The Politics of Higher Education and American Academic Fiction 1950-1980

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SAŽETAK

Iako je američki akademski roman dobro prihvaćen od kritičara i čitatelja, još uvijek je relativno nepoznat i neistražen u hrvatskim razmjerima. Hipoteza je ove studije da akademski romani kao književni artefakti svog vremena istodobno oblikuju i odražavaju splet diskursa visokog obrazovanja u kojima sudjeluju. Stoga je njezin glavni cilj locirati diskurs akademskih romana kroz neknjiževne diskurse njihova razdoblja kako bi se došlo do novih saznanja o društveno-povijesnom kontekstu njihova nastanka.

Pri analizi je korišten književno-teorijski pristup novog historizma koji naglašava povijesnost tekstova kao i značaj povijesnog konteksta u kojemu su djela nastala. Premda je dosad pristup novog historizma uglavnom korišten samo za analizu djela iz starijih književnih razdoblja, ovaj rad želi ukazati na primjenjivost ove metode pri čitanju akademske proze, čime se otvaraju nove mogućnosti proučavanja suvremene književnosti.

Propitujući odraz američkog društva i akademskog svijeta u američkoj prozi iz akademskog života, rad se usredotočuje na romane nastale od 1950. do 1980. – *The Groves of Academe* (1952.) Mary McCarthy, *Pictures from an Institution* (1954.) Randala Jarrella, *A Small Room* (1961.) May Sarton, *Stoner* (1965.) Johna Williamsa, *The Odd Woman* (1974.) Gail Godwin i *The War Between the Tates* (1974.) Alison Lurie – te potom razmatra kontinuitet žanra na prijelazu stoljeća.

U svijetlu suvremenog trenda približavanja Hrvatske Zapadnim obrazovnim standardima, detaljniji uvid u američki obrazovni sustav, kao i promjene s kojima se suočava akademska zajednica, može pridonijeti boljem razumijevanju akademskih struktura i pospješiti započete tranzicijsko-integracijske procese. Prema tome, raspon mogućnosti koji nude djela ovog žanra nadilazi čisto teorijsko-književni diskurs, i predstavlja važan izvor iskustva i znanja te doprinos unutar- i međukulturalnoj znanstvenoj razmjeni.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: američka proza iz akademskog života, novi historizam, književni artefakti, satira, diskurs

ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that the American academic novel has been well received by critics and readers alike, it is still relatively unknown and unexplored within the Croatian context. This dissertation offers the hypothesis that the academic novels as literary artifacts of their time are a part of interplay of discourses in higher education, which they both shape and are shaped by. Its purpose was to locate the discourses of the academic novels within other contemporaneous nonliterary discursive practices, in order to recover the socio-historical context of their production.

The analysis was done within the framework of new historical literary criticism with an emphasis on the historicity of the texts as well as the historical context in which the works were written. Although the theoretical approach of new historicism has been previously used mostly in the analyses of works of the earlier literary periods, this thesis posits the use of new historicism to analyze more recent literary works and thereby open up new possibilities of literary and historical analysis.

The subject of investigation was the politics of higher education and American academic fiction as represented in Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe* (1952), Randal Jarrell's *Pictures from an Institution* (1954), May Sarton's *A Small Room* (1961), John Williams' *Stoner* (1965), Gail Godwin's *The Odd Woman* (1974) and Alison Lurie's *The War Between the Tates* (1974). The study comprises the academic novels from the 1950's to the 1980's and traces the continuation of the genre through the turn of the century.

In the light of recent trends in Central Europe of nearing western standards in education, detailed insight into the American educational system, as well as the problems faced by the American academic community, may contribute to a better understanding of academic structures as well as advance the implementation of the ongoing transitional and integration processes. Therefore, the range of possibilities offered by works of this genre surpasses the literary-theoretical discourse and represents a very valuable source of experience and knowledge, contributing to the domestic and foreign scholarly exchange.

Keywords: American academic fiction, new historicism, cultural artifact, satire, discourse

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INTRODUCTION

Although the American academic novel has enjoyed immense popularity in the last few decades, it is still relatively unknown and unexplored within the Croatian context. This small but recognizable subgenre of contemporary fiction is set in the world of the academia and deals with themes closely related to academic circles such as economic, social and political trends that influence the development and management of American universities. Higher education has always been recognized as the driving force for the cultural, social and economic development of a nation and the authors of academic novels are challengers of the ideology, the power and mediations present in its particular discourses. This study offers the hypothesis that the academic novels as literary artifacts of their time are a part of interplay of discourses in higher education which they both shape and are shaped by.

The aim of this study is to relocate the discourses of the academic novels among the other nonliterary discursive practices of the particular decade the work was written, in order to, as Greenblatt says, "recover as far as possible the historical circumstances of their original production and consumption and to analyze the relationship between these circumstances and our own" (1990: 228–229). This study intends to discover what literary authors and academics can learn from each other and to what extent the university shapes the novels and the novels shape the university.

The topic of the academic novel in the United States as a genre will be introduced and thoroughly explained in the introductory chapter. In addition, new historicism will be defined and its basic principles of literary study will be explained. Analysis is done within the framework of new historical literary criticism with an emphasis on the historicity of the texts as well as the historical context in which the works were written. The aim of this

study is to explore "the textuality of history and the historicity of texts" (Barry 172) in order to study American academic fiction as literary texts in terms of the embedded history and culture. The theoretical approach of new historicism has been previously used mostly in the analyses of works of the earlier literary periods. The novelty of this thesis is the use of new historicism to analyze more recent literary works and thereby open up new possibilities of literary and historical analysis.

The dissertation will be based on the key principles and most significant literary and theoretical works on new historicism by authors such as Stephen J. Greenblatt, Catherine Gallagher, Louis A. Montrose, John Brannigan, Michel Foucault, Jean E. Howard, Janice Rossen and H. Aram Veeser, as well as selected theoretical writing on academic fiction of the following authors: John O. Lyons, John E. Kramer, David Lodge, Sanford Pinsker, Kenneth Womack, William Tierney and Elaine Showalter.

The study will focus on literary works belonging to the genre of American academic fiction published over a thirty year period (from 1950 through 1980). The main text of this thesis will include a detailed analysis of the academic novels with an emphasis on particular issues that are resonant in the spheres of the American academic world and their reflection in the American culture, education and politics. The subject of investigation will be the politics of higher education and American academic fiction as represented in Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe* (1952), Randal Jarrell's *Pictures from an Institution* (1954), May Sarton's *A Small Room* (1961), John Williams' *Stoner* (1965), Gail Godwin's *The Odd Woman* (1974) and Alison Lurie's *The War Between the Tates* (1974). After a study of the academic novels from the 1950's to the 1980's, the focus shifts to the continuation of the genre through to the turn of the century.

The concluding part of the dissertation will point out the thematic links between the analyzed novels, direct attention to the presence and relevance of particular issues in contemporary American culture and give suggestions for further research. In the light of recent trends in Central Europe of nearing western standards in education, detailed insight into the American educational system, as well as the problems faced by the American academic community, may contribute to a better understanding of academic structures. Therefore, the range of possibilities offered by works of this genre surpasses the literary-theoretical discourse and represents a very valuable source of experience and knowledge as well as contributes to the domestic and foreign scholarly exchange.

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENRE OF AMERICAN ACADEMIC FICTION

> Who are these homegrown enemies, more dangerous even than Saddam Hussein with his arsenal of chemical weapons?
>
> The answer: professors of literature. You know, the kind of people who belong to that noted terrorist organization, the Modern Language Association.
>
> Stephen Greenblatt 113

In order to decode the above statement by Stephen Greenblatt, we need to turn to a reliable source on this particular group of individuals, and there is no better choice than the academic novel. As a dominant literary form the novel is effective for the study of the social and cultural context at a particular place and time, and as such it is an indispensable source for scholarly research. For the purposes of this study, the academic novel will be a window into the academic world and a reliable link to its institutions, its particular social and cultural structures. As Thelin and Townsend confirm in their article "Fiction to Fact: College Novels and the Study of Higher Education", "anyone who is committed to the understanding and study of higher education has an obligation to read the accompanying fiction on the subject since it presents a serious and systematic account of higher education" (qtd. in Verrone 10).

The terms "academic novel," "university novel", "campus novel" and "college novel" are synonymous and depict literary works belonging to the genre of academic satire. Although this contemporary fictional form began with academic satire novels written in the 1950's, we can trace the satirization of education far back to when

"Aristophanes mocked Socrates in Clouds (423 BC) and Lucian attacked philosophers and rhetoricians in the second century" (Knight).

One of the earliest definitions of the academic novel was given in 1962 by John O. Lyons in *The College Novel in America*, where he defines the novel of academic life as "one in which higher education is treated with seriousness and the main characters are students and professors" (1962: xvii). He presents a survey of American academic life and a chronological bibliography which includes 215 American college novels beginning with Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Fanshawe* (1828) and ending with Louis Simpson's *Riverside Drive* (1962). Lyons claims "Hawthorne's *Fanshawe* is the first American novel of academic life" (1962: 5) but adds that "there were so few novels of academic life that *Fanshawe* is oddly isolated" (1962: xvi).

Additionally, in 1974 Lyons published an addendum which covers the period from 1962 to 1974 and gives a brief review of more recent college novels. He recognizes the influence of the novel as a literary genre and discusses the role of the academic novel in particular, emphasizing the fact that as public awareness of education grew, so did the number of academic novels:

> Historically the novel has been a crusading instrument. … The novel of academic life is in this tradition, for it often has an argument to make. It is usually a pedagogical one, although it may be an argument for racial or class tolerance or academic freedom. The importance of such arguments to the study of the novel of academic life can be indicated by the correlation between the production of the novels and the heat of public argument over education. (xviii)

Reading Lyons' survey of the history of the academic novel in America from 1962 to 1974, we become aware of the fact that many of the issues that plagued the academic world within the investigated time span continue to shake the ivory towers of the more recent times. According to Sanford Pinsker, "there are works, after all, that reflect college life and those that tend to shape it, those that chronicle the prevailing sociological trends and those that strike us as more prophetic, as more lasting, and as more important" (122). That becomes evident as we follow the transformation of higher education through the decades and observe its significance in the shaping of the social and political landscape of America. As Harry T. Moore commented in 1962, "In many ways, the academic novel can contribute important revelations about our national existence" (qtd. in Lyons 1962: vii) and that is the desired outcome of the present study.

Similarly to Lyons, in his comprehensive work, *The American College Novel: an Annotated Bibliography*, John E. Kramer provides a bibliographic survey of academic novels, beginning also with Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Fanshawe* (1828) and ending with Gordon Weber's *The Great Buffalo Hotel* (1979). His study includes 425 American college novels published from 1828 to 1979 and in an appendix under the title "Major American College Novels" Kramer lists sixty novels which he considers to be "the most heuristically important and/or entertaining works in the bibliography" (xiii). Especially interesting are Kramer's observations regarding topics and characters not present in the previous academic novels, namely the appearance of members of marginalized groups, particularly the gay, lesbian and minority characters.

In addition, in the introduction Kramer defines the term college novel as "a full length work of fiction which incorporates an institution of higher learning as a crucial part of its total setting and which includes among its principal characters, graduate or undergraduate students, faculty members, administrators, and/or other academic

personnel" (ix) and gives an insider's view by voicing his personal reasons for reading academic novels: "And, during my fifteen years as a college faculty member, I have taken a great deal of perverse delight in reading fictional accounts of people very much like my administrative overseers, my faculty colleagues, my students, and myself" (Kramer 1981: x).

Kramer's annotated collection addresses both the academic and non-academic readership. This was also pointed out by Anderson and Thelin who recognized Kramer's twofold purpose in catering to "those who enjoy reading college novels for pleasure and for scholars who use college novels as a tool for understanding how higher education is perceived in American culture and as part of the serious, systematic analysis of higher education" (106–107).

A more recent bibliography is Lisa Johnson's study, *The Life of the Mind: American Academia Reflected through Contemporary Fiction* (1995) in which she lists approximately two hundred additional novels published between 1980 and 1994. Although Johnson does not present an annotated bibliography like Kramer, in the introduction she confirms that academic fiction is a valuable academic resource. As Verrone observes, "she does preface her list with a view that academic fiction contains several recurring themes which represent current issues in American higher education, affirming the genre as a useful tool in research of higher education" (10). Just like Kramer, as an insider Johnson not only defines academic fiction but more importantly offers her views on academics and the academia:

> What is it about academia anyway? We profess to hate it, spend endless amounts of time complaining about it, and yet we in academia will do practically anything to stay. The pay may be low, job security elusive, and in the end, it's not the glamorous work we envisioned it would be. Yet, it

> still holds fascination and interest for us. This is an article about American academic fiction. By academic fiction, I mean novels whose main characters are professors, college students, and those individuals associated with academia. These works reveal many truths about the higher education experience not readily available elsewhere. We learn about ourselves and the university community in which we work. (23)

It is interesting that Kramer's and Johnson's views resonate in similar opinions given by "insiders" like David Lodge and Elaine Showalter. Firstly Lodge, who is as well known for his academic fiction as he is for his critical works, comments on the public view of this genre and its appeal for those doing scholarly research. Then he concedes that "in theory, everybody disapproves of academic novels, as being too inbred and stereotyped" but he observes that "in practice there seems to be a very big public for them" (qtd. in Moseley 1991: 8). Lodge suggests that these novels appeal to both readers and writers due to their representation of the university as "a kind of microcosm of society at large, in which the principles, drives and conflicts that govern collective human life are displayed and may be studied in a clear light and on a manageable scale" (1986: 169). Furthermore, in his essay, "Crosscurrents in Modern English Criticism," Lodge describes the pleasures of academic life as "the rise and fall of reputations, the interweaving of trends and movements, the alliances and rivalries, feuds and conspiracies" (248). His views of academic novels are first hand, for not only does he appreciate them as a professor and literary critic but he is also a prolific writer who has helped create this genre. As Chris Walsh comments, "Lodge's academic novels are nothing if not densely, intelligently informative about the world which they depict" (276).

Like Lodge, in her book *Faculty Towers*, Showalter discusses the usefulness of academic novels for academics of all ranks and even admits she was addicted to reading academic novels long before she was a professor:

> as I became a professor myself and experienced the realities and diversities of colleges and universities, I measured the gap between what I lived and what I read. In an era before there were handbooks, self-help guides, or advice columns for graduate students and junior faculty in the *Chronicle of Education*, novels taught me how a proper professor should speak, behave, dress, think, write, succeed, or fail. (2)

Showalter discusses the transformation of the university from the 1950's to the 1990's, summarizes academic novels and as an insider brings in her own personal experience of climbing the academic ranks. As Showalter holds a mirror up to her world, she not only provides a useful overview of academic fiction produced within a fifty-year period but also confirms the prevailing opinion that academic fiction can be both a source of pleasure and a valuable tool in the study of higher education:

> The best academic novels experiment and play with the genre of fiction itself, comment on contemporary issues, satirize professorial stereotypes and educational trends, and convey the pain of intellectuals called upon to measure themselves against each other and against their internalized expectations of brilliance. (4)

Likewise, in *Images of Higher Education in Novels of the 1980's*, John Hedeman asserts that novels have addressed issues in higher education with more representation of truth than some educational research material (qtd. in Verrone 10). Similarly, Thelin and Townsend suggest "college novels can serve as a form of historical memory, reminding us of events that may have been recorded in a novel but otherwise forgotten from the

historical record" (qtd. in Anderson 110). *Harvard Episodes* (1897) by Charles Macomb Flandrau is an interesting example of an academic novel that supports those views. The novel is one of the earliest works of academic fiction about American college life that "caused a minor scandal in the Yard and among the alumni" due to its unfavorable depiction of Harvard that included student vice, cheating, mayhem and snobbery (Lyons 1962: 9–10). Flandrau was criticized by the *Advocate*, Harvard's literary magazine, which claimed: "It is a matter of sincere regret, not so much that a false impression will inevitably be given by this book, but that a Harvard man should, whether knowingly or unknowingly, be the one to give it" (Bail 257). Despite the criticism, Flandrau defended his right to reveal the truth which, according to him, "was simply the kind of truth the educational process must face" (Lyons 1962: 10). Thus, Flandrau's novel proves that the academic novel reveals information about the American academia that is frequently not available elsewhere. In addition, this novel proves just how useful literary and non-literary texts are for a thorough investigation of our topic. However, Thelin and Townsend "caution that readers of academic fiction have an additional obligation to decode the many images and events that appear in these novels and to utilize these connectors to other sources of information about higher education" (Verrone 10). The present study intends to do just that as it investigates both fictional and non-fictional works from particular time periods, in order to attain a greater understanding and knowledge of higher education in America.

Anderson and Thelin stress the value of the genre as they suggest that "college novels can be employed as a means to understand how a particular profession or discipline is portrayed" (109–110) and due to the fact that many of the academic novels were written by insiders, they offer firsthand accounts of university life. Showalter points this out as she explains that these novels are written by "English professors about English professors

or by professional writers teaching in creative writing programs who can observe the tribal rites of their colleagues from an insider's perspective" (1). Similarly, Tierney observes that it is to be expected that the main characters of academic novels are mostly English professors "since many of the authors are members of English departments" (2004: 164). One such example is the character of Gertrude, the writer in residence in Randall Jarrell's *Pictures from an Institution,* who has made a career of going from university to university and giving her scathing first-hand accounts of the academic world in action. When we consider the commotion that Gertrude spread in the college, it is hardly unexpected that there were those who were against hiring writers. As Epstein aptly put it, "to hire a novelist for a university teaching job is turning the fox loose in the hen house. The result—no surprise here—has been feathers everywhere" (Epstein 2008: 377).

The freedom of expression exercised by writers of academic fiction, according to Lodge, could be traced to "the institution of academic tenure, which makes scholars less afraid of their peers and superiors than members of other professions" (1986: 169). If the very purpose of the academe is the pursuit of truth and knowledge, "academic freedom codified the belief" and "tenure was the structure that ensured the belief would not be violated" (Tierney 2004: 161). Individuals are shaped by the social contexts so it is vital to ensure that academic freedom is integrated into the social structure of universities.

It is noteworthy to mention that academic tenure and academic freedom play a very significant role in the academic novels in this study, particularly in the representations of the struggles to attain and maintain academic positions and respond to the rapidly changing demands of the American society that affect all aspects of higher education.

Furthermore, Tierney considers how "novelists have constructed academic identities" (2002: 162). Following the development of the academic novel, certain shifts

are evident. One significant change between the first half and the second half of the twentieth century occurred as the novels shifted from being student-oriented to faculty-oriented as "the locus of interest has moved from what one might call novels of student awakening, disillusionment, or maturation to novels concerned with the exploits of the faculty" (Tierney 2002: 166). Although the image of the professor has varied, Lyons comments that "the character of the professor in literature has consistently suffered from stereotypes ranging from the chalky-coated, absentminded, ineffectual, and even impotent professor, the timid and harmless pedant, the vicious and demonic sinner, or even the philanderer" (1962: 119). Pinsker presents the campus community dwellers as "faculty members who grumble and plot insurrections, deans (and sometimes, presidents) who dream about signing their dismissal notices, and increasingly, flashy academic superstars who liven up a moribund campus with insider gossip and the latest trends in literary theory" (1999: 442). Furthermore, members of academic departments have been described as

> tightly-knit groups whose members are both collaborators and competitors, and they divide into hostile fractions, especially over such issues as electing a department chair, hiring new faculty, and promoting or tenuring their colleagues ... or ... gather in competing theoretical (or anti-theoretical) camps and argue over politics or pedagogy. (Knight)

Finally, Womack concludes that the faculty characters in these novels range from "either satirically proffered as amoral, self-serving human forms or as larger, coldly manipulative, and omnipresent institutional machines" (2).

Although Benjamin De Mott is quoted for saying "No novel of academe has ever produced a believable professor" (1962: 245), Tierney disagrees and points out that "some

of our most celebrated authors have written academic novels and concocted entirely believable professors" (2002: 161). In fact, some of the characters of academic fiction are so real that numerous professors claim to have recognized themselves or their colleagues in them.

As academics identify with the representations of academia in these fictional portrayals, they realize their lives are mirrored in fiction and as Reynolds, Schwartz, & Bower claim "the participants in college life … read them as a form of catharsis and release" (qtd. in Anderson and Thelin 108). The identification with the fictional characters makes academics sensitive to the unfavorable portrayals. However, instead of taking offense, the alternative response would be to consider the depictions as constructive criticism and use them to advantage. Tierney calls for a similar response as he explains that "the self-delusion of the characters and the false conceptions they hold of themselves and others" provide us with a "mirror for us to look at ourselves" and "if we do not like what we see" we should not "smash the mirror" but "think of changing that which creates the visage" (2004: 174–175).

Thus, Tierney advises academic readers not to dismiss these novels just because the depictions of professors are not heroic or noble but to think about what they could learn from these unfavorable portrayals (2004: 174–175). Finally, he suggests that "the purpose in reading academic fiction has less to do with proving or disproving the truth of a text; instead, the novel might be thought of as a way to help academics think about how academic life has been structured, defined, and interpreted in order to create constructive change" (2004: 164). Being in full agreement with Tierney, this study intends to discover what literary authors and academics can learn from each other and to what extent the university shapes the novels and the novels shape the university.

As Tierney emphasizes that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages of the unfavorable fictional representations, he offers the following advice to academics:

> The discomfort that academic novels may cause us is reason not to avoid reading such texts, but to create change. The challenge is not merely to improve upon a tenure system or to develop accurate representations of academic life, but to ensure that the bonds of academic fellowship and obligation enable the members of the academy to fulfill the responsibilities of the professorate. Good academic novels, then, may not portray us as we wish to be seen, but by complicating the picture of academic life, the novels may encourage us to act as we wish to be seen. (2004: 176)

On the other hand, there are those who disagree and do not find pleasure in reading academic novels, but loathe the academic satire genre and would like to see it vanish. Among them is Bruce Robbins who calls attention to "the generally unflattering treatment academics have received from the so-called academic novel" and adds that "over the past half-century or so, novelists who turned their attention to the university have arguably contributed more than a little to the acute lack of respect and understanding of which academics … tend to complain" (249).

Contrary to Robbins' view, this study will attempt to prove that the academic novels serve as a corrective rather than a means to devalue higher education. Both the fact that over six hundred academic novels have been written and that many of them have been written by the most eminent authors supports this argument and confirms that the genre of the academic novel should not be "dismissed as light-weight and self-indulgent" (Fullerty vii). In addition, renowned experts in various fields have also made significant contributions to the genre by producing some of the best academic novels. An excellent example is the novel *A Tenured Professor*, written by John Kenneth Galbraith, a well-

known economist who authored numerous articles and bestselling books on economic topics and was one of the most widely known economists at home and abroad.

The protagonist of this academic novel, Montgomery Marvin, is a professor of economics who decides to put to use his expertise in making money as a part of his liberal agenda. His tenured teaching position at the university gives him the freedom to shake up both Harvard and Wall Street but does not exempt him from being labeled as un-American for using inside information to manipulate the stock market. On the one hand, Galbraith's novel offers pleasure and economic intrigue and on the other, it calls attention to the professors for whom teaching becomes a sideline as they wheel and deal for personal gain.

In addition to the academic readers, there is a broader readership that has also already been mentioned. As enrolments increase together with public spending, so does public awareness concerning higher education. Due to the extensive developments in mass media, numerous sources on higher education are available to the general public: "television programs, including documentaries, exposés, and entertainment shows; the news media, on television, in print, and online; movies; popular magazines; and, of course, anecdotal stories and accounts told by word-of-mouth" (Anderson and Thelin 108). In addition to the mentioned sources, the genre of academic fiction has also received increasing public interest and the novels are seen as "a prodigious, indispensable resource" (Anderson and Thelin 106) that provides the uninformed readers about what goes on campuses.

As Connor O'Brien claims, "the campus novel is 'culturally important' because it both reveals and shapes popular attitudes to education" (32). Furthermore, Tierney emphasizes that these novels enable the faculty and administrators of colleges and universities "to gain a socio-cultural perspective about how others see the professorate"

(2004: 161) and "reach mass audiences who are likely to have input into how the larger society shapes academic life" (Tierney 2004:162).

Whereas scholarly journals and other scholarly publications are read mostly by academics, the academic novels have a much larger reading audience. As Janice Rossen has observed, academic novels "are social documents, but they are also fiction" and as such they "engage in the interplay between fiction and fact" and "are important because they are widely believed by their readers to constitute an accurate representation of academic life, whether they do so or not" (1993: 3–5). She continues her discussion by emphasizing the importance of institutions of higher learning in the American culture and suggests that more attention be given to the fictional portrayals that deal with this particular subject because "these fictional representations shape and are shaped by the culture's conception of academic life" (2).

Anderson and Thelin also claim that readers can discover much about the academic community even if the credibility of these accounts may be questionable due to the fact that they are frequently written by "academics, steeped in academic culture and values ... participant-observers who have seen the good, the bad, the ugly" who "may have axes to grind or grudges to air" (107). However, the authors insist that a firsthand source, even "a sardonic view of higher education by an insider is still an informed view" (107). As one academic department chair has explained, "I learned the most about being a department chairman not from the campus orientation or from what other administrators told me, but from reading two academic novels: Richard Russo's *Straight Man* . . . and Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim*" (qtd. in Anderson 107).

This twofold purpose of entertaining and informing is achieved in the academic novel through the use of satire, which is one of its dominant features. Lyons recognized satire as the major method of the academic novels and commented that "the novel of

academic life has wrung a good deal of satire as well as pathos out of a situation in which there is a hierarchy of power and prestige from the demos-freshman to the tyrant-president" (1962: xv).

However, while Lyons claims that academic novels do not offer solutions, Ian Carter argues that they do so (qtd. in Womack 22). This study is in agreement with Carter's view, and it will be shown that the novels offer solutions to the problems they portray. They not only satirize but they also foreground the major issues that are shaping and being shaped by the times.

As Womack observes, "through their satiric representations of campus life, the practitioners of academic fiction render *de facto* judgments regarding the prevailing states of affairs in our post-secondary institutions" (Womack 23). If the aim of academic satires is to call attention to shortcomings in order to call for solutions, then "the best definitions of satire should be formulated from a combination of its corrective intent and its literary method of execution" (Harris). Thrall et al. suggest that satire may be defined as "a literary manner which blends a critical attitude with humor and wit to the end that human institutions or humanity may be improved" and they claim that "the true satirist is conscious of the frailty of institutions of man's devising and attempts through laughter not so much to tear them down as to inspire a remodeling" (436). Chris Baldick defines the campus novel as "a novel usually comic or satirical, in which the action is set within the enclosed world of a university (or similar seat of learning) and highlights the follies of academic life" (qtd. in Moseley 2007: 268–269). Likewise, Moseley considers the definition of satire and reasons the intention of the writers of academic fiction, concluding:

> If satire is the act of ridiculing a person, belief, or situation in order to expose its evils, then, by this reasoning, the academic novelist writes out of an urge to reveal, and perhaps punish, the follies and shortcomings of

> the academic institution in which he or she has been a dweller or participant. (7)

Discussing the purpose and manner of academic satires, Moseley claims that they "neither revile nor romanticize the life they present" and "they are neither savage satires nor mellow incitements to nostalgia or envy" (2007: 14). According to him, "reading satires of higher education might give professors a shock of recognition or perhaps even, in Janice Rossen's words, 'satisfaction in seeing one's enemies held up to ridicule'" (2007: 9).

On the other hand, Moseley considers the effect unfavorable satirized views may have on readers outside the academic community: "the cold satire may afford the non-academic reader to enjoy an agreeable pity or contempt for the pedagogue," or even to "respond to the academic satire with outrage" (2007: 9–10). Leuschner emphasizes this, further pointing out that

> the portrayal of academics as foolish or morally corruptible or both may provide succor for those who feel that education is a luxury denied to them, or for those who have experienced it and found it wanting, but the consequences for universities (and the humanities in particular) may be considerable. Such portraits draw upon and contribute to pervasive "anti-intellectualism" and can have a "profound impact", especially in a climate of budget crises and calls for accountability. (349–50)

Both Moseley and Leuschner confirm the significance of the broader readership of academic novels and this is understandable if we consider the amount of tax dollars appropriated for education. The public must be informed about government expenditures on education and they have the right to hold accountable all who are responsible for

providing a quality education, namely the government, the administrators of the individual institutions and the academics themselves.

Furthermore, Womack discusses how "academic fictions create meaning and value through their satirical narratives" and claims they can be seen as a form of social protest. He claims that they "often satirize and problematize the contradictions and sociological nuances of campus life" (1) as well as "document the institutional dilemmas and professional insecurities" that plague higher education (19). That is the type of documentation of higher education that will be the focus of this study.

One of the key topics of the academic satires is power and, as Rosen concludes, academic novels should be read "in terms of what they reveal about the dynamics of power between the contemporary novelist and his audience" (188). In her discussion of power structures present in the novels she considers the actual power of the University in reality as well as in the fictional portrayals. She asks who is allowed inside various circles within the academic community and who is marginalized from the arena of academic politics "as academics compete with each other within that realm for positions of power" (3–4).

Kenyon also emphasizes this power struggle among academics and claims that academic novels "portray human relationships which are also power relationships" (2007: 97) and that "a high proportion of senior academics are much more interested in what they call 'politics' (when they mean 'business') than they are in their teaching or research" (2007: 97–98). University politics frequently results in rivalries between the university administration and the faculty, as well as antagonism across departments and faculties, which diminishes the ideal of the university as a collaborative working and learning environment. As individuals struggle for advancement of their self-interest, they seem to forget the common purpose of the pursuit of truth and knowledge. This personal struggle by academics is described by Womack as "the rites of scholarly competition" and "the

triumphs and perils of multiculturalism, the predominance of the academic meritocracy" (146) and "the hoarding of manuscripts and knowledge in order to secure the individual scholar's uncertain niche in the larger academic community" (24). Murphy considers the interests of consumers and providers of education as he observes that

> the university serves as a microcosm in many novels: its ailments, whether framed as tragic or comic, are symptomatic of the broader society—everywhere there is a lust for status, sex and power. Part of the problem, of course, is the gap between personal ideals and the everyday reality of academia, which requires workers continuously to evaluate themselves and improve their "performance." (4)

On the one hand, the academic novels uncover the previously mentioned individual struggle for survival in the academic ranks but also "re-instill in the professorate a concern for academic freedom and an awareness of the social obligation and responsibility that academics have" (Tierney 2004: 175–176).

Although there have been critics of academic fiction who have complained of the sameness of University fiction, Rossen argues that "a more complicated web can be discerned in the texture of University fiction" which "reinforces popular views and yet also reflects those which are innately present in the culture in the first place" (2–3). This study will show that the subject of academic fiction is anything but limited, and that, on the contrary, it is as diverse as the nation whose changing and ever increasing educational needs it strives to meet.

As we follow the development of the academic novel through three decades, an evident change in the setting and atmosphere of the academic community can be observed. The increased interest in higher education and academic fiction provided more

accessible means for the general public, which may account for the great numbers of academic novels published since the nineteen-twenties.

Lyons compares the novels produced before the first World War with those that came after and observes the difference in "their depiction of social, and specifically sexual behavior" (1962: 24), the "prewar genteel sentimentality and a postwar naturalism" (1962: 36). He comments that "desperation" is a trait of the novels written after the First World War, for the "novelists are upset by what appears to be a disintegration of social codes which accompanied new wealth and a broadened democracy in the colleges" (1962: 45). Finally, he recognizes as particularly interesting "that though the romantic anti-intellectualism which characterizes the prewar novels continues, the novelists begin to admit the place of higher education in a frontierless nation," leading to "some sort of intellectual awakening" (46).

The period after the First World War brings an end to mischievous merrymaking on campus and there is a shift from the academic novels of life to the novels of education (Lyons 1962: 68). The authors take on issues such as academic freedom, class conflicts on campus, coeducation, women's colleges, the curriculum, college administration and other similar issues that had an impact on higher education during this period. The novels of the 1930's are focused on "the class conflict and the social problems" and "the academy is shown to be well meaning but ineffectual because it is a pawn of a capitalistic nation" (Lyons 1962: 94).

Due to the increased interest in education and the significant rise in enrollment, the novels dealt with the growth of state education, the controversy over mass popular education, the struggle for academic freedom, racial discrimination, progressive liberal colleges, practical vs. traditional education as well as business and government control over higher education.

With the appearance of novels that depict how "universities abdicate their integrity to the business interests which actually control it" we have a foreshadowing of later novels confirming the corporatization of universities due to similar business interests (Lyons 1962: 136).

With the introduction of new issues, there is also a significant shift in the setting of academic novels. Lyons observes that the atmosphere of Emerson's "The American Scholar," dominated in the early academic novels and by the end of the century made a caricature of the college campus (1962: 5). He associates the beginning of the American college novel with the Harvard setting, and the pattern continues so that only a "few novels are set at a community college, and most are (set) at prestigious and/or large state universities" (Thelin & Townsend 1988:164).

Likewise, Womack traces the academic novel's "modern origins in the nineteenth century, an intense era of social change and industrial growth that destabilized the prodigious cultural influences of privileged institutions of higher learning such as Oxford and Cambridge, and in America, Harvard" (Womack 21). A good example of this is the novel *Harvard Episodes* by Flandrau from 1897 which gives a vivid fictional account that was recognized as a realistic description of American higher education in the late nineteenth century.

One of the most significant changes in the setting occurred as the Harvard and similar Ivy League settings were replaced by smaller, less prestigious institutions, which resulted in novels in which "the novelists tend to acclimate education to generally romantic and democratic American ideals" (Lyons 1962: 132). Another shift occurred as the image of the professor changes from a romantic to a "comic character" or "the vehicle of satire," an "eccentric but sympathetic professor" who "acts as a sane point of reference in the mad world" (Lyons 1962: 132–133).

David Lodge comments that the early novels were an essentially comic subgenre, which frequently portrayed the campus setting as a small world set apart from modern urban life whose inhabitants display pretentious social and political behavior as well as moral weakness ("Exiles in a Small World").

In contrast to the earlier novels, the later ones depicted a campus setting which was no longer disconnected from the practical concerns of everyday life. Showalter observes this shift as she claims that the campus community is no longer an ivory tower, "a sanctuary or a refuge; it is fully caught up in the churning community and the changing society; but it is a fragile institution rather than a fortress" (Epstein 2005: 375).

Womack also highlights some of the major issues of academic novels of the past decades observing 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" (2). The novels foreground the major educational characteristics of their periods:

> the rapid academic expansion of the fifties amid "red-baiting" and loyalty oaths; the radical politics of the sixties; the critical revolution of the seventies and eighties (structuralism, deconstructionism, postmodernism) and the broadening of the curriculum to include women's studies, African-American studies, and multiculturalism; and the subsequent budget cutbacks that require intellectual expansion with shrinking resources and "show the university's limitations as an autonomous community." They reveal an academic world without the common values needed to guide or control its growth. (Knight)

However, Begley comments that "the novelist's perspective shifts, but the place itself remains substantially the same. On every campus in every decade, there's the urgent need for new funds, issues of academic freedom, worries about hiring and admissions quotas, petty jealousies, endless inter- and intra-departmental squabbles" (qtd. in Moseley 142). Additional frequent issues that pose a threat to academic and intellectual freedom are racial intolerance, lack of democracy in the college and student organizations, trendy literary theories, corporatization of universities, repression of the female intellect and female sexuality, defamation, educational malpractice, sexual harassment, political correctness, affirmative action and discrimination based on age, sex, disability, race, religion, national origin, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Finally, considering all the reasons given in this chapter for reading academic novels, it is hardly surprising that Jeffrey Williams appeals to academics to "[t]each the university (38)!" … "teach not only academic fiction" but also "courses foregrounding the literary, cultural, and social history of the university" (25) because "the topic of the university brings together theoretical, historical, political, sociological, literary, and other cultural texts, texts that are mutually informing and make the most sense in conjunction" (27).

Although American academic fiction has enjoyed immense popularity in the last few decades, it is still relatively unknown and unexplored within the Croatian context. The present study aims to increase both the Croatian readers' awareness of this genre and their knowledge regarding the development of higher education in the United States.

As a newly formed democracy, Croatia has recognized the significance of education and has been making efforts to empower its citizens through education, especially higher education. Due to the fact that universities generate knowledge and knowledge is what generates development in all spheres of society, Croatia is looking for

solutions to improve its higher education. As Croatia strives to attain status of a knowledge society and struggles with the implementation of the Bologna process, it has much to learn about higher education. The present study of fictional and non-fictional texts aims to aid Croatia by proposing solutions for dealing with the major issues in the development of higher education.

The investigation intends to reveal the extent to which fictional representation in the critiques of the academic world have shaped and have been shaped by American institutions of higher learning during a period of three decades. Until the present time only a few studies have examined particular aspects of college fiction and "relatively few scholars of higher education have used the academic novel as a research tool for understanding higher education" (Tierney 2004: 164). An exception is Thelin and Townsend's article "Fiction to Fact: College Novels and the Study of Higher Education" (1988) in which the authors argue that academic fiction novels are as valid as "institutional records, archival materials, and student and alumni memoirs and biographies" for the study of higher education (184).

This research is based on the key principles and most significant literary and theoretical works on new historicism and will focus equally on non-literary and literary works as historical traces written within the same period, and address the major issues of the day. This study focuses on fictional works that belong to the genre of American academic fiction published over a thirty year period (from 1950 through 1980), that are all set within the American academic community. These include: Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe* (1951), Randall Jarrell's *Pictures from an Institution* (1952), May Sarton's *The Small Room* (1961), John Williams' *Stoner* (1965), Gail Godwin's *The Odd Woman* (1974) and Alison Lurie's *The War Between the Tates* (1974).

2. NEW HISTORICISM IN THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMIC NOVEL

> Hugh: "It is not the literal past, the 'facts' of history that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language … we must never cease renewing those images."
>
> Brian Friel, Translations

With the aim of recovering the images of the past embodied in academic fiction, which have both shaped and been shaped by the development of higher education in the United States, we turn to new historicism. This movement in Anglo-American literary scholarship emerged in the late 1970's and early 1980's at the University of California at Berkeley when American critic Stephen Greenblatt and others founded *Representations,* still one of the most important and influential journals in the field of literary study (Fry). The movement's primary focus has been "the Early Modern period, the so-called 'Renaissance'," but it has extended to other fields, particularly to "the eighteenth century, British Romanticism, and Americanist studies from the late colonial through the republican period" (Fry).

According to Jean E. Howard, "by the early eighties professors had grown weary of teaching literary texts as 'ethereal entities' floating above the strife of history" (qtd. in Myers 27–28) and looked beyond to texts, literary and non-literary, that were floating about at the time these were written and read. Practitioners of new historicism opposed literary theories that "concentrate[ed] on the language of isolated texts and ignore[d] the worldly circumstances—the societies and the times—that produced them" (Spikes 98). They reacted against "both traditional historicism's marginalization of literature and new criticism's enshrinement of the literary text in a timeless dimension beyond

history" (Ghadiri 384). As Myers points out, "the new historicists not only call into question the traditional view of literature as an autonomous realm of discourse with its own problems, forms, principles, activities but they dissolve the literary text into the social and political context from which it issued" (28).

In their introduction to *New Historicism and Renaissance Drama*, Richard Wilson and Richard Dutton recognized this critical practice as "a return to history in literary criticism" (1992: 12) which was turning to "modes of analysis in which history and the political implications of what one was doing became prominent and central" (Fry).

In *Practicing New Historicism* Gallagher and Greenblatt, as founders of the interpretative practice, discuss the history of new historicism and the principles that motivated their criticism. They resist systematization, refuse to even recognize new historicism as a field and claim they "never formulated a set of theoretical propositions or articulated a program" (1). Furthermore, they have refused to be identified with any particular doctrine or ideology and look upon their work not as a set theory but as a critical practice according to which "literature must be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the critic" (qtd. in Milchakov) "in order to create a new and reinvigorated notion of literature as an historically and culturally grounded form of expression" (Spikes 97). According to Tiwary, their approach "is based on the assumption that a literary work is the product of the time, place, and circumstances of its composition and must be read and interpreted in its biographical, social and historical contexts" (79).

In order to explain the effects of new historicism on the practice of literary history, Greenblatt and Gallagher designated the following four specific transformations that it helped bring about:

1. the recasting discussions about “art” into discussions of “representations”;
2. the shift from materialist explanations of historical phenomena to investigations of the history of the human body and the human subject;
3. the discovery of unexpected discursive contexts for literary works by pursuing their “supplements” rather than their overt thematic;
4. the gradual replacement of “ideology critique” with discursive analysis. (17)

In 1982, Greenblatt edited a special issue of the journal *Genre* in which he coined the phrase “new historicism” and explained the effect of new historicism on literary critical practice:

> The new historicism erodes the firm ground of both criticism and literature. It tends to ask questions about its own methodological assumptions and those of others … the critical practice represented in this volume challenges the assumptions that guarantee a secure distinction between ‘literary foreground’ and ‘political background’ or, more generally, between artistic production and other kinds of social production. (1982: 5–6)

In Barry’s *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, new historicism is defined as “a method for the interpretation of literary texts based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period” (172). “Typically, a new historical essay will place the literary text within the ‘frame’ of a non-literary text”, and “the text and co-text will be seen as expressions of the same historical ‘moment’ and interpreted accordingly” (Barry 173). As Howard explains:

> new historicists produce new readings of canonized texts, though in doing so they lay those texts beside a host of "non-literary" texts to show how tightly what we call the literary is bound up with common ideologies and discourses of its historical moment of production. (153)

Although Greenblatt coined the term "new historicism" for his critical practice, he returns to the term "cultural poetics" that he used in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* in 1980, in which he claims that the "proper goal" of his critical practice was "a poetics of culture" (1982: 6). He defines cultural poetics as a critical practice which challenges the assumptions that guarantee a secure distinction between "literary foreground" and "political background," or, more generally, between artistic production and other kinds of social production[1] (1982: 6). Although Greenblatt stated that he had used the term "new historicism" inadvertently and that he preferred "cultural poetics," new historicism is the name by which this critical practice is widely known.

Gallagher and Greenblatt, as founding figures of new historicism, establish a connection with "Herder's brilliant vision of the mutual embeddedness of art and history", which supports their intense interest in "the possibility of treating all of the written and visual traces of a particular culture as a mutually intelligible network of signs" (7). Greenblatt and Luis Montrose, another major innovator and proponent of new historicism, "treat history not as a background context, as one possible frame of reference which might help make the literary text more meaningful, but instead they treat history as the very subject and form in which literature is enmeshed" (Brannigan 59–60). They approach

[1] It is worth mentioning that cultural poetics has been "part of Greenblatt's rhetoric since new historicism was first instituted" as can be seen in the series of books devoted to the critical practice of new historicism entitled "The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics," which was launched in 1987 by University of California Press with Greenblatt as the General Editor (Brannigan 84-85).

literary texts in relationship to historical context as a useful way of looking at literature in history and "studying history with a new awareness of how history and culture define each other" (Veeser: 1989 xii). According to Brannigan, new historicists presume history and literature to be intertwined and they focus not on "the text and its context, not literature and its history, but literature *in* history" (3). New historicism's practitioners read literary texts "as material products of specific historical conditions" and "texts of all kinds are the vehicles of politics insofar as texts mediate the fabric of social, political and cultural formations" (Brannigan 3).

This new critical practice has opened up new possibilities of merging "history, anthropology, art, politics, literature, and economics" and allowed humanists to deal with "questions of politics, power" and all issues concerning everyday life (Veeser 1989 ix). Although practitioners of new historicism refuse to be systematized, they shared common theoretical assumptions that made them identifiable as a group. According to Veeser's introduction to his 1989 anthology of essays, New Historicism assumes:

1) that every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices;
2) that every act of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the practice it exposes;
3) that literary and non-literary "texts" circulate inseparably;
4) that no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths or expresses unalterable human nature;
5) that a critical method and a language adequate to describe culture under capitalism participate in the economy they describe. (1989: xi)

New historicism draws from other forms of criticism and has been influenced by an international constellation of thinkers who have exerted a decisive influence on its development. Among the most prominent are:

> the American cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz, the French social scientist and historian Michel Foucault, the British critic and cultural theorist Raymond Williams, the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, the German cultural and literary critic Walter Benjamin, and the French philosopher and founder of deconstruction Jacques Derrida. (Ryan xii)

New historicists accept Derrida's notion that every facet of reality is textualized, so "that everything about the past is only available to us in textualized form: it is 'thrice-processed,' first through the ideology, or outlook, or discursive practices of its own time, then through those of ours, and finally through the distorting web of language itself" (Barry 175).

Raymond Williams, chief British proponent of new historicism who coined the term cultural materialism, " describes the analysis of all forms of signification … within the actual means and conditions of their production" and stresses that "both cultural materialism and new historicism seek to understand literary texts historically and reject the formalizing influence of previous literary studies" (Ghadiri 385). Williams "assigns responsibility for shifts and changes in literature to shifting economic, political, social and cultural conditions in general; and therefore takes literary studies … into the domain of describing and analyzing the specific cultural conditions in which literary texts are produced and received" (Brannigan 39). His theoretical assumptions have been crucial to the development of new historicism, particularly for the manner in which it analyzes

"the way culture is both reflected and acted upon in the society of which it is part" (Brannigan 39).

Williams' view of culture as something that is ordinary and comes from everyday experience is similar to Geertz's opinion that culture is public and "cultures and peoples should speak for themselves, with anthropologists learning to 'converse with them' and interpret them" (Yarrow). Following Clifford Geertz and other cultural anthropologists, the new historicist critics have evolved a method for describing culture in action as they "put the disciplines of literary studies and anthropology into a mutually beneficial exchange" (Brannigan 34). Geertz provides "a theoretical context for the way in which new historicists examine how a particular period or culture fashions or manufactures itself" (Brannigan 33). Geertz's interpretive method of "thick description" has "made the conjunction of literary and non-literary texts powerful and compelling" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 31). It has become a feature of new historicism that calls for the new historicist critic to "'descend into detail,' constructing meaningful exchanges between texts of diverse forms and orientations, in order to get closer to the linguistic, cultural and social fabric of the past" (Brannigan 34).

Geertz's interpretive practice suggests that multilayered cultural meanings are "compressed" into anecdotes which, once expanded, enable "one to widen out into enormous complexities of social experience" (qtd. in Gallagher and Greenblatt 26). Similarly, the "thick descriptions" of new historicists seize upon an event or anecdote and re-read it in such a way as to reveal through the analysis of tiny particulars the behavioral codes, logics, and motive forces controlling a whole society (Veeser 1989: xi).

In *The History of the Anecdote: Fiction and Fiction,* Joel Fineman defines the anecdote "as a specific literary genre" that "determines the destiny of a specifically

historiographic integration of event and context" and explores the theoretical implications of new historicism's characteristic use of anecdotes (qtd. in Veeser 1989: 50–56).

Gallagher and Greenblatt, for their own part, explain their use of the anecdote, "the signature New Historicist move" (Veeser 1994: 4):

> We wanted also to use the anecdote to show in compressed form the ways in which elements of lived experience enter into literature, the ways in which everyday institutions and bodies get recorded. And we wanted, conversely, to show in compressed form the ways in which poetry, drama, and prose fiction play themselves out in the everyday world. (30)

The new historicist anecdote is an "Auerbachian device" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 35) which makes possible the unpacking of "long works and even entire cultures out of a close encounter with a tiny fragment" to reveal "the representation of reality" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 40). Auerbach's analysis of the textual fragment represents the work from which it is drawn and the particular culture in which that work was produced and consumed (Gallagher and Greenblatt 35). His interest focuses on "moments of representational plentitude: moments in which a culture's apprehension of reality, its experience of reality, and its representation of reality converge" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 41). The textual fragment, or anecdote, has the "ability to give the reader access to the very condition for perception and action, along with the very condition for textuality, at a given place and time, in a given culture" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 40).

In substantiating the use of the anecdote, new historicists claim that the significance of the particular representative practice extended beyond the work in question, in "comparable texts elsewhere" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 45). Their idea was to situate the work "in relation to other representational practices operative in the culture at a given moment in both the history of the author as well as the critic" (Tiwary 83). They

gave equal weight to the literary and non-literary texts that constantly inform or interrogate each other (Barry 172). Montrose confirmed this equality when he described a fundamental axiom of the movement as "a reciprocal concern with the "historicity of texts and the textuality of history" (qtd. in Veeser 1989: 20).

According to Montrose, "to speak of the social production of 'literature' or of any particular text is to signify not only that is it socially produced but also that it is socially productive" (qtd. in Veeser 1989: 23). Greenblatt's works illustrate this " mutual permeability of the literary and the historical" (qtd. in Ghadiri 385) in his "shift away from a criticism centered on 'verbal icons' toward a criticism centered on cultural artifacts," called "cultural poetics" or "new historicism" (1990: 3).

"Literary texts are cultural artifacts" that both shape and are shaped by their historical contexts circulating in the culture in which they were produced (Tyson 2006). For new historicists, " the literary text, through its representation of human experience at a given time and place, is an interpretation of history and as such, the literary text maps the discourses circulating at the time it was written and is itself one of those discourses" (Ghadiri 384). " Literary works are the emanations, the active agents, of the culture's circumambient ideology; they are both what a culture produces as well as what reproduces the ideology" (Myers). Works of literature are not imitations but "representations" of the culture from which they emerge; they do "not imitate human action," they "mediate" it and as mediation rather than as imitation of social practices, "*shapes* rather than *reflects* an age's understanding of human experience and potentiality" (Myers).

In "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture," Montrose says:

> Representations of the world in written discourse are engaged in constructing the world, in shaping the modalities of social reality, and in

> accommodating their writers, performers, readers, and audiences to multiple and shifting subject positions within the world they both constitute and inhabit. (qtd. in Veeser 1989: 16)

There is a constant "dialogue between the 'poetics and politics' of culture" (qtd. in Veeser 1989: 24) affirmed and rendered in the connection "between literary and other discourses, the dialectic between the text and the world" (Veeser 1989: 24). New historicists claim that "all acts of expression, literary and non-literary discourses, are embedded in the material conditions of a culture and are examined with an eye for how they reveal the economic and social realities, especially as they produce ideology and represent power or subversion" (Brewton). They address "the role that discourse, including literature, plays in negotiating and making manifest the power relations and structures of a culture" (Brannigan 81). "The fundamental change that new historicism has brought to the relationship between literature and history is to have shifted the methodology from a simple application of historical facts to literary texts to a complex understanding of levels of discursive participation in constructing and maintaining power structures" (Brannigan 81). It has been "most useful to the discipline of literary studies in exploring the relationship between literature and history, and in demonstrating the ideological and political interests operating through literary texts" (Brannigan 11). According to Stephen Greenblatt and Alan Sinfield, "literary texts are vehicles of power which act as useful objects of study in that they contain the same potential for power and subversion as exist in society generally" (Brannigan 6). New historicists expose "the systems and operations of power so that we are more readily equipped to recognize the interests and stakes of power when reading culture" (Brannigan 8). Not only are they "engaged in uncovering the historical contexts in which literary texts first emerged and

were received … but they are busy interpreting the significance of the past for the present, paying particular attention to the forms of power which operated in the past and how they are replicated in the present" (Brannigan 6). The focus of the critical practice is "the recovery of the original ideology which gave birth to the text, and which the text in turn helped to disseminate throughout a culture" (Myers).

The new historicist conception of ideology is not that of Marx, but rather that of the French structuralist Marxist Louis Althusser who claims that "literature is one of the institutions which participate in making state power and ideology familiar and acceptable to the state's subjects" (Brannigan 5). According to Althusser, "literature will reflect the values, customs and norms of the dominant interests in its society and so is mobilized, mostly unconsciously, by the state as an ideological weapon" (qtd. in Brannigan 5).

Nevertheless, there is an obvious similarity "between Althusser's 'interpellation' and Michael Foucault's 'discursive practices', since all of these concern the way power is internalized by those whom it disempowers, so that it does not have to be constantly enforced externally" (Barry 176–77). New historicists insist on the principle of reciprocity of literature and history and "have paid considerable attention in their work to the effects of literature in both containing and promoting subversion, and to instances of state and hegemonic control over cultural expression" (Brannigan 4). They turn to the methods of Foucault and Althusser "in examining the textual form taken by material practices and institutions, and exposing the transformations, contradictions and the production of subversion in order to recuperate power" (Brannigan 28).

New historicists make use of Foucault's views on the relationship between knowledge and power as well as his "idea of social structures as determined by dominant 'discursive practices'" (Barry 179) that define and construct the objects of our knowledge. Brannigan points out that Foucault echoes Nietzsche when he sees "the structures of

knowledge, information and decision-making in modern Western society" to be "predicated on claims to power" (42) though Barry notes that, for instance, Althusserian "repressive structures" and "ideological structures" are much "less rigid" in Foucault (Barry 176). Still, the influence of Foucault is obvious and his work "permeates the New Historicist conception of history as a succession of épistémes or structures of thought that shape everyone and everything within a culture" (Myers).

According to "the Foucauldian premise power is ubiquitous and cannot be equated with state or economic power" (Ghadiri). It is "pervasively and also insidiously the way in which knowledge (of something that's true or not) circulates in a culture by means of discourse, how it is distributed by largely unseen forces in a social network or a social system" (Fry). Montrose, as do other practitioners, looks at "the way in which literary texts or forms can be co-opted to serve as tools in the construction of power" (Brannigan 57). According to new historicists, power is not solely controlled by a single individual or institution but constantly "circulates in a culture through exchanges of material goods, exchanges of human beings, and, most important for literary critics, exchanges of ideas through the various discourses a culture produces" (Tyson 2006). Focusing on exchanges, Greenblatt developed "a notion of cultural negotiation and exchange ... by examining the points at which one cultural practice intersects with another" (1990: 228).

In the introduction to *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* Greenblatt writes, "the written word is self-consciously embedded in specific communities, life situations, structures of power" (1980: 7). It is by means of language that the real world shapes itself and therefore new historicists turn to all texts to examine how they represent the dominant ideology of the culture. The reciprocal relationship between literature (discourse) and history can be explained as follows:

> history is, as it's traditionally thought to be by the old historicism, a background to discourse or literature and it conditions what literature can say in a given epoch. But by the same token there is an agency, that is to say a capacity, to circulate power in discourse (literature) in turn, so that literature has a discursive agency that affects history every bit as much as history affects literature. (Frye)

New historicists see literature as "an agent in constructing a culture's sense of reality" and the major objective is to grasp the terms of the discourse which made it possible [for contemporaries] to see the 'facts' [of their own time] in a particular way—indeed, made it possible to see certain phenomena as facts at all" (Howard 25–27).

The new historicist method of literary analysis covers a larger cultural field because it focuses on both fictional as well as non-fictional works and "can suggest hidden links between high cultural texts and texts very much in and of their world, such as documents of social control or political subversion" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 10). This juxtaposition of literary and non-literary texts makes for a "broader vision of cultural interpretation" which "is focused on finding the creative power that shapes literary works outside the narrow boundaries in which it had hither to been located, as well as within those boundaries" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 12).

In "Marxism and The New Historicism", Catherine Gallagher discusses the practitioner's "equal weighting" of literary and non-literary texts for the purposes of interpretation by recognizing that

> it entails reading literary and nonliterary texts as constituents of historical discourses that are both inside and outside of texts and that its practitioners generally posit no fixed hierarchy of cause and effect as they trace the

> connections among texts, discourses, power, and the constitution of subjectivity. (qtd. in Veeser 1989: 37)

New historicists emphasize that although it is not possible to recover the original meaning of a text, it is possible to recover "the original ideology which gave birth to the text, and which the text in turn helped to disseminate throughout a culture" (Myers).

"New Historicism continues to exercise a major influence in the humanities and in the extended conception of literary studies" (qtd. in Ghadiri 385). It has wide application for works from all literary periods and is suitable as an analytic interpretative technique for analysis of all types of texts, both fictional and non-fictional as constituents of historical discourses. As Veeser put it, "NH has won over critics and readers who search for connections between social structures, literary texts, and their own gender, sexuality, class position, ethnic background, relations to bosses and parents— in short, to their lives" (Veeser 1994: 11).

In rethinking the study of literature and art, new historicists "identify new objects for study, bring those objects into the light of critical attention, and insist upon their legitimate place in the curriculum" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 11). Catherine Gallagher discusses the "impact the new historicism has had on curricula in literature departments" and observes that "new historicists … along with Marxists and feminists" have already altered the institutional landscape by influencing "the curricula in the literature department, introducing non-canonical texts into the classroom" (qtd. in Veeser 1989: 44–45).

Although new historicism has gained acceptance in English departments worldwide, there are still large areas and genres of literature to which this practice has not been applied in critical readings. This method could be applied to more contemporary periods and the problems of academic life because there is always some discrepancy

between the establishment's approach to the problem and the accounts that we find in fiction and non-literary texts.

This thesis will break new ground, due to the fact that new historicism has not yet been applied specifically to the subgenre of academic fiction. In order to combine a particular interest in disciplines of literature, history, language and culture, the new historicist approach will be applied for an interdisciplinary analysis and interpretation of texts, both fiction and non-fiction, in their cultural-historical context. This study will consider how the authors of the academic novels shaped the public perception of the major issues in higher education during the thirty year investigation period. Following Greenblatt's method, academic novels will be posited "in relation to other representational practices operative in the (American) culture at a given moment in both its history and our own" (1990: 229). The goal of investigating the American academic world is to attempt "to bring together the literary document and the historical document in a new and revealing way" (Greenblatt 1990: xi). For the purposes of this investigation, two academic novels and various non-literary texts will provide representative evidence about the discursive practices of the three decades under investigation. The aim is to relocate the discourses of the academic novels among the other nonliterary discursive practices of the particular decade the work was written, in order to, as Greenblatt says, "recover as far as possible the historical circumstances of their original production and consumption and to analyze the relationship between these circumstances and our own" (1990: 228–229).

Thus, the reading will draw upon selected academic novels as well as historical records, newspaper articles, university records and any other non-fictional texts that highlight the contemporary socio-political issues, anxieties and struggles of the time. Furthermore, this study will focus on the ways in which the various texts might have been read and understood by its audience at the time of publication. Following the new

historicist premise “that literary texts are embedded in social and political discourses,” (Brannigan 68), this thesis will analyze both the literary and non-literary texts in order to reveal “the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life” (Greenblatt 1983: 14) with reference to the development of higher education in America. Works of literature are not created in a historical vacuum, they have a firm relation to their historical context and so a critical analysis of American academic fiction as well as other non-fictional works from the same period should contribute to a greater understanding and knowledge of the American higher education.

3. THE ACADEMIC NOVEL OF THE FIFTIES: THE POLITICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE COLD WAR DISCOURSE

The claim that the genre of the American academic novel began to flourish in the fifties seems to be true if we count the entries for this period in the comprehensive bibliographies compiled by Lyons and Kramer. Lyons lists forty-five college novels and Kramer lists fifty-eight novels, twenty-one student-centered and thirty-seven staff-centered. This significant increase in the number of academic novels coincides with an increase in interest in higher education and an increase in enrollment. The overlap supports the claim of this thesis that the academic novels as literary artifacts of their time are a part of interplay of discourses in higher education which they both shape and are shaped by. Higher education has always been recognized as the driving force for the cultural, social and economic development of a nation and the authors of academic novels are challengers of the ideology, the power and mediations present in its particular discourses.

Accepting the view that "literary works are both what a culture produces as well as what reproduces the ideology" (Myers), this research intends to show that the academic novels both shape and are shaped by the social, political and cultural discourses circulating at the time they were produced. The focus of this study will be on the interplay of particular discourses in the academic novels and other representational texts in order to portray the "historicity of texts and the textuality of history" (qtd. in Veeser 1989 20).

This chapter deals with academic novels of the fifties with a particular emphasis on Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe* published in 1952 and Randal Jarrell's *Pictures from an Institution* published in 1954. These works have been selected as representative for several reasons. Firstly, both novels are included in the two above

mentioned bibliographies as well as listed in Kramer's appendix as major American college novels. Secondly, *The Groves of Academe* is written by Mary McCarthy and *Pictures from an Institution* is said to have been written about Mary McCarthy and is dedicated to Mary McCarthy and Hannah Arendt, with both of whom Jarrell shared personal and professional interests. Mary McCarthy was an American author, critic and political activist and Hannah Arendt, a German-American philosopher and political theorist, whose critical views on progressive education and political and intellectual crises in America are in agreement with McCarthy's and Jarrell's thinking.

Thirdly, Jocelyn College, in *The Groves of Academe,* and Benton College, in *Pictures from an Institution,* are both progressive institutions of higher education and are very similar to Bard College and St. Lawrence University respectively, colleges at which McCarthy and Jarrell had taught. Finally, as expressive acts embedded in "the ideological discourses of their moment of production" (1991: Howard), the novels are both a source of pleasure for lovers of academic fiction and a valuable source of information regarding major issues in higher education, namely repressive government policies during the McCarthy era and the subversion of education in America through the liberal indoctrination of students in progressive colleges. Ideally, the academic discourse should be based on seeking the truth in pursuit of knowledge but both the selected novels as well as the non-fictional materials reveal it to be corrupted by cold war rhetoric.

The principle aim in this chapter is to apply new historical insights and approaches in recovering the images of the past embodied in the two selected novels to show not only how educational and political trends at the beginning of the twentieth century shaped education in the 1950's but also how the academic novels of the fifties both shaped and were shaped by higher education discourses circulating during this period. Moreover, literature has a strong power, and so by satirizing the academy the academic novels have

changed the academics' ideological shaping and increased the public's awareness regarding the major issues in higher education. In addition to these two fictional portrayals, a variety of non-fictional sources ranging from official documents to articles from various print and Internet media from the fifties as well as more recent materials concerning this time period, will be considered. Approaching literary texts in relationship to historical context should not only lead to "a new awareness of how history and culture define each other" (Veeser 1989: xiii), but give a clearer understanding of higher education in America in the fifties.

The preoccupation with the academe in the selected novels illustrates the New Historical premise that "a literary work is the product of the time, place, and circumstances of its composition and must be read and interpreted in its biographical, social and historical contexts" (Tiwary 79). In the heated cold-war atmosphere of the 1950's, the satirical representations of McCarthy and Jarrell echoed the public criticism that was aimed at progressive education policy. During the 1950's progressive education was the most influential modern educational theory implemented in American educational institutions. It was introduced by John Dewey, the father of progressive education, who was the founder and president of the American Association of University Professors. He "spent his life dealing with philosophy and education as they related to democracy" and in his work, *Democracy and Education* (1916), he "charged that education was an experimental science capable of guiding individual and community growth toward better democracy" (Cengage).

Due to the teachings of Dewey and his followers, traditional conservative educational policies based on basic skills were replaced by more liberal progressive teaching practices carried out in progressive educational institutions. An illustrative example is Sarah Lawrence, one of the first Progressive, experimental colleges in the

United States. Instead of the traditional organizational structure based on a departmental system with hierarchical ranking, all its faculty members were considered as teachers who comprised a community of equals. Since there was no fixed curriculum and no required courses or exams, the major responsibility of the faculty was to assist students in creating their own course of study. There was an emphasis on learning by doing and courses such as "theater, dance, music, painting, sculpture, design, and graphics were central to the overall-all curriculum and integrated with the humanities and sciences course of study" (Kridel).

One of the most prominent figures associated with Sarah Lawrence and progressive education is Harold Taylor, who held the position of Sarah Lawrence College president for fourteen years and was a national leader for Progressive education. As a follower of John Dewey, he fostered Dewey's emphasis on the importance of democracy and experience and "argued for a curriculum embodying personal development, social and cultural activism (social agency), and the unity of intellect and emotions in the educational process" (Kridel). Instead of college departments he was an advocate of learning centers, with no lectures, required courses or tests. He invited to Sarah Lawrence "cultural figures with provocative ideological, social activist, liberal, and radical views" which "led anticommunist Senator Joseph McCarthy to identify Sarah Lawrence College as a target for attack during the hearings of the House Committee on Un-American Activities" (Kridel).

Mary McCarthy's characterization of Jocelyn's president, Maynard Hoar, illustrates the extent to which her novel is a "representation of reality" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 40) and as such a very useful tool "in exploring the relationship between literature and history, and in demonstrating the ideological and political interests" (Brannigan 11) that affect the history as well as the literature during this decade.

McCarthy helps us to grasp the extent of the confusions of the progressive political and educational doctrines in colleges at this time by portraying the president of the fictional Jocelyn college, Maynard Hoar as "the epitome of these confusions" (Lyons 1962: 172), and as such an easy mark for incrimination by the protagonist, Henry Mulcahy. President Hoar had hired Mulcahy "in spite of (or because) he was suspected of being a Communist" so that he "could advertise his liberalism during the period of Senator McCarthy's investigations" (Lyons 170). Mullah's intrigue rests on the president's not wanting to risk a scandal for breaching the principle of academic freedom by persecuting a faculty member because of his Party affiliation. The president himself made Mulcahy the token Communist in a liberal, progressive institution and now he had no choice but to keep him. McCarthy heightens her satire by showing how happy they were to embrace him: "Jocelyn had been officially enraptured to welcome Dr. Mulcahy to its staff, as an exemplar, a modern witness to the ordeal by slander" (McCarthy 11).

However, the progressive teaching methods illustrated in the history and fiction came under attack during the 1950's, a turbulent period in American history in which the United States was losing its dominance to the Soviet Union in both the space and arms race. As the decade progressed, a battle for the control of the American schools ensued. It became evident that although a little learning goes a long way, it would take a lot more to meet the numerous challenges of the social and political controversies that the nation was facing at the time. In *Education and the Cold War,* Hartman investigates the "postwar transformation in U.S. political culture" and concludes that "schools served as a battleground in the ideological conflicts" (1). As America appeared to be lagging behind the Soviets, the cold war discourse turned against the American system of education and "progressive curricula were held responsible for a lag in preparation for scientific and technological careers, culminating in the Sputnik crisis of 1957" (Zilversmit). The

previously praised system came under fire for not meeting the needs of the nation and for being insufficiently patriotic. The progressive curriculum in institutions of higher education was particularly blamed for lower standards and indoctrination which resulted in a significant shift in government policy.

The shift in government policy resulting in a critical view of progressive education is as evident in history as it is in both McCarthy's and Jarrell's novels. Both authors uncover "the transformations, contradictions and the production of subversion in order to recuperate power" (Brannigan 28) in order to reveal "the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life" (Greenblatt 1983: 14).

American education was found lacking and there was a call for educational reforms to upgrade American education especially in the fields of science and math. President Eisenhower's contradictory statements regarding progressive education serve as an illustrative example of this shift. First, there is his tribute to the small liberal colleges of America in his speech delivered on October 15, 1953 , at the Cornerstone-Laying Ceremony for the Anthony Wayne Library of American Study at Defiance College in Defiance, Ohio:

> On this campus, typical of the small liberal arts college, I deem it a privilege, indeed I consider it a duty, to pay my tribute to these schools. Already they have contributed much to the American way. Their potential contributions to the country's future are beyond calculation. (Woolley)

This type of supportive view was expected due to the fact that before his presidency Eisenhower was president of Columbia University where John Dewey, a major representative of progressive education, spent the majority of his career and wrote his most famous work. However, the expected voice of support changed to a voice of disapproval when the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union

intensified due to what seemed to be Soviet supremacy in the space race. The President changed his views and "blamed America's allegedly inferior educational system squarely on John Dewey" and urged educators "to abandon the educational path that, rather blindly, they have been following as a result of John Dewey's teachings" (Berube 39).

According to the article "Education and Its Cold War Discontents," the Sputnik episode has long been recognized as pointing to deficiencies of U.S. education (Mitch). A similar view is expressed by Hartman in his book *Education and the Cold War* where he focuses on the battle for American schools and even quotes Hannah Arendt's statement that "only in America could a crisis in education actually become a factor in politics" (1). Hartman claims that

> Arendt's pithy statement proved true, not only because she formulated these words in the midst of a panic over the state of American education that followed the successful Soviet launching of Sputnik in October 1957 but more broadly because her theory made evident that the decade-long battle for the American school was shaped by the political and intellectual crises that defined the United States during the early Cold War. (1)

But the event of Sputnik did provide a tremendous spark for enlarging federal investment in America's colleges and universities on an unprecedented scale. Promoting scientific knowledge now became a mainstream issue of lawmakers, not just the personal interest of academics and a select number of government officials. The federal government would provide more funding for higher education, especially to those fields that were either necessary or very important to the maintenance of the national defense, but state governments, not Washington, would retain control over the chartering and organization of higher education in the United States.

America's political crisis was fueled by fear of Soviet dominance and the threat of

communism and its intellectual crisis intensified as public awareness regarding the dumbing down of America's education. During the World War II period "the key factor to victory was America's superior military-industrial productivity" (Hartman 2) but "science and education become the main battleground of the Cold War" (Bonner 177). As dissatisfaction prevailed, more and more people found "that America's system of education was disorganized, that it failed to provide sufficient training and research in the sciences, that it catered to mediocrity at the expense of the promising student" (Douglass). The extent to which these views resonate in McCarthy's and Jarrell's novels confirms the new historicist premise "that literary texts are embedded in social and political discourses" (Brannigan 68).

The emphasis on the significance of education for America's prosperity and development is repeated in the following remark by President Dwight Eisenhower in which he discusses the pedagogical aspects of the cold War saying, "No man flying a warplane, no man with a defensive gun in his hand, can possibly be more important than a teacher" (qtd. in Barksdale Clowse 6–8).

As public interest in education grew, so did the awareness of its deficiencies and what this meant for the nation as a whole. In *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education 1876–1957,* Lawrence Cremin claims that "less teachers, higher enrolment, inflations, fewer schools, and budgetary issues increased public criticism of progressive education during this time period" and "prompted critics to take advantage of the growing dissatisfaction with the progressive movement" ("Criticism of Progressive Education"). American education ran headlong into the social controversies that changed the nation as racial problems, McCarthyism, the Cold War, and budget shortages wreaked havoc on the world of education ("The 1950's: Education:

Overview"). Cremin names seven major factors that contributed to the fall of progressive education during this time period:

> 1) distortion and ideological disagreements amongst proponents of Progressive education; 2) negativism inherent in social reform movements; 3) unrealistic demands on teachers' time and abilities; 4) the movement becoming a victim of its own success—"intellectual bankruptcy"; 5) increasing conservativism in American political and social thought post-World War II; 6) professionalization of the system and attempts to keep the laymen out of educational administration; and 7) failing to keep pace with the ever-transforming American society. (348–351)

In 1949, two books, Bernard Iddings Bell's *Crisis in Education* and Mortimer Smith's *And Madly Teach*, claimed that "the progressive education movement had taken over parental responsibilities, were coddling children instead of teaching them, and removed religion from public education" ("Criticism of Progressive Education"). Similarly, in 1953 Arthur Bestor who wrote *Educational Wastelands* arguing that "the purpose of education was to provide equal education to all citizens" and that individually tailored education "was robbing citizens of this equal access to knowledge" ("Criticism of Progressive Education"). All of these factors "building upon one another directly led to the end of the Progressive Education Association in 1955 which turned out to be the final nail in the movement's coffin" ("Criticism of Progressive Education").

An example of public disapproval is found in Hannah Arendt's article "The Crisis of Education," that expresses "her critical view of modern educational theories, which consist of an astonishing hodgepodge of sense and nonsense, that have completely

overthrown all traditional, and all the established methods of teaching and learning" (qtd. in Curren 188). Although she emphasizes that the average American school is the most "advanced" and the most modern, she announces the bankruptcy of progressive education and presents its drawbacks as follows:

> the acute crisis in education is caused by the political temper of the country that struggles to equalize or to erase the differences between the young and old, between the gifted and the ungifted, finally between children and adults, particularly between pupils and teachers. It is obvious that such an equalization can actually be accomplished only at the cost of the teacher's authority and at the expense of the gifted among students. (qtd. in Curren 189)

Arendt claims that the crisis in education is a political one, and that America's continued efforts to provide equality and equal opportunity for all its citizens has resulted in mass education of a poorer quality and not empowered but disempowered learners. Arendt calls on teachers to take responsibility for their profession and the world as a whole by reclaiming their authority as experts in their fields. Her critical view of progressive education confirms the shift in attitude evident in the contradictory statements by President Eisenhower and resounds in the satirical representations of McCarthy and Jarrell.

Arendt's characterization of progressive education as "an astonishing hodgepodge of sense and nonsense" is reflected in both McCarthy's and Jarrell's satirical representations of progressive colleges. However, it is noteworthy to mention, that although this was the end of progressive education for the time being, these same ideas of Dewey and his associates that were denounced in the late 1950's would be "rediscovered, and revised to address the changing needs of schools, children, and society in the late

twentieth century" ("A Brief Overview of Progressive Education"). Furthermore, progressive education is as much a subject of the twenty-first century and the following passage shows its relevance:

> Today, scholars, educators and activists are rediscovering Dewey's work and exploring its relevance to a "postmodern" age, an age of global capitalism and breathtaking cultural change, and an age in which the ecological health of the planet itself is seriously threatened. We are finding that although Dewey wrote a century ago, his insights into democratic culture and meaningful education suggest hopeful alternatives to the regime of standardization and mechanization that more than ever dominate our schools. ("John Dewey and Progressive Education")

The above mentioned quotation refers to current thought in the United States, but tracing connections among various texts and discourses, it is interesting to mention that a similar view appears to be present currently in Croatia as well. In his article "Ethical Ideal of Democracy: On John Dewey's Philosophy of Democratic Education," Pavo Barišić from the Institute of Philosophy in Zagreb, Croatia, discusses "the essential characteristics and model of democratic education in Dewey's works" and emphasizes that "Dewey does not destroy the foundations of liberalism and democracy … but rather enriches, strengthens, and brings them to a higher level" (3).

Bringing together the literary and historical documents, as the above quoted document from Croatia, the novels and the various documents from the United States, as constituents of historical discourses, has confirmed Greenblatt's claim that this approach will enable us to "recover as far as possible the historical circumstances of their original production and consumption and to analyze the relationship between these circumstances and our own" (1990: 228–229).

In addition to progressive education, during the 1950's the fear of communism was another major issue that caused much controversy and is well documented. In the public eye, the thought of communist subversives at home appeared the most salient component of the Soviet threat and even political careers were built on the fear of communist infiltrators. For the purposes of this study, there will be an analysis of various sources, ranging from media reports to Supreme Court documents as well as Mary McCarthy's novel, *The Groves of Academe*. Whereas each of these sources presents a critical view of McCarthyism, the non-fictional texts depict the victimization of the innocent, while the novel points to the absurdity of McCarthy and his Investigative Committee and the harm the red scare was doing to the hundreds of citizens who were named, investigated and whose lives and reputations were ruined. Both the fiction and the history expose "the shifts in values and interests" (Greenblatt 1983:14) and are revealing "documents of social control or political subversion" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 10).

Americans from all walks of life were being accused and the academic community was no exception. As students, teachers, university professors and even librarians were charged with being Communists, Harold Taylor, the president of Sarah Lawrence College, gave the following defense of academic freedom:

> We cannot preserve the loyalty and political integrity of our students and teachers by congressional investigation. We can only paralyze their will to think independently and to act politically. It is the proper function of boards of trustees to protect the educational system from political control by the Government. If education is conceived as a means of telling students what to think and making sure that they think it, this is the most un-American activity of all. (Kridel)

From 1950 to 1954 Senator Joseph McCarthy and his investigative committee held government hearings to "reveal and weed out these Communists traitors in government and society" (Lewis). As the anti-communist hysteria spread and the black lists appeared, jobs were lost, reputations ruined and Americans were losing their freedom and safety. There were even those who charged others with being Communists or communist sympathizers only to avoid being accused themselves. Political and military setbacks caused a growing concern that communist traitors in government and society were bringing destruction to democracy. Apocalyptic discourse was used to scare the country into believing it was being threatened by a dangerous enemy that had to be stopped. As a result of the red scare hysteria, people were afraid to exercise their basic right of freedom of speech and "America's democratic institutions and basic civil and political rights were violated" (Lewis).

The McCarthy hearings resulted in a politics of fear and led to the wrongful persecution of thousands of Americans. Although many remained silent due to fear, there were also those who attempted to expose McCarthy as a bully and great threat to freedom and democracy. These defenders of the Constitution and democratic institutions argued that the red scare hysteria of McCarthyism led to indoctrination, instilled political and social conformity, introduced loyalty oaths and undermined basic civil liberties and rights of Americans.

Below I discuss a selection of media articles and documents that testify to the traumatic realities that university professors in particular were subject to as a result of the McCarthy investigations. There are numerous reports of reckless accusations that destroyed people's lives by ruining their reputations and careers. Some of the falsely accused successfully fought back while others were destroyed. The following cases are just a few reported cases that testify to the destruction brought on by McCarthyism.

The article "The Honor Roll: American Philosophers, Professionally Injured During the McCarthy Era," documents a list compiled by John Mc Cumber reporting on the fate of thirteen men who were accused of being Communists and whose lives and reputations were ruined ("The Honor Roll").

However, there were also reports with a more positive outcome as in the article "Fair Play and a Free Press: The Triumph of Melvin Rader" which reports how Melvin Rader, a University of Washington philosophy professor who was falsely accused by the Washington State legislature's Committee on Un-American Activities, cleared his name and kept his job. With the help of a *Seattle Times* journalist he was able to expose the smear tactics of the Canwell Committee and in 1969 after his retirement from the University he chronicled his ordeal in his book *False Witness*. According to the article, Ralph Gundlach, Herbert J. Philips, and Joseph Butterworth, the other three professors who were also falsely charged, lost their jobs and never were able to teach again. It is interesting to mention, that Ed Guthman, the reporter whose investigative prowess helped to exonerate Rader, won a Pulitzer Prize for the best national reporting of 1949 ("1950: Fair Play").

On February 9, 1970, the *Bremerton Sun* quoted Melvin Rader's reaction to his victory:

> I was deeply stirred by these events, not only because I was personally vindicated but because justice prevailed. As I stated to Guthman: "Thanks to the fact that I live in a democracy and that many people have helped me, I have been able to clear my name." In this one instance at least, misrepresentation and blind prejudice had been defeated by fair play and a free press. ("1950: Fair Play")

Controversy over McCarthyism attracted national media attention and there were those who proclaimed that American citizens should raise their voice against the victimization of fellow Americans by McCarthy and the Senate Investigating Committee. In his 1954 telecast Edward R. Murrow exposed McCarthy and not only reported on his victims but warned that all Americans are at risk of being accused. He also suggested that by remaining silent people become his accomplices.

> The greater tragedy was nationwide. No one man can terrorize a whole nation unless we are all his accomplices. If none of us ever read a book that was 'dangerous,' had a friend who was 'different' or joined an organization that advocated 'change,' we would all be just the kind of people Joe McCarthy wants. (Highton)

Melvin Rader serves as an example of a courageous individual who fought back and won. There are other similar cases that testify to similar bravery when academics rose against the infamous loyalty oath which was adopted by the University of California at the insistence of the California state committee of un-American Activities. The loyalty oath is defined as "an oath that declares an individual's allegiance to the government and its institutions and disclaims support of ideologies or associations that oppose or threaten the government" ("Loyalty Oath"). Throughout the history of United States it has been required of government officials, members of the armed services, naturalized citizens and it has been "invoked during times of stress, such as wars, or when the government perceives an outside threat to security" ("Loyalty Oath"). The Free Dictionary explains that a "majority of states enacted statutes that required public employees, public school teachers, and university professors to sign a loyalty oath as a condition of employment" (*http://www.thefreedictionary.com/)*. However, during the 1950's, loyalty oaths were coerced and those who declined suffered the consequences.

As “thirty-one Berkeley professors were fired for refusing to sign even though they were not Communists”, James E. Schevill is remembered as the “Heroic prof during McCarthy terror” who insisted on his right of academic freedom by “refusing to sign a loyalty oath as a prerequisite for teaching at that university” (Highton). He appealed to university president Robert Sproul saying: “In this suffused atmosphere of questioned loyalties, which reminds me more and more every day of the half-comic, half-tragic world of Kafka’s novels, I cannot agree to the debasement of the free exchange of ideas” (Highton). It is noteworthy to mention that during this time more than 100 professors were accused and dismissed in the nation (Highton). On April 21, 1950 the American Association of University Professors condemned these dismissals as the General Secretary, Ralph E. Himstead, sent a telegram to all the Regents of the University of California stating: “The exaction of loyalty oaths is inimical to freedom both constitutional and academic and can have no other result than irreparable injury to both the quality and reputation of the university” (Himstead).

It is interesting to mention that a similar view is expressed in the *Los Angeles Times* on March 11, 2008 in the article “Loyalty oaths fail the test of democracy: Such requirements are an anachronism from the McCarthy era”:

> In a regime of loyalty oaths, it is the government that defines which thoughts and which ideas are permitted. Dissenting views and nonconforming views are deemed “disloyal.” The very existence of such oaths reflects an utter lack of confidence in the American people. Nothing so dangerously corrupts the integrity of a democracy as a lack of faith in its own citizens. (Stone)

The above mentioned cases are just a few examples of the many battles that have been fought and have reached as high as the Supreme Court. The loyalty oath is often found to be discriminatory on numerous accounts and legal battles are waged by those who oppose signing. Once such cases attract media attention or are fought in court the dismissed employees are usually rehired and individuals are allowed to include their addendum to the oath so they can sign it in good faith. Jimmer Endres, Assistant Professor at the Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, in his article "Resist the State Oath of Allegiance: Include a political or religious objection in an addendum" shares his experience and encourages others to oppose the imposing of signing the loyalty oath. He claims that "moral, religious, and/or political objections may be recorded in an addendum to the Oath, provided that they do not 'nullify' it" (Endres).

The following more recent articles will confirm that the issues of the fifties, among them academic freedom and loyalty oaths, are still plaguing the ivory towers of the twenty-first century. The California state constitution still requires all state workers to sign a loyalty oath as a term of employment but individuals and organizations are coordinating efforts to publicize and resist the Oath. According to the article "Enduring oath still testing loyalties", "the loyalty oath continues to be an inexcusable impediment that discriminates rather than ensures academic freedom" (Paddock). It was introduced "in 1952 to root out Communists from public jobs" but at the present "its main effect is to weed out religious believers, particularly Quakers and Jehovah's Witnesses" (Paddock).

In a similar article "Adjunct Professor Fired for Not Signing Loyalty Oath," Matthew Rothschild reports on Wendy Gonaver who was not allowed to teach because she refused to sign the "State Oath of Allegiance." However, in the follow-up article, "Happy Ending to Story about Professor Fired for Loyalty Oath," Rothschild reports that

Wendy Gonaver will be teaching and has been allowed to submit a personal statement with the oath.

For similar reasons, on February 28, 2008, the California State University, East Bay fired Marianne Kearney-Brown, a Quaker, because she inserted the word "nonviolently" in her state-required Oath of Allegiance form. However, she was reinstated when it had been decided that "oaths may be modified to conform with individual values" and she agreed to sign the oath accompanied by a document that stated: "Signing the oath does not carry with it any obligation or requirement that public employees bear arms or otherwise engage in violence" (Asimov).

The controversy of over the loyalty oath continues and cases are fought not only in lower courts but have reached the Supreme Court. Some of the lower court decisions regarding the use of the loyalty oath have been upheld while others have been overturned. In *Baggett v. Bullitt*, 377 U.S. 360, 84 S. Ct. 1316, 12 L. Ed. 2nd 377 (1964), the Court invalidated Washington's statute requiring teachers and state employees to take a loyalty oath due to the fact that it was not only "unduly vague, uncertain, and broad" but also "violated due process and infringed on the teachers' Freedom of Speech" ("Loyalty Oath"). Similarly, in the case Keyishian *v. Board of Regents*, 385 U.S. 589, 87 S. Ct. 675, 17 L. Ed. 2nd 629 (1967) the Court found the loyalty statute to be "unconstitutionally vague" and an infringement on Academic Freedom because "loyalty statutes that attempt to prescribe what a teacher can say" threaten to "cast a pall of orthodoxy over the classroom" ("Loyalty Oath").

The articles and documents quoted previously confirm the new historical premise that "cultures and peoples should speak for themselves" (Yarrow) in order to get closer to "the behavioral codes, logics, and motive forces controlling a whole society" (Veeser 1989: xi).

The history reveals that McCarthyism wreaked havoc across the United States destroying lives and reputations and causing political and cultural hysteria. However, while Jarrell's novel gives the red scare only a brief mention, aiming its satire at the deficiencies of progressive education, McCarthy's novel takes on both issues. On the one hand, she gives an unfavorable picture of American higher education and emphasizes that not only do the groves have no fundamentally grounding principles on which education is based but they have become a hot bed of liberals taken in by phonies. On the other hand, she mocks Senator McCarthy and his Investigative Committee and points out that manipulators within the academe who are willing to make a sham of academic freedom pose a greater threat to the groves than those accused of being Communists or communist sympathizers. The main phony in the novel is the protagonist, Henry Mulcahy, who turns the tables on McCarthyism by resorting to false accusations, blackmail and their other dreaded smear tactics just to keep himself from being fired. He manipulates the system by pretending to be a victim of the persecution of Communists in order to blackmail the liberal college president into keeping him on. The absurdity rests on the fact that the president is an easy target of such manipulators due to his constant efforts to prove that he is a true open minded and tolerant liberal and progressive. College presidents are central characters in both McCarthy's and Jarrell's novels and they are caricatured as individuals who keep themselves in power by keeping up appearances and professing the ideology of conformity. The academic novels may at first glance be taken as pastiche representations, but after careful consideration it becomes evident that they definitely deserve to be given "equal weight" (Barry 172) due to what Montrose calls their "reciprocal concern with the 'historicity of texts and the textuality of history'" (qtd. in Veeser 1989: 20).

3.1. McCarthyism, Higher Education and Academic Freedom in *The Groves of Academe*

Mary McCarthy's novel *The Groves of the Academe* is considered to be one of the first American academic novels. Lyons claims it is "the most important novel about academic freedom" (1962: 169) and Kramer describes it as "a delicious satire on academic pretensions and one of the best known of all American college novels" (154). The novel is prefaced by a quote from Horace's Epodes, "Atque inter silvas academi quaerere verum," which translates from the Latin as "And Seek for Truth in the Groves of the Academe" (Epistles bk. 2, no. 2, 1.45 15). However, the Groves of Academe that McCarthy presents do not offer truth but actually the opposite. Jocelyn College is a place of deception and manipulation rather than a place of truth and learning.

As an author, political activist and critic Mary McCarthy was very outspoken in both her fiction and nonfiction, openly addressing moral and political issues and advising others to do the same:

> When you have committed an action that you cannot bear to think about, that causes you to write in retrospect, do not seek to evade the memory: make yourself relive it, confront it repeatedly over and over, till finally, you will discover, through sheer repetition it loses its power to pain you. (*How I Grew* 1987)

Like Jarrell, McCarthy relived her teaching experiences at Bard and Lawrence in order to bring across the shortcomings of progressive institutions. As an insider McCarthy challenged the progressive education discourse and claimed that it was not meeting the needs and the expectations of the times. Her satire is directed at the internal politics of private colleges and their liberal educational doctrines which she criticizes. Progressive

reform ideas proved to be destructive of education; and as the Red Scare was compounded by the education scare, McCarthy's novel engages in shaping the public awareness of the inadequacies of public education. Her novel mirrors the discourse of the 1950's by exposing the fallacies of progressive education as well as the witch-hunt of intellectuals and the cut-throat "non-ethics" of survival. In the terms of Montrose, we can assess that her novel is not only "socially produced but also that it is socially productive" (qtd. in Veeser 1989: 23). As we situate her novel "in relation to other representational practices operative" (Tiwary 83) in the United States at that time, we can get closer to the "cultural and social fabric of the past" (Brannigan 34).

McCarthy set the plot in the 1950's, a time of battle for academic freedom, at a small progressive college. Her satirical representation challenges the discourse of progressive education which "tries to make the best of all possible progressive worlds in terms of education" (Lyons 1962: 172) and encourages its students "simply to be free, spontaneous, and coeducational" (McCarthy 61). Jocelyn is an experimental institution "founded on a mishmash of educational theories, but always dominated by a belief in individual instruction and in the student as a person to be molded (or incited) into becoming a right-thinking citizen" (Lyons 1962: 172). As the narrator of the novel explains, "What the founder had had in mind was a utopian experiment in so-called 'scientific' education; by the use of aptitude tests, psychological questionnaires, even blood-sampling and cranial measurements, he hoped to discover a method of gauging student-potential and directing it into the proper channels for maximum self-realization" (McCarthy 61–62). However, the narrator makes it clear that "the progressive schools were doing their job no better than the old fashioned classical ones" or even worse if we consider that "studies showed the graduates of progressive schools to be *more* dependent on outside initiative, on an authoritarian leader-pattern, than any other group in the

community" (McCarthy 62–63). McCarthy's narrator echoes the previously cited documents regarding the shift from a positive to a negative view of progressive education and confirms Williams' claim that "shifts and changes in literature" are caused by "shifting economic, political, social and cultural conditions in general" (Brannigan 39). Once again we are reminded of the new historical principles regarding the necessity "of describing and analyzing the specific cultural conditions in which literary texts are produced and received" in order to reveal "the way culture is both reflected and acted upon in the society of which it is part" (Brannigan 39).

During the 1940's and 1950's as fear spread through the nation she became a liberal critic of both McCarthyism and Communism. In *The Groves of Academe* she "demonstrates how vulnerable liberalism is to demagogues from the left as well as the right—not only revealing why American universities knuckled under during the Red Scare, but also anticipating the politically correct orthodoxy that would sweep campuses in the decades to come" (Fischer). Thus, McCarthy's work not only helps us to grasp the terms of the discourse of the past in "the historical circumstances of their original production and consumption" but also "to analyze the relationship between these circumstances and our own" (Greenblatt 1990: 228–229).

The Red Scare brought about the suffering and persecution of Americans accused of being Communists or communist sympathizers and McCarthy addresses this important issue in the novel as she directs her sharply pointed satire at Senator Joseph McCarthy and the politics of anti-Communism. The academic characters of Mary McCarthy's novel, particularly the protagonist Henry Mulcahy, mirror the discourse of the 1950 by juxtaposing Red Scare smear tactics and underhanded survival tactics. Her satirization demonstrates that manipulators like Mulcahy, who will stop at nothing to achieve their own material gain (no Communist utopia), pose a greater threat to higher education than

real Communists. By portraying a protagonist who is dangerous, subversive and handy at using Joseph McCarthy's incriminating tactics, Mary McCarthy's satirical representation is trying to get at the absurdity of the era. It is ludicrous that Mulcahy was able to become a threat with the help of Senator McCarthy, who by investigating him under the allegations that he may be a Communist actually turns him into a real threat and so the joke is on McCarthyism. This bringing together of the fiction and the history helps us to recover "the original ideology which gave birth to the text, and which the text in turn helped to disseminate throughout a culture" (Myers).

McCarthy was well known for her blunt outspokenness and respected for her views. She warned against American intellectuals particularly of the ex-fellow-traveler and ex-party member type because they are a threat to cultural freedom and her novel was to raise awareness of the fact that McCarthyism was weakening the American culture and the nation as a whole. She demonstrated the absurdity of McCarthy and his Investigative Committee by having her protagonist use their smear tactics for personal gain. He posed a greater threat to Jocelyn and academic freedom in general than any Communist or communist sympathizer.

Mulcahy's story is embedded in "the material conditions" of the American culture of the 1950's and it uncovers the social, political and economic reality, "especially as they produce ideology and represent power or subversion" (Brewton).

Mary McCarthy demonstrates the absurdity of the Joseph McCarthy era persecutions by creating a protagonist who is a devious opportunist striving to get ahead, and not a powerfully dangerous intellectual that needs to be rooted out. Keeping the academy safe from these insidious/subversive intellectuals, he is opening it up for real frauds like Mulcahy who represent a real threat to the academy.

Mulcahy, a professor of English at Jocelyn, learns that the college will not renew his teaching contract and resorts to manipulation and blackmail to be reappointed. Having decided that "to be fired at this juncture, when he was halfway to tenure, was unthinkable," (McCarty 9–10), he refuses to be fired and puts in motion his devious plan employing false accusations and smear tactics that were characteristic of the McCarthy era prosecutions.

The following excerpt from a speech delivered on September 25, 1951 by Jazzes H. Halsey, President of the University of Bridgeport, at the Opening Convocation of the College Year gives a vivid account of the state of the nation as the innocent were pronounced guilty through the use of the smear tactics Mulcahy was well aware of:

> These are days of crises and on every hand we see numerous evidences of attempts to curb freedom of thought and freedom of expression. Throughout the country we hear charges of "Communist" and "subversive" hurled at people who might disagree with the prevailing trend of thought. Responsible citizens have become victims of smear tactics, character assassins, and guilt by association. People are becoming fearful and timid. (61)

The novel turns the tables on McCarthyism by having Mulcahy "expose the existence of a frame-up by framing himself first" (McCarthy 98) by victimizing the falsely accused victimizers. Mulcahy's survival plan is based on incriminating the president of Jocelyn as a false accuser in order to avoid being dismissed.

> Was it not Maynard Hoar, precisely who could not afford to have it known that he got rid of an inconvenient critic—Maynard Hoar, author of a pamphlet, "The Witch Hunt in our universities" … Especially when it so happened that the inconvenient critic had been under fire, not so long ago,

> by a state legislature for Communistic, atheistic tendencies," as evidenced by a few book reviews in the *Nation*, of all places, a single article in the old *Marxist Quarterly* ("James Joyce, Dialectical Materialist"), and a two-dollar contribution to the Wallace campaign. (McCarthy 10–11)

In addition to incriminating the president, Mulcahy also plans to carry out his intentions by targeting a vulnerable student and a faculty member. The Mulcahys were popular with the student-body and he was willing to take advantage of their affection for his wife and four children in order to get them to rally on his behalf: "He had consolatory visions of student petitions, torchlight parades, sit-down strikes in the classroom. He held her in suspense for a moment—like a conductor, he thought, with raised baton over the woodwinds of her feelings" (McCarthy 19).

Next, he needed to ensure the support of his colleagues and "he saw that the case was and must be one of academic freedom" (46), which meant that he had to convince his colleagues that he was a victim of persecution because of his Party affiliation and that his dismissal was part of a campaign of organized terror in the universities against men of independent mind" (McCarthy 40).

Thinking who among his colleagues would drum up the most support he decides to take advantage of the vulnerability of Domna, the youngest member of the Literature department. He was a predator upon the vulnerable and the weak, and he was taking advantage of their friendship by calling in the favor for "their long morning talks and endless cups of black coffee" which made "Jocelyn habitable for this the lonely, affection starved child" (McCarthy 41).

To make his concocted plan more convincing he even implicates himself in wrongdoing, confessing about forging a letter promising him a permanent appointment which in itself was cause for dismissal since it goes against the "morals clause in the code

on faculty tenure" (McCarthy 54). Also, he admits that although he was a member of the Communist Party, he had denied his affiliation after losing positions at "five universities for various academic pretexts, never knowing who was responsible" (57). Mulcahy reminds her that he has "perjured himself before [his] superiors and before a state legislature—an indictable offense" (58). He continues to convince Domna that "the heat is on Maynard to get rid of" him: "I have become a political liability and he will use any pretext to get rid of me before my name appears in a congressional investigation" (58). There is no end to his unscrupulous ways and his certainty that he would be believed because "the idea that a man in his right mind would run the risk of proclaiming himself a Communist when the facts were the other way would simply occur to no one" (99).

The above excerpts from McCarthy's novel illustrate "the role that discourse, including literature, plays in negotiating and making manifest the power relations and structures of a culture" (Brannigan 81) as well as the shifts in values and ideology that occurred due to McCarthyism. The absurdity is present in the anxiety of Mulcahy's colleagues, who fight for his reinstatement even when they become aware of his lies and manipulation.

As I have already mentioned, Mulcahy's web of deceit mirrors the witch-hunt of intellectuals and cut-throat non-ethics of survival embedded in the Red Scare discourse of the 1950's. In addressing McCarthyism in her mocking manner, Mary McCarthy brings together the fictional and historical while at the same time revealing "the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life" (Greenblatt 1983: 14) during this turbulent time of battle for academic liberties.

The Mulcahy incident even disrupts the literary conference hosted by the university. The central figure of the conference is the "the poet of the masses" (McCarthy 235), Vincent Keogh, a Communist with scruples and conscience and no threat to the

college or society as a whole. The sarcastic portrayal of Keogh is said to be based on Kenneth Rexroth, an American "poet, translator and critical essayist who described himself as a Christian Communist and for most of his life denied ever having joined the party although he had been an active party member from 1935 to 1938" (Smith 32).

Excitement is aroused when the poet greets Mulcahy as a former comrade. It leads the president and the head of the Literature department to question him in order to find out Mulcahy's true standing with the Communist Party. Keogh admits in confidence that Mulcahy is not nor ever was a Communist. However, he quickly regrets making the admission and feels anxious "that he might have played …the role of a stool-pigeon or an informer which was offensive to his whole sense of himself" (McCarthy 293). Thus, he lets Mulcahy know "that the President and certain staff members had been asking questions about him, which he had answered … too freely" (McCarthy 294). The characterization of the poet points to how tightly the literary is bound up with its historical moment of production. The poet's integrity as opposed to Mulcahy's underhandedness makes evident whom society should feel threatened by.

Enraged by the conducted interrogations, Mulcahy storms the President's office "literally shakes his fist in Maynard's face, threatens to expose him to the A.A.U.P., and to every liberal magazine and newspaper in the country" (McCarthy 299). Also, he threatens "to write a sequel to the President's magazine article that would reveal to the whole world the true story of a professional liberal: a story of personal molestation, spying, surveillance, corruption of students by faculty stool-pigeons" (McCarthy 299). Furthermore, Mulcahy demands: "Justice for [him]self as a superior individual" and "the right to pursue his profession, the right to teach without interference or meddling" (McCarthy 301).

The depiction of Mulcahy's very skillful implementation of McCarthyism smear tactics highlights the absurdity of the Red Scare discourse. Mary McCarthy's novel is a cultural artifact testifying to the "social control and political subversion" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 10) "embedded in the social and political discourses" (Brannigan 68) of the 1950's. McCarthy's "representation of reality" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 40) brings home the message that this devious character is by no means a "superior individual" and as such should not be allowed to teach. McCarthy foregrounds that instead of weeding out people according to their party affiliations, universities ought to have been weeding out incompetent teachers who are unfit to teach due to their lack of ethics and decency as well as incompetent knowledge.

Therefore, the ending of McCarthy's novel makes a final statement on the consequences for a country ruled by anticommunist hysteria. Overcome with feelings of failure and bitterness, the president hands in his resignation to the Jocelyn board of trustees: "I saw that I was too much incriminated. The college would never get rid of him as long as I was at the tiller. With another skipper, who can't be blackmailed, there's a fair chance of getting him out" (McCarthy 301–302).

As we come to observe that the honorable person has no choice but to resign while the unworthy is promoted, we must ask ourselves who academics are and who has a rightful place to teach at universities. This takes us back to the opening quote at the beginning of the novel which is proven to be wrong, since obviously the idea of the groves as the place of truth is a sham as the nature of truth and power in a bureaucratic society.

In the end we get a final taste of McCarthy's critique of academic life through her cutting remarks implied in the poet's speech:

> they had succeeded in leading him up the garden path into one of their academic mazes, where a man could wander for eternity, meeting himself

> in mirrors. No, he repeated. Possibly they were all very nice, high-minded, scrupulous people with only an occupational tendency towards backbiting and a nervous habit of self-correction, always emending, penciling, erasing; but he did not care to catch the bug, which seemed to be endemic to these ivied haunts. (McCarthy 295)

The sarcasm that is evident in the poet's words, as well as the sharp-pointed satire of the entire novel, leads Lyons to conclude that in *The Groves of Academe* "there is a display of knowledge and insight concerning modern educational theories and literary battles which is often pyrotechnical" (Lyons 1962:173). Concluding his discussion of the novel, Lyons states: "Mary McCarthy implies that the teaching profession does not deserve freedom and perhaps would not know what to do if it had it" (Lyons 1962:178). Evidently, the struggle for academic freedom is a never ending process and this right should neither be taken for granted nor denied if higher education is to meet the needs and challenges set before it.

Through the character of Mulcahy, McCarthy illustrates how academic freedom can be made a sham of and so her protagonist "represents the weakness of liberalism and progressivism because he intellectually knows these doctrines but has no real faith in them" (Lyons 1962: 172–173). At Jocelyn liberal thought is advertised, there are no loyalty oaths and "membership in the Communist Party, past or present, does not in itself establish unfitness to teach" (McCarthy 118). Jocelyn prided itself on being a progressive college and with a former radical as president the college policy was very liberal. However, the question is put whether Communists are fit to be teachers if they lack intellectual freedom: "Can a Communist under discipline have intellectual freedom? We hear that they cannot, that they are under strict orders to promote their infamous doctrine; their minds are not free as ours are" (McCarthy 118). This question calls attention to the

new historicist premise that fiction and history are bound up in the historical moment of production as the discourse of academic freedom is confronted with the communist discourse.

Views presented in McCarthy's novel are voiced by Professor Sidney Hook, Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at New York University, in his article in the *New York Times* magazine (February 27, 1949): "What is relevant is that their (the Communist Party members') conclusions are not reached by a free inquiry into the evidence. To stay in the Communist Party they must believe and teach what the party line decrees" (qtd. in Allen).

In the same year, Raymond B. Allen, President of the University of Washington, Seattle, published the report *Communists Should Not Teach in American Colleges,* stating that "members of the Communist Party should not be allowed to teach in American colleges … a member of the Communist Party is not a free man, that he is instead a slave to immutable dogma and to a clandestine organization masquerading as a political party" (Allen).

In addition to the discourse of academic freedom, the interplay of two other discourses are "embedded in the material conditions" (Brewton) at the time, namely budget shortages and the GI Bill. In the *Groves of Academe* there are several references to the budget shortages that Jocelyn College is continually exposed to. Three are of special interest for our discussion on higher education and even crucial for the plot of the novel. Firstly, Jocelyn College, just like other small colleges in the fifties, was encountering constant financial difficulties and coping in its unique manner: "the college was in continual hot water financially, it had inevitably grown accustomed to close shaves and miraculous windfalls" (67). Secondly, although budget shortages lead to lower salaries there is the following reference which reveals academics are willing to make sacrifices in

exchange for security. A Jocelyn faculty member explains: “Hence the common fixation on tenure, we feel that we serve for life like civil-service employees, we accept low wages and poor housing conditions in exchange for the benefits of a security that we consider implicit in the bargain” (178–179).

The third aspect regarding a lack of funds makes evident that there was no promise of a permanent position but just Mulcahy’s desperate scheming attempts to turn a short-term appointment into a permanent one. The following excerpt only proves that the president was doing all he could for Mulcahy and that his prospects for a permanent appointment were nonexistent.

> Our budget for Literature-Languages doesn’t allow for another salary at the professorial level … I could carry him as an instructor, pro tem, but I couldn’t promise him promotion and tenure; … Hen has been nothing but a luxury for us. … He isn’t being paid out of department funds; he’s on a special stipend, borrowed from the emergency reserve. (176–177)

By focusing on budget shortages McCarthy is mirroring the economic and social reality of the 1950’s that resulted in an increase in government involvement in education due to the growing demands from both state and local school boards for federal funding that was caused by teacher and school shortages as well as the overcrowding of educational institutions. The impact of greater government involvement resulted in advantages and drawbacks for American education from the fifties to the present day and is evident from the following:

> Federal funding brought spending guidelines, such as bans on Communist teachers and the requirement to integrate schools. Restrictions on where and to whom the money went made the jobs of the state and local school boards even harder. Some chose not to

> accept the federal money because it meant giving up complete control over administration. For all the help the federal money brought—more schools and teachers along with better curricula—the full effects of that involvement, some negative, would be felt in the coming decades. ("The 1950's: Education: Overview")

The second major issue, the GI Bill discourse, calls attention to the fact that enrollments are of primary significance for the survival of institutions. The following brief satirical reference claiming that Jocelyn College was saved by the flood of new enrollments, which included veterans and those seeking upward educational mobility illustrates how effectively "the literary text maps the discourses circulating at the time it was written and is itself one of those discourses" (Ghadiri 384).

> During the War, it had nearly foundered and had been saved by the influx of veterans studying under the GI Bill and by the new plutocracy of five-percenters, car-dealers, black-market slaughterers, tire salesmen, and retail merchants who seemed to Jocelyn's presidents to have been specially enriched by Providence, working mysteriously, with the interests of the small college in mind. (McCarthy 67)

According to Roger L. Geiger, "the thirty years following the end of World War II were possibly the most tumultuous in the history of American higher education" (61). President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (The GI bill) which was to "change the social and economic landscape of the United States" (Greenberg). Not only did it provide generous educational opportunities ranging from vocational and on-the-job training to higher education, and liberal access to loans for a home or a business, but it also promoted the belief that education can be and should

be available to anyone, regardless of age, sex, race, religion, or family status (Greenberg). Moreover, "it changed the meaning of higher education in public consciousness from the 1950's onward" ("The GI Bill of Rights"). From this time, there has been a significant increase in the number of public institutions of higher education which has resulted in the expansion of educational opportunity to all U.S. citizens as well as international students. In his article "The GI Bill of Rights, Changing the Social, Economic Landscape of the United States," Milton Greenberg explains the changes and their consequences for Americans. He describes higher education in the United States before the war as "mostly private, liberal arts, small-college, rural, residential, elitist, and often discriminatory from institution to institution with respect to race and religion" (Greenberg). Furthermore, he claims that the opposite is true for the American universities of the twenty-first century which are for the most part "public, focused heavily on occupational, technical, and scientific education, huge, urban-oriented, suitable for commuter attendance, and highly democratic" (Greenberg). Furthermore, he suggests that "now, upward social, educational, and financial mobility, rather than certification of the upper classes, is what American higher education offers to Americans and increasingly to others in the world" (Greenberg).

The new bill led to an overwhelming enrollment and resulted in the overcrowding of institutions of higher education. As Geiger explains:

> In 1947, 1.1 million ex-GIs were enrolled, compared with 1.5 million students before the war and this surge did little to raise standards, though, as overcrowded institutions were forced to run year-round, to shorten courses, and to curtail requirements. This interlude nevertheless rebuilt depleted institutional treasuries and boosted morale as well. In wake of

this experience, most institutions sought to consolidate and bolster their programs. (61–62)

The highest increase in enrollment was reported in 1956 "with more than 450,000 new students (colleges would feel the full effect of the baby boomers during the 1960's and 1970's)" ("The 1950's: Education: Overview"). This significant year-long increase in enrollment "strained the physical capacity of aging school buildings and challenged the flexibility of outmoded curricula" ("The 1950's: Education: Overview"). Due to the fact that increased enrollments exceeded the existing resources, there was a call for increase in funding for education, teacher recruitment escalated and construction spending was on the upswing throughout the nation to meet the demands for more classrooms.

Heightened public interest in educational reform during the decade resulted in more media coverage of higher education as well as an increase in fictional representations, especially the academic novel which not only mirrored the changes but also shaped the public's view.

3.2. Progressive Education under Fire in *Pictures from an Institution*

Pictures from an Institution by Randal Jarrell was published in 1954 and was nominated for the 1955 National Book Award. Lyons describes the novel as "one of the gentler satiric works on progressive education" (1962:157) while Kramer states it is "often regarded as the paramount satire on academic life" (157). The novel is set at Benton College, a small progressive Southern women's college, which resembles in many aspects Sarah Lawrence College, a private, independent, liberal arts college where Jarrell taught for a year. This resemblance has led to the belief that Benton was modeled after Sarah Lawrence College but Jarrell has denied this in an interview with the *New York Times*: "Benton is supposed to be just a type ... I've taken things from real places, but mostly have made them up" (Nichols). However, the criticism expressed in the witty quotations from the novel bear an uncanny resemblance to the description of Sarah Lawrence given at the beginning of this chapter. Jarrell addresses the role that the progressive education discourse "plays in negotiating and making manifest the power relations and structures" (Brannigan 81) within the American system of higher education in the 1950's. The idea of equality and freedom of choice was carried to such extremes regarding curriculum choices and the students' own assessment of their achievement that the role of the teacher in the process is vague, whether we are looking at Sarah Lawrence or Benton. This confirms the new historicist premise that literary and non-literary texts "circulate inseparably" (1989: xi) as "expressions of the same historical moment" (Barry 173). In his very satirical manner, Jarrell illustrates the ideology of the time:

Benton faculty as a whole, which "reasoned with the students, 'appreciated their point of view,' used Socratic methods on them, made allowances for them, kept looking into the oven to see if they were done; but there was one allowance they never under any

circumstances made—that the student might be right about something, and they wrong" (Jarrell 81–82).

The above excerpt makes it evident that the roles of student and teacher were not defined and were rather confusing for both categories. Jarrell's satirical representation of progressive education is in accordance with Greenblatt's approach "to bring together the literary document and the historical document in a new and revealing way" (Greenblatt 1990: xi). As Gallagher suggests, he combines "both fictional and non-fictional as constituents of historical discourses" (qtd. in Veeser 1989:37) as he reminds us of the "hodgepodge modern educational theory" (qtd. in Curren 188) criticized by Arendt in her critical works as well as of Mary McCarthy's critical view of the progressive reforms. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that Jarrell dedicated his novel to Mary McCarthy and Hannah Arendt, whose critical views on progressive education and political and intellectual crises in America he evidently shared. Showalter reports that Jarrell told Hannah Arendt that he had written a "prose book" inspired by her *Origins of Totalitarianism*, implying that a small liberal arts college resembles a totalitarian society (30). Showalter comments that the book strikes her as tedious and almost unreadable and she explains that "*Pictures* goes through a year at Benton, a progressive women's college, at which a malignant woman novelist and her meek husband skewer the faculty in a series of acid portraits" (30). She supports her views by quoting William Pritchard's opinion that the novel was "tending toward brilliant one-liners that obliterated 'responsible' analysis of his subject" (30).

I agree with Pritchard's appraisal that Jarrell's exhibition of wit is brilliant, but I disagree with his claim that it stands in the way of Jarrell expressing his views of the faculty, administration and students of the small women's college. On the contrary,

Jarrell's novel illustrates Herder's vision of the "mutual embeddedness of art and history" (7), as he illustrates that literary and non-literary "texts" circulate inseparably (1989: xi).

He does this effectively through a series of incidents and character sketches that call attention to the faults of the progressive educational reforms. These poisonous sketches, abounding in biting satire and mocking witticisms, are at times difficult to follow due to the lack of plot and the oddity of the Benton world, its characters, their interpersonal relationships and their general academic routine. Moreover, the novel is considered to be prophetic due to the fact that although it was written in "the middle of the last century it shows in their bud many of the absurd developments which have come to full flower in current American academe: Endless Tolerance, Creativity, and Diversity are already the buzzwords par excellence at fictional Benton College of the 1950's" (Nemeth).

In addition to Gertrude's sardonic observations, the reader is constantly informed by the narrator, who is a faculty member but remains nameless. The narrator makes humorous and often offensive observations about the faculty, students and administrative staff of Benton. The novel focuses on these two interesting characters and their interactions with the rest of the Benton inhabitants.

Gertrude is said to have been modeled on Mary McCarthy, who was a close friend of Jarrell. Whether a loving portrait or a poisonous sketch, it is evident that the portrayal both pokes fun at and reveals her superiority and severity as an eminent woman writer.

> As 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. She was one, intermittently, but while she wasn't she did not remember what it had felt like to be one; and her worse self distrusted her

> better too thoroughly to give it much share, ever, in what she said or wrote. (Jarrell 189–190)

Jarrell and McCarthy shared personal and literary connections due to their engagement at the Bard College campus at the same time in the 1950's, when McCarthy was a writer in residence for a year. In his novel Jarrell "shadows her cold-hearted fiction-gathering techniques, as she observes the Bard faculty in action for a book she wrote called *The Groves of Academe*" (Ottaway). The reader is told that Gertrude gathers gossip and characters for her next novel, but we are aware that it is Jarrell who is behind the gossip and the witticisms "presented in a sprightly, but often coy, prose" (Lyons 1962: 158). Jarrell's text addresses the discourses present at the time it was written and in the process becomes one of those discourses (Ghadiri 384).

The resemblance of McCarthy and Gertrude is also discussed by Carol Brightman in her biography, *Writing Dangerously: Mary McCarthy and Her World*, where she comments on the similarity between Mary McCarthy and Gertrude Johnson and claims that Gertrude is "easily mistaken for Mary McCarthy" (Brightman). She supports her views by comparing the descriptions of the two which reveal the resemblance:

> When Gertrude "patted someone on the head you could be sure that the head was about to appear, smoked, in her next novel" (Jarrell 268) ... (Her readers) "could not mention (her) style without using the vocabulary of a salesman of kitchen knives" (Brightman 460).
>
> It's true that McCarthy's reputation belonged in the cutlery department. Incisive, hard-edged, penetrating, cutting were the words for her. When she entered a room, people froze; it was assumed that "she had the goods on everybody." (Brightman xiv)

Brightman's comparison rests on the complementation of fiction and history which illustrates Greenblatt's principle "to bring together the literary document and the historical document in a new and revealing way" (Greenblatt 1990: xi).

That Jarrell challenges the ideology of the discourse of progressive education is present in Lyon's evaluation of his novel. He claims that *Pictures from an Institution* is not merely gossip, but a critical commentary of the experiment of progressive educational reform at Benton:

> The college is described in much the same way Shirley Jackson describes the college in Hangsman in (1951), and Mary McCarthy describes Jocelyn in *The Groves of Academe* (1952). These are all colleges which have tried to combine the best features of the Great Books program at St. John's with the free and democratic work-study program at Antioch. At each of these fictional campuses there is the atmosphere of a crusade being carried on against the rest of the educational world. The programs are rooted in the belief that the students will become moral and cultured by learning with, not from, the faculty. (Lyons 1962:158)

Although *Pictures from an Institution* seems to focus on Gertrude, another odd figure is also frequently addressed, Dr. Dwight Robbins, Benton's "youthful but vacuous president" (Kramer 157). College presidents are central characters in *The Groves of Academe* and *Pictures from an Institution* and in their beliefs and teaching they are very similar to Harold Taylor, the well known college president of Sarah Lawrence. Jarrell identifies President Robbins as "one of these *idiots savants* of success, of Getting Ahead in the World" (Jarrell 23). In the characterization of President Robins we recognize Greenblatt's " mutual permeability of the literary and the historical" (qtd. in Ghadiri 385)

as we follow Jarrell's dealing with "the interplay of discourses," that both shape and are shaped by their historical contexts in which the novel was written.

> Dwight Robbins believed what Reason and Virtue and Tolerance and a comprehensive Organic Synthesis of Values would have him believe. And about anything, anything at all, he believed what it was expedient for the President of Benton College to believe. You looked at the two beliefs and lo! the two were one ... President Robbins was so well adjusted to his environment that sometimes you could not tell which was the environment and which was President Robbins. (Jarrell 10–11) … That's no man, that's an institution. (Jarrell 7)

Joseph Epstein responds to Jarrell's mirroring depiction of progressive college presidents in his discussion of the novel where he claims that it is "among several withering criticisms of university life, a marvelously prophetic description of the kind of perfectly characterless man who will eventually—that is to say, now, in our day—rise to the presidencies of universities all over the country" (375). He claims that college presidents, like the fictional president of Benton, are "cozening, smarmy, confidently boring, an appeaser of all and offender of none, 'idiot savants of success' (Jarrell's perfect phrase), not really quite human but … with a gift for 'seeming human'" (375).

Jarrell's novel is a cultural artifact that challenges the ideological and political interests circulating at this time. Democracy has always been an important issue in education in the United States but the progressive reforms took the democratic ideals to the extremes, unfortunately not to the benefit of providing more quality education. The following passage gives a student's perception of democracy in action at Benton:

> at Benton, where education was as democratic as in "that book about America by that French writer—de, de—you know the one I mean"; she

> meant de Tocqueville; there at Benton they wanted you really to believe everything that they did, especially if they hadn't told you what it was. You gave them the facts, the opinion of authorities, what you hoped was their own opinion; but they replied, "that's not the point. What do you yourself really believe?" If it wasn't what your professors believed, you and they could go on searching for your real belief forever—unless you stumbled at last upon that primal scene which is, by definition, at the root of everything. (Jarrell 82)

The above passage confirms that the freedom allotted to the students as well as the rationalization of independence and dependence was vague and caused confusion and frustration among faculty and students. As Arendt commented, the teachers were stripped of authority and the students, although unprepared, were left to their own devices to deal with responsibilities beyond their capabilities. The following passages from the novel reveal "the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life" (Greenblatt 1983: 14). Jarrell addresses the discourse of democracy in the 1950's and illustrates the disadvantages of the democracy carried to its extreme.

> The faculty of Benton had for their students' great expectations, and the students shook, sometimes gave, beneath the weight of them. If the intellectual demands Benton made of its students were not so great as they might have been, the emotional demands made up for it. Many a girl, about to deliver to one of her teachers a final report on a year's not quite completed project, had wanted to cry out like a child: 'whip me, whip me, mother, just don't be Reasonable!' " (Jarrell 83)

The sketches Jarrell gives of the faculty have one common denominator: the faculty members are all convinced that Benton is the best college and that "if Benton were gone it would no longer be possible to become educated" (Jarrell 83). Educating Benton girls is constantly emphasized and it seems that scholarship and research, although not frowned upon, are not a requirement:

> At Benton a few "produced"—works of scholarship, works of art, in the summer; but most of them, after they had been at Benton for a while, produced Benton girls. And Benton did not look down on these "mere educators," as most schools do all the time they are saying they don't. (Jarrell 87)

After having read numerous academic novels in which publish or perish is the usual requirement for tenure and job security in general, the above excerpt sounds unreal. Also, the passage is a reminder of the teaching-research dilemma faced by college scholars. Teaching loads and administrative duties often do not leave enough time for research, and this is often crucial if one's survival at the college depends on the "publish or perish" principle.

Higher education has its hierarchy of power and a pecking order which makes the following description of the college as a haven free from competition unimaginable:

> The ranks of the teachers of Benton were fairly anomalous, their salaries were fairly similar, and most of what power there was distributed; being the head of the department, even, was a rotated chore. What mattered at Benton was the Approval of Your Colleague, the respect of the community of Benton. (Jarrell 105)

The above description presents the idea that the organizational structure of progressive colleges like Benton "was not only a delusion, it was a gratefully primitive

one: at Benton the members of the faculty had an importance, a dignity and significance, that we have lost" (Jarrell 87). By juxtaposing Benton to present day colleges and universities, Jarrell is calling attention to the brutal departmental struggles for power that are a common practice in college and university departments all through the United States. His novel is a cultural artifact that reveals "the economic and social realities, especially as they produce ideology and represent power or subversion" (Brewton) within the social and historical context of the 1950's. The narrator observes Gertrude's reaction to Benton to make the same point, because although she could see all this about Benton, she was extremely disappointed and even unwilling to believe that Benton's inhabitants were so dull, virtuous and scandal free. Gertrude has her views on academic stereotypes but Benton was an exception:

> To her the most powerful professor in the department was always just about to expose the head of the department's love affair with one of the students, in order to get the head's rank and salary and power for himself: or if it wasn't like this on the surface, it was at bottom. Sex, greed, envy, power, money: Gertrude knew that these were working away at Benton—though in sublimated form, sometimes—exactly as they work away everywhere else. ... Gertrude felt about Benton: "It's a place like any other." But like so many places, it wasn't. (Jarrell 106–107)

According to Lyons, Gertrude's conclusion "that Benton is not life—it is a place where nothing happens, where there is no plot or direction in life," implies "that progressive education, by beginning with the romantic assumption that the child lives in a state of moral and intellectual grace from which he must be gently led into adulthood, only creates a false view of the world" (1962: 159).

Another time consuming responsibility of the faculty is committee work and this is another thing at Benton that frustrated Gertrude and that exemplifies the idea of equality and democracy taken to extremes.

> When the President said, about the faculty at Benton, "We like to think that we educated each other," he had every right to think so—they spent as much time with each other as with the students. … as committees were concerned, she was going to get an excuse from her psychoanalyst that the President could sign; (Jarrell 86–87)

The narrator goes on to mock Benton's educational doctrine with its pompous liberalism: "The girls come to feel that Benton is at war not only with other colleges but with the liberal world outside. They longed for men to be discovered on the moon, so that they could show that they weren't prejudiced towards moon men; and they were so liberal and selfless politically" (Jarrell 104). This passage pokes fun at the professed liberalism, while the excerpt that follows questions their progressive claim by criticizing the progressive hypocrisy ingrained in a nation that is proclaiming its progressiveness but acting more in its own national interest than the interest of its citizens.

In his novel Jarrell negotiates the "power relations and structures" (Brannigan 81) present in the discourses circulating at the time it was written and reveals "the original ideology which gave birth to the text, and which the text in turn helped to disseminate throughout a culture" (Myers). According to Greenblatt and Sinfield, literary texts such as this "are vehicles of power which act as useful objects of study" because "they contain the same potential for power and subversion" (Brannigan 6) as is visible in the following:

> Benton was a progressive college, so you would have supposed that this state would be a steady progression. So it had been, for a couple of decades; but later it had become a steady retrogression. Benton was less progressive than it had been ten years before—but somehow this didn't bother people, didn't make them feel less progressive, and didn't do anything to them. (Jarrell 222–223)

The book ends with Gertrude going off to write a satire on academia despite all her complaints about it being too dull. The narrator is also leaving Benton and says: "I felt that I had misjudged Benton, somehow,—for if I had misjudged Miss Rasmussen so, why not the rest of Benton?" (Jarrell 276) Whether the narrator actually misjudged Benton or not, his critical views of progressive education, as well as those expressed by Mary McCarthy, Hannah Arendt and the numerous critics covered in this chapter, have led us to rethink our own views on progressive versus traditional education. Following the new historicist premise "that literary texts are embedded in social and political discourses" (Brannigan 68), has made possible the realization of the purpose of this study, which is as Greenblatt put it to "recover as far as possible the historical circumstances of their original production and consumption and to analyze the relationship between these circumstances and our own" (1990: 228–229).

4. THE ACADEMIC NOVEL OF THE SIXTIES: EXCELLENCE AND POWER IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The 1960's were a time of great change and the principal aim of this chapter is to bring together the literary and non-literary discourses embedded in the fabric of society at this time to reveal the events that transformed the social, political and cultural life in America, with a particular emphasis on the transformation of higher education.

In *Faculty Towers*, Elaine Showalter observes that although issues such as "political protest, the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, the women's movement, Stonewall, the sexual revolution, the drug culture, as well as the growth of rock music and popular culture" made the sixties a "turbulent decade" they are absent from the fiction of the time (34). However, although these issues may not have been the centerpieces of the college novel of the sixties, we can trace their impact as we observe a significant shift in the portrayal of higher education in college fiction in the two decades as the authors of academic novels challenge the ideological and political discourses circulating in the society. Their novels are cultural artifacts that reveal the transformation of the university from a haven offering protection against "the rough-and-tumble outside the walls" (Showalter 16) "to the current thematic milieu of cut-throat tenure battles, sexual harassment tribunals and departmental power struggles" (Hay).

During the 1960's the safe groves frequently become a battleground and the major issues that provoked battles are as present in the academic fiction as they were in nonfictional sources. The academic novels of the sixties are not pastiche representations offering entertainment to readers, but representations of reality that are produced, valued and exchanged as a result of the various discourses circulating at that particular moment

in history. John Williams' *Stoner* (1974) and May Sarton's *A Small Room* (1974) have been selected as representative academic novels for the 1960's because they mirror the changing social, political and economic context of higher education and as such are valuable sources of information to this study. The subject matter, characters, and the overall preoccupation with the academe illustrates the New Historical premise that "a literary work is the product of the time, place, and circumstances of its composition" (Tiwary 79). Both Williams and Sarton intervene in the discourses that articulate ideological, social and other interests in order to reveal hidden agendas and motives that serve self-interests, maintain superiority, and ensure others' subjugation (Henry & Tator, 2002). They challenge some of the most pressing issues of the day making evident that the turbulence of the sixties shook the ivory towers and resulted in the groves being anything but a safe haven isolated from the real world.

Both novels address issues of departmental and university politics as well as the fundamental question of what it means to be a teacher. In addition, Williams takes on the subject of the effects of war on the academic community, while Sarton negotiates the issue of marginalized groups, as she takes a closer look at the treatment of women and homosexuals in the academy. Sarton also comments on the corporatization of the university and its meritocracy that results in plagiarism.

The authors of academic novels challenge the key values, conventions and rules of academic discourse that have become a sham as faculty politics, petty administrators and the administrative bureaucracy undermine the true mission of the academy. The novels reveal a shift in the poetics of the culture of the academy from "the admiring tones" of the earlier academic novels to "a much more acerbic view of academic life and a much more Darwinian sense of the university and the struggle for survival with the department presented as an ethnographic entity, a tribe" (Showalter 34).

> Within this tribal culture, novelists begin to explore the Freudian subtexts of department life, especially the Oedipal projections on to the chair, or at least the alpha male … the terrifying senior professor, the castrating department chair, and the formidable patriarchal critic … who is the father who must be emulated by the men and served by the women. (Showalter 34–35)

Stoner, the protagonist of Williams' novel, exemplifies this in being the victim of containment of the department chair who resorts to subversive tactics in acts of vengeance that sabotage both Stoner's professional and private life. Stoner's refusal to pass a student incurs the wrath of the student's mentor, the department chair, resulting in acts of vengeance that undermine Stoner's teaching career and lead to the dismissal of a female instructor with whom Stoner was having an affair.

Similarly, Sarton's novel *A Small Room* shows who stands where in the pecking order as a trustee exerts power over the workings of a college turning it into a capitalistic production and sabotaging its function as an educational institution. Sarton's novel is an example of the novels of the sixties that, Showalter claims, "register a lot of unhappiness, protest and discontent … and where women particularly figure as angry and excluded" (34). Her observations could have been based on Sarton's novel that is set in Appleton, a small women's college, with a cast of female intellectuals of various generations struggling to achieve their individual happiness and prosperity within the male dominated heterosexual academic community. Showalter's observation mirrors the gender issues in academia revealing "the shifts in value and interest … produced in the struggles of social and political life" within the context of the academic setting (Greenblatt 1983:14).

After World War II, women returned to their roles in the home, and wifehood and motherhood were regarded as women's most significant professions. Alison Lurie describes campus life in the 1950's as "a patriarchal, family-centered society" where "[m]en went to work, and women stayed home and took care of the children" (qtd. in Showalter 38–39). Lurie is a reliable source of information on the roles for women in the world of higher education not only as a woman professor and writer of academic fiction but also because she grew up as a professor's daughter and later became a faculty wife.

Sarton intervenes in the academic discourse by challenging the question put by a newcomer to the Appleton faculty: "is this a society in which brilliance in women is considered desirable?" (Sarton 23). Lucy's question brings into focus the larger question of how women were perceived in the late 1950's and early 1960's and emphasizes the shifting attitudes towards their role throughout the development of higher education in American society.

According to the female faculty of Sarton's fictional college, "the college was not founded to give society what it wants" (Sarton 23) but by "setting an uncompromising standard … might develop women who could take the lead … capable of handling power" (Sarton 23). As one of the male professors points out, Appleton is "the last stronghold of the bluestocking" and by its female faculty as a college aimed not at "producing marriageable young ladies" but "fostering brilliance" (Sarton 22). There is a constant referral to this "brilliance" expected both of the female faculty as well as of the students and there is a strong emphasis on the fact that women have to work harder than men to gain recognition in the academy.

Katz states that, set in the late 1950's, "the novel portrays a time when many female academics had to choose between marriage and a professional career, but as we observe the protagonist, Lucy Winter, a twenty-seven-year-old Harvard graduate, we

realize that that's a choice she would prefer not to make" (Katz). On numerous occasions she reveals her desire for a husband, children and not just a teaching career: "She would never settle for being a female oddity, a professor, and give up …the rich expansive complex web of a family" (Sarton 59). She confirms this later by saying: "I love teaching here. But it's my whole life I can't imagine without … without" (Sarton 247). It is obvious Lucy Winter, who unlike Deborah and Maria, expresses an explicit desire of being a wife, mother and teacher, everything the women like Lurie proved is possible.

Sarton addresses gendered discourses pertaining to women's roles in the home and profession but the female characters she created offer little hope to Lucy in view of an example of the woman who has it all. There are two younger women, both married, one gave up her teaching career to raise three sons and another devotes herself to supporting her husband's teaching career. Of the other two unattached women one lives alone and another has devoted herself to taking care of her nagging mother. There are two other women who live alone but are involved in a longstanding and intimate lesbian relationship. Olive Hunt, the rich trustee of the college, and Carryl Cope, the star professor, are involved in a semi closeted lesbian relationship referred to as friendship.

It is important to emphasize that the emergence of the women's rights movement during the 1960's shifted the boundaries of political discourse on women's issues and led to a social and cultural transformation of America. The interplay of these discourses reveals that women found themselves caught up in the discursive restraints of wifehood and motherhood, and the gendered structure of power relations shaped by the historical context of their age. Carolyn Teasley, in her article, "Understanding the 60's Women's Liberation Movement", challenges the advancement of women's rights as she discusses the establishing of the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy. The Commission released reports that documented the

discrimination in wages, promotion practices and federal tax laws against women and made recommendations for improving hiring practices, paid maternity leave and affordable child care. Furthermore, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, an amendment to the Fair Labors Standards Act of 1938, guarded against sex-based discrimination of pay between men and women employed by the same business performing under similar working conditions and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 made discrimination in unions, schools and the workplace unlawful on the basis of race, creed, national origin or sex. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was established July 2, 1965 to enforce the new federal law and NOW, the National Organization for Women, was founded in 1966 by Betty Friedan with the main purpose to question the legality of sexual discrimination in the workplace by public demonstrations, lobbying and litigation. Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique*, published in 1963, was read by women worldwide and became a best seller and greatly influenced the women's rights movement.

The women's movement of the 1960's and 1970's touched all aspects of American life, and higher education was no exception. Because women were excluded from some private and state funded colleges, universities, and professional schools, hundreds of women's colleges were formed during the 1960's to ensure that women had a challenging and supportive academic environment. But when men's schools began to admit women, the landscape changed dramatically, and many women's colleges closed or merged.

The increase in educational and employment opportunities resulted in a significant increase in the enrollment of female students as well as in the number of women professors. The role of women in higher education was changing and this change is present in the college fiction with a diversity of female characters ranging from frustrated faculty wives, women professors, female administrators, seductive graduate students, visiting lecturers, writers-in-residence and a host of other female characters from the

world of the academia. But, as Showalter comments, the novel of the sixties was "still well short of a feminist heroine" (32), perhaps due to the fact that in the 1960's, "the rare female professor is ambivalent about power and in denial about ambition" (Showalter, 35). "Overall, feminism took a long time to seep into the academic novel, even when women were writing it" (Showalter 41). One such example is Kate, a professor in the novel *The James Joyce Murder* who declines the offer of a college presidency at the Jay College for Women. The position of power was offered by Professor Knole, a retired woman professor who explains, not too flatteringly: "there's a shortage of really competent women around, let alone women who aren't married to men whose careers or egos foreclose any possibilities of their having a college president for a wife" (qtd. in Showalter 42).

As we focus on the American academic novels of the sixties, we move away from the Oxbridge setting to the American English department of fictional colleges that are frequently modeled on well-known institutions like Harvard and Princeton as well as the smaller liberal colleges. The depiction of the institutions of higher learning is frequently unfavorable and includes opportunism, cowardice, corruption and pomposity, "class distinctions, regional snobbery, and anti-Semitism" (qtd. in Showalter 44).

Shifting views pertaining to access to higher education for traditionally marginalized groups "both shape and are shaped by their historical contexts circulating in the culture" during the decade (Tyson 2006). Particularly the employment policies and practices of higher education institutions based on racial, ethnic and gender discrimination against employees have led professors to feel isolated and disempowered within their profession.

Thus the academic novels not only trace the discourses of the day, but become those discourses, as they introduce the characters of the visiting professors or writers in

residence, who write a campus novel during their stay at the college. Authors of academic novels are presented as faculty members who either want to advance their academic careers or are looking for a way out of the academe. As Kramer comments, “all of the university’s neophyte instructors of English feel that they can escape academe at any time by writing a best-selling college novel” (242). It is interesting to mention that academic novels were not only a source of pleasure for lovers of academic fiction and a fount of knowledge for researchers but also a handbook for future academics and a ticket out for those seeking an escape from the ivory towers.

4.1. *The Small Room:* Teaching: A Vocation or Profession?

May Sarton is the pen name of Eleanore Marie Sarton, an American poet, novelist, and memoirist whose novel, *The Small Room* (1961), "became popular reading in the 1970's among feminists in higher education" for its candid "depict[ion] of women in the serious pursuit of academic excellence" (Kramer 216). The novel is set in New England at Appleton, a small women's college which bears a great similarity to Smith, Radcliffe, Wellesley and Mount Holyoke, all small women's liberal arts colleges. These colleges played an important role in women's access to higher education at a time when wifehood and motherhood were regarded as women's most significant professions and many American colleges had neither female students nor female faculty.

Sarton's novel intervenes in the capitalist economic discourses surrounding higher education with trustees who have gained control of the colleges through their invested capital and have corrupted the academy by turning it into their own capitalistic production. The academy is not the "life of the mind" but a sweatshop in the corporatization of the academy, where both the laborers of these academic factories, the exploited proletariat as well as the students, are collateral damage in the race for an ever-increasing demand in turnover of knowledge production. Sarton's portrayal of Appleton College illustrates how endowments have corrupted the academy and turned it into a factory in which the students are always expected to produce more: "to produce, produce, produce. I'm not a machine" (Sarton 100). In this context, it is interesting that the "publish or perish" dictate present in most academic novels is redirected by Sarton at the students who suffer from a constant moving of the goalposts. Sarton not only challenges the true meaning of being a teacher, but she also reveals the price of brilliance for both female teachers and students in the American institutions of higher learning in the sixties. Putting the academy on a corporate

model is shown to be counterproductive because it sabotages the true mission of the academy: the commitment to the advancement of knowledge and freedom of thought. By focusing on the containment within the academic hierarchy, Sarton reveals the true mission of higher education and the personal and professional sacrifices required if the mission is to be successfully accomplished. Jennifer Finch, one of the female faculty, keeps repeating John Donne's verse "Teach me to heare Mermaides singing, or to keep off envies stinging, and finde what winde Serves to advance an honest minde" (Sarton 238). The repetition of this quote is a constant reminder to the academy that no matter what, the true mission of "the life of the mind" should neither be forgotten nor sacrificed for any reason. Thus Sarton not only challenges the true function of institutions of higher learning and what it means to be a teacher but also reveals the role of women as teachers and students in America during the sixties.

Carryl Cope insists that the purpose of education is developing intellectual excellence: "we talk a great deal about excellence, and we pride ourselves on demanding it … We are unwilling, evidently, to pay the price of excellence ... Excellence costs a great deal" (Sarton 69). Unfortunately, too much emphasis on academic excellence leads to meritocracy and ends in plagiarism and brings about an avalanche of mutual accusations. As blame descends upon the college so does the need to humanize the groves as institutions of the mind where teaching the whole person is the mission. By making the price of excellence in education the centerpiece issue of her novel, Sarton challenges the traditions and values in the context of continuous change in higher education that have placed such an overemphasis on meritocracy which even in the best of students can lead to plagiarism. Appleton has set an uncompromising standard which even its star student, Jane Seaman, cannot live up to. Jane "fails to cope with the pressure to achieve higher ground, perpetrates an unethical act that threatens to shatter the very tradition of

excellence" (Matthew). It is ironic that the plagiarized work was in a college literary publication *Appleton Essays* that Professor Cope gave proudly to Lucy with a special emphasis on the fact that: "Jane is a scholar. I'll vouch ... the girl will go far … She'll do original work … She's head and shoulders above anyone else in the senior class, intellectually speaking, and she's worked like a demon" (Sarton 24).

Lucy is overwhelmed by her discovery: "She stole it, almost a complete paraphrase, and in a few places direct quote" (Sarton 91). She was clueless about what would lead a student of such exceptional talent and promise to sacrifice academic integrity and turn to plagiarism, knowing that such a violation would result in expulsion. She confronts Jane and calls her attention to the consequences of her actions: "You know the rule. You know what overt plagiarism, in this case a sometimes line-by-line steal, means in any reputable college" (Sarton 97). Jane first denies the deed, then gives excuses and finally makes an honest confession: "the pressure, the pressure, the pressure" (Sarton 99). When Lucy tries to comfort her with Professor Cope's words, "one pays a high price for brilliance" (Sarton 100), Jane replies: "When I came here I was in love with learning, literally. I was like a starving person who finds food. …I began to feel like a person in my own right. I mean, it mattered to someone how I did, what I thought" (Sarton 100). As Jane continues, she begins to expresses her resentment towards her mentor, Carryl Cope: "What does she know? …From the time I first had her as a sophomore she has been at me to produce, produce, produce. I'm not a machine!" (Sarton 100).Moreover, Jane insists that "[t]he more you do, the more you're expected to do, and each thing has got to be better, always better" (Sarton 100).

Appleton boasted the "personal element" but, according to Jane, students are not seen as people but as machines and maximum performance is all that matters. When Lucy says that Professor Cope gave her the issue of *Appleton Essays* with a particular pride,

Jane replies: “What a sell for her! The infant prodigy turns out to be a fake!” (Sarton 102). “I just got tired of being pushed so hard, tired of the whole racket, tired of having a brain, tired of coming up to the jump and taking it again and again. Lost my nerve” (Sarton 102). Thus, her resorting to plagiarism is clearly the reaction of “a brilliant but emotionally troubled student, who seems to want to terminate a demanding protégé relationship with the college’s most powerful research scholar, Carryl Cope” (Katz).

The whole college community is shaken, as students and faculty express opposing views on this moral issue. On the one hand, the professors are in disbelief as to why a “Senior, a brilliant student or … one in whom so much has been invested” (Sarton 91–92) would violate the academic code so blatantly and wondering “if we are not all responsible” (Sarton 93). Professor Cope feels guilty for driving Jane to excellence and withholding the emotional support that was obviously needed. She says: “We cannot have a person of this quality blackballed for life … We have some human responsibility” (Sarton 120). Moreover, Lucy points out “the punishment is so severe that it would mean the end of her education. Is the image of justice worth that?” (Sarton 133–134). On the other hand, the students for the most part see this case as a faculty cover-up, “a pure case of favoritism; if anyone else had done what Jane did, they would have been expelled. Why should Jane get away with this?” (Sarton 133). Finally, the conflict is resolved with the student council’s decision to allow Jane “back as a regularly enrolled student, as soon she is well enough” (197).

In addition to the price of excellence in education and plagiarism, the novel also intervenes in the discourses of basic American values, endowments, as well as professional and personal relationships. It is interesting that the three mentioned issues are closely tied to the distinguished Professor Carryl Cope and the wealthy trustee Olive

Hunt who share a professional relationship as well as a longstanding and intimate lesbian relationship.

Sarton's poem "Now I Become Myself", as well as many of her novels, belong to the literature of the gay liberation and feminist era in that they reflect the lesbian experience. However, no matter how we label them, it is evident that her works were shaping public views towards the gay/lesbian discourse before the actual gay activist movement was born. It is important to underscore that, in 1969, despite the unfavorable laws and public prejudice, a massive grassroots gay liberations movement began in the United States, in great part due to the radical protest of blacks, women, and college students. Gays challenged all forms of hostility and punishment present in society and chose to "come out of the closet" and publicly proclaim their identity ("Milestones in the Gay Rights Movement").

In the summer of 1969 a group of gay New Yorkers made a stand against raiding police officers at The Stonewall Inn, a popular gay bar in the Village operated by the mafia. At this time it was illegal for two men to dance with each other but, since the mafia paid off the police, at Stonewall this was allowed. During the riot, chants of "Gay Power!" were heard and, as the chant caught on it was the beginning of a new era in gay and lesbian history (Kuhn 5). This was the beginning of the modern gay rights movement which would unite the gay community in a worldwide battle against discrimination; in addition, annual gay pride celebrations have been set up around the world to commemorate the Stonewall riots. "By 1970, 5,000 gay men and lesbians marched in New York City to commemorate the first anniversary of the Stonewall Riots; in October 1987, over 600,000 marched in Washington, to demand equality" ("Milestones in the Gay Rights Movement"). Although there were gay groups before the Stonewall riots, their number increased significantly thereafter and groups like the Student Homophile League,

Homosexuals Intransigent!, FREE (Fight Repression of Erotic Expression), the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and many others had an active presence at more than 175 colleges and universities by 1971 (Beemyn). In addition there are national organizations of homosexuality and people who lobby and fight for rights of homosexuals.

Sarton's novels include open lesbian relationships but, during the time of the writing of the novel, such relationships were not as open and a coming out mostly resulted in dismissal, as Sarton herself experienced more than once. Perhaps this fear is being alluded to in the *Small Room*, as Olive tells Lucy: "I never could persuade Carryl to come and live with me outright" (Sarton 203), though it is never clear whether this was a personal or professional decision. The existence of the relationship is acknowledged but not talked about. However, as Olive and Carryl dominate over the faculty and exert their influence on college polices, there are those who resent Carryl's power as Olive's friend. Fortunately, there are also those like Jack Beveridge, who defend them: "it happens to be a real relationship. The fact that they love each other and have done so for twenty years. Beyond our recognition of the fact, I quite agree with Lucy, it is none of our damned business" (Sarton 152).

In *Journal of A Solitude* Sarton wrote, "The fear of homosexuality is so great that it took courage to write *Mrs. Stevens Hears the Mermaids Singing* … to write a novel about a woman homosexual who is not a sex maniac, a drunkard, a drug-taker, or in any way repulsive, to portray a homosexual who is neither pitiable nor disgusting, without sentimentality" (1973:91–92). In an interview with Neila C. Seshachari, Sarton discusses her feelings of alienation in America as opposed to feelings of belonging in Europe: "I am a lesbian and this [way of life] was totally acceptable in Europe and not, at that time, in America. I came out with *Mrs. Stevens Hears the Mermaids Singing* and it took courage. I lost two jobs immediately" (Seshachari).

Her books are groundbreaking because she puts gays/lesbians in a positive light which was considered inappropriate or even dangerous in the 1950's and 1960's. Sarton's novel is challenging the heteronormative relationships by saying: here is a normal couple with the same issues as any heterosexual couple. She is challenging the stereotype of lesbians as pedophiles or alcoholics and creating a pedagogy that lesbianism does not have to be pederasty.

Her awareness of the risks is evident in her admission that she would not have been as open if her parents were still living or if she had a regular job (1973: 91–92). Sarton's fears say much about the discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation that was widespread in America in the sixties. The literature reflected reality with numerous examples of people like May Sarton whose coming out resulted in a ruined reputation or dismissal.

The following article documents one such example of a college professor whose reputation was ruined as the McCarthy witch-hunts were turning against the gay and lesbian population of America. According to the article, "Gay Professor in '60s Porn Scandal", Joel Dorius, then a young professor at Smith College in Northampton, was involved in a scandal over magazines in his possession depicting nude male physiques. His life and teaching career were ruined when he was arrested and convicted of possessing and distributing pornography. He was fired by Smith, and he received a fine and suspended jail sentence. There were two other professors involved who also suffered consequences: Mr. Arvin, who was later allowed to retire at half-pay, and Mr. Spofford, who was dismissed like Mr. Dorius (Heredia).

This example shows that discrimination and prejudice were present at the progressive institutions such as universities, but the academic community turned a blind eye as long as it was kept in the closet in their ranks. "Homosexuality was widely viewed

as an abomination—criminal, sinful and a mental disease—but accepted on many college campuses as long as it did not surface publicly" (McFadden). However, "in most cases homophobia and antigay discrimination on the college campus resulted in verbal and physical abuse of students as well as well as dismissals of faculty" (Lance).

During the 1960's, aversion of homosexuals came close to a true phobia, and led to the social inequality of homosexuals in all spheres of American society. Homosexual relations and homosexuality were not openly discussed among the American population:

> it was common for companies, including the federal government and the armed forces, to fire anyone who was accused of being gay. Mental health professionals also took a firm position, describing homosexuality as "sick," sometimes placing them in mental hospitals where, it was hoped, they might be "cured." It is not surprising that most lesbians and gay men remained "in the closet," closely guarding the secret of their sexual orientation. But the gay rights movement gained strength during the 1960's. One early milestone took place in 1973, when the American Psychiatric Association declared that homosexuality was not an illness but simply "a form of sexual behavior" (Lance).

The prejudice against homosexuality embedded in American society led to hardships that homosexuals faced in their daily lives. Employers were reluctant to hire them for fear of their being emotionally unstable; they would lose their jobs and reputations due to investigations and frequently false accusations because of presuppositions that homosexuality leads to drug abuse, stealing and other criminal behavior and they were strictly discharged from the military. At this time it was common to hide one's homosexuality and individuals even resorted to front marriages to avoid discrimination.

As a cultural artifact of its historical context, Sarton's novel illustrates not only that the academic community has been shaped by contemporary discourse about gay partnerships but that it has helped shape it to move past the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Sarton treats Carryl and Olive's relationship just like any other heterosexual relationship in order to show that gay people can have "real" relationships like straight people can. Richard Chess comments that "to this day the dangers of writing openly about homosexuality remains great … if even in 1992 a lesbian writer must fear for her life, how much greater the real dangers must have seemed to Sarton writing 'Permanence' in the early 1950's" (71). "Sarton's work gained academic recognition, especially by feminist critics" and "subsequently her work began to be studied in literature classes and college women's studies programs" (Blouin). She appreciated the recognition but refused to be labeled either as a lesbian or feminist and spoke of herself as a humanist. Sarton expressed her concerns "with lesbianism, especially her fear of its becoming a 'fashion' and her anxiety about being marginalized as a 'lesbian' writer" (Ingersoll xii).

The assertion that Sarton's works are closely bound up with the "ideologies and discourses of its historical moment of production" (Howard 1991:153), as well as the more recent times, is clearly evident in the controversy it stirred in the dismissal case due to employment discrimination on the basis of sexual discrimination. Penny Culliton, a New Hampshire teacher, was fired in 1996 for including in her curriculum the following three works which deal with homosexuality, *Maurice* by E. M. Forster, *The Education of Harriet Hatfield* by May Sarton and *The Drowning of Stephan Jones* by Bette Greene. It is interesting that the purchase of the books had initially been approved by a grant that had been authorized by the school superintendent and principal. Although students and community members protested and even signed a petition against censorship, Culliton was dismissed and the 40 students who walked out in protest were suspended (Sears). It

is interesting to note that the books were found "unsuitable" and banned only after a local newspaper reported that Culliton was working with a lesbian and gay support group for young people. Additionally disturbing is the fact that the books in question were literally taken from the students in class while they were reading them, causing a letter to be sent to the school board, "This is tantamount to teaching youths that adults have an evil mind and that the First Amendment is in need of being replaced" (Chatelle). As a result, Culliton's dismissal was overturned into a one-year suspension by the Public Employee Labor Relations Board (Chatelle).

The Culliton issue was not just about discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; it also challenged freedom of speech and academic freedom, core values and basic beliefs embedded in American society and culture. However, self-reliance is another belief that Sarton addresses in her novel as she presents the revolutionary idea of using professional counselors on campus. This issue launches much controversy on campus and even results in the dissolving a professional and personal relationship as Olive threatens to sever her ties with the college and Carryl by cutting both off if her wishes are denied. Olive is a firm believer in the notion of "pulling yourself up by your bootstraps" which is a fundamental belief that resonates within the mainstream American ethos. She expresses her view of achieving excellence: "My dear child, what the girls need is not more 'help'—ugh, how I loathe that word!—but greater demands on their intellects and souls" (Sarton 78–79).

However, Sarton's novel emphasizes the fact that a student's mental health is a priority and colleges must provide proper support and guidance. Sarton's teaching experience as a university professor at Harvard and other universities made her aware of "the limits of her ability to deal with students' emotional problems and recognize that in the midst of a push for excellence from the university and professors some students require

the support of counselors to help them overcome their emotional hurdles" (Fulk 84). Furthermore, in having her character Lucy realize that Jane's psychological ill-health was behind the self-destructive act she helps her colleagues and the college administration deal with the chaos her discovery triggered. Sarton illustrates the need to take psychological issues into account in assessing a student's conduct in violation of the code of academic conduct.

As the controversy escalates, the beliefs and values of both the faculty and the students are put to the test and the scandal affects their personal and professional relationships. Can psychological and emotional trauma be accepted as extenuating circumstances in the assessment of a student's misconduct? "Does academic brilliance in a student provide relevant grounds for special treatment" (Katz)? Sarton challenges the discourse of fairness against this background of special treatment with exceptions to the rules for students who do work above and beyond the usual college standard (Katz). Jane's case is being interpreted by students and faculty alike with "caring and compassion" as well as "rumors of favoritism and unfairness" (Katz). May Sarton's *The Small Room* offers an enlarged view for moral understanding and is very useful "in helping students understand more carefully and appreciatively the moral issues and dilemmas teachers face" (Thayer-Bacon).

The trustee is opposed to the hiring of a psychiatrist because this would create dependent rather than independent women. In addition, as a believer in individual freedom she refuses to conform to the demands of others who insist on installing the psychiatrist at Appleton. She makes her point by saying: "Appleton has never conformed … we had three communists on the faculty during that McCarthy business … and a damn nuisance they were, I must say" (Sarton 78). This reference to proving one's freedom as opposed

to conforming echoes the Red Scare discourse of the previous chapter where college presidents prove their progressiveness and liberalism by hiring token Communists.

The dynamics of blackmail introduced by Olive sway the college president to make allowances: "it is a question of belief. One has to respect that … She comes of the old-fashioned school which thinks you pull yourself up by your own bootstraps" (Sarton 57). Olive's view of psychiatric treatment illustrates the stigma of mental illness that was common until mental health advocacy began in the late 1960's. A sea change in attitudes was brought about by efforts "to expose the myths and misunderstandings that surround mental illness, challenge stereotypes and give an accurate picture of the realities of mental illness and the people who experience them" (111). It is interesting to note, that the shift in the president's reaction reveals how shifting attitudes in literary texts mirror "the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life" (Greenblatt 1983: 14).

However, Carryl Cope, objects to Olive's behavior and points out that "trustees do not make faculty appointments" (Sarton 78). When Olive replies: "I have the right to leave my money where I choose," Carryl concludes: "Indubitably. But if you use money to browbeat people, you are misusing it, Olive" (Sarton 191). This is an interesting comment regarding college politics, for often the trustees with their endowments could exert substantial influence on college policy. Talking about the difficulty with endowments the president concludes: "It is no longer easy to raise money for an independent college, especially a woman's college" (Sarton 174).

Although Sarton's novel was written in 1961, the following more recent document points to the fact that these concerns are "embedded in social and political discourses" (Brannigan 68) of colleges in the twenty-first century. In a review of Sarton's novel, a reader comments on the similarities between Appleton and the college she attended and

she singles out plagiarism and endowments, two of the major issues in Sarton's novel. She describes her small private liberal arts college where a "charge of plagiarism was dealt with more seriously than a charge of rape … we had an Honor Code and an Honor Board and violating that led to an immediate expulsion." She goes on to say "the issue of endowments was a big one at my school … one of the president's most important jobs (if not the most important) is to raise money for the school" (Eva).

The centerpiece issue of Sarton's novel is the price of excellence in education. Sarton challenges the traditions and values in the context of continuous change in higher education. Unfortunately, this overemphasis on meritocracy even in the best of students can lead to plagiarism. Appleton has set an uncompromising standard which even its star student could not live up to. She fails to cope with the pressure to achieve higher ground, perpetrates an unethical act that threatens to shatter the very tradition of excellence. Because of her lack of experience in being a teacher, Lucy does not know "how to handle plagiarism from an emotionally troubled student who has been pressured by her mentor to produce increasingly more sophisticated academic work" (Katz).

Sarton intervenes in the discourse of the unique relationship between teacher and pupils and "explores how inveterate, established traditions and values of teaching are being challenged as demanded by the ever changing student body over time" (Matthew). The lesson to be learned is not taught by Carryl Cope, a distinguished scholar but by Sarton's protagonist, Lucy Winter, a novice teacher. Initially Lucy expresses her reluctance to interact with students not just on a professional but also a personal level but soon discovers that this is inevitable if you are to teach the whole person. While Cope focuses on their scholastic merit, Lucy gets involved in the students' personal lives and problems. In molding and pruning the students, Lucy teaches a most valuable lesson: "It's not about winning." Indeed, one can prove to be above the critic but if one does not have

self-respect and love, life has no meaning. "This is a *sentimental education* that transcends scholastic merits" (Matthew). Teaching is not just about academic achievement but about teaching students "how to live, how to experience, giving them the means to ripen" (Sarton 51). In interacting with students, Lucy learns that a close personal teacher-student relationship is not only unavoidable but crucial for a student's academic development and general wellbeing; she realizes that "teacher-student relationships defy any kind of rule-bound guidance" (Katz), and that "that teaching is first of all teaching a person … that every teacher in relation to every single student must ask these questions over and over, and answer them differently in each instance" (Sarton 105).

The novel brings out textbook advice and truths for newcomers to the teaching profession, as the faculty of Appleton, "beset by their conscience, are forced to reappraise their profession and motives," (Matthew) attempting to answer the fundamental question of what it takes to be a teacher. Harriet Summerson reveals that "the hell of teaching is that one is never prepared. I often think before every class … and always I imagine that next year it will be different" (28). She also narrows the question down what it means to be a female teacher: "Is there a life more riddled with self-doubt than that of a woman professor, I wonder?" (Sarton 29).

Lucy is uncertain about her teaching competence but the following clearly shows that she considers teaching a sacred profession in which she would like to succeed. Eventually she becomes committed to being "a keeper of the sacred fire?" (Sarton 117) and she reasons what it is like to be a teacher:

> It's just that I feel overwhelmed. I don't see how anyone can be a good teacher, let alone a great one. You can't win; either you care too much or too little; you're too impersonal or too personal; you don't know enough or you bury the students in minutiae; you try to teach them to write an

> honest sentence, and then discover that what is involved is breaking a psychological block that can only be broken if you take on the role of psychoanalyst. (Sarton 83)

Sarton concludes her representation of reality with a shift in conviction as Lucy becomes aware of the moral complexity of teaching and the complexity of teacher-student relationships. On her path to self-realization Lucy's attitude shifts from her initial conviction that she doesn't "believe in personal relationships between teachers and students" (Sarton 39) to her awareness of the need to teach "[t]he total human being!" Through the characterization of Lucy she intervenes into the discourse of teaching to show that it involves "the care of souls" (Katz) which is the true meaning of the description of Appleton as "a close community" where the "personal element counts" (Sarton 13). Lucy's awareness of the need to teach the whole person is mirrored in the mission of higher education to address the whole person in order to produce "well-rounded graduates with social skills and core values as well as general intellect" (Benson 157) Rather than focus entirely upon the intellectual capacity of students, higher education must consider the student as a whole person with physical, social, emotional, intellectual, moral and spiritual concerns. Moreover, "decades of scholarship on learning and development suggest that the growth of the mind is inextricably linked to the growth of the heart and of the spirit" ("Whole Person"). Interestingly, Benson's study reports that in a College Outcomes Survey "the items that students rated highest in their colleges' contribution to their personal and social development were: 'acquiring a well-rounded education'" (Benson 74).

The emphasis on teaching the whole person, found in Sarton's novel as well as the above quoted literature "show how tightly what we call the literary is bound up with common ideologies and discourses of its historical moment of production" (Howard 199:

153).The academic novel has proven to be a useful tool in our efforts to “recover as far as possible the historical circumstances of their original production and consumption and to analyze the relationship between these circumstances and our own” (Greenblatt 1990: 228–229).

4.2. *Stoner*: Teaching and Academic Politics

With the aim of recovering the images of the past embodied in academic fiction, we turn to the novel *Stoner* which has both shaped and been shaped by the development of higher education in the United States in the early twentieth century. It was written in 1965 by the American scholar, poet and novelist John Edward Williams "whom the G.I. Bill enabled to go to college in Denver and take a Ph.D. at the University of Missouri, where *Stoner* is set a generation earlier" (Dickstein). Williams said the novel is "an escape into reality" (McGahren xiii) and perhaps this is visible as "the small world of the university opens out to war and politics, to the years of the Depression and the millions who 'once walked erect in their own identities' and then to the whole of life" (McGahren xiii–xiv). Both Williams' and McGahren's statements confirm that the novel *Stoner* is representative of the period in American history, and as "a material product of specific historical conditions … mediates the fabric of social, political and cultural formations" (Brannigan 3).

Although the novel was written in the Vietnam War era, Williams' novel does not address the Vietnam War head on, but rather obliquely, by intervening in the discourse of war, to address issues pertaining to both the private and professional battles faced by an academic in the 1960's. It is interesting that the novel is shaped by the politics of the Vietnam War era of the 1960's, but creates a narrative within the political, social and cultural context of the 1940's and 1950's.

It may be true that *Stoner* is not recommended for those considering college teaching as a profession because it traces the tragic circumstances of an academic's life, from his undergraduate days at the University of Missouri, through forty-plus years in the

university's English department. The introductory passage offers a grim depiction of the teaching profession:

> He did not rise above the rank of assistant professor, and few students remembered him with any sharpness after they had taken his courses. … Stoner's colleagues, who held him in no particular esteem when he was alive, speak of him rarely now; to the older ones, his name is a reminder of the end that awaits them all, and to the younger ones it is merely a sound which evokes no sense of the past an no identity with which they can associate themselves or their careers. (Williams 3–4)

Such a portrayal of the protagonist, William Stoner, at the opening of the novel presents a dim view of the mark he left behind, but in an interview the author negates the claim that Stoner is a loser as he says:

> I think he's a real hero. Teaching to him is a job—a job in the good and honorable sense of the word. His job gave him a particular kind of identity and made him what he was … It's the love of the thing that's essential. … The lack of that love defines a bad teacher. … You've got to keep the faith. The important thing is to keep the tradition going, because tradition is civilization. (McGahren xii)

Through the characterization of Stoner, Williams challenges the influence of the ideology of the 1960's on teacher identity discourses. In an interview, Williams' widow explained that Stoner "was not an autobiographical novel but was based on a noted professor at the University of Missouri … Williams was working out what it meant to be a teacher" (qtd. in Livatino 420). The author knew well the world he portrayed and his novel mirrors the social, political and economic context of the age. His grandparents were

farmers, he served in the Army Air Corps during World War II, and he spent three decades in an academic setting similar to that of *Stoner*.

In representing Stoner's family, Williams intervenes in the discourse of education showing a shift in attitudes toward higher education which resulted in a growing interest as people looked to colleges and universities with the hope of a better future. Stoner's father recognizes this opportunity for his son: "I never had no schooling to speak of … Seems like the land gets drier and harder to work every year; … county agent says they got new ideas, ways of doing things they teach you at the university. Maybe he's right" (Williams 6).

Williams also intervenes in the discourse of basic American values by portraying Stoner's parents as a supportive unit representing the true meaning of the American family. They respect his individual right to pursue his own goals and happiness, and his interests are put above the interests of the family. This is clearly shown in the conversation between father and son as Stoner expresses his wish to stay on at the university to pursue a career in literature thus giving up his life at the farm. Once again the father shows understanding as he says: "I didn't figure it would turn out like this. I was doing the best for you I could, sending you here. Your ma and me has always done the best we could for you … If you think you ought to stay here and study your books, then that's what you ought to do. Your ma and me can manage" (Williams 23–24).

Williams' intervention in the discourse of higher education reveals "the shifts in value and interest that are produced" (Greenblatt 1983: 14) as public awareness increases about the benefits of attaining a college education, particularly in the fields that offer the promise of a better future. According to the article, "Analysis of Undergraduate Enrollment in the Department of Horticulture, University of Georgia, 1959–1969," within this period university enrollments were on an increase throughout the United States and

"undergraduate enrollment at the University of Georgia has followed the national trend" (Pokorliy). Although there was a decline in the previous years, "by 1965, the Commission in Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources reported that undergraduate enrollment in agriculture, nationwide was increasing" (Pokorliy). Particularly interesting is the information about the factors that had contributed to a decline in enrollments in agriculture: "1) the poor image of agriculture in the minds of the general public, 2) the attraction of young people to the more glamorous basic sciences and professions, 3) poor teaching, 4) lack of interest by faculty in undergraduate students, and 5) failure by administration to emphasize and support student recruitment programs" (Pokorliy). This shift in attitudes towards a future in agriculture is mirrored in Stoner's change of major in his own studies. Williams' novel is not just an entertaining representation but a cultural artifact and useful tool to "recover as far as possible the historical circumstances of their original production and consumption" (Greenblatt 1990: 228–229).

It is interesting that chance was a key factor in Stoner's enrollment in the College of Agriculture at Columbia University, more precisely the chance suggestion of a county agent. In his sophomore year, chance intervenes once again as he is shamed into finding meaning in a survey course of English literature. This is a turning point for Stoner, for he had always accepted everything in his life—the land, his lessons, his chores, even life itself—as plain facts of his existence. However, in literature he senses "a knowledge of which he could not speak, but one which changed him" (Williams 113). This epiphany foreshadows his future vocation and brings up Stoner's inner conflict of whether to go back to the farm and surrender to the expectations of his aging parents or stay on at the university and further his academic career.

It is ironic that Archer Sloane, the same teacher who shames him into a realization of his true vocation, is the one who tells him: "You're going to be a teacher. … It's love, Mr. Stoner. … You are in love. It's as simple as that" (Williams 20).

Thereafter, Stoner studies and teaches but he is incapable of articulating what he knows either as a scholar or as a teacher. He is constantly under the impression of his own inadequacy and responds with great surprise and appreciation when his students show eagerness and interest in his courses. However, after ten years into his career, he finally begins "to discover who he was; … He felt himself at last beginning to be a teacher, which was simply a man to whom his book was true, to whom is given a dignity of art that has little to do with foolishness or weakness or inadequacy as a man" (Williams 113).

Here, as throughout the novel, Williams addresses the discourse of teaching and asks the question what it means to be a teacher. Stoner's statements of dedication to teaching as well as the following historical document prove that the answer is embedded in the novel as well as the in historical documents. This once again shows that "literature has a discursive agency that affects history every bit as much as history affects literature" (Fry).

In "Thoughts on Teaching and Learning" Richard E. Klinck, the recipient of the National Teacher of the Year Award in 1965, addresses the same teaching ideology voiced by Stoner throughout the novel. He says:

> I am a teacher.
>
> I see the future in my classroom and I have the power to make that future brighter and richer in mind and in heart. I am something special. I am something beside which I can stand proud.
>
> I am a teacher!

This same joy resounds in the following quotation which illustrates the personal and professional satisfaction that years of dedicated teaching can bring:

> To his surprise he began to enjoy a modest popularity as a teacher; he had to turn away students who wanted to get into his graduate seminar … and his undergraduate survey classes were always filled. Several graduate students asked him to direct their theses, and several more asked him to be on their thesis committees. (Williams 130)

By tracing Stoner's path to becoming a teacher, Williams mirrors the life of all those who have made this transformation and who will follow the depiction of their reality with recognition and understanding. If most academic novels are satires, Stoner stands out as an earnest representation of academic life and the vocation of a scholar and teacher. It does not present the nature of the university in the cynical manner of Stoner's young colleague, Dave Masters: "It's for us that the University exists, for the dispossessed of the world; not for the students, not for the selfless pursuit of knowledge" (Williams 31). Although Stoner would remember what Masters had said, "it brought him no vision of the university to which he had committed himself" (Williams 32). Stoner imagines a different university, a place of "the life of the heart and the mind," (McGahren vii) a safe heaven, "a retreat from the world, a place where students were afforded four years, and teachers, if they were the right sort, a lifetime of contemplation without giving in to the 'economic, social, and other kinds of pressures of the world'" (Livatino 421). As Williams put it in an interview with Bryan Wooley in 1985, "a place where one can realize that there are things more important than hacking out a living" (qtd. in Livatino 421). Stoner's love of teaching and literature gives him joy and fulfillment. "Williams complains about the shifts in the teaching of literature and the attitude to the text 'as if a novel or a poem is something

to be *studied* and *understood* rather than *experienced*' … 'to read without joy is stupid'"(McGahren xiii).

In addition to the discourse of teaching, Williams intervenes in the discourse of war to depict the effect of the outbreak of war on the academic community. As the novel traces the life and academic career of Stoner, the historical events, especially the Depression and the two world wars, heighten the sense of futility. As mentioned earlier *Stoner* was written during the Vietnam era but Williams decides to set the time back a decade in order to deal with the discourse of war indirectly.

Opposition to the Vietnam War started out as a small peace movement and by 1965 (the same year *Stoner* was written) grew into a radical peace movement on college campuses throughout the United States. "The radicalization of the peace movement began with the formation of Students for a Democratic Society statement issued in 1962 that expressed skepticism about the 'troubling events' of racism, the Cold War and the apathy of the nation" and "called on students to work for a society based on 'participatory democracy'" (Churney).

In *Stoner,* Williams substitutes the reality of the Vietnam War context with that of the state of war declared between the United States and Germany. Through depiction of characters in the novel, Williams intervenes in the war discourse to show the effect of the outbreak of war on life at the university and the shift in attitudes in enlisting in the war effort.

A state of confusion sets in, classes are not held, small groups mill around the campus, and anti-German demonstrations are held. There is a diversity of attitudes regarding the war among the students, faculty and the administration. Stoner and his two friends and colleagues each have their own view, from Finch who claims, "We've all got to do our part" (Williams 34) and expects Stoner to join as well, to Masters who "didn't

give a damn" about either side but says he would join because "it might be amusing to pass through the world once more before I return to the cloistered and slow extinction that awaits us all" (Williams 35). Stoner resents "the disruption which the war forced upon the university; but he could find in himself no very strong feelings of patriotism, and he could not bring himself to hate the Germans" (Williams 33–34). The different reactions above make evident that numerous factors shape the enlistment of faculty and students and cause shifts in the moral, political and social ideologies within the war discourse.

University records of numerous colleges and universities in the United States report that "during World War II, many university faculty and staff enlisted in the armed forces or volunteered for some other type of war work" and "those remaining at the university were called upon to teach more classes" ("UNC"). However, there were those, like Stoner, who were reluctant to take arms and preferred to stay and teach instead. The article, "UNC Faculty & Staff in the War," illustrates the close "relationship between literature and history" and demonstrates that "the ideological and political interests operating through literary texts" (Brannigan 11) are mirrored in the non-literary discourses. A letter from UNC alumni Victor S. Bryant to Dean of Administration Robert Burton House confirms the rumor that university faculty had notified the Orange County Draft Board "that they would go to prison before they would fight in the United States Army" (UNC).

The department chair, Archer Sloane, who "lost a third of the department to the enlistment", says to Stoner that "the scholar should not be asked to destroy what he has aimed his life to build" (Williams 36). Also, he informs Stoner that if he decides to stay he "will have no particular advantage" and even could "have a disadvantage, either now or in the future" (Williams 36–37). Thus, within the frame of the war discourse, Williams challenges not only the shift in attitudes towards the teaching profession, but also the

advantages and disadvantages of having teachers enlist as opposed to continuing to teach in wartime. Sloane describes the teacher as the unknown hero that Stoner was: "You must remember what you are and what you have chosen to become, and the significance of what you are doing. There are wars and defeats and victories of the human race that are not military and that are not recorded in the annals of history. Remember that while you're trying to decide what to do" (Williams 37).

In the end, Stoner chooses to continue fulfilling his duties on campus rather than venture into the world outside his ivory towers. With the help of Archer Sloane, he is able to avoid service and due to the wartime shortage of trained and experienced college teachers, the University offers Stoner a full-time instructorship at the University despite their policy of not employing their own graduates. His decision not to enlist causes different reactions from the university community, from "looks … from his older colleagues and … the thin edge of disrespect that showed through his student's conventional behavior toward him" (Williams 38).

Within the war discourse, Williams addresses other issues pertaining to battles fought by academics in higher education. While some are looking for promotions to get to the top of the teaching ladder, there are those, like Stoner, who find job satisfaction and personal fulfillment from teaching itself. Stoner is satisfied with being a teacher, and he had no ambition to fight to get to the top of the academic hierarchy as a distinguished scholar. A foreshadowing of how far Stoner would climb in the academic world occurs early on in the novel as Stoner is introduced to the wife of a former trustee who addresses him as a university professor: "I'm not a professor. I'm just an instructor" (Williams 50). It is hardly a surprise that, after 38 years of teaching, he rises no higher than the rank of Assistant Professor. In addition, although he is the most senior member of the department he does not "cast covetous eyes" (Williams 151) at the position of chairman. He says: "I

hadn't thought about it, but—no. No, I don't think I'd want it. … I'd probably be a rotten chairman. I neither expect nor want the appointment" (Williams 151). Later we find that it was fortunate that Stoner didn't want the chairmanship because his colleague, Hollis N. Lomax, did and he, unlike Stoner, had the support of those in power: as the dean says, "the suggestion came from upstairs" (Williams 165–166).

At this point in the novel, another intervention into the war discourse challenges the ideology and the pecking order discourse within the university as Williams reveals the department power struggles, faculty politics, petty administrators and the administrative bureaucracy that are frequently encountered in the material culture of the sixties. The defining moment of Stoner's academic life and one which illustrates how dirty and petty university politics can get, occurs just as Stoner is discovering the fulfillment of teaching. An unfortunate incident with Charles Walker, a slightly disabled student and Lomax's protégé, leads to the ruin of Stoner's academic career. Walker ends up being everything Stoner disapproves of and he resents his "laziness and dishonesty and ignorance" (Williams 147). Lomax is resentful of Stoner's negative impression of Walker but Stoner stubbornly persists in his criticism: "I'm sorry for him. I am preventing him from getting his degree, and I'm preventing him from teaching in a college or university. Which is precisely what I want to do. For him to be a teacher would be a—disaster" (Williams 163). These words enrage Lomax and he replies: "That is your final word?" he asked icily. …Well, let me warn you, Professor Stoner, I do not intend to let the matter drop here" (Williams 163).

The disagreement leads to the start of Stoner's feud with Lomax, one that "bedevils the rest of his career" (Dickstein). University policies of hierarchy and power are masterfully interwoven into the plot. The sense of futility is heightened by the flat-out abuse of power by the department chairman who wreaks vengeance on Stoner using all

the means the university politics will allow. He accuses Stoner of prejudice against Walker and threatens "to bring formal charges" (Williams 171) in accordance with the Constitution of the University of Missouri which "allows any faculty member with tenure to bring charges against any other faculty member with tenure, if there is compelling reason to believe that the charged faculty member is incompetent, unethical, or not performing his duties in accord with the ethical standards" (Williams 171).

The power struggle between Stoner and Lomax reveals the social realities of the academic pecking order, especially as they produce ideology and represent power and subversion. Their conflict is particularly interesting as it depicts a power struggle between a tenured professor, who is also the department chair, in collision with a senior tenured member and the dean. Lomax claims his right according to the previously mentioned document: "It is my right, nevertheless, to bring charges" (Williams 172). The Stoner and Lomax dispute embodies the subversion and containment of university politics which have both shaped and been shaped by the development of higher education in the United States. The feud itself shows that a literary work can "contain the same potential for power and subversion as exist in society generally" (Brannigan 6). The ideological and political interests found in Williams' novel are also present in a more recent case "that could set a bad precedent for other tenured professors who might someday anger their bosses" (Silvey). Just like Stoner, Greg Engel, a University of Missouri associate engineering professor, was facing accusations after "colleagues launched a faculty irresponsibility charge against" him "for alleged disrespect to students and ineffective teaching" (Silvey). The documents reporting the administrators' and faculty's decisions and interpretations of vague of university policies are mirrored in the proceedings regarding Stoner's alleged wrongdoing. It is interesting how the literary text and the history belong to the same ideologies and discourses and can be interpreted within the same context.

Through the characters Williams illustrates the ideology of the time, "the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life" (Greenblatt 1983: 14). As we follow the development of the dispute, we also become aware of "the production of subversion in order to recuperate power" (Brannigan 28).

Dean Finch, who supports Stoner, threatens Lomax using slander and false accusations mirroring McCarthyism's smear tactics: "I'm not going to have the department or the college dragged into a mess. … I promise you that I will do my damndest to see that you are ruined. I will stop at nothing. …I will lie if necessary; I will frame you if I have to" (172). As a close friend, he tries to convince Stoner to back down because "Lomax can be vindictive" (Williams 166): "he can't fire you, but he can do damn near everything else" (Williams 166). Moreover, Finch brings in university politics by underlining that if the dispute takes deeper roots it could have wider repercussions for the university and result in "a fight that would split the department, maybe even the college" (Williams 166).

Despite Finch's intervention, Stoner is unwilling to sacrifice his integrity as a teacher and allow his profession to be degraded by the likes of Walker and Lomax: "It's not the principle … It would be a disaster to let him loose in a classroom" (167). However, owing to departmental politics, Stoner's struggle is in vain. Walker would be "allowed to take his preliminaries again, his examiners to be selected by the chairman of the department" (Williams 175).

In presenting Lomax's unquenchable thirst for vengeance Williams addresses the ideology and the discourse of tenure as a safeguard against threats and infringement in an academic context. Lomax confirms the power of tenure as he concedes: "I don't think you're fit to be a teacher … I should probably fire you if I had the power; but I don't have the power, as we both know. We are—you are protected by the tenure system" (177).

Since Lomax cannot dismiss Stoner he uses his authority as department chairman to degrade him by changing his schedule to "the kind of schedule that a beginning instructor might expect" (173). Stoner "was to teach at odd, widely separated hours, six days a week … he had been assigned three classes of freshman composition and one sophomore survey course; his upper-class Readings in Medieval literature and his graduate seminar had been dropped from the program" (Williams 172–173). Lomax's manipulation of the system demonstrates "ideological and political interests operating through literary texts" (Brannigan 11).

Williams' novel is a useful object of study in that it contains the same potential for power and subversion as exist in society generally" (Brannigan 6). Stoner's reaction shifts from acquiescence to peaceful insubordination and the power struggle takes a new course as Stoner retaliates and works within his authority as a teacher to fight for his rights. He obediently accepts teaching general English One, but insists on his right to bring in changes especially due to the fact that there "has been a great deal of talk in our freshman comp meetings lately about new methods, experimentation" (Williams 226). He decides to teach what amounts to his senior course in Middle English to his freshman class (Williams 228). When asked to comply more with the initial syllabus, he replies: "I'm sure Professor Lomax wouldn't want to interfere with the way a senior professor sees fit to teach one of his classes. He may disagree with that professor, but it would be most unethical for him to attempt to impose his own judgment—and, incidentally, a little dangerous" (Williams 227). Finch confirms Stoner's rights and refuses when asked by Lomax to intervene: "how do you think that would look—a dean meddling in how a senior member of the department teaches his classes, and meddling at the instigation of the department chairman himself? No, sir" (228).

Stoner's retaliation and victory illustrate "the effects of literature in both containing and promoting subversion" (Brannigan 4). By turning the tables on Lomax and getting the upper hand in their power struggle Stoner is able to retrieve his former schedule to "teach his old graduate seminar on the Latin Tradition and Renaissance Literature, a senior and graduate course in Middle English language and literature, a sophomore literature survey, and one section of freshman composition" (228). Through the depiction of the power struggle between Stoner and Lomax, Williams illustrates the role of the novel in negotiating and making manifest the power relations and structures" (Brannigan 81) of the academic community.

The futility Stoner is exposed to due to the feud with Lomax is compounded by the economic hard times of the 1970's. Williams' novel is a literary artifact, a part of the interplay of the discourses operating within the context of the Great Depression. Its portrayal of the state of the nation suffering from the negative effects of the Great Depression reveals "the economic and social realities, especially as they produce ideology and represent power or subversion" (Brewton).

Stoner is aware of the safety of his tenured status during such hard times as he sees "men, who had once walked erect in their own identities, look at him with envy and hatred for the poor security he enjoyed as a tenured employee of an institution that somehow could not fail" (Williams 220). Once again Williams intervenes in the discourse of tenure to highlight its significance for the academic profession. Tenure has always been an important segment in the academic context as can be seen in the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, which "has been endorsed by more than 200 scholarly and education groups" and promotes "public understanding and support of academic freedom and tenure and agreement upon procedures to assure them in colleges and universities" (AAUP).

The desperation of the Great Depression was followed by the Second World War and once more Stoner witnessed faculty and students resigned to join the war effort. "Once again he saw the faculty depleted, he saw the classrooms emptied of their young men, he saw the haunted looks upon those who remained behind, and saw in those looks the slow death of the heart, the bitter attrition of feeling and care" (245).

Williams' novel is embedded in the desperation and anxiety of the World War II period as well as the transformations in higher education that the postwar era brought. Williams particularly forefronts the challenges that the university faced as enrollments increased and Veterans "descended upon the campus and transformed it, … they came to their studies as Stoner had dreamed that a student might—as if those studies were life itself and not a specific means to specific ends" (Williams 248–249). As a cultural artifact of its times, the novel is embedded in the historical context of the GI Bill and its role in transforming higher education and enhancing veteran's benefits. William's depiction is confirmed in the following study which illustrates "how tightly what we call the literary is bound up with common ideologies and discourses of its historical moment of production" (Howard 1991: 153). According to Bound and Turner, veterans accounted for 70 percent of males enrolled in the years following the war; this caused "total enrollment [to jump] by more than 50 percent from the prewar (1939) level of 1.3 million to over 2 million in 1946, with further increases through 1949" (785).

Williams concludes the addressing of the war discourse with two final battles. The first battle is once again against Lomax who is eager to see Stoner retire. Williams depicts once again "the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life" (Greenblatt 1983: 14) within the academic hierarchy. The novel brings up an issue that is significant for professors who are reaching the age of retirement. On the one hand, there are the laws that regulate this

question and then once again there are the department politics that can influence decisions either way. As we follow Stoner's conversation with Finch we are informed of Stoner's options: "You'll be—sixty-five next year. I suppose we ought to be making some plans." Stoner shook his head. "Not right away. I intend to take advantage of the two-year option, of course" (Williams 251). Additionally, Finch explained the laws and regulations by saying:

> voluntary retirement was possible at sixty-five; … or if it were agreed upon by the chairman of the department and the dean of the college, and the professor concerned, extend his retirement age to sixty-seven, at which time retirement was mandatory. Unless, of course, the person concerned were given a distinguished Professorship and awarded a Chair, in which event— (Williams 253)

Here is another intervention of Williams which illustrates how tightly his novel is "bound up with common ideologies and discourses of its historical moment of production" (Howard 1991: 153). Through his protagonist Williams addresses mandatory retirement for tenured faculty members that has been a controversial issue of discussion in academic circles as well as in Congress. According to the article "Ending Mandatory Retirement for Tenured Faculty: The Consequences for Higher Education," "in the 1986 congressional session, the House and Senate reached agreement on legislation amending the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967" (7). "The law granted a temporary exemption for postsecondary institutions to enforce mandatory retirement at age 70" (Ashenfelter 957) and following a review in the early 1990's, mandatory retirement was eliminated on January 1, 1994" (Ashenfelter 957). With this change in retirement policy "the United States became one of the few countries in the world to offer true lifetime employment security to tenured faculty members" (Ashenfelter 957).

Those who opposed the elimination of mandatory retirement claimed the exemption was a hard-fought victory for college and university representatives, who argued that mandatory retirement was needed to maintain a steady inflow of young faculty and promote the hiring of women and minorities (Ashenfelter 957). It is interesting that these opposing views are mirrored in Lomax's arguments for getting rid of Stoner: "It would be in the best interests of the department and college if Professor Stoner would take advantage of his opportunity to retire. There are certain curricular and personnel changes that I have long contemplated, which this retirement would make possible" (Williams 253). This overlap or mirroring illustrates a fundamental principle of reciprocity of literature and history concerning the "historicity of texts and the textuality of history" (qtd. in Veeser 1989: 20).

As a final attempt, Lomax offers a bribe in the form of "a promotion to full professor" as a "fitting climax to Stoner's retirement year and a dinner in honor of the occasion" (Williams 254). First, Stoner refuses, but after discovering that he has a tumor and that he must undergo surgery, he decides to retire. Through one final intervention in the teaching discourse, Williams challenges the shift in attitude of the academic community as they choose to honor a colleague they had previously ignored or even scorned. The hypocrisy of the academic pecking order is revealed as what was deemed meaningless is finally given meaning. Williams' novel is focusing on the shifts in value and interest, provoking us "to analyze the relationship between these circumstances and our own" (Greenblatt 1990: 228–229). After all the years of dedicated teaching, Stoner was being honored with a retirement celebration. "He was seated between Gordon Finch and the president of the University, Lomax was the master of ceremonies and members of the department who had not really spoken to him for years waved across the room to him" (Williams 264). In severe pain and suffering hearing loss Stoner makes out the best

he can what is being said. What he hears is the typical talk one hears at such occasions. Even Lomax had only words of praise about Stoner: "long years of dedicated service … richly deserved rest from the pressures … esteemed by his colleagues. He heard the irony and knew that, in his own way, after all these years, Lomax was speaking to him" (265).

Stoner was asked to speak but he was at a loss for words and all he could say was: "I have taught … I have taught at this University for nearly forty years. I do not know what I would have done if I had not been a teacher. … I want to thank you for letting me teach" (266).

His speech is brief but it reveals that teaching was the essence of what Stoner's life was all about. His final address is mirrored in the speech of the previously mentioned teacher of the year: "I am a teacher. I do not believe anyone has ever had a more proud statement to make. I do not whisper it, or say it off handedly, for I am proud, glad to have been somehow chosen for what is certainly one of the greatest opportunities in all of human endeavor. I say it sincerely, for everyone to hear. I believe it fully. I am proud to be a teacher" (Klinck). Both speeches illustrate that all types of texts, both fictional and non-fictional are constituents of historical discourses and confirm that literature has a discursive agency that affects history every bit as much as history affects literature. (Fry)

Williams' interventions into the war discourse challenged the ideologies and interests circulating in the American culture and his novel "mediates the fabric of social, political and cultural formations" (Brannigan 3) and "invokes the life of learning as a rebuke to the wasteful wars and cheap compromises of the wider world" (Dickstein). Furthermore, Williams' novel turns out to be precisely intended for those considering a career in teaching, not for the prestige but for "the life of the heart and the mind," (McGahren vii). *Stoner* is a cultural artifact that is part of " the interplay of discourses" circulating at the time it was written and it both shapes and is shaped by its historical

context (Tyson 2006). Following the new historicist premise “that literary texts are embedded in social and political discourses,” (Brannigan 68), the academic novels in this chapter have proven valuable in revealing “the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life” (Greenblatt 1983, 14) with reference to the development of higher education in America.

5. THE ACADEMIC NOVEL OF THE SEVENTIES: GENDER, RACE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The turbulence of the 1960's was carried over into the 1970's, marking the decade of growing dissent, dissatisfaction and "disillusionment of government, advances in civil rights, increased influence of the women's movement, a heightened concern for the environment, and increased space exploration" (Gillis). Anti-war protests raged on American college campuses; and even after U.S. military participation in the war ended, the Vietnam War continued to divide the country and significantly influenced the shaping of U.S. domestic and foreign policy. There were numerous riots in the nation's cities, and the youth counter-culture rebelled against the conventional social norms and the cultural standards of their parents.

All of the above mentioned "events of the times" shaped and were shaped by the social, economic, political and cultural discourses circulating during the 1970's and are mirrored in "the music, literature, entertainment, and even fashions of the decade" (Gillis). The authors of academic novels challenged the ideology, power and mediations present in the historical contexts; and their works are cultural artifacts "embedded in the social and political discourses" (Brannigan 68) circulating at the time they were produced. Gail Godwin's *The Odd Woman* (1974) and Alison Lurie's *The War Between the Tates* (1974) are deeply rooted in the material conditions of the American culture of the 1970's and illustrate the New Historical premise that "a literary work is the product of the time, place and circumstance of its composition and must be read and interpreted in its biographical, social and historical contexts" (Tiwary).

The two novels by Godwin and Lurie intervene in historical discourses on gender as they forefront women's roles in society, particularly their roles within the academic

community. Interestingly, both novels have a female protagonist and address marital infidelity; however, in Godwin's novel the focus is on an academic's lover and in Lurie's on the deceived academic wife. Furthermore, both novels are embedded in the war discourse, which frames the interplay of personal and professional relationships that reveal "the economic and social realities, especially as they produce ideology and represent power of subversion" (Brewton). During this turbulent time of battle for human rights, the novels bring together the fictional and historical, revealing the "shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life" (Greenblatt 1983: 14).

Gender discourse is the centerpiece of both novels and their representation of women shapes and is shaped by the socio-historical context. The novels echo the women's liberation movement that emerged in the late 1960's, "posing a radical challenge to patriarchy and male domination in society" (Baker 13). The women's movement "emerged from multiple feminisms—the grassroots activism of diverse groups of women—and the resulting public policy reflected this diverse participation" (Baker 199). Godwin's militant character Gerda and Lurie's feminist protestors challenge the issues that drew women from all walks of life to speak out together on efforts to foster gender equality and illustrate the New Historical premise that "literary works are both what a culture produces as well as what reproduces ideology" (Myers). The historical references in the two novels help us recover the images of the past as well as deepen our understanding of the major events and preoccupations of the seventies. Godwin's remark that Gerda "marched on Washington, martyred herself for one semester teaching in a black high school" (Godwin 36) echoes the 1963 political rally known as the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom which united blacks and whites who opposed segregation and discrimination. They joined together in their struggle for human rights,

for equal rights regardless of gender, race, class or sexual orientation. This is just one example that illustrates Greenblatt's premise of the " mutual permeability of the literary and the historical" (qtd. in Ghadiri 385) and confirms that the two selected novels deserve to be given "equal weight" (Barry 172) in recovering the images of the past.

5.1. Gender Roles and Power in *The Odd Woman*

American novelist, short story writer, essayist, and librettist Gail Kathleen Godwin wrote *The Odd Woman* in 1974 and set it in the early 1970's. The title and central issue of her story are based upon George Gissing's 1893 novel *The Odd Women* which focuses on women in Victorian society, with a particular emphasis on the position of the odd or unmarried women. Godwin's novel focuses on a female protagonist, Jane Clifford, a single professor of English literature in her thirties, who is a believer in "perfect unions, like that of Marian Evans (George Eliot) and George Henry Lewes, in which men and women can communicate but retain separate identities" (Lay). Her greatest fear appears to be to remain "odd" in the sense of Gissing's women and she expresses concern that she will "never join or pair or duplicate herself" (Godwin 203). Jane's preoccupation with being "paired" rather than "odd" mirrors the 1970's cultural mores whereby those females who failed to conform to the traditional lifestyle were considered outcasts. Godwin's representation of this reality exposes "the shifts in values and interests" regarding the discrimination of single women within the social and historical context of the 1970's (Greenblatt 1983: 14).

Throughout the novel, Jane is in search of what she refers to as her "best life" (Godwin 203), which she attempts to find through research, especially of nineteenth-century literature. Godwin's intervention into the discourse of women is framed by references to the major women's issues of the decade: feminism, women's roles in society, adultery and single people as opposed to those in a relationship. Her novels are powerful representations of women and women's realities and she "remains highly regarded for her depiction of authentic female protagonists whose private struggles and insecurities reflect

those of many modern women" (Cengage). The characterization of these protagonists shows that literary and non-literary texts "circulate inseparably" (Veeser 1989: xi) as "expressions of the same historical moment" (Barry 173). According to Wimsatt, Godwin's novels "center upon young women struggling to attain their independence, establish their identity, and successfully pursue their work despite the restraints of male-dominated culture and with or without the companionship or support of men" (qtd. in Cengage).

The autobiographical material she has interwoven into her novel, as well as the overlap of the social, political and economic changes, point to the fact that Godwin's novel is embedded in the history of its time. Godwin was brought up in North Carolina in an all-women's environment, which had a strong effect on her intellectual and social development and is echoed in her writing. She was raised by her divorced mother "Kathleen Godwin, who was a reporter for the local paper, a junior college teacher, and weekend romance writer" and by her grandmother who was "a traditional Southern woman who ran the household and set aside her interests for others" (Cengage). In her works Godwin incorporates the "settings, events, cultural references, or characters struggling with Southern traditions and stereotypes … with story lines closely paralleling her own life experiences" (Chithraleka). The autobiographical material not only provides an analyses of her life but the characters, settings, events, and cultural references reveal the interplay of the major discourses ingrained in the social, economic and political context of the time her works were written.

The center of attention in her novels is the portrayal of female characters that reveals a shift in the attitudes concerning the roles of women within the context of the 1970's. Her character depictions represent stereotypes ranging from an elderly traditional Southern lady, an accommodating wife, a militant feminist, a married career woman to

the "odd woman" who has treaded beyond the bounds of the traditional and expected in search of her "best life" (Godwin 203). As Godwin intervenes in the discourse of women's roles in society, she challenges the ideology, the power and mediations embedded in the material conditions of their production. She "shows her concern with the customs and taboos which make the traditional roles of women even more inflexible" (Chithraleka). Her depiction of an unmarried literature professor engaged in a love affair with a married man addresses issues such as individual freedom, women's identity and self-fulfillment by critically exploring the lives of her grandmother, mother and militant friend as well as a wide range of women authors and female characters.

Godwin was among "the feminist writers of America who challenged the male chauvinistic principles by fighting for the rights of women in the society" (Chithraleka) and she was aware that "for a lot of feminists from that period *The Odd Woman* became the hallmark of the novel" (Godwin 433). This is hardly surprising since Godwin masterfully challenges the constant process of negotiation that women face due to the interplay of femininity, female destiny, entrapment and other discourses embedded in the material context of the culture within the historical moment. Her novels depict "the choices that modern women make … whether within marriage or the single life, motherhood or career, these choices necessitate compromise, and none brings complete happiness" (Lay).

In *The Odd Woman,* Jane complains to her mother that "those persons raised in the interstices of Zeitgeists are the ones most punished" (Godwin 173). Her mother acknowledges the women's reality of having to make choices and compromises: "There was a time I wanted it all. I wanted love. I wanted a career. I wanted everything eternally beautiful, and with no compromise" (Godwin 172). She admits how hard it was to be both a mother and writer: "We are the products, we are prisoners of our times" (Godwin 172)

and regrets having "the misfortune to grow up with one foot in one era and the other foot in the next" (Godwin 172). Through this exchange between mother and daughter, Godwin "evokes powerfully and movingly generations of women struggling to fulfill themselves, caught between personal aspirations and cultural scripts" (Xie 72).

The Odd Woman "is a novel of a particular historical moment, exploring 'literary-feminist themes' and illustrating the era's fascination with literary women" (Brownstein 176). In the 1970's "reading and writing became an important channel for female self-understanding; and literary women—readers, writers and English professors—seemed themselves 'attractive role models, professional women who thought professionally' " (Brownstein 177).

Godwin's text is "a representation of human experience at a given time and place, an interpretation of history and as such, the literary text maps the discourses circulating at the time it was written and is itself one of those discourses" in which her female characters shape and are shaped by the other female characters (Ghadiri 384). Her novel is a cultural artifact which represents women's reality in its depiction of "the struggles of ambitious, talented women in late twentieth-century America, sometimes contrasting their problems with those faced by women of earlier generations" (Chithraleka 75).

Godwin's characters often explore their options through art as they create or analyze images that may reveal or even change reality (Lay). Her novel frequently mentions what characters are reading and opens the topic of how we are shaped by the books we read. Her protagonist searches for the answers to life's mysteries in literature and in the past she "finds personal, familial, cultural and literary vales resounding in many distinctive voices, each articulating an aspect of the 'culture text' of femininity" (Xie 68). Jane's fascination with the relationship of life and literature fits in with the new historicist approach of turning to literary texts to recover the "the original ideology which gave birth

to the text, and which the text in turn helped to disseminate throughout a culture" (Myers). Jane is so taken in by books that she exclaims: "one of the best things about being an academic is: the free books" (Godwin 80). She is convinced that she had discovered "a penetrable chink in the wall between life and literature; reality and imagination" and that "[s]omeday in the future, when the world was whole again, there would be no such walls, and people would laugh in amazement at their ancestors' ignorance in pretending such false divisions were 'real' " (Godwin 236–237). Her views of fiction and reality substantiate "how tightly what we call the literary is bound up with common ideologies and discourses of its historical moment of production" (Howard 1991: 153).

Jane's friend Sonia Marks explains that "too many women's lives conform" to the pattern of soap operas and she questions whether "the soap opera follows life or do we (women) pattern our lives" after them (Godwin 53). This question mirrors the new historicist precept of fiction in history. Gabriel also emphasizes that different people see the same reality differently and this results in completely different representations. "The representations are the work of the ego … By ego I now mean that part of the person which experiences the external world through the senses, which records and transcribes" (Godwin 279). Godwin's novel is "an agent in constructing a culture's sense of reality" and a means for us "to grasp the terms of the discourse which made it possible [for contemporaries] to see the 'facts' [of their own time] in a particular way—indeed, made it possible to see certain phenomena as facts at all" (Howard 1986: 25–27). Godwin emphasizes the significance of texts as vehicles of power that enable "cultures and peoples to speak for themselves" and allow readers to "converse with them and interpret them" (Yarrow). She depicts her protagonist as a woman who "ransacked novels for answers to life … investigated and ruminated over the women she had sprung from" (Godwin 24). When Kitty destroys her diary, Jane responds angrily: "It might have been of some use to

me. How are people ever going to evolve if their forebears keep on destroying the evidence?" (Godwin 183). This confirms the new historicist premise that in order to recover the images of the past we turn to the representations of reality in which they are embedded. Godwin illustrates this further through the example of the novelist who "had created this town, put it on the map of the 'real world' by his unsurpassed descriptions of it. The town had not existed in eternity until he wrote it out in pages, focusing lovingly on the smallest detail" (Godwin 202).

Godwin's novels reflect her Southern heritage and "many aspects of her work connect with the historical conditions of Southern culture and literature," particularly those that have "characterized Southern civilization, especially the persistently thorny issues of family, race and social class" (Chithraleka 74). As Godwin challenges the ideas of class distinctions, she draws upon the Old South ideological traditions of wealth and status that remained entrenched in culture. The manner in which she deals with these controversial matters reflects "her knowledge of Anglo-American literary traditions, to which she gives a recognizably Southern slant, and they reflect her awareness of both renascence and post modern cultural attitudes toward class and race as conveyed in Southern literature" (Chithraleka 74).

Gerda, one of the female characters who is "from lower-class origins" (Godwin 37), mirrors the class discourse of the period by exposing the bias and prejudice of social discrimination: "My mother and father are what the snobs down South call 'poor white trash,' they pull tobacco in the summer and go on welfare in the winter" (Godwin 37). Another intervention by Godwin in the class discourse is her description of a family who bought the house in which Jane's grandmother Edith was a tenant:

> The house was sold to a Detroit family named Wurtburg, who were rather awed to find they had purchased an original Southern lady along with their

> other furnishings and fittings. But the Wurtburgs were soon baffled by the social politics of this pretty town where people said soft, pretty things but never meant them; where, no matter how hard you worked or how pleasant you were to people you seemed already to have been assigned a 'place' and were expected to stay in it. (Godwin 164)

The Wurtburgs stayed in their place and "they treated Edith with a complicated mixture of subservience, resentment and awe" (Godwin 165). It is interesting that when Edith says "Won't you come in for a minute," it is said in such a "tone that Mrs. Wurtburg was beginning to understand meant nothing of the kind in this town" (Godwin 164–165).

Godwin's novel brings together the fictional and historical while at the same time revealing "the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life" (Greenblatt 1983: 14). Her portrayal of the Wurtburgs, who are even more racially intolerant than the Southern snobs, reveals the hypocrisy of those who complain about discrimination but discriminate against others themselves. They had left Detroit "because … there were beginning to be racial incidents; there were too many black people ... and it vexed them … that the inhabitants of this town behaving as if there were no such thing as Detroit, as if the Detroits of the world were not the least little threat to them" (Godwin 164).

Godwin's novel mirrors the economic and social reality of the 1970's by confronting the discrimination and marginalization of African Americans. "There were plenty of black people here, but they made themselves agreeably invisible, disappearing from the back seats of the city busses into the rear entrances of their employers' homes. They stayed in their places, these Negroes" (Godwin 164–165). In the portrayal of the position of African Americans in the 1970's we recognize Greenblatt's "mutual permeability of the literary and the historical" (qtd. in Ghadiri 385) as we follow Godwin's

dealing with "the interplay of discourses," that both shape and are shaped by their historical contexts in which the novel was written. A.C. Tide responds to Godwin's mirroring depiction of the position of African Americans in the South with a particular emphasis on the reasons why African Americans were moving South:

> For many African Americans who had left the South with hopes of escaping discrimination, the North proved to be an illusory promised land. … the political awareness and activism among southerners brought about immense political and social transformations. The swelling ranks of the civil rights movement in the South during the 1950's and 1960's bolstered the assault on segregation with sit-ins, protests, voter-registration drives, and boycotts. As a result, the Supreme Court reversed the 'separate but equal' doctrine in 1954, ruling in Brown v. Board of Education that state-sponsored segregation was indeed unconstitutional. Along with this landmark decision, passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act signaled an earnest attack by the federal government on Jim Crow. That is not to say that African Americans in the South did not face obstacles, continued discrimination, and violence. Many of the same problems persisted; however, it was clear to all in the 1970's that something had indeed changed forever. If the civil rights movement had not succeeded in creating a just and harmonious world, it had fostered important, tangible, and lasting changes in the social and political fabric of the nation—particularly in the southern states. (Tide)

Due to the improved conditions in the South, they found that they could get elected more easily and be more effective. They struggled to achieve equality in all aspects of American life and were making their presence felt in the highest public spheres "as

members in Congress and the first African-American mayors of cities such as Los Angeles, Detroit, and Atlanta" (Gilis).

A new wave of feminism arrived in the late 1960's and early 1970's with ties to the civil rights movement of the previous decade. It "took on a wider agenda than the women's suffrage movement had focused on. From mainstream to radicals, this feminism movement fought for equal rights and a new way of looking at gender rules" (Johnson Lewis).

In addressing the women's movement, Godwin particularly questions what it means to be a woman and a teacher and how one's teaching identity is framed by the interplay of discourses embedded in the material context of a culture. Godwin's inquiry into women in education is echoed in the study "Discourses and Subjectivities of the Gendered Teacher" by Cammack and Phillips who address the discourse of gender issues and find that "women's roles are secured by the labels teacher, wife, and mother, the discourses seem to support the kind of mythical prowess, a need to be nurturing, loving, submissive, and yet powerful" (126). In Godwin's novel, Sonia Marks, successful professor, wife and mother, embodies all the qualities mentioned in the study above. According to Jane, with "nineteen publications to her credit, and five listed in the MLA International Bibliography," she "sounds like a paragon" and "captured with such ease all the things she herself wanted" (Godwin 47). In depicting Sonia, "the most popular teacher with the students," and "the most hated, or envied, by her fellow faculty members," Goodwin challenges the shifts in attitudes that shaped the acceptance of women professors like Sonia and Jane in the academic community and the way the women academics perceived their identity in the seventies (Godwin 50). Similarly, Cammack and Phillips' study illustrates how the discourse of teaching as "acceptable women's work and the discourse of patriarchy work upon the subjectivity of women as they struggle with what

it means to be teacher/woman" (Cammack). Martha Chamallas, likewise addresses the gender discourse by commenting on the subversion of justice in university politics in the seventies. Women like Sonia Marks were an oddity because they were so underrepresented that they were seen as tokens "who were noticed and rated on a scale that applied to women only—a scale that focuses on a woman's style of dress, appearance, body, social graces, and other traits not directly linked to her ability to perform her job" (195). Godwin's novel as well as the studies of Martha Chamallas and Cammack and Phillips show that approaching literary texts in relationship to historical context leads to "a new awareness of how history and culture define each other" (Veeser 1989: xii), and gives a clearer understanding of the role of women in higher education in America in the seventies.

The article "Women faculty and administrators" reports on findings concerning the employment of women in higher education in the seventies.

> Numerous studies (Centra 1974; Carter and Ruther 1975; Bayer and Astin 1975; Carnegie Council 1975, and others) have shown that though women represent about one quarter of all faculty, they are found in greater numbers in colleges than in universities, in less prestigious rather than elite institutions, and in certain disciplines; generally they hold positions of lower rank, are less well paid than their male colleagues, and are more likely to be untenured. (41)

However, women's opportunities for advancement in higher education were improving and the references regarding women faculty in Godwin's novel reflects the shift in attitudes concerning the place of women within the faculty: "the department needs women … there was a sudden wide demand for women's courses" (Godwin 27).

Nevertheless, due to the budget shortages she is anxious about being kept on and exclaims: "Musical chairs … When the music stops, will I have a place to sit down?" (Godwin 25).

In her novel, Godwin also addresses the discourse of teaching with a particular focus on the discourse of knowledge creation through the example of her protagonist's education and points out how our attitudes shape and are shaped by the historical context of our culture. "Looking back on her own education, she decided that she had learned what she had wanted to learn and the teachers had little to do with it. … She doubted whether she, or anyone else, could teach anyone much" (144). Through Jane, Godwin challenges students' perceptions of learning and provokes questions that lead to the redefining of the role of the teacher in the learning process. Also, Jane challenges the teacher identity discourse as she claims that professors are prone to vanity and that a requirement for success is to master the art of flattering them.

> It had been one of the skills she had taught herself in the long Campaign to ... via the fellowships and scholarships which would lead to financial independence. Intellectual flattery of teachers had become an adjunct to her for scholarly activities … most of them aimed at the preferences or prejudices of influential teachers. (Godwin 142–143)

Just like Sarton and Williams in the previous chapter, Godwin takes on the discourse of teaching and once more we discover that "literary works are both what a culture produces as well as what reproduces the ideology" (Myers). By the author's letting her protagonist share her views on teaching, we recognize how literature both shapes and is shaped by the material context in which it was written. Jane's views of teaching vastly differ from the views expressed in the previous chapter. Sarton's Lucy and William's Stoner see teaching as a vocation, while to Jane it seems to be more a job or a profession. She admits that she "had never believed herself to have what was called 'a teaching

vocation' nor a charitable calling to save the masses" and the main reason she became a professor was so that "she could earn money because she liked to read books and talk about them. But she felt no passion for teaching" (144). Through Jane's example, Godwin presents the "historical and contemporary discourses of teaching as a profession, and the ways in which discourses of vocation, career and character interweave in teaching in the construction of teacher subjectivity" (Whitehead). In addition, she condemns the practice of abandoning traditional scholarship in favor of trendy research that conforms to current fads, customs and fashions:

> how even sicker I am of my contemporaries, my colleagues, people who call themselves intellectuals, eating this pablum up as if it contained some youth fertilizer, throwing hard-earned skills and disciplines and languages and anything that requires sustained effort or more than a cat's span of attention out the window, maiming themselves in order to squeeze a few dazed 'wow's and 'man's and 'cool's out of a bunch of semiliterate, spoiled children. I hate them! I hate this goddamned fashion. It is turning the curriculum into a syllabus of comic books! (250)

Commentaries like this reinforce Godwin's participation in the broader discourse on change in higher education curriculum. Her novel is embedded in the interplay of discourses that "shifted and diversified the academic landscape" in the 1960's and 1970's (Bona 7). Gail Godwin is among the feminist scholars who "played a pivotal role in unearthing and republishing" as well as incorporating "women studies scholarship across the curriculum" (Bona 2).

5.2. The Vietnam War Discourse and Higher Education in *The War Between the Tates*

American novelist and academic Alison Lurie is the author of *The War Between the Tates,* a satirical representation of the academe and a cultural artifact of the interplay of discourses operating within the academic community in the late 1960's and early 1970's. It is set at Corinth, an elite imaginary university which is very similar to Cornell University where Lurie began her teaching career in 1970 as one of the two women professors on the faculty.

In her novels, Lurie addresses the women's discourse, with a particular emphasis on gender, status and power in the interplay of the discourse of men and women in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Lurie's women are well-educated, intelligent, physically attractive, and well off financially. They remind us of Jane Austen's heroines who found fulfillment in marriage and children, but with the difference that Lurie's heroines question the choices and compromises they have made. Moreover, the author herself—as a faculty wife, mother and faculty member—resembles her female protagonists in search of personal and professional fulfillment.

At the time *The War Between the Tates* was published in 1974 Lurie and her husband were both members of the Cornell faculty and the novel contains a number of autobiographical elements that mirror the academic community of Cornell during this time. In discussing *The War Between the Tates,* Lurie said that "the events happened to people I know, but it happened at three different universities" (Aloi), thus confirming the new historicist premise that fiction and history are bound up in the historical moment of production. Lurie's English Department Chair, Jonathan Culler, praised her as "a popular and devoted teacher of courses on creative writing, children's literature, literature and

folklore and the reading of fiction, as well as an inspiration to aspiring writers" (Cody). However, he added that "Having a brilliant satirist in the department is never completely comfortable, of course; we professorial types sometimes worry that we might be satirized in a sequel to *The War Between the Tates*, but she has treated us with great forbearance and chosen other targets" (Cody). Culler's comment illustrates that academic novels are literary artifacts of their time and that they shape and are shaped by the discourses present at the time they were written and in the process become one of those discourses (Ghadiri 384).

During this period, the battle of the sexes is framed by the women's movement and illustrates the gendered discourse in which men are dominant and women are "denied any role in the structures of authority and decision making" (Scollon 252). This is visible in academic politics which sidelines women faculty members so that, although women are accepted as teachers, there is a much lower percentage chosen for tenured positions or promotions. The same is true in sexual and marital politics, and the actual role of the woman in relation to her husband or partner. Interestingly, in her book *Faculty Towers*, Elaine Showalter foreshadows the impact of the novel as she announces that "Lurie would later become the laureate of the unhappy faculty wife, in her best-seller *The War between the Tates*" (38).

The novel maps the discourses circulating at the time and satirizes the gendered discourse of women's liberation from both the man's and the woman's point of view, in order to highlight the shift of attitudes in the public's perception of gender roles. Lurie's depiction of men ranges from self-satisfied husbands who see women primarily as homemakers, to stuffy professors who cheat on their wives with clingy co-eds. In a similarly critical manner, the women are portrayed as self-righteous wives who blame men for their failed relationships and turn to women's liberation out of boredom.

Furthermore, Lurie's satire is also directed towards the youth culture as she addresses the generational discourse with depictions of the drug scene, of irresponsible and out of touch with reality youth who blindly follow the identity politics of the herd, which leads to parent/adolescent conflicts in their early years and later spreads to rebellion against institutional authorities. Corinth youth "smoked hash, deceived draft boards, 'lifted' goods from store counters, and made casual, violent love" (Lurie 41).

Lurie's novel reveals "the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life" (Greenblatt 1983: 14). She presents the interplay of discourses that have shaken personal and professional relationships within the academic community with a particular emphasis on infidelity, children's revolt and student protest. The meaning of the word "war" in the title "refers out to several overlapping conflicts: the war between the sexes, between older and younger generations and between North and South Vietnam, by analogy with the American Civil War, under its alternative title of the War Between the States" (Newman 111).

Lurie interacts with contemporary issues and her novel reflects the ideas and tensions of this turbulent period in which it was written. Her use of the Vietnam metaphor is effective in showing how the Vietnam War ideologies shaped the social, political and cultural discourses circulating at the time, in particular the American foreign policy. Lurie's novel "chronicles the breaking of the marriage of Brian and Erica Tate against a background of the Vietnam War, student protest, and the rise of the counter culture" and the "shaky alliance between Brian and Erica Tate mirrors the shakiness of the American consensus" regarding the Vietnam War (Newman 110–111). According to Lind, "[i]t was necessary for the United States to escalate the war in the mid-1960's in order to defend the credibility of the United States as a superpower ... and to forfeit the war after 1968, in order to preserve the American domestic political consensus in favor of the Cold War on

other fronts" (Lind). Lurie's portrayal of war echoes the critical public opinion that "the U.S. war in Indochina was a tragic and unnecessary mistake, brought about by American arrogance and an exaggerated fear of the threat posed to U.S. interests by the Soviet Union and communist China" (Lind).

Lurie utilizes the American government discourse in depicting the personal relationship of what seems to be an ideal academic couple, Brian and Erica Tate. Their marriage is based on the separation of powers, where Erica is the chief executive in charge of domestic issues, the home and children, and Brian is the legislative and judicial branch with the power to veto his wife's initiatives. Of particular importance in the novel are specific references to George F. Kennan, diplomat, historian and brilliant analyst of the American foreign policy who is Brian Tate's idol.

Brian represents the ideal American hero, with a successful academic career, an attractive wife, two children and a beautiful home. He assumes he is destined to be famous, since "he had been born with all the advantages: the son of a well-known professor, nephew of authors and lawmakers, grandson and great-grandson of ministers and judges; healthy, handsome, intellectually precocious, well-loved, well-educated" (Lurie 35). Although he holds the Sayle Chair of American Diplomacy, he is dissatisfied because he has higher aspirations to be the Dean of Humanities, or perhaps "a university president or a candidate for Congress" (Lurie 37–38). His arrogance and superiority complex are apparent in his view that he deserves better than his "colleagues, born into cultural and economic slums, the ugly, clumsy sons of provincial neurotics or illiterate immigrants, might be proud having become Corinth professors" (Lurie 35). He is convinced that fame eludes him because "he had been misunderstood, just as the public figure he admired most, George Kennan, had been misunderstood" (Lurie 37). Lurie describes in detail Brian's vain efforts to achieve political fame: "He has written many

long and serious political articles; he has served without pay on committees and commissions; 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" (36–37). He does not care whom he serves, politics was politics and all he wants is power and fame. He even claims moral superiority in the case of his infidelity because "he refused to take advantage of her infatuation, which men in his position would have. He had tried to do the right thing, to cure her of her attachment. ... That these methods did not work … was not his fault" (Lurie 48).

However, Brian does commit adultery and this leads his wife to declare war. "Brian Tate, that serious, righteous man, that well-known liberal professor and household moralist, has knowingly seduced, impregnated, and abandoned a child" (Lurie 132). The Vietnam War as an extended metaphor throughout the novel juxtaposes the catastrophic American conflict and the breakup of a typically American marriage. This interplay of the war discourse between fiction and reality is in line with the new historicists' premise that fiction and history are bound up in the historical moment of production and that these texts circulate inseparably. The novel not only illustrates that the Vietnam War is as present in reality as it is in fiction but that the novel as a cultural artifact is a valuable source of information which can help us to recover "the original ideology which gave birth to the text, and which the text in turn helped to disseminate throughout a culture" (Myers).

For instance, the depictions of battling sides and their war strategies mirror the Vietnam War conflicts and particularly the U.S. foreign policy. We are told that "Brian and Erica, like their friends, students and colleagues, have spent considerable time trying to understand and halt the war in Vietnam" (Lurie 94) and now in a real sense they have brought the war home. The war discourse is so familiar that Brian is able to identify and

"draw a parallel between it and the war now going on in his house" (Lurie 94) and expects Erica to present a united front in their war against their children.

In addition, the Tates "see themselves as the South Vietnamese government, merely trying to preserve a peaceful status quo against wily invaders who are taking over their terrain" (Sanborn). "For nearly two years … 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" (Lurie 93). However, as far as the opposing side in the conflict is concerned: "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" (Sanborn). To prevent being overpowered, the children resort to strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare: "In spite of their wish for self-government, they remain dependent on Erica's aid and Brian Tate's investments. … They refuse to negotiate, and retreat into the jungles of their rooms on the third floor, where they plan guerilla attacks" (Lurie 95).

Irony comes into play as we find that "What makes the war most exhausting for Brian now is that his ally, Erica has deserted him. … This defection seems to him profoundly unjust; even dishonorable" (Lurie 96). It is interesting that, while the cheating husband questions his wife's honor, the deceived wife attempts to rationalize and mitigate his guilt by blaming the girl. Erica comments that, in her day, girls who had crushes on professors did not act on them, "conventional morality being different then", but Wendy's generation, being "more matter-of-fact about sex," offer themselves openly: "no strings attached, no emotional commitment", "the stock situation of most men's fantasies" (Lurie 56). If we remember that the women's movement peaked in the 1960's and 1970's, then

this comment by Erica makes a sham of female solidarity and reveals that, at times, women are willing to compromise their moral principles for personal interests.

In the novel, the generational clashes concern not just the Tate children but the youth culture on the whole. Lurie's negotiating of the generational conflicts is framed by the material context deeply entrenched in the ideological discourses of the sixties and seventies. The youth culture was rebelling because "the war in Vietnam allowed for them neither enjoyment nor self-expression. In their view, that war was the product of a generation with which they had nothing in common, and it quickly became the strongest symbol of the oppression of culture, history, and social institutions" (Scollon 215). The dissatisfied youth of the 1960's became known in the United States as the counterculture identified with the rejection of conventional social norms of older generations, unconventional appearance, music, and liberal views of drugs and sex. Lurie's novel makes numerous references to the generation gap discourse, particularly regarding the contrasting attitudes toward addictive substances. While Wendy and her fellow students think that

> grass makes you relaxed, happy and at peace with the world; it refines and heightens perceptions. Alcohol blurs the senses and causes you to become noisy and violent. It is "addictive" … is apt to lead to the use of stronger and more dangerous drinks: to loss of physical control, shouting, fighting, vomiting and fatal auto accidents; eventually to impotence and visions of snakes and cirrhosis of the liver. …it's a gross commercial rip-off … taxes … to supporting corrupt government and killing people in Vietnam. (Lurie 263–264)

On the other hand, Brian thinks that

> Wendy's constant use of marijuana … leads to stronger drugs: to LSD, speed or heroin; to addiction, weird delusions, mental and moral collapse, overdose and death. It is illegal … distributed by criminal organizations part of whose profits go to bribery, corruption and possibly murder, and the use of it makes one a criminal ... breaking a federal law. (Lurie 263)

In addition, Brian mentions that, in the university town, "a new counterforce has sprung up, one which he cannot tolerate … since it sets itself as a rival" to "getting a college degree" (Lurie 62–63). The Krishna bookshop expands from "a matter of academic curiosity and amusement" to "a matter for serious annoyance … encouraging … escapism and fuzzy thinking" (Lurie 63). It "gave courses on a variety of dubious subjects from astral projection to Zen Buddhism—assigning homework and papers in competition with the university" (Lurie 63). There were two reasons why a significant number of Americans took up the practice of Zen in the 1960's. Firstly, "the 1965 changes to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 opened the doors to Asian immigration. This enabled a new wave of Asian Buddhists as well as Asian Buddhist clergy and teachers to come into the U.S." (McCormick). Secondly, "the youth counterculture was actively seeking alternatives to what they saw as a hypocritical and repressive Judeo-Christian heritage and the conformist and materialistic consumer society" (McCormick).

The generational discourse described above was one among many that marked the period from 1950's to the 1970's, the decades that witnessed dramatic changes in society, with nationwide civil rights, black power, and women's liberation protests. "African-Americans, Native Americans, minorities, and gays increasingly demanded full legal equality and privileges in society, and affirmative action became a controversial policy as minorities and women asserted their rights to jobs and quality education" (Gillis).

The Free Speech Movement at the University of California at Berkeley in 1964 sparked student uprisings that "soon engulfed hundreds of campuses" (Kimball). Students marched to protest political issues such as "the Vietnam conflict, curricular reform, housing arrangements for racial minorities, university investment policies"(Kimball) but the protests grew into

> a much broader emancipationist program … in the end such issues were mere rallying points for a revolution in sensibility, a revolution that brought together radical politics, drug abuse, sexual libertinage, an obsession with rock music, exotic forms of spiritual titillation, and a generalized antibourgeois animus. At Columbia, a dean was held hostage, the president's office was occupied, and his files were looted. … Taking over buildings and smashing up property had, as *Time* magazine put it in April 1969, become a "deplorable custom." (Kimball)

It is interesting to mention that during this period of radical assaults and student unrest the diplomat and historian George F. Kennan, who is mentioned in *The War Between the Tates* as Brian Tates' hero, "took issue with the politicization of the American Campus" and voiced his ideal of scholarly seclusion in his 1968 essay, "Rebels Without a Program" (3). According to Kennan, the basis of education was the "ideal of the association of the process of learning with certain remoteness from the contemporary scene" (3). He distinguished between two tendencies of student radicalism: "angry militancy, full of hatred and intolerance and often quite prepared to embrace violence as a source of change" and "gentleness, passivity, quietism—ostensibly a yearning for detachment from the affairs of the world … an attempt to escape into a world which is altogether illusory and subjective" (9). In Lurie's novel, "the first group is more or less equally represented by the group of angry feminists (who resort to violence when they

take their sexist lecturer hostage) and the anti-war protesters" (Newman 114). Brian Tate's friend from New York, Leonard, learns through university gossip about the Corinth unrest and adds "We've had the same thing … The local Hens objected because Jane Austen, the Brontës, et cetera, were taught by men, who couldn't possibly understand … Next you'll have the Gay Power boys picketing Comp Lit because Proust and Gide aren't taught by faggots" (Lurie 282). Interestingly, Leonard shows the same arrogance and moral superiority as Brian, illustrating that their shared values are rooted in the same ideology which prevailed in the male discourse of the period.

Lurie's satirical representation of a humorous takeover of a sexist professor's office by his female students echoes the 1969 student revolt at Cornell. The feminist protestors demanded "a public apology from Dibble plus equal class time for a speaker of their choice" (284). They were fed up with Dibble's sexism manifested in his belief "that women's IQ stops at age twelve" (Lurie 266); in references to Prohibitionists as "hysterical old-maid schoolteacher types;" in statements that "it's a waste of me to teach girls political science" (Lurie 282); and in expressing his disparaging opinion of women faculty: "There's a fashion now in some schools for hiring women"(Lurie 283).

Surprisingly Brian ends up supporting both sides by taking the role of political advisor to the radical feminists and the university administrators. He feels power in being called in by the acting chairman of the department. Lurie comments that: "Like many acting chairmen, Bill was an ambitious, cautious, personable young man; an executive type, devoted to the smooth functioning and greater glory of the department, but without strong opinions of his own" (Lurie 283). This description of the chairman echoes the previous criticism of liberal presidents of progressive schools who were "the kind of characterless man [sic] who will eventually … rise to the presidencies of universities all over the country. Cozening, smarmy, confidently boring, appeasers of all and offenders

of none, 'idiot savants of success' … not really human but … with a gift for seeming human" (Epstein 375).

Brian's actions are governed by selfish motives. He is anxious to help his colleague because "Dibble's picture—and his—will be in the local newspaper, perhaps even on television" and his "exploit will become part of Corinth history" (Lurie 293). Regrettably, Brian's status as adviser proves no more durable than that of the US "advisers" in Vietnam (Newman 124). His arrogance and bias lead him to underestimate the physical strength and solidarity of the female protestors by falsely assuming: "They are too gentle …they lack the male bonding instinct, the tradition of cooperation against a common enemy" (Lurie 285). However, although Brian succeeds in rescuing Dibble, he is stopped in his getaway, caught and humiliated although convinced that he is "superior in age, sex, status and political astuteness to the angry young women surrounding him" (Lurie 296). The university concedes their demands "for a speaker of their choice" (Lurie 284) and, ironically, Brian becomes famous through humiliation.

When the crisis is over, there is a significant shift in Brian's opinion of women: "he had believed them to be essentially different from men: weaker and less rational, but also gentler, finer, more sensitive. After being nagged and scolded by more than a dozen angry women he experienced their 'aggression, the coarseness, the brutality'" (Lurie 297–298). Due to a journalistic lapse, the *Corinth Courier* releases a picture of Brian that is described "as 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 Amazons" (Lurie 299). His story also appears in the *New York Times*, accompanied by a photograph of Dibble's escape and an account of the crisis. The story goes nationwide and, in the end, it is taken "that it was Brian Tate had offended so many young women" and is the "violent opponent of the new feminism" (Lurie 299). He

is hated by the feminists, "has been claimed as an ally by Corinth antifeminists as well as fanatical misogynists nationwide, the Happy American homemakers" (Lurie 299). He is upset at the hate mail from "former favorite students, and female relatives (including his mother and aunt), angry feminists. He received offers from media but also the 'the mock jovial remarks of colleagues, the glances and whisperings of students, and the sniggering recognition of people'" (Lurie 300).

The above mentioned conflict is described in the novel with several references to a previous protest of blacks in Corinth which actually took place at Cornell University in 1969. Lurie gives brief references to the black protest as the female protesters claim that the blacks would receive respect and their demands would be met. They insist: "If we were blacks, instead of women, they wouldn't dare give us this kind of crap. Anyone, anyone has more status in this society than we do, more respect!" (Lurie 284). Brian agrees that blacks would be taken more seriously not because "[b]lacks do not have more status," but because "[t]he establishment is just more scared of them. If you were black, they'd be afraid you'd bomb Burnham Hall, or hold Dibble hostage in his office" (Lurie 285). Here once more Lurie brings together the fictional world and historical reality by alluding to the events that occurred during the Cornell takeover by African American students.

Lurie's depiction of the students' struggle articulates particular social demands neither mediated nor fulfilled within the existing system of higher education at that time. Additionally, there is a significant difference in the outcome of the two protests; Cornell underwent a profound change while Corinth is not significantly affected, apart from the fact that Professor Tate loses face. In contrast, in the protest at Cornell University initiated by the association of Afro-American students who took over the student union Willard Straight Hall turned out to be so violent that it remains in the memories of those who

experienced it. No shot was fired during the takeover, but the students were armed with rifles, shotguns and homemade spears. It was reported that

> [f]our hours after the Afro-American society took Willard Straight Hall, a fight broke out with white students who executed a counter invasion but were driven out. The blacks maintain that within the student body of 14,000 (only 250 of whom are black) there was a vicious undercurrent or racism. A cross was burned; Negroes were harassed and threatened. Their principal demands: drop disciplinary charges against five Negroes involved in demonstrations last December, revise student-faculty judicial procedures and investigate the cross-burning. (Childs 22)

The black students claim they armed themselves only in self-defense and said that the horror expressed by the white community over the unloaded weapons is hypocritical because white students keep guns on campus. The blacks felt that the university, having brought them to Cornell, had made only token attempts since to understand and assimilate them. "We're not an act of good will," said one. "We're a reality that has to be dealt with" (Childs 26). In the end, the administration gave into the protestors' demands and the protestors' tactics devastated the nation. This was the first student protest in which weapons were introduced and thereby a new and awful style in campus revolt began.

Another protest characterized by violence is the Kent State massacre on May 4, 1970 in which four students were killed and nine more were injured by Ohio National Guardsmen attempting to stop the anti-war demonstrations. The protestors were not armed and the shooting raised much controversy and doubt whether the decision of the guardsmen was justified.

> The legal aftermath of the May 4 shootings ended in January of 1979 with an out-of-court settlement involving a statement signed by 28 defendants as well as a monetary settlement, and the Guardsmen and their supporters view this as a final vindication of their position. The financial settlement provided $675,000 to the wounded students and the parents of the students who had been killed. Sides are still divided over the justification of the Guards' reaction and experts who find the Guard primarily responsible find themselves in agreement with the conclusion of the Scranton Commission: "The indiscriminate firing of rifles into a crowd of students and the deaths that followed were unnecessary, unwarranted, and inexcusable." (Lewis)

The shootings are remembered as "the day when the Vietnam War came home to America" and they "have come to symbolize a great American tragedy which occurred at the height of the Vietnam War era, a period in which the nation found itself deeply divided both politically and culturally" (Lewis). The May 4 shootings at Kent State should neither be forgotten nor distorted if such tragedy is to be avoided in the future.

In addition to the student protests, "the second-wave feminism of the 'women's movement' peaked in the 1960's and 1970's and touched on every area of women's experience—including family, sexuality, and work" ("Women's Movement"). In Lurie's novel there are several references to Danielle Zimmern's involvement with Women's Liberation after her divorce. Sara, one of the feminist protestors, lectures Brian and her boyfriend "on the subject of women: their natural physical, psychological and moral superiority to men; the manifold injustices they have suffered in the past; and their right in the present to equal pay, equal educational and vocational opportunities, free day-care centers, and abortion on demand" (Lurie 210). As Brian tries to convince her that "he is already in favor of equality between the sexes," she tells him that men cannot get rid of

their chauvinist attitudes because it is a part of society's "conditioning"' (Lurie 210). Furthermore, her opinion of American society and its institutions is evident as she comments to Brian that, to get what he wants, he does not have to resort to violence: "You don't physically have to hassle them, all our social institutions do it for you" (Lurie 210).

Lurie also addresses the controversial issue of abortion showing that laws restricting abortion not only infringe on personal freedom but also endanger the lives of women. Lurie illustrates the historical reality in Erica's statement: "I have to find someone decent and competent to help her, because if I don't she'll probably go to some awful quack abortionist in Jersey City or somewhere" (Lurie 134). Erica "recalls horror articles … of the illegal abortion racket; descriptions of filthy makeshift operating rooms, bloodstained tables; callous and venial doctors whose names have been struck from the Medical Register because of drink or drugs" (Lurie 132). However, at this time women did not have freedom of choice because qualified doctors were not allowed to perform abortions. When Erica turns to her doctor for help he states, "Abortion is not only against the law in this country, it's a serious crime" and he cautions Erica that she may be charged as "an accessory to a crime" (Lurie 135). The framing of Women's Rights in the media discourse has brought about shifts in gendered power relations but women are still marginalized in most political decision making (Ferree 132) which has resulted in the slow pace of change in bringing legislation on women's issues**.** Lurie's novel mentions that "New York State has just passed a liberal law legalizing abortion" which alludes to the 1973 Supreme Court ruling making abortion legal throughout the country. The historic decision *Roe* v. *Wade* resulted "in broadly liberalized abortion laws in the United States" (Cengage 2012). Lurie's novel is a very useful tool "in exploring the relationship between literature and history and in demonstrating the ideological and political interests" (Brannigan 11) that affect the history as well as the literature during this decade.

It is important to mention that additional progress was made in 1972 when "Congress passed Title IX of the Higher Education Act, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex in any educational program receiving federal funds and thereby forced all-male schools to open their doors to women and athletic programs to sponsor and finance female sports teams" ("women's movement").

Furthermore, another example illustrates both progress and the slow pace of legislation regarding women's issues. On March 22, 1972, the Equal Rights Amendment, which declares that "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex," finally passed the Senate and the House of Representatives by the required two-thirds majority and was sent to the states for ratification. However, although forty years have passed, the Equal Rights Amendment is not yet included in the U.S. Constitution because only 35 of the necessary 38 states—the constitutionally required three-fourths—have ratified it (Francis).

Lurie's novel *The War Between the Tates* is ingrained in the "social and political discourses" of the seventies, and it shapes and is shaped by the convergence of politics, sexuality, feminism, and power and the ways they relate to higher education during the Vietnam War era (Brannigan 68). Lurie focuses particularly on the discourses of gender, age and race that caused shifts in the attitudes of the American people at this troubled time. Numerous parallels can be drawn between the Vietnam War and the fictional battles in the novel, particularly in the depiction of how the opposing sides conduct themselves. The attack on American "exceptionalism" is very much part of the moral of Lurie's novel, in which the Tates' pretensions to superior moral status are ruthlessly destroyed (113). Ironically, the novel ends in a peace march with the Tates anxious to begin the reconstruction of their marriage. The marital war has fashioned them into new selves as they have finally recognized their flaws and lost the arrogance and moral superiority of

superpowers. At the beginning of the novel Erica was frightened by all the changes: "I'm too tired to learn the new rules. I don't care about nineteen sixty-nine … rock festivals or black power or student revolutions or going to the moon. … All these new developments …have nothing to do with real life … Reality was when the children were small and before the housing development" (Lurie 226). However, in an attempt at escapism, her awakening comes as she snaps back into reality after taking LSD. As the drugs wear off, she not only becomes aware of the reality but she embraces it. Erica considers the claim of the feminist group WHEN that women prove their oppression by accepting the help of men and "that when real equality is achieved, men won't be necessary" (Lurie 347). As she questions: "Are the sexes, then, to live apart forever in waring camps?" (Lurie 347), she feels differently and chooses to call a truce so that she and Brian "can close ranks and present a united front" (349).

Brian and Erica want to "save face at home and abroad" so they "never declared war officially, but continued to speak of the conflict as a peace-keeping effort" (Lurie 95). However, they are aware that "the true facts are widely known, and have earned them the bad opinion of the rest of their world including that of other parents who are currently engaged in their own undeclared wars" (Lurie 95). Brian recognizes that "Other wars end eventually in victory, defeat, or exhaustion, but the war between men and women goes on forever" (Lurie 300).

Lurie's utilization of the war metaphor and analogy to frame her narrative leads to "a new awareness of how history and culture define each other" and gives a clearer understanding of the period within which *The War Between the Tates* was written (Veeser 1989: xii). As we follow the overlapping of reality and fiction, the new historical premise of the "historicity of texts and the textuality of history" becomes evident (qtd. in Veeser 1989 20). Lurie's novel is not just a pastiche representation of its time but a cultural

artifact that brings the Vietnam War home by illustrating that "[n]o American conflict in the 20th century so tore this nation apart, so scarred its social psyche, so embedded itself in its collective memory, and so altered the public view of institutions, government, the military, and the media" ("The Vietnam War").

Clearly, it is evident that Lurie's novel participates in the interplay of discourses and that it was shaped by and has shaped the modern debate on two conflicting views regarding U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Lurie's war metaphor explains the subversive strategies that characterize both the battle of the sexes and the battle of generations and enables us to interpret the circulation of discourses within which her novel was written.

6. ACADEMIC NOVEL THEN AND NOW: THE LEGACY AND CONTINUITY OF THE GENRE

The academic novels from 1980 through 2000 continue to provide valuable commentary and reflection upon the decades contemporaneous with the time they were written. However, these works are not included in this investigation due to the fact that they are a bit too close to the present and as such are too new for new historical assessment, "too recent to merit a proper New Historical re-reading and to accommodate New Historical tools of inquiry which concern themselves with 'established' historical 'data/truths' that are removed by at least a few generations" (Wawrzycka). However, the genre of the American academic novel is thriving and, as it continues to reflect on its culture, it will, in a few decades, become a ripe topic for further new historicist interpretation and provide "a new awareness of how history and culture define each other" (Veeser 1989: xii).

After a study of the academic novels from the 1950's to the 1980's, the focus shifts to the continuation of the genre through to the turn of the century. The depictions of university life and the interactions of faculty members with each other and with students as presented in the more recent novels highlight discourses that have dominated higher education in the United States from the 1980's on. Particular issues were as much part of the campus social agenda as of the plots of the campus novels and they will be forefronted in this analysis: academic freedom, sexual harassment, tenure, race and academic politics. Interestingly, the academic novels set against the backdrop of actual historical events of the time they were written confirm the new historicist premise "that literary texts are embedded in social and political discourses" (Brannigan 68). For example, *The Human Stain* is set against events of the 1990's, in particular the Bill Clinton-Monica Lewinsky

scandal and Lurie's *Truth and Consequences* against the 9/11 tragedy. This bringing together of the fiction and the history helps us to recover "the original ideology which gave birth to the text, and which the text in turn helped to disseminate throughout a culture" (Myers).

Firstly, as maintaining and securing academic freedom within the educational context becomes an issue, academic novels challenge the actions that violate academic rights and freedoms of students or faculty members. In the 1980's, there was an increase in complaints of sexual harassment in higher education, and American feminist and law professor, Catharine A. MacKinnon, was "instrumental in establishing the legal claim that 'sexual harassment' in the workplace is sex discrimination" (Strebeigh). Furthermore, in 1986 the Supreme Court, in its first sexual harassment case, with MacKinnon as co-counsel, agreed with her argument by ruling unanimously that sexual harassment is sex discrimination (Strebeigh). The American Association of University Professors responded by issuing documents that emphasize

> a more general commitment to the maintenance of ethical standards and the academic freedom concerns these standards reflect. In its *Statement on Professional Ethics,* the Association reiterates the ethical responsibility of faculty members to avoid "any exploitation of students for … private advantage." The applicability of this general norm to a faculty member's use of institutional position to seek unwanted sexual relations with students (or anyone else vulnerable to the faculty member's authority) is clear. Similarly, the Association's *Statement on Freedom and Responsibility* states that "intimidation and harassment" are inconsistent with the maintenance of academic freedom on campus. ("Sexual Harassment")

Political and cultural battles over sexuality were a frequent topic of debate in the 1980's and as such were echoed in the academic novels of the time, from various standpoints. Anne Bernays' *Professor Romeo* (1989), Francine Prose's *Blue Angel* and Philip Roth's *Professor of Desire* all deal with sexual desire. However, Roth's novel explores the conflicts of passion and reason as it depicts David Kepesh, an academic who moves between a life of scholarship and carnal desire. On the other hand, in Bernays' and Prose's novels sexual desire turns into abuse of power and results in sexual harassment. According to Tierney, "The campuses in academic novels are places rife with sexual liaisons between professors and their students. The consequence of these affairs when they are discovered is that the professor loses his tenure" (172). This is illustrated in Bernays' *Professor Romeo* as Harvard's leading scholarly researcher and best-selling author, Jake Barker, nicknamed "Professor Romeo," is asked to resign after being found guilty of sexual harassment. The charges are brought by the Dean of Women's Affairs, who happens to be a former lover, and three former students. That the consequences for the harasser can be serious is emphasized in the ironic but revealing statement made by the accused: "[o]nce you have forfeited your job, your reputation, your standing in society, your amour proper, and the privilege of using the Harvard athletic facilities, what else could be taken from you that mattered?" (Bernays 255). Similarly, in Prose's satirical representation, an English composition instructor, Ted Swenson is dismissed after a single failed attempt at intercourse. Ironically enough, the instructor is in love with his wife and has avoided any entanglement with his students during his ten years of teaching. Prose's harasser is less a seducer than a victim who has to pay for his mistake. Both Bernays and Prose intervene in the discourse of sexual harassment that positions the male professor as the guilty party, but in both novels there is a blurred line between innocence and guilt as "an academic Don Juan collides with contemporary feminism" and private interests join

academic politics to subvert the process of justice (Kaplan). These satirical representations offer no sympathetic character on campus since the harassed are depicted less as victims and more as vindictive feminists implementing the sexual harassment policies of their universities. The novels are ironies focusing on the absurdity of flawed human beings, like the suspended college professor in Prose's novel who shows his art history class a slide depicting a classical Greek sculpture of a female nude and says, "Yum … and that Yum blew up in his face … [t]he students accused him of leering" (Prose 18). If we agree that academic novels can be correctives, than we should consider Bernays' "interesting and thought-provoking questions about how modern universities are run and about the people who run them" (Bridges 12).Bernays' comments that people at Harvard and Yale "may be smarter (or not) than the rest of us … but … they share the same common human failings as everyone else" is "a fact worth remembering as society discusses the future of higher education" (Bridges 12).

Another issue that dominates the more recent academic novel is race, an issue that is taken up by Phillip Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000) and Emily Raboteau's *The Professor's Daughter* (2005). Both authors address the issue of race by exploring mixed-race people in America passing for white. In her novel, Raboteau blurs the lines between fiction and reality as she presents the balancing of black and white identities, and shows how constructs of race and family gain meaning from each other. Esteemed Princeton professor Bernard Boudreaux II has gone from Deep South misery to Ivy League success. However, his American dream is haunted by a racial nightmare caused by the lynching of his father. In order to ensure that his children will not suffer like him, he marries a white woman so that they could pass for white. Raboteau, herself a professor's daughter and a child of interracial marriage growing up in America, knew well the children's story. The autobiographical material she has interwoven into her novel, as well as the overlap of the

social, political and economic changes point to the fact that Raboteau's novel is embedded in the history of its time and touching on issues that involve African-Americans and race.

Roth's novel also addresses the issue of race by depicting Coleman Silk, who is forced to retire when his colleagues decree that he is a racist. The irony of the accusations is revealed when it becomes obvious that it was not a question of racism and that he is black passing as white. It is worth mentioning that Roth's novel is set against the time period of Clinton's scandal which runs parallel to Clinton's "Initiative on Race" (1997–1998) that "dramatically reformulated the American race problem at the dawn of the new century" (Kim 175). As we follow the overlapping of reality and fiction, the new historical premise of the "historicity of texts and the textuality of history" becomes evident (qtd. in Veeser 1989 20).

By the 1990's and through the end of the century, "the lottery of hiring, political correctness, the culture wars, and the tragedies of tenure had become familiar topics of academic fiction" and "English departments had become the locus for the greatest disappointment and frustration" (Showalter 87). This was particularly true for those faculty members who failed to attain tenure, as is the case in Blaire French's *The Ticking Tenure Clock*: "Walter Kravitz had been denied tenure, and denied at the lowest level of review" (3). The question of tenure is explained in the 1940 "Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure" which had as its purpose to

> promote public understanding and support of academic freedom and tenure and agreement upon procedures to ensure them in colleges and universities. Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition. (De George 117)

It is important to mention that the meaning of tenure and the means to attain it are satirized in academic novels and the representations of academics are far from favorable. Nevertheless, as Tierney says, if "[g]ood academic novels … do … not portray us as we wish to be seen, but by complicating the picture of academic life, the novels may encourage us to act as we wish to be seen" (2004: 176). Thus, novels discussed below invite us to read them not just as pastiche representations for pleasure but as representations of reality that will enable us to "recover as far as possible the historical circumstances of their original production and consumption and to analyze the relationship between these circumstances and our own" (Greenblatt 1990: 228–229).

John Kenneth Galbraith's *A Tenured Professor* (1990), Blaire French's *The Ticking Tenure Clock* (1998), James Hynes's *Publish and Perish* (1997) and *The Lecturer's Tale* (2001), Richard Levine's *Tenure* (2002), James M. Lang's *Life on the Tenure Track* (2005) and John David Stewart's *Murder Most Academic* (2004) are all examples of more recent academic novels that have as their common denominator the depiction of faculty members striving to attain tenure or risking its loss. In Galbraith's *A Tenured Professor*, a young professor, Montgomery Marvin, is eager to make his "small contribution to the liberal agenda" but is advised by an older colleague that "the only sensible course" is if "one waits until one has tenure to show one's liberal tendencies" (38). This proves to be sensible advice for Marvin later in life when he suffers losses from a business venture and is lucky to have the security of tenure to fall back on. Galbraith's novel is more about economics and politics than it is about academics, as it questions whether or not economic interests control political ones. Blaire French's protagonist, who is on the tenure track, suggests following the "Roll Over Rule … endure six years of submissiveness in return for a lifetime of freedom" (17). James Hynes's *Publish and Perish* blends satire and horror in order to provide humor at the expense of American

academics focusing more on poetic justice than academic matters. In a similar fashion, his *The Lecturer's Tale* continues with the satire and horror while disclosing petty campus politics and power struggles for survival in academia. Richard Levine's *Tenure* addresses serious issues such as sexual orientation, affirmative action and tenure in a behind the scenes look at academia, while James M. Lang's *Life on the Tenure Track* brings the story of his first year on the tenure track and provides an insider's view of academia. Finally, John David Stewart's *Murder Most Academic* is an academic mystery in which Jeremy Brand, professor of popular culture at Calloway State University, gets involved in a tenure case that escalates into an investigation of academic fraud, blackmail, arson and murder.

In addition to tenure, academic novels highlight other vital issues that concern academia. The 1980's were also "the decade of feminist literary criticism and theory and the moment when women appear in the academic novel as serious contenders for tenure, status, and all the glittering prizes" (Showalter 68). However, Showalter also points out that the academic novels of the 1980's written by feminists "are also the most discouraging and dispiriting about the prospects for women sharing the joys of the academic life" (68). One such example is Virginia Miner, the protagonist of Alison Lurie's *Foreign Affairs* (1984). The novel also mirrors the article, "Unmarried professors are outsiders in the Ozzie and Harriet world of academe," which discusses the perks offered by colleges and universities to their married professors that do not apply to single professors and voices the appeal of single professors that colleges should stop treating them like second-class citizens ("Unmarried professors"). Lurie's protagonist, Virginia Miner, is a single middle-aged female scholar of children's literature. Not only is she an outsider due to her marital status but also owing to her choice of an unfashionable field of research, which was criticized in a magazine of national circulation "as a prime example of the waste of public funds" (Lurie 5). It is interesting to note that Lurie taught

children's literature for over thirty years at Cornell University. Another social satire by Lurie, *Truth and Consequences* (2005), returns to the college campus setting and depicts a battle of the sexes similar to Lurie's novel, *The War Between the Tates*. Once again, Lurie sets her novel against historical events, with 9/11 as a backdrop for much of the action. Lurie focuses less on academia and more on adultery and illness; her novel "pays little attention to the social matrix … there is no visceral sense of campus politics or university life, no sense of the times" (Kakutani).

One final academic novel, Richard Russo's *Straight Man* (1997), is of interest because it deals with the same petty politics, bureaucracy, tenure battles, budget shortages, promotions and abuses of power, as some of the academic novels of the previous decades.

Clearly we can conclude that academic novels written from 1980 through 2000 mirror higher education and provide a window into American academia. The novels are embedded in "the material conditions" of the American culture and they bring together the fictional and historical while at the same time revealing "the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life" (Greenblatt 1983:14). The preoccupation with academe in the selected novels illustrates the New Historical premise that "a literary work is the product of the time, place, and circumstances of its composition and must be read and interpreted in its biographical, social and historical contexts" (Tiwary 79). The academic novel promises to offer future scholars a wealth of material to continue utilizing the perspective of Historical Criticism for literary and cultural interventions.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has attempted to familiarize the Croatian reader with the American academic novel, a genre of contemporary fiction which is still relatively unknown and unexplored within the Croatian context. The main objective of the research was to increase both the Croatian readers' awareness of this genre and their knowledge regarding the development of higher education in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century.

The study focused on American academic novels published over a thirty year period, from 1950 through 1980, and set within the American academic community. The research highlighted politics of higher education and American academic fiction as represented in Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe* (1951), Randall Jarrell's *Pictures from an Institution* (1952), May Sarton's *The Small Room* (1961), John Williams' *Stoner* (1965), Gail Godwin's *The Odd Woman* (1974) and Alison Lurie's *The War Between the Tates* (1974). The study explored these fictional representations as critiques of the American academic world within the framework of the transformation of higher education and its impact in the shaping of the social and political landscape of America.

In addition to the academic novels, the investigation included non-fictional works belonging to the same time periods, in order to confirm the hypothesis that academic novels as literary artifacts of their time both shape and are shaped by the interplay of social, political and cultural discourses circulating at the time they were produced. The purpose of this study was to relocate the discourses of the academic novels among the nonliterary discursive practices circulating at the time of their production and

consumption in order to confirm the new historicist premise that literature has a discursive agency that affects history every bit as much as history affects literature.

This research was based on the key principles and most significant literary and theoretical works on new historicism and has given equal weight to literary and non-literary works as historical traces written within the same period which address the major issues of the day. Particular emphasis was placed on the historicity of the texts as well as the historical context in which the works were written. Using new-historicist methods, the present study achieved its aim of recovering the images of the past embodied in academic fiction, which have both shaped and been shaped by the development of higher education in the United States.

Firstly, the selected novels of the fifties, Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe* published in 1952 and Randal Jarrell's *Pictures from an Institution* highlight the repressive government policies during the McCarthy era and the subversion of education in America through the liberal indoctrination of students in progressive colleges. Ideally, the academic discourse should be based on seeking the truth in pursuit of knowledge but both the selected novels as well as the non-fictional materials revealed it to be corrupted by cold war rhetoric.

Secondly, the academic novels of the sixties, John Williams' *Stoner* and May Sarton's *A Small Room,* challenge the key values, conventions and rules of academic discourse that have become a sham as faculty politics, petty administrators and the administrative bureaucracy undermine the true mission of the academy. Both novels address issues of departmental and university politics as well as the fundamental question of what it means to be a teacher. In addition, Williams takes on the subject of the effects of war on the academic community, while Sarton negotiates the issue of marginalized groups, as she takes a closer look at the treatment of women and homosexuals in the

academy. Sarton also comments on the corporatization of the university and its meritocracy that results in plagiarism.

Thirdly, Gail Godwin's *The Odd Woman* and Alison Lurie's *The War Between the Tates,* are deeply rooted in the material conditions of the American culture of the 1970's, and shape and are shaped by the convergence of politics, sexuality, feminism, and power and the ways they relate to higher education during the Vietnam War era. The novels intervene in historical discourses on gender as they forefront women's roles in society, particularly their roles within the academic community.

After a detailed investigation of the academic novels from the 1950's to the 1980's, the focus of the study shifted to the continuation of the genre through to the turn of the century. The study showed that academic novels continue to provide valuable commentary and reflection upon the decades contemporaneous with the time they were written, particularly concerning academic freedom, sexual harassment, tenure, race and academic politics. However, these more recent works were not included in this investigation due to the fact that they are a bit too close to the present and as such are too new for new historical assessment. Nevertheless, the present study concludes that the genre of the American academic novel is thriving and, as it continues to reflect on its culture, it will, in a few decades, become a ripe topic for further new historicist interpretation.

Although the theoretical approach of new historicism has been previously used mostly in the analyses of works of the earlier literary periods, the present study has shown that new historicism is suitable for the analyses and interpretation of more recent literary works, like the academic novel, and thereby has opened up new possibilities of literary and historical analyses of fictional and non-fictional discourse. This thesis has broken new ground, due to the fact that new historicism has not yet been applied specifically to the

subgenre of academic fiction. Additionally, the current investigation contributes to knowledge by using the American academic novel as a research tool for understanding the development of higher education in the United States. The investigation showed the academic novel to be a window into the academic world and a reliable link to its institutions, its particular social and cultural structures.

The study has broadened the knowledge of American culture, particularly the problematics of the American academic community, and it has demonstrated that academic novels, even the most critical academic satires, serve as a corrective rather than a means to devalue higher education. Using the new historicist principle of reciprocity between literature and history, the present study has shown how the university shapes the novels and the novels shape the university, which means that authors of academic novels and academics can learn from each other. Instead of taking offense at unfavorable portrayals, academics can consider them as constructive criticism and use them to advantage in order to bring about constructive changes to academia.

Furthermore, in rethinking the study of literature, the present study calls attention to the impact new historicism has had on curricula in literature departments. It has broadened the range of new objects for study, not just by introducing non-canonical texts in into the classroom, but by giving a legitimate place in the curriculum to a wide range of literary and nonliterary texts. New historicism has recently been included in the doctoral program at the Faculty of Philosophy in Osijek, and, as a result of this study, it will gain wider acceptance by being introduced in the form of new courses at the undergraduate or graduate level. The new historicist approach to literary texts in relationship to historical context will open up new possibilities in teaching literature, and offer our students a new perspective on literature in history and history in literature. On the whole, new historicism will benefit our students by increasing their knowledge of the

diversity of American culture and society, and by improving their understanding of the fundamental premises for the development of literature and society.

Due to the fact that universities generate knowledge and knowledge is what fosters development in all spheres of society, the present study of fictional and non-fictional texts aims to aid Croatia by looking at solutions or at least ways of dealing with the major issues in the development of higher education. In the light of recent trends in East/Central Europe of nearing western standards in education, detailed insight into the American educational system, as well as the problems faced by the American academic community, may contribute to a better understanding of academic structures. Therefore, the range of possibilities offered by works of this genre surpasses the literary-theoretical discourse and represents a very valuable source of experience and knowledge as it also contributes to the domestic and foreign scholarly exchange.

Bringing together the literary and historical documents as constituents of historical discourses, has confirmed the new historicists' claim that this approach enables us both to recover the socio-historical context of their original production and consumption and to analyze the relationship between these circumstances and our own. The academic novel promises to offer future scholars a wealth of material to continue utilizing the perspective of new historical criticism for literary and cultural interventions.

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ŽIVOTOPIS

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