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Campus Novel Variations:
A Comparative Study of an Anglo-American Genre

Proměny univerzitního románu:
Komparativní studie angloamerického žánru

Ph.D. dissertation | dizertační práce

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Olomouc 2015

Prohlašuji, že jsem dizertační práci napsal samostatně, pouze s použitím citovaných pramenů a literatury.

I hereby declare that I have written this dissertation by myself, using only literature and sources cited below.

V Olomouci 24. března, 2015 | Olomouc, March 24, 2015

Acknowledgements:

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Mgr. Ema Jelínková, Ph.D., for her valuable comments on the content of this dissertation and her patience with which she read several drafts of this project. Consultations with Professor Marcel Arbeit also contributed to the final shape of this dissertation.

Also, I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Josef Jařab and the doctoral board of the English and American Literature programme at Palacký University, as well as Professor Clinton Machann, a member of both the English Department at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, and the Brazos Valley Czech Heritage Society in Bryan, Texas. Thanks to the Hlavinka Fellowship, arranged by the cooperation of these people and institutions, I was able to spend two academic years in the USA as a M.A. student, which provided me with a great opportunity to conduct research for this dissertation.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support and understanding as I was completing this dissertation.

Abstract:

This dissertation provides a chronological overview of the development of the campus or academic novel from the 1950s to the early 21st century. Since the campus novel has been a specifically Anglo-American phenomenon, I compare two representative texts from each decade—one British and one American—in all of the six chapters. As campus novels are usually characterized as comic or satirical texts, I also address the coexistence of the comic and the satirical within the genre. My findings show that while the British campus novels have been written by a rather limited number of authors (Kingsley Amis, Malcolm Bradbury, and David Lodge), the American campus novels have been authored by various recognized writers of general fiction (Vladimir Nabokov, Bernard Malamud, Don DeLillo). Also, whereas all the novels discussed in this dissertation are set at humanities departments, the British campus novels tend to take place at English departments, implicitly defending British literature and culture. Finally, I conclude that although Philip Roth's *The Human Stain*, one of the most recent addenda to the genre, can hardly be characterized as a comic novel, all of the texts analysed in this dissertation are satirical in their effect, as they try to name and potentially reform various problematic aspects of academia.

Abstrakt:

Tato dizertační práce poskytuje chronologický přehled vývoje univerzitního neboli akademického románu od 50. let 20. století do prvního desetiletí 21. století. Jelikož univerzitní román představuje specificky angloamerický jev, každá ze šesti kapitol porovnává dva reprezentativní texty—jeden britský a jeden americký—ze stejného desetiletí. Protože univerzitní romány bývají charakterizovány jako komické a satirické texty, práce se rovněž soustřeďuje na výskyt komických a satirických prvků v tomto žánru. Mé srovnání ukazuje, že zatímco autoři britských univerzitních románů tvoří relativně malou skupinu (Kingsley Amis, Malcolm Bradbury, David Lodge), mezi americké autory daného žánru patří různorodí uznávaní prozaici (Vladimir Nabokov, Bernard Malamud, Don DeLillo). Přestože všechny analyzované romány se odehrávají na humanitních katedrách, britské texty jsou obvykle zasazeny na katedru anglistiky, čímž implicitně obhajují britskou literaturu a kulturu. Závěr práce zdůrazňuje, že i když jeden z posledních univerzitních románů, *Lidskou skvrnu* Philipa Rothe, lze stěží popsat jako komický román, všechny analyzované texty mají satirický účinek, neboť se snaží pojmenovat a potenciálně reformovat nejrůznější problematické aspekty akademického světa.

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1. Introduction and Literature Review

While the novel as a genre was only born in the 18th century, contemporary readers often tend to think of novels as bread and butter of literature. To explain the persisting popularity of novels, one could argue that throughout the genre's development, readers have been attracted to these texts for two main reasons. First, some readers have been craving stories set in times and places recognizably different from their own as a means of entertainment, escape or education; some of gothic novels, fantasy and science fiction or historical novels could serve as examples here. However, others (or even the same) readers have also been interested in reading about fictional worlds similar to the one they inhabit, for such worlds are peopled by characters who are potentially closer to them, as they have to face situations and problems resembling their own.

It is mainly the latter reason that explains the popularity of the campus novel, which has often been seen by literary critics as a kind of fiction "written about scholars, typically by scholars and often for scholars."[1] Indeed, given this relatively small community, the wide-spread tendency to read campus novels as *romans à clef* does not come as a surprise. In addition, in the introduction to *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (2005),[2] the most comprehensive survey of the Anglo-American campus novel so far,[3] Elaine Showalter admits to having used campus novels as resource books of academic mores and manners: "In an era before there were handbooks, self-help guides, or advice columns for graduate students and junior faculty in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* or the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, novels taught me how a proper

[1] See e.g. Merritt Moseley, "Introductory: Definitions and Justifications," in *The Academic Novel: New and Classic Essay*, ed. Merritt Moseley (Chester: Chester Academic Press, 2007), 5.
[2] Like Showalter and David Lodge, whose article is quoted later in this introduction, I am using the terms academic novel and campus novel interchangeably.
[3] Showalter denies such a characterization, claiming that her volume is "a personal take," reflecting her preoccupations, mainly with feminism. See *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 16. However, even up to March 2015, no other scholar has written a comprehensive study of the British and American campus novel whose scope would surpass *Faculty Towers*.

professor should speak, behave, dress, think, write, love, succeed, or fail."[4] Importantly, as Showalter mentions graduate students and junior faculty as target readers, it needs to be said that the faculty rather than undergraduate students are also the more typical protagonists of the modern campus novel as it developed from the 1950s on in reaction to the wider spread of higher education in both the United Kingdom and the United States. Thus, while many earlier *Bildungsromane* (such as Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, 1945) feature the protagonist's university experience within their narrative, such texts are beyond the scope of the campus novel as I and other critics understand it.[5] While this dissertation illustrates that the professor-centred academic novel continues to flourish, Jeffrey J. Williams suggests that campus film gradually replaced the novel as the main narrative vehicle of undergraduate experience.[6]

As a graduate student in English and American literature that has studied in both the Czech Republic and the United States, I must agree with Showalter that I have also appreciated campus novels as sources of information about various aspects of university life. Accordingly, as early as in 1987, John Thelin and Barbara Townsend argued for the "opportunity, even obligation, to read the fiction that use colleges and universities as subject and setting"[7] in order to better understand American higher education. As social scientists, the authors also suggest that campus novels may be usefully employed along with various other data, such as "institutional records, archival materials, and student and alumni memoirs and biographies."[8] While I have mentioned that my research focuses on professor-centered novels, I also try to supply it with the study of the social context and biographical data of the authors of the novels.

The British campus novelist and literary critic David Lodge has also studied the history of the university. Lodge has emphasized that the application

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[4] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 2.

[5] See e.g. Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 2, or David Lodge, "Nabokov and the Campus Novel," *Cycnos* 24, no. 1 (2008), paragraph 1, accessed May 4, 2013, http://revel.unice.fr/cycnos/index.html?id=1081.

[6] See Jeffrey J. Williams, "The Rise of the Academic Novel," *American Literary History* 24, no. 3 (2012), 569.

[7] John Thelin and Barbara Townsend, "Fiction to Fact: College Novels and the Study of Higher Education" (paper presented at the national conference of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, San Diego, California, February 17, 1987), 4, accessed May 8, 2013, http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED281440.pdf.

[8] Thelin and Townsend, "Fiction to Fact," 6.

of the Latin word, *campus,* meaning "field," to the physical space occupied by a college or university, was originally an American usage, beginning in the early 19th century, eventually entering British English only in the late 1950s. The earliest citation in the Oxford English Dictionary of "campus" as a word applied to a British university comes from 1958, referring to the University of East Anglia, one of the new universities then being built on the American model—that is, "a unified, self-contained site in a pastoral or park-like setting."[9] It is mainly because universities are not usually designed in this particular way in the rest of the world that campus novels have rarely occurred in other countries.

Showalter agrees with Lodge that "the campus can be the site of pastoral, or the fantasy of pastoral—the refuge, the ivory tower."[10] Bruce Robbins specifies that the tendency to portray the campus in a pastoral mode was typical of the precursors of the modern campus novel in the first half of the 20th century; however, he also emphasizes that "only a tiny percentage of the population attended university so that the celebration of the university was also a celebration of a highly restricted class and gender privilege."[11] In the latter half of the century, these limitations no longer apply and the pastoral mode is discarded as the university setting begins to mirror the whole society. While the earlier Bildungsromane would use satire only sparingly, most critics hold that the modern campus novel adopts a satirical mode to address the issues that have arisen following the expansion of Anglo-American higher education. Comparing the university campus to the suburbs, another common topos of Anglo-American literature, Showalter suggests that "like the suburbs, [the campus] is the site of those perennials of the literary imagination John Updike names as 'discontent, conflict, waste, sorrow, fear.'"[12] Thus, while the campus remains an enclosed space, it is not necessarily a sacred space.

Rather, the campus comes to represent a microcosm that reflects, to a large extent, the issues and problems of the surrounding world. For instance,

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[9] David Lodge, "Nabokov and the Campus Novel," paragraph 3.
[10] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 3.
[11] Bruce Robbins, "What the Porter Saw: On the Academic Novel," in *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*, ed. James F. English (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 251.
[12] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 3.

Steve Padley notes that in post-war Britain, “the university campus provided one of the few settings in which the interaction of people from different class backgrounds could feasibly be represented, and writers such as Kingsley Amis, Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge developed the campus novel in directions that enabled them to address changes and trends in academia and the social structure.”[13] Similarly, many of the American novels feature some larger historical or political events in the background. Overall, campus novels can effectively mimic the issues of the democratic society as the universities, particularly their liberal arts departments that provide the setting of all the novels discussed in this dissertation, have often been seen as one of the pillars of this very society. As William Tierney argues, “[if] the academy does not accept its responsibility to be courageous, outspoken, and experimental, then we lessen not simply the academy, but society as well.”[14] Thus, Tierney confirms the key role of academic freedom for the whole society. While the fact that the majority of protagonists in campus novels are humanities professors may simply be explained by the fact that the authors of the texts have worked in humanities departments, Williams suggests that for many readers, the characters of humanities professors “represent an altruistic interest in knowledge, culture, and liberal learning.”[15]

At the same time, campus novels that portray the corruption of these ideals and misplacement of the concern with freedom and knowledge by the race for tenure and promotion may be related to the struggles for power and prestige in the wider society. As all of these points suggest that the university can easily make its way into the popular imagination, it is perhaps not surprising that some campus novels have reached high sales,[16] arguably attracting additional readers from outside of academia. Moreover, the campus novel may have reached additional audiences through film and television adaptations. Of the twelve texts discussed in this dissertation, three have been made into films (Kingsley Amis’s *Lucky Jim*, A. S. Byatt’s *Possession* and Philip Roth’s *The Human Stain*), while David Lodge himself adapted his novel *Nice Work* for the BBC.

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[13] Steve Padley, “Campus Novel,” in *Key Concepts in Contemporary Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 74.
[14] William Tierney, “Academic Freedom and Tenure: Between Fiction and Reality,” *The Journal of Higher Education* 75, no. 2 (2004), 176.
[15] Williams, “The Rise of the Academic Novel,” 582.
[16] For the numbers of sold copies of Byatt’s *Possession*, see Moseley, “Introductory: Definitions and Justifications,” 6.

Showalter’s quoting Updike also connects to intertextuality as another feature of campus novels, an element which has been increasingly typical of the postmodern novel in general. However, as the English department is the most common setting of the campus novel, British texts in particular have often echoed not just canonical literary texts, but also literary theory which has become an important part of English studies since the 1970s. In addition, besides being texts about the interpretation of other texts, campus novels have also often dealt with the writing process. This development illustrates the introduction of creative writing into the English departments at Anglo-American universities. Thus, many campus novels, British and American, feature visiting writers among their characters, and may be interspersed with pieces of other fictional texts.

As the campus novel was established after WWII simultaneously in Britain and America and authors in both countries have continued to write in that genre until present day, this dissertation aims to survey the development of the campus novel in British and American literature since the 1950s up to the early 21st century. While the preceding paragraphs suggest that the campus novel already has a small body of criticism devoted to it, no monograph has systematically compared the genre’s development in the two countries which I am aiming for in this dissertation. In fact, the lack of such a publication has prompted me to start this project. Still, before outlining my own research methods, I would like to summarize the scholarship I am, to various extents, drawing on.

The very first monograph dealing with the genre to a significant degree is *The American Writer and the University* (1989), a collection of essays edited by Ben Siegel. In this volume, Siegel and his co-authors focus on the figure of the professor and the writer on the American campus and the complicated relationship between the two. Besides dealing with some authors of campus novels discussed in the body of this dissertation, such as Bernard Malamud and Philip Roth, the monograph also includes an essay on Joyce Carol Oates’ *The Hungry Ghosts: Seven Allusive Comedies* (1974) as a representative work of campus short fiction. In addition, the book comprises major American writers’ (John Barth’s, Joseph Heller’s and Saul Bellow’s) points of view of the university, even while admitting that

these authors have dealt with the campus only tangentially in their work. Finally, the collection deals with three instances of writers who have worked on the American campus—the poet Theodore Weiss, the playwright James Ragan, and the novelist David Madden. Thus, while many of the authors' concerns do not coincide with mine *per se*, some of their observations may, nevertheless, be illuminating in capturing the ethos of the campus environment.

The second monograph, Ian Carter's *Ancient Cultures of Conceit: British University Fiction in the Post-War Years* (1990), makes a rather strong statement regarding the quality of the British academic novel. First, while the title suggests that the volume concerns exclusively the British campus novel, in fact, Carter attaches a chapter titled "American Difference." The conclusion of this chapter is that "while there are many potboilers in the American literature, at its best that literature writes its English competitor off the page,"[17] as the list of American contributors to the genre includes names such as Nabokov, Wolfe, Malamud, McCarthy, Barth, and Lurie. Importantly, Carter is touching here on a significant difference in the number of British and American writers. Whereas many major American authors of general fiction have written a campus novel or two during their career, major British campus novels have been mostly authored by a relatively small group of writers who have worked mainly in that genre—particularly Amis, Bradbury and Lodge.

As Carter is a sociologist by profession, he provides some interesting statistical data. For instance, he shows that Oxford and Cambridge figure in over 70 per cent of British academic fiction, which confirms the elite position of Oxbridge not just in British society, but also in popular imagination.[18] A closer look at Carter's material shows that he lists 196 items of British university fiction written between 1945 and 1988

[17] Ian Carter, *Ancient Cultures of Conceit*: *British University Fiction in the Post-War Years* (London: Routledge, 1990), 211.

[18] See Carter, *Ancient Cultures of Conceit*, 5. In contrast, John E. Kramer's *The American College Novel: An Annotated Bibliography* (2004) identifies 129 different colleges or universities in 648 novels. The most common are Harvard (77), Yale (32), Princeton (21), UC-Berkeley (19), Chicago (18), Cornell (12), Columbia (9), Iowa (9), Michigan (8), NYU (8), and Bennington (8). See Christian K. Anderson and John R. Thelin, "Campus Life Revealed: Tracking Down the Rich Resources of American Collegiate Fiction," *The Journal of Higher Education* 80, no. 1 (2009), 109.

(with selected earlier novels),[19] many of them rather obscure. Again, much of his material is beyond the scope of my study, as 10 items predate the year 1945 and some others are short stories rather than novels. Carter also includes many novels that belong to the subgenre of campus murder mystery which I am deliberately leaving out of this dissertation in order to be able to focus on a manageable amount of texts.[20] However, while his list is imprecise, Carter outlines some of the larger aspects I would like to track down in my survey, such as the often negative portrayal of scientists, women and foreigners in the British campus novel. It is the anti-scientific and also anti-political concepts of culture voiced in the novels that Carter finds most problematic; besides, he aptly concludes that the novels offer implicit solutions to the problems they pose by their use of satire, urging the reader to take culture seriously and see universities as important bastions of culture.

The third of the five monographs is Janice Rossen's *The University in Modern Fiction: When Power is Academic* (1993). As the title suggests, Rossen is particularly interested in the division of power within the university, but she also relates this perspective to other issues, such as the representation of the "dialectic between competitiveness and idealism"[21] in academic fiction. Thus, she suggests that the best academic novels are usually those which engage the greatest amount of conflicting motivations in their characters' attitudes toward their work. Observing that many contemporary novels about academic life cast scholarly contests as intensely personal, she asserts that academic fiction, "even that which is about such an arcane field as literary criticism," is appealing to a non-academic audience, because it portrays dilemmas that "are part of the *condition humaine*."[22] The purpose of satire in campus novels is, in her view, twofold: besides gaining some form of mastery over one's enemies, satire exhibits a zeal for reform. At the same time, she argues that "satire is by no means inherently repulsive to those

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[19] Similarly, John E. Kramer's list of 648 novels in *The American College Novel* starts with Hawthorne's *Fanshawe* (1828) and continues to 2002, excluding murder mysteries, horror novels and science fiction. Kramer further divides the novels into 319 student-centred ones and 329 professor-centred ones. See Anderson and Thelin, "Campus Life Revealed," 106-107.
[20] Another Kramer's book, *Academe in Mystery and Detective Fiction: An Annotated Bibliography* (2000) lists 486 novels published between 1910 and 1999. See Anderson and Thelin, "Campus Life Revealed," 106.
[21] Janice Rossen, *The University in Modern Fiction: When Power Is Academic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 3.
[22] Rossen, *The University in Modern Fiction*, 170.

who are pilloried by it,"[23] as British campus novels that ridicule American academics are extremely popular in the United States. While Rossen's thematic chapters touch on a number of highly significant issues, such as gender and class in academia, scholarly research or academic politics, unfortunately, the author focuses mostly on British texts, in spite of being an American herself.

The fourth monograph, Kenneth Womack's *Postwar Academic Fiction: Satire, Ethics, Community* (2001), is not a systematic survey of the genre, but a one-authored collection of essays on the Anglo-American campus novel, short fiction (Oates) and theatre (Mamet, Gilbert and Gubar), focusing on ethical issues. American novelists (Nabokov, Reed, and Smiley) dominate Womack's list, as the British are represented by Amis and Lodge only. While Womack's initial observation of "the scathing representation of professors and institutions alike in these fictions as figures of deceit, duplicity and falsehood"[24] aptly describes some of the texts he has selected, it may denounce the academia rather too excessively. Later on, Womack somewhat more sympathetically emphasizes that modern academic characters "suffer from the whimsy of global economic slumps and university budget cuts, the fashionable nature of structuralist and poststructuralist literary criticism, growing social and racial divisions on college campuses, and an increasingly hostile academic job market."[25] Thus, it is all these issues that challenge the academic characters' ethics and moral integrity. As Womack is not interested exclusively in full-length fiction, he does not provide any list of campus novels. However, he introduces the theoretical framework of ethical literary criticism, which is a very useful tool for approaching the genre.

As this introduction may suggest, Elaine Showalter's *Faculty Towers* (2005) has been the most helpful source for my research. However, while Showalter lists some 64 campus novels in her bibliography, many of these are beyond the scope of my study. For instance, some of them predate the 1950s, others belong to the campus murder mystery subgenre. Yet others have been written by other than British and American writers (mostly Canadian, but one South African and one French text are listed as well);

[23] Rossen, *The University in Modern Fiction*, 159.
[24] Kenneth Womack, *Postwar Academic Fiction: Satire, Ethics, Community* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 1.
[25] Womack, *Postwar Academic Fiction*, 2.

while these definitely provide an interesting area for further research, I am deliberately leaving them out to concentrate on the British and American production. On the contrary, Showalter, like other scholars, neglects to list some novels that I find important. Nevertheless, I have found Showalter's chronological approach useful for highlighting some larger tendencies as well as providing the intellectual background. In scope, Showalter's survey goes beyond my project, but in methodology, I would like to elaborate on many of the author's observations. While Showalter mentions that the satirical campus novel may ridicule academic types for their dreamy impracticality, she also argues that "perhaps we professors turn to satire because academic life has so much pain, so many lives wasted or destroyed."[26]

Finally, *Academic Novels as Satire: Critical Studies of an Emerging Genre* (2007) is a recent collection of essays on the Anglo-American campus novel edited by Mark Bosco and Kimberly Rae Connor. It includes seven essays on diverse authors and themes, such as revisionist history or utopia in academic novels, A. S. Byatt, Philip Roth, David Lodge, Richard Russo and John L'Heureux. Attached is a bibliography of 63 campus novels, sometimes going beyond the scope of my study in similar ways as Showalter's volume. In the introduction, Kimberly Rae Connor maintains that academic novels "set up academe as a sitting duck, as the target of all that is wrong with society"[27] rather than as an example of what society could or should be promoting, but concludes that the novels that the volume considers "seek to use satiric elements for a transformative, perhaps even redemptive purpose."[28]

Besides the listed monographs, I have also been able to access Patricia Barber Verrone's *The Image of the Professor in American Academic Fiction 1980-1997* (1999), an unpublished dissertation defended at Seton Hall University. Using fourteen novels written by major (Bellow, Lurie, Oates, Reed, Erdrich and Dorris) as well as less well-known writers, Verrone studies the fictional representation of the professor in light of her thorough research of the institutional changes in American higher education in the given period. She particularly

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[26] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 3.
[27] Kimberly Rae Connor, "Introduction," in *Academic Novels as Satire: Critical Studies of an Emerging Genre*, ed. Mark Bosco and Kimberly Rae Connor (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), 4.
[28] Connor, "Introduction," 16.

focuses on the role of promotion and tenure in the professors' lives, the way fictional professors approach their role as teachers, and the gender implications for female professors. She concludes that fiction is a useful tool for a complete understanding of higher education.

The persisting scholarly interest in campus novels was also proved by the 2007 publication of *The Academic Novel: New and Classical Essays*, a collection edited by Merritt Moseley. The editor's introduction summarizes the development and reception of the genre up to the early 21st century and the rest of the volume is divided into two parts. The first one reprints several influential essays that consider the genre as a whole (e.g. a chapter from Carter's *Ancient Cultures of Conceit*) alongside more recent thought-provoking scholarly work, such as Adam Begley's article "The Decline of the Campus Novel," originally published in 1997. The second part includes seven essays that focus on particular authors of campus novels, from Nabokov, Mary McCarthy and Randall Jarrell to Kingsley Amis, Alison Lurie or David Lodge. In the introduction, Moseley argues that most academic novels are comic which does not necessarily make them satirical and concludes that "the high incidence of comedy,[29] ranging from the most delicate verbal touches to broad farce, in academic fiction is one of its most valuable and welcomes traits."[30] However, in his essay on types of academic fiction in the same volume, Moseley identifies satirical novels focusing on the faculty as the largest group within the genre. He further divides these novels into four groups according to their satirical targets: satire on professors themselves, satire on conditions that undermine college education or faculty liberty, satire on the publish-or-perish syndrome, and satire on the political environment, particularly racial and gender relations.[31]

Thus, Moseley raises a question of the presence of the comic in campus novels. While short dictionary definitions rather understandably tend to generalize, simply stating that the campus novel is usually comic or satirical,[32] more extensive studies also neglect to elaborate on this distinction. For instance,

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[29] Since the term *comedy* is usually used in reference to drama, I prefer to use the term *the comic*. Similarly, I refer to campus novels as comic novels rather than comedies.
[30] Moseley, "Introductory: Definitions and Justifications," 19.
[31] See Merritt Moseley, "Types of Academic Fiction," in *The Academic Novel: New and Classic Essays*, 110-112.
[32] See e.g. Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 33.

David Lodge reads *Lucky Jim* simply as a comic novel, without any reference to satire.[33] On the contrary, the subtitles of both Womack's study and Bosco's and Connor's essay collection illustrate that other critics read the campus novel as intrinsically satirical. Yet other scholars try to combine these two views. While it has been observed that exaggerated, rather than realistic, action and characters are common features of both comic and satirical texts,[34] most of the studies I have mentioned so far agree that satire aims to reform or redeem its target of attack. This aim makes satire's intent more serious than that of comedy, which has been primarily seen as a means of entertainment.[35]

However, as there are no formal markers specifically ascribed to the comic or the satirical, Christian Gutleben emphasizes that the distinction between the two necessitates an intricate analysis of modality, tonality and narrativity. In the campus novel, Gutleben goes on to argue, "the disclosure of the foibles of a secluded world appears to link up with the denunciatory aspect of the satiric mode, and the pure funniness of self-derision as well as the ludic exploitation of language seem to correspond to the emphasis on laughter associated with the comic mode."[36] Thus, besides comparing the development of the campus novel in Britain and America, this dissertation will seek to address the coexistence of the comic and satirical elements in academic fiction. As Steve Padley notes that American campus novels "tend towards darker humour,"[37] I will also pay attention to any differences between the distribution of the two elements in British and American texts.

Since I aim to provide a chronological overview of the major tendencies in the campus novel since the 1950s up to the early 21st century, I have chosen to discuss two representative texts from each decade—one British and one American—in all of the following six chapters. The criteria for the selection are threefold: first, I have attempted to choose texts that

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[33] See David Lodge, "*Lucky Jim* Revisited," in *The Practice of Writing*: *Essays*, *Lectures*, *Reviews and a Diary* (London: Penguin, 1996), 85-97.
[34] See John Peck and Martin Coyle, *Literary Terms and Criticism*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 118.
[35] See e.g. Ema Jelínková, *British Literary Satire in Historical Perspective* (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2010), 123-124.
[36] Christian Gutleben, "English Academic Satire from the Middle Ages to Postmodernism: Distinguishing the Comic from the Satiric," in *Theorizing Satire: Essays in Literary Criticism,* ed. Brian A. Connery and Kirk Combe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 134.
[37] Padley, "Campus Novel," 75.

are really crucial for the development of the genre; second, I have tried to focus on texts by major authors; finally, I have aimed to select texts that would be most useful in illustrating both the parallels and the differences in the development of the genre in the two countries. While every chapter includes a detailed explanation of my choices, I also occasionally refer to other campus novels which further illustrate the trends that I have observed.

Thus, the first chapter deals with two early campus novels, Kingley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1954) and Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin* (1957), both of which feature insecure temporary lecturers at provincial universities, rather than at Oxbridge or Ivy League. Besides reflecting the movement away from the prestigious institutions as settings of the modern campus novel, each of the texts illustrates one more geographically specific tendency. While Jim Dixon, a young man of lower middle class background with a university degree, is an everyman with whom the whole British generation of the 1950s could identify, Timofey Pnin is a Russian émigré, the member of a minority, the Other—a figure who often becomes prominent in American campus novels in the following decades.

The second chapter focuses on two campus novels of the 1960s, Malcolm Bradbury's *Stepping Westward* (1965) and Bernard Malamud's *A New Life* (1961), both of which illustrate a young instructor's quest into an unknown territory of a distant university. In *Stepping Westward*, the protagonist is a British writer, supposedly an angry young man, who accepts a one year teaching post at an American university; in *A New Life*, the main character is Sy Levin who moves from the East to the West of the United States to teach freshmen composition at a small agriculture college. While both of them encounter numerous hardships in their new environments, it is Malamud's protagonist whom the experience leads to a new beginning.

The third chapter continues in the theme of British professors' exploration of America by means of analysing David Lodge's *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses* (1975) which also portrays a voyage in the opposite direction, one of an American professor travelling to Britain. In addition, the text foregrounds the social position of the two professors' wives, which it shares with Alison Lurie's *The War between the Tates*

(1974), a novel focusing on the marriage crisis of a middle-aged professor and his wife. While both texts are set against the background of the student revolutions of the late 1960s, it is the latter that consistently uses parallels between the political and the personal life. Thus, Lurie's novel is set in a Political Science Department, while Lodge's compares a British and an American English Department.

The fourth chapter concentrates on two novels that deal, in strikingly different ways, with the relationship between academia and the business world, Lodge's *Nice Work* (1988) and Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985). The protagonist of the former, a female lecturer in English literature, views the business world as something completely foreign to her until she meets a manager of an engineering firm. On the contrary, the main character in the latter is well-versed in the practices of consumer culture to such an extent that he invents Hitler Studies as a new academic field as well as a big business. I suggest that these differences hint at the larger attitudes toward the world of commerce in British and American universities at that time.

While the subgenre of the campus novel of detection has been left out of my study, the fifth chapter concerns two novels that are surprisingly close to it, A. S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance* (1990) and Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich's *The Crown of Columbus* (1991). Both of these texts feature two liberal arts professors, male and female, collaborating on research that makes them resemble protagonists of detective fiction. Whereas Byatt's protagonists find a series of 19th century love letters exchanged between two fictional British poets, the research of the two major characters in *The Crown of Columbus* starts when one of them, a female Native American, discovers two pages from a diary apparently written by Christopher Columbus. Thus, while in Byatt's novel, the research is in literary history, Dorris and Erdrich are concerned with the larger socio-political history of America.

Finally, the sixth chapter focuses on how contemporary political scene influences the campus by concentrating on Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (2005) and Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000). Smith's novel deepens the campus novel's international theme as it deals with a mixed-race

British American family living in the United States and the conflict between liberal and conservative values. Similarly, Roth's novel demonstrates how American academia is influenced by political correctness as the text is set in 1998, during the period of President Bill Clinton's impeachment hearings and scandal over Monica Lewinsky. Thus, upon entering the new century, campus novel has become more topical and illustrative of the whole society than ever before.

2. The 1950s and Outsiders in Academia: Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* and Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin*[38]

> In my novels there are good people and bad people, which is very rare these days. There's often a lot wrong with the good people, and one must also lay off by making the bad people say good things or be right about things that the good people are wrong about. There are bad people, and it is essential to make them ridiculous.
> —Kingsley Amis in *Interviews with Britain's Angry Young Men*[39]

> Some people—and I am one of them—hate happy ends. We feel cheated. Harm is the norm. Doom should not jam. The avalanche stopping in its tracks a few feet above the cowering village behaves not only unnaturally but unethically. Had I been reading about this old man, instead of writing about him, I would have preferred him to discover, upon his arrival to Cremona, that his lecture was not this Friday but the next. Actually, however, he not only arrived safely but was in time for dinner.
> —Vladimir Nabokov, *Pnin*

In the 1950s, as higher education and academic careers both in the United Kingdom and the United States were becoming available to an increasing amount of people from various social backgrounds, campus novel emerged as a genre simultaneously in the United Kingdom and the United States, with several major writers immediately contributing to it. In this chapter, I have aimed to select two texts that have been particularly influential for the development of the campus novel throughout the following five decades. In Britain, the most significant campus novel by far, and arguably the most important British novel published in the 1950s, was Kingsley Amis's (1922-1995) *Lucky Jim* (1954) which enriched British literature with a new voice, representing the generation coming out of age in that decade. The memorable character of Jim Dixon, a rootless history lecturer at an unnamed provincial university, was a protagonist that middle-lower or working class readers with a university degree could sympathize with. As David J. Taylor notes, "*Lucky Jim* manages what might once have seemed an impossible feat: to make a university don, even an uninspired and soon-

[38] An early version of this chapter was presented as a paper at the English Student Conference, held at Palacký University in Olomouc on May 13-14, 2013.
[39] Dale Salvak, "Kingsley Amis: Mimic and Moralist," in *Interviews with Britain's Angry Young Men* (San Bernardino, Calif.: Borgo Press, 1984), 18.

to-be ex-don, into a post-war Everyman."[40] Amis himself claimed that the inspiration for his novel came when he was visiting Philip Larkin, to whom *Lucky Jim* is dedicated, at University College, Leicester, in 1948, as Larkin was working there as a librarian. However, some critics have suggested University College, Swansea, where Amis taught from 1949 to 1961 as another source for the novel.[41]

While some scholars consider Charles Percy Snow's (1905-1980) *The Masters* (1951) the first British campus novel, I agree with David Lodge who sees this text as one volume in a long sequence of novels set in various institutions.[42] Moreover, as the novel centres on political intrigues of two candidates for the master of a Cambridge college, it deals little with the academic profession as such. In addition, set in 1937, *The Masters* is more of a historical novel, dealing with a very different world than the post-war campus novel. Finally, its overall tone is tragic, or elegiac, whereas the campus novel is typically comic or satirical;[43] in fact, the only comic element in the whole three hundred page text is provided by a few scenes featuring a minor character of the oldest member of the college whose absent-mindedness prefigures Professor Welch in *Lucky Jim*. Thus, Snow's novel has not provided a model for the emerging genre.

Nevertheless, Snow's 1959 Rede Lecture "The Two Cultures" about the separation of the intellectual life in western society in between the sciences and the humanities as an obstacle to solving the world's problems may prove illuminating for reading numerous campus novels throughout the genre's future development. More specifically, Snow made it clear that he believed the "literary intellectuals," representative of the traditional culture, were largely to blame for this deplorable situation: while the scientists had "the future

[40] David J. Taylor, *After the War: The Novel and the English Society since 1945* (1993), qtd. in Bruce Robbins, "What the Porter Saw: On the Academic Novel," in *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*, ed. James F. English (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 251.

[41] See for instance David Lodge, "*Lucky Jim* Revisited," in *The Practice of Writing: Essays, Lectures, Reviews and a Diary* (London: Penguin, 1996), 88.

[42] See David Lodge, "Nabokov and the Campus Novel," *Cycnos* 24, no. 1 (2008), paragraph 4, http://revel.unice.fr/cycnos/index.html?id=1081 (May 4, 2013).

[43] Bruce Robbins notes that Snow is "Trollopian enough to view careerism without satire." See "What the Porter Saw: On the Academic Novel," 253.

in their bones," the literary intellectuals were "natural Luddites."[44] This accusation brought about a reaction by the literary critic F. R. Leavis whose 1962 Richmond lecture "Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow " argued that "even the achievements of science depend on the prior creation of the human world, including language" and called for the need to study literature, "the literature of one's own language in the first place."[45] As many British campus novels are written by English professors and set in English Departments, the authors may be tempted to react to this ongoing debate. In fact, Ian Carter identifies an idealization of Oxbridge as a defense of British literature and culture as one of the consistent features of the British campus novel which portrays Oxford and Cambridge as "national bastions, national universities refining the cream of British youth."[46]

While *Lucky Jim* centres on a History Department, its position among the British campus novels of the 1950s is really unrivalled, as the only other major representative of the genre, Malcolm Bradbury's (1932-2000) *Eating People Is Wrong* (1959), was published full five years later. Moreover, the novel clearly shows some influence of Amis by dealing with class issues, albeit Bradbury's lower-middle class character who finds himself unfitting in academia is a student rather than an instructor. Importantly, *Eating People Is Wrong*, also set at a provincial university, features professors who manifest their concern with people from the underprivileged groups of society, prefiguring the later intellectuals' support of ethnic and other minorities. However, it is *Lucky Jim* that has introduced into the genre the protagonist's struggle for tenure as a central theme. Thus, in many of the campus novels in the following decades, the reader is engrossed with the story of a junior faculty member, male (e.g. Nabokov's Timofey Pnin) or female (e.g. Robyn Penrose in David Lodge's *Nice Work*, 1988) striving to get tenure, which is a situation a large part of the genre's readership could identify with.

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[44] Qtd. in Stefan Collini, "Introduction," in *Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow*, by F. R. Leavis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 3-4.
[45] Qtd. in Collini, "Introduction," 23.
[46] Ian Carter, *Ancient Cultures of Conceit: British University Fiction in the Post-War Years* (London: Routledge, 1990), 82.

In the United States, three campus novels occurred within a short time span of five years, the first one being *The Groves of Academe* (1952) by Mary McCarthy (1912-1989) who could have drawn on her experience as a temporary visitor at two liberal arts colleges in New York State—Bard and Sarah Lawrence. While it is significant that the founder of the seemingly male-dominated genre was a female writer, McCarthy's text defies one of the major characteristics of the future campus novels in that the protagonist who strives for tenure, Henry Mulcahy of the fictional Jocelyn College, is a duplicitous and manipulative character who makes up a story that he is being dismissed only because he was once a member of the Communist Party. As Elaine Showalter explains, Mulcahy is aware that the liberal college and its faculty "are too politically correct (to use a term that became ubiquitous a decade later) to be seen as persecuting the Left."[47] Such an unsympathetic protagonist represents a huge leap from *Lucky Jim*, a character who, in Amis's own words quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, was meant to be "good," and who has been identified by the critics as having voiced the opinions and experiences of a whole generation of readers. Indeed, not many major authors of campus novels decided to follow McCarthy's path, with the notable exception of Malcolm Bradbury's later novel *The History Man* (1975) which introduced the memorable Machiavellian protagonist of Howard Kirk, a professor of sociology at one of England's new universities.

Two years later, *The Groves of Academe* was followed by Randall Jarrell's (1914-1965) *Pictures from an Institution* (1954), set in the fictional Benton College which is supposedly based on Sarah Lawrence where the author taught for several years. In spite of many comic or satirical passages, *Pictures from an Institution* presents two major problems regarding its inclusion among the major campus novels. First, several critics have agreed that the text is, in spite of Jarrell's publisher's pre-publication recommendation that the author revises his prose to make it more like a novel, a series of episodes and character sketches rather than a novel.[48]

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[47] Elaine Showalter, *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 35.
[48] See e.g. Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 37.

While some later American campus novels have been written in a similar form (e.g. Rolando Hinojosa's *The Happy Few*, 2006), the second objection is much more serious. Even though *Pictures from an Institution* claims to be a "work of fiction"[49] and is dedicated to "Mary and Hannah" (*PI*, 6), referring to Mary McCarthy and her friend Hannah Arendt, as Lodge has emphasized, "everybody who was anybody in the East Coast literary world recognized that [the main female character of] Gertrude [Johnson] was a damaging caricature of Mary McCarthy."[50] I believe it is mainly for this reason that *Pictures from an Institution* has not lasted; even a contemporary reader, unaware of the character's identification, is somewhat surprised by the pathetically negative characteristics of Gertrude, for instance in the following passage: "[A]s a writer Gertrude had one fault more radical than all the rest: she did not know—or rather did not believe—what it was like to be a human being. […] [S]he had not signed the human contract when the rest of us signed it" (*PI*, 143).

Thus, the first major American campus novel typical of the whole genre is really Vladimir Nabokov's (1899-1977) *Pnin* (1957). While Amis's reputation, in spite of his having written over twenty novels in total, primarily rests on his debut, Nabokov's magnum opus is, of course, *Lolita* (1955). Interestingly, it was during a break from working on his most famous novel that Nabokov created the character of Timofey Pnin, an untenured Russian-American assistant professor of Russian at the fictional "somewhat provincial"[51] Waindell College. However, the author's biographer Andrew Field has argued that "the book is teeming with people from Cornell"[52] where Nabokov taught from 1948 to 1959. Moreover, Galya Diment has even asserted that the character of Pnin was based on the historian Marc Szeftel, an émigré Russian and a colleague of the author.[53] Unlike Amis's Jim Dixon who has only been working at the university for

[49] Randall Jarrell, *Pictures from an Institution* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1969), 4. Hereafter cited in the text as *PI*.
[50] Lodge, "Nabokov and the Campus Novel," para. 18.
[51] Vladimir Nabokov, *Pnin*, in *Novels 1955-1962* (New York: Library of America, 2010), 302. Hereafter cited in the text as *P*.
[52] Andrew Field, *The Life and Art of Vladimir Nabokov* (1987), qtd. in Lodge, "Nabokov and the Campus Novel," para. 29.
[53] Galya Diment, *Pniniad: Vladimir Nabokov and Marc Szeftel* (1997), qtd. in Lodge, "Nabokov and the Campus Novel," para. 29.

some eight months at the beginning of the novel, Pnin has already been at Waindell for nine years, from 1945 to 1954, and expects to be awarded tenure next year.

Nevertheless, like Dixon, Pnin also finds it hard to fit in academia, even though he differs from the majority because of his nationality rather than class. While the lower-middle class Dixon takes up a job at a redbrick university at a time when, in David Lodge's words, provincial universities are all "mini-Oxbridges, aping and largely staffed by graduates of the ancient universities,"[54] the émigré Pnin finds himself working at a small American liberal arts college when, according to one of the minor characters in the novel, "political trends in America discourage interest in things Russian" (*P*, 420). Thus, both of the novels are set against the larger historical background.

In addition, Nabokov's novel also deals with the protagonist's life before his arrival in America, becoming just as much a campus novel as a novel of exile. Similarly, *Lucky Jim* includes some passages that emphasize the novel's setting shortly after WWII. For instance, Jim's hard-working student Michie is an ex-service man "who'd commanded a tank troop at Anzio while Dixon was an R.A.F. corporal in Western Scotland."[55] Even though *Lucky Jim* was published in 1954 and Malcolm Bradbury called it "the exemplary Fifties novel,"[56] Amis had been working on it since the late 1940s. While there are no specific dates mentioned in the novel, the story cannot take place later than 1951, as the text mentions the Labour Party being in power. According to Lodge, "the atmosphere of the novel is that of socialist, 'austerity' Britain"[57] when young university lecturers like Jim Dixon might have to live in a lodging house.

Thus, in both texts, the universities provide no shelter from both recent and contemporary events. While Dixon finds himself at the mercy of Professor Welch, the head of the History Department who will decide whether Jim keeps his job, Pnin is looked down upon by his American colleagues. Consequently, like *Lucky Jim*, *Pnin* is a typical campus novel in that its entertaining comic tone is infiltrated by satire which highlights contemporary problems in the academic

[54] Lodge, "*Lucky Jim* Revisited," 91.
[55] Kingsley Amis, *Lucky Jim* (London: Penguin, 1992), 27. Hereafter cited in the text as *LJ*.
[56] Malcolm Bradbury, *The Modern British Novel* (London: Penguin, 1993), 320.
[57] Lodge, "*Lucky Jim* Revisited," 90.

world and beyond. Accordingly, trying to differentiate the comic from the satirical in the campus novel, Christian Gutleben distinguishes the tone of the text, meaning "the spirit in which the writer deploys his methods,"[58] and the mode of the text, referring to its final effect. While Gutleben focuses on the British campus novel, I will examine the application of this distinction to all of the texts discussed in this dissertation. Hence, this chapter argues that in both *Pnin* and *Lucky Jim*, the comic tone is used with a satirical effect.

Still, a difference between the two novels needs to be mentioned. In *Lucky Jim*, the lower-middle class Dixon either imagines comic scenes or plays jokes on the upper- middle class characters, deliberately initiating the comic situations and laughing at the upper middle class characters' social pretences and a sense of being in power all the time. In result, the comic tone is used with the effect of a satirical denunciation of the upper middle class characters, notably professor Welch and his family. Throughout Amis's novel, the reader is invited to laugh with Jim at the Welches for their pomposity and self-importance.

On the contrary, the Russian émigré Pnin cannot help finding himself in comic situations because he lacks the insight into what is going on in his new environment. As Andrew Field observes, "Pnin does have a delightful donnish sense of humor, but his conscious wit is minor indeed in comparison to the hilarious eccentricity of which he is quite unaware."[59] Consequently, as the assistant professor so often misunderstands what is happening around him, he becomes an increasingly lonely figure as well as an object of imitation at his colleagues' social gatherings. However, while Pnin's eccentricity may contribute to the comic tone of the novel, I will show that the ultimate satirical targets in the text are Pnin's confident and malicious imitators rather than the well-meaning protagonist himself.

The intricacies of the comic tone in *Lucky Jim* and *Pnin* are also closely tied to the two novels' different narrative strategies. In *Lucky Jim*, the third person narration follows Jim Dixon's point of view. Thus, much

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[58] Christian Gutleben, "English Academic Satire from the Middle Ages to Postmodernism: Distinguishing the Comic from the Satiric," in *Theorizing Satire: Essays in Literary Criticism,* ed. Brian A. Connery and Kirk Combe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 133.

[59] Andrew Field, *Nabokov. His Life in Art: A Critical Narrative* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), 131.

of the humour derives from the fact that the reader knows what is going on in Dixon's mind, even in the situations when the character's thoughts are very different from what he says aloud. For instance, during a polite conversation with Professor Welch, the reader learns that Dixon feels like "[picking] up his professor, [squeezing] the furry grey-blue waistcoat against him to expel the breath, [running] heavily with him up the steps, along the corridor to the Staff Cloakroom, and [plunging] the too-small feet in their capless shoes into a lavatory basin, pulling the plug once, twice, and again, stuffing the mouth with toilet paper" (*LJ*, 9-10). The tension between what Jim says and thinks is motivated by the fact that Professor Welch has the authority to decide whether Dixon keeps his job, and thus Jim needs to get on well with him. The absent-minded Welch, on the contrary, does not even make enough effort to remember Dixon's name, as he occasionally addresses his junior colleague by the name of Faulkner, Jim's predecessor in the position.

Besides making good impression on Professor Welch, Dixon is obliged to take responsibility for some of his superior's teaching and research duties whenever he is asked to. In effect, Welch is satirized for unscrupulously exploiting his junior colleague. Finally, out of politeness, Dixon also forces himself to accept any invitation to spend the weekend at the Welches' house outside the city. There, the Welches often organize social gatherings featuring cultural programme consisting of the following: "Part-songs. A playreading. Demonstration of some sword-dance steps. Recitations. A chamber concert" (*LJ*, 23). While Dixon considers these pastimes snobbish and obsolete, he is aware of the Professor's way of thinking: "He wants to test my reactions to culture, see whether I'm a fit person to teach in a university [...]. Nobody who can't tell a flute from a recorder can be worth hearing anything on the price of bloody cows under Edward the Third" (*LJ*, 24). In this case, the satirical effect of Dixon's joke reveals that in post-war British academia, common sense is subordinate to social pretensions and false sophistication.

At one of these social gatherings at the Welches,' Dixon secretly slips out of the house to have a few beers at a nearby public house.[60] At

[60] James F. English reads the university as an effeminate space, peopled by the self-dramatizing Professor Welch and Jim's colleague Margaret Peel, and the pub as Jim's shelter because of its

night, under the influence of alcohol, he happens to burn his hosts' bedclothes and is afraid to tell them, as he believes that from their point of view, "there was no excuse which didn't consist of the inexcusable: an incendiary was no more pardonable when revealed as a drunkard as well—so much of a drunkard, moreover, that obligations to hosts and fellow-guests and the counter-attraction of a chamber-concert were as nothing compared with the lure of the drink" (*LJ*, 62). Thus, Dixon decides to hide the damaged bedclothes and eventually does so with the help of Christine, the latest girlfriend of the Welches' son Bertrand. This moment is important for multiple reasons, as it starts Dixon's re-evaluation of Christine, whom he initially considered too reserved but now sees her as quite witty and amusing. Another comic situation ensues from this accident later when Dixon urgently needs to call Welch, but the professor's wife answers the phone. Even though Mrs. Welch immediately recognizes his voice, Dixon, in an effort to avoid her nagging him for the subject of the sheets and blankets, still manages to convince her he is a reporter from the *Evening Post:*

> 'That's Mr. Dixon, isn't it? Before I get my husband, I'd just like you to tell me, if you don't mind, what you did on the sheet and blankets on your bed when you...'
>
> He wanted to scream. His dilated eyes fell on a copy of the local paper that lay nearby. Without stopping to think, he said, distorting his voice by protruding his lips into an O: 'No, Mrs Welch, there must be some mistake. This is the *Evening Post* speaking. There's no Mr Dixon with us, I'm quite sure.'
>
> 'Oh, I'm most awfully sorry; you sounded at first just like...How ridiculous of me' (*LJ*, 98-9).

This comic scene brings about an exemplary satirical effect. While Mrs. Welch is sure she has just heard the voice of Jim Dixon, a voice she must have heard on the phone many times before, she acts against her common sense once Dixon claims that he is a reporter. In effect, the Welches are satirized for their continuous effort to attract media attention—at the last gathering,

authentic masculinity. See "Barbarism as Culturism: *Lucky Jim* and the Politics of the Campus Novel," in *Comic Transactions: Literature, Humour and the Politics of Community in Twentieth Century Britain* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 137-139.

they had people from the Third Programme and *Picture Post*. Consequently, it is the Welches who are, in Amis's words from the epigraph to this chapter, meant to be "ridiculous." The scene is also representative of many situations, both in and outside the university, in which Dixon plays jokes on the Welches to save his reputation, or rather the remains of it, in order to keep his job at the History Department. As Dale Salwak has observed, *Lucky Jim* "emulates the spirit of the picaresque novel with its episodic lurchings, its opportunistic hero, and its emphasis on satirizing various English character types."[61] Besides Professor Welch and his wife who deliberately imitate the upper class, the derided types include the bearded painter Bertrand and Dixon's emotionally unstable and rather unattractive colleague Margaret Peel.

In *Pnin*, on the contrary, the source of the comic tone is the character's lack of knowledge of the surrounding world; consequently, it would not be convenient to describe the comic scenes from the protagonist's point of view. Thus, Nabokov has chosen a different and rather complex narrative device—the novel is told from a first person point of view of a minor character that, surprisingly, has omniscient access to the other characters' minds. However, as the narrator is not present in many key scenes throughout the book, an illusion of an omniscient narrator that stays outside of the story is created at the beginning of the text. For instance, in the first chapter, the narrator describes Pnin's attitude to his environment in the following way: "He was perhaps too wary, too persistently on the lookout for diabolical pitfalls, too painfully on the alert lest his erratic surroundings (unpredictable America) inveigle him into some bit of preposterous oversight" (*P*, 305). As the narrator goes on to provide an example of this general tendency, he tells the story of Pnin's journey to Cremona, alluded to in the second epigraph to this chapter, in order to deliver a lecture to the Cremona Women's Club. First, the narrator describes the assistant professor's fears of losing the typed lecture on the way; then, he finally reveals himself as a minor character in the fictional world:

[61] Dale Salvak, "Academic Life in *Lucky Jim* and *Jake's Thing*," in *The Academic Novel: New and Classic Essays,* ed. Merritt Moseley (Chester: Chester Academic Press, 2007), 211.

> If he kept the Cremona manuscript [...] on his person, in the security of his body warmth, the chances were, theoretically, that he would forget to transfer it from the coat he was wearing to the one he would wear. On the other hand, if he placed the lecture in the pocket of the suit in the bag now, he would, he knew, be tortured by the possibility of his luggage being stolen. On the third hand (these mental states sprout additional forelimbs all the time), he carried in the inside pocket of his present coat a precious wallet with two ten-dollar bills, the newspaper clipping of a letter he had written, *with my help* [my italics], to the *New York Times* in 1945 (*P*, 307).

While the narrator discloses his close acquaintance of Pnin, for the time being, he does not provide any more detail about their relationship. Instead, he goes on with the story of Pnin who, because of his using a five year old timetable, takes a wrong train. The conductor tells Pnin to get off the train and take a bus. However, on the bus, Pnin realizes that he had left his lecture at the bus stop. He runs out of the bus, gets the lecture and is offered a ride to Cremona by a truck driver, which he gladly accepts. After this series of twists and turns, the narrator finishes the episode with the passage from the epigraph, one typical of the tone of the whole novel.

In the quoted passage, Pnin's clumsiness and lack of attention contribute to the comic tone of the text; at the same time, the reader may side with the endearingly absent-minded protagonist rather than with the malicious narrator. In other situations throughout the novel, the comic tone stems from Pnin's Russian cultural heritage which is often incompatible with American lifestyle. Even though Pnin has found a respectable, if insecure, job in academia, he has never got used to the way of life in the New World. For instance, shortly after his arrival in the United States, Pnin "was greatly embarrassed by the ease with which first names were bandied about in America," remembering at least sixty of his close Russian friends whom he had known since 1920 and "whom he never called anything but Vadim Vadimich, Ivan Hristoforovich, or Samuil Izrailevich, as the case might be, and who called him by his name and patronymic with the same effusive sympathy" (*P*, 372). In the same vein, while Americans would think of

themselves as friendly, Pnin often finds them too "inquisitive" (*P*, 320), which results in his changing his lodging about every semester.

While the passages quoted above point out some larger cultural differences between Russia and the United States, Pnin's limitations in his use of the English language bring about additional comic misunderstandings. As the narrator sums it up, "if his Russian was music, his English was murder" (*P*, 343). Throughout the book, several examples of Pnin's mispronunciations are presented. For instance, he addresses Joan Clements, the wife of a professor at the Philosophy Department, as "John" (*P*, 339), or he calls the librarian Mrs. Thayer "Mrs. Fire" (*P*, 349).

However, while there clearly is a degree of incompetence in Pnin's usage of English, the professor is portrayed as a dedicated scholar who enjoys teaching. In fact, it is when he is working at the university library, collecting material for writing a *Petite Histoire* of Russian culture, that he realizes he is "lucky to be at Waindell" (*P*, 351). Thus, Kenneth Womack rightly observes that "frustrated by such language barriers, Pnin attempts to communicate with his peers using the only means at his disposal, the international parlance of scholarship."[62] Unlike Amis's Jim Dixon who has famously observed that "we all specialize in what we hate most" (*LJ*, 33-4) as he admits to becoming a medievalist only because it was "a soft option in the Leicester course" (*LJ*, 33), Pnin is a scholar really absorbed in his subject, a teacher of Russian language who takes "every opportunity to guide his students on literary and historical tours" (*P*, 345).

In spite of being a sound scholar and enthusiastic teacher, Pnin is not well-regarded by most of the other professors at Waindell. In contrast, distinguished professors of foreign languages are characterized by the narrator as incompetent in their subjects. For instance, a grammar textbook that Pnin uses in his classes was authored by the head of a Slavic Department in a "far greater college than Waindell, a venerable fraud whose Russian was a joke but who would generously lend his dignified name to the products of anonymous drudgery" (*P*, 303). Similarly, Leonard Blorenge, the chair of the French Department at Waindell, speaks no French, dislikes literature and is

[62] Kenneth Womack, *Postwar Academic Fiction: Satire, Ethics, Community* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 48.

believed to be the basis for "a legendary figure, the Chairman of French, who thought Chateaubriand was a famous chef" (*P*, 323). Nevertheless, Blorenge holds a highly condescending view of Pnin and after meeting him socially, he declares that he "'definitely felt' that Pnin was not fit even to loiter in the vicinity of an American college" (*P*, 399). Likewise, Jack Cockerell, the chair of the English Department, "[considers] Pnin a joke" (*P*, 397) and is recognized as one of the Russian professor's best imitators.

Thus, as Samuel Schuman has rightly observed, "not everything about Waindell is funny, however: much is cruel."[63] With respect to this observation, a difference between *Lucky Jim* and *Pnin* needs to be addressed. Throughout Amis's novel, Dixon's jokes highlight the Welches' pomposity and self-importance, encouraging the reader to laugh at the professor and his family. On the contrary, in Nabokov's text, the narrator first bids the reader to laugh at Pnin's clumsiness and eccentricity, only gradually revealing the Waindell faculty members' cruelty and incompetence which tempt the reader to identify with the protagonist over his colleagues. Of course, it is Pnin's confident but inept colleagues rather than the well-meaning protagonist himself that represent the faults in academia. Thus, while in *Lucky Jim*, the target of satire is introduced at the very beginning of the text, in *Pnin*, the ultimate satirical target is not revealed until later in the narrative.

The only professor who has respected Pnin since his arrival at Waindell and treated him as a friend is Herman Hagen, the head of the German Department whose Comparative Literature section employs Pnin. The only other academic who has gradually found his way to Pnin is Laurence G. Clements from the Philosophy Department at whose house Pnin lived for some time after Clements' daughter had moved from home. While Clements' initial reaction to the possibility of Pnin's staying at his place was the exclamation "I flatly refuse to have that freak in my house!" (*P*, 319) delivered to his wife, incidentally, the two men were brought together by their scholarly interests: "A chance reference to a rare author, a

[63] Samuel Schuman, "'I May Turn Up Yet, on Another Campus:' Vladimir Nabokov and the Academy," in *The Academic Novel: New and Classic Essays,* ed. Merritt Moseley (Chester: Chester Academic Press, 2007), 173.

passing allusion tacitly recognized in the middle distance of an idea, […] an adventurous sail descried on the horizon led insensibly to a tender mental concord between the two men, both of whom were really at ease only in their warm world of natural scholarship" (*P*, 325). Not surprisingly, because of his hard work, Clements is considered both "the most original and least liked scholar on the Waindell campus" (*P*, 410).

Significantly, Jim Dixon may share Pnin's view of teaching, but has a very different opinion on scholarship. Towards the end of the novel, in a conversation with Gore-Urquhart, an antiquities collector, Dixon makes clear that "well taught and sensibly taught, history could do people a hell of a lot of good. But in practice it doesn't work out like that. Things get in the way. I don't quite see who's to blame for it. Bad teaching's the main thing. Not bad students, I mean" (*LJ*, 214). Thus, Dixon believes in the importance of teaching, but cannot find any professor whom he could consider a model teacher. From the very beginning of the novel, Dixon finds himself wondering "how had [Welch] become Professor of History, even at a place like this? By published work? No. By extra good teaching? No in italics" (*LJ*, 8). This description of Welch as both a mediocre teacher and scholar contrasts sharply with Welch's "set[ting] such store by being called Professor" (*LJ*, 7). While Welch's insistence on being addressed by his academic degree seems a huge leap from the wide-spread informal form of address in Nabokov's Waindell, the difference is only superficial, as senior academics in both *Lucky Jim* and *Pnin* are satirized for being rather incompetent, but pompous and self-important.

Unlike Pnin, Dixon is highly sceptical of the quality of his own research which he only produces to keep his job. For most of the novel, Jim tries to get his article, titled "The Economic Influence of the Developments in Shipbuilding Techniques, 1450 to 1485," published in some of the historical journals; yet, in spite of this effort, he famously characterizes his method of scholarship as "[throwing] pseudo-light upon non-problems" (*LJ*, 14). Trying to summarize his article to Welch, Dixon feels that he "had read, or begun to read, dozens like it, but his own seemed worse than most in its air of being convinced of its own usefulness and significance. 'In considering this strangely neglected topic,' it

began. This what neglected topic? This strangely what topic? This strangely neglected what?" (*LJ*, 14-15). As this is probably the most well-known scene from the novel, Elaine Showalter adds that the phrase "this strangely neglected topic" has become "self-mocking academic shorthand for any contrived, tedious, irrelevant piece of obscure pedantry we feel compelled to produce."[64]

However, in spite of all his dissatisfaction, Dixon is unable to come up with an idea of a job he could get outside academia: "What would he do afterwards? Teach in a school? Oh dear no. Go to London and get a job in an office? What job? Whose office? Shut up" (*LJ*, 170). Commenting on Jim's position, Ian Carter argues that "no young scientist of any talent would feel that he isn't wanted or that his work is ridiculous, [...] and some of the disgruntlement of Amis and his associates is the disgruntlement of the underemployed arts graduate."[65] Although *Lucky Jim* mainly addresses the situation in post-war Britain when all the jobs had already been taken by the upper classes, the lack of job opportunities in the humanities is a recurring topic in the British campus novel.

While Dixon mostly perceives the university as an old-fashioned and stuffy place, he is not completely immune to the idealization of Oxbridge. When walking with Welch towards the main building of the College, it crosses Jim's mind that the two of them "might well be talking about history, and in the way history might be talked about in Oxford and Cambridge quadrangles. At moments like this Dixon came near to wishing they really were" (*LJ*, 8). Thus, in spite of his rebellious nature, Dixon seems to have an idealized vision of the university which his own personal experience does not live up to. In addition, sometimes he painfully realizes that his education and academic career has separated him from his lower middle class background. Sitting in a bar with Margaret, Jim observes the barmaid and cannot help thinking about "how much he liked her and had in common with her, and how much she'd like and have in common with him if she only knew him" (*LJ*, 25). Interestingly, whereas Pnin can occasionally escape to the Pines, a coterie of Russian expatriate intellectuals

[64] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 32.
[65] Carter, *Ancient Cultures of Conceit*, 130.

where he feels at ease while drinking tea and discussing *Anna Karenina*, Dixon finds it rather hard to fit in any environment.

Only once in his academic career does Dixon experience a momentary satisfaction after he is promised the publication of his article "in due course" (*LJ*, 30) by some L. S. Caton who advertises in the *Times Literary Supplement* that he is going to start "a new historical review with an international bias" (*LJ*, 14). However, by the end of the novel, Jim loses all of his illusions about academia when he finds a close paraphrase or a translation of his own article published under the name of L. S. Caton in the journal of some Italian historical society. After this discovery of unethical behaviour in academia, Dixon's loss of his job at the university at the end of the novel seems like a rescue. Thus, Janice Rossen is right to point out that "many of the best university novels are about someone leaving academe at the end of the book."[66]

However, first, Dixon has to give his public lecture on "Merrie England," another task Welch assigned to him. It is at the reception before the lecture that Jim talks to the rich Gore-Urquhart, and apparently impresses him greatly with his sincerity. Gore-Urquhart is neither affiliated with the university nor interested in the lecture; like Dixon's, his presence there results from an obligation dictated by politeness, as he does not want to offend the dean by rejecting another of his invitation. Listening to the uninteresting conversation between Welch and the dean, Gore-Urquhart asks Jim, with a hint of sympathy, how long has he himself participated in university life. Encouraged by Gore-Urquhart's understanding, Dixon explains to him his insecure position at the university. Having had some whisky before with a friend, and some sherry at the reception, Jim eventually forgets he is talking to Gore-Urquhart and expresses openly his wish: "If only I could get hold of a millionaire I'd be worth a bag of money to him. He could send me on ahead into dinners and cocktail parties and night-clubs, just for five minutes, and then by looking at me he'd be able to read off the boredom-coefficient of any gathering" (*LJ*,

[66] Janice Rossen, *The University in Modern Fiction: When Power Is Academic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 188.

215). Hearing that, Gore-Urquhart stays amused and sympathetic rather than shocked or offended.

Later on, during his drunken lecture, Dixon becomes similarly vocal about his feelings. Standing in front of his audience, he decides that "if this was going to be his last public appearance here, he'd see to it that people didn't forget it in a hurry" (*LJ*, 225). Thus, Jim adopts a sarcastic tone: "Nobody outside a madhouse, he tried to imply, could take seriously a single phrase of this conjectural, nugatory, deluded, tedious rubbish" (*LJ*, 226). Consequently, unlike for most of the novel, Dixon finally says aloud what he means, and is rewarded for shedding of his mask of hypocrisy, as Gore-Urquhart offers him the post of his secretary. To top Jim's success, because of him, Christine has just broken up with the possessive Bertrand. In the final scene, Jim and Christine are walking away from the Welches who, because of their shock to see Dixon and Christina together, have once again become subjects of ridicule. Thus, *Lucky Jim* can be seen as a comic text not just because it uses humour, but also because it tends towards a happy ending for the protagonist.[67]

Unlike Amis, Nabokov avoids such an explicitly happy ending; the moment he comes closest to it occurs in one of the retrospective passages that retell Pnin's life before his arrival in America. Around 1925, while living in Paris, Pnin marries Liza Bogolepov, a medical student interested in psychiatry and a would-be poet. However, the idealistic Pnin is not aware that Liza accepted his proposal when she was "recovering from a pharmacopoeial attempt at suicide because of a rather silly affair with a littérateur" (*P*, 328) and partly because of an advice from her analyst friends who recommend a marriage to speed up her recovery. In December 1938, Liza telephones Pnin that she is leaving him for a man who understands her "organic ego" (*P*, 329), a Dr. Eric Wind. However, in April 1940, when Pnin is getting ready to emigrate to America, Liza suddenly appears, pregnant, at his apartment. For Pnin, their ensuing preparations to move to the New World "had a rich fairy-tale tinge" (*P*, 330). Unfortunately, Dr. Wind follows them on the ship and Liza chooses him over Pnin once

[67] See e.g. Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 40.

again. The only time she visits Pnin after that is to ask him for some money for her son's schooling.

In spite of this troubled history, Pnin is in love with Liza even at Waindell. During his career, he never has any relationship; as there are no women on the faculty, the only female on campus that he is somewhat attracted to is Betty Bliss, "a plump maternal girl of some twenty-nine summers" (*P*, 326) and a graduate student in comparative literature. However, Pnin's attraction to Betty resembles a longing for a friendly companionship rather than a passionate relationship: "In trying to visualize a serene senility, he saw [Betty] with passable clarity bringing him his lap robe or refilling his fountain pen. He liked her all right—but his heart belonged to another woman" (*P*, 327). Thus, both *Lucky Jim* and *Pnin* do not feature any female character from the academic world that the protagonist would be really attracted to. However, Jim's and Pnin's lovers could hardly be more different. Whereas Womack aptly observes that through Christine who works at a London bookshop and "his ethical re-evaluation of her, Dixon finally realizes the possibilities of a new life outside of the university,"[68] Liza only torments Pnin. In fact, the only quality Liza shares with Christine is good looks; her unstable personality makes her rather similar to Margaret Peel who tries to pressure Jim into a romantic relationship before he starts dating Christine.

Thus, Elaine Showalter is right that while the presence of women on the faculty makes *Lucky Jim* seem more contemporary, the female characters are "pretty dreadful."[69] Margaret is first described as "small, thin and bespectacled" (*LJ*, 18); throughout the novel, she attempts to dress extravagantly and wears too much makeup in an effort to attract Jim's attention. While she tries to talk Jim into going out with her by emotional blackmail, Dixon is clear about his view of her: "Whatever passably decent treatment Margaret had had from him was the result of a temporary victory of fear over irritation and/or pity over boredom" (*LJ*, 111). In a particularly hostile passage, Jim even compares Margaret to "a man with an unintelligible accent and service glasses whom he'd known by sight in the

[68] Womack, *Postwar Academic Fiction*, 39.
[69] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 30.

R.A.F. and had never seen doing anything except sweeping out the N.A.A.F.I. and wiping his nose on his sleeve" (*LJ*, 154). Amis tries to make the reader even less sympathetic towards Margaret by introducing the character of Catchpole, whom she was dating while occasionally going out with Dixon. After Jim finally breaks up with her, he regrets that "she wasn't better-looking, that she didn't read the articles in the three-halfpenny Press that told you which colour lipstick went with which natural colouring" (*LJ*, 163).

Probably the only positive character features of Margaret's are meant to be her honesty and generosity, as she once admits to Jim before they break up: "You'd have much more fun with [Christine] than you ever had with me" (*LJ*, 186). Thus, critics have rightly accused Amis of portraying Margaret in a rather schematic way. In addition, no attractive female faculty member occurs in the text, the only choices left for Dixon's friend Beesley at the annual College Ball being "the sexagenarian Professor of Philosophy or the fifteen-stone Senior Lecturer in Economics" (*LJ*, 107). Consequently, Amis's presentation of the female faculty members makes Jim's departure from the university even more of a release.

Like Dixon, Pnin also does not keep his job at the university until the end of the novel, but his departure is far from triumphant. It is Pnin's misfortune that once Herman Hagen is offered a "delightfully lucrative professorship at Seaboard, a far more important university than Waindell" (*P*, 397), the protagonist loses his benefactor, as the other most influential member of the German Department has never got on well with Pnin. Hagen tries to get Pnin a job at the English Department, but does not succeed, as at that time, Jack Cockerell is "unofficially but hopefully haggling for the services of a prominent Anglo-Russian writer who, if necessary, could teach all the courses that Pnin must keep in order to survive" (*P*, 397-98). When this writer accepts the offer, it is revealed, in a brilliant twist, that he equals both the narrator and Nabokov the author.[70]

[70] Andrew Field has noted that a reference to an Anglo-Russian novelist who is coming to teach at Waindell and to an entomologist whose name and patronymic are Vladimir Vladimirovich strongly suggest that the narrator is Nabokov. See *Nabokov. His Life in Art*, 135.

Calling himself Pnin's friend, the narrator writes to Pnin to tell him he would let him work at Waindell under him, but the assistant professor refuses, saying that he has to leave town before the narrator's arrival. In the last chapter of the novel, the narrator finally provides the history of his relationship to Pnin, implying that the previously mentioned "littérateur" Liza had an affair with before her suicide attempt was in fact him, which explains Pnin's refusal to cooperate with him. The final scene shows *Pnin* driving away from Waindell, unsure "what miracle might happen" (*P*, 435). Thus, the reader is left speculating about what awaits the assistant professor in the future. However, in his later novel, *Pale Fire* (1962), Nabokov briefly mentions that Pnin now has a new job as chairman of the Russian Department at Wordsmith College.[71] Overall, because of its narrative technique, *Pnin* is a novel which rewards rereading, as every detail matters. Thus, from the solely formal point of view, while *Lucky Jim*, a novel associated with the neorealist 1950s in Britain and the Angry Young Men, presents a rather straightforward narrative, *Pnin* is a representative work of one of the major postmodern writers.

Although the somewhat unlikely happy ending of *Lucky Jim* and the open ending of *Pnin* could be simply seen as resulting from different authorial strategies, they can also be explained as reflecting generic conventions. As Brian A. Connery and Kirk Combe have observed, "satire tends towards open-endedness, irresolution, and thus chaos. Closure, in most cases, would turn a narrative satire into either comedy or tragedy and thus contradict the satirist's representation of evil as a present and continuing danger."[72] Thus, the different endings of the two novels stem from their unequal reliance on the satirical mode.

While *Lucky Jim* eventually tends towards the happy ending associated with the comic tradition, *Pnin* resists closure, and thus foregrounds the satirical mode of the text. In result, the closure of *Lucky Jim* diminishes the urgency of the call for reform, as it suggests that people like Professor Welch may not be as powerful and influential as they may think. In the future, similar affirmative

[71] See Vladimir Nabokov, *Pale Fire*, in *Novels 1955-1962* (New York: Library of America, 2010), 549.
[72] Brian A. Connery and Kirk Combe, "Theorizing Satire: A Retrospective and Introduction," in *Theorizing Satire: Essays in Literary Criticism*, ed. Brian A. Connery and Kirk Combe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 5.

endings will become typical of the light-heartedly comic British campus novel. On the contrary, Nabokov's novel shows no movement towards change. While a provincial American college may gladly employ a recognized Anglo-Russian writer, its faculty remain condescending in their view of a slightly eccentric Russian immigrant instructor. Thus, the reform appears necessary, but seems hard to be put into practice. Perhaps Nabokov felt the need to lighten the dark ending of the novel, inserting a brief mention of Pnin's new employment into *Pale Fire* five years later. However, if read by itself, *Pnin* lacks the affirmative ending of *Lucky Jim*, and so do many later American campus novels.

The link between the two Nabokov's novels is also associated with intertextuality, another characteristic feature of the campus novel. *Pnin* is thus interspersed with numerous allusions reflecting, in particular, Nabokov's knowledge of Russian literature and culture. As Andrew Field notes, even the title of the novel itself (and the protagonist's surname) is taken from the name of the 18th century Russian poet Ivan Pnin, the illegitimate son of Prince Repnin. Field further explains that "at that time such truncated names were quite common for the bastard offspring of noblemen—and [Ivan Pnin's] most famous work, *The Wail of Innocence*, is a passionate protest against his position as 'half a person' in the eyes of society."[73] Thus, one can see some parallels here with Timofey Pnin's position as an outsider at Waindell.

Other intertextual references add to the satirical effect of the novel; for instance, one of the three students that signed up for Pnin's course in Elementary Russian in Fall 1950 is the "languid Eileen Lane, whom somebody had told that by the time one had mastered the Russian alphabet one could practically read 'Anna Karamazov' in the original" (*P*, 303). More surprisingly, not only the students are ignorant about Russian literature, as even the President of Waindell College good-intentionally talks of Russia as "the country of Tolstoy, Stanislavski, Raskolnikov, and other great and good men" (*P*, 395). Nabokov thus seems to suggest that while Pnin's lack of knowledge of the American culture makes him a target of his colleagues' jokes, the Americans are not even aware of the gaps in their

[73] Field, *Nabokov. His Life in Art*, 139.

knowledge of Russian culture. Yet other allusions go beyond the sphere of Russian literature to outline the contemporary modes of literary criticism in Fall 1954: “Hard-working graduates, with pregnant wives, still wrote dissertations on Dostoevski and Simone de Beauvoir. Literary departments still laboured under the impression that Stendhal, Galsworthy, Dreiser and Mann were great writers. Word plastics like ‘conflict’ and ‘pattern’ were still in vogue” (*P*, 396). Thus, even though *Pnin* is not primarily set in an English Department as many later campus novels, it provides a good picture of the situation in literary studies at the time.

While intertextuality is not often identified as a technique popular with the Angry Young Men, *Lucky Jim* does contain several oblique instances of this feature. For instance, thinking of what he feels like doing to Bertrand Welch, Dixon recalls “a sentence from a book he’d once read: ‘And with that he picked up the bloody old towser by the scruff of the neck, and, by Jesus, he near throttled him’” (*LJ*, 50). The quotation comes from Joyce’s *Ulysses*, but the text of *Lucky Jim* does not provide this information. The fact that Jim will never admit, even to himself, to remembering the names of the books that he has read, reflects Dixon’s refusal to boast of his familiarity with authors associated with high culture. Again, this quality only increases the gap between Jim and the snobbish and pretentious academic environment.

In conclusion, as I have tried to show, both *Lucky Jim* and *Pnin* portray untenured lecturers who find it hard to fit in provincial universities, either because of their class or nationality. The novels share a comic tone which derives primarily from situational humour, but its effect is that of satire directed at senior academics. In *Lucky Jim*, the British lower-middle class Dixon imagines comic situations and plays jokes on the upper middle class Professor Welch and his family, as humour is the only weapon he can use against them. In effect, the reader is invited to laugh with Jim at the Welches for their pomposity and self-importance. In Nabokov’s text, the Russian émigré Pnin finds himself in comic situations because of his lack of knowledge of the American culture and vernacular and is ridiculed by his colleagues for his ignorance and eccentricity. As the Waindell faculty members are revealed as malicious and disrespectful, the reader is tempted to identify with the struggling

protagonist. Moreover, besides acting in an arrogant way toward their younger and untenured colleagues, senior academics in both novels are portrayed as mediocre scholars and teachers.

However, whereas the serendipitous happy ending of *Lucky Jim* highlights the comic element of Amis's novel, *Pnin*'s resistance towards closure foregrounds the satirical mode of Nabokov's text. Thus, as the lower-middle class Dixon leaves academia for a better paid job elsewhere, the ending of Amis's novel suggests a decrease of power and influence of the upper middle classes in post-war British society. Nabokov's novel, on the contrary, provides no hint that the faculty of a provincial American college will improve their behaviour towards marginalized immigrants, leaving the portrayal of academia as faulty as at the beginning of the text. Importantly, a pattern of difference has been established here between the more light-hearted British campus novel and its darker American counterpart. Finally, while both of the novels portray teaching, scholarship, and socializing within academia, themes such as academic politics and struggles for power within the university remain to be pictured in more detail in the campus novels of the following decades.

3. The 1960s, Transatlantic Voyages and Quests to the West: Malcolm Bradbury's *Stepping Westward* and Bernard Malamud's *A New Life*

We don't pretend to be anything more than a typical American state college. The atmosphere is relaxed. There's no 'publish or perish' hanging over everybody's head. There are no geniuses around to make you feel uncomfortable. Life is peaceful here.
—Bernard Malamud, *A New Life*

My friend, universities are not better than life. They are just life. It is not you and I who make them what they are. It is the students, and the administration, and the computer, and the alumni, and the football team. Universities are places where people go to get acquainted with one another.
—Malcolm Bradbury, *Stepping Westward*

As Elaine Showalter notes in *Faculty Towers*, the novel is always a belated form of social commentary: "Just as the academic novel of the '50s was really about the disruptive postwar generation of the '40s, the books that came out in the '60s looked back to the previous more placid decade."[74] Thus, rather than portraying the student unrest of the 1960s, campus novels written in that decade still reflect the McCarthy era of the 1950s.[75] Also, as two representative texts, Bernard Malamud's (1914-1986) *A New Life* (1961) and Malcolm Bradbury's (1932-2000) *Stepping Westward* (1965), illustrate, the setting of the novels is becoming more diverse than in the 1950s, moving from humanities departments at liberal arts colleges to English departments at land grant universities. In addition, both of the texts are set in the American West, an area previously unknown to their protagonists, Malamud's urban Easterner Sy Levin and Bradbury's James Walker, a writer from Nottingham who accepts a one year creative writing job in the United States. Thus, both of the main characters find themselves in the position of an outsider, like Kingsley Amis's Jim Dixon or Vladimir Nabokov's Timofey Pnin. In their new environments, they have to face not

[74] Elaine Showalter, *Faculty Towers*: *The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 42.
[75] I am deliberately leaving out of my analysis John Williams's 1965 novel *Stoner* which has enjoyed a new wave of interest after being reissued in 2003, as it is set at a Midwestern university before rather than after WWII.

only the usual responsibilities associated with teaching, but also some larger academic policies and controversies. As the novels share their setting and themes and *A New Life* predates *Stepping Westward* by four years, Robert Morace has observed that "in part it is Malamud's Jewish American story that hides in Bradbury's Anglo-liberal novel."[76]

The tone of *A New Life* is set by its opening sentence: "S. Levin, formerly a drunkard, after a long and tiring transcontinental journey, got off the train at Marathon, Cascadia, toward evening of the last Sunday in August, 1950."[77] Thus, the following chapters tell the story of Levin, a single thirty-year-old New Yorker who has just moved to the fictional town of Easchester, Cascadia, to teach at the local land grant institution, Cascadia College. As evident from the quote, the only piece of information the reader gets about the protagonist's past at the beginning of the text is that he got over a drinking problem. Then, the narrator quickly moves on to describe Levin's meeting with Gerald Gilley, a member of the English Department, at the station; all of Levin's personal history is only to be revealed in retrospective passages and dialogues. As Leslie Fiedler observes, *A New Life* is "an account of the most absurd and touching of all the waves of migration from East to West: the migration of certain upwardly mobile, urban, Eastern young academics, chiefly Jews, into remote small-town State Universities, Cow Colleges, and Schools of Education."[78] While Levin's Jewishness is played down throughout the text, the rest of the sentence catches the essence of the novel.

Bernard Malamud himself taught at Oregon State University for twelve years, starting in 1949, and while he admitted to not having consciously written an academic novel, he described the creation of *A New Life* as the "simple act of writing a novel out of my experience."[79]

[76] Robert A. Morace, *The Dialogic Novels of Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 44.

[77] Bernard Malamud, *A New Life* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Cudahy, 1961), 3. Hereafter cited in the text as *NL.*

[78] Leslie Fiedler, "The Many Names of S. Levin: An Essay in Genre Criticism," in *The Fiction of Bernard Malamud*, ed. Richard Astro and Jackson J. Benson (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1977), 155.

[79] See "An Interview with Bernard Malamud," in *Bernard Malamud: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Leslie A. Field and Joyce W. Field (1975), qtd. in James M. Mellard, "Academia and the Wasteland: Bernard Malamud's *A New Life* and his Views of the

Accordingly, James M. Mellard may be right to suggest that in *A New Life*, Malamud achieves "more than [the campus novel] itself guarantees, as he works into it the elements of pastoral long identified with his fiction."[80] As I have mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, the pastoral tone is associated with the fictional representation of academia before rather than after 1945. On the contrary, as I explained in the first chapter, later campus novels which I am focusing on usually employ a comic tone with a satirical effect in order to highlight the faults in academia. In *Lucky Jim*, a representative modern campus novel, the decidedly comic tone is established in the opening scene, as Dixon tries to keep a polite conversation with Professor Welch even though he admits that he would prefer to stuff the conceited professor's mouth with toilet paper. Gradually, Welch's self-importance is revealed to be the ultimate satirical target in the text.

The opening of Malamud's novel, however, defies this characteristic. Rather than strictly following the generic rules of the post-war campus novel, the tone of Malamud's novel occasionally appears to revive the earlier pre-World War II tradition which portrayed the university as an enclosed pastoral world. In fact, it is because a small agricultural college seems so remote from his previous experience in New York that Sy Levin decides to move there in search of a new life. Only gradually, as he becomes disillusioned with local academia, does satire begin to come to the surface. Thus, the novel often oscillates between idealization and satire, as it comments on the complexities of academic life.

Malcolm Bradbury's *Stepping Westward* offers a seemingly similar scenario by featuring James Walker, a writer associated, rather against his will, with the Angry Young Men movement, on his first voyage to the American West and the fictional Benedict Arnold University in the small town of Party. According to the author, *Stepping Westward* also illustrates a certain migratory pattern, that of the post-war "Sabbatical Generation, the brand-new breed of scholars, students, critics, journalists, poets and novelists who used to gather on each side of the Atlantic every late summer to exchange themselves for their counterparts on the other, passing

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University," in *The American Writer and the University*, ed. Ben Siegel (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), 66.

[80] Mellard, "Academia and the Wasteland," 54.

each other in midatlantic."[81] While Bradbury was employed at several British universities, he also briefly taught at Indiana University in the 1950s. However, the novel opens with a device typical of the British campus novel, a note denying any correspondence between its story and real life, claiming, among other things, that "the university where part of the action takes place is much too improbable to resemble any existing institution."[82] While Benedict Arnold University is named after Benedict Arnold, an American general who defected to the British side in the American revolutionary war, only its architecture may remind the reader of Britain, as the Student Union is a "direct imitation of King's College Chapel, Cambridge" (*SW*, 11).

Yet, as the reader might expect from a traditionally light-hearted British campus novel, Bradbury's protagonist is, unlike Malamud's Levin, really looking for a one year diversion rather than a new beginning. The opening scene of the novel reveals that Walker was chosen for the creative writing fellowship by Bernard Froelich, a liberal member of the English Department who hopes that the Brit will be a "rebel" who is "likely enough to cause confusion" (*SW*, 25) among the still waters of the predominantly conservative department. Robert Morace perceptively notes that "in Bernard Froelich we find more than a merely acronymic echo of Benjamin Franlin, patron saint of pragmatism and self-advancement, cut-free, however, from Franklin's interest in social meliorism."[83] Accordingly, Froehlich's motivation to bring Walker is to increase his own influence within the department.

Contrary to Froelich's expectations, Walker is a henpecked husband and father of a rather disobedient seven-year-old daughter, excited about but also afraid of what awaits him in America.[84] To illustrate the different authorial treatment of the protagonists of the two novels, the following short extracts from both texts may prove useful. Malamud writes that Levin "had dragged through the past a weight of shame and sense of exclusion from normal life, engineered by his father, Harry the goniff, misfit turned thief"

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[81] Malcolm Bradbury, *Dangerous Pilgrimages: Trans-Atlantic Mythologies and the Novel* (London: Penguin, 1996), 455.
[82] Malcolm Bradbury, *Stepping Westward* (London: Arena, 1984), 6. Hereafter cited in the text as *SW*.
[83] Morace, *The Dialogic Novels of Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge*, 51-52.
[84] In *All Dressed Up and Nowhere to Go* (1962), Bradbury characterized himself in the 1950s, when travelling to the United States, as a "niggling [...] uneasy figure, struggling about [his] Englishness, fighting to get out." Qtd. in Morace, *The Dialogic Novels*, 45.

(*NL*, 229), reading being the protagonist's "only occasional relief" (*NL*, 201). Walker, on the contrary, is described as "a stout, slightly thyroidic, very shambling person in his early thirties" (*SW*, 31), so that "only literacy and indignation kept him alive" (*SW*, 33). The occasionally more serious tone of *A New Life*, incompatible with the comic tone of *Stepping Westward*, is striking. However, as I will show in the rest of this chapter, both novels satirize provincial American universities where liberal arts programmes are marginalized and liberal views are held by a small minority.

Unlike Malamud, Bradbury provides a chronological account of the main character's experience. On the boat from England to New York, Walker is strongly attracted to Julie Snowflake, a self-confident and good-looking English major at Hillesley, a prestigious girls' college which aims to produce wives for Ivy League graduates. However, Walker is too kind to reject the attention and company of Miss Marrow, an unimpressive thirty-year-old British virgin who is moving to America to become a secretary. This fact suggests a lot about Walker, hesitant to do what he would like to because of politeness or habit. Not surprisingly, as Froelich picks him up at the station, he is somewhat disappointed by the writer's timidity, and resolves to try even harder to make the most of Walker's presence in order to pursue his goals.

At this point, a difference in the two novels' narrative technique needs to be mentioned. *A New Life* follows Levin's point of view, inviting the reader to sympathize with the protagonist. The other characters, all shown only from the outside, gradually become satirized for their small town behaviour and a strictly utilitarian attitude to higher education. In *Stepping Westward*, on the other hand, the narrator has access to the thoughts of both Walker and Froelich. However, rather than eliciting the reader's empathy, this device serves to highlight those qualities that make both characters the targets of satire. In the case of Walker, the reader is invited to laugh at the writer's fear and lack of self-confidence: "Miss Marrow's prim Anglicanism only faintly extended beyond his own uncertainty in the new world he had entered. Could he bear it? Could he grow to it?" (*SW*, 146). In the case of Froelich, the reader is encouraged to criticize the professor's manipulations and laugh at his disrupted

expectations: “Froelich […] was more than ever curious about the principle of Walker’s anger. He knew it as a critic, observed it in the books, but where did it lie in the man? What kind of turmoil was he going to cause in the department? How would he fill out the role Froelich had designed for him?” (*SW*, 189-90). This narrative device, however, does not mean that the satire is restricted to Walker and Froelich; as I will show, it applies, to various extent, to all the characters in the novel.

In *A New Life*, the text also reveals much later that Levin was brought to the university thanks to the first member of the department whom he met, as Gerald Gilley chose him because his wife, Pauline, liked the photograph attached to Levin’s curriculum vitae. In both texts, the protagonists eventually confront the men who are responsible for their presence at the respective universities. Importantly, just like Cascadia and Benedict Arnold represent rather provincial universities, Levin and Walker are academic everymen rather than academic stars. Levin has recently got his M.A. and has no experience with college teaching; Walker is a British writer, somewhat unrecognized in his own country, who has only worked as a part-time lecturer at an adult education centre. While they are grateful for the chance they get, their opinions on politics and education eventually result in their conflicts with other representatives of the respective universities.

Shortly after his arrival, Levin is disappointed by Cascadia’s illiberal curriculum and general atmosphere, as he learns that the College President, Marion Labhart, has reportedly once declared that “Plato, Shelley and Emerson have done more harm than good to society” (*NL*, 288). Therefore, Labhart is satirized for denouncing the European as well as American philosophical tradition, both of which he probably knows very little about. Having been assigned courses in composition and “remedial grammar” (*NL*, 21), Levin regrets that he is not going to teach any literature during his one year appointment.[85] He cannot but find *The Elements of Grammar*, a

[85] As Malamud did not have a Ph.D., he was also only assigned to teach freshman grammar and technical report writing at Oregon State. In his own words, he only started teaching literature after “the two gentlemen who administered the English department had heard I was acquiring a small reputation as a serious writer of fiction.” See Bernard Malamud, “Reflections of a Writer: Long Work, Short Life,” *New York Times Book*

required text written by Oliver Fairchild, the elderly head of the department, "deadening" (*NL*, 103).

When Levin laments the lack of liberal arts programmes at the university, arguing that "democracy owes its existence to the liberal arts" (*NL*, 27), Gilley, the head of the composition programme, only retorts: "Cascadia is a conservative state, and we usually take a long look around before we commit ourselves to any important changes in the way of life. You might keep in mind that education for an agrarian society, which is what we are—the majority of our state legislators come from rural areas—is basically a 'how to work' education" (*NL*, 29). As Gilley plays golf with Labhart and gets on very well with Fairchild and many of his colleagues who hold similar opinions, he is also the most likely candidate to become the next head of the department. Thus, Cascadia College is satirized not only for a strictly utilitarian conception of education which makes the English Department a service department, but also for its provincial atmosphere where a friendly relationship with the College President may be a decisive factor in getting a promotion.

The only other candidate for department head is C. D. Fabrikant, the department's best scholar with a Ph.D. from Harvard and supposedly liberal views. Thus, by means of Fabrikant's alma mater, Malamud may be implicitly referring to *General Education in a Free Society*, a book produced by a group of Harvard professors in 1945. This text, also referred to as the Redbook, argued that the goal of education was the cultivation of the "whole man," and charged the humanities, in Geoffrey Galt Harpham's words, with "inculcating an inspiring sense of the breadth, depth, and variety of human achievement."[86] However, while Fabrikant supposedly holds these very views, he does not appear to have enough supporters at the department. Whenever Gilley criticizes Fabrikant, who devotes a lot of time to scholarship, for being "a bit of a hermit" (*NL*, 34), no department member seems to disagree with him.

While Gilley is initially warm towards Levin, their disagreements gradually set them apart from one another. At first glance, the atmosphere

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Review, March 20, 1988, 15, accessed August 14, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/09/28/reviews/malamud-reflections.html.

[86] Geoffrey Galt Harpham, "Finding Ourselves: The Humanities as a Discipline," *American Literary History* 25, no. 3 (2013), 516.

at the department seems friendly, as the faculty meet at parties and potlucks, some go fishing or to the college sports together. However, Levin finds himself increasingly isolated because of what is going on under the surface: “How could they have lived so long with the *Elements* and the damned d.o., to say nothing of how Fairchild and Gilley, seemingly equalitarian, autocratically ran things?” (*NL*, 270). Additional events pile up to deepen the gap between Levin and Gilley. First, Gilley agrees to withdraw a Hemingway short story from the syllabus after a student’s parents objected to it because of its “sex parts” (*NL*, 225). Second, Gilley refuses to stop the college coaches from distributing a list of composition professors who are not lenient to athletes among the members of the college’s sport teams.[87] Thus, Levin considers supporting Fabrikant as the next department head. When Gilley asks Levin for his support, the protagonist tells him the truth. Shortly after that, a “cold war” (*NL*, 308) between the two men ensues.

In *Stepping Westward*, the narrator suggests from the beginning that conflicts among the faculty occur because of their differing political opinions. Whereas Malamud only hints at potential disagreements between the conservative majority and the intuitively liberal minority, Bradbury writes about the faculty, “which, like all faculties, is divided between conservatives and radicals, and which, like all faculties, comes to the boil at least once a year in a spate of petitions and accusations and calumny” (*SW*, 12). However, unlike in *A New Life*, Coolidge, the President of the university, is not explicitly linked with any side of these conflicts; rather, he is described as “a totally eclectic human being” (*SW*, 12). Coolidge’s most striking qualities seem to be a strong sense of patriotism and a sincere, if largely irrational, belief in the greatness of the university: “In any disinterested evaluative scale of American colleges, Benedict Arnold hardly ranks top; to Coolidge it was more scholarly than Harvard, better built than Yale, more socially attractive than Princeton, and with better

[87] Athletic coaches’ effort to get athletes good grades is also satirized in Tom Wolfe’s novel *I am Charlotte Simmons* (2004). This satirical target appears poignant with respect to the recent case of academic fraud at the University of North Carolina. See “Professor among 4 Fired in UNC Academic Fraud,” *Associated Press*, December 31, 2014, accessed January 3, 2015, http://college.usatoday.com/2014/12/31/professor-among-4-fired-in-unc-academic-fraud/.

parking facilities than all of them" (*SW*, 13). While I must mention the absence of such a portrayal of an American University President in American campus novels, it enables Bradbury to satirize Benedict Arnold University for being provincial and self-important at the same time.

The English Department in *Stepping Westward* is more diverse, even offering a graduate programme and including a Quaker, a New Critic, a Catholic Aristotelian, a New York liberal and a Buddhist Leavisite among its faculty. However, Harris Bourbon, the head, is characterized by "instinctive conservatism" (*SW*, 18), which makes him rather close to Malamud's Gilley. Bourbon, described by one of the characters as "a sort of cross between Dr. Johnson and a Texas cowpoke" (*SW*, 203) lives in a ranch-style house with his family, specializes in the Renaissance and has not read anything after 1895. The New York liberal among the faculty is Froelich who is currently writing a book on 20th century plight with a chapter on Walker. Froelich lives in a small house with his wife and gives wild parties to which no members of the English Department are invited. Unlike Bourbon or Coolidge, Froelich is dissatisfied with the English Department which he considers too provincial: "The faculty […] looked impressive in their classrooms as they discoursed on Dickens and Dostoevsky and Blake […]. For part of the time, at least, they might have been at Harvard or Oxford. But what a veneer it all was! On weekends they put on levis and went up to their cabins in the canyon to clear snow, fish in creeks, and saw logs for their stoves" (*SW*, 316). Thus, for Froelich, Bourbon in particular represents the very provinciality that he detests.

Walker, however, has other things to worry about. Shortly after his arrival, when looking through his documents, Walker learns that the state legislature requires him to sign the loyalty oath to the American government, because the university draws on some state funds. The decision to sign or not develops into a complex moral issue. On one hand, the reader may admire Walker, a largely submissive character, for standing up for his rights, as he claims that a British citizen should not be forced to sign any oath to another government. On the other hand, there are clear hints that his decision may be seen as controversial and may result in the very turmoil Froelich has been hoping to provoke. Thus, while Walker

perceives his scruple as an issue of personal freedom, he neglects to realize its larger consequences. Bourbon urges him to sign the oath, claiming "it's just a formality," and the "only people who don't sign it are New York liberals" most of whom "don't like it here anyway" (*SW*, 250). Bourbon's reaction to Walker's hesitancy to sign it suggests either ignorance or hypocrisy; having asked Walker if he is not a communist, Bourbon claims that "this ain't nothin' to do with that nut McCarthy" (*SW*, 252). For the time being, Walker postpones signing the oath. While Froelich encourages him to refuse signing it, Walker even considers returning the form unsigned, hoping no one might notice one unsigned piece of paper among the writer's other official documents.

The whole affair would probably have been forgotten soon if Walker had not mentioned it again himself, in a public lecture on the topic of the writer's dilemma which he is assigned to give at the end of his first semester. The scenes preceding Walker's speech strongly echo Jim Dixon's preparations for his assigned lecture on Merrie England in Amis's *Lucky Jim*. Walker spends a week trying to put the lecture together, but unable to decide what to talk about, he arrives at the auditorium with an incomplete draft. Having had a few drinks at the reception and running out of ideas, he spontaneously brings up the loyalty oath. Arguing that "if we are going to show our piety to the liberal ideal of the writer, the disinterested man, and have him in our universities, and have him lecture to us about his dilemma, then we have to do it freely," he concludes that the loyalty oath is "a mistake" (*SW*, 311). While Morace points out that Walker's refusal to sign the loyalty oath is "his most distinctly 'American' act: a Thoreauvian resistance to civil government's usurpation of the rights of the individual," he also observes that the "drunken babble"[88] in which Walker delivers his lecture makes it much less of a heroic gesture. Moreover, while Dixon's lecture in *Lucky Jim* provides the first example of Amis's protagonist's public self-expression in academia, Walker's speech is delivered under the influence of the manipulative Froelich.

The lecture does cause the turmoil that Froelich has been hoping for. Some students require Walker to be dismissed or ask if England is a

[88] Morace, *The Dialogic Novels*, 47-8.

communist country, while the non-conformists proclaim him a hero against his will. Julie Snowflake is impressed by the speech to such an extent that she drives to Benedict Arnold to meet with Walker. However, while this subplot provides numerous comic situations, it eventually brings about a devastatingly satirical effect. After Walker is accused of offending the laws of hospitality, a group of the faculty, led by Dr. Jochum, a Russian émigré, starts a petition asking the college to affirm in favour of the oath. Finally, Froelich convinces President Coolidge, who has never dismissed anyone for disloyalty, to condemn Jochum's petition. As a result, Jochum is forced to resign. Walker keeps his job for the rest of the year, but feels guilty and accuses Froelich of "[making him] destroy a man" (*SW*, 414).

While Bruce Robbins aptly notes that in British campus novels "from *Lucky Jim* through David Lodge and Malcolm Bradbury [...], there has been no need to ask whether satire would be the chosen mode,"[89] not many campus novels offer as wide a target of satire as *Stepping Westward*. Eventually, the loyal oath controversy satirizes Bourbon and Coolidge for their conformism and lack of principles and, even more so, Froelich for his unscrupulous manipulations. Finally, the well-meaning Walker is criticized for his lack of insight into his environment, and even the principled Jochum for becoming a voluntary victim of unpredictable academic policies.

In *A New Life*, Malamud also mentions that "intellectuals, scientists, teachers were investigated by numerous committees and if found to be good Americans were asked to sign loyalty oaths" (*NL*, 229). However, Levin finds himself in a conflict of opinions and becomes the centre of attention for another reason, the elections for the head of the English Department. Once the elections for the new department head are announced, Levin wants to get to know Fabrikant better in order to help his cause. Contrary to his expectations, Levin soon faces another disillusion. At the very beginning of the novel, Levin is told about Leo Duffy, the former composition instructor whose office he inherits. Duffy came from South Chicago and was, in Gilley's words, "a sort of disagreeable radical who

[89] Bruce Robbins, "What the Porter Saw: On the Academic Novel," in *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*, ed. James F. English (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 249.

made a lot of trouble" (*NL*, 35). Duffy smashed windows, failed more than half of his composition students, ordered *The Communist Manifesto* from the college bookstore and, according to Fairchild, "wanted to reform us all in the shortest possible time—I'd say a week" (*NL*, 43). Levin knows that for some time, Fabrikant defended Duffy; according to another department member, "what Fabrikant liked about Duffy was he did what *he* didn't dare to" (*NL*, 121, italics in original). Nevertheless, eventually Duffy was dismissed on account of being "a fellow-travelling radical" (*NL*, 46).

Before Levin definitely decides to support Fabrikant, he wants to find out why the professor gave up Duffy's defence. However, as Fabrikant's answer that Duffy "was a pestiferous nuisance, not worth the fuss he had kicked up" (*NL*, 298) does not satisfy Levin, he decides to run for the department head himself. One of Levin's plans is to start a series of meetings that he calls Great Books programme to be carried on at the college library in the evenings. He is hoping to get a mixed group of faculty members together—liberal arts people, scientists, technologists, and business school people—who would explain the classics of literature, science and social sciences to each other. He believes that "after we've talked about some of the books maybe the others would understand us a little better, at least what the humanities are and why they're necessary to our existence" (*NL*, 312). In the long run, this programme may change the atmosphere in favour of introducing liberal arts programmes to the college. Thus, Levin hopes to overcome the gap between C. P. Snow's two cultures, represented in the novel by the professors of the inclusively defined sciences and the humanities.

However, Levin is an unsuccessful candidate mainly because of his personal life. For some time, Levin has been having a love affair with Pauline Gilley whose husband is, in her own words, "indifferent" (*NL*, 209) to her. In spite of their efforts to keep the relationship secret, it is eventually revealed to the public at about the same time as Levin's candidature. The relationship is a result of both Pauline's unsatisfying marriage and Levin's isolation from other people in Easchester.

Being a thirty-year-old bachelor upon his arrival, Levin is warned by some of his colleagues that the place could be hard on single men of his

age; he is also warned not to date his students or prowl among the faculty wives. All the department members except Levin, Fabrikant, who lives with his sister, and a female instructor of composition named Avis Fliss are married. Avis is a "not-bad-looking woman of about thirty-five" (*NL*, 97); however, she is a strong supporter of Gilley's candidature. Thus, Levin tries his luck with a student named Nadalee Hammerstad, a twenty-year-old freshman, but gives up the relationship, keeping in mind that it may result in his dismissal from the college. It is much later that he, at a party, realizes his attraction to Pauline. Soon, they start to meet regularly. Pauline confides to Levin that her and Gilley's children are adopted, as Gerald is infertile because he had mumps at the age of twenty-two. "I married a man with no seeds at all" (*NL*, 193), says she. Thus, James M. Mellard's assertion that Pauline Gilley "represents the force of life itself"[90] only stresses her and her husband's incompatibility.

At one point, Levin and Pauline agree to give up the relationship, but the break only reinforces their mutual feelings and eventually Pauline tells Levin that she is going to get a divorce. Soon before that, Levin learns from Avis that Duffy and Pauline had been lovers. Thus, Levin cannot help feeling that Pauline "had loved him to repeat Duffy, or possibly forget him, both reasons amounting to the same thing" (*NL*, 265). With respect to that, Showalter notes that the most subversive element in *A New Life* is the "introduction of a character who would figure in later academic fiction: the wicked double in the form of the former faculty member whose office the new man inherits."[91] Showalter is right that Levin is gradually becoming Duffy's double because of his views that are seen as too nonconformist by Gilley and Fairchild; however, Levin's relationship with Pauline goes beyond the affair that she had had with Duffy.

Eventually, Levin does not take over Gilley's function of the department head, but he does replace him in personal and familial life. Gilley promises Levin good references if he resigns and leaves, but Levin refuses, saying that Pauline is "all [he has] got" (*NL*, 345). One day before the election, Gilley announces through Avis Fliss that "he and his wife

[90] Mellard, "Academia and the Wasteland," 62.
[91] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 35.

were separating, with an assist by Mr. S. Levin" (*NL*, 345). In this atmosphere, people avoid Levin and he does not even attend the elections. As a result, Gilley wins almost unanimously. Later in the day, Levin receives an official communication from President Labhart, terminating his services "as of today, in the public interest, for good and sufficient cause of a moral nature" (*NL*, 346).

Finally, Gilley only lets Pauline have the children if Levin promises him to give up college teaching, which he, to Gilley's surprise, does. When Gilley unbelievably asks Levin: "Why take that load on yourself?", Levin only replies: "Because I can, you son of a bitch" (*NL*, 360). Thus, in his relationship with Pauline, Levin has found the new life he has been looking for. By the end of the novel, Levin views true freedom not as the rejection but the acceptance of obligations. At the same time, Levin had to sacrifice his career to personal and familial life. As Janice Rossen states, academics are often "trying to negotiate some workable relationship with the outside world."[92] Thus, while the ending of the novel is rather pessimistic in this respect, it illustrates the larger dilemmas between professional and personal life which academics, but not only them, may often encounter.

In *Stepping Westward*, Walker's personal life also goes through unexpected changes. Although the predominantly comic tone of the novel seemingly decreases the seriousness of the protagonist's choices, it is occasionally employed with a strong satirical effect. For instance, after his arrival at Benedict Arnold, Walker suddenly experiences a freedom from familial obligations which he enjoys so much that he decides, almost on the spur of the moment, to top it with a divorce. Thus, he sends his wife Elaine a telegram, saying "ARRIVED SAFELY STOP WILL YOU GIVE ME DIVORCE QUERY MARRIAGE UNSUCCESS STOP LOVE JAMES" (*SW*, 222). The telegram provokes two strong reactions that in turn satirize several characters in the novel. First, upon learning that Walker is trying to get a divorce, Bourbon is shocked as in his conservative view, marriage is a sanctuary regardless of whether it is successful or not. Second, Elaine's self-confident reaction to the telegram reveals her knowledge of Walker:

[92] Janice Rossen, *The University in Modern Fiction: When Power Is Academic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 179.

"DON'T BE SO DAFT STOP LOVE STOP ELAINE" (*SW*, 248). While upon receiving the telegram, Walker complains that Elaine does not take anything seriously, the ending of the novel proves her right, as Walker returns to marital and familial life.

Before that Walker, however, does attempt at relationships with other women. Like in *A New Life*, the local English Department has not much to offer in that respect, its only female members mentioned in the text being Evadne Heilman, a large woman with a booming voice who introduces herself to Walker as "a Chaucer man" (*SW*, 207), and an unspecified number of "old ladies in flappy dresses who taught children's literature" (*SW*, 205). Cindy Handlin, "a blond and willowy" (*SW*, 205) graduate student attending Walker's creative writing class admires him, but he does not seem to be interested in her.

Throughout Walker's stay, Froelich lets the writer spend a lot of time with his attractive wife, Patrice, hoping to strengthen Walker's tie to him. At least once, Walker has sex with Patrice, without any expectations of a serious relationship on either side. Overall, Froelich and Patrice seem to have a rather free relationship, as "everyone knew, including presumably Patrice, that Froelich dated his students and took them for meals at Lucky's Place" (*SW*, 333). Thus, *Stepping Westward* foreshadows the later British campus novels of adultery, such as David Lodge's *Changing Places* (1975) or Bradbury's own *The History Man* (1975). Showalter even considers Froelich "the department Machiavelli and a kind of early version of the freewheeling, macho Jewish professor who would become the hero of academic fiction in the '70s," aptly adding that "ironically, Sy Levin is far from being such an iconic figure."[93]

However, Walker's most important relationship during his stay in America is with Julie Snowflake. After Julie arrives at Benedict Arnold to congratulate him on his lecture and Walker learns the devastating piece of news about Jochum's resignation, Walker uses his opportunity and immediately escapes with Julie from Party. They spend the Christmas break together, on a road trip to California and Mexico. While Julie initially

[93] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 56.

admires Walker for taking up a stand on the loyalty oath, his passivity and lack of practical skills eventually prompt her to tell him "we just don't work out" (*SW*, 400). Thus, as he is not willing to return to Benedict Arnold, Walker has no option but to go back to Elaine. Preparing her for his early return, he writes her a letter, admitting vaguely: "I wanted to be free but you were right; there isn't enough there to make free with. I'll come home like Tom Jones to be the good squire, and hope you'll want me" (*SW*, 402). At the end of the novel, order is restored in Walker's life, as he goes back to Nottingham, sadder but stronger and wiser.

Throughout both *A New Life* and *Stepping Westward*, a lot of the controversies stem from what is considered appropriate to say in public or teach in the classroom. Thus, both texts deal with teaching and scholarship more extensively than the campus novels of the preceding decade. In *A New Life*, Levin once feels that at the time of cold war, "teaching was itself sanctuary" (*NL*, 96), even though Easchester's emphasis on science and technology is also reflected in his students' attitudes: "Freshmen were fine people, earnest, ambitious in uncomplicated ways, some obviously bright, but very few were committed to ideas or respected intellectualism" (*NL*, 274). Moreover, teaching freshmen at Cascadia allows for little personal course design, as all the instructors are required to use the same textbook, Fairchild's *Elements of Grammar*, and assign the same final exams. The students' grades across the sections then enable Gilley, the head of composition, to compare how successful all of the instructors are in fulfilling the departments' objectives. In a final irony, after Levin leaves Cascadia for good, the department finally changes the required textbook, as Levin had been trying to suggest since his arrival. Thus, while the relevance of Levin's objections has been recognized by his adversaries and the strictly utilitarian view of higher education has been corrected, the defender of this improvement is not given any credit for his effort.

Naturally, composition instructors are also expected to recognize and prove students' plagiarism, which in the 1950s involves spending long hours at the library, leafing through recent issues of magazines. Little other passages in campus novels highlight how this aspect of English professors' jobs has changed since the wide spread of the internet. As the department

is so service-oriented and both teaching and grading are demanding on time, the instructors are not expected to produce any scholarship. The only department member consistently interested in scholarly publishing is Fabrikant, and Gilley, whose only publication might be a planned picture book of American literature, holds that against him: "I've been doing the dirty work while CD has sat behind a locked door, writing his literary papers" (*NL*, 104), he complains to Levin early on. Thus, any debate over publishing only strengthens the antipathy between the two most powerful department members.

Levin, on the contrary, wants to follow Fabrikant's example and dreams of publishing articles with titles like "The Forest as Battleground of the Spirit in Some American Novels," "Stranger as Fallen Angel in Western Fiction," or "The American Ideal as Self-Created Fiction" (*NL*, 267). In Showalter's words, these "vague and enormous topics at the opposite extreme of Jim Dixon's ship-building monograph" reflect "the era's trendy obsessions."[94] Eventually, Levin writes a short critical essay on "American Self-Criticism in Several Novels" and asks Fabrikant to evaluate it. While Fabrikant praises it, Levin is not convinced, finding the article "trivial," without any "original thought in ten typewritten pages" (*NL*, 272). The hint is that Fabrikant praises it undeservedly, in an effort to make Levin his ally. Consequently, this episode drives Levin further away from Fabrikant.

In *Stepping Westward*, Bourbon as the head of the department also assigns Walker to teach one section of composition on top of one graduate and one undergraduate creative writing class, explaining that composition is "a very valuable function for English in the technological world of today, and I don't mind tellin' you, Mis' Walker, it's sometimes the only way we have of presentin' English as a university subject at all to the other departments like Science and Business" (*SW*, 245). However, the freshman reader used at Benedict Arnold is much more inclusive than the one required at Cascadia. In one of the most memorable scenes in the novel, Walker leads a classroom discussion of Swift's "A Modest Proposal,"

[94] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 54.

unable to convince some of the students that the author was not in favour of cannibalism even though a literal reading of the text suggests otherwise. Towards the discussion, one of the male students explains to Walker: "I didn't come to university to improve my *mind*, Mr. Walker. I come here to, duh, train me for a job. That's what you guys don't realize. […] You want us to think like you do, irony and all that crap. And what happens? You just get yourself into trouble" (*SW*, 350, italics in original). Consequently, the undergraduate students' attitudes at Benedict Arnold echo those at Cascadia.

However, unlike in *A New Life*, Bourbon who advocates the importance of freshman composition also admits that publishing is "the only way to get on in this academic rat-race" (*SW*, 287). Thus, Walker is amazed that in preparation for writing scholarly articles, graduate students in English have "vast terminologies for talking about literature, and freely [use] words Walker had never before heard in anyone's speech vocabulary—mimesis, epistemology, mythopoeic" (*SW*, 292). Unlike *A New Life*, *Stepping Westward* reflects the emergence of English literature as a major liberal arts discipline. However, the quote also insinuates that the rise of literary theory has resulted in the incomprehensibility of literary criticism to readers outside academia.

Yet, contrary to Bourbon's claim, *Stepping Westward* suggests that a skilful manipulator like Froelich can have a successful career in spite of the lack of scholarly publications. In the final scene of the novel, Bradbury reveals that in result of the loyalty oath controversy, Bourbon resigned and Froelich became the head of the department. Froelich does not have to mind that his book on plight was rejected by four publishers, as long as he manages to keep this fact unknown to his department. He also does not need to worry about which writer to invite to Benedict Arnold next year, as he easily convinces President Coolidge to use the creative fellowship money to establish a literary quarterly. Clearly, the motivation behind Froelich's decision is to strengthen his position and avoid any complications: "Magazines did not, like Walkers, run away; magazines did not sleep with one's wife; magazines did not fear for the things they had said and the consequences of their statements" (*SW*, 414). In result, whereas

Walker's return to England may be suggestive of a restorative ending associated with the comic literary tradition, the final scene adds a devastating satirical effect to the novel. Not only is the manipulative Froelich much more powerful than at the beginning of the text, but he has achieved his position by highly unethical means, having sacrificed two people's careers in the process.

As I have already suggested, one of the consistent features of campus novels is intertextuality. Unlike in *Lucky Jim*, where this aspect was rather concealed, or *Pnin*, where Nabokov's references mostly reflected the author's knowledge of classic Russian literature, in both *A New Life* and *Stepping Westward*, intertextuality serves to illuminate the texts' central themes. For instance, in *A New Life*, a novel set in the beautiful landscape, Malamud makes frequent references to Thoreau, a writer fascinated with the natural world. Throughout the novel, Levin often feels somewhat isolated in the small town of Easchester, but he admires the beauty of the surrounding countryside. Thus, he once finds comfort in asking himself: "Had not Concord been for Thoreau the miniature of the universe?" (*NL*, 74). At other times, Malamud makes an indirect reference, expecting the reader to fill in the gaps. Later on, when Levin goes to a college basketball game in order to observe Pauline from afar, he notices that President Labhart is watching him. Suddenly, Levin feels like "Arthur Dimmesdale Levin, locked in stocks on a platform in the town square, a red A stapled on his chest, as president Labhart stood over him, preaching a hellfire sermon denouncing communist adulterers" (*NL*, 244). While the text does not explicitly say so, any student of American literature will recognize the character of Arthur Dimmesdale and the image of the red letter A as references to Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*.

Similarly, in *Stepping Westward*, a novel about Walker's voyage to America and a search for freedom, Bradbury quotes D. H. Lawrence's saying that most people have come to America "to get away from everything they are and have been. […] Which is all very well, but it isn't freedom" (*SW*, 313). In Bradbury's novel, Walker also realizes that an escape to another place cannot by itself guarantee his freedom, as any contact with other people brings him new ties and responsibilities, similar to those back home.

In addition, *Stepping Westward* refers, more or less explicitly, to other campus novels. First, in a conversation between President Coolidge and Harris Bourbon about Walker and the Angry Young Men, Coolidge says: “We had a very interesting lecture on the Angry Young Men. By a professor L. S. Caton, just passing through, didn’t we, Har?” and Bourbon adds: “Mostly ‘bout Amis, though” (*SW*, 241). This example of intertextuality works on two levels. While any reader will probably recognize the reference to Kingsley Amis as the major representative of the Angry Young Men, only those who are familiar with the storyline of Amis’s *Lucky Jim* will fully appreciate the joke. L. S. Caton is, of course, the unethical academic who plagiarized Jim Dixon’s paper and then moved to Latin America. Thus, it seems not that unlikely that he could have stopped in the West of the United States and given a lecture at Benedict Arnold.

The second reference to a campus novel comes later in the text, when Walker and Julie Snowflake discuss the sad fate of Jochum who had to resign from Benedict Arnold. Julie mentions that Jochum had originally taught at Hillesley, but had to leave, as he was not given tenure. She concludes her account by saying: “It was sort of like *Pnin*, did you ever read that novel?” (*SW*, 387). Again, the text does not say so explicitly, but *Pnin* is a 1957 academic novel written by Vladimir Nabokov. In the following decades, such less overt examples of intertextuality will become increasingly typical of the British campus novel.

In conclusion, both *A New Life* and *Stepping Westward* are campus novels whose atmosphere of political controversies looks back to the McCarthy era of the 1950s. Because of that, the protagonists’ self-identification as liberal rather than conservative becomes a crucial point. Both novels are set at somewhat marginalized English departments of large American state universities where, for the most part, freshmen composition matters more than specialized courses in English or American literature. Rather than concentrating strictly on the protagonists’ struggle for tenure, both texts deal with larger issues of power and prestige within academia, such as fights over department chairmanship and academic freedom.

In spite of all these similarities, the differences between the two texts are essential with respect to the larger contrasts between the British

and the American campus novel. The comic tone is much more developed in *Stepping Westward* which portrays the British protagonist's one year stay at a provincial American university as a temporary escape from his marital and familial duties. *A New Life*, on the contrary, presents a more complex story of a New Yorker's effort to start over in the American West. Similarly, while both novels employ satire, they do so to a different degree and with a different effect. American provincialism and a utilitarian attitude to higher education are the primary satirical targets in both texts, but *Stepping Westward* extends the satire at the British protagonist for his lack of independent thinking and assertive behaviour. In *A New Life*, on the contrary, the satire is limited to the protagonist's adversaries, as the reader is invited to sympathize with Sy Levin and his struggle for a new life, which he eventually achieves, even though in different terms than he might have expected.

4. 1970s: Adultery in the Time of Vietnam War and the Student Unrest in Alison Lurie's *The War between the Tates* and David Lodge's *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses*

Brian and Erica, like their friends, students and colleagues, have spent considerable time trying to understand and halt the war in Vietnam. If [Brian] were to draw a parallel between it and the war now going on in his house, he would have unhesitatingly identified with the south Vietnamese. [...] For nearly two years, he would point out, the house on Jones Creek Road has been occupied territory. Jeffrey and Matilda have gradually taken it over, moving in troops and supplies, depleting natural resources and destroying the local culture.

From the younger Tates' position, however, the parallel is reversed. Brian and Erica are the invaders: the large, brutal, callous Americans. They are vastly superior in material resources and military experience, which makes the war deeply unfair; and they have powerful allies, like the Corinth Public School System.

—Alison Lurie, *The War between the Tates*

Most of the troopers were young men who had only joined the National Guard to get out of the Viet Nam War anyway, and they looked now just like the GIs that one saw in Viet Nam on the television newsreels, bewildered and unhappy and, if they were bold enough, making peace signs to the cameras. In fact the whole episode of the Garden was much like the Viet Nam war in miniature, with the University as the Thieu regime, the National Guard as the US army, the students and hippies as Viet Cong ... escalation, overkill, helicopters, defoliation, guerrilla warfare: it all fitted together perfectly.

—David Lodge, *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses*

The 1970s once again confirmed Elaine Showalter's claim about the novel being a belated form of social commentary, as two of the major campus novels of the decade, Alison Lurie's *The War between the Tates* (1974) and David Lodge's *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses* (1975) situate the most of their action into the year of 1969. Both Lurie (1926-) and Lodge (1935-) wrote academic fiction before; in fact, Lurie, a professor of children's literature at Cornell University, seems to be the only major American writer to have consistently worked in the genre, usually setting her texts in New England. Lurie's 1962 debut *Love and Friendship* was a campus novel written from the point of view of a sexually and intellectually frustrated faculty wife, and the author's latest academic novel

Truth and Consequences, dealing with adultery at the time of the September 11 attacks, came out in 2005. Similarly, Lodge is the only of the three major British authors of campus novels (the other two being Kingsley Amis and Malcolm Bradbury) still writing. His 1965 novel *The British Museum Is Falling Down* is not strictly set on a university campus, but concentrates on a married graduate student's effort to complete his dissertation while taking care of his family and features a rather unlikely happy ending strongly reminiscent of *Lucky Jim*. Lodge's last campus novel, *Deaf Sentence* (2008), focuses on a retired academic's hearing problem.

Nevertheless, it is *The War between the Tates* and *Changing Places* respectively that contributed the most to their authors' reputation and popularity. *The War between the Tates* was characterized as "[the author's] best book" by Philip Roth and "one of the few American novels Jane Austen would most certainly have enjoyed" by Truman Capote, while the *Providence Sunday Journal* review boldly claimed that Lurie "accomplishes what Mary McCarthy attempts."[95] The reviews of *Changing Places* mostly celebrated the novel's wit and comic tone, *Daily Mail* describing it as "by far the funniest novel of the year," characterized by "the cool, cruel detachment of Evelyn Waugh," while the *Sunday Times* reviewer simply stated that "not since *Lucky Jim* has such a funny book about academic life come my way."[96] The reviews also suggest that *Changing Places was* the second most widely read British campus novel after *Lucky Jim*, especially outside academia.

However, *The War between the Tates* and *Changing Places* share much more than having become bestsellers and received favourable critical reviews. As some of the quoted reviews suggests, both of them belong among the most strikingly comic texts in the history of the campus novel genre. In many passages throughout *The War between the Tates*, the traditionally more serious American campus novel has come relatively close to its more light-hearted British counterpart; as I will show, both Lurie's

[95] Qtd. in Alison Lurie, *The War between the Tates* (New York: Random House, 1974), 1-3. Hereafter cited in the text as *WT*.

[96] Qtd. on the blurb of David Lodge, *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses* (London: Penguin, 1978). Hereafter cited in the text as *CP*.

and Lodge's texts rely heavily on the situational comic, featuring characters that find themselves in improbable situations. However, while Merritt Moseley praises academic novels for their comic tone and argues that comic academic novels are not necessarily satirical,[97] I agree with Ema Jelínková that "Lodge's satire can at times be very sharp, yet accompanied by relieving comic inventiveness and exuberant humour."[98] More specifically, I apply Christian Gutleben's distinction between the comic and the satirical, as introduced in the first chapter of this dissertation. Hence, I believe that not only *Changing Places* but also *The War between the Tates* successfully combine their comic tone with a satirical effect, as all of the characters in both novels become, to various extents, the authors' satirical targets for the opinions they hold. Thus, while an early campus novel like *Lucky Jim* reserved its satire for Dixon's antagonists, both Lodge's and Lurie's text deride all of the characters, perhaps in an emerging tradition established by Bradbury's *Stepping Westward* a decade ago.

The fact that Capote hinted at an affinity between Lurie's and Austen's writing is also far from incidental, as both authors may be considered representative of the same satirical tradition, namely Horatian satire. As Chris Baldick explains, Horatian satire, named after the poet Horace, employs an "indulgent, tolerant treatment of human inconsistencies and follies, ironically amused rather than outraged."[99] Thus, like Austen, Lurie tends to portray her characters as foolish or incompetent rather than entirely vicious or corrupt. In extension, the same applies to David Lodge's novels as well as the most of the academic fiction discussed in this dissertation. By opting for the milder Horatian satire rather than the more bitter Juvenalian, named after the poet Juvenal, campus novelists may imply that their satirical targets are both capable and worthy of correction.

Yet, while the campus novels analysed in the previous chapters, with the notable exception of Nabokov's *Pnin*, feature junior faculty members as their protagonists, *The War between the Tates* and *Changing Places* choose

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[97] See Merritt Moseley, "Introductory: Definitions and Justifications," in *The Academic Novel: New and Classic Essays* (Chester: Chester Academic Press, 2007), 18.
[98] Ema Jelínková, *British Literary Satire in Historical Perspective* (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2010), 111.
[99] Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 116.

to focus on middle-aged academics and faculty wives and their reaction to the rapidly changing world. As the two epigraphs to this chapter show, both novels have in the background the 1960s student rebellions against the Vietnam War as well as anti-establishment protests in general; Lurie even uses the word *war* in the title of her novel to create multi-layered parallels between the war in Vietnam, and more metaphorically, the two wars in the Tate family.[100] As suggested in the epigraph taken from *The War between the Tates*, the first conflict develops because of the clashes between the parents, Brian and Erica, and their teenage children, Jeffrey and Matilda. Later on, the second conflict occurs between Brian and Erica after Brian's adultery with a student. The Tates live in Corinth, a "provincial academic town" (*WT*, 221), as Brian teaches political science at Corinth University, supposedly modelled on Cornell.[101]

Changing Places also includes adultery as a central theme, as its protagonists indulge in extramarital affairs with both students and faculty wives. Thus, while Lurie's novel centres on the Tate family, *Changing Places* features a wide range of characters. Characterized by the narrator as a "duplex chronicle" (*CP*, 7), the novel extends the confrontation of the British and American academic environment started in Bradbury's *Stepping Westward* by concentrating on two professors of English literature—Philip Swallow of the provincial redbrick university in Rummidge and Morris Zapp of the prestigious State University of Euphoria.

While *Changing Places*, in an author's note typical of the British campus novel, claims that "Rummidge and Euphoria are places on the map of a comic world which resembles the one we are standing on without corresponding exactly to it" (*CP*, 6), similar author's notes in both of its loose sequels, *Small World* (1984) and *Nice Work* (1988), admit that Birmingham where Lodge taught from 1960 to 1987 was the inspirational source for Rummidge.[102] Similarly, the text of *Changing Places* itself describes Euphoria as a "small but populous state on the Western seaboard

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[100] Ian Carter adds that the title also resonates with the term 'the war between the states,' a conventional name for the American Civil War. See *Ancient Cultures of Conceit: British University Fiction in the Post-War Years* (London: Routledge, 1990), 207.
[101] See Judie Newman, *Alison Lurie: A Critical Study* (Amsterdam, Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2000), 24.
[102] See e.g. David Lodge, *Nice Work* (London: Penguin, 1989), 7.

of America, situated between Northern and Southern California, with its mountains, lakes and rivers, its redwood forests, its blond beaches and its incomparable Bay, across which the state university at Plotinus faces the glittering, glamorous city of Esseph" (*CP*, 13), suggesting as its model the University of California in Berkeley, located on the east shore of the San Francisco Bay. Lodge himself went to Berkeley as visiting associate professor, like Philip Swallow, in January 1969, and later confirmed this interpretation, characterizing *Changing Places* as "a narrative transformation of the thematic material and the socio-cultural similarities and differences I had perceived between Birmingham and Berkeley."[103]

In one case, the correspondence between the fictional and real places could be extended to one between a literary character and its model. As Elaine Showalter notes, the character of Morris Zapp, besides being one of the "freewheeling macho Jewish professors"[104] typical of academic fiction in the 1970s (Leonard Zimmern, an English literature professor and a minor character in *The War between the Tates*, represents another example of this character type), is an "acknowledged double"[105] of the literary theorist and legal scholar Stanley Fish, who taught at Berkeley from 1962 to 1974. Like Zapp, Stanley Fish has been a very prolific scholar with an almost incredibly rapidly developing career. Also, according to Showalter, Zapp's claim, made before his stay in Rummidge, that he "had made himself an authority on the literature of England not in spite but because of never having set foot in the country" (*CP*, 39) echoes Fish's famous witticism that "travel narrows the mind."[106]

Like *The War between the Tates*, *Changing Places* deals, in Lodge's words, with "permissive society, the Counterculture, Flower power and all the rest of 1960s baggage."[107] It needs be said that in comparison to both texts, Kingsley Amis's 1978 novel *Jake's Thing*, whose protagonist, an Oxford don, dreads the possibility of women being admitted to Comyns

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[103] David Lodge, "Fact and Fiction in the Novel: An Author's Note," in *The Practice of Writing* (London: Penguin, 1996), 33.
[104] Elaine Showalter, *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 56.
[105] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 80.
[106] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 80.
[107] Lodge, "Fact and Fiction in the Novel," 33.

College, seems disappointingly dated.[108] Nevertheless, for all their similarities, while *Changing Places* focuses on the differences between British and American academia, *The War between the Tates* foregrounds the conflicts of generations.

Thus, in Lurie's novel, the parents, Erica and Brian, stand for the older generation that aligns itself with tradition, while the children, fifteen-year-old Jeffrey and thirteen-year-old Matilda, are already attracted to science fiction magazines, rock music and pop culture. It is Erica in particular that detests the changes in her life, as she finds it hard to get used to the fact that her children are growing up, and the neighbourhood is changing from Jones Creek Road into Glenview Homes, old remodelled farm houses becoming surrounded with expensive but tasteless ranch homes. From Erica's point of view as a middle-aged housewife, the way of life of the youth as well as recent events described in the newspaper appear altogether incompatible with her own experience. At one point, she complains to her friend, Danielle Zimmern: "Everything's changed, and I'm too tired to learn the new rules. I don't care about nineteen sixty-nine at all. I don't care about rock festivals or black power or student revolutions or going to the moon. […] All these new developments they have, maybe they're interesting or depressing or amazing, but they have nothing to do with real life" (*WT*, 226). On one level, the reader may sympathize with Erica's feeling of misplacement in time; however, the character is also satirized for her lack of interest in contemporary events as well as for associating herself with what she at one point calls the "local academic aristocracy" (*WT*, 302). For Erica, who grew up in a suburban area of Larchmont, New York, the Corinth upper class neighbourhood represents a version of pastoral idyll that is quickly disappearing.

Brian, to some extent, shares Erica's feelings. To him, the campus seems unlike the real world as it is mainly populated by the young generation. This would not be a problem by itself, but "the trouble is, [Brian] can see quite well that the real world is growing to resemble

[108] Ian Carter identifies secularization, decline of the classical curriculum, and letting women in as three aspects of the erosion of difference between Oxbridge and not-Oxbridge. See *Ancient Cultures of Conceit*, 160.

university more every year, as the youth culture becomes more dominant; and he is aware that all he has to look forward to is the prospect of joining the most depressed minority of all, the old" (*WT*, 41). Thus, Brian does not see the university as a pastoral world, but rather as a centre of the youth culture he finds hard to understand. Consequently, both of the Tates dissociate themselves from the spirit of the age, Erica identifying its representatives as her children, Brian, in addition to that, his students.

Brian, however, has another problem. Even though his colleagues consider him successful in his career, as he has written two scholarly studies in his field and received the department's Sayle Chair of American Diplomacy, he is not satisfied with his professional achievement: "Why, he asks himself sourly, is he speaking on foreign policy instead of helping to make it? Why does he still discuss other men's theories instead of creating his own?" (*WT*, 35). Having once dreamt of a career in national politics, Brian would now at least like to become the Dean of Humanities at Corinth. A Harvard graduate from a distinguished family and already a former chairman of the Political Science Department, Brian is, at the age of forty-six, dissatisfied with his position, connecting his lack of success with his lack of physical stature: "It was felt everywhere that he was in every sense a small man, not suited to authority over anything beyond a small department" (*WT*, 37). Again, far from any version of pastoral, the university embodies to Brian only a second best place for his career. It is probably because of his frustration that Brian takes his opportunity to start an affair with Wendy Gahaghan, a hippie supporter of student rebellions and a graduate student at the Department of Social Psychology. While Wendy is neither the most attractive nor the most intelligent of his students, Brian seems simply flattered to see that someone admires him as much as she does.

While the reader has access to both Brian's and Erica's thoughts, Brian is the major character who becomes the primary target of Lurie's satire. Even though Brian considers himself liberal, he is unscrupulously pragmatic in his career, as he "has offered himself at various times and more or less subtly to the Democratic, Independent Republican and Liberal parties as an adviser on foreign policy" (*WT*, 36-37), without success.

Moreover, an admirer of the political scientist George Kennan, Brian is somewhat conservative in his subscription to the belief in the separate spheres of influence which he translates from the national to domestic matters: "Brian attributed the success of [his] marriage partly to this doctrine. He might advise Erica on important policy decisions, but ordinarily he would not question her management of the home, nor would she ever try to intervene in his professional life" (*WT*, 13). This division of powers makes Erica feel the more responsible for the children's behaviour. In addition, when Erica, a Harvard graduate like Brian and an author of three children's books turned housewife, finds a part-time job, Brian strongly condemns the idea on account of the children.

Brian's belief in the separate spheres extends even into his extramarital affair; while Wendy once took a class with him, he feels safer about the relationship because she is not a student at his department. However, this fact does not prevent Wendy, who is "given to sudden romantic gestures" (*WT*, 34) from running toward him and embracing him in the halls. As Michael S. Helfand aptly observes, Lurie's technique inverts Brian's assumption about the separate spheres of interest in that it "illuminates human behaviour not by isolation, but by seeing the public in the personal, the personal in the public."[109]

Brian's views are also reflected in his relationship to C. Donald Dibble, a colleague from his department, and his feminist students. Even though Brian despises Dibble for insulting women and condoning the Republican Party in his classes, he also secretly detests students who lecture him on the New Feminism, and in private mockingly refers to the campus discussion group called Women for Human Equality, or WHEN for short, as "the Hens" (*WT*, 26). His two antipathies eventually lead Brian to put into practice a somewhat malicious joke that, rather unexpectedly, turns against him. Deliberately advising feminist students to enrol in Dibble's course, Brian mischievously hopes for an unpleasant semester for both parties. Eventually, the students complain and the department chairman

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[109] Michael S. Helfand, "The Dialectic of Self and Community in Alison Lurie's *The War between the Tates,*" *Perspectives on Contemporary Literature* 3, no. 2 (1977), 70.

discusses the issue with Brian as his predecessor in the position. Wanting to humiliate Dibble, Brian suggests that his colleague should announce optional class meetings during reading period to discuss feminist viewpoints. However, Dibble's obstinacy surprises even Brian, as the professor strongly refuses this compromise. Visiting Brian's office to complain they have not achieved any recognition, the female students lament that even blacks have more status in society than women. Brian light-heartedly corrects them that the blacks do not have more respect, as "the establishment is just more scared of them. If you were black, they'd be afraid you'd bomb [the Political Science Department], or hold Dibble hostage in his office" (*WT*, 285).

To Brian's shock, the latter alternative is exactly what the feminists decide to do, as twelve or fifteen of them take over Dibble's office and hold him there for hours. Worried that his joke is getting out of hand, Brian asks the students to let him in and helps Dibble escape out of the window. However, the event attracts many spectators who mistakenly conclude that the professor who makes sexist remarks in his lectures is Brian. This belief is further reinforced by a photo of Brian among the feminists that gets circulated in the media, a "classic image of the women's liberation threat, at once comic and symbolic: a small middle-aged man, his face expressing fear and outrage, being wrestled to the floor by long-haired young Amazons" (*WT*, 299). Thus, wishing to get nationally famous, Brian only becomes infamous, and for rather inadequate reasons. In effect, Brian is derided for his malicious joke.

Erica thinks that in a sense, "it is only poetic justice that her husband should take Dibble's place as a feminist scapegoat, for Brian has also injured women, not in the abstract, but specifically and personally" (*WT*, 302). Nevertheless, by this time, Brian's and Erica's relationship is already changing for the better after a period of separation because of Brian's affair with Wendy who gets pregnant. Learning about the affair and Wendy's pregnancy, Erica throws Brian out, explaining that she should let him live with Wendy: "It's wrong to hold on to a man you don't believe in, when there is someone else who does" (*WT*, 164). Erica's justification of her action as the right thing to do reflects her obsession with being

always moral. However, in spite of her convictions, Erica eventually realizes the inconvenience of the separation, as she gets tired from having to fight the war with the teenage children on her own. Similarly, Brian becomes increasingly aware of the insurmountable differences between him and the careless Wendy who becomes pregnant for the second time after he had paid for her abortion. However, Brian's fear that he will have to marry Wendy dissolves after she admits that the child is not his this time, as she also slept with a Pakistani graduate student while dating him, and announces her decision to bring up the child in a California commune with yet another man.

During the separation, Erica also had a brief affair with Sanford Finkelstein aka Zed, her former fellow student at Harvard who has moved to the area from California to start a Krishna bookshop, a centre of alternative culture. At a time of the rising counterculture, the shop is frequented by the students to such an extent that Brian sees it as "university's rival" (*WT*, 63). However, behind Sanford's interest in mysticism, Erica discovers passivity and resignation which she finds an inadequate, "defeatist" (*WT*, 341) attitude to deal with the world. On the contrary, it is Brian that, albeit partially in an effort to improve his reputation, decides to organize a Peace March in which all of the characters, including Erica, participate. After the march, Erica invites Brian home for lunch, which he interprets as a "favorable sign" (*WT*, 349). Thus, *The War between the Tates* ends in an atmosphere of mild optimism, associated with the comic literary tradition.

As I find Michael S. Helfand's conclusion that "feminism, mysticism and communal living represent the unacknowledged needs of the Tates"[110] somewhat simplified, I agree with Judie Newman that "where the Erica/Sanford plot underlines the deficiencies of the utopian, detached idealist, Brian's involvement with the radical feminists emphasizes the problems of political pragmatism."[111] Further on, Newman stresses that "the reader should not assume that Lurie lends Zed and Wendy her full

[110] Helfand, "The Dialectic of Self and Community," 69.
[111] Judie Newman, "Sexual and Civil Conflicts: George F. Kennan and *The War between the Tates*," in *University Fiction*, ed. David Bevan (Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1990), 116.

approval."[112] The weak, defenceless Wendy gets exactly what she wants, a child and life in a commune, by manipulative methods. It is Zed who explains Wendy's tactics to Erica, using the metaphors of the war that penetrate the novel: "The battle isn't always to the strong [...]. The weak have their weapons too. They come and collapse on you, like defeated nations, and you have to take care of them" (*WT*, 194). However, Zed only sees through Wendy's motifs because he too is a manipulator, using mysticism to self-serving ends. Zed quoted the Prophet to Wendy in order to convince her that the precise paternity of the child is unimportant, so that she will pass it off as Brian's, and he will have more chance with Erica. Furthermore, Zed is the only major character not to participate in the Peace March, and even not to have voted since 1954, allegedly in an effort to detach himself from the material world. Consequently, none of the major characters is immune from Lurie's satire. While some of them correctly identify the others' faults, they stay largely unaware of their own.

Interestingly, in his career, the successful Morris Zapp of *Changing Places* faces a similar problem to Brian's. Having, rather early, achieved all that he could in his field, at the age of forty, he inevitably finds himself at a loss what else to do: "Zapp was the man who published articles in *PMLA* while still in graduate school; who, enviably offered his first job by Euphoric State, had stuck out for twice the going salary, and got it; who had published five fiendishly clever books (four of them on Jane Austen) by the time he was thirty and achieved the rank of full professor at the same precocious age" (*CP*, 15). The only time Zapp failed was in an unfinished megalomaniac project, an effort to examine all the novels of Jane Austen "from every conceivable angle, historical, biographical, rhetorical, mythical, Freudian, Jungian, existentialist, Marxist, structuralist, Christian-allegorical, ethical, exponential, linguistic, phenomenological, archetypal, you name it; so that when each commentary was written there would be simply nothing further to say about the novel in question" (*CP*, 44). Unsurprisingly, halfway through *Sense and Sensibility*, Zapp realizes that such a project is not feasible. Thus, both Brian Tate and Morris Zapp

[112] Newman, "Sexual and Civil Conflicts," 118.

are satirized for having rather unlikely expectations about their professional achievements.

The rapid development of Zapp's career has a less desirable parallel in his turbulent personal life. Zapp has already been married twice and has had several extramarital affairs. Indeed, his last moment decision to participate in the Rummidge exchange is prompted by the hope to postpone or even prevent his second divorce. From his first marriage, Zapp has a daughter named Melanie, already a student at Euphoria who, however, dissociates herself from her father by using her mother's maiden surname, Byrd. With his second wife, Désirée, Zapp has nine-year-old twins named Elizabeth and Darcy, after the protagonists of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Unfortunately for Zapp, there is little hope that Désirée will change her mind about the divorce. "Being married to you is like being slowly swallowed by a python. I'm just a half-digested bulge in your ego" (*CP*, 40), she complains.

In contrast, in Rummidge, Zapp is as successful in his professional life as ever. He especially proves an excellent negotiator and administrator. Being used to student unrest from Euphoria, he easily negotiates a compromise with Rummidge students who stage a rather mild sit-in in the University Assembly Hall in order to get the right to participate in decision making in university matters. While the protest is relatively calm, Gordon Masters, the ineffective elderly head of the English Department, finds it so hard to deal with that he eventually resigns. Like in *The War between the Tates*, some characters of *Changing Places* correctly identify other's faults that are satirized in the novel. For instance, Zapp aptly observes that Masters "[had run] the department as a strategic withdrawal against overwhelming odds, the odds being students, administrators, the Government, long hair on boys, shorts skirts on girls, promiscuity, Casebooks, ball-point pens—just about the whole modern world" (*CP*, 126). Because of his experience and professionalism, by the time he is going to leave Rummidge, Zapp even receives an offer to stay there as the official head of the department. Thus, talking of academia as any version of pastoral seems inadequate in relation to both Rummidge and Euphoria. While Rummidge represents backward

tradition, Euphoria is in a constant state of flux which appears incompatible with an enclosed idyllic environment.

Overall, the revolts at Euphoria are much more intense than at Rummidge. While California was one of the first centres of the counterculture movement, the comic tone of the novel allows Lodge to exaggerate this fact and portray Euphoric State, in Showalter's words, as a "heightened version of Berkeley."[113] Like Brian Tate, Swallow finds himself at the centre of the events, as he becomes entangled, against his will, in a controversial event with extensive media coverage. However, while Brian's reputation is damaged by the incident, Swallow accidentally becomes something of a hero for the supporters of anti-establishment and counterculture.

At one point, the student protests at Euphoria centre on the issue of what the students call a People's Garden, an area used as an unofficial parking lot by the university. However, the students want to turn the parking lot into a garden, declaring that the land belongs to the Costanoans, an Indian tribe from whom it was stolen by force two hundred years ago. Thus, the students proclaim that "if any Costanoans show, we'll gladly move out. Meanwhile, we're providing an open space for the people of Plotinus" (*CP*, 154). One day, Swallow happens to be at the site with some of his students who have stolen some bricks to construct a People's Fishpond at the garden. When the police are approaching, looking for the thieves, all of the students run out immediately, Swallow being the only person left for the policemen to arrest. While he is released from prison after a few hours, he becomes a local hero, the more memorable for his foreign origin. The fact that Swallow admits that he was only "mildly sympathetic" (*CP*, 174) to the People's Garden does not prevent people from remembering him as one of the protest's most celebrated supporters in academia. In fact, Stephan Alexander Ditze rightly emphasizes the differences in reaction to student unrest in Rummidge and Euphoria: "While the English scholars are timid conformists who fearfully brace themselves against the onslaught of mild student protest, the nonconformists among Euphoric's English

[113] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 77.

department even demonstrate their solidarity with the militant protesters."[114] Again, the events concerning the People's Garden were inspired by the establishment of the People's Park, a free public park in Berkeley that was created during the political activism of the late 1960s. Thus, the People's Garden could be seen as a basis for a utopian society that is often envisaged in academia.

Even though Swallow has never come out of his way to support the protesters, he did socialize with some of them. While in Lurie's novel, Brian Tate always perceives a distance between him and the revolting students, Swallow is, upon his arrival at Euphoria, sincerely fascinated by the lives of the students who live in the same apartment building as him and do not hesitate to invite him to their parties. "They seemed to live entirely in the present tense" (*CP*, 96), he observes. Having been to the States once before to complete his master's thesis, Swallow is glad to repeat his pleasant experience, as after his return to Rummidge, his life had largely slipped into professional and familial duties. Like Brian Tate, Swallow has come to associate his wife, Hilary, who gave up her master's thesis on Augustan pastoral poetry to become a housewife, primarily with their children: "He found it difficult after all these years to think of [Hilary] as ontologically distinct from her offspring. She existed, in his field of vision, mainly as a transmitter of information, warnings, requests and obligations with regard to Amanda, Robert and Matthew" (*CP*, 25). Overall, the authors' choice of middle-aged protagonists in both *Changing Places* and *The War between the Tates* has made the campus novel, more than ever before, also a family novel. Thus, Jeffrey J. Williams is right to point out the emergence of a new trend, different from the campus novels of the 1950s and 1960s which "still defaulted to the image of academe as a separate sphere […] with its own protocols, peculiar customs, and insular politics."[115]

Both *Changing Places* and *The War between the Tates* also illustrate the importance of adultery as a major theme in campus novels. Like Brian

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[114] Stephan Alexander Ditze, "In Search of Liberation and Enlightenment: America and the Americans in David Lodge's Comic Novel *Changing Places*," in *America and the Americans in Postwar British Fiction: An Imagological Study of Selected Novels* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2006), 235.

[115] Jeffrey J. Williams, "The Rise of the Academic Novel," *American Literary History* 24, no. 3 (2012), 563.

Tate, Swallow has sex with a student, but in this case, the event is a one night stand after a party at the students' apartment building and does not influence the plot in any important way, except that in Lodge's comic fictional world, rich in coincidences, the girl turns out to be Melanie Byrd, Zapp's daughter from his first marriage. However, the major treatment of adultery in *Changing Places* occurs later, as Zapp and Swallow do not only exchange each other's jobs, but also wives. As Kenneth Womack notes, "the manner in which they literally swap their entire worlds with one another underscores Lodge's satiric critique of his academic characters and the ease and alacrity with which they exchange the emotional and sexual discourses."[116] Even though *Changing Places* and *The War between the Tates* are relatively close in tone, Lurie's treatment of the demise of the Tates' marriage is far more touching than the satirically portrayed wife-swapping in the two parallel storylines of Lodge's novel.

Swallow's relationship with Désirée Zapp develops first, when she bails him out of prison after the People's Garden incident. Thus, ironically, while Swallow is initially so excited to be leaving his family obligations behind, at Euphoria, he eventually finds himself in "a more comfortable, loose-fitting version of his life in England" (*CP*, 179-80) with Désirée. After Swallow moves in with Désirée, he does not mind helping her with housework and taking care of Elizabeth and Darcy in case she is at one of her meetings, as she has just become involved with the women's liberation movement. Everybody at Euphoria knows about this housing arrangement, but no one thinks that they are having an affair, as Swallow, having previously shared an apartment with a male student, is suspected of being gay, and by the same logic, Désirée is supposed to be a lesbian because of her participation in the women's liberation movement. Swallow now sees his time at the students' apartment building in completely different terms: "The interregnum [...] seemed like a drug dream as it receded into the past. There had been something unnatural, unhealthy about it, after all, something ignoble and ridiculous about the role he had played there, a middle-aged parasite on the alternative society, hanging around the young

[116] Kenneth Womack, *Postwar Academic Fiction: Satire, Ethics, Community* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 82.

folk with a doggy, ingratiating look" (*CP*, 180). Clearly, Swallow now perceives this period as escapism inadequate to his age; however, he also realizes that even his current way of life is only a temporary arrangement.

Zapp's and Hilary's relationship, on the contrary, for a long time does not extend over a few dinner invitations, but when Swallow, infatuated with Désirée, forgets about Hilary's birthday, Zapp takes her out. It is after Zapp and Hilary had sex for the first time that Désireé calls Hilary to inform her about the current state of affairs. The final chapter leaves the novel open-ended, showing the four major characters meet in New York to solve the situation but leaving their dialogue unfinished. However, unlike in Nabokov's *Pnin* where the final scene shows the protagonist leaving the university without any specific plans for the future, the reader can easily guess what the ending will be. In spite of his fascination with Désirée and America, Swallow admits to her before that he will go "back to Hilary and the children. Back to Rummidge. Back to England" (*CP*, 176). Désirée also assures him that even though she wants to get divorced, she has no intention of getting married again, as she is finally happy to be a "free woman" (*CP*, 175). Rather expectedly, as Lodge reveals in *Small World*, Swallow returns to Hilary, just like Brian Tate returns to Erica, and Zapp does not manage to prevent his divorce from Désirée. Thus, for all their twists and turns, comic or more serious, the storylines of both *The War between the Tates* and *Changing Places* eventually return to a very similar state of events as they described at the beginning. Therefore, Christian Gutleben rightly suggests that "the mere absence of conclusion does not transform the work into a radical gesture;"[117] in spite of its seeming lack of closure, *Changing Places* provides enough hints that the text tends towards the restorative ending reminiscent of the comic literary tradition.

Other critics have tried to identify some general tendencies in the plots of campus novels. For instance, Steven Connor sees two basic plots in academic fiction: "The one concerns the disruption of a closed world, and the gradual return of order and regularity to it, while the other concerns the passage through this

[117] Christian Gutleben, "English Academic Satire from the Middle Ages to Postmodernism: Distinguishing the Comic from the Satiric," in *Theorizing Satire: Essays in Literary Criticism,* ed. Brian A. Connery and Kirk Combe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 141.

closed world of a character who must in the end be allowed to escape its gravitational pull."[118] As I have shown in the previous chapters, the latter scheme is typical of the early campus novel in the 1950s and 1960s. However, since the 1970s onwards, the former scenario gradually seems to prevail. My only objection to Connor's characterization would be that novels like *Changing Places* and *The War between the Tates* no longer portray academia as a closed world, but rather as a mirror of the whole society.

Having provided the plots of the novels, I will now concentrate on the portrayal of scholarship and teaching in the two texts. In *The War between the Tates*, teaching is crucial in that it strengthens Wendy's attraction to Brian Tate. Like many supporters of counterculture at the time, Wendy aims to go into the wilderness and live in a commune based on mutual cooperation and mystical philosophy. While Wendy's Department of Social Psychology considers such behaviour as "examples of social pathology" (*WT*, 38), she is grateful to Brian for explaining her that such way of thinking belongs to the "mainstream of the American utopian tradition" (*WT*, 39). Also, Brian's and Wendy's relationship represents one of the first instances of an affair between a male professor and his avid female student which becomes a recurring theme in campus novels of the following decades. For instance, Francine Prose's *Blue Angel* (2000) focuses on the relationship between a middle-aged professor of creative writing and a young would-be novelist.[119]

Interestingly, Lurie's narrator also suggests that Brian's being a political scientist who dreams of becoming a politician differentiates him from the majority of faculty members at Corinth. On the whole, while the professors' appearance tends to reflect their teaching field, many of them are too careful to confront the world outside academia:

> University professors often have an elective affinity with their subject. Whether through original tropism, conscious effort or merely long association, language instructors born in Missouri and Brooklyn look and act remarkably like Frenchmen and

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[118] Steven Connor, *English Novel in History, 1950-1995* (1995), qtd. in Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 4.

[119] As a satire on sexual harassment, *Blue Angel* is, however, much darker in tone than *The War between the Tates*.

> Italians, professors of economics resemble bankers, and musicologists are indistinguishable from musicians. The similarity is usually only one of style; indeed most professors, at least at Corinth, tend to regard with suspicion and hostility any colleague who leaves the academy to practice what they preach (*WT*, 159).

While this description is highly comic in tone, in effect, it satirizes academia for being too concerned with theory and unwilling to venture beyond the ivory tower. Thus, it implicitly validates Brian's longing for his public political career, making him a more complex character.

Brian himself elaborates on the narrator's observation by comparing his department colleagues, on the basis of their character and appearance, to historical personalities from international politics. For instance, Brian likens the sexist Professor Dibble, "a rather paranoid bachelor" who identifies himself as a "radical conservative" (*WT*, 161) to Metternich, and sees Chuck Markowitz, a young radical who "has allowed his hair to grow out until it resembles a small dirty black poodle dog sitting on top of his head" (*WT*, 162) as Castro. Throughout the novel, Dibble is crudely satirized for his blatant sexism, which allows him to underestimate the recent societal developments. For instance, he once diminishes a female graduate student's professional success: "You got an assistantship at Ohio State? Well, you'd better hang on to it. There's a fashion now in some schools for hiring women, but it won't last" (*WT*, 266). While in the incident with the feminist students, the media confuse Dibble with Brian, the former eventually realizes his views have no support among his colleagues and tenders his resignation from the university.

Ironically, Dibble's words about no women in academia seem apt in the portrayal of Corinth University in the novel. There are no female professors in Brian's department, the only academic female character in the text being Danielle Zimmern, Erica's friend from the French Department. The fact that both Danielle and her former husband, Leonard, are of Jewish origin also makes them the only academic characters in the novel who are not WASP. After her divorce, Danielle struggles to negotiate her professional and familial duties, as she is bringing up two children by herself. In her involvement with feminism, Danielle foreshadows Désirée

Zapp, but unlike her, she is going to remarry, somewhat unlikely, to a veterinarian who takes care of her children's pets.[120] Thus, by the end of the novel, Lurie seems more concerned with ending the text on an optimistic note than with portraying the diversity in academia. Also, academic research is not shown in the novel with the exception of Brian's efforts to write a book on American foreign policy in the Cold War period.

In *Changing Places*, on the contrary, both research and teaching are portrayed as crucial for academic career. At Euphoria University, scholarly publication is the key for getting tenure, even though as the students are becoming more vocal, the evaluations of their professors in Class Bulletin are also paid attention to. Although the English Department at Euphoria is nearly as big as the entire arts faculty at Rummidge, the university is "buying" (*CP*, 13) only the most distinguished scholars and getting a career there is highly competitive. As Swallow puts it in a letter to Hilary, the requirements for tenure at Euphoria remind him of "a jungle in which the weakest go to the wall" (*CP*, 133). Ironically, Swallow is unaware that he has been sent abroad so that one of his younger colleagues who has written many scholarly studies is promoted during Philip's absence in violation of Rummidge's seniority principle.

Thus, British universities, in spite of awarding tenure "virtually [automatically]" (*CP*, 16), consider scholarly publications as a major criterion for giving promotions and chairs. Consequently, Swallow who teaches a lot and publishes little and, to Zapp's shock, does not even have a Ph.D., has a permanent job, but can hardly get a promotion. Besides being unable to settle on a field, Swallow has another quality that prevents him from getting a promotion: "[H]e lacked will and ambition, the professional killer instinct which Zapp abundantly possessed" (*CP*, 15). Moreover, in a hyperbole characteristic of Lodge's writing, a rather unorthodox system of factors could have influenced one's career at the Rummidge English Department in the past, as no student managed to locate

[120] Interestingly, it is the Zimmerns and Danielle's new husband, Dr. Kotelchuk, that Lurie chooses to revive in her later fiction. Leonard Zimmern becomes a professor at Columbia and writes a nasty review of the work of Vinnie Miner, the protagonist of *Foreign Affairs* (1984). Danielle and Dr. Kotelchuk appear briefly in *Truth and Consequences*.

any scholarly publication by Gordon Masters, who had been the head of the department for the last thirty years. According to one of the department members, Masters was appointed because like him, the then Vice-Chancellor "was a huntin', shootin', fishin' type. Took all the candidates down to his place in Yorkshire for a spot of grouse-shooting. Naturally Gordon made a great impression" (*CP*, 90). Indeed, Lodge has just used a similar joke about the camaraderie within a provincial university as Bernard Malamud in *A New Life*.

In addition, the position of women at Lodge's Rummidge seems no better than at Lurie's Corinth. After Masters resigns from his function, he is replaced by Rupert Sutcliffe, an old-fashioned bachelor who is "scared to death" of women, treating the two unspecified female members of the department "as honorary men" (*CP*, 218). When Hilary Swallow applies to complete her postgraduate studies, Zapp being one of her referees, Sutcliffe objects: "It puts us in a rather awkward position. I mean, the wife of a colleague" (*CP*, 218). Thus, while Euphoria University represents a highly competitive environment in touch with the recent societal developments, Rummidge stands for a conservative provincial institution. As Ian Carter perceptively notes, Lodge's "celebration of American university life is extremely rare in British fiction," and incomparable with Bradbury's "jaundiced account" in *Stepping Westward*.[121]

Having later admitted to Birmingham being the model for Rummidge, Lodge felt the need to make clear that the university's portrayal in the novel was highly exaggerated: "The University of Rummidge is [...] a much smaller and dimmer place than the University of Birmingham, and its undistinguished English department which seems never to have had more than one professorial chair in its entire history, could not conceivably be confused with the large and flourishing School of English."[122] While I have mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation that exaggerated, rather than realistic, action and characters are common features of both comic and satirical texts, Lodge's characterization of Rummidge may not always be as devastating as his own comment would suggest. In the first chapter, the

[121] Ian Carter, *Ancient Cultures of Conceit*, 201.
[122] Lodge, "Fact and Fiction in the Novel," 34.

narrator describes the university in the following terms: “Having competed strenuously for fifty years with two universities chiefly valued for being old, it was, at the moment of drawing level, rudely overtaken in popularity and prestige by a batch of universities chiefly valued for being new” (*CP*, 14). Ian Carter emphasizes that such a view of the system of higher education has no parallel in other British campus novels: “Lodge’s assertion that in 1969 the hierarchy among universities was relatively flat is striking. Nowhere else in British university fiction does one get that sense.”[123] Even Amis’s Jim Dixon has moments when he wishes he were at Oxford or Cambridge.

Lodge’s Euphoria is portrayed as more ethnically diverse than Rummidge. One of the students that Philip Swallow meets through Melanie Byrd is Wily Smith, of remote African American descent. Similarly, besides Morris Zapp, the English Department has two more professors of Jewish heritage, the insecure Howard Ringbaum and the ambitious Sy Gootblatt. When Swallow talks to Luke Hogan, the head of the department, about the opportunity of finding a permanent job at Euphoria, Hogan explains that Philip will not be able to compete with other applicants: “To make you an offer appropriate to your age and experience, we should expect a book or too. Now if you were black, of course, it would be different. Or better still, Indian” (*CP*, 182). Thus, Hogan reveals that as academia has only recently opened its gates to the members of ethnic minorities, there may be some exceptions with respect to their hiring in spite of the highly competitive atmosphere in American universities. However, while members of ethnic minorities may be encouraged to apply for jobs, there is no female academic among the faculty of the English Department.

Another of the features of campus novels that I have been paying attention to is intertextuality. As most of the British campus novels, *Changing Places* is interspersed with references to authors and texts within the canon of Anglophone literature; for instance, the novel’s subtitle *A Tale of Two Campuses* echoes Charles Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities* which contrasts London and Paris before and during the French revolution. Along with that, Lodge has enriched the genre with references to literary theory which

[123] Carter, *Ancient Cultures of Conceit*, 75.

at that time became a part of English studies curricula. The spread of literary theory into English literature departments documented in *Changing Places* suggests that liberal arts programmes no longer need to focus on freshman composition courses as in Malamud's *A New Life*. Moreover, even Lodge's conception of the novel as two parallel storylines featuring characters that function as foils to each other reflects the author's interest in structuralism and its binary oppositions.

In addition, *Changing Places* introduces the elements of metafiction into the campus novel. One of the wittiest metafictional passages in the novel occurs in the third chapter that entirely consists of letters exchanged between the two professors and their wives, providing the reader with an access to the thoughts of all the four characters. After Swallow has been assigned to teach Creative writing at Euphoria, he asks Hilary to send him a booklet called *Let's Write a Novel*. In a letter to Philip, Hilary writes: "What a funny little book it is. There's a whole chapter on how to write an epistolary novel, but surely nobody's done that since the eighteenth century?" (*CP*, 130). Well, Lodge just has. However, Lodge's formal experimentation in *Changing Places* does not stop with the revival of the epistolary novel, as the fourth of the six chapters is written in the form of newspaper articles and the final one has the form of a film script. Unfortunately, the author later repeated most of these innovatory techniques in his later campus fiction, from *Small World* to *Deaf Sentence*, making them almost a cliché inventory of a Lodge novel.

The War between the Tates, on the contrary, does not use only intertextuality in the traditional sense, but rather intermediality, as Lurie makes references to famous works of art on display at the museum where Brian Tate is waiting to meet with Wendy. Thinking about Wendy's abortion that he is going to pay for, Brian wonders if Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell, portrayed by Hans Holbein, would approve of his decision. In addition, as Sandy announces to Erica his intention to leave Corinth for good, he reminds her of a painting of a man in ragged clothes starting on a journey, namely Hieronymus Bosch's *The Fool*. Indeed, *The War between the Tates* has enriched the campus novel with references to historical personalities as well as famous

paintings, reflecting the fact that artists are, along with academics, the most typical protagonists of Lurie's works.

In conclusion, both *The War between the Tates* and *Changing Places* are set against the background of the Vietnam War and student unrest of the late 1960s. Both novels are predominantly comic in tone, relying heavily on improbable coincidences. While both novels also satirize every single character for their various follies, overall, the satire is relatively mild. For instance, in *The War between the Tates*, Brian Tate is satirized for his political pragmatism, and Erica for her exaggerated morality; in *Changing Places*, Morris Zapp becomes the target of satire for having too much ambition and Philip Swallow for his lack of it. Also, as adultery becomes a popular topic in academic fiction, all these characters are satirised for the ease with which they engage in extramarital affairs. Nevertheless, by the end of the narratives, these affairs are over and the characters' personal lives return to the state of events described at the beginning of the novels. As the protagonists are middle-aged, they observe the student protests rather than participate in them; however, both texts affirm the need for change within academia and the wider society by having the characters that oppose the student unrest the most, Professor Dibble in *The War between the Tates* and Professor Masters in *Changing Places*, resign from their jobs. Still, the major female characters are faculty wives rather than professors, and most of the major characters are of white Anglo-Saxon protestant, or, at the most, Jewish heritage. The discourse of campus novels written in the 1970s describes the fights for the rights of women and minorities, leaving its results to be pictured in the following decades.

5. 1980s and Excursions beyond the Ivory Tower: Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and David Lodge's *Nice Work*[124]

Society is set up in such a way that it's the poor and the uneducated who suffer the main impact of natural and man-made disasters. People in low-lying areas get the floods, people in shanties get the hurricanes and tornadoes. I'm a college professor. Did you ever see a college professor rowing a boat down his own street in one of those TV floods? We live in a neat and pleasant town near a college with a quaint name. These things don't happen in places like Blacksmith.
—Don DeLillo, *White Noise*

The situation was so bizarre, so totally unlike her usual environment, that there was a kind of exhilaration to be found in it, in its very discomfort and danger, such as explorers must feel, she supposed, in a remote and barbarous country. She thought of what her colleagues and students might be doing this Wednesday morning—earnestly discussing the poetry of John Donne or the novels of Jane Austen or the nature of modernism, in centrally heated, carpeted rooms. [...] What would they all think if they could see her now?
—David Lodge, *Nice Work*

At first glance, the two representative campus novels of the 1980s, Don DeLillo's (1936-) *White Noise* (1985) and David Lodge's (1935-) *Nice Work* (1988), may seem to share little more than the fact that their authors set some of their earlier texts at an educational institution. Lodge is one of the major authors of British campus novels, *Nice Work* being the final part of his loose academic trilogy, along with *Changing Places* (1975) and *Small World: An Academic Romance* (1984). Even though DeLillo's previous fiction did not contribute to the professor-centred academic novel, his second novel, *End Zone* (1972), was set at a small college in West Texas, the protagonist being a college football player. Like the authors' previous texts, *White Noise* and *Nice Work* illustrate many of the issues of their time; however, the former's emphasis on the over-specialization within American academia and the latter's focus on the financial cuts of the British system of higher education do not suggest many connections. Also, in spite of its theme, *Nice Work* is a more light-

[124] An early version of this chapter was presented as a paper at the sixth annual conference on Anglophone studies, held at Tomáš Baťa University in Zlín on September 4-5, 2014.

hearted novel than *White Noise*, just like many British campus novels tend to be, in comparison with their American counterparts.

White Noise, DeLillo's eighth novel and commercial breakthrough, is not only a campus novel, but in Elaine Showalter's words, a "postmodernist tour de force."[125] The protagonist and narrator, fifty-one-year-old Jack Gladney, is characterized not only as the chairman of the Department of Hitler Studies at the Midwestern College-on-the-Hill in the town of Blacksmith, but also as a husband and father or stepfather of many children from his four marriages. His life is set against the background of an ecological catastrophe in a consumer society and permeated with the fear of death. As Jeffrey J. Williams has observed, in the American campus novel, the "academic man became postmodern everyman—at least straight white professional everyman, who goes to the mall and watches TV."[126]

Nice Work, on the contrary, reflects the advent of literary theory and Women's Studies in the 1980s by featuring a female protagonist, Robyn Penrose, a temporary lecturer in English Literature in Rummidge, Lodge's fictionalized version of Birmingham. While Robyn is an excellent scholar and a dedicated teacher, her career is insecure because of the wide ranging cuts in the British university system. As a specialist on the 19th century industrial novel, she is asked to participate in a Shadow Scheme, a project aimed at educating academia about the world of industry, and having not much choice, accepts. Like the protagonists of the texts she studies, she learns a lot about herself in the process. Eventually, both Jack Gladney and Robyn Penrose find themselves in places far beyond campus, in situations they would hardly imagine. While they are satirized for their limited perception of the world, the reader is also moved by their experience.

The reception of *White Noise* by the critics also suggests a shifting perception of the campus novel genre. As late as in 1977, Leslie Fiedler complains that Bernard Malamud's 1961 novel *A New Life* slips into "what may well be the least rewarding of all American sub-genres, the academic

[125] Elaine Showalter, *Faculty Towers*: *The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 94.
[126] Jeffrey J. Williams, "The Rise of the Academic Novel," *American Literary History* 24, no. 3 (2012), 567.

novel."[127] In 1991, on the other hand, Frank Lentricchia speculates why *White Noise* has become so successful with American readers and argues, at the first place, that the text is "a campus novel (of sorts)," which may answer for its popularity in a "country committed to mass education, even at the higher levels."[128] Thus, Lentricchia asserts that *White Noise* has been considered a great American novel because, rather than in spite of, including numerous campus novel features.

The campus is indeed an important, if not the only one, setting in *White Noise*. Moreover, by having the first scene take place there, DeLillo uses the opening of the novel to suggest a lot about the whole of American society. First, the narrator's description of college students moving back to campus in September strengthens the ties between higher education and consumer culture. As the students start taking their possessions from their parents' station wagons, the narrator, Jack Gladney, ends the first paragraph of the novel by providing a list of all the objects he can see:

> [T]he stereo sets, radios, personal computers; small refrigerators and table ranges; the cartons of phonograph records and cassettes; the hairdryers and styling irons; the tennis rackets, soccer balls, hockey and lacrosse sticks, bows and arrows, the controlled substances, the birth control pills and devices; the junk food still in shopping bags—onion and garlic chips, nacho thins, peanut creme patties, Waffelos and Kabooms, fruit chews and toffee popcorn; the Dum-Dum pops, the Mystic mints.[129]

In this description, the idea of getting a higher education becomes inseparable from owning the listed objects and moving them into one's college dormitory. Gladney further reinforces this connection by mentioning that he has "witnessed this spectacle for twenty-one years" (*WN*, 3). Thus, the observed event becomes an annual ritual. Finally, by the end of the second paragraph of the novel, the narrator argues that the experience of watching their sons and daughters "tells the parents they are a collection of the like-

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[127] Leslie Fiedler, "The Many Names of S. Levin: An Essay in Genre Criticism," in *The Fiction of Bernard Malamud*, ed. Richard Astro and Jackson J. Benson (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1977), 155.
[128] Frank Lentricchia, "Introduction," in *New Essays on* White Noise, ed. Frank Lentricchia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 7.
[129] Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (New York: Penguin, 1986), 3. Hereafter cited in the text as *WN*.

minded and the spiritually akin, a people, a nation" (*WN*, 4). Consequently, the experience of going to college, or having a child that does, creates a sense of community or belonging among the people.

It is only after this setting of the tone that the narrator reveals his identity: "I invented Hitler studies in North America in March of 1968. [...] When I suggested to the chancellor that we might build a whole department around Hitler's life and work, he was quick to see the possibilities. It was an immediate and electrifying success" (*WN*, 4). This change of theme is important in elaborating on the college's relation to consumer culture. Not only is the campus a place where various marketed products, from electronics to food, are consumed, but even a study programme needs to be promoted like any of those objects, as economic success is the final measure. As Frank Lentricchia notes, Jack Gladney is a "sharp observer and commentator who at the same time participates—often to the reader's bewilderment—in an action which fatally shapes him, [...] the less than self-possessed voice of a culture that he would subject to criticism and satire."[130] Thus, the academia in *White Noise*, Gladney included, has clearly mastered many of the practices of the business world.[131]

In Lodge's novel, the opening pages are equally important in setting the tone; however, the relationship between academia and the business world is presented as diametrically opposite. Thus, the novel draws on the comparison of two worlds, a typical feature of the comic tradition since Shakespearean comedy which would contrast, for instance, the country and the court.[132] While the story proper in *White Noise* provides no exact dates, *Nice Work* opens in January 1986, designated Industry Year by the Government in Thatcherite Britain. Even though *Nice Work* is the final part of Lodge's loose trilogy, a kind of *Changing Places* between the factory and the university, it differs from its two predecessors by being more grounded in

[130] Frank Lentricchia, "Tales of the Electronic Tribe," in *New Essays on* White Noise, ed. Frank Lentricchia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 93.
[131] While DeLillo is the only author analysed in this dissertation who did not hold a job in academia, he worked for five years as a copywriter at the agency of Ogilvy & Mather in the early 1960s.
[132] See e.g. Alice Rayner, *Comic Persuasion: Moral Structure in British Comedy from Shakespeare to Stoppard* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 46.

external political circumstances. Bernard Bergonzi emphasizes that *Nice Work* was published in 1988, a year after Lodge left the university after twenty-seven years as a lecturer and professor. Therefore, whereas Lodge's earlier campus novels had been confined to the academy, in this one, "like Robyn, he finds a world elsewhere, as he did in real life. The professional writer, unlike the academic, is a solitary producer and directly dependent on the market; and thus more likely to understand the problems of other kinds of producer."[133]

One of the projects within the Industry Year in the novel is the Shadow Scheme, according to the University's Vice-Chancellor meant to "dispel the prejudice" that "universities are 'ivory tower' institutions, whose staff are ignorant of the realities of the modern commercial world."[134] In this programme, Robyn Penrose is to shadow Vic Wilcox, the managing director of J. Pringle and Sons Casting & General Engineering Company which supplies parts to the motor industry. Unlike *White Noise*, the first major campus novel written in the first person, *Nice Work* features two protagonists, both of whose thoughts are made accessible to the reader by the omniscient narrator. Thus, as Earl G. Ingersoll aptly notes, "the major difference in *Nice Work* as a representation of academic fiction is its willingness to invest half its production in the world of the other, Victor Wilcox, the representative of the other of Snow's two cultures."[135] Therefore, the novel demonstrates that Charles Percy Snow's 1959 lecture "The Two Cultures" about the separation of intellectual life in western society in between the sciences and the humanities has remained relevant even three decades later.

In Elaine Showalter's words, Lodge's rendering of Robyn represents "the most detailed, convincing, and upbeat portrait of the feminist academic in the '80s,"[136] in spite of the fact that *Nice Work* was written by a man. The narrator provides the reader with a summary of Robyn's vita, revealing that she was born "nearly thirty-three years ago" (*NW*, 42) in Australia, but

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[133] Bernard Bergonzi, *David Lodge* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1995), 27.
[134] David Lodge, *Nice Work* (London: Penguin, 1989), 85. Hereafter cited in the text as *NW*.
[135] Earl G. Ingersoll, "The Academic Novel with a Difference: David Lodge's *Nice Work,*" in *Academic Novels as Satire*: *Critical Studies of an Emerging Genre*, ed. Mark Bosco and Kimberly Rae Connor (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), 87.
[136] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 102.

her family moved to England when she was five, as her father did post-doctoral research in 19th-century European diplomacy at Oxford. Much of the rest of Robyn's biography is a history of literary studies in miniature. A bright student, Robyn was urged by her school to apply to Oxbridge, but chose to go to Sussex University: "Under the umbrella of a degree course in English Literature, Robyn read Freud and Marx, Kafka and Kierkegaard, which she certainly couldn't have done at Oxbridge" (*NW*, 42). Thus, *Nice Work* becomes one of the first British campus novels that refuse to celebrate the traditions of Oxford and Cambridge in order to embrace the modern trends that spread more rapidly in newer universities.[137]

During her studies at Sussex, Robyn joined the Debating Society and spoke frequently in favour of progressive causes such as abortion, animal rights, state education and nuclear disarmament. She also met Charles, who became her boyfriend, and with whom she later went to Cambridge to do a Ph.D. By this time, the narrator informs the reader, "structuralism and poststructuralism, semiotics and deconstruction, new mutations and graftings of psychoanalysis and Marxism, linguistics and literary criticism" (*NW*, 46) have reached Oxbridge. However, the more conservative dons still did not approve of these new approaches to literary criticism. Eventually, "battle was joined, in seminars, lectures, committee meetings and the review pages of scholarly journals. It was revolution. It was civil war. Robyn threw herself enthusiastically into the struggle, on the radical side naturally. It was like the sixties all over again, in a new, more austerely intellectual key" (*NW*, 46). Thus, too young to participate in the student unrest described, for instance, in Lodge's own *Changing Places*, Robyn finds a cause for fight in her support of innovative methods in literary criticism. Importantly, the narrator's treatment of Robyn is ambivalent. While the narrator is mostly sympathetic to her, he satirizes her adherence to literary theory by introducing her as a "character who, rather awkwardly for me, doesn't herself believe in the concept of character" (*NW*, 39).

[137] Established in 1961, Sussex University is one of the so called plate glass universities, the next wave of British institutions of higher education after the so called redbrick universities (including Lodge's Birmingham aka Rummidge) that gained university status before WWI.

Accordingly, in his academic writings, Lodge has expressed his regrets that the rise of theory may result in the incomprehensibility of literary criticism to readers outside academia.[138]

Robyn's career also echoes the budget crisis at British universities. By the time Robyn finishes her Ph.D., Margaret Thatcher has begun cutting higher education and the graduate cannot find a job: "The previously unthinkable prospect of a non-academic career now began to be thought—with fear, dismay and bewilderment on Robyn's part. Of course she was aware, cognitively, that there was a life outside universities, but she knew nothing about it, nor did Charles, or her parents" (*NW*, 51). Like Amis's Jim Dixon, Robyn can hardly imagine a career outside academia; however, unlike him, it is because for her, university teaching represents the only "nice work" of the novel's title. Fortunately for Robyn, in 1984, Professor Philip Swallow of Lodge's *Changing Places*, who has by this time become the head of the English Department at Rummidge, is elected Dean of the Arts Faculty and is allowed to appoint a temporary lecturer in English Literature. Thus, Robyn gets the job and moves to Rummidge. Her relationship with Charles, who now teaches at the University of Suffolk,[139] has by this time evolved into a phase which resembles "a divorce in which the two parties occasionally meet for companionship and sexual pleasure without strings" (*NW*, 59). Robyn has occasional doubts about the relationship, but for the time being, concentrates on her newly developing career.

While Robyn is convinced about the importance of liberal education, Vic Wilcox, the other of Lodge's protagonists, is much more sceptical. Vic was born in 1940 and currently lives in a neo-Georgian house in Rummidge with his wife, Marjorie, and three children. Like Robyn, Vic is satisfied with his job, but his emotional life has gone stale, as Marjorie has become a bored, chunky housewife, using Valium and falling asleep over the book *Enjoy Your Menopause*. A graduate of the Rummidge College of Advanced Technology, Vic passes the university every day on his way to and from work. To him, the campus appears as a "small city

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[138] See e.g. David Lodge, "A Kind of Business—the Academic Critic in America," in *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1990), 175-184.
[139] Probably a fictional university, as University Campus Suffolk was not established until 2007.

state, an academic Vatican, from which he keeps his distance, both intimidated by and disapproving of its air of privileged detachment from the vulgar, bustling industrial city in which it is embedded" (*NW*, 29). Thus, even at the time of the wide ranging budget cuts, the university may seem a pastoral world to an outsider.

White Noise, on the contrary, does not feature such incomparable perceptions of the campus. Nevertheless, Vic's seeing the university in clerical terms may not be that far-fetched. As the department heads at the College-on-the-Hill wear robes like friars or priests, "not grand sweeping full-length affairs but sleeveless tunics puckered at the shoulders" (*WN*, 9), Showalter notes that the college "mirrors John Winthrop's vision of puritan America, a moral beacon to the world."[140] Also, the characterization of the campus as an enclosed world is reinforced when Gladney notes: "The students tend to stick close to campus. There is nothing for them to do in Blacksmith proper, no natural haunt or attraction" (*WN*, 59). On the other hand, while the students may not be tempted to venture outside the campus, as I have already shown, the university engages in similar marketing practices as the world of business and commerce. Accordingly, as Gladney says, "little or no resentment attaches to the College-on-the-Hill as an emblem of ruinous influence" (*WN*, 85).

While Lodge's novel is, as most of British academic fiction, set in the English Department, *White Noise* focuses on Gladney's department of Hitler Studies. No other member of Hitler Studies is mentioned in the novel, but the department is located in Centenary Hall, along with the department of popular culture, officially called American Environments. Thus, whereas *Nice Work* reflects the changing attitudes to the traditional humanist field of English Literature, *White Noise* illustrates the development of completely new academic programmes. The chairman of American Environments, Alfonse (Fast Food) Stompanato, collects pre-war soda pop bottles. Most of his teachers are New York émigrés and all of them "are male, wear rumpled clothes, need haircuts, cough into their armpits" (*WN*, 9). They mostly specialize in film and try to relate the films and the famous actor's

[140] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 94.

biographies to their own lives. Stompanato's fascination with his field of expertise goes so far that he once asks his colleagues over lunch where they were when James Dean died. As one of the department members is not sure about the answer, he starts pleading: "Ask me Joan Crawford. [...] Ask me Gable, ask me Monroe. Ask me Jeff Chandler [...]. Ask me John Garfield, ask me Monty Cliff" (*WN*, 69). Thus, film and television, rather than the canonical works of English literature or influential texts of literary theory, form the background of *White Noise*. While Michael Valdez Moses explains that "white noise is literally an artificially produced electronic noise invented to cover over the silence which disturbs workers in modern soundproof office buildings,"[141] the novel's title also refers to the background noises of the televisions or radios that are always on during the conversations in Gladney's home.

The only exception to some of the characteristics of a typical American Environments professor is Murray Jay Siskind, a former sportswriter and a newcomer to the college. Unlike the macho and affluent Jewish professors like Morris Zapp who entered academic fiction in the previous decade, Siskind is a loner that lives in a rooming house: "I can't help being happy in a town called Blacksmith. I'm here to avoid situations" (*WN*, 11), he says. Shortly after his arrival, Siskind confides to Gladney about his surprise at his colleagues' areas of expertise: "I understand the music, I understand the movies, I even see how comic books can tell us things. But there are full professors in this place who read nothing but cereal boxes" (*WN*, 10). Siskind's surprise voices the author's criticism of some trends in academia, including the programme of Hitler Studies, which are satirized in the novel. In an interview, DeLillo admitted that "we want to know more about the Nazi era, and Hitler's place in it," but explained that *White Noise* "is just a comment on the kind of super specialization that has entered our culture in the last 15 years or so. Why not an academic specialty devoted to a single individual, if the individual is as

[141] Michael Valdez Moses, "Lust Removed from Nature," in *New Essays on* White Noise, 81.

important as Hitler?"[142] Paul A. Cantor adds that "the bland acceptance of DeLillo's treatment of Hitler in academic circles seems to mirror the very phenomenon *White Noise* portrays: a scholarly world so open-minded that it can now accommodate any subject without evidently blinking an eye."[143] Thus, even academic openness can become a rather negative quality when taken to its extremes.

This feature of the academia is further stressed by the college catalogue's description of the only class that Chairman Gladney teaches: "Advanced Nazism, three hours a week, restricted to qualified seniors, a course of study designed to cultivate historical perspective, theoretical rigour and mature insight into the continuing mass appeal of fascist tyranny, with special emphasis on parades, rallies and uniforms, three credits, written reports" (*WN*, 25). Thus, Hitler becomes a topic for a college course just like any routine subject. In addition, Cantor observes that "the sober course description actually contains a bomb shell when it speaks of the *continuing* [italics in original] mass appeal of fascist tyranny, suggesting that the phenomenon of Hitler has not been successfully suppressed and contained."[144] However, in the context of a college catalogue, this disturbing fact loses its importance.[145]

In spite of his initial feelings of insecurity at the College-on-the-Hill, Siskind catches on quickly. While of Jewish heritage, Siskind is not at all disturbed by Hitler studies. On the contrary, he flatters Gladney for his success: "Nobody on the faculty of any college or university in this part of the country can so much as utter the word Hitler without a nod in your direction, literally or metaphorically. This is the center, the unquestioned source. He is now your Hitler, Gladney's Hitler" (*WN*, 11-12). Moreover, inspired by his colleague's example, Siskind wants to establish another new field, Elvis Studies.

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[142] "Interview with Ray Suarez," *NPR Book Club of the Air*, August 4, 1994, paragraph 8, accessed August 22, 2013, http://perival.com/delillo/technoise.html.
[143] Paul A. Cantor, "Adolf, We Hardly Knew You," in *New Essays on* White Noise, 40.
[144] Cantor, "Adolf, We Hardly Knew You," 45.
[145] In a much more personal way, German history becomes reflected in Michael Blumenthal's novel *Weinstock among the Dying* (1993). In this text, Martin Weinstock, a poet teaching creative writing at Harvard, recalls his growing up in Manhattan, as he was brought up by his aunt and uncle, Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany.

While Gladney is willing to help Siskind to get support for his idea, he has a problem of his own. An international Hitler conference is scheduled at the College-on-the-Hill for next spring, but Gladney speaks no German. Thus, Siskind arranges for Gladney to take German lessons from an instructor not affiliated with the college, Howard Dunlop, Murray's fellow tenant at the rooming house. Gladney is amazed that Dunlop, an eccentric who rarely seems to leave his room, tells him that besides German, he used to teach Greek, Latin, ocean sailing, and meteorology: "I've taught meteorology in church basements, in trailer parks, in people's dens and living rooms" (*WN*, 56). Indeed, Gladney aptly notes that "everyone I know is either a teacher or a student" (*WN*, 55), as his wife, Babette, teaches a course on correct posture in an adult education programme. One day, Babette mentions she has been asked to teach another course, called "Eating and Drinking: Basic Parameters" (*WN*, 171). When her children express their disbelief at such a banal topic, she explains to them: "The world is more complicated for the adults than it is for children. We didn't grow up with all these shifting facts and attitudes. [...] So people need to be reassured by someone in a position of authority that a certain way to do something is the right way or the wrong way, at least for the time being" (*WN*, 172). Thus, the postmodern world of *White Noise* with its constantly shifting values provides numerous opportunities for teaching, both within and beyond the official educational institutions, as people are always eager to learn in order to feel more secure. As Showalter writes, *White Noise* is "in the category of great American fiction about the soul, [...] about the fear of death and the ways people stave it off with knowledge, titles, robes, and ceremonies."[146]

Like the whole field of Hitler Studies, the conference is also carefully advertised and marketed: "Three days of lectures, workshops and panels. Hitler scholars from seventeen states and nine foreign countries. Actual Germans would be in attendance" (*WN*, 33). The international makeup of the conference is not far from the description of academic conferences in Lodge's previous novel, *Small World* (1984), which portrays the world as a

[146] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 96.

global campus. Like in *Small World*, the conference becomes quite a diversion for the participants who "told Hitler jokes and played pinochle" (*WN*, 294). Gladney welcomes all the participants with a five minute speech in German, the result of his German lessons with Dunlop. For the rest of the conference, Gladney tries to avoid the Germans because of his insufficient knowledge of the language. However, he is surprised to notice how all the scholars "resembled each other despite the wide diversity of national and regional backgrounds" (*WN*, 294). Thus, in the globalized academia, not even the Germans respond to the Nazi phenomenon with more depth than Gladney himself.

While *White Noise* describes many teaching and studying opportunities that permeate the whole society, the fictional world of *Nice Work* again proves Lodge's interests in structuralism and binary oppositions, portraying university teaching and factory working as two walks of life, separated by an insurmountable gap. Thus, neither Robyn nor Vic are excited about venturing into the unknown, as they learn they have been selected for the Shadow Scheme. Robyn only agrees because she realizes she may need a reference from Swallow one day. Vic also carefully negotiates his participation in the programme with Brian Everthorpe, his marketing director that mistakenly expects Robyn to be a male, because of her first name.

Thus, after their first meeting, Vic, whose political preferences are on the right and who is only five feet, five and a half inches tall, unfavourably comments on both Robyn's gender and world views: "Jesus wept! Not just a lecturer in English Literature, not just a *woman* lecturer in English literature, but a trendy lefty feminist lecturer in English Literature! A *tall* trendy leftist feminist lecturer in English Literature!" (*NW*, 116, italics in original). Similarly, after her first meeting, Robyn thinks of the factory as "the cultural heart of darkness" (*NW*, 141). She does not find anything attractive about Vic, a cultural conservative and a supporter of Margaret Thatcher. Importantly, besides reflecting their personalities, the arguments between Vic and Robyn continue in a constant debate in English culture about the effects of industrialism. As Bernard Bergonzi sums up, "Robyn is the heir to a distinguished intellectual tradition of hostility to

industrial civilization, which extends from Carlyle to Leavis. Vic presents the opposing position that without national wealth, won in a harsh, competitive world, none of the academic values and quality of life which Robyn takes for granted could be sustained."[147] Bergonzi concludes with outlining the reflections of these debates in literature, as similar discussions were enacted in the Victorian industrial novels, "which were sometimes known, in Carlyle's expressive phrase, as 'Condition of England' novels; *Nice Work* is a latter-day addition to the genre."[148]

However, eventually, Robyn and Vic overcome the gaps between them and influence each other's opinions, making one another question what they had always taken for granted. Thus, in a sense, *Nice Work* is even more a novel about teaching than *White Noise*. First, when talking to Vic who claims that art degrees are a waste of money, Robyn finds herself "falling back on arguments that I don't really believe any more, like the importance of maintaining cultural tradition, and improving students' communicative skills" (*NW*, 218). However, as she confides to Charles, "if I said we teach students about the perpetual sliding of the signified under the signifier, or the way every text inevitably undermines its own claim to a determinate meaning, [Vic] would laugh in my face" (*NW*, 218). While Charles does not bother to think about the implications of Vic's ignorance of poststructuralism, Robyn is disturbed by the realization that it makes literary theory "rather marginal" (*NW*, 218), as even many educated people have no knowledge of it.

In addition, under Vic's guidance, Robyn rethinks the way universities are built and designed. Portrayed in rather unattractive terms in *Changing Places*, to a factory manager, the student housing at Rummidge looks like "massive three star hotels" (*NW*, 240), or "imitation Oxford colleges" (*NW*, 241). Influenced by her conversation with Vic, Robyn becomes aware of the inconsistency between the university's elitist set-up and her own left-wing principles. Later, Robyn even tries to convince her parents, to their surprise, that she has some reservations about the way the 1963 Robbins Report was implemented. A report of the Committee on

[147] Bergonzi, *David Lodge*, 25.
[148] Bergonzi, *David Lodge*, 25.

Higher education, the Robbins Report recommended an immediate expansion of British universities and promoted the accessibility of higher education to all able and willing. While Robyn agrees with these two main points, she argues that building "so many new universities in parks on the outskirts of cathedral cities [...] perpetuates the Oxbridge idea of higher education as a version of pastoral, a privileged idyll cut off from ordinary living" (*NW*, 307). Even though Robyn insists that "universities are the cathedrals of the modern age," she admits that they "don't really bother to explain themselves to the community" (*NW*, 241). Thus, *Nice Work* definitely abandons the infatuation with Oxbridge that has made its way into the majority of previous British campus novels.

On the other hand, Robyn's feelings of inadequacy of teaching literary theory dissolve after she successfully lectures Vic on the difference between metaphor and metonymy and manages to explain to him how to recognize their usage in contemporary advertisements. Also, Robyn even convinces Vic that nude female posters at the factory objectify women and persuades him to have them taken off. Overall, thanks to Robyn, Vic becomes increasingly conscious of his own educational limitations and narrow horizons. Nevertheless, observing Vic's meetings with his staff, Robyn is pleased to realize that he "would have been surprised to be told it, but he used the Socratic method: he prompted the other directors and the middle managers and even the foremen to identify the problems themselves and to reach by their own reasoning the solutions he had himself already determined upon" (*NW*, 219). Thus, Robyn enjoys discovering that Vic's job may be more similar to hers than she expected. In spite of her initial reluctance to participate in the Shadow Scheme, Robyn finds herself happy for the opportunity, as she "led a double life these days, and felt herself to be a more interesting and complex person because of it" (*NW*, 216).

If the two topoi in *Nice Work* are the university and the factory, in *White Noise*, it is the university and the supermarket, where Gladney often goes with Babette and all the four children of various parentage that they are bringing up. When starting out with Hitler Studies, Gladney reinvented his identity, adding an extra initial and thus renaming himself J. A. K.

Gladney, as Showalter notes, like many other academics in the '80s and '90s that "suddenly began to sign themselves with three names."[149] At the College-on-the-Hill, Gladney wears his gown and heavy framed black glasses all the time. Gladney even named his son Heinrich Gerhardt, explaining that "he was born shortly after I started the department and I guess I wanted to acknowledge my good fortune" (*WN*, 63). However, Gladney's impressive image of a successful department head does not carry over from his professional into personal life. When a colleague meets Gladney and his family at the supermarket, he perceives Jack, without the gown and glasses, in completely different terms, as "a big, harmless, aging, indistinct sort of guy" (*WN*, 83). Thus, Gladney also appears to be living two lives—one of a recognized college professor and one of a worried family man. Or, his life as a powerful man is, in Thomas J. Ferraro's words, only a "marketed image."[150]

In *Nice Work*, Vic Wilcox finds himself in a similar position. On the surface, he seems an affluent man that can prove his wealth with his five bedroom house with four toilettes. It is Marjorie in particular that enjoys the benefits of her husband's job, boasting of the *en suite* bathroom. Thus, consumerism is also reflected in Lodge's novel, even though not in relation to academia. In reality, however, Vic's job is as insecure as Robyn's position of a temporary lecturer, with the only difference that she knows her appointment ends after three years. Vic, on the contrary, tells Robyn that the Engineering and Foundry Division of Midland Amalgamated that own J. Pringle and Sons can "get rid of [him] whenever they like" (*NW*, 135). In fact, this is exactly what happens towards the end of the novel, as Vic is suddenly told that the Board of Midland Amalgamated "did not see Pringle fitting into [their] long-term strategy" (*NW*, 365). Consequently, they decide to sell the company and make Vic redundant. As Kenneth Womack puts it, *Nice Work* "examines the uneasy relationship that often exists between the academy and the 'real world,' between the competitive forces of the

[149] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 95.
[150] Thomas J. Ferraro, "Whole Families Shopping at Night!" in *New Essays on* White Noise, 21.

intellect and the free market forces of the industry."[151] However, while the two worlds appear different, the members of both of them have to struggle to survive. In addition, Vic's job is even less secure, as rather than on his intellect, it depends on the whimsy of the marketplace. No surprise that Vic is appalled to hear that many of Robyn's colleagues enjoy tenure.

However, by the time Vic is dismissed, the relationship between him and Robyn has become more complicated. On her last day as Vic's shadow, Robyn accompanies him to a technology convention in Frankfurt, Germany. The narrator precedes the account of the business trip by a flash forward: "It was, perhaps, inevitable, that Victor Wilcox and Robyn Penrose would end up in bed together" (*NW*, 267). Thus, adultery continues to be one of the favourite themes of the British campus novel. However, having spent the night together, the two protagonists interpret the event in completely different terms. Robyn thinks of what happened as a one night stand, something she happened to be ready for, as she learned shortly before the trip that Charles had started dating Debbie, a foreign exchange dealer without university education. Charles mentioned to Robyn earlier that he may want to try writing an article about what is going on in the City, explaining that the financial services sector is "not about buying and selling real commodities. It's all on paper, on computer screens. It's abstract. It has its own rather seductive jargon—arbitrageur, deferred futures, floating rate. It's like literary theory" (*NW*, 219). However, in spite of her surprise by Charles's sudden interest in banking, Robyn did not suspect that it may be paralleled by a similarly intense infatuation with another woman. Even though Robyn's pride was wounded by the discovery of Charles' infidelity, she stays realistic and has no expectations from her relationship with Vic.

Vic, on the other hand, is convinced he is in love with Robyn, even claiming that he is going to get a divorce and marry her. Robyn unsuccessfully tries to convince him that "love is a literary con trick" (*NW*, 297). However, Vic continues to write her letters that she refuses to answer. To escape from Vic, Robyn spends Easter at her parents' in the south of England, working on her book on the image of women in 19th

[151] Kenneth Womack, *Postwar Academic Fiction: Satire, Ethics, Community* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 92.

century fiction which may help her extend her temporary lectureship at Rummidge or get a permanent job elsewhere. While Robyn no longer idealizes universities, she still cannot imagine having a satisfying career anywhere else. Because of her Shadow Scheme experience, she now finds herself daydreaming of the campus full of not only students and lecturers, but also workers and managers, all of whom have gathered there "to exchange ideas on how the values of the university and the imperatives of commerce might be reconciled and more equitably managed to the benefit of the whole society" (*NW*, 347). Thus, the awareness of the gap between Snow's two cultures permeates the whole of the novel.

At one point, it seems that Robyn is going to leave the university just like many protagonists of earlier campus novels do, as she is told that the faculty's grant is going to be cut by another ten per cent. It is at this moment that Morris Zapp of *Changing Places* appears as deus ex machina, attending a party at the Swallows' on his way to a series of European conferences. Thus, while Rummidge's overseas conference fund has been cut to the bone, Euphoria States,' Lodge's fictionalized version of Berkeley, is still as generous as in the previous decade.[152] At the party, Zapp and Robyn have a conversation about her work in progress in which "the names of prominent feminist critics and theorists crackled between them like machine-gun fire: Elaine Showalter, Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar, Shoshana Felman, Luce Irigaray, Catherine Clément, Susan Suleiman, Mieke Bal—Morris Zapp had read them all" (*NW*, 325). Impressed, Zapp offers Robyn to get her book published by Euphoria Press and invites her to apply for a tenure track appointment in Women's Studies at Euphoria State, for, as she later learns, "exactly twice as much as she was earning in Rummidge" (*NW*, 358). When Zapp admits that there is another candidate for the position, "not a serious scholar, just a writer" (*NW*, 358), any reader familiar with *Changing Places* guesses it must be Zapp's ex-wife, Désirée, who has applied for the job. For those who have not read the first book in the series, this fact is later confirmed by Philip Swallow in a

[152] In fact, Richard Russo's *Straight Man* (1997), probably the first major American campus novel portraying an American college struggling with financial problems, was not published until almost a decade after *Nice Work*.

conversation with Robyn. Apparently, Zapp, in spite of his knowledge of feminist theory, dreads the prospectus of having his radical feminist ex-wife work at the university that employs him; even Robyn calls the mode of Désirée's two bestselling books, *Difficult Days* and *Men*, "vulgar feminism" (*NW*, 322).

Even though the 1980s was the decade when feminist cultural theory spread in academia, *White Noise* lacks any academic female character that would be satisfied with all aspects of her experience in academia. As all the instructors at the American Environments are male, the only female academic in the novel is Winnie Richards, a young research neurochemist whose work is respected by the entire faculty at the college. However, in terms of appearance and behaviour, Gladney describes Winnie as "a tall, gawky, furtive woman who blushed when someone said something funny" (*WN*, 185). While Robyn Penrose corrects Morris Zapp he should not tell her "you look like a smart girl to me," as she prefers to be referred to by the neutral word "person" (*NW*, 326), Winnie has much more to put up with as "some of the New York émigrés liked to visit her cubicle and deliver rapid-fire one-liners, just to see her face turn red" (*WN*, 185). When Gladney reminds Winnie that everybody calls her "brilliant," she only retorts: "I'm built funny and walk funny. If they couldn't call me brilliant, they would be forced to say cruel things about me. How awful for everyone" (*WN*, 188-9). Whereas Winnie's character enables DeLillo to effectively disclose some of the hypocrisy in academia, it also emphasizes the plight of female faculty members.

Robyn Penrose, on the contrary, has increasingly less to worry about. After she sends out her job application, another piece of news arrives, as she learns she is the sole beneficiary of her Australian uncle's will. Thus, while Robyn will not become Vic's wife, she will support him financially, as he decides to fulfil his dream and start his own company. In fact, the recent lack of fortune in Vic's professional life is balanced by a change for the better in his personal life. Marjorie's reaction to Vic's loss of his job is, all in all, rather surprising. Besides expressing a relief that the reason for Vic's recent absent-mindedness was not a relationship with another woman, the rather passive Marjorie now happily suggests she could

work as a secretary in his new company to save up his expenses. In addition, Marjorie's interest in her husband's independent career revives Vic's erotic interest in his wife.

Finally, at the university, Philip Swallow announces that he has discovered he can redirect some of the resources and keep Robyn instead of the oldest member of the department, Rupert Sutcliffe of *Changing Places*, that is going to retire. Robyn, one of whose students has just talked to her to tell her she is the best professor at the department, gladly agrees to stay, as she is not really attracted to leaving Rummidge. If Ian Carter wonders "where are the British novels that have Oxbridge-educated teachers celebrating not-Oxbridge university life,"[153] here is one.

The serendipitous ending of *Nice Work* echoes the restorative closure of earlier British campus novels form *Lucky Jim* onwards. In other words, the ending highlights the novel's reliance on the comic literary tradition with its structures of reconciliation that prevail over the satirical elements of the text. As Bergonzi writes, the ending "may depend more on convention and genre than on probability, but the work is a comedy, and we expect comedies to end more or less happily."[154] As has been mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, texts which are predominantly satirical, in contrast, tend towards open-endedness and irresolution rather than a clear-cut closure.

However, whereas Vic's and Marjorie's marriage is restored to order, there is no wedding for Robyn. Even though Charles has broken up with Debbie and asks Robyn to marry him, she rejects the proposal, and keeps her integrity and independence. Thus, except for the ending, the novel is in many aspects a modern retelling of Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1855). Just like *Nice Work* follows the two representatives of the university and the business world, *North and South* details the relationship between Margaret Hale from the aristocratic South of England and John Thornton, the owner of a local mill in a northern industrial town. Nevertheless, Gaskell's text ends with the marriage of the two major

[153] Ian Carter, *Ancient Cultures of Conceit: British University Fiction in the Post-War Years* (London: Routledge, 1990), 204.
[154] Bergonzi, *David Lodge*, 27. However, as I have mentioned in the introduction, since the term *comedy* is usually used in reference to drama, I prefer to call the texts discussed in this dissertation comic novels rather than comedies.

characters. Besides, *Nice Work* makes numerous references to other 19th century novels, such as Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854), that are either quoted in Robyn's lectures or used as epigraphs to individual chapters.

White Noise does not build on 19th century literature in any way, referring to Dickens only once to highlight the difference between a distant past and the present. When assigned by his doctor to undergo some medical tests at an institution called Autumn Harvest Farms, Gladney ponders on the implications of the name: "What kind of condition might we expect to have diagnosed in a facility called Autumn Harvest Farms? Whooping cough, croup? A touch of the grippe? Familiar old farmhouse miseries calling for bed rest, a deep chest massage with soothing Vicks VapoRub? Would someone read to us from *David Copperfield*?" (*WN*, 275-6). The reference to the 19th century novel thus suggests that Dickens' portrayal of life seems inadequate in Gladney's world, just like the name Autumn Harvest Farms with its implication of a countryside pastoral and absence of serious illnesses. However, to be fully appreciated by the reader, the passage needs further contextualization.

While *Nice Work* transgresses the traditional boundaries of academic fiction by an excursion into the contemporary industrial world, *White Noise* ventures farther beyond the campus. Frank Lentricchia characterizes the novel as, among other things, "an ecological novel at the dawn of ecological consciousness."[155] Indeed, both Gladney's domestic and professional lives are disrupted by an ecological catastrophe, referred to as the airborne toxic event, as a chemical spill from a tank car releases a black billowing cloud not far from Jack's home. The event develops unexpectedly and Gladney tends to undermine its importance until the last moment: "I'm the head of a department. I don't see myself fleeing an airborne toxic event. That's for people who live in mobile homes out in the scrubby parts of the county, where the fish hatcheries are" (*WN*, 117). Thus, Gladney makes claims that his privileged position in society should guarantee his and his family's protection from such natural disasters. Moreover, Gladney is not convinced about the seriousness of the situation

[155] Lentricchia, "Introduction," 7.

until a fire captain's car announces the necessity of evacuation. In comparison, Gladney's son Heinrich that follows all the news and updates about the event to inform the family seems much more responsible than his father, in spite of being mildly satirized for his precociousness.

When the Gladneys are evacuated into an abandoned Boy Scout camp, Jack finally feels in danger, and misses the attributes that symbolize his social privilege: "I wanted my academic gown and dark glasses" (*WN*, 142). However, the airborne toxic event is a state that concerns every human being, regardless of their social status. In fact, having been exposed to the cloud while refuelling, Gladney has to undergo medical check-ups, as Nyodene D, the toxin released in the event, is supposed to have a life span of thirty years in human body and is thus likely to result in Jack's premature death. Jack's reaction to this announcement underlines its inherent absurdity: "So to outlive this substance, I will have to make it into my eighties. Then I can begin to relax" (*WN*, 141). Of course, if Gladney lives into his eighties, he will be much closer to death regardless of Nyodene D. As Michael Valdez Moses notes, "the airborne toxic event, though produced by a fully technological society, nevertheless replicates a primal and elementary human situation [...] of an authentic existential threat."[156]

Indeed, the fear of death stands at the very centre of *White Noise*; one of its working titles was *The American Book of the Dead*. Both Gladney and Babette cannot help torturing themselves with thoughts as to which of them will die first. One of the reasons why Gladney is attracted to Hitler lies, in Valdez Moses' words, "in the apparent power of the carefully staged Nazi rally to ward off an existential confrontation with personal finitude."[157] In the novel, Gladney describes to Siskind his feelings when watching the Nazi propaganda films in the following terms: "Crowds came to form a shield against their own dying. To become a crowd is to keep out death. To break off from the crowd is to risk death as an individual, to face dying alone" (*WN*, 73). Thus, becoming a spectator of the Nazi propaganda films allows Gladney to temporarily forget about his fear of

[156] Michael Valdez Moses, "Lust Removed from Nature," in *New Essays on* White Noise, 81.
[157] Valdez Moses, "Lust Removed from Nature," 81.

death. Therefore, Janice Rossen is right to point out that scholars tend to "search for something in their work that is intensely personal."[158] In Gladney's case, the research field he has invented allows him to lessen his fear of death.

Babette, on the other hand, alleviates her fear of death by secretly using a fictional experimental drug called Dylar. After she unintentionally reveals this fact to Gladney because of her lack of carefulness in hiding the substance, Babette admits to Jack that she received the drug in exchange for sex from a man she calls Mr. Gray so as not to disclose his identity. Thus, while in *Nice Work*, adultery stands at the centre of the novel, it is only one of the many interrelated themes of *White Noise*. Babette claims she let Mr. Gray know on the answering machine the drug did not work for her and stopped meeting him. Gladney believes her but cannot help thinking of the man.

Eventually, Gladney tracks Mr. Gray down and plans to kill him with a gun he got from his father-in-law. Importantly, earlier on, Gladney himself suggested that such an action is inconsistent with his character. When receiving the gun, Gladney initially refuses accepting it, saying "we don't want guns in our little town" (*WN*, 254), and only agrees to take it when his father-in-law insists. However, after he learns of Mr. Gray, he finds himself in a situation he had never imagined and decides to make use of the gun. When Gladney locates Mr. Gray in a deserted motel on the edge of town, the man is an easy target, sitting in front of the TV, under the influence of Dylar. Nevertheless, because of Gladney's inexperience and clumsiness, the event develops differently from his expectations. Having shot the sitting Mr. Gray in his midsection, Gladney proceeds to place the gun in his hand to make the murder look like a suicide; however, Gray manages to pull the trigger and shoot him in his wrist.

Looking at the bloodied man, Gladney suddenly perceives Gray in completely different terms: "I was seeing him for the first time as a person. The old human muddles and quirks were set flowing again. Compassion, remorse, mercy" (*WN*, 313). Overcome by a sudden feeling of sympathy for his victim, Gladney decides to take Mr. Gray to the nearest clinic to save his

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[158] Janice Rossen, *The University in Modern Fiction: When Power Is Academic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 146.

life. On the way, Mr. Gray is so absent-minded he does not remember who shot him. The clinic turns out to be in the former Germantown and is still operated by German speaking nuns. The women are not disturbed by the men's injuries and do not ask for any explanations. Having a small talk conversation with them in German, Gladney concludes that he "felt much more at ease in this German-speaking company than [he] had with the Hitler scholars" (*WN*, 317), once again disclosing the international conference as inauthentic. When Gladney finally returns home after his secret adventure, he suddenly realizes how fulfilling his familial life is. Thus, while this subplot provides a satirical exaggeration of Gladney's inaptness at perpetuating violence, it eventually highlights his tendency to embrace humanity and reaffirms his satisfaction in personal life. Moreover, the experience puts a stop to Gladney's excessive worries about death. The closure of *White Noise* consequently echoes the restorative ending of *Nice Work*.

In the final chapter, Wilder, Babette's six-year-old son that is being brought up in the Gladneys' home, happens to leave the neighbourhood on his tricycle, unobserved by any family members. Not having witnessed the event, Gladney notes that "our reconstruction yields to the awe-struck account of two elderly women watching from the second-story back porch of a tall house in the trees" (*WN*, 322). Eventually, Wilder rides across the heavily trafficked highway, as he does not stop pedalling until he falls into a water furrow on the side. He survives, the implicit explication being that he has not yet come to fear death. This miraculous event shows that life and death continue to fascinate the human mind. In the novel's final sentence, the tabloid racks at the supermarket only prove this everlasting interest, as they include information on "the tales of the supernatural and the extraterrestrial. The miracle vitamins, the cures for cancer, the remedies for obesity. The cults of the famous and the dead" (*WN*, 326). Therefore, in spite of all the turning points throughout the novel, the affirmative ending of *White Noise* embraces the comic literary tradition like that of *Nice Work*. Indeed, the novel's leaning towards an affirmative ending has been established by Gladney's and Mr. Gray's survival. As comic texts tend to exclude death, one may expect Wilder to survive as well.

In conclusion, both *Nice Work* and *White Noise* transgress the usual confines of the campus novel by including events that take place outside of the university. *Nice Work*, the final part of Lodge's loose academic trilogy, overcomes its predecessors by the depth of social and cultural criticism, as it has enriched the genre with a confrontation of the academic and the business world, or Snow's two cultures. Set in 1986, the British Industry Year, it features an encounter between Robyn Penrose, a temporary lecturer in English Literature at Rummidge, Lodge's fictionalized Birmingham, and Victor Wilcox, the manager of an industrial company. As both of them are mildly satirised for their limited views, Lodge assures the reader that the meeting enables both of them to expand on their horizons. Towards the end of the text, the comic literary tradition prevails over the novel's satirical features, as the protagonists are rewarded for becoming more open-minded by a restoration of order in their personal and professional lives.

White Noise, on the contrary, does not need to contrast the academy with the business world, as it satirizes a fictional Midwestern college for taking over the practices of consumer culture. At the College-on-the-Hill, academic fields are advertised and consumed along with goods displayed at the local supermarket. While *Nice Work* leans towards a validation of feminism and literary theory that have found its way into the traditional field of English Literature, *White Noise* satirizes the narrow specialization within academia by featuring the new academic field of Hitler Studies. The chairman of Hitler Studies is the narrator and protagonist, Jack Gladney, a perceptive critic of consumer society, in which he, nevertheless, actively participates. Apart from satirizing academia, the novel goes far beyond the usual themes of campus novels, dealing with issues as serious as the fear of death. Over the course of the novel, Gladney is forced to face an ecological catastrophe and a marital crisis which makes him resort to violence. However, as Gladney condemns violence and embraces humanity, the closure of the text echoes the affirmative ending of *Nice Work* and its tendency towards the restoration of order associated with the comic literary tradition.

6. 1990s and Academic Research as Detection: A. S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance* and Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich's *The Crown of Columbus*[159]

Literary critics make natural detectives. You know the theory that the classic detective story arose with the classic adultery novel—everyone wanted to know who was the father, what was the origin, what is the secret?
—A. S. Byatt, *Possession: A Romance*

I had read enough mystery novels, seen enough whodunits on television, that I was a sucker for the drama: yellow parchment, unfinished sentences, portended treasure.
—Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich, *The Crown of Columbus*

The two major campus novels of the 1990s, A. S. Byatt's (1936-) *Possession: A Romance* (1990) and Michael Dorris (1945-1997) and Louise Erdrich's (1954-) *The Crown of Columbus* (1991) were written by already established writers who were, nevertheless, newcomers to the genre as their previous works have little in common with academic fiction. However, all of the authors knew university environment from the professor's point of view, as Byatt lectured at University College London from 1972 to 1983 and Dorris taught at Dartmouth College where Erdrich was a writer in residence in 1981. Besides setting their texts in the institutions they were familiar with, the authors reinvented the campus novel, either by enriching it with the elements of other genres or by elaborating on some features that used to be employed only marginally in the academic fiction of the previous decades.

For instance, the influence of romance, a mode of writing characterized, in J. A. Cuddon's words, by "elements of fantasy, improbability, extravagance and naivety [...], elements of love, adventure, the marvellous and the 'mythic,'"[160] was to be found in David Lodge's academic fiction of the 1980s. Lodge's 1988 novel *Nice Work*, discussed in the previous chapter, features an unlikely, if only short-lived, liaison

[159] An early version of this chapter was presented as a paper at the conference Crime and Detection in the Age of Electronic Reproduction, held at Technical University of Liberec on November 22-24, 2013, and is to be published in the conference proceedings later in 2015.
[160] J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (London: Penguin, 1999), 758.

between a female lecturer in English Literature and a manager of an engineering company and closes with the former's unexpected inheritance that solves the financial problems of all concerned. Similarly, *Possession*, besides being subtitled *A Romance*, even opens with an epigraph from Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*": "When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume, had he professed to be writing a Novel."[161]

While in this quote, novel and romance are differentiated according to the extent to which they ascribe to realism, as comic and satirical texts, campus novels are also not closely associated with the realist tradition. As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, the action portrayed in both a comic and a satirical text tends to be exaggerated; similarly as with the characters, the action is not meant to be realistic but rather illustrative. Thus, romance is not incompatible with either comedy or satire, as all of them depart significantly from realism. The link between romance and comedy is more tangible; as Christian Gutleben has suggested "the structure of reconciliation […] is common to [both] romance and comedy."[162] In result, through their restorative endings, both *Nice Work* and *Possession* may be seen as drawing on the tradition of romance as well as reinforcing the dominance of the comic in the campus novel genre. Finally, while Northrop Frye's seminal *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) suggests that satire cannot normally be mixed with romance, Gutleben asserts that this may not apply to the campus novel genre, as "the first true university novel, John Gibson Lockhart's *Reginald Dalton: A Story of English University Life*, originated in 1823 from the coupling of romance and satire."[163] This observation is valid although *Reginald Dalton* represents the earlier student-centred rather than modern professor-centred campus novel.

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[161] A. S. Byatt, *Possession: A Romance* (New York: Vintage, 1991), xi. Hereafter cited in the text as *P*.

[162] Christian Gutleben, "English Academic Satire from the Middle Ages to Postmodernism: Distinguishing the Comic from the Satiric," in *Theorizing Satire: Essays in Literary Criticism*, ed. Brian A. Connery and Kirk Combe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 138.

[163] Gutleben, "English Academic Satire," 138. Similarly, Zoja Pavlovskis-Petit finds the blending of romance and satire in the novels of Jane Austen, a major writer from the same period. See "Irony and Satire," in *A Companion to Satire*, ed. Ruben Quintero (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 518.

In addition, Byatt chooses to supply the epigraph from Hawthorne by the following passage: “The point of view in which this tale comes under the Romantic definition lies in the attempt to connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us” (*P*, xi). Accordingly, *Possession* juxtaposes the romantic relationships between fictional Victorian poets Randolph Henry Ash and Christabel LaMotte, and two late 1980s scholars, Roland Mitchell and Maud Bailey, researching their lives and work. Similarly, Dorris and Erdrich’s *The Crown of Columbus*, written on the occasion of the quincentenary of Christopher Columbus’s discovery of America, focuses on a Native American anthropologist’s interpretation of Columbus’s identity, and the results of the discovery for the indigenous peoples. The anthropologist, Vivian Twostar, is in a relationship with Roger Williams, a WASP poet and professor at the English Department, who is interested in Columbus as well, even though from a completely different perspective as a mythical heroic figure. Thus, while *Possession* compares and contrasts late 20th century with the Victorian era, *The Crown of Columbus* perceives the present as connected to an even earlier historical turning point.

Doryjane Birrer has characterized *Possession* as “a postmodern anti-postmodern Victorian historiographic metafiction Bildungsroman gothic detective story literary thriller romance.”[164] However, as the elements of metafiction and romance as well as a critique of postmodern philosophy have been present in campus novels at least since David Lodge’s *Changing Places* and *Nice Work*, I argue that it is the features of detective fiction that enriched the genre in the last decade of the 20th century. Along with the mainstream campus novel, there has also been the subgenre of the campus murder mystery which was foreshadowed even before WWII by Dorothy L. Sayers’s *Gaudy Night* (1935), a text representative of the Golden Age of British detective fiction. In the following decades, the campus murder mystery continued with the works of the British Edmund Cripin and the American Carolyn Gold Heilbrun,[165] yet, in spite of

[164] Doryjane Birrer, “From Campus Fiction to Metacritical Fiction: A. S. Byatt’s Academic Novels,” in *Academic Novels as Satire: Critical Studies of an Emerging Genre*, ed. Mark Bosco and Kimberly Rae Connor (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), 50.

[165] As a professor of English at Columbia, Heilbrun even published her murder mysteries, from *In the Last Analysis* (1964) to *The Edge of Doom* (2002), under the pen name of Amanda Cross, as she felt the need to protect her academic career.

its wide appeal, the subgenre has not received much critical attention or recognition.

The detective strand of academic fiction and the mainstream campus novel finally crossed in the early 1990s in *Possession* and *The Crown of Columbus*. However, rather than focusing on the theme of murder and its investigation, both Byatt and Dorris with Erdrich chose to portray as detection the methods and discoveries of academic research itself. Also, while many campus murder mysteries, such as Amanda Cross's *Death in A Tenured Position* (1981) that deals with the suicide of an ill-respected female English professor at Harvard, only highlight the problems in academia, the blending of detective fiction and the restorative tradition of romance in *Possession* and *The Crown of Columbus* allows for the portrayal of university life as a rewarding and meaningful existence. As academic research is depicted as the disclosure of hidden truths, typical of detective fiction, unlike in an early campus novel such as *Lucky Jim*, no character is tempted to leave academia.

Both novels thus portray academia as being far from an isolated ivory tower. Rather than a solitary activity separated from the outside world, academic research is viewed as an activity with larger social consequences. In *Possession*, Roland and Maud correct the literary and social history of Britain by revealing that a respected married poet was in a secret relationship with another writer, inevitably inviting comparisons with the perception of gender roles in late 20th century academia and wider society. Similarly, *The Crown of Columbus* provides a significant reinterpretation of the explorer's legacy with far-reaching results for previously colonized nations all over the world. Importantly, in both novels, unethical behaviour poses obstacles to the research carried out by the protagonists. The perpetrators of this behaviour thus provide the archetype of the villain necessary to the genre of detective fiction.

In the case of *Possession*, the combination of detective fiction and romance proved unexpectedly successful, as the novel was not only awarded the 1990 Booker Prize, but also became a bestseller, thus challenging the traditional claims about campus novels being read by a rather limited audience.[166] Twelve

[166] Merritt Moseley reports that within seven months of its publication, *Possession* sold about 100,000 hardback copies in the United States, and in 1991, it sold about 250,000 copies in paperback. See "Introductory: Definitions and Justifications," 6.

years after its publication, the novel was even adapted into a film, albeit one that does not strictly follow the original storyline. Ironically, Sarah Phillips Casteel mentions that *The Crown of Columbus* was shortly after its publication criticized for its "vivid action sequences appearing to court a Hollywood adaptation,"[167] which, however, was never put into practice. Overall, as Susan Farrell sums up, the novel was seen as "too commercial, too contemporary, and too entertaining to be taken seriously."[168] It is only recently that *The Crown of Columbus* has been, in my opinion deservedly, re-evaluated. In this paper, I argue that just like *Possession*, it successfully combines the elements of romance and detective fiction, besides enriching the academic novel with a Native American perspective.

Interestingly, in 1997, Adam Begley argued that the campus novel eventually found itself in a decline because of the decrease of satire within the genre. Begley explains this phenomenon by the fact that the writers have become too dependent on campus and as a result, not satirical enough about it.[169] However, I believe that the following development of the genre has shown that satire only mildly decreased in some major campus novels of the 1990s to coexist with other elements and regain strength in the following decade. As I will show, *Possession* and *The Crown of Columbus* satirize both the traditional and the more recent aspects of academia and, because of their romantic elements, the modern courtship rituals in general. As A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff sums up, "a romance, detective story, adventure tale, and postcolonial response to the consequences of Columbus's invasion, *The Crown of Columbus* is also a sharp academic satire."[170] Similarly, Birrer writes that *Possession* "extends the lampooning tradition of campus fiction to encompass a more intensely philosophical and sustained engagement with the implications of changing conditions in English studies, and particularly with the relationship of literary criticism

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[167] Sarah Phillips Casteel, "Sephardism and Marranism in Native American Fiction of the Quincentenary," *MELUS* 37, no. 2 (2012), 79.

[168] Susan Farrell, "Colonizing Columbus: Dorris and Erdrich's Postmodern Novel," *Critique* 40, no. 2 (1999), 121.

[169] While Begley's analysis focuses on two other American novels, Jane Smiley's *Moo* (1995) and Richard Russo's *Straight Man* (1997), it could also be applied to the novels discussed in this chapter. See Adam Begley, "The Decline of the Campus Novel," *Lingua Franca* 7, no. 7 (1997), 39-46. On the contrary, Ishmael Reed's 1993 novel *Japanese by Spring*, dealing with the American Culture Wars, is much closer to the focus of the following chapter of this dissertation.

[170] A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, "Afterword," in *The Chippewa Landscape of Louise Erdrich*, ed. Allan Chavkin (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 185.

and theory not only to academic culture, but to the world outside of academe."[171] Thus, in both texts, satire is not replaced by other elements, whether more reflexive or more action-driven, but it meaningfully complements them.

The only substantial difference in the two novels with respect to their use of satire is closely tied to their narrative techniques. More specifically, the omniscient narrator in *Possession* invites the reader to identify with the two protagonists, Roland and Maud, and reserves most of the explicit satire for the minor characters. *The Crown of Columbus*, on the contrary, features the two protagonists, Vivian and Roger, as alternating narrators, providing the reader with an access to their thoughts, whether these be worthy of admiration or criticism. Thus, while the protagonists are mostly treated sympathetically, occasionally, the reader recognizes both Vivian and Roger as victims of the authors' implicit satire.

In spite of the differences, in both novels, the detective plot begins with an academic's finding of a manuscript which becomes influential for the discoverer's future career. In *Possession*, the academic scholarship that is portrayed as detection focuses on the finding of two intimate letters written by the supposedly major fictional poet Randolph Henry Ash to an unknown female addressee. The letters are accidentally discovered at the London Library in September 1986 by the twenty-nine-year-old Roland Mitchell, an insecure part-time research assistant to Professor James Blackadder, the editor of Ash's Complete Works. As a dedicated scholar, on finding the letters, Roland is both "profoundly shocked," as the married middle-aged writer urgently begs the unnamed lady to see him again, and "thrilled" (*P*, 9), for he has just discovered a heretofore unknown fact about the subject of his scholarship. As in all of Ash's biographies, there is no mention of Ash having any love interest other than his wife, Ellen, Roland is determined to examine all available resources in order to identify the addressee. In the diary of Ash's friend, Crabb Robinson, Roland reads about a breakfast party where both Ash and a Miss LaMotte were present. Finally, Roland identifies the lady as Christabel LaMotte, an author of religious poems and children's stories. Unlike Ash who has supposedly been recognized as a major Victorian poet, LaMotte is a rather marginalized poet that has been only recently

[171] Birrer, "From Campus Fiction to Metacritical Fiction," 51.

rediscovered by feminist literary critics. In fact, Elaine Showalter views Ash as "a cross between Tennyson and Browning" and LaMotte as "half Christina Rossetti, half Emily Dickinson."[172] As poems supposedly written by both poets are inserted into the text, *Possession* confirms intertextuality as a characteristic feature of the campus novel.

Roland's decision to keep the discovery of the letters for himself until he identifies the addressee is motivated by his marginal status in academia. The narrator mentions that Roland thinks of himself as a "latecomer" (*P*, 13), too young to experience the turbulent 1960s and benefit from the then expansion of British higher education. Even worse than a temporary lecturer like Robyn Penrose of David Lodge's *Nice Work*, Roland is only employed part-time. His personal life is not any more satisfying than the professional one, as he is living in a small basement flat with his girlfriend Val whom he met in college. While Roland is grateful to Val for helping him financially as he was finishing his Ph.D., they have recently grown estranged from each other.

Roland is vaguely aware that "if he could get a job, it might be easier to initiate some changes" (*P*, 18). However, the last time a job opening came up in his own department, it went to his older colleague Fergus Wolff, "a child of the sixties who had temporarily dropped out, opted for freedom and Parisian revolutions, sitting at the feet of Barthes and Foucault, before coming back to dazzle Prince Albert College" (*P*, 37). Besides being in the right place at the right time, Fergus also specializes in literary theory, a more modern field than Roland's traditional Victorian poetry and textual criticism. For all these reasons, Roland sees in his discovery a promise of career advancement. Thus, Janice Rossen rightly suggests that "the delight of hoarding special knowledge, as in private ownership of secrets about one's chosen subject, or the possession of manuscripts"[173] is one of the sources of power in academia.

While Roland makes a discovery in his field of expertise, the Dartmouth anthropologist Vivian Twostar of *The Crown of Columbus* is not interested in

[172] Elaine Showalter, *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 112.
[173] Janice Rossen, *The University in Modern Fiction: When Power Is Academic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 146.

Christopher Columbus at the beginning of the novel. In her tenure year, the assistant professor finds herself worried about her academic future, as her curriculum vitae is "top heavy with teaching experience at four different schools but light on scholarly productivity."[174] Accordingly, Vivian is shown as a dedicated teacher, for instance when organizing a student potluck instead of the final class session of her Native American Studies course. As her students arrive, she thinks of them as "the mix I regularly drew, including a few sceptical, sharp-eyed economics majors who had enrolled in order to fulfil a distribution requirement. […] Then there were the solemn five or six students who were truly interested in pre-contact civilizations, and finally, the one or two zealots who henceforth vowed to make Indian rights their life's cause" (*CC*, 81). Overall, Vivian is perceptive of and interested in her students' attitude toward the subject. Although the course is officially a survey of pre-1492 tribes, Vivian also tries to educate her students about the impact of the Old World on Native population.

Thus, when Vivian is asked to write an article on Christopher Columbus on the occasion of the quincentenary for the 1991 graduation issue of the alumni magazine, she is tempted to opt out. First, she tries to explain to the editor of the magazine that in her view, 1492 is "a year of mourning for American Indian peoples" (*CC*, 13). Second, she does not feel like writing about the same topic as her boyfriend Roger, who has been working on "an unrhymed monologue about Columbus—a reconstructed voice as in Browning's 'My Last Duchess'" (*CC*, 16). However, as the editor keeps pleading that the college would appreciate her contribution, she reluctantly agrees, since she understands that she needs to improve her scholarly reputation.[175]

Yet, Vivian's initial lack of interest in Columbus does not prevent her from making a ground-breaking discovery. At the Dartmouth library, Vivian discovers the college's correspondence with the Cobbs, a family of famous Dartmouth graduates. On examining the correspondence which has been going for

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[174] Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich, *The Crown of Columbus* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992), 13. Hereafter cited in the text as *CC*.

[175] A research conducted in American academia by E. L. Deci et al. in 1997 showed that teaching is still given little consideration in hiring and promotion. See Patricia Barber Verrone, *The Image of the Professor in American Academic Fiction, 1980-1997* (PhD diss., Seton Hall University, 1999), 15, accessed September 5, 2014, http://domapp01.shu.edu/depts/uc/apps/libraryrepository.nsf/resourceid/354EF71FD6361F0685256E1A006CF08D/$File/Verrone-Patricia-Barber.pdf?Open.

more than a century, Vivian finds out that just like his numerous ancestors, the latest descendant of the family, Henry Cobb, has been asking the college to return "all materials pertinent to Christopher Columbus" (*CC*, 127), without providing a more specific description. All that Vivian can observe are some recurring words: "'Columbus,' of course, but also 'Eleuthera' and '*corona*.' The farther back from the twentieth century I delved, the more elusive references became, with '*diario*' dangled more and more frequently" (*CC*, 133, italics in original). While Henry Cobb's last letter is as recent as 1989, the correspondence remains strikingly vague with respect to the nature of the materials the family has been asking for. Thus, the novel introduces a mystery that is to be gradually unveiled by the protagonist's research.

Curious, Vivian writes Henry Cobb a deliberately ambiguous letter, stating that she would like to learn more about his theories. Cobb promptly responds with an invitation to Eleuthera, Bahama Islands, all expenses included, and Vivian gladly accepts. As Vivian further inspects the correspondence, she comes across a letter written by a Samuel Martin Cobb to the Reverend of the College, obliquely asking him to determine the authenticity of two pages of a book and a pile of oyster shells, decorated on their smooth undersides with odd raised markings, in an unidentified language. Vivian understands that the sender meant to ask the Reverend whether the two attached pages coming from a diary which his ancestors had bought from a Spanish slave owner were really written by Christopher Columbus. As the writing appears to match Columbus's signature in other manuscripts, Vivian believes she has found two pages from Columbus's diary and hopes that if she brings the pages and the shells with her to Eleuthera, she will be able to fill in the gaps.

As the two preceding paragraphs suggest, *The Crown of Columbus* portrays Vivian's academic research as including all the stages typical of any scholarship in the humanities—looking through archived materials, the examination of found texts, possibly in several languages, determining whether a text may be useful or not for the focus of one's research, the analysis and interpretation of selected materials, even personal communication or correspondence with other people. Thus, Merritt Moseley's observation about *Possession* that "the novel is about scholarship—the discovery of documents, the

forming of judgements, the revision of critical understanding"[176] applies equally well to *The Crown of Columbus*.

Also, in both novels, the protagonists carry out their research at and outside of the university, in their home country and abroad, finding both allies and adversaries in the process. In *The Crown of Columbus*, Vivian does not find much support in academia, as she largely sees herself as the college's "painless affirmative action" (*CC*, 124). Her relationship with Roger is a source of additional tension. Even though Roger agrees to accompany her to Eleuthera, he is not particularly supportive of her research. Because of his own work on Columbus, Roger aspires to become one of the most recognized authors of fictional biographies in world literature: "Carl Sandburg's Lincoln. Virgil's Aeneas. Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. Christopher Columbus, currently on loan to Samuel Eliot Morison, was still up for grabs, and he would be mine" (*CC*, 52-3). Thus, in spite of Roger's honest interest in Columbus, the chapters written from his point of view reveal a degree of self-importance as well as a lack of respect for his partner's scholarly abilities. Consequently, Vivian gets more support from her friend Hilda Seelbinder, a professor of geography, and Hilda's husband Racine, a medievalist, than from her partner.

Roger's lack of appreciation of Vivian's research connects to his superior status in academia. Moreover, in spite of their mutual physical attraction, the social gap between them keeps on complicating their relationship. As the two protagonists alternate as narrators, the novel offers a lot of direct commentary on this issue. When they meet for the first time at the college library where they had been assigned adjacent carrels, Vivian perceives any relationship between them as rather unlikely: "If this had been a movie, we would have stared gravely into one another's eyes, taken a step forward, a step backward, in and out of the magnetic field, then moved irresistibly close. Instead, as this was Dartmouth, we glared suspiciously at one another and then mutually turned away" (*CC*, 35). Thus, in her view, love at first sight only exists in pop culture. Similarly, Roger thinks of being a boyfriend as "an absurd role for a full professor, for a man whose curriculum vitae ran to eight modest, single-spaced pages" (*CC*, 67). Even at

[176] Moseley, "Introductory: Definitions and Justifications," 6.

a later point, Vivian mentions Roger's being a full professor as "the side of him I found least attractive" (*CC*, 274).

In *Possession*, Roland also tries to look for allies among academics whose critical opinions differ from his own. As a scholar in Victorian poetry focusing on a canonical male author, Roland has not been able to find a full-time job in academia, since his field of expertise has been somewhat marginalized after literary theory and feminism became central to the discipline of English Literature in the 1980s. Nevertheless, in his search for knowledge, Roland decides to consult Dr. Maud Bailey from Lincoln University, the foremost British expert on LaMotte who happens to be a distant relative of the poet. A feminist critic, Maud is initially not very supportive of Roland's claim that the freethinking LaMotte corresponded with a traditionalist like Ash and appreciated his poetry, but once they overcome the initial differences in their opinions, Roland and Maud decide to cooperate. Thus, the novel criticizes various philosophical divisions within academia and argues that in order to produce well-founded research, scholars need to be open-minded enough to be willing to go beyond their usual viewpoints. In result, the novel prefers neither the traditional nor the modern approaches to academic research, but rather a synthesis of both.

The research Roland and Maud carry out together soon takes them outside academia. For instance, when visiting LaMotte's grave near Lincoln, they accidentally meet Joan and George Bailey, other descendants of LaMotte who invite them for tea to their nearby house, Seal Court, and let them see the objects that supposedly belonged to the poet. Inspired by LaMotte's poem about a doll starting with the line "Dolly keeps a secret" (*P*, 92), Maud inspects the poet's doll houses and finds the complete love correspondence between Ash and LaMotte. In this scene, Maud really acts as a detective, being a careful observer and making the most of the knowledge available to her. Also, from now on, the correspondence becomes the two scholars' shared project; while Roland originated the research, Maud contributed to it in a substantial way. Thus, the novel rejects what Dinah Birch has called the "stereotypes of brilliant detective and dependable but dull-witted associate, initiated by Poe and carried on by

Doyle, […] Agatha Christie and […] Colin Dexter"[177] for a more balanced portrayal of its two protagonists.

Although Roland and Maud may be equal research partners, their status within academia differs significantly. When they meet for the first time, Roland does not like Maud's "deliberately blurred patrician" voice (*P*, 44). While Roland is employed only part-time, Maud is already an assistant professor with a reputation in the field of Women's Studies. While Maud owns a flat and a car, Roland lives in a rented flat. Thus, in comparison to *The Crown of Columbus*, *Possession* presents a gender reversal with respect to the protagonists' distribution of power within academia as well as the wider society.

It is not until the very end of the novel that Maud becomes not only Roland's fellow researcher, but also a partner, as Byatt juxtaposes the development of their relationship with the romance they study. Thus, *Possession* has also been classified as Neo-Victorian fiction as a text that "engages with the Victorian era, at either the level of plot, structure, or both."[178] The protagonists' social status appears to be the main reason for the deferral of their relationship, as Roland only lives with Val out of habit and Maud, who had an affair with Fergus at a conference in Paris a year ago, currently has no partner. The narrator makes clear that Roland has been in love with Maud at least since they found the manuscripts at the Baileys, and is thus disappointed after Maud suggests that they both read the letters of the poet who interests them, as he "had a vision which he now saw was ridiculous and romantic, of their two heads bent together over the manuscripts, following the story, sharing, he had supposed, the emotion" (*P*, 144). While Roland speculates that Maud may not be attracted towards him, she rather prefers not to admit to any emotion yet.

Like Roland and Maud, Vivian also comes to champion an open-minded attitude to scholarly research. Rather than appropriating Columbus like Roger, Vivian becomes sincerely interested in discovering the explorer's true identity. When evaluating the biographies of Columbus available to her, the assistant

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[177] Dinah Birch, "Detective Fiction," in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, ed. Dinah Birch (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 289.
[178] Jacqueline Banerjee, "Neo-Victorianism: An Introduction," *The Victorian Web*, August 26, 2013, accessed September 5, 2014, http://www.victorianweb.org/neovictorian/introduction.html.

professor finds them lacking in providing an objective picture: "Though collected and presented with such care, [the biographies] seemed arranged more to carry out the private agendas of Columbus's biographers than to prove objectively one theory or another" (*CC*, 99). As the biographers appear to perpetuate their own theories rather than determine what is correct, numerous speculations about Christopher Columbus prevail, some of them more probable than others. For instance, Roger himself argues that Columbus was Jewish, as he left Spain the same year when Queen Isabella expelled unconverted Jews. As Farrell notes, "in true poststructuralist fashion, Columbus becomes a text, open to nearly endless interpretation as various readers fill in the historical absences surrounding him."[179]

While the poststructuralist approach to research may complicate the search for truth that is essential to the detective plot, it is Columbus's multiplicity that attracts Vivian towards the explorer. Gradually, she even comes to identify with him: "I could relate to Columbus, stranger to stranger" (*CC*, 124). Just like Vivian herself is of mixed heritage, "Irish and Coeur d'Alene and Spanish and Navaho and God knows what else" (*CC*, 123), Columbus was, in her view, a foreigner everywhere he went. In addition, Vivian studies the explorer as she believes that "every word Columbus wrote, every thought he recorded, had enduring importance to Indians—either as a record of our world as it had existed before contact, or as evidence we could use to seek overdue justice" (*CC*, 149). Thus, because of his heroic poem, she blames Roger for making a career out of "poeticizing history" (*CC*, 125) and views his scepticism towards the authenticity of her discovery as reluctance to revision the past. Consequently, Vivian and Roger do not manage to tolerate each other's views.

Similarly, although *Possession* portrays Roland and Maud as capable to overcome the expectations stemming from their different viewpoints, the novel reveals academia as a whole as rather divided, the more so as the text is peopled by the representatives of both British and American scholars in English Literature. For instance, the institution devoted to the study of Randolph Henry Ash that Roland and James Blackadder work at is "funded by a small grant from London University and a much larger one from the Newsome Foundation in Albuquerque" (*P*, 13). The trustee of the charitable trust in New Mexico is Mortimer Cropper, a

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[179] Farrell, "Colonizing Columbus," 124.

major American scholar working on the Complete Correspondence of Randolph Henry Ash. However, rather than cooperating, Blackadder and Cropper tend to distrust each other. Rather than his American colleague's expertise, it is Cropper's acquisitive tendencies and unlimited financial resources that Blackadder is worried about, as Cropper may be able to relocate all of the Ash manuscripts from the British Library to New Mexico. Thus, the novel satirizes acquisitiveness in academia which has marginalized the scholars' personal involvement in their research. Also, like the Columbus's biographers Vivian studies in *The Crown of Columbus*, Cropper bends the subject of his research to his liking; reading Cropper's scholarship, Maud suddenly "found it hard to like Randolph Henry Ash, in Cropper's version" (*P*, 268). Thus, unlike Roland and Maud, Cropper makes little effort to produce objective scholarship, as his research mainly perpetuates his own theories. Therefore, Janice Rossen seems to be right to suggest that "the very nature of literary scholarship—since it is based on an interpretation of cultural attitudes—leads the British to fear that the Americans will not only gut their national culture, but will do so clumsily."[180]

While all the minor academic characters in *Possession*, whether British or American, also occasionally became the targets of satire for their various characteristic traits, they gradually improve their image. For instance, Blackadder is introduced as a traditionalist in his mid-fifties, who studied under F. R. Leavis and spread his mentor's conception of literature. As the narrator explains, "Leavis did to Blackadder what he did to serious students: he showed him the terrible, the magnificent importance and urgency of English literature and simultaneously deprived him of any confidence in his own capacity to contribute to or change it" (*P*, 32). Thus, like Roger Williams of *The Crown of Columbus*, Blackadder views literature as high art and an object of worship. However, Blackadder's belief in the greatness of English literature and personal dedication to his scholarship make him not dissimilar from the two protagonists of the novel.

Beatrice Nest, the other representative of the older generation of British professoriate and the editor of Ellen Ash's journal, serves rather as Byatt's tool to

[180] Rossen, *The University in Modern Fiction*, 155. Thus, by portraying Roland as an American, the 2002 film adaptation, directed by Neil LaBute, makes a significant departure from the original text.

criticize the sexism in academia in the decades after WWII than as a satirical target. When Maud visits Beatrice to examine the journal for any mention of LaMotte, Beatrice admits to her younger colleague that she opted for editorship rather than literary scholarship primarily because it was considered appropriate to her sex. Ironically, when the conditions for women in academia improve, Beatrice's work on Ellen Ash is not appreciated for being too tame for the feminists. As Blackadder explains to Roland, "poor old Beatrice began by wanting to show how self-denying and supportive Ellen Ash was and she messed around looking up every recipe for gooseberry jam and every jaunt to Broadstairs for *twenty-five years*, can you believe it, and woke up to find that no one wanted self-denial and dedication any more" (*P*, 36, italics in original). While not paying much attention to the ideological shifts in academia, Beatrice is a dedicated scholar, careful about not doing harm to the object of her research.

Rather than by Maud, a more radical feminist is represented by the American Leonora Stern. Leonora is of Creole and Native American ancestry; she comes from Baton Rouge and currently works at the university in Tallahassee. Stern is the surname of her former husband Nathaniel, an assistant professor at Princeton. Since her divorce, Leonora has had several lesbian relationships, but she says she now prefers to be independent, as she is "paranoid about home-making" (*P*, 338). However, while Showalter characterizes Leonora as a "parodic character,"[181] her portrayal considerably improves as the narrative progresses. Most importantly, Leonora is not acquisitive like Cropper, as she only wants to have access to Ash's and LaMotte's correspondence. Also, while her scholarship largely assumed that the addressee of LaMotte's love poems was a female painter named Blanche Glover, once Leonora learns of LaMotte's relationship with Ash, rather than ignore this discovery, she wants to incorporate it into her future research to provide a complete picture of the author's work.

Finally, *Possession* extends its portrayal of Anglo-American academia by featuring the minor character of Ariane Le Minier, a French student of women's writings who corresponds with Maud. Thanks to Ariane, Maud learns that LaMotte, who was half-Breton, visited her distant French cousin and would-be writer Sabine de Kercoz in Fouesnant in 1859. This fact seems of interest to

[181] Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 115.

Roland and Maud, as there is no record of where both of the poets were for about a year between the summers of 1859 and 1860. While Vivian and Roger are accompanied to Eleuthera by Hilda and Racine, Roland's and Maud's research trip is again secret. As Maud admits, "all scholars are a bit mad. All obsessions are dangerous. This one's got a bit out of hand" (*CC*, 360). The trip proves even more successful than expected, as Ariane gives them a photocopy of Sabine de Kercoz's journal that covers almost all LaMotte's visit. The journal closes with a rather unexpected piece of information—Christabel escaped to Brittany from the prudish Victorian society after she got pregnant with Ash out of wedlock. However, all that the journal mentions about the child is that it was born in France. Therefore, from now on, the focus of Roland's and Maud's research shifts to finding out what became of the child. As Irina Ana Drobot has observed, the history Roland and Maud discover "reminds of the secrets discovered in [Victorian] sensation novels, including love outside the marriage, seduction, and breaking social conventions."[182] Thus, *Possession* can also be seen as a recent addition to a popular tradition of British crime fiction.

On the contrary, the most shocking discovery Vivian and Roger make once they arrive in Eleuthera concerns the character of their alleged fellow researcher. Once Vivian meets Henry Cobb, he assures her that the crown (*corona*) mentioned in Columbus's diary equals "*the* most valuable single thing in fifteenth-century Europe" (*CC*, 195, italics in original) and is hidden somewhere on the island. More importantly, Cobb makes clear that it is the supposedly precious crown rather than any historical research that he is interested in. In addition, rather than keeping the treasure in a public space, Cobb has different plans with it: "[The crown] is worth ten resorts. I'm not liquidating an inch of this estate until it's located, insured, and on the block at Sotheby's" (*CC*, 195). Finally, once he has the crown, Cobb intends to dispose of the diary, planning to put the manuscript "on the block as well, page by page, perhaps word by word if there are enough wealthy private collectors" (*CC*, 206). Vivian's pleading that even if her two pages contained what he is looking for, they belong to the college or to the country, has no effect. Thus, besides his schemes and manipulations, it is

[182] Irina Ana Drobot, "Literature as Part of an Academic's Life in the Campus Novels *Ever After* by Graham Swift and *Possession* by A. S. Byatt," *Scientific Journal of Humanistic Studies* 6, no. 10 (2014), 67.

Cobb's materialism and refusal to share historical records with the public that makes him the villain of the novel.

While Vivian hopes to prevent Cobb from selling the crown and the diary, she is interested in finding out more about the precious object, which she sees as Columbus's "gift of ambassadorial goodwill" (*CC*, 214) to the native populations. Thus, for the time being, she only gives Cobb one of the two pages and asks him to see the rest of the diary. As she studies the diary, Vivian concludes that the text, along with the letter and the shells, is "a puzzle composed of three pieces" (*CC*, 213-214). Once she is done with her research, she hopes to escape without giving Cobb the second page. While Vivian skilfully negotiates with Cobb, Roger does not hesitate to express his open distrust of not only the man, but also his theories. Unlike Vivian, who does not question Cobb's claims about the crown, taking it for an expression of respect that Columbus showed to the indigenous populations, Roger sees the existence of the crown as a precious object as rather implausible: "To throw in a treasure! It's really too much of a cliché" (*CC*, 219). Whereas Vivian's work could be characterized as detection, Roger ridicules it by accusing her of "playing detective with that scurrilous Cobb" (*CC*, 233). Thus, Roger assumes that research performed in academia is superior to that carried out outside the university.

It is this open antagonism between Vivian and Roger that Cobb manages to use against them. When Cobb arranges to meet with each of them individually on his yacht, without the other's knowledge, to discuss the details of what they know about Columbus, they both readily agree. Vivian is rather glad that Roger will not be present to interfere with his sceptical commentaries. Similarly, Roger realizes that it is rather Vivian's non-heroic interpretation of Columbus than the possibility of the diary's authenticity by itself that upsets his established image of the explorer. Unfortunately, Vivian and Roger are not aware that Cobb has successfully separated them in order to get the missing page from Vivian, no matter what.

To achieve his goal, Cobb does not hesitate to use the most violent means. First, he pulls the yacht away from Roger, leaving the poet to make his way back to shore through the shark-infested sea without a paddle. Then, after Vivian refuses to give Cobb the missing page, he ties her to a bucket of sand, with the intention of throwing her out of the boat and drowning her. She, rather unlikely,

manages to free herself by using, in Farrell's words, "a farcical blend of the various cultural tools available to her."[183] More specifically, Farrell emphasizes that Vivian swings the rope with its bucket of sand at Cobb and kicks him over the side of the boat by a combination of the American hula hoop and the Japanese karate. As Farrell sums up, "although plurality and blending of cultures are celebrated in the novel, they are often presented in such broad strokes and so ludicrously that they seem to be mocked or ironized at the same time."[184] Thus, no character is completely free of the authors' satire.

Just like Vivian is slightly derided for her eclecticism and multiculturalism, Roger is, once again, satirized for his pomposity and self-importance. After the sea washes Roger up shore, into a cave made of bat dung, he recites his epic poem "Diary of a Lost Man" from memory, hoping to provoke a reaction from the outside. When he finishes his recitation of the poem which takes up some fifteen pages of the novel and no rescuer arrives, Roger passes time in the cave by recapitulating his life, reaching the conclusion that "in the greater scheme of things I had not done so badly. Not like some who for all their brashness were still struggling for a promotion, someone like Vivian, willing to go to any length to discover new and improbable facts about a well-established historical figure. Someone with—God, it was true—the courage to take a chance, even if it meant ridicule, failure" (*CC*, 347). Suddenly, Roger sees Vivian's research on Columbus in a new light, as something ground-breaking and respectable. Thus, Roger too comes to value openness to new discoveries and viewpoints.

It is shortly after this realization that Vivian, to Roger's surprise, appears in the cave. She has had the markings on the shells translated by Racine who identified the language as Hebrew and found out that they provide the clues to the crown, which happens to be hidden under the bat dung in the same cave as Roger. Thus, immediately after Vivian finds Roger in the cave, they start to examine what is concealed under the layer of guano and eventually they discover an unopened square glass box. As Vivian chops the box, rather than a golden crown, she finds in it the Crown of Thorns that Christ wore during the Crucifixion.

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[183] Farrell, "Colonizing Columbus," 128.
[184] Farrell, "Colonizing Columbus," 128.

Whereas Racine provides the history of the Crown, as it was kept in Jerusalem, brought to Byzantium, and then its individual thorns travelled across Europe, Vivian is concerned with the perception of the Crown from the Native American point of view: “Maybe [the Indians] thought the Crown was dangerous and so they never opened the box and buried the whole business where no one would mess with it. Maybe they put it in a safe place until someone came along who could explain how to use it. Maybe they just pure and simple didn’t want the thing and didn’t know how to give it back” (*CC*, 371). Thus, the Crown foregrounds the complex issues of cultural interchange. In addition, as Laura L. Stookey notes, “Columbus’s gift to the New World thus serves as an emblem of the suffering of Native American peoples after contact with the Christians of Europe.”[185] Thus, in a way, Roger has been right all along that there is no golden treasure on Eleuthera, the real treasure being Columbus’s complete diary with its record of the past. At the same time, the search for the crown leads Roger to an increased awareness of both the complexity of the past and cultural differences that continue into the present.

While excluding the threat of death, *Possession* also climaxes with open conflicts and closes with a major discovery. Once Cropper learns about the existence of the letters exchanged between Ash and LaMotte, he immediately tries to purchase them for his collection. Furthermore, once he has read a small part of the letters, Cropper gives a public lecture in the City, announcing in advance that “a major discovery was to be unveiled” (*P*, 416). Thus, while Roland and Maud, the true discoverers of the correspondence, are reading Sabine de Kercoz’s diary in France to fill up on the rest of Ash’s and LaMotte’s love story, Cropper appropriates their discovery, pompously presenting it to the public. At the same time, as Cropper intends to purchase the letters for Robert Dale Owen University, the lecture unites Roland and Maud with Leonora and Blackadder in their effort to keep the correspondence in England.

Importantly, Cropper’s effort to acquire Ash’s correspondence does not stop with hoping to purchase the letters from the Baileys, as he also intends to have those that had been described in Ellen Ash’s journal as “too dear to burn” (*P*, 482) and were buried with the poet. Fortunately, Beatrice happens to overhear

[185] Laura L. Stookey, *Louise Erdrich: A Critical Companion* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 5.

Cropper's conversation with the poet's descendant, Hildebrand Ash, and informs Maud that the two men mean to dig up the Ash's grave in Hodershall. Beatrice even reports the villainous Cropper as saying: "Why not behave like the thieves who took *Impression at Sunrise*, why not take it and think of a plausible way to account for whatever we find later?" (*P*, 476). Therefore, unlike *The Crown of Columbus*, *Possession* locates the villain in academia. Besides hyperbolizing Cropper's obsession with the subject of his research, this characterization contributes to the detective plot of the novel. Hildebrand Ash, then, is Cropper's rather unhelpful sidekick whose assistance the academic needs only so as not to appear an absolute thief, as Hildebrand is the future inheritor of all that belongs to Lord Ash, the oldest of the poet's descendants. Unlike Hildebrand, Lord Ash would not be willing to negotiate with Cropper, since he is a nationalist who had deposited the Ash manuscripts in the British library.

In their effort to prevent Cropper from putting his plan into practice, the other academics get legal support from Val's new boyfriend, the lawyer Euan. When all of the characters meet to discuss how to proceed, it is Euan who suggests that they follow Cropper around and catch him in flagrante delicto, commenting that "this feels like the unmasking at the end of a detective story. I've always wanted to be Albert Campion, myself. We still haven't tackled our villain" (*P*, 524). Thus, while Byatt's academic characters provide references to literary theory and the canon of English literature, a non-academic character links *Possession* to Margery Allingham's writing and the Golden Age of popular British detective fiction. As Leonora contributes a story that Cropper reportedly has already stolen a Margaret Fuller's letter, Blackadder envisions his colleague as an obsessed collector: "So we are to assume a private, inaccessible cabinet of curios that he turns over, and breathes in at the dead of night, things no one ever sees" (*P*, 525). Cropper is thus portrayed as an eccentric connoisseur, not even willing to share his precious collection with the public.

The quickness with which Val has found a new partner serves to accentuate Roland's and Maud's slow progression into a romantic relationship. While the class gap between the protagonists has already been mentioned, the narrator explains there is an additional reason for this postponement. Although Roland is aware that "the expectations of Romance control almost everyone in the Western world, for better or

worse, at some point or another" (*P*, 460), the narrator characterizes Roland and Maud as "children of a time and culture that mistrusted love, 'in love', romantic love, romance *in toto*, and which nevertheless in revenge proliferated sexual language, linguistic sexuality, analysis, dissection, deconstruction, exposure" (*P*, 458). The narrator thus points out a paradox of the postmodern age: while people have always had a need for romance, late 20th century scholars only discuss theories related to sexuality in their research, refusing to believe in the idea of romantic love. It is not until the very end of the novel that Roland and Maud stand up against these highly sceptical views and consummate their love affair.

Related to this disbelief in romantic love is scepticism towards the existence of an authentic self, already touched on in Lodge's *Nice Work* in the previous decade. In *Possession*, Maud also mentions that her generation of scholars has been taught that "there isn't a unitary ego—how we're made up of conflicting, interacting systems of things—and I suppose we believe that?" (*P*, 290). Similarly, another related scepticism of the postmodern age is reflected in *The Crown of Columbus*, one concerned with the inability of language to communicate any meaning. However, unlike Roger, who believes that when there is no adequate language to describe one's feeling, it is better not to speak at all, Vivian challenges this view: "I know words are messy, full of connotations, old desires and memories. I know no word has the identical meaning to two people. I know there is no way to absolutely describe what just happened to us, but to give up on language, to give up on what we have, no matter what a rag box it is—that is an act of cowardice" (*CC*, 248-9). Thus, somewhat surprisingly, it is Roger the traditionalist rather than Vivian who subscribes to the postmodern trends of literary and linguistic interpretation. Therefore, both novels satirize not only the old-fashioned academia with its strict hierarchy, but also the contemporary postmodern philosophy of deconstruction, as the adherence to all of these phenomena poses obstacles to the protagonists' personal fulfilment.

The ending of *Possession* resolves not only the romantic but also the detective plot. In the final scenes, the protagonists and their allies confront Cropper and Hildebrand Ash who have dug up a box from Randolph Ash's grave.

Inspecting the content of the box, Roland and Maud find a letter written by LaMotte to Ash that says: "You have a daughter, who is well, and married, and the mother of a beautiful boy" (*P*, 542), explaining that their child had been born in Brittany and carried to England. By this twist, Maud turns out to be a descendant of both of the poets who has been, unaware, exploring her own origin. Also, Euan informs Maud that because according to LaMotte's will, all her books and papers go to her sister, all the poet's letters are Maud's property. With the correspondence project finally completed, Roland starts thinking about his future, as his diligent work had finally paid off and he had recently received three job offers. The novel thus ends on an affirmative note reminiscent of the earlier British campus novels as well as of the work of Agatha Christie and other authors associated with the Golden age of British detective fiction; as Jack Miles observes, "in the classic British detective story, order is restored after disruption."[186] Besides Roland being finally recognized for his academic research, the text closes with the fulfilment of the romantic relationship between him and Maud.

While its elements of violence may link *The Crown of Columbus* to the American 'hard boiled' writing of Dashiel Hammett and other authors,[187] its closure also echoes the restorative tradition of British detective fiction, as Cobb is sentenced to a ten year imprisonment after Vivian's televised testimony against him. Like in *Possession*, the protagonists' positions in academia level off once Vivian sets out to edit Columbus's diary. Roger reports that while working on an unexpurgated, annotated version of the diary, Vivian found in the text "material for a plethora of legal approaches under international law, issues of aboriginal claim and sovereignty, of premeditated fraud. The prospects for victories—here, in Brazil, in New Zealand, in Mexico—appear better than anyone would have expected" (*CC*, 375). Thus, while Roland and Maud protect their country's literary heritage, Vivian's and Roger's discovery may have long-lasting consequences even for places outside of their native country. Similarly, while Roland and Maud struggle to complete and revise their country's literary history, Vivian uses Columbus's diary as a source in her fight for future justice.

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[186] Jack Miles, "Happily Ever After," a review of *Thinks…*, by David Lodge, *Commonweal*, August 17, 2001, 25.
[187] See Cuddon, "Crime Fiction," 194.

In conclusion, as both *Possession* and *The Crown of Columbus* skilfully combine the elements of detective fiction and the campus novel, the texts may appeal to readers both inside and outside academia. The detective plots in both texts focus on a couple of university professors and their discovery of manuscripts which disclose heretofore unknown facts, resulting in a reinterpretation of literary or socio-political history. In *Possession*, the discovery of an intimate relationship between two diverse fictional poets changes the body of scholarship dealing with their work. In *The Crown of Columbus*, the discovery of the explorer's diary brings a redefinition of Columbus's perception of the native populations and the right to their land. Thus, the ground-breaking discoveries bring in the portrayal of academic research as a meaningful occupation and the portrayal of personal relationships accentuates the academia as a place where people find collegial support and emotional nourishment. As the detective plots necessitate villains that pose obstacles to the protagonists, these are also the primary satirical targets for their acquisitiveness and materialism. However, the satire also concerns the division of academia into the conservative traditionalists and the supporters of postmodern philosophical theories, calling for a meaningful synthesis of both approaches as a prerequisite for well-founded research. In spite of their postmodern elements and concerns, the texts tend toward a restorative ending, reminiscent of both the earlier British campus novel and the Golden Age of British detective fiction.

7. Early 2000s and Racial Conflicts in Academia: Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* and Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*[188]

He's lost his wife, he's lost his job, publicly humiliated as a racist professor, and what's a racist professor? It's not that you've just become one. The story is you've been discovered, so it's been your whole life. It's not just that you did one thing wrong once. If you're a racist then you've always been a racist. Suddenly it's your entire life you've been a racist. That's the stigma and it's not even true.
—Philip Roth, *The Human Stain*

Two days ago Kipps had argued strongly against Howard's Affirmative Action committee in the *Wellington Herald*. He had criticized not only its aims but challenged its very right to existence. He accused Howard and 'his supporters' of privileging liberal perspectives over conservative ones; of suppressing right-wing discussion and debate on campus. The article had been a sensation, as such things are in college towns. Howard's e-mail in-box this morning was full of missives from outraged colleagues and students pledging their support. An army rushing to fight behind a general who could barely get on his horse.
—Zadie Smith, *On Beauty*

At the beginning of the 21st century, the campus novel seems considerably more popular in the United States than in the United Kingdom. In the first decade of the century, both David Lodge and A. S. Byatt did publish some academic fiction; however, their novels such as *Thinks…* (2001) or *The Biographer's Tale* (2000) respectively continue in the established tradition rather than enrich the genre with new perspectives. Moreover, both authors' later works illustrate their movement away from the campus novel towards historical fiction about major Anglo-American writers. Thus, Lodge's novels *Author, Author* (2004) and *A Man of Parts* (2011) focus on Henry James and H.G. Wells respectively, while Byatt's *Children's Book* (2009) is loosely based on the life of Edith Nesbit. Byatt herself suggested that satirical campus novels were established to address problems in academia during the expansion of British higher education when universities were, after all, "intensely hopeful." In contrast, Byatt argues that writers may be reluctant to satirize contemporary universities which are too "terrified and cowering and underfinanced and overexamined and

[188] An early version of this chapter was presented as a paper at the student section of the 60th conference of the European Association for American Studies, held at Leiden University College in the Hague, the Netherlands, on April 3-6, 2014.

overbureaucratised."[189] As the percentage of British population attending universities is still rather low compared to the situation in America, young British writers may not feel attracted to the campus novel for its arguably limited appeal.[190] Therefore, it is perhaps not a coincidence that Zadie Smith's (1975-) only campus novel, *On Beauty* (2005), is set in America rather than Britain. Hence, Smith's novel shows that one of the means of reviving British academic fiction may be an update of the popular reflection of American academia.

In America itself, on the contrary, the campus novel continues to flourish, with contributions by numerous distinguished writers such as Francine Prose's *Blue Angel* (2000), or Tom Wolfe's *I am Charlotte Simons* (2004). Although the protagonist of the latter is a student rather than a professor, the novel encompasses a wide range of characters from teachers and administrators to athletic coaches. Thus, while in in the introduction, I have distinguished the post-war professor-centred novels from the earlier student-centred ones, in the early 21st century, the lines are becoming blurred. However, what these more inclusive novels share is a decidedly satirical mode. The fact that major writers choose to step into the genre suggests that they consider the campus a useful setting for writing about contemporary society. Indeed, in 2012, Jeffrey J. Williams argued that over the past two decades, the American campus novel became a mainstream genre. More specifically, Williams suggests that the academic-centred novel "has grafted with the mid-life crisis novel, the marriage novel, and the professional-work novel to become a prime theater of middle-class experience."[191] Similarly, Mark McGurl has observed that following the institutionalization of creative writing at American universities, the campus

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[189] Qtd. in Aida Edemariam, "Who's Afraid of the Campus Novel?" *Guardian*, October 2, 2004, accessed January 2, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/books/2004/oct/02/featuresreviews.guardianreview37.

[190] As of 2011, about 1 in 3 people in the UK attends college or university. See "Highest Levels of Qualification across England and Wales Infographic," *Office for National Statistics*, March 7, 2014, accessed January 12, 2015, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census-analysis/local-area-analysis-of-qualifications-across-england-and-wales/info-highest-qualifications.html. The corresponding number in the US is over 70%. See Jeffrey J. Williams, "Teach the University," *Pedagogy* 8, no. 1 (2008), 26.

[191] Jeffrey J. Williams, "The Rise of the Academic Novel," *American Literary History* 24, no. 3 (2012), 561-2.

novel continues to be one of the most respected genres of American fiction.[192] However, none of the recent American novels has attracted such attention and recognition as Philip Roth's (1933-) *The Human Stain* (2000).[193]

Both *The Human Stain* and *On Beauty* illustrate that in the early to mid-2000s, the campus novel regained its satire and darkened, as racial anxiety became its central topic. On one hand, the novels suggest that at first glance, race may no longer seem a significant factor in the development of one's academic career in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Coleman Silk, the protagonist of *The Human Stain*, is considered by his colleagues at the fictional Athena College on the eastern coast to be "perhaps among the first of the Jews permitted to teach in a classics department anywhere in America" as well as "the first and only Jew ever to serve at Athena as dean of faculty."[194] Similarly, Monty Kipps, an art professor in *On Beauty*, is talked about as "the first Negro at Oxford."[195] On the other hand, both texts also make clear that controversies related to race persist to haunt academia.

Moreover, both novels further reflect social and political issues as they are set against the Culture Wars of the 1990s, a heated debate about the relative merits of teaching classic literature and art at American universities. While the Culture Wars, sometimes also referred to as the Canon Debate, were prompted by the former Secretary for Education William J. Bennett and his 1985 report on American education, the discussion continued well into the next decade.[196] As Williams points out, because of these discussions, the university became "a main battlefield of American culture,"[197] since the nation perceived the debates about what minority authors and artists were to be studied as being of direct social importance. These intellectual battles highlighted that knowledge production in

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[192] The other genres that McGurl sees as on the rise are the portrait of the artist, the ethnic family saga, metagenre fiction, and various forms of prison narrative. See Mark McGurl, *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 49.

[193] *The Human Stain* was on the *New York Times* "Editor's choice" list of ten best books of 2000. In 2001, it won the National Jewish Book Award and the PEN/Faulkner Book Award. A film adaptation followed in 2003.

[194] Philip Roth, *The Human Stain* (London: Vintage, 2001), 5. Hereafter cited in the text as *HS*.

[195] Zadie Smith, *On Beauty* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2005), 282. Hereafter cited in the text as *OB*.

[196] See e.g. Patrick Hayes, "'Calling a halt to your trivial thinking': Philip Roth and the Canon Debate," *Cambridge Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (2013), 225.

[197] Williams, "The Rise of the Academic Novel," 567.

the humanities can hardly be objective; rather, this knowledge is, in William Tierney's words, "created, political, and contested."[198] Perhaps this is another reason why humanities departments provide such a useful setting for campus novels that seek to analyse contemporary society.

In Roth's novel, Coleman Silk, a seventy-one-year-old professor and former dean, resigns from his position at a small liberal arts college because of an unjust charge of using a racial slur against African Americans in the classroom. The charge rests on the pretext of Coleman's using the word 'spooks' when asking his class about two students who have not showed up by the fifth week of the semester: "Does anyone know these people? Do they exist or are they spooks?" (*HS*, 6). Later that day, the dean informs Coleman that he has been accused of racism by the two students who turn out to be black. While Silk admits that the word 'spooks' could be used as "an invidious term sometimes applied to blacks" (*HS*, 6), he is astonished by the falsity of the charge. Thus, Roth satirizes the hypersensitivity of the academia to racial issues at the age of political correctness. *The Human Stain* hence repeats the motif of the protagonist leaving the university established in early campus novels. However, unlike the main characters of *Pnin* or *A New Life* who depart out of their own free will, Coleman Silk is pushed away by the college's administration. Aida Edemariam suggests that while in the late 20th century, exile is "almost a fossilised concept," an American campus may represent a contemporary alternative to a close-knit community, the banishment from which is "keenly felt."[199]

Ironically, the novel eventually reveals that Silk himself is a light-skinned African American that has been passing for a Jewish American for the most of his life. As "up until 1947, […] segregated education was approved in New Jersey" (*HS*, 322), Coleman decided to invent a new identity for himself by impersonating a Jewish man, which he is able to do because of his familiarity with local Jewish population. As Jennifer Glaser points out, "in the perverse Bildungsroman that is Coleman Silk's life

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[198] William G. Tierney. "Academic Freedom and Tenure: Between Fiction and Reality." *The Journal of Higher Education* 75, no. 2 (2004), 174.
[199] Aida Edemariam, "Who's Afraid of the Campus Novel?" *Guardian*, October 2, 2004, accessed January 2, 2015,
http://www.theguardian.com/books/2004/oct/02/featuresreviews.guardianreview37.

story, childhood in a predominantly Jewish New Jersey town teaches him a particular brand of white (Jewish) identity."[200] Thus, while the story proper is set in 1998, against President Bill Clinton's impeachment hearings and scandal over Monica Lewinsky, in fact, *The Human Stain* chronicles the complex perception of race in the last five decades in both American academia and the wider society. Whereas in the 1940s, higher education in the humanities was not easily open to African Americans, when black students at a liberal arts college in the 1990s accuse a professor of racism, no member of the academic community speculates that they may not be in the right. Thus, in spite of many social changes that would suggest otherwise, the perception that racism still exists continues to pervade academia.

On Beauty focuses on the perception of race in early 21st century academia by providing a detailed portrayal of the diverse black population of a New England university town. While Smith is the first among British campus novelists to write extensively about race with respect to both British and American characters, her novel does share some features with earlier British academic fiction. Like Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge, Smith sets her novel primarily on an American campus, namely in the area around the fictional Wellington College, supposedly based on Harvard University and Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she was a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute in 2002. Smith herself makes a cameo appearance in the novel, as a "feckless novelist on a visiting fellowship" (*OB*, 324) who escapes from a boring faculty meeting. Like her British predecessors, Smith peoples her novel with a profusion of British and American characters, both of which become the targets of satire.[201] In particular, *On Beauty* foregrounds social and political issues by focusing on two Oxford educated art professors who currently reside in Wellington where they fight on the opposite sides of the Culture Wars.

Thus, on one side, there is Howard Belsey, a fifty-seven-year-old untenured white professor, who is married to an African American woman,

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[200] Jennifer Glaser, "The Jew in the Canon: Reading Race and Literary History in Philip Roth's *The Human Stain*," *PMLA* 123, no. 5 (2008), 1469.

[201] By providing a detailed portrayal of numerous characters, *On Beauty* also resembles Jane Smiley's novel *Moo* (1995), which features a wide range of characters who inhabit a Midwestern university campus, foremost professors but also students, administrators, and staff.

Kiki, with whom he has three children. Politically, Howard is a liberal supporter of affirmative action and the chair of Wellington's Equal Opportunities Commission. Professionally, he is a radical art theorist who tries to deconstruct the "culture myth of Rembrandt" (*OB*, 54), as he considers the distinguished painter only a "competent artisan who painted whatever his wealthy patrons requested" (*OB*, 155). In his supposedly open-minded university lectures, the atheist Howard preaches against the "redemptive humanity of what is commonly called "'Art,'" arguing that "Art is the Western myth with which we both *console* ourselves and *make* ourselves" (*OB*, 155, italics in original). In addition, as he perpetuates his views outside of academia, he does not allow his family members to have any representational art in their home. Even though Howard is originally a Brit, he has little contact with his British background and voices an extreme version of the opinions that previous British campus novels like Lodge's *Changing Places* or A. S. Byatt's *Possession* associated with American academia.

Howard's daughter, Zora, who studies at Wellington, blindly takes over his views. On the contrary, Howard's older son, Jerome, who attends Brown University, is interested in learning about different opinions, even from his father's adversaries. Finally, Howard's younger son, Levi, is embarrassed by his family's privileged academic background and romanticizes black underclass, the very bottom of which is constituted by Haitian immigrants who work as janitors on the campus and as housekeepers to the college faculty.[202] As Kiki notes, when the fifteen-year-old Levi spends time with the Haitians, handing out leaflets to support their demonstration for higher wages, "Howard's very proud *of course*—proud without actually thinking about what any of it might *mean*" (*OB*, 400, italics in original). Thus, while Howard is glad to see Levi make a political gesture which is in accordance with his own theories, he remains largely unaware of the stratified world of the local black underclass whose cheap services he regularly uses. In result, for all his good intentions, Howard's deeds

[202] It is the presence of Haitians that prompts Regine Jackson to identify the city in the novel as Boston, the home to the third largest community of Haitians in the United States since the 1980s. See Regine Jackson, "Imagining Boston: Haitian Immigrants and Place in *On Beauty*," *Journal of American Studies* 46, no. 4 (2012), 856.

stay behind his professed opinions. Accordingly, Ann Marie Adams has characterized Howard as "the novel's faulty hero,"[203] which makes him the closest to a protagonist of all the other characters in the novel.

Howard's antagonist is Monty Kipps, an anglicized Trinidadian established in London who arrives at Wellington as a visiting lecturer. Like Howard, Monty is a Rembrandt scholar, but one who embraces traditional humanism. A devout Christian, Monty believes that "Art [is] a gift from God, blessing only a handful of masters, and most Literature merely a veil for left-wing ideologies" (*OB*, 44). A political conservative, he claims that "Equality [is] a myth, and Multiculturalism a fatuous dream" (*OB*, 44). When he learns that his daughter Victoria has been reading French philosophers, he expresses his hope that "Cambridge will straighten her out" (*OB*, 114). The title of the lecture series he plans on giving at Wellington is "The Ethics of the University: Taking the 'Liberal' out of Liberal Arts" (*OB*, 239).

Because of the offensive statements Monty has made about homosexuality, Howard tries to ask him to see the text of the lectures before they are delivered, as he believes he may be able to prevent him from giving the speeches under the hate crime law. Kipps not only retorts that the demand is against the right to free speech, but adds that "it surprises and delights me that a self-professed textual anarchist like Dr. Belsey should be so passionate to know the intention of a piece of writing" (*OB*, 327). Thus, while Smith satirizes both of the characters for imposing their narrow views on others, she also uses Monty to point out some discrepancies in Howard's liberal mind.

Whereas *On Beauty* juxtaposes two protagonists with opposite views, *The Human Stain* tracks down the changing perception of Coleman Silk by Athena College's faculty and administration. As Michiko Kakutani aptly notes, *The Human Stain* is "a book that shows how the public Zeitgeist can shape, even destroy, an individual's life."[204] When Coleman had become

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[203] Ann Marie Adams, "A Passage to Forster: Zadie Smith's Attempt to 'Only Connect' to *Howards End*," *Critique* 52, no. 4 (2011), 396.
[204] Michiko Kakutani, "Confronting the Failures of a Professor Who Passes," review of *The Human Stain*, by Philip Roth, *New York Times*, May 2, 2000, accessed January 23, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/library/books/050200roth-book-review.html.

the dean of Athena in the 1980s, he "had taken an antiquated, backwater, Sleepy Hollowish college and, not without steamrolling, put an end to the place as a gentleman's farm by aggressively encouraging the deadwood among the faculty's old guard to seek early retirement, recruiting ambitious young assistant professors and revolutionizing the curriculum" (*HS*, 5). Thus, as a dean, Coleman manages to clean the place of the pompous old faculty and replaces them with bright young people out of graduate programs at prestigious universities.

In the late 1990s, after his successful career as an administrator, Coleman returns to teaching as a full-time professor, only to resign in his second semester. Roth makes clear that if Coleman had not been accused of racism, he would have been rightfully respected for his substantial contribution to the development of the college: "[T]here would have been the institution of the Coleman Silk lecture series, there would have been a classical studies chair established in his name, and perhaps […] the humanities building or even North Hall, the college's landmark, would have been renamed in his honor after his death" (*HS*, 6). This paradox highlights that the college has devalued Coleman's dedicated service to the educational institution.

Moreover, throughout the text, Roth shows that it is not the faculty's good intentions that led to Coleman's charge of racism. Rather, as Coleman had made the college more competitive, by the time of the 'spooks' incident, "a reaction against [him] started to set in" (*HS*, 10), since he had made several enemies by his strict policies. While as a dean, Coleman had been under the protection of Pierce Roberts, the former college president who later left Athena for a more prestigious institution, the current administration feels no loyalty to Silk. Eventually, the professor realizes how many people are "not at all displeased" that the word he used "was definable not only by the primary dictionary meaning that he maintained was obviously the one he'd intended but by the pejorative racial meaning" (*HS*, 10). Thus, Coleman's colleagues intentionally choose to understand his utterance in the way that suits them. Consequently, the novel foregrounds the issues of language and interpretation; it is not what Coleman says but how it is interpreted by those in power that really matters. As the cause is

eventually picked up by the college's small black student organization, even Herb Keble, a professor whom Coleman brought to the college as the first African American in the social sciences, tells him: "I can't be with you on this, Coleman. *I'm going to have to be with them*" (*HS*, 16, italics in original). Thus, Keble compromises his personal loyalty to Coleman in favour of what has been made into a political issue.[205]

Finding no support at the college, Coleman is only defended by his wife Iris who comes from an unorthodox Jewish family. An abstract painter and poet, Iris eventually becomes the victim of the case, as she suddenly suffers a stroke and dies the next day. At her funeral, Coleman makes sure to tell all the people present that "[the people at the university] meant to kill me and they got her instead" (*HS*, 13). Thus, Iris's sudden death highlights the victimization of Coleman by his hostile colleagues. Depressed, Coleman decides to resign from the college. It is only too late that he realizes he has unnecessarily sacrificed his career, as nobody expected him to resign, since the incident only provided the African American academic community with an "'organizing issue' of the sort that was needed at a racially retarded place like Athena" (*HS*, 17). A jobless lonely widower, Coleman eventually starts a relationship with Faunia Farley, a janitor at the college thirty years his junior, for which he is criticized by the academic community once again.

While the quotes from the two novels that I have chosen so far may suggest that the texts are not narrated by the protagonists, I will now proceed to characterize the narrative strategies in more detail. Importantly, both Roth and Smith achieve a distance from their protagonists, but each does so in a different way. Roth's novel is narrated by the writer Nathan Zuckerman, the author's alter-ego that appears in several of his texts. In *The Human Stain*, Zuckerman moves to the area close to Athena College and Silk asks him to write an account of the incident that happened to him, claiming that the case is so absurd that if he wrote it down himself,

[205] Similarly, the protagonist of Francine Prose's *Blue Angel*, a middle-aged instructor of creative writing, is banished from a small college after a student seduces him to help her get her novel published, only to accuse him of sexual harassment later. However, Prose tries to complicate the victim and villain binary by portraying the instructor as a somewhat self-centered man and not a very dutiful academic.

nobody would believe him. Thus, Zuckerman starts to write down the story, *The Human Stain* being presented as his creation. However, as he is no eye witness of the events that he describes, he is inevitably an unreliable narrator which he makes clear from the very beginning. For instance, he admits he is not familiar with academia: "[E]ven ordinary deans, I am told, serving as they do in a no man's land between the faculty and the higher administration, invariably make enemies. […] But Coleman had been no ordinary dean" (*HS*, 7). Zuckerman also anticipates the revelation of Coleman's true ethnicity by comparing him to "one of those crimp-haired Jews of a lightly yellowish skin pigmentation who possess something of the ambiguous aura of the pale blacks who are sometimes taken for white" (*HS*, 15-16). In both cases, Zuckerman's being the narrator creates a distance between Silk and the reader.

On Beauty, on the contrary, is told by an omniscient narrator that stands outside the text and moves freely in time and space. For instance, early in the novel, the narrator explains: "We must now jump nine months forward, and back across the Atlantic Ocean" (*OB*, 42), moving from the Kipps' house in London back to Wellington. While Michiko Kakutani has mentioned that Smith has a "magical access to her characters' inner lives,"[206] this access does not apply to all of the characters to the same degree. Whereas Monty Kipps is mostly seen from the outside, Howard's thoughts are frequently made accessible to the reader. For example, describing a tedious faculty meeting at Wellington, the narrator mentions that Howard "often wondered what impression of the British, as a nation, his American colleagues must glean" (*OB*, 324) from their acquaintance with himself. At the same time, providing the reader with descriptions of Howard from other characters' points of view creates a distance from the protagonist. For instance, a scholarship student in Howard's class on 17th century art thinks that the professor speaks "a different language from the one she has spent sixteen years refining" (*OB*, 250), as Howard's lectures are full of terms she cannot even find in a dictionary. Thus, showing Howard from other

[206] Michiko Kakutani, "A Modern, Multicultural Makeover for Forster's Bourgeois Edwardians," review of *On Beauty*, by Zadie Smith, *New York Times*, September 13, 2005, accessed April 1, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/13/books/13kaku.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

characters' point of view results in a distancing effect similar to the one that Roth employs in *The Human Stain*.

However, rather than the narrative strategies themselves, it is the protagonists' controversial deeds that discourage the readers from identifying with them completely. Roth portrays Coleman Silk in a predominantly sympathetic way, as an innocent victim of the circumstances that are beyond his control. In addition, the novel foregrounds a striking paradox—while until his resignation, Silk might have been celebrated as an early Jewish academic, his achievement would not have been possible if he had admitted to his true ethnicity back when he was about to start his higher education. Even for Coleman's father, a well-read optician who unfortunately loses his practice during the depression, the Jews "were like Indian scouts, shrewd people showing the outsider his way in, showing the social possibility, showing a colored family how it might be done" (*HS*, 97). Thus, Coleman's choice to pass for a Jewish American only accentuates this wide-spread belief according to which Jews were viewed as models of assimilation for middle class blacks. Even the campus novels of the 1970s analysed in this dissertation portray many academics as Jewish, but none as black.

At the same time, Coleman's decision to pass as a Jewish American was a selfish one in that he separated himself from his mother and siblings, telling his unorthodox Jewish wife that he is an only child both of whose parents are no longer alive. In addition, Coleman's and Iris's four children, who are in their late thirties during the 'spooks' incident, have no idea of the African American blood running in their veins, as Silk told them that his ancestors were Russian Jews. Towards the end of the novel, Zuckerman meets Silk's sister Ernestine who thinks that "[Coleman] himself came to believe that there was something awful about withholding something so crucial to what a person is, that it was [his children's] birthright to know their genealogy" (*HS*, 320). Most strikingly, unaware of one element of his identity, Coleman's youngest son Mark stresses the other one, becoming an orthodox Jew at the age of sixteen.

Similarly, Howard is portrayed as a well-meaning, if somewhat insecure character. Like Coleman, he chooses to reinvent his identity,

separating himself from his British working class background by escaping first to Oxford and then to America: "Howard liked to keep his 'working class roots' where they flourished best—in his imagination" (*OB*, 292). Throughout the text, Howard only meets his father once, after four years, when travelling to London. In addition, when Howard marries Kiki, who works as a hospital administrator, and moves with her to the neighbourhood where the predominantly white faculty members live, he unwittingly separates her from her social background. One day, Kiki complains to him that "everywhere we go, I'm alone in this … this *sea* of white. I barely *know* any black folk any more, Howie. My whole life is white. I don't see any black folk unless they be cleaning under my feet in the fucking café in your *fucking* college" (*OB*, 206, italics in original). Thus, because of her race, Kiki never feels like she can easily fit among Howard's colleagues. In fact, as an untenured academic, Howard has made Kiki follow him from one university to another ever since they got married.[207]

The predominantly comic tone of *On Beauty* allows for a portrayal of Howard as a clumsy academic reminiscent of James Walker of Bradbury's *Stepping Westward* or Philip Swallow of Lodge's *Changing Places*. For instance, while the open-minded Jerome is working as Monty Kipps's personal assistant in London, he sends Howard an email which says he is going to propose to Victoria Kipps even though he has only known her for a week. Having read the email, the hasty Howard cannot think of doing anything else than fly to London immediately to talk Jerome out of it. When two days later, Jerome writes another email which says "please don't tell anybody, just forget about it" (*OB*, 26), Howard is already on the way to England. Thus, Howard's sudden unexpected arrival in London only adds fuel to the conflicts he and Monty have had in academia.

On the other hand, what distinguishes *The Human Stain* and *On Beauty* from their predecessors is the serious portrayal of the transience of

[207] Howard's insecure position on the job market is far from an exception, as according to the American Association of University Professors, by 2007, almost 70 % of faculty members were employed off the tenure track. See "Tenure and Teaching-Intensive Appointments," *American Association of University Professors' 2009 Report*, accessed September 8, 2014, http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/teachertenure.htm#5.

human life, as both novels feature the death of some of the characters. In *The Human Stain*, death occurs fairly frequently throughout the narrative. As already mentioned, Iris dies in result of the unbearable pressure she has to deal with after her husband's charge of racism and his unsuccessful call for justice. Moreover, at the end of the novel, Coleman and Faunia die in a car crash. Thus, *The Human Stain* is the first major campus novel which closes with a tragic ending for the protagonist rather than with a restorative one reminiscent of the comic tradition.

On the contrary, *On Beauty* only features the decease of a rather minor character, Monty Kipps' wife Carlene. After the Kippses move to Wellington, Carlene, a black British housewife, dies of an aggressive cancer of which she refused to tell her family as she did not want them to worry about her. However, her death does not significantly influence the rest of the narrative. Moreover, the funeral scenes in *The Human Stain* and *On Beauty* are employed with a strikingly different effect. Coleman's funeral, narrated by Zuckerman, highlights the protagonist's separation from his family by the presence of Coleman's black sister and Mark in a yarmulke. In contrast, Carlene's London funeral astounds Jerome by the presence of a wide range of people of various social background, as he whispers to Kiki: "Can you imagine a funeral—any event—this mixed back home?" (*OB*, 282). Thus, Jerome's admiration of Carlene stems from the fact that the professor's wife seemed to have many acquaintances across the social spectrum.

In fact, the positive portrayal of non-academic female characters is to be found in both *The Human Stain* and *On Beauty*. Whereas in earlier British campus novels such as *Changing Places*, faculty wives have been largely satirized as mere extensions of their husbands, *On Beauty* provides a sympathetic portrayal of not only Carlene Kipps, but also Kiki Belsey. In spite of their husbands' mutual antipathies and their own differences, once the Kippses move to the neighbourhood where the Belseys live, the two women become friends. While Kiki mentions she wanted to be Malcolm X's private assistant, none of them consider themselves an "intellectual" (*OB*, 94). Also, when Kiki first makes a friendly call on Carlene, they find out that they share an appreciation of figural painting, which also stands for a general interest in the people around them. Thus, Adams is right to

observe that for the two characters, "an appreciation of beauty can lead to a lateral regard for others."[208]

In addition, both women show their open mind by refusing to unquestioningly take over their husbands' opinions. For instance, when the Belseys go to a Mozart concert, Kiki does not hide that she admires the music and considers it "the work of a genius" (*OB*, 72) although Howard who does not approve of the term "genius" without attaching a definition to it complains that he "prefer[s] music which isn't trying to fake [him] into some metaphysical idea by the back door" (*OB*, 72). Overall, while Howard's obsession with academic language, which he increasingly uses even outside the university, makes it almost impossible for him to communicate a meaningful message, Kiki is very direct in expressing herself: "He was bookish, she was not; he was theoretical, she political. She called a rose a rose. He called it an accumulation of cultural and biological constructions circulating around the mutually attracting binary poles of nature/artifice" (*OB*, 225). Thus, it is the rejection of Howard's language which allows Kiki to make herself clear. Similarly, when a friend of Monty's comes out as gay, Monty is outraged, claiming that "it is for us to conform to the book," but Carlene says "life must come first over the book" (*OB*, 178). Thus, unlike her bigoted husband, Carlene is capable of accepting the diverse people around her.

Even though both Kiki and Carlene are portrayed as open-minded, they differ significantly in their attitude to life. When Kiki tells Carlene that Monty uses her as an "example of the ideal 'stay-at-home' Christian Mom" and asks if she had never had any aspirations of her own, Carlene only retorts that she had "wanted to love and to be loved" (*OB*, 172). Thus, while Carlene is admired for her humility and devotion, Kiki is celebrated for her actively independent approach to life. However, Kiki's character and appearance are described in a considerably more detailed way than Carlene's. Although the narrator mentions that she weighs "a solid two hundred and fifty pounds" (*OB*, 14), Kiki is depicted as beautiful in her own way: "Her skin had that famous ethnic advantage of not wrinkling

[208] Adams, "A Passage to Forster," 384.

much, but, in Kiki's case the weight gain had stretched it even more impressively. At fifty-two, her face was still a girl's face. A beautiful tough girl's face" (*OB*, 14-15). Thus, it is only in the eyes of white people that she is seen as unattractive because of her size.

Throughout the novel, Kiki has to deal twice with Howard's infidelity, which confirms adultery as a popular theme in academic fiction. First, after Kiki discovers a condom in Howard's suit pocket and learns that Howard cheated on her with Claire Malcolm, a white professor of creative writing at Wellington, she sees this fact as an offence to her race. However, she forgives him and does not leave him: "The only account she could give of this decision was that she was not quite done loving him, which was the same as saying she was not yet done with Love—Love itself being coeval with knowing Howard" (*OB*, 60). Thus, Kiki's explanation echoes Carlene's statement about human connection being central to life. Second, Kiki learns from Zora that Howard had sex with Victoria Kipps who is a student in his class. This time, Kiki is enraged that Howard made love to with a college freshman that his son had been in love with. To punish Howard, Kiki moves out of their apartment, making the impractical academic deal with household duties and family responsibilities. By the end of the novel, however, reconciliation between them is implied. Thus, for all its departures from the previous tradition, *On Beauty* does share some elements of the light-heartedly comic British campus novel.

The Human Stain, as the darkest of the American campus novels, does not allow for any such development. Nevertheless, like *On Beauty*, the text provides a sympathetic portrayal of the female non-academic character of Faunia Farley. While Faunia does not belong to any racial minority, she is marginalized by her social standing. A thirty-four-year-old divorcée, Faunia works as a janitor at the college. After Iris's death, Faunia becomes Coleman's lover and confidante. As Coleman reports to Zuckerman, Faunia had only had "two years of high school education" (*HS*, 2). After her parents' divorce and her mother's remarriage, Faunia ran away from home to escape from her abusive stepfather. At twenty, she got married to Lester Farley, a Vietnam veteran older than herself, but her life did not change for any better. A crude and domineering man, Les "beat her so badly she ended up

in a coma. They had a dairy farm. He ran it so badly it went bankrupt. She had two children. A space heater tipped over, caught fire, and both children were asphyxiated" (*HS*, 28). Moreover, while Faunia tries to escape from Les, he continues stalking her even after their divorce.

Coleman's and Faunia's relationship is based on mutual understanding between two ostracized people. For instance, Coleman appreciates Faunia's honesty and lack of bias: "She's not religious, she's not sanctimonious, she is not deformed by the fairy tale of purity" (*HS*, 341). However, the allegedly well-meaning college faculty are shocked by the relationship, as they automatically assume that Silk abuses the vulnerable woman. Thus, Zuckerman concludes that the college's outraged reaction reflects many characteristic beliefs of the age, juxtaposing it to Bill Clinton's contemporaneous affair: "Here in America either it's Faunia Farley or it's Monica Lewinsky! The luxury of these lives disquieted so by the inappropriate comportment of Clinton and Silk" (*HS*, 154). Hence, Coleman's relationship with Faunia echoes the fear of the inappropriate voiced by both the local academic community and the wider society.

Given the sympathetic portrayal of Faunia, it is striking how negatively Roth depicts the only major academic female character, the French professor Delphine Roux whom Coleman employed at Athena during his administrative career. Even back then, Coleman realized that she was "29 years old and virtually without experience outside schools" (*HS*, 184), but her great curriculum vitae, with professional training at the École Normale Supérieure de Fontenayand and a Ph.D. from Yale, provided enough credentials for the job. While Delphine later becomes Coleman's superior as the chair of the small department of languages and literature, she does not manage to get on well with most of her colleagues. Having made no close friends among the faculty and administrative staff, except for the department secretary, "a mousy divorcée in her thirties" (*HS*, 273), Delphine tends to overly identify with her students.

Even before the 'spooks' incident, Coleman had a conflict with Delphine as one of her favourite students, Elena Mitnick, complained to her about the Euripides plays in Coleman's Greek tragedy course, finding them "degrading to women" (*HS*, 184). Delphine takes Elena's side,

accusing Coleman of "insist[ing] on the so-called humanist approach to Greek tragedy" which she calls "tedious" (*HS*, 193). Coleman, however, does not feel intimidated by this reproach; rather, he implicitly accuses Delphine of encouraging Elena to express her opinion on the plays without paying any attention to the content of the course: "To read two plays like *Hippolytus* and *Alcestis*, then to listen to a week of classroom discussion on each, then to have nothing to say about either of them other than that they are 'degrading to women,' isn't a 'perspective,' for Christ's sake—it's mouthwash" (*HS*, 192). Still angry at Coleman for refusing to treat her as an authority, at the beginning of the 'spooks' incident, Delphine becomes the chief agent of his plight. After Tracy, one of the two African American students, complains to Delphine that Professor Silk had used a malicious racial slur to characterize her to her classmates, Delphine turns the matter over to the dean.

As Delphine prides herself that she protects members of ethnic minorities and women in particular, William G. Tierney notes that the least convincing aspect of the novel is "the caricature Roth has drawn of Roux as a card-carrying feminist."[209] One of the minor characters describes Delphine as "so passé, such a parody of Simone de Beauvoir" (*HS*, 269). Importantly, it is her immaturity that makes Delphine exaggerate the importance of feminist perspective and new pedagogies. While Coleman is generally popular with his students "because of everything direct, frank, and unacademically forceful in his comportment" (*HS*, 4), he makes clear what are the students' rights and obligations. Delphine, on the contrary, demonstrates her alleged open-mindedness by sympathizing with students against the educational system anytime they complain, regardless of the relevance of the complaint. When Tracy claims that she failed all but one of her courses "because she was too intimidated by the racism emanating from her white professors to work up the courage to go to class" (*HS*, 17), Delphine fails to recognize the falsity of the statement and the student's inability to accept any responsibility.

While Delphine acts as a protector of women from men, in fact, she is frustrated that she has not found a partner even after five years at what

[209] William G. Tierney, "Interpreting Academic Identities: Reality and Fiction on Campus," *The Journal of Higher Education* 73, no. 1 (2002), 168.

she considers the "dreadfully provincial" (*HS*, 263) Athena College. Thus, one late evening in her office, she decides to write a personal advertisement to *New York Review of Books*.

It is when she composes the advertisement that Delphine's pretensions come to the surface. First, she tries hard to word the advertisement so as to make clear that no black men need to apply. After a long effort to explain what kind of man she is looking for, she realizes that her description completely characterizes the man she professes to be her enemy, Coleman Silk. As Glaser notes, Delphine "performs feminism and racial sensitivity while concealing her own prejudices and desires for sexual submission."[210] Shocked by the realization that she had long tried to suppress, Delphine mistakenly sends the advertisement to the addressees of her previous communication, her department mailing list.

Delphine is desolate, as she fears that the email may provoke a scandal which will result in her dismissal from Athena. Suddenly, she has a phone call from the department secretary, announcing that Coleman and Faunia had died in a car crash. After the phone call, it occurs to Delphine to make up a story that Silk had broken into her office and computer. As the college community accept this invented story, Coleman is, after his death, considered not only a racist, but also a misogynist. While Zuckerman finds the story "obviously phony" (*HS*, 289), the faculty explain it in relation to what they have accused Silk of earlier, framing the email as a malicious joke and a "misogynistic act committed by a man who already proved himself capable of a vicious racist comment at the expense of a vulnerable student" (*HS*, 290). Again, the novel foregrounds the issues of interpretation and manipulation of the truth.

In addition, after his death, the faculty accuse Coleman of intentionally killing Faunia to prevent her from exposing him as her abuser. As Zuckerman believes that Les Farley was the cause of Coleman's and Faunia's deaths, he shares his suspicion with Coleman's relatives who arrive for the professor's funeral. However, while Zuckerman hopes to set things right, Coleman's sons make clear that they do not want any more police

[210] Glaser, "The Jew in the Canon," 1474.

investigations, as they think Faunia is not the right woman to be linked with their father's legacy. Once again, people place propriety higher on their hierarchy than truth or justice.

Thus, the only effort to vindicate Coleman after his death is Herb Keble's funeral speech in which he admits: "I should never have said to my friend, 'I can't be with you on this. I should have said, 'I *must* be with you'" (*HS*, 310, italics in original). Herb concludes by denying all that Delphine Roux and the other faculty had accused Silk of. Yet, Zuckerman cannot help thinking that two completely incompatible walks of life, academia and the underworld, had colluded in their victimization of Coleman Silk, who had been "excommunicated by the saved, the elect, the ever-present evangelists of the mores of the moment, then polished off by a demon of ruthlessness" (*HS*, 315). However, in some passages, even Les Farley is portrayed more sympathetically than Delphine, as Faunia's ex-husband's being a Vietnam veteran contrasts with the privileged background of the ignorant Professor Roux.

With respect to the tragic closure of the novel as well as its devastating satire, *The Human Stain* appears rather different from most of the other texts that I have focused on so far. Consequently, whereas some critics read campus novels as comic rather than satirical, I conclude that all novels analysed in this dissertation are satirical, which, however, does not necessarily make all of them comic. While I have explained in the third chapter that most of the selected novels employ the milder and more indulgent Horatian satire rather than the bitter Juvenalian one, *The Human Stain* adopts the latter form. Unlike the earlier novels which portray their satirical targets as foolish or inept rather than entirely corrupt, Roth's novel condemns academia for its unscrupulous manipulation and victimisation of the protagonist, Coleman Silk. This crucial difference is also the reason for the lack of humour in Roth's text. As Ema Jelínková explains, to a Juvenalian satirist, laughter is "far too frivolous for his needs and it might alleviate the atmosphere of a conviction of great evil being present."[211]

Whereas *The Human Stain* employs the character of Delphine Roux as an embodiment of corruption in academia, *On Beauty* provides a rather

[211] Ema Jelínková, *British Literary Satire in Historical Perspective* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2010), 8.

sympathetic portrayal of a female academic, the professor of creative writing Claire Malcolm. Although Claire is Howard's married colleague with whom he cheated on Kiki, she is depicted as a dutiful academic: "Claire was an excellent teacher. She reminded you how noble it was to write poetry; how miraculous it should feel to communicate what is most intimate to you, and to do so in this stylized way, through rhyme and metre, images and ideas" (*OB*, 259). Besides being a dedicated teacher, Claire also tries to bridge the gap between the privileged academia and the wider society. While Delphine only spoils lazy students who got the chance to go to college, Claire opens her classes to students who cannot afford to enrol at Wellington, and she does not hesitate to fight for the opportunity to be allowed to do so.

When Claire is threatened by the administration that she may no longer be allowed to accept non-students into her classes, she realizes that any call for support she makes must be expressed in what she calls "Wellington language" (*OB*, 263), the language the people who make the decisions are used to using. Thus, she is aware of the isolation of the academia. Moreover, as Claire considers herself a poet rather than an academic, she sometimes feels like she does not belong to her environment: "How had she ever ended up here, in one of these universities, where one must make an argument for everything, even an argument for writing about a chestnut tree?" (*OB*, 219). Thus, Claire's contact with the world outside the university enables her to effectively criticize academia.

Among the other characters, it is the hard-working sophomore Zora Belsey who notices Claire is not a typical academic. Although Claire is familiar with philosophy and canonical literature, her lack of knowledge of recent development in literary theory cannot escape Zora's attention: "Sometimes Zora suspected [Claire] of being barely intellectual. With her, it was always 'in Plato' or 'in Baudelaire' or 'in Rimbaud', as if we all had time to sit around reading whatever we fancied" (*OB*, 219). Thus, while in *The Human Stain*, students are only minor characters, in *On Beauty*, they contribute in a major way to the portrayal of academia. In particular, Zora's character enables Smith to highlight multiple problems the turn of the century academia may be facing. First, as suggested above, the

emphasis on literary and cultural theory in academic curricula may have resulted in familiarizing students with the latest thinking rather than with the literary and cultural heritage.

In addition, as a hardworking art history major in the top three percentile of the college, Zora excels in the assignments required from her, but tends to see her courses as nothing but a refined intellectual exercise: "Once the class was finished she realized at once how she might have argued the thing just as viciously and successfully the other way round; defended Flaubert over Foucault; rescued Austen from insult instead of Adorno" (*OB*, 209). Thus, looking for a permanent attachment to a cause, Zora comes to embrace all of her father's ideas and theories on art and politics. For instance, she explains the view of art that she has taken over from Howard to guests at her parents' anniversary party: "Dad's more into conceptual art, of course. We have totally extreme taste in art—like most of the pieces we own, we can't really show in the house. He's into the whole evisceration theory, you know—like art should rip your fucking guts out" (*OB*, 114). The alternation between 'we' and 'he' in this speech shows Zora's lack of distinction between her own and her father's opinions. Consequently, Zora's character serves to criticize the way Howard imposes his views on his family.

It is after the revelation of Howard's infidelity with Claire that Zora voices her extreme loyalty to her father most openly. Unlike Jerome who always supports his mother, Zora justifies Howard's infidelity because she considers Claire both more intelligent and better-looking than Kiki: "[W]hat kind of a sophisticated guy in his fifties *doesn't* have an affair? It's basically mandatory. Intellectual men are attracted to intellectual women—big fucking surprise. Plus my mom doesn't do herself any favours—she's like three hundred pounds" (*OB*, 139, italics in original). Zora's lack of sympathy for her mother highlights her blind devotion to her father as a representative of academia.

While Zora idealizes both her father and the university community, Howard has a completely different view of academia. Although Howard is angry with Monty for having maliciously pointed out that he wrote an article in which he confused Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait* of 1629 with *Self-Portrait with Lace Collar*, he admits that he would have done the same:

"To enact with one sudden tug (like a boy removing his friend's shorts in front of the opposing team) a complete exposure, a cataclysmic embarrassment—this is one of the purest academic pleasures. One doesn't have to deserve it; one has only to leave oneself to it" (*OB*, 29). Thus, an insider to the academia, Howard perceives it as governed by malice and animosity. In addition, Monty reveals himself no better than Howard as he turns out to have been having an affair with Chantelle Williams, an African American non-student who attends Claire's class, possibly even before his wife's death.

Although Zora tends to imitate Howard, she overcomes her impractical father in her dedication to a cause. For instance, she shows her determination when she fights for Carl Thomas's, another African American non-student's,[212] right to attend Claire's creative writing class. Carl joins the course after the class accidentally sees his performance of oral poetry at a local club.[213] Soon after Carl attends a few sessions, a faculty meeting is to discuss the practice of letting non-students attend classes, and Claire asks Zora if she would be willing to help her get some support for the cause. Zora agrees the more excitedly as she is in love with Carl; however, she does not know that he is attracted to Victoria Kipps. Thus, while Zora is busy writing an opinion piece for the campus newspaper to argue that academia should be open to non-students, Carl is flirting with Victoria. It is not until Zora accidentally discovers Carl and Victoria making out at a party that she declares she is in love with him and accuses him of not having enough good taste to choose someone "a little more classy than Victoria Kipps" (*OB*, 416). In reaction, the enraged Carl informs Zora about Howard's and Monty's affairs with their students, as Victoria and Chantelle had told him earlier. Thus, it is Carl whom she professes to protect that reveals to Zora the pretensions of the academia.

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[212] In 2008, the percentage of all 18- to 24-year-old African Americans enrolled in higher education increased to 32.6% from 21.2% in 1988. See "Milestones in African American Education," *Infoplease.com*, accessed December 28, 2014, http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0872844.html.

[213] Besides written poetry and spoken word, Ulka Anjaria identifies other binaries in the novel, such as thin/fat, Mozart/hip-hop, Rembrandt/Haitian art, beautiful/ugly, high art/cheap commodity. See "*On Beauty* and Being Postcolonial: Aesthetics and Form in Zadie Smith," in *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays,* ed. Tracey L. Walters (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 31-56.

As the preceding paragraphs suggest, the portrayal of students in the two novels is completely different. *The Human Stain* pictures students as irresponsible and convinced that they are always in the right. *On Beauty*, on the contrary, describes students, for the most part, as ambitious and hard-working. While some may use the internet only for entertainment, many are increasingly career-oriented, as they have learned to think of higher education as a valuable service that they need to make the most of. For instance, when deciding which class to take, they simply do a google search:

> [The students draw] on multiple variables including the relative academic fame of the professor; his previous publications up to that point; his intellectual kudos; the uses of his class; whether his class really meant anything to their permanent records or their personal futures or their grad school potential; the likelihood of the professor in question having any real-world power that might translate into an actual capacity to write that letter which would effectively place them—three years from now—on an internship at the *New Yorker* or in the Pentagon or in Clinton's Harlem offices or at French *Vogue* (*OB*, 142).

As this description shows, another emerging satirical target for a contemporary campus novel seems to be the high ambition of students that may even exceed their professors' aspirations. At the same time, Smith suggests that students, rather than professors, are willing to bridge the gap between academia and the wider society. While Zora makes many wrong judgments on the personal level, in her opinion piece for the campus newspaper, she manages to identify the very paradox that the campus is, in Jackson's words, "liberal in principle but largely removed from the actual social conditions outside its walls."[214] Thus, Zora convincingly calls for putting the academic community's theoretical opinions into practice.

Consequently, the campus novels at the turn of the century echo their predecessors by hinting at implicit solutions to the problems they pose. This persisting feature of the genre appears the more striking in conjunction with Steven Weisenburger's observation that in post-war American literature, a new mode of satire that he calls *degenerative* has become prevalent. The degenerative satire differs from the traditional generative satire as it "lacks a steady narrative

[214] Jackson, "Imagining Boston," 857.

voice, specific 'targets,' and fixed norms or corrective goals."[215] At the same time, Weisenburger admits that "some writers (like Mary McCarthy, Philip Roth, or Terry Southern) adhered to an idea of satire that is decidedly generative; they took for granted satire's power to punish vice and uphold liberalist norms."[216] As two of the examples, McCarthy and Roth, are authors of campus novels, the study confirms my own findings that the genre appears to use satire with a reformative purpose. While Weisenburger's research focuses on the American novel, my observation applies both to the more light-hearted British campus novel and to its darker American counterpart. Even *The Human Stain*, which replaces the comic tone with a tragic one and Horatian satire with Juvenalian, presents the loosening of academic requirements on students and the abuses of political correctness as satirical targets worthy of reform.

Finally, like previous campus novels, both *The Human Stain* and *On Beauty* employ the elements of intertextuality. As Silk teaches a survey course in ancient Greek literature in translation, Roth posits Coleman's story into the frame of classical myth and tragedy.[217] When lecturing about *The Iliad* and Achilles, Silk mentions that Achilles "through the strength of his rage at an insult […] isolates himself, positions himself defiantly outside the very society whose glorious protector he is and whose need of him is enormous" (*HS*, 5). This summary provides explicit parallels with Coleman's own story. After being unjustly insulted, Coleman resigns from Athena, the community he had devoted a substantial part of his life to. In addition, later on, taking Viagra to ensure his sexual relationship with Faunia, Coleman compares himself to Zeus: "Thanks to Viagra I've come to understand Zeus's amorous transformations" (*HS*, 32). Thus, Coleman sees his relationship with Faunia in completely different terms than the supposedly well-meaning faculty at Athena who, for all their proclaimed open-mindedness, automatically perceive a liaison of two people of different age and social rank as abusive. As Elaine Showalter concludes, "Silk's fate

[215] Steven Weisenburger, *Fables of Subversion: Satire and the American Novel*, *1930-1980* (London: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 14.
[216] Weisenburger, *Fables of Subversion*, 27.
[217] For a more detailed account of these intertextual elements, see Patrice D. Rankine, "Passing as Tragedy: Philip Roth's *The Human Stain*, the Oedipus Myth, and the Self-Made Man," *Critique* 47, no. 1 (2005), 101-112.

is the matter of classical tragedy, with desire as the human stain on the silk fabric and rage as the rent in cloth."[218]

In acknowledgements to *On Beauty*, Smith herself writes: "It should be obvious from the first line that this is a novel inspired by a love of E. M. Forster" (*OB*, ix). Accordingly, the opening sentence of the novel "One may as well begin with Jerome's email to his father" (*OB*, 1) is reminiscent of the first line of Forster's *Howards End* (1910): "One may as well begin with Helen's letters to her sister."[219] In his email, Jerome Belsey confides to Howard that he has fallen in love with Victoria Kipps, just as Helen Schlegel in Forster's novel mentions she is in love with Paul Wilcox. However, while both novels focus on the relationships between two families of different social background and ideological opinions, *On Beauty* is more than a retelling of *Howards End*, as the text also enters into conversation with Elaine Scarry's essay "On Beauty and Being Just" (1999). Thus, rather than focusing on the issue of financial inheritance as Forster, Smith is concerned with aesthetic and ethical views perpetuated by academia. As Adams puts it, Smith "asks not 'who will inherit England?' but, echoing Scarry, 'who will appreciate beauty and be just?'"[220]

In addition, various earlier campus novels come to mind when reading *On Beauty*. Perhaps most strikingly, towards the end of the novel, Howard is to deliver a public lecture which may secure him tenure, like Jim Dixon in *Lucky Jim*. While Dixon arrives at the lecture inebriated, Howard is late because of a traffic jam. While Dixon has not prepared his talk, Howard realizes too late that he had forgotten the text of his Rembrandt lecture in his car. Looking at the audience, Howard sees all the people from the academic community and, to his surprise, his wife. As he is about to start, Howard is so astounded by the beauty of both Rembrandt's *Hendrickje Bathing* on the projector and Kiki in the audience that he finds himself unable to give his deconstructionist lecture from memory. Thus, the ending implies that Howard has realized the limitations of his theories and that he and Kiki have become closer to each other again. Consequently, the

[218] Elaine Showalter, *Faculty Towers*, 129.
[219] E. M. Forster, *Howards End* (London: Campbell, 1992), 3.
[220] Adams, "A Passage to Forster," 377.

restorative ending continues in the tradition established by the British campus novel.

In conclusion, both *The Human Stain* and *On Beauty* deal with racial conflicts in the turn of the century academia, but each novel contextualizes them in a different way. *On Beauty* focuses on the conflicting perceptions of race, aesthetics and morality in a New England college town. While the conservative members of the academia like Monty Kipps are not willing to open its gates to the underprivileged racial minorities, Smith suggests that there is something needful in their traditional approach to academic curricula. The liberal members of the academia, such as Howard Belsey, do claim to be interested in benefitting those outside, but their practice often stays behind their theoretical opinions. In addition, their approach to the curricula, attempting to demythologize and deconstruct the great figures of the past, results in making academic study a barren intellectual exercise expressed in a theoretical jargon inaccessible to anyone outside the university. Thus, for all their faults, it is the students like Zora and Jerome, temporary academics like Claire or outsiders like Kiki who succeed, to various degrees, in identifying the various faults of both of these viewpoints.

The Human Stain deals with Coleman Silk's unjust charge of racism which is eventually complemented by a charge of misogyny. Thus, rather than focusing on racial issues per se, the novel highlights the academia as a site of hypocrisy and manipulation. For all his flaws, an aging distinguished academic like Coleman Silk is undeservedly sacrificed so that the academic community, represented by the immature Professor Delphine Roux, can boast of its open-mindedness and tolerance. Thus, unlike the earlier campus novels, *The Human Stain* portrays the academia as entirely corrupt, opting for Juvenalian rather than Horatian satire. To make his indictment of the academia more convincing, Roth minimizes the use of humour and closes the novel with a tragic ending for the protagonist. Accordingly, while in *On Beauty*, students may contribute to improve the state of the academia, *The Human Stain* suggests that they have learned to confidently coexist within its corrupted walls, benefitting from the loosening of academic standards and letting themselves be used in manipulated controversies if needed. Thus, while both

texts identify similar satirical targets and call for reform, Smith's novel portrays the reform as considerably easier to put into practice.

8. Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have aimed to compare the genre of the campus novel in British and American literature from the 1950s to the early 21st century. As the novel tends to be a belated form of social commentary, the analysed texts reflect the changes in Anglo-American higher education from the late 1940s to the late 1990s. In the introduction, I have outlined that the main focus of the dissertation is the usage of the comic and the satirical within the genre. Therefore, in my textual analysis, I have consistently employed Christian Gutleben's distinction between the general tone of a text and its mode, or the final effect. Thus, I have argued that campus novels use the comic tone with a satirical effect, as they highlight the follies and vices of the academia and call for a reform.

For instance, the first chapter applies this distinction to two representative campus novels of the 1950s, Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* and Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin*. In *Lucky Jim*, the comic tone stems from Professor Welch's pomposity that prompts Jim Dixon, a temporary lecturer of lower-middle class background, to play jokes on his superior. In turn, the novel satirizes the academia which employs such self-important academics as Professor Welch. Similarly, in *Pnin*, the eponymous protagonist's misunderstandings that result from his lack of knowledge of English language and American culture contribute to the comic tone; however, once the novel shifts to portray Timofey Pnin's colleagues who exaggerate the Russian immigrant's incompetence, the academia is satirized for its maliciousness. Thus, in spite of contemporaneous legislation that aimed to make academic careers more accessible to people of various social backgrounds, both of the novels portray the academia as unwilling to open its gates to the newcomers. Accordingly, Dixon does not regret giving up his academic career once he gets a generous job offer outside academia and Pnin leaves the university that he works at.

However, as Dixon finds both a better job and a partner, the serendipitous happy ending of *Lucky Jim* is far from the open ending of *Pnin*. Thus, while *Lucky Jim* uses satire to call for the reform of academia, the novel's restorative ending is more typical of the comic than the satirical literary tradition, as comic texts tend towards happy endings for the protagonists. *Pnin*, on the contrary, does not soften

its satire throughout the text, as the open ending of the novel leaves the protagonist without any promise of a change for the better.

The campus novels discussed in the second chapter, Bernard Malamud's *A New Life* and Malcolm Bradbury's *Stepping Westward*, were written in the 1960s but are set in the 1950s, against the McCarthy era. Both texts are situated at provincial universities in the American West, an area previously unknown to their protagonists. While the American West as seen by a junior faculty member from New York or a creative writer from England is a site of numerous comic misunderstandings, the novels also satirize the provincial universities for their strictly utilitarian approach to higher education. Bradbury's Englishman was attracted to America because of the country's promise of freedom, but as his experience does not live up to his expectations, he eagerly returns to his comfortable existence in Nottingham. Thus, the British novel repeats the light-heartedly comic tone as well as the restorative ending of *Lucky Jim*. Malamud's New Yorker, on the contrary, sacrifices his academic career in favour of family life, as he decides to accept responsibility for his partner's children from her previous marriage. Thus, Malamud's protagonist is forced to make uneasy negotiations between his professional and personal obligations.

While British campus novels continue to be more light-hearted than the American ones, the third chapter illustrates that academic fiction in both countries changes significantly from the 1970s onwards. First, whereas the earlier novels usually focused on untenured junior faculty members, both David Lodge's *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses* and Alison Lurie's *The War between the Tates* feature middle-aged tenured professors who have benefitted from the expansion of Anglophone higher education. Second, the protagonists are portrayed as husbands and fathers apart from academics. Although Lurie's Brian Tate is a political scientist that dreams of becoming a politician, overall, the protagonists are rather unwilling to leave academia. First, they have already devoted a substantial part of their lifetime to it; second, tenure provides them with a feeling of security. While the middle-aged academics' reactions to the rapidly changing world, represented by the students, bring about numerous comic situations, the novels extend their satirical targets from academia to various phenomena in the wider society. It is in this decade that a male professor's adulterous intercourse with a student or faculty wife becomes a typical theme of

the genre. However, the lightly comic treatment of adultery in *Changing Places* is far from the serious rendering of the theme in *The War between the Tates*.

The novels discussed in the fourth chapter, David Lodge's *Nice Work* and Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, juxtapose the academia and the wider society of the 1980s. While *Nice Work* focuses on Robyn Penrose, a female temporary lecturer in English Literature, and her encounter with a manager of an engineering company, *White Noise* deals with the professional and familial life of a tenured professor who invented the new academic field of Hitler Studies. *Nice Work* thus challenges the previous academic fiction in which the protagonists were male and female characters were faculty wives rather than academics. As Robyn's insecure position at the university stems from the financial cuts of higher education in Thatcherite England, the novel satirizes political decisions that result in lack of finances in academia. *White Noise*, on the contrary, criticizes the overspecialization and commercialization of both American higher education and the wider society.

In turn, another pattern of difference between the British and the American texts emerges. As Lodge's novel is, along with the vast majority of British campus novels, set in an English department, it implicitly defends English literature and culture against influences from abroad. In particular, the British novels adopt an increasingly anti-American stance. While *Changing Places* equally satirized both the British and American characters, the protagonist of *Nice Work* is glad to refuse a well-paid job in America thanks to an unexpected inheritance. In addition, by including two novels by David Lodge, this dissertation only highlights the fact that most British campus novels from the 1950s to the 1980s were written by a trio of representative authors, Lodge along with Amis and Bradbury. As all of these authors were English professors, British campus novels often used intertextuality and elaborate literary allusions. In contrast, American campus novels were not only written by a wider range of authors, but they also feature a more varied set of settings and themes. For instance, *White Noise* focuses on the influence of consumer culture on academia, as the department of Hitler Studies serves to exaggerate the development of new specialized academic programmes which are advertised in the same ways as other commercially marketed products or services.

Although the subgenre of the campus murder mystery is beyond the scope of my research, the fifth chapter deals with two novels of the early 1990s, A. S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance* and Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich's *The Crown of Columbus*, which use the features of detective fiction. However, rather than an investigation of a murder, the authors portray as detection the methods and discoveries of academic research itself. In turn, rather than a solitary occupation separated from the outside world, academic research is viewed in these texts as an activity with larger social consequences. In *Possession*, two young instructors of English Literature, a tenured female and an untenured male, discover the love correspondence of two fictional Victorian poets and consequently revise literary history. In addition, they strive to make sure that the letters are not bought by their American colleague with better financial resources. Thus, although cuts in higher education have been present in both countries since the 1980s, the British campus novels continue to satirize Americans as moneyed people. By means of an epigraph from Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*," Byatt suggests she uses the term *romance* in the subtitle to evoke parallels between the Victorian and the late 20th century subplots of the text. As Gutleben explains that the structure of reconciliation is common to both romance and comedy, another manifestation of romance or comedy may be found in the affirmative ending of the novel. Not only do the two protagonists consummate their love affair, but because of their discovery, the untenured one finally receives several job offers. Thus, in campus novels, both romance and comedy may coexist with satire.

While *Possession* uses the highest amount of intertextuality of all the British campus novels, as the text includes poems supposedly written by the two fictional poets, the novel adopts an already established discourse with respect to the anti-American stance. In contrast, *The Crown of Columbus* enriches the pluralistic American campus novel, which already includes representative texts by other ethnic authors, with a Native American perspective. However, both novels react to the increasing difficulty of getting a permanent job at a university. In *The Crown of Columbus*, a Native American female assistant professor of anthropology who strives to obtain tenure discovers Christopher Columbus's diary. Along with her partner, a distinguished male professor of English, she proceeds to study the diary. As their findings provide a significant reinterpretation

of the explorer's legacy with far-reaching results for previously colonized nations all over the world, the novel foregrounds the issue of justice in relation to academia. Like in *Possession*, because of their ground-breaking research, the protagonists' positions in academia level off, and this releases a degree of tension from their relationship. Thus, while the novel closes with an affirmative ending typical of the comic tradition, it also satirizes the stiff hierarchy of the American academia by portraying a serious relationship of two academics of different rank as rather problematic.

The campus novels of the early 21st century discussed in the sixth chapter, Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* and Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*, also deal with gender and racial issues, but they set them against larger academic policies and controversies. In *The Human Stain*, Coleman Silk, a seventy-one-year-old professor of classics and administrator at a small college, leaves academia after he is falsely accused of using a racial slur against two of his African American students. At first glance, the novel, set against Bill Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky, seems to satirize the hypersensitivity of academia at the age of political correctness. However, Roth reveals that in fact, the protagonist's corrupt adversaries deliberately use the charge as an excuse to denigrate Silk. As the novel portrays academia as entirely corrupt, it chooses to employ the harsher Juvenalian satire which does not use humour rather than the milder Horatian one which was typical of earlier campus novels. Thus, while some critics have read campus novels as comic rather than satirical, I conclude that all novels analysed in this dissertation are satirical, which, however, does not necessarily make all of them comic.

Although Smith is a British author, she also sets her novel on an American campus, as *On Beauty* provides a detailed portrayal of the diverse black population of a New England university town. The novel centres on two Oxford educated art professors who fight on the opposite sides of the Culture Wars. The former is a conservative anglicized Trinidadian visiting professor, an old-fashioned humanist and a bigoted Christian. The latter is an untenured liberal Brit and a radical art theorist. While both are satirized for imposing their views on others, the latter is the novel's faulty protagonist who supports ethnic minorities in theory, but remains rather passive in practice. Consequently, whereas *The Human Stain* discloses some academics as defending an ethnic minority only to hide their

own ambition, *On Beauty* reveals that some academics may sympathize with members of ethnic minorities only in theory. However, by portraying academia as perhaps foolish and inefficient but not entirely corrupt, the British text sticks to Horatian satire and suggests that the reform may be less difficult to put into practice.

In all of the analysed novels, academia has been satirized for multiple reasons. While the early novels mocked its stuffy old-fashioned atmosphere, the later ones satirized its competiveness and the increasing difficulty to obtain tenure. Finally, the most recent novels deride academia as a site of racial issues. However, in spite of all this criticism, the satire remains, to use Steven Wiesenberger's term, generative, as the authors hint at solutions to the problems that they highlight. Thus, even the affirmative endings of the most of the selected novels may be seen as confirming their authors' optimist conviction that academia is both capable and worthy of reform. Since most of the authors have experienced the academic profession themselves, they usually create characters that consider the multiple duties required from an academic, such as teaching and research, an important and meaningful occupation.

As John Peck and Martin Coyle have observed, both the action and the characters portrayed in a satirical text tend to be exaggerated, as they are meant to be rather illustrative than realistic. However, in spite of many authors' notes in campus novels to the effect that the characters and events portrayed in the text are entirely fictitious, the tendency to read campus novel as *romans à clef* persists, perhaps given the relatively limited size of the Anglo-American academic community. Yet, of all the characters in the campus novels analysed in this dissertation, Morris Zapp of David Lodge's *Changing Places* may be the only acknowledged double of a real academic, Stanley Fish.

Another way of reading campus novels as reflections of the Anglophone academia is by comparing their fictional settings to the existing institutions that are considered to have inspired the authors. While one may associate the British campus novels' defence of Englishness with Oxbridge, a close inspection reveals that their setting is much more diverse. More specifically, Jim Dixon graduated from Leicester University and is employed at an unnamed provincial university. *Stepping Westward* takes place at a generic American university. David Lodge himself admitted that *Changing Places* is set at the author's fictionalized versions

of the universities in Birmingham and Berkeley. Birmingham is also the setting of *Nice Work*, although the protagonist of the novel, Robyn Penrose, holds a Ph.D. from Cambridge. The two main characters of *Possession* are employed at Prince Albert College and Lincoln University, while the protagonists of *On Beauty* reside at Wellington, Smith's fictionalized version of Harvard. Thus, while Ian Carter's earlier research showed that Oxford and Cambridge figure in 70 per cent of British academic fiction written between 1945 and 1988, the major novels analysed in this dissertation may occasionally refer to Oxbridge, but are actually set elsewhere.

The American novels reflect a similar variety. Timofey Pnin works at a provincial college. Similarly, the protagonist of *A New Life* teaches at a generic land grant college, while the professor of Hitler Studies in *White Noise* is employed at a generic Midwestern college. In contrast, Brian Tate graduated from Harvard and works at Corinth University, a fictionalized version of Cornell. Both of the two main characters of *The Crown of Columbus* are employed at Dartmouth College. Finally, Coleman Silk lectures at a provincial New England college, but one of his antagonists has a Ph.D. from Yale. Thus, the novels suggest that because of lack of job openings in academia, even graduates of prestigious universities may seek employment at provincial colleges. At the same time, one may also conclude that rather than favouring the most prestigious universities, the authors of the novels analysed in this dissertation choose to portray a wide range of contemporary institutions of higher education.

The variety of themes and settings may be one of the reasons for the persisting popularity of the genre both inside and outside academia. As the reception of the campus novel among literary critics has been varied, the dismissive view of the genre was most recently repeated by John Dugdale in *The Guardian*,[221] while Jeffrey J. Williams offered the opposite view in his article in *American Literary History*. Although Dugdale mentions both British and American authors, a negative reception of the genre is perhaps less surprising in the British environment. As I have suggested earlier, the British campus novel seems to have somewhat exhausted itself by its limited discourse of defence of

[221] Dugdale dismissively explains the production of campus novels as "an elite club's induction ritual." See "Last Rites for the Campus Novel," *Guardian*, April 1, 2013, accessed December 28, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2013/apr/01/last-rites-campus-novel.

British literature and culture. The only major British campus novelists still writing are Lodge and Byatt; however, both have recently turned away from academic fiction. In addition, young British writers do not appear attracted to the genre, with the exception of Zadie Smith who, however, wrote only one novel and set it in America. Another reason why campus novels are no longer written in Britain could be that the percentage of people attending college in the UK continues to be considerably lower than in the US.

Similarly, it is no coincidence that a positive evaluation of academic fiction comes from the United States where the genre continues to flourish, with recent contributions by both major and young writers. The percentage of Americans with some experience of college life increases steadily, and so do creative writing programmes that bring major American writers to educational institutions. While in the introduction, I have distinguished the post-war professor-centred novels from the earlier student-centred ones, in the early 21st century, the lines are becoming blurred. Rather, as the scope of campus novels widens to include not only professors, but also students and administrators, the genre reveals a lot about not just the academia, but the whole American society.

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