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The Image Of The Professor In American Academic Fiction 1980-1997

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**THE IMAGE OF THE PROFESSOR IN AMERICAN ACADEMIC FICTION
1980-1997**

BY

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Seton Hall University**

1999

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
DEDICATION	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
I INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Research Problem	1
The Research Question	4
Subsidiary Questions	4
Definition of Terms	4
Procedure	5
II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	9
III ISSUES FACING THE PROFESSORiate	17
IV FACULTY TENSIONS: A CULTURE DIVIDED	33
V THE FICTIONAL PROFESSOR AS TEACHER	60
VI THE PORTRAYAL OF THE FEMALE ACADEMIC	85
VII THE PROFESSOR'S PERSONAL LIFE	113
VIII CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	140
References	154

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Research Problem

The complex role of higher education in society has become a significant subject of recent research. Topics as varied as promotion and tenure practices, the role of the research university, the commitment to teaching, and the financial crises facing universities have been scrutinized. Interest in higher education is a result of two main trends. First, an increasing number of students in our country are attending college, and, second, the growth of public funding for higher education has escalated tremendously since World War II. As a result, more and more citizens have become interested in policy decisions regarding higher education, although as Giametti (1988) points out, the public has little understanding of higher education. Often, in fact, public perception is molded in ways other than through scholarly research.

One means by which the public has been made aware of academic life has been through fiction. Janice Rossen (1993) suggests that since the university does hold a prominent place in our culture, its parallel emergence in fiction is not surprising. In one of the first treatises on the subject of academic fiction, Lyons (1962) views the topic in Aristotelian terms. He states that that the academic world is well-suited to the novelist since the dramatic action involves unity of plot and interesting, albeit not necessarily noble, characters. Furthermore, the academic world offers a kind of insulation to the novelist that even allows him/her to limit the time and locale of the action as Aristotle prescribed. Social science researchers, too, affirm the importance of fiction as a vehicle

to provide the public with information about values and norms in society. Berger (1977) discusses the insights into social institutions that can be gained from fiction suggesting that fiction carries a freedom of expression in its perspective on social values.

If fiction, then, can be helpful in offering a legitimate portrait of our social institutions, it is understandable that universities have provided subjects for fiction since the novel began. The most thorough bibliographies of such works, hereafter referred to as academic fiction, were completed by Lyons (1962, 1974) and Kramer (1981). Both credit Nathaniel Hawthorne's Fanshawe (1828) as the first academic novel, followed by a few similar works at the end of the century. However, both researchers agree that since 1925, academic novels began to appear in greater numbers, especially after World War II. A more recent bibliography, compiled by Johnson (1995), picks up where Kramer left off and covers academic novels published between 1980-1994.

Of particular significance to this study, however, is the manner in which professors are portrayed in these works. Lyons (1962) points out that before 1925, students were at the center of academic novels. However, the focus shifted to professors after that time until 1960 when student center novels again seemed to dominate the genre, in part because of the various accounts of student unrest on college campuses. In the early novels, Proctor (1957) discusses the consistently narrow portrayal of university professors who appear absent-minded and foolish and generally ignorant about the way of the world outside the academy. When the context changed, however, and novels of the 1970's and 1980's were more concerned with social and cultural changes within the university, the portrayal of the professor became more complex. As a character, the professor emerged as one who was struggling to find a place within his/her university, and a myriad of

reasons contributed to this dilemma. In all, scholarship indicates that a single image of faculty does not seem to exist in fiction, although many portrayals are clearly negative. This notion affirms the complexity of higher education since the personalities and experiences of the professors cover a wide range of circumstances in these works, suggesting that the novel has done much in helping the public understand the role of the faculty member in higher education (Vandermeer, 1982).

Assuming that fiction can serve as a credible link to society and its institutions, academic fiction, then, can shed light on a widely shared cultural experience, higher education. Several scholars have studied various aspects of the manner in which higher education is portrayed in fiction, including the portrayal of professors in early novels. This research will further those studies by examining how such characters are depicted in academic fiction during the time period from 1980-1997. This particular period will be the focus of this study for two reasons. First, with the exception of a few dissertations that examine either the more focused subject of women academics in fiction, or the professor as a post-modern hero, minimal research has been devoted to the image of the professor in academic fiction since 1980, especially with regard to the question of how that image reflects reality. Although Johnson (1995) presents a complete bibliography from 1980-1994, this list lacks analysis of the novels. Second, the image of the fictional professor has not been examined in light of the research in higher education regarding the changing role of the professor beginning in 1980.

The Research Question

How are college professors portrayed in American academic fiction during the period 1980-1997?

Subsidiary Questions

1. What central issues have faced the professoriate during the period under discussion?
2. What role do promotion and tenure issues play in the lives of the professors in these novels?
3. How do fictional professors interpret their role as teachers?
4. What are the gender implications for female professors in these novels?
5. How are the personal lives of professors portrayed?
6. How do portrayals of professors in fiction compare/contrast with scholarly research on the role of the professor in the university?

Definition of Terms

Academic fiction. A term first defined by Lyons (1962) and used consistently thereafter as full-length works of fiction which incorporate an institution of higher learning as an essential part of its total setting and includes among its characters graduate or undergraduate students, faculty members, administrators, and other academic personnel associated with an American higher education institution. This definition has also historically excluded juvenile literature, conventional mysteries and pornographic works.

Culture. A term used in reference to higher education institutions that defines a common set of beliefs, values and expectations.

Procedure

The works of Lyons (1962,1974) and Kramer (1981) reflect the most comprehensive bibliographies of American academic fiction up to 1979. Johnson (1995) resumes the work with a bibliography that covers novels published between 1980 and 1994 retaining the same criteria of selection as the earlier compilers. The bibliography, therefore, constitutes a list of novels that incorporates a higher education institution as an essential part of its setting, and includes students, faculty members and administrators as principal characters. The list excludes conventional mysteries, juvenile fiction, science fiction and pornography. Johnson's search of fiction indexes resulted in 200 novels that fit the stated criteria. An identical search by this researcher for the years 1995-1997 added seven additional titles to the list. This list was then reduced by excluding translations, books published only in paperback form, novels dealing exclusively with a military school setting or a community college environment, and works where the events precede the late 1970's. Finally, novels were also excluded when the role of professors was only tangential to the work. These determinations were made based on a thorough search of Book Review Digest and in consultation with the Bowker Annual, which provided publication information, and, to a limited degree, on this researcher's experience with some of the novels. The specific criteria for exclusion is justified by the overall focus of this research which will not examine the role of professors in community colleges or on military campuses. Similarly, only the American college or university experience will be under scrutiny in the early chapter dealing with challenges facing the professoriate within the limited time frame of the 1980's and 1990's. Finally, the decision to consider only novels

which were originally published in hardcover addresses this researcher's desire to examine quality literature rather than merely popular fiction. These efforts resulted in a reduced list of 112 novels. The Book Review Digest was also helpful in drawing attention to works that should have been excluded originally. For example, although mysteries were excluded from the original search, abstracts from Book Review Digest revealed that some of these novels still appeared on the list. This was probably due to the absence of the word "mystery" in the title. Similarly, although the search should have only generated novels by American authors, the works of David Lodge, a British author, surfaced. This researcher can only conclude that the designation of a United States publishing house contributed to his inclusion.

Since the focus of this study, however, is an examination of the portrayal of the professor in academic fiction, Kramer's (1981) study was especially helpful since he separated his bibliography into "student-centered" and staff-centered" novels. Subsequently, this researcher considered the heading "College Teachers" under fiction themes in the Fiction Catalog. In addition, the lists generated by Hedeman (1993), Robinson (1989), and Maddock-Cowart (1989), all of whom wrote dissertations on aspects of higher education in fiction, were consulted. Maddock-Cowart specifically analyzes the image of the professor as a post-modern hero in post-1950 academic novels, and Hedeman devotes a part of his dissertation, which deals more broadly with the image of higher education in fiction, to a discussion of 10 novels from the 1980's which have professors at the center of the novels' events. Robinson focuses on women academics which is relevant to a segment of this study which examines gender implications among the professoriate.

The preceding procedure reduced the number of potential novels for this study to 35. All 35 novels were then read to determine the validity of their use in this study. The reading of these works reveals a slight departure, however, from the criteria employed by Lyons (1962, 1974), Kramer (1981) and Johnson (1990). This researcher notes that the setting of these novels chosen for this study is often outside of the familiar campus surroundings that were more prevalent in novels prior to 1980. As a result, professors in these works are often engaged with off-campus activities, such as independent research, or attendance at conferences or even occupied with personal problems which take them away from their campus environments. Nevertheless, the central characters are professors who are faced with important issues which reflect the changing role of the professoriate in the 1980's and 1990's. Also, if these novels were to be excluded to adhere more closely to earlier criteria, an image of the professor that is much too narrow would be portrayed. Just as important, too, would be the fact that authors, such as Bellow, Oates, and Lurie, now considered part of an emerging literary canon, would be ignored (Hedeman 1993).

Ultimately, reading and analysis of the 35 novels that adhered to the aforementioned criteria resulted in a selection of 14 novels for this study. This decision represents a manageable number of novels so that an in-depth investigation of the topic was possible. However, this determination was also based on this researcher's expertise as an instructor of literature and with a direct familiarity with professorial issues as a faculty member in higher education for the two decades under consideration in this study. Final selection was, most importantly, based on the works that convey the most significant insights into the image of the professor. More specifically, criteria for selection

is also based on novels which examine professors from a variety of perspectives as indicated by the chapter headings for this research: the implications of tenure and/or promotion, their role as teachers, the specific challenges that the female academic faces in these works, and the consequences of professors' personal relationships. By adhering to this selective criteria, significant conclusions are drawn about the image of the fictional professor in comparison with the circumstances of the real world academic. Therefore, novels that were ultimately excluded were those that do not focus adequately on professors (novels that Kramer referred to as "student centered" novels) in order to maintain credibility to this research. Thus, the following list of novels are the focus of this study: Saul Bellow's (1982) The Dean's December, John Gardner's (1982) Mickelsson's Ghosts, Rebecca Goldstein's (1983) The Mind-Body Problem, Alison Lurie's (1984) Foreign Affairs, Joyce Carol Oates' (1986) Marya, A Life, Michael Levin's (1987) The Socratic Method, Carl Djerassi's (1989) Cantor's Dilemma, John Kenneth Galbraith's (1990) A Tenured Professor, Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris'(1991) The Crown of Columbus, Michael Blumenthal's (1993) Weinstock Among the Dying, Ishmael Reed's (1993) Japanese By Spring, Theodore Weesner's (1994) Novemberfest, Jane Smiley's (1995) Moo, and Richard Russo's (1997) Straight Man.

Finally, the procedure for this study breaks new ground in that, initially, scholarly research devoted to the role of the professor in the 1980's and 1990's is examined so that the fictional image of the professor can be evaluated to determine the accuracy of the portrayal.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The most thorough bibliographies of academic fiction were compiled by Lyons (1962, 1974) and Kramer (1981). In Lyon's earlier study, The College Novel in America, the author presents a definitive work which traces the history of the academic novel from 1828-1962 and identifies common themes in a chronological listing of 212 novels. His latter work is a supplementary bibliography which covered novels published between 1962 and 1974. Lyons speaks of fiction as a "crusading instrument" (p. xviii) and views the academic novel as belonging to this tradition since it often makes a pedagogical argument that suggests a correlation between academic life and public perception of higher education. However, Lyons also points out that the academic novel has too often been the product of a disgruntled professor and, therefore, expresses a one sided misrepresentation of academic life. He readily, admits, then, to a dearth of literary quality among academic novels, but does defend their study for research purposes in higher education.

Kramer (1981) provides valuable information in The American College Novel: An Annotated Bibliography which updates Lyons' list and separates the novels into staff-centered and student centered novels until 1979. Although he acknowledges Lyons' view of the questionable literary merit of many of the novels, he clearly holds a higher opinion of the genre and identifies sixty such novels as major works of literature. In his view, these works deserve respect and, more important, represent a conscious attempt to seek reality in fiction.

Johnson (1995) continued the work of these trailblazers and compiled a bibliography of academic fiction from 1980-1994 in "The Life of the Mind: American Academia Reflected Through Contemporary Fiction." Although she does not present an annotated bibliography, 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 higher education research.

The theme of the usefulness of academic fiction has been described by other researchers. In his dissertation, Images of Higher Education in Novels of the 1980's, John Hedeman (1993) addresses the notion that the public's perception of higher education is often formed by the mass media. Novels, in particular, he asserts, have addressed issues in higher education with more representation of truth than some educational research material. Hedeman notes, too, that the investigation of the image of higher education in fiction has been a generally neglected area of research.

In a paper presented at the National Conference of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, "Fiction to Fact: College Novels and the Study of Higher Education," Thelin and Townsend (1987) more radically suggest that 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. More specifically, they make a claim for the novels' usefulness in learning about campus customs and rituals that are inherent to an understanding of college life. These researchers caution, however, 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 as connectors to other sources of information about higher education.

Robinson (1989) echoes the theme in her dissertation, Academic Women in the American Novel, 1970-1984. In her extensive discussion about the novel as a social statement, she asserts the widely accepted assumption that there is a connection between fact and fiction, and, therefore, believes that academic fiction can yield insights into issues facing higher education. Vandermeer (1982) provided an earlier evaluation of academic fiction in her dissertation, The Academic Novel as a Resource in the Study of Higher Education, on the basis that the genre can influence readers' opinion, effect change in perceptions, and reflect major trends in higher education. By contrast, Hague (1985) views the fiction in a negative light in her article, "The Academic World in Modern Literature," and discusses the appearance of recurrent themes which she views as too critical of university life and a one sided indictment of the professoriate.

Other research moves beyond the validity of examining academic fiction in general to a more specific discussion of the fictional portrayal of the college or university professor, the specific topic of this study. As early as 1946, Boys' article, "The American College in Fiction," found the fictional image of the professor overwhelmingly negative and argued that this image presented a distorted view of the academic world. Proctor (1957), who wrote an exhaustive study of the British university novel from its beginnings to the 20th century, The English University Novel, discusses the historical presence of the professor in fiction:

The university man did, in fact, flourish in fiction long before anyone saw fit to devote a full novel to his academic exploits. He not only flourished; he became tainted with such an odious reputation that the first novels about him could only allow him to continue his long existence as either villain or fool. (p. 33)

Because Proctor's concentration is British academic fiction, his work has limited value for this study; nevertheless, his aforementioned remarks about the historical presence of professors in fiction are relevant as well as his views about the academic novel as a social document.

One of the earliest studies was completed by Belok (1958) whose dissertation examined the image of the professor in novels from 1940-1957. He concludes that the image is often unfavorable as many professors are revealed as eccentric and/or disagreeable characters. He also notes that for female academics the stereotypical portrayal is even worse, even though only a small number of female professors make an appearance in fiction during this time period. Belok goes so far as to say that these portrayals seem to damage the image of the professor in higher education.

Sheppard (1990) also reflects on what he terms "the defamation of the learned in general" (p.12) and affirms that college professors have consistently come under attack in fiction in a chapter in University Fiction, edited by David Bevan (1990). In another indictment of academic fiction, Hague (1985), whose work was mentioned earlier, sees an irony within the genre since many of the works are written by academics. She states that rather than attempt a unique point of view, writers of academic fiction have been content to accept most of the prevailing conditions in the university and have written novels that lack "form and vision" (p.187). She further asserts:

The lack of identity which plagues so many professors in the university novel and culminates in the adoption of a parodic prose has its corollary in the fiction written by academics which continues to cling to stereotyped, conventional portrayals of the academy. (p.187)

Hague also addresses the tendency of the fictional professor to turn his/her attention away from teaching and toward research. She reiterates that this tendency seems to confirm the stereotypical image of the professor as one who loses a clear concept of reality.

Hedeman (1993), however, focuses on the complexity of the image of the professor in fiction and refutes the argument that the character is consistently portrayed as a stereotype, although he does suggest that many fictional professors do embody qualities of self-doubt and insecurity. He does agree with other researchers, however, that sexism within the profession is an inherent characteristic in academic fiction. Hedeman tends to be more in agreement with King (1970) whose much earlier dissertation, The Persona of the College Professor in the American Novel, 1828-1968, portrays the fictional professor as someone who embodies both virtues and weaknesses in keeping with the assumption that fiction mirrors reality. In addition, he cautions the tendency to categorize fictional professors if the world of the academic novel is presumed to represent the complex world of higher education where, in fact, a myriad of personalities prevails among the professoriate.

Although the research reveals diverse views regarding the characterization of fictional professors, commonality exists regarding the issues and challenges that professors confront in the novels. Johnson (1995), whose work was cited earlier, states that the tenure and promotion issue evokes concern for many in the fictional professoriate. She also elucidates the teaching experience, relationships with students, and the fate of the female professors as prominent themes in academic fiction from 1980-1994. This view of the academic novel directly refutes the subject matter of earlier 20th century works which,

according to Yevish (1971), ignored the legitimate aspects of university life such as "the pursuit of knowledge, the mysteries of teaching" (p.48).

Since a chapter in this study deals with the image of women academics, the literature on this topic is reviewed, and scholars note the differences in the early treatment of women in academic fiction versus a more contemporary treatment. Lyons (1962) dealt briefly with the role of the female professor but did make clear that he detected a familiar stereotype. In his article 12 years later, Lyons affirms that the "feminist's crusade, apparently, has not touched the form. One certainly finds in college novels illustrations of the subjugation of women" (p. 125). Vandermeer (1982) devotes a portion of her dissertation to an examination of women academics in novels from 1950-1979 and notes that although women academics had not appeared very frequently, their appearance often constituted a sexist treatment. A more recent study concerning women in academic fiction by Robinson (1989) reveals that women have achieved a higher level of recognition. She points out that, unlike earlier studies, the image of the female professor is less negative and that, for the most part, the authors portray realistic women who possess integrity and intelligence. Just as interesting in Robinson's research is the recognition that many of the novelists during this period are women who have had experience in the academic world.

Scholarship on academic fiction provides a solid but diverse body of literature for reading and analyzing the novels under consideration for this study. Clearly, much of the earlier literature focuses on a stereotypical image of the professor who is often viewed negatively, especially in the novels written prior to 1980. More recent research, however, especially unpublished dissertations which examine more contemporary fiction, have

observed a different image of the fictional professor as a more complex character who is actively engaged with the challenges that beset higher education in the 1980's and 1990's. Historically, however, many researchers of academic fiction have shared the common view that the genre lends inherent value to a better understanding of higher education.

In addition to the scholarship on academic fiction, this study also examines higher education research which identifies the central issues facing the professoriate during the time period. Early but significant scholarship by Finklestein (1978) serves as a starting point on the subject of the many changes that were beginning to impact professors on American campuses. Financial constraints as well as the "publish or perish" credo placed assorted demands on faculty. Rice (1986) discusses the added dilemma of the emerging conflict between the collegial and managerial cultures of the university. The research of Clark and Corcoran (1987) examines professors' role as teachers as it becomes more apparent that this is an undervalued activity. Ten years later, the research of Deci et al. (1997) still maintains that teaching is given little consideration in hiring and promotion decisions. One of the most significant issues discussed in academic research is the changing tenure process in institutions. The earlier research of Austin and Gamson (1983) underscores the increased use of part-time faculty and the frequency of offering one-year contracts, situations that resulted in a decreased sense of professorial autonomy and an erosion of collegiality. Finklestein, Seal and Schuster (1998) explore the topic in more recent years and he predicts the situation will worsen with continued threats to tenure coming from legislative bodies and governing boards.

This study also considers the academic research that discusses the impact of the increased presence of women in the academy during the time period. Bowen and Schuster

(1986) address the topic and point out that affirmative action and civil rights legislation began to alter the former dominance of men in the ranks of the professoriate. More specific academic research by Bentley and Blackburn (1992) parallels a topic faced by some of the fictional women regarding scholarly publications and note that there is a noticeable decreasing difference in publication rates based on gender. Since the chapter on fictional academic women in this study also focuses on their often perceived dilemma of professional life vs. personal life, academic research is consulted on this topic. Researchers such as Chamberlain (1988) suggest that many female professors are, in fact, reluctant to engage in personal relationships, but this decision tends to isolate them and exclude them from the circle of male scholars. Johnsrud and DesJarlais (1994) also note that women faculty often report having difficult relationships with male colleagues and even leave positions as a result. Perhaps one of the most significant concerns faced by fictional women is the tenure issue, which, again, mirrors academic research. Finklestein (1984) and Rausch, Ortiz, Douthitt and Reed (1989) report data that indicates that women tend to be tenured more slowly than their male counterparts. In all, academic scholarship suggests that although women have made impressive gains in the academy, several approaches must be undertaken to continue their success and increase their representation.

Thus, this study intends to enhance the scholarship on academic fiction by examining the fictional portrayal of the professor in novels from 1980-1997 preceded by an identification and discussion of the issues facing the professoriate within this time period according to the prevalent research in higher education.

Chapter III

ISSUES FACING THE PROFESSORiate

Research on the professoriate in American higher education reveals a variety of images. Two dichotomous views follow:

We are university teachers. We love what we do. We would do it if we didn't get paid for it (but don't tell our deans that). We would continue to do it if we won the state lottery. We would keep doing it if we just had a year to live. We do it despite the vitriolic nonsense about professors that emerges from the mouths of politicians, administrators, the popular press, and embittered pundits within and in exile from the academy. . . . We do it despite the fact that the university clearly cares more about money than it does about teaching and students. We do it because we love it, and what we do, we have to keep reminding ourselves, is – we teach. (Solomon and Solomon, 1993, p.1)

The story of the collapse of American higher education is the story of the rise of the professoriate. No understanding of the academic disease is possible without an understanding of the Academic Man, this strange mutation of 20th century academia who has the pretensions of an ecclesiastic, the artfulness of a witch doctor, and the soul of a bureaucrat. Almost single-handedly, the professors have destroyed the university as a center of learning and have desolated higher education. (Sykes, 1988, p.4)

The first view presented by Solomon and Solomon (1993) is supported by

the authors' remarks about the university in a more general sense. Referring to the university as a dominant social institution of American society, the authors suggest that it has become a giant corporation, a conglomerate of interlocking industrial and developmental units as well as a primary institution of economic and public policy. As a result, the place of education seems uncertain in the university, a notion which many in society view with suspicion. The authors admit that many are questioning the location of teachers and students, two constituents whose place no longer seems obvious within the walls of the university. They recognize, too, that the public portrait of faculty is often not positive with the media often creating professors as ethereal, pampered fools who take job security for granted. Although Solomon and Solomon (1993) admit that professors themselves are often to blame for this image, the authors offer the explanation that they have been taught the art of academic survival which underscores the importance of taking control of a piece of academic territory. As a result, professors do not often make themselves accessible to those outside the university and, therefore, do little or nothing to alter the stereotype. The writers also point out that although critics of the profession often point to the so-called long vacations and flexible hours, countless hours are spent preparing lectures, performing research, attending committee meetings, and advising students. In all, they view the professoriate as a group of scholars who are anxious to do what they truly want to do without interference from a bureaucracy which has lost sight of the central mission of higher education.

Sykes (1988), author of the second quote, makes no excuses for the professoriate. Rather, he sees faculty members as professionals who become locked in time through the unique protection of tenure and believes that the culture of the professoriate is marked by

an ingrained sycophancy that leads to a corruption of academic power. Both researchers place some blame on the structure of the university. Solomon and Solomon (1993), for example, suggest that the university suffers from a structural deformity that threatens and undermines intellectual life. Sykes (1988), too, refers to the elaborate structure as an unruly organizational chart. However, while the former sees the structure as depriving faculty of academic power, the latter is resolved that at the bottom of the pyramid the academic power is held and strictly guarded by the professors themselves.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine some of the major issues and tensions facing professors in the time span covered in the academic novels in this study. Although publication dates do not precede 1980, some of the novels' events are set in the late 1970's which justifies some of the earlier academic research. Therefore, the chapter will attempt to reflect the climate of the period as well as present a profile of the faculty. The real world image of the professoriate reflects perceptions as divergent as expressed by Solomon and Solomon (1983) and Sykes (1988). One common view, however, emerges from the academic research: issues facing the post-1970 professoriate bear little resemblance to issues of an earlier time.

In the foreword to Higher Education in American Society, Clark Kerr (cited in Altbach, Berdahl, and Gumport, 1994), discusses the contradictory aspects of university life. He suggests that American colleges and universities have never inherited the upper stories of the fabled ivory tower of the historic myth since they have always been constrained by the pressures of society. At the same time, he asserts, these institutions have functioned with more autonomy than most other institutions in society, and have, in fact, been privileged entities of a tolerant society. Consequently, the main participants in

these institutions, the faculty, have lived their lives with more autonomy and professional freedom than most other members of the labor force.

Altbach et al. (1994) also take up the contradictory views of higher education and the antithetical images of the professoriate. They state that while some have argued that the system is wasteful and inefficient and that the professoriate is at the heart of the problem, the American academic model is the most successful in the world. They, too, place some of the blame on the structure of the university and suggests that higher education should reconsider its priorities and place more emphasis on teaching. More important, however, they take up a theme that several other researchers espouse which emphasizes that a constant tension exists between the traditional autonomy of the academic profession and external pressures. They identify one of these pressures as the processes of promotion and hiring which remain in professorial hands, but which are very often subject to intrusion from external sources such as the court system which keeps a watchful eye on affirmative action and tenure quotas, for example. Curricular issues, too, are largely considered the responsibility of the faculty, but government agencies have been known to influence the curriculum with grants and other financial awards. Thus, the American professoriate has been influenced by the social, political, and economic context of higher education which, in some ways, has threatened the strong sense of professional autonomy and academic freedom. In fact, Altbach et al. (1994) predict that these trends will continue and result in further weakening of the power of the professoriate.

External influences on higher education and the resulting loss of professional autonomy are critical factors when assessing the issues facing the American professoriate during the past two and a half decades. Austin and Gamson (1983) attempt to define

these influences and the rationale for their intrusion on academic life. The authors affirm that for many years the working conditions in universities appeared ideal when compared to conditions in other settings. However, more recent pressures on the universities have altered the quality of the working climate. Economic pressures, the authors note, constitute an incredible demand on academic institutions. While the growth of revenues to colleges has slowed, expenditures have continued to increase. Such pressures have led to salary cutbacks, termination of positions, and fewer available resources. Another dominant pressure has arisen because of the structure of the organization. In fact, the authors emphasize, universities are mixed organizations, comprised of both a bureaucratic and a collegial structure. This increased duality causes inherent problems and tends to complicate academic decision making. In more recent times, power is shifting away from faculty and toward administration. This obvious trend toward centralization has changed the university culture as collegiality and autonomy have eroded.

Higher education research in the late 1970's appears to be the starting point for this discussion about the changing climate of universities and the obvious impact on the life of the professors. Finklestein (1978) underscores the role of the professor as both a member of a profession and an organization and speaks to the ensuing conflict between the demands for research and teaching. He suggests that because a close relationship exists between the college or university where professors are employed and the nature of their work, external pressures on their institutions have considerable impact on the worklife of faculty members (Finklestein, 1978). The researcher extends the discussion by suggesting that the greatest sources of conflict for faculty are the results of excessive

demands to perform many tasks. As colleges are affected by financial constraints, heavier workloads are placed on faculty.

The trend that Finklestein observed has obviously continued into the present time. Altbach et al. (1994) assert the presence of increasing bureaucracy in universities and offers another explanation for the conflicts that it has caused – the pressure of accountability. The author points to an obvious tension between professional autonomy and accountability pressures. Specifically, he notes that professorial ideas about collegiality and individual autonomy are in direct conflict with institutions' complex bureaucratic structures. Administrators are responsible to a hierarchy whose eye is often on the bottom line, and, as a result, many academic decisions are often being made by administrators who are gaining authority and power in academe.

Slaughter (1994) offers tangible evidence that the complexities and external pressures of academic life have drastically impacted on the professoriate. For example, in her study of academic freedom cases, she notes that financial exigency or retrenchment cases accounted for the largest dismissals of tenured faculty and notes that almost all faculty were vulnerable to consideration for dismissal because of projected economic difficulties in the 1980's. She also notes the increased number of cases that dealt with the use of part-time faculty, an issue that did not arise in earlier years. The implication, she asserts, is that fewer faculty had access to tenure due to the rise in part-time employment. Tenure, in Slaughter's view, was undermined, due, in part, to administrators' increased sophistication with strategies for managing professional labor. In the majority of cases, two opposite views emerged as administrators saw their plans as concern for the

institution and portrayed faculty as concerned with saving jobs and promoting their specialties.

In a discussion of the image of the academic profession, Rice (1986) also notes strains between the collegial and managerial cultures of the university. The conflict, he states, lies with the perception of faculty who are rooted in a collegial tradition versus the more recent institutional climate where managerial power is strengthening. The last two and a half decades have seen faculty evaluated by clients (students), liberal arts disciplines making room for professional studies, and knowledge valued according to its economic usefulness rather than as an end itself. For a professoriate grounded in tradition, these changes represent a profound shift away from a collegial culture and result in heightened tensions.

It is evident, then, that a common theme in research on higher education from the mid-1970's to the present focuses on the changing culture of the university and its impact on the professoriate. Clearly, the professor during these years represents a change from the professor of earlier times. Although many of the challenges professors have faced in the past 25 years have been identified by researchers, what historical trends contributed to this changed climate? Wilson and Gaff (1975) refer to the post-1970 period in American higher education as the emergence from the most turbulent era in history, the 1960's. This era was marked by student turmoil in the interest of changing higher education so it could become more responsible to social needs, create a more humanitarian environment, adopt more systems of democratic governance and make teaching a central function of the university. The hallmark of this era was growth in all sectors of higher education. The academic market became a seller's market and the professoriate tripled in numbers to

keep abreast with expansion. This unparalleled growth defined institutions' future plans. However, expectations were dashed with the arrival of the 1970's. By the early part of the new decade, a lack of trust in institutions seemed to permeate society, and universities found themselves immersed in social change. Student population growth and the demanding challenge of providing access to a more diverse student body provided immediate challenges. According to Finnegan (1992), the once unparalleled power of the faculty began to erode as the academic work environment changed. By the middle of the decade, hiring in the liberal arts had almost ceased. Supply of faculty was so great that tenure-tracks were no longer needed to obtain qualified faculty. Wilson and Graff (1975) note that prestigious national commissions began to echo students' call for more emphasis on teaching, a more relevant curriculum, closer student-faculty relationships, and greater student participation in formulating institutional policies. For example, both the Carnegie Commission and the Task Force on Academic Reform recommended major changes in the way universities were organized. With accountability measures looming, the 1980's witnessed new developments and concerns for faculty, including greater discipline specialization, the acknowledgement of a greater diversity among constituents, and dwindling resources. Institutions were forced to reevaluate their missions, and the role of faculty became largely dependent on enrollment.

The '70's and '80's marked extraordinary changes in higher education.

Institutions had no alternative but to react to the new climate which included budget cuts, downsizing, mandates from legislatures, admission quotas, etc. (Altbach et al., 1994). Without question, these changes caused an increase in administrative authority and increased bureaucratic control. Professors lost a good deal of their bargaining power as

they learned to live with stagnant salaries, unfilled vacancies, and increased use of part-time faculty, all of which has affected professorial life. Austin and Gamson (1983) predicted that these pressures would continue to erode collegiality and autonomy since faculty would be less participative in the decision making process on their campuses. Furthermore, the authors envisioned greater tensions between the collegial and bureaucratic structures as faculty and administrators' respect for one another continues to wane. Thelin and Townsend (1994) validate the earlier prediction by admitting that although faculty made gains in matters of salary, tenure proceedings and pension plans in the earlier decades, a more complicated structure continues to give more authority to administrators.

It has been established that as the historical context of higher education after the 1970's shifted, conditions for the professoriate changed just as dramatically. But, who are these individuals who comprise the American professoriate? In addition to understanding the environment within which they function, a description of the characteristics of these academics is important. Based on a survey from the Carnegie Foundation, Haas (1996) provides a profile of the professoriate. Approximately 584,000 faculty are employed in American 4 year colleges and universities. Seven in 10 hold a Ph.D., and 73% are employed full time. Their professional lives appear stable, since over 40% have been employed by only one institution. Women's participation in the field has increased slowly since 1980. Although that fact is somewhat justified due to the late entry of women in the field, even women with extensive experience are underrepresented in tenure positions. The author also profiles the professoriate in terms of how they spend their time and reports that they work at their profession (including research, teaching,

committee involvement, service to students, etc.) on an average of 53 hours per week during the academic year. The author discusses faculty reaction to the working environment and his research supports faculty recognition of a growing bureaucratic trend in academia. In fact, he states that 9 out of 10 faculty believe that higher education is not as effective due to the threat of bureaucratic control and the loss of professors' autonomy. More important, Haas reports that faculty view themselves as powerless at their institutions. Ironically, however, although professors hold a negative view of general conditions within higher education, three of four express satisfaction with their current positions. They are particularly happy with their relationships with their colleagues, satisfied with courses they teach, and are content with the feeling of job security. However, other issues elicit greater dissatisfaction. Professors are not satisfied with professional development opportunities, with relationships with administration, and less than half are content with promotion practices at their institutions.

Not necessarily a new but, indeed, a constant pressure in higher education is the need for faculty to publish. Haas (1996) affirms that the visibility faculty achieve from publication can provide a significant contribution to their students and their university. However, other researchers such as Solomon and Solomon (1993) caution that an overemphasis on research causes the teaching process to be undervalued. In addition, they emphasize, more administrators are then needed to supervise the research and administer the funding often associated with research, so more layers of administration eventually add to the complex structure of the institution. These authors also see a problematic relationship between research and teaching if professors' research distracts from rather than enhances their teaching efforts.

A discussion of the professoriate must include attention to the tenure system, alluded to earlier in a historical context. Again, the 1970's signified a departure from the stable economic status professors enjoyed in earlier times. Salaries began to decline and, in some states, such as New York and Maryland, professors faced salary cuts. Altbach et al. (1994) note that during the 1970's, too, the tenure system, came under attack. The main reason, again, had to do with fiscal problems universities were facing. The job market was deteriorating and it became increasingly difficult for young professors to receive promotions or to be granted tenure. Some institutions resorted to tenure quotas and raised the standards for granting tenure. Other institutions found another way around tenure policies – retrenchment. The decade saw a number of professors fired as universities argued that fiscal crises justified these actions. More important, the court system often ruled against the professors, upholding the idea that although tenure protects academic freedom, it did not supercede firing for financial reasons. Tenure concerns continued to be problematic for professors through the 1980's and 1990's as administrators looked to other ways to save money and to maintain a more bureaucratic system. Finklestein (1998) envisions that the future of tenure is extremely tenuous with the distinct possibility that state legislatures or governing boards may further jeopardize the process.

The 1980's was a decade devoted to professors' reaction to the difficulties of the 1970's. The most obvious reaction came with the growth of academic unions. Although the inception of unions seemed like a panacea for professors' problems, the movement never really became as dominant as expected. In fact, according to Altbach et al. (1994), unions were mostly concentrated in the community college sector and the lower and

middle tier publics. Again, the court system made unionizing difficult in the private sector, ruling that collegiality prevailed and, therefore, faculty were viewed as part of management.

The relationship between a professor's publishing record and his or her ability to obtain tenure has remained constant for the past 25 years. However, since the early 1980's, more researchers have begun calling for a new way to view professional scholarship. Blackburn and Baldwin (1983), referring to higher education as a labor-intensive enterprise, insist that institutions learn to use their faculty as effective resources. Clark and Corcoran (1986) also suggest that a paradox exists at the universities in that although professors spend most of their time teaching, it is not an activity that is rewarded. Research and publication still remain the principal evaluative tool for the promotion and tenure process. Boyer (1990) also notes the shift in priorities from teaching to research and the resulting narrowing of the faculty reward system. He asserts that one of the most critical responsibilities of colleges and universities is to cease the teaching versus research debate and affirm the necessity of evaluating scholarship in more creative and effective ways. More recently, Deci, Kasser and Ryan (1997) express the cynical view that good teaching in higher education is not valued by administrators. They suggest that teaching skills are rarely given much weight in hiring, and/or promotion decisions when compared with the emphasis placed on research and publication. Bess (1997) also sees a connection between professors' feelings of autonomy and the value administrators place on teaching. In an era when professors are feeling less autonomous and more threatened by bureaucracy, any additional support

which attempts to free professors from administrative compliance would be viewed positively (Deci et al., 1997).

Issues facing the professoriate during the past 25 years are a direct result of the many changes that have occurred in colleges and universities. Fiscal crises, a diverse student population, government and corporate interference, accountability initiatives, the publish or perish credo, organizational complexity, bureaucratic intensity, and decline in professional autonomy have affected the academic profession in a variety of ways, including professors' relationships with colleagues. Boice (1992) believes that success or failure in professional careers often relies on social supports. Although professors appear to value autonomy above everything else, the author suggests that faculty also rely on colleagues for support. However, as Reynolds (1992) discusses in her case study approach, most junior faculty feel isolated and threatened by more senior colleagues. In her study, several participants note a lack of substantive interaction with colleagues and, often, a reluctance on the part of colleagues to give advice, particularly on tenure and promotion issues. Several admit that the tenure process creates a tense atmosphere within a department and note a more positive environment exists when the process is over. Altbach et al. (1994) explain that the size and diversity of the professoriate often makes collegiality more difficult. Also, the institutions' complexity, with governing boards, elected senates, etc. has contributed to a loss of mutual academic purpose among colleagues. Other factors include a greater reliance on part-time faculty and increased specialization among faculty which tend to isolate individuals. The result, according to a Carnegie study (1990) is a decrease in morale among professors. Some universities, according to Solomon and Solomon (1993), are to blame for creating dissention among

colleagues. For example, the hiring of the "superstar" faculty member who is paid an exorbitant sum to bring his/her notoriety to the campus can often devastate morale within a department. This individual is often isolated from the day-to-day activities of the institution and, perhaps, tend not to cultivate a sense of loyalty or trust among colleagues.

A wealth of academic research discusses the particular impact of the changing culture of higher education on women academics. The issues discussed thus far, external pressures, tenure and promotion processes, and collegiality take on additional implications in terms of gender. Reflecting on the situation in the late 1970's and early 1980's, Adams (1984) refers to personal experience as she gives a strong indictment of the academy on the topic of women:

Thirteen years of teaching in universities has at least disclosed to me the secret that there is no second sex in academe. There is only one sex: male. The main belief that the university is or can be a heterosexual system is mistaken, as the otherwise mysterious discrepancies in the history of women in academe reveal.
(p. 135)

During the same time period, Clark and Corcoran (1986) offer some explanation why a disproportionate number of women had achieved high levels of success in academe, especially in research oriented institutions. Although discrimination is often a factor, the author also points to differential interests and preferences for teaching rather than research as other factors. Hensel (1991) also gives credence to a subtle and systematic process of gender discrimination, and predicts that at the current rate, it will take women ninety years to achieve equal representation to men on American campuses. Finklestein (1984) also addressed the issue of discrimination but, like Clark, points to

several factors that have a bearing on the fact that women have not had the academic success that men have known. He refers to factors of early socialization, proclivity toward teaching, and a disinclination to research as contributing to gender inequality in academe. Notwithstanding the many historical and sociological factors, gender inequity does still exist in the 1990's as reflected in the statistic that of all full-time faculty with a minimum of 15 years of experience, only 21% of women are tenured, compared with 79% of men (Haas, 1996, p.346). The researcher also notes that there are significant economic implications here, too, since an annual income of \$55,000 is earned by two-thirds of the men, while only 46% of women show those earnings.

The issues and challenges that American higher education has faced in the post 1970 period are significant. Although some researchers would argue that the complaints of faculty – feeling overworked, unsupported, and uninformed – are as old as academe, the last two and a half decades have increased the demands and stresses (Boice, 1992). As Glassick, Huber and Maeroff (1997) point out, the priorities of higher education have been realigned, placing more emphasis on research and graduate education, downplaying pedagogy, and resisting a broader vision of what faculty work should entail. When fiscal constraints and other external influences get added to the mix, professors' roles look quite different from those of their predecessors. There is no indication that the profession will again look the way it did at its inception. Researchers predict that economic concerns will continue to plague universities and expectations will be that higher education must serve as an engine for the nation's economic growth (Zusman, 1994). Accountability, then, will continue to be an ever present influence on what professors do with their time,

and they can be assured that an even stronger bureaucracy will decrease professional autonomy.

Professors have been and will continue to be easy targets for abuse. Solomon and Solomon (1993) state that they are often eccentric, and their work is often removed from the realm of everyday existence. More important, these authors suggest that professors are not very good at defending themselves and resort to pretentious platitudes in defense of themselves. Therefore, society often harbors prejudices against them. However, the authors also emphasize that professors are not all the same and that the university is a richer place for the variety of academics it perpetuates. Wilson and Gaff (1975) considered the image of professors much earlier and asserted that many disparate images have emerged. While professors have often been depicted as fictional stereotypes, many of these "types," to some degree, are represented among faculties at colleges and universities. Since the focus of this research is the image of the professor in fiction published from 1980-1997, it is relevant to consider the research on the professoriate as it was discussed throughout this chapter to consider how realistically fictional writers portray members of the professoriate, the topic that is central to this study. Do professors in these novels resemble the idealistic perception of Solomon and Solomon(1993), or will Sykes' (1988) disparaging image emerge? More important, do campus culture in these novels resemble post 1970 culture and, if so, how do fictional professors react to the challenges? Indeed, among the myriad of conflicting images of the professor in reality and in fiction, one notion remains constant – the professoriate is central to the life of the university.

Chapter IV

FACULTY TENSIONS: A CULTURE DIVIDED

Once there were twelve bodies
 Where we now sit. I know it,
 because there are still husks
 where those bodies once were,
 empty carapaces
 overtaken during the mind's coup,
 begun as a benevolent
 dictatorship
 but now gone wild
 (as all power does)
 with its sense of itself,
 and so we are all seated here,
 captives
 of bad wine and too much too eat,
 and grow quietly to hate one another
 for the pure tedium of what we have become-
 repeating the word tenure
 as if it were a mantra,
 while the body,
 that old anthropologist
 (the one true scholar among us)
 stirs restlessly
 in its prison of pomp and
 conceptions
 as if to remind us
 how brief its tenure is,
 how transient its publications. (Blumenthal, 1993).

The preceding poem represents the work of Martin Weinstock, a fictional Harvard professor in Weinstock Among the Dying (Blumenthal, 1993). It serves to underscore a principal concern among many professors in American academic fiction, the promotion and tenure process. Just as important, however, is the tone of the poem which echoes the cynicism, mistrust, and insecurity that the fictional professors articulate in the novels.

Vandermeer (1982) offers a common definition:

Tenure is a privilege of faculty members in higher education, justified primarily on the grounds that in order to conform to the highest standards as a professional teacher/researcher the professor must be relieved from insecurity and pressures that may be exerted by administrators, governing boards, and other powers when those pressures tend to suppress the truth. (p. 125)

With regard to the process as is it portrayed in fiction, she states that the academic novel is replete with professors whose main concern is the acquisition of tenure and with administrators who are determined to sabotage that goal. The tenure process, however, serves as both the cause and effect of a myriad of other problems that fictional professors face. For example, several fictional universities face harsh financial crises, and professors' professional lives are affected by the ultimate freezes placed on hiring, promotion and the granting of tenure. Bowen and Schuster (1986) speak to the fact that financial stringency has led to the increase of temporary and/or part-time faculty appointments. Among the implications, they note that part-time professors are not able to assume a share of the many institutional and departmental responsibilities which consist of advising students, serving on committees, etc. These researchers also point out that the requirements for tenure and promotion also have become more rigorous as institutions are eager to impose financial constraints. Professors experience, then, even greater emphasis being placed on publishing and primary research as the criteria gets more stringent. Those faculty who operate under part-time status also have their share of difficulties since they represent a completely different type of employment. As Clark (1987) asserts, they are evaluated less systematically, receive little administrative or collegial support, and have almost no contact outside of class with students.

Fisher (1994), too, suggests that the financial cutbacks imposed on universities have placed added pressures on academics, and academic novels affirm this idea. As pressures increase for the fictional professor, another obvious effect is the erosion of a collegial atmosphere. Maddock-Cowart (1989) observes that central to professors' university experience should be the concept of a community of scholars. Inherent to this community, she suggests, should be the assumption that deep and abiding friendships would exist among colleagues. However, in academic novels, professors appear, for the most part, isolated from one another and are often engaged in an atmosphere of mistrust.

Without question, financial constraints of the last two decades have greatly impacted the professorial environment. Full-time faculty has been reduced, more rigorous publication standards for promotion and tenure have diverted teaching efforts, and accountability is forever looming its head.

This chapter will examine many of the professional pressures that fictional professors face in their respective novels. Although the discussion will focus primarily on promotion and tenure issues, attention will be given to the factors which precipitated concerns for the professors and with the ultimate effects these issues have on the professors. Thus, the culture of the professoriate in these novels will be under scrutiny: is it a divided culture, as Professor Weinstock suggests, where professors "grow quietly to hate one another"?

In the Blumenthal (1993) novel, Weinstock Among the Dying, Professor Martin Weinstock finds himself in mid-life and trapped in the academic world of Harvard University. Martin finds much of Harvard life disturbing, and he and his colleagues spend a good deal of time agonizing over promotion and tenure. In addition to the tension the

issue creates among colleagues, professors in this novel often express feelings of personal and professional insecurity. Early in the novel, for example, as Weinstock confides to another professor, "his one real friend in the English Department," (p. 15) about his feelings of malaise, the colleague immediately diagnoses Weinstock's problem as feelings of insecurity about his future at Harvard. Clearly, the most disturbing fact about life at Harvard for the professors in this novel is the unwillingness of the University to grant tenure. Therefore, professorial life becomes a series of several one year appointments without any sense of future stability. As Weinstock explains, "Yet it seemed that the only thing that happened to a happy man in Cambridge was six or eight years of economic and professional insecurity followed by a one-way ticket out of the place - wham bam, thank you, ma'am!" (p. 48). Weinstock's description of life at Harvard is made more poignant when he is personally faced with the cruel reality of interminable single year appointments. When Professor Gamson opts for early retirement as the Director of the Creative Writing Program, Weinstock is offered the position for a 3 year term. However, he questions what the appointment will mean in terms of his future at Harvard. He explains to the Dean that at the end of the 3 year period, he will be 42 years old and will have completed 8 years at Harvard and will still not have job security. The Dean replies, " 'But as you know, this University has a slightly more irregular way of handling promotions than most institutions' "(p. 140).

The connection between feelings of insecurity on the part of professors and an institution's historic reluctance to grant tenure in favor of yearly appointments is a topic that Vandermeer (1982) discusses. The central idea in her definition of tenure, as discussed earlier, is the emphasis on the fact that tenure may be considered a privilege for

faculty members in American higher education, but it is justified on the grounds that the professor must be relieved from the external pressures that may be exerted by bureaucratic powers within the university's structure. Only when these pressures are relieved, the researcher states, can a professor conform to the highest academic standards.

Although Martin Weinstock experiences difficulty with Harvard's tenure process, other professors in the novel receive worse treatment. Professor Gamson, for instance, had spent 35 years as an untenured adjunct professor when he was given the directorship of the Creative Writing Program a few years before Weinstock was offered the job. Gamson eventually chooses retirement, but another professor, Askold Doxbinder, makes a more tragic choice, suicide. Although he had won the Pulitzer Prize, Doxbinder was denied tenure. He chained himself to the steps of the library on a winter night and died of exposure. An investigation later revealed that the two members of his department who had voted against his tenure were historians whose own books had been unsuccessfully submitted for the Pulitzer.

When professors in Blumenthal's novel are not agonizing over their own fate, they are often giving advice to colleagues about tenure. When Weinstock suspects that he is going to be offered the Creative Writing position, Professor Armitage warns, " 'Just don't forget to ask for the Big T when she offers it to you, OK?' " (p. 137). When Weinstock questions Armitage's advice, the latter responds, " 'Security. You know - tenure. Tell her you've been here for five fucking years, that you've published more than all the so-called serious scholars in the department put together, and that it's time for the university to lay the Big T on you if they want you to stay' " (p. 137). However, Martin Weinstock chooses not to remain at Harvard, so he escapes the greater part of the

exasperating tenure process. As insecure as the process at Harvard might have made him feel, his confidence in his creative powers does not wane, and he decides to pursue his career outside of academe.

Professors' insecurities are manifested in other ways in the novel. The relationship between the pressure to publish and the granting of tenure, for example, forces professors to make difficult decisions about their professional lives. Professor Marikovski, fictional author of 27 books and three hundred journal articles, feels insecure about accepting an invitation to South America while he is on sabbatical, telling Weinstock, "I felt I needed to stay here and finish my Thoreau book" (p. 26).

The emphasis on scholarly publishing and its relationship to tenure is faced by many other fictional professors. Professor Vivian Twostar is a professor of anthropology and the central character in The Crown of Columbus by Louise Erdich and Michael Dorris (1991). Early in the novel she laments the fact that she was "ordered" to submit a professional article on Christopher Columbus. She states, "My curriculum vitae was top heavy with teaching experience at four different schools but light on what he [the Dean] termed scholarly productivity." Vivian speaks, too, of her commitment to service on her resume but recognizes, "When it came down to it, the dean and I both knew that good works didn't get you tenure" (p.17).

As many of the characters in Blumenthal's novel, Professor Twostar speaks of tenure in terms of security. A 40 year-old single (and expectant) mother, Vivian yearns for a lifetime contract. "And, I admit it, I bought into the idea of tenure. It seemed to me a kind of dividing line that I was overdue to cross" (p. 17). However, Vivian, too, learns that in the pursuit of tenure, relationships with colleague often suffer. She

becomes outraged when another professor suggests that some members of the tenure committee question her objectivity as a scholar on Columbus since she was of American Indian descent. She assumes the remark “ ‘was to make me nervous. To put a knife at my jugular’ ”(p. 240).

Kronik (1997) suggests some interesting ideas about the reasons some professors spend much of their time attempting to get their work published:

We publish partly because the system assumes that we will and because if we want to get ahead - or in some cases keep our jobs - we have to. We publish partly because of human frailty and vanity, because it feeds our egos to see our names in print, and as we rush to our colleagues' footnotes and indexes and bibliographies in pursuit of our legitimization. . . . Finally, we surely publish because we do sincerely enjoy the game - yes, the game - and we end up believing in it; we end up taking ourselves very seriously. (p. 161)

Vivian Twostar is one example of a fictional professor who, despite bemoaning the pressures of publishing and the agonizing ritual of tenure, is determined to find some degree of personal and professional satisfaction in the process as the above statement suggests. She states, “ ‘Tenure was worth some struggle, worth feeling pressure, but the effort it demanded had to pay off. So when Columbus knocked, I had no choice but to answer the door’ ” (p. 13). As Vivian relentlessly pursues the missing pieces of research she needs for her article, she sacrifices her personal life and, at times, places herself and her family in grave danger. She clearly takes the research seriously and ends up doing something she never thought she would - believing in it.

Possessing neither the cynicism of Martin Weinstock nor the passion of Vivian Twostar, Celestine Price is a doctoral student who gets constant advice about academic life from her professors in Cantor's Dilemma by Carl Djerassi (1989). Two divergent perspectives are given in the novel about professors and their pursuit of tenure. Professor Graham Lufkin admits feelings of insecurity about his research, but he credits Johns Hopkins University for recognizing his positive teaching efforts. " 'When I got tenure at Hopkins, I was a promising researcher. But the tenure decision was really made because of my teaching' " (p. 130). Later in the novel, however, when Celestine has finished her graduate work and is interviewing for a position at Harvard, she receives a more scathing view of the tenure process. She is told that she would never really have a chance of obtaining tenure, unless, of course, she wins the Nobel Prize. She tells her friend, " 'They're actually proud that they don't promote from within. The implication was that you should be satisfied to have started out at Harvard. When you're really ready for tenure, you'll just have to look someplace else' "(p. 166).

About the time of publication of the novels cited above, an article by Chronister and Truesdell (1991) appeared in the Review of Higher Education. The authors speak about the last decade of the 20th century as a challenging period in American higher education. They affirm that institutions will be facing numerous challenges during this period involving their most critical resource, the faculty. Citing important statistics, they state that in the fall of 1987 25% of full-time faculty were age 55 and older, but estimate that by academic year 2000, 54% of tenured faculty will be 56 years of age or older. These figures support two ideas. First, the American professoriate is "graying," and second, the majority of full-time faculty are tenured. The effect of these

statistics on the younger members of the professoriate is that more and more institutions are adopting a strategy that will not retain all of the previous tenured positions either by tightening standards for professors to obtain tenure or by increasing their hiring of non-tenure track faculty. In fact, among the 52 institutions who provided information for the article, Chronister and Truesdell report that 22 of the institutions have reviewed their tenure system during the past 3 years with the majority making probationary periods more stringent and tightening standards for research. The academic fiction discussed thus far seems to reflect the challenges professors face as they grope with the tenure issue.

No discipline is spared the turmoil of the tenure process in academic fiction. English professors, anthropologists, pure scientists, and even philosophy professors express concern for their professional futures. In The Mind-Body Problem by Rebecca Goldstein (1983), several references are made to the abundance of Ph.D.'s in philosophy and to the effect this fact has on the professoriate. Renee Feuer, a Princeton graduate student in philosophy in Goldstein's novel, notes that in recent years there have been about 80 applicants for every one job in philosophy.

Many of those on the breadlines are there for the second or third time, having come to the terminus of their non-tenure track job, or having been turned down for tenure. As difficult as it has become to get those first jobs, it's become even more challenging to hold onto them. It's much more practical for a university to refuse tenure, and the salary increase that goes with it, and instead hire a freshly minted Ph.D. (p. 146)

Goldstein's novel speaks bitterly about senior faculty members and suggests the erosion of collegiality between older and younger members of the faculty. Her characters make reference to the fact that senior faculty could not pass the standards they now impose on their juniors. They refer to the "good old day" when tenure had a whole different meaning,

But the economics of university life have changed and tenure has been the exception on most campuses. One state university has been automatically turning down all young faculty who haven't managed to publish a book in their first six years of teaching. Recently they turned down a candidate who had written a book, and a well received one. Unfortunately, judged they, he had written the book only to get tenure. (p. 147)

Arbitrary criteria and double standards pose problems for Glen Cady, Professor of German, in Novemberfest by Theodore Weesner (1994). Unlike most professors in academic novels who are vying for tenure, Glen is a late starter. He is completing his sixth year as a 52 year old assistant professor attempting to hold on to his tenuous position at the university. Professor Cady is characterized as a decent human being who had dropped out of high school at 17 and escaped from a bleak future as a factory worker in the Midwest to join the army. His tour of duty in Germany becomes "the chief source of his new nourishment" (Engel, 1994, p. 11). Later he goes back to school and eventually earns a doctorate in German literature.

As soon as Glen is introduced, his feelings of insecurity about his future with the university are obvious. As he ponders his fate, he realizes, "Next year it is up or out

.... Now, after three decades of catching up, he is tenure-track, but not tenurable. His particular flaw, besides starting so late, is not unusual: articles but no book” (p. 9). At a meeting with the Dean, during a discussion of tenure, he is not made to feel any better. The Dean questions Glen’s decision to take a doctorate in a field that is declining and also comments on his rather late entry into the field of higher education. The Dean also echoes a familiar institutional concern when he reminds Glen that, “ ‘Tenure is an enormous investment for the university’ ” (p.9). In an attempt to defend his position and to suggest that arbitrary standards exist, Glen reminds the Dean that his credentials are as good as most others who have been tenured. The Dean finds exception to Glen’s defense, by reminding him that he has no book to his publication credit. When Glen attempts to tout his record on translations, the Dean is still not impressed. “ ‘Translations are fine, they give the university visibility. But as you know, the guidelines make it clear that translations cannot count as publications’ ” (p. 10).

In this novel, Weesner’s professor feels more than just insecure about his future, however. Cady suspects that he is actually being blackballed as the tenure process seems to break down and a question of unethical behavior surfaces on the part of his senior colleagues. The chairwoman of the department, whom Cady believed was his friend, assigns Otto Gentz, a tenured full professor to act as his advocate from the department. Glen is immediately doubtful about Gentz’ objectivity. He has always believed that Gentz dislikes him and he considers Gentz devious. “ ‘If he retained the vaguest hope, it has to be dispelled by this. How could Monica assign such a man as his advocate?’ ” (p.73). At first, it appears that Gentz intends to carry out his responsibility to Glen by keeping him abreast of the situation. He tells Glen that during a preliminary straw vote

of the department, the result was that all six senior members of the department voted against his tenure. He reiterates what the Dean had told Glen earlier, that his lack of a book as part of his publication record makes his case weak. When Glen reminds Gentz that other members have not published any more than he has, the senior professor's response echoes the arbitrary standards and uses the all too common financial excuse that has been prevalent in similar discussions in academic novels. Gentz states, "Well, entering is one thing, admitting others is something else. Plus the usual arguments, declining enrollments and so on" (p. 103). Glen becomes bitter over the fact that his advocate, Professor Gentz, contributed to the negative vote but is assured that Gentz is not trying to undermine his case and promises to keep him informed about the ongoing process.

The situation worsens for Professor Cady, and his suspicions about the process prove to be correct. A short time after his conversation with Gentz, he hears that the department's recommendation not to grant him tenure has reached the Dean who informs Glen of the university's ultimate decision. He is outraged that he was never informed that the process had reached this stage, and Otto Gentz offers weak excuses about how the process proceeded without Glen's knowledge.

Clearly, in his novel, Weesner portrays Professor Glen Cady as a victim of a changing system in higher education. Finklestein et al,(1998) address the trend in the late 1980's and 1990's for institutions to offer more non-tenure track appointments:

It is as though the concentric circles that have always represented the differing degrees of mutual commitment have been altered: the core inner circle (depicting

the tenure-track appointments) has been squeezed mightily while the diameters of the circles that represent the more transient appointments have expanded. (p. 107)

The research of Glassick et al. (1997) addresses a topic that Professor Cady faces in the novel regarding the candidate's evaluation process:

A scholar's trust in evaluation depends on what he or she believes is going on behind closed doors. Predictable methods should produce no surprises. Annual reviews for junior faculty should not amount to routine exercises. Instead, the evaluation should comment helpfully on progress toward appointment and tenure. (p. 55)

Clearly, in Cady's case, the ideal scenario that these researchers recommend does not take place. The committee, rather, has its own biases about Cady's scholarship and appear to go out of their way to discourage him from pursuing the process. The standards are, in fact, arbitrary, if those sitting in judgment do not even possess the very credentials that the candidate is required to have.

Some writers of academic fiction couch serious statements about professorial life within a satiric framework. Straight Man, by Richard Russo (1997), is characterized as "academic burlesque" by Skow (1997). In an article about the novel, he refers to collegial relations in the remote Pennsylvania college where the novel is set as an institution that is replete with jealousy and backbiting. In addition to tackling the tenure and promotion issue in this novel, Russo blames administrative budget wars for the degeneration of professorial life.

As Straight Man opens, groundbreaking is underway for a new facility on campus, the College of Technical Careers Building. At the same time, rumors about

massive faculty layoffs are rampant. Professor William Henry Devereaux Jr., creative writing teacher and chairman of the English Department, remains, at first, naive about the administration's plans. He dismisses the possibility that there might be a purge of faculty. "Even university administrators are not foolish enough to spend millions on a new facility in the same year they intend to fire tenured faculty and claim financial hardship as justification" (p. 70). Later, when a biology professor expresses his concern about the impending layoff, William still believes the rumor lacks credibility and asks, " 'You really think they can just start sacking people with tenure?' "(p.319).

Sounding even more confident by reminding his colleagues that faculty are threatened every year with cutbacks, William says firmly, " 'There will be no faculty purge this year . . . what there will be is more belt tightening, more denied sabbaticals, an extension of the hiring freeze' "(p. 9). However, William's attempt to relieve the pressures felt by his colleagues backfires. Instead of being grateful for his support, his colleagues get suspicious and question his motives. They become convinced that he is cooperating with the administration and preparing a list of faculty dismissals.

Faculty relationships at this fictional college have a long history of mistrust and pent up anger. One faculty member's award of tenure over another colleague often served as the basis for a tense relationship. William, for example, reminisces about the year that both he and another professor, Finny, came up for tenure and promotion to associate professor. Although no one thought Finny had any chance since he had not finished his doctorate and had no publications to his credit, William was turned down and Finny's application was accepted. Though William admits that it was rather brash of him to seek tenure and promotion after only being at the college for one year, he was still

outraged about Finny. One year later, William sought revenge and applied for full professor. The committee, seemingly shocked by his arrogance, nevertheless approved his request.

Interestingly, although professors in this novel seem prepared to go to any lengths to secure tenure, they are not necessarily happy after they get it. Whereas the characters in Weinstein Among the Dying, The Crown of Columbus, Cantor's Dilemma, and The Mind-Body Problem view tenure as a necessary life-time net of professional security, William Devereaux views it as a deathtrap. He states, " 'Most of us who came to the university twenty years ago continued to make application for years after we arrived, but then tenure and promotion locked us in place and we gave up' "(p. 245). Even after he expresses his satisfaction with becoming a full professor in such an unprecedented short period of time, William expresses dismay with his permanent status, saying that the committee was " 'rooting me to the scene of the crime, too weighted down by tenure, rank, and salary to be marketable ever again' "(p. 157). This realization, then, seems to preclude Devereaux, as well as other fictional professors, from moving to another institution.

Whether it is eagerly anticipated or viewed as a life sentence, the tenure process has its share of critics among professors in academic fiction. Perhaps the author with the most scathing view is Saul Bellow who allows Professor Albert Corde in The Dean's December to express his harsh views about academic life, including the issue of tenure. Siegel (1989) states that the subject of university life stirs both rancor and resentment in Bellow and that he considers most of what is wrong with the nation's culture is the fault of the university and its professors. In the novel, an old friend of Albert's, Dewey

Spangler, writes a newspaper column about the professor. He recalls an observation of Corde's that admits some professors do work hard, " 'but a professor when he gets tenure doesn't have to do anything. A tenured professor and a welfare mother with eight kids have much in common' "(p. 303).

In the novel, Professor Corde is feeling the backlash of a series of articles he had written about corruption in Chicago, the city where he is a journalism professor and Dean at a small college. Among the many problems Corde encounters as a result of the articles, he receives serious repercussions for not getting clearance from his college before publishing them. In the articles, Corde had attacked everyone - politicians and businessmen alike, much to the anger of the administration. Spangler says in his column on Corde, " 'He also blames the universities. Academics have made no effort to lead the public. . . they are dominated by the same consensus and ruled by public opinion . . . they are failures and phonies. That's what his articles reveal' " (pp. 301-302).

Bellow and his fictional professor echo the opinion of Sykes (1988), journalist and researcher, who also takes a dim view of the American professor and the justification of tenure in modern higher education:

The tenuring process is academia's ultimate control mechanism and it is often used ruthlessly to snuff out dissent among junior profs who deviate from the standard line, either in their scholarship, their methodology, or their politics. But once through the portals of tenure, the young professor finds himself girded about with procedural armor that provides him with a security unheard of in any other profession. (p. 137)

Albert Corde also seems to share the feeling of malaise that was observed by Martin Weinstock in Weinstock Among the Dying and William Devereaux in Straight Man. Although the reasons may be different, both characters feel disenchanting by academe. In Corde's case, it appears he writes the controversial articles to escape some aspects of the academic arena when he says, "It was no wonder that the classroom, the library environment, had driven him finally into the streets of Chicago" (p.130).

Hedeman (1993) discusses the tendency of the professor in some works of academic fiction to seek escapes. He suggests that often these professors are plagued by self-doubt and personal or professional insecurities. Many of them seek alternatives to their academic lives, unlike the more traditional portrayal in early academic fiction when professors sought solace from within the academic environment. The author also states that one reason fictional professors find less satisfaction from their disciplines is because of the fragmentation among colleagues even within the same department. The literature discussed thus far indicates that promotion and tenure, financial constraints, and the "publish or perish" credo are factors that contribute to the fragmentation of faculty culture.

A cast of professorial characters in the midst of their own culture clash dominates the novel Moo by Jane Smiley (1995). Resembling Richard Russo's satiric novel, Straight Man, Moo has been called a satire on academic mores, a novel that indicts the managerial values that dominate higher education (Taylor, 1995). In an article by McMillen (1995) Smiley is quoted as saying that it was always her desire to write two novels about American agriculture, a comedy and a tragedy. "It seemed obvious to me that the tragedy [reference to A Thousand Acres] takes place down on the farm, and the

comedy takes place at the university' ” (p. A19). As in many other academic novels, departmental rivalries, massive cutbacks, and promotion maneuvering are everyday concerns. In Smiley's work, however, professors engage in a myriad of despicable schemes either for their own personal gain or to thwart further financial intrusion from an external governing body.

Moo University is a midwestern agricultural college that is falling victim to the political whims of a state governor who wishes to cut staff, slash programs, and obtain financial help from corporations. Convinced that the educational enterprise cannot run itself, the governor is determined to take over and redeem the university from a faculty whom he believes is trying to exploit the taxpayers. A chapter in the novel entitled “Common Wisdom” summarizes the perspective of the governor:

It was well known among the legislators that the faculty as a whole was determined to undermine the moral and commercial well-being of the state, and that supporting a large and nationally famous university with state monies was exactly analogous to raising a nest of vipers in your own bed. (p. 19)

The legislators' lack of trust and low opinion of the university faculty are almost justified as Smiley introduces each member from the professorial ranks. First among them is Professor Lionel Gift, a self-promoting economist who is also chairman of the university promotion and tenure committee. Described by Smiley as the committee on campus most fraught with politics, it was ironically also termed the most sensitive committee. It soon becomes apparent that Professor Gift succeeds in making most people sensitive to his personal needs. “What repaid Dr. Gift for his time and hard work were the connections he made and strengthened with other important members of the

university community whose specialized knowledge could be had at a lower cost if they felt a personal tie with him" (p. 33). Another committee member, Professor Helen Levy, constantly makes references to the ways in which this committee burdens a person's life. Professor Cates, conservative and righteous, is also a member. At the mercy of the committee and anxiously awaiting approval of his application for promotion is Professor Timothy Monaghan. Tensions between Monaghan and his colleagues are apparent from the first day of the new semester and last for the many months that the committee takes to review his material. Timothy often expresses his own self-doubts and, at the same time, feels a sense of mistrust toward his colleagues. Even at a faculty party, he feels the tension:

The uncomfortable result was that he barely spoke to Helen. . . . A note from Margaret in his mail, just Dec. 1, had let him know the date of the committee's consideration of his material. He believed that was all she actually knew, but it was hard to talk to her these days, too. The words he could not avoid saying, "my promotion, my promotion," rolled out in a self-absorbed donkey bray and intolerably offended his own ears. (p. 166)

Although academic research tends not to consider tenure and promotion as separate processes, In Teaching Well and Liking It, edited by James Bess (1997), Beyer refers to the promotion process as the most powerful tool in academe. She suggests that powerful signals about what is valued by an academic culture are sent to faculty via the promotion process. In particular, she states that junior faculty tend to become disillusioned and unmotivated if they perceive that promotion criteria seems arbitrary. She recommends the forming of alliances between junior and senior faculty to reduce

feelings of insecurity. Glassick et al. (1997) speak, too, of the importance of departmental colleagues who often make the first and most important evaluations for candidates for promotion.

As Smiley takes the reader into the committee meeting on Monaghan's application, a less than positive picture of collegiality emerges. Professor Gift handles the first order of business as he reads a communication from the English Department that Monaghan's third novel was accepted for publication. Although Helen chastises the committee for pretending to have the literary expertise to judge Monaghan's work, a debate ensues over the fact that parts of Monaghan's novel had been published in Playboy Magazine. As his novel is referred to as salacious material by one committee member and a trivial work by another, Monaghan is only marginally recommended for promotion with a "6" on a scale from 1 to 10. However, Professor Levy has managed to get a confidential copy of Gift's report on a land mining company which implicates the professor and a sinister billionaire in a scheme to mine gold in the last remaining virgin rain forest in Costa Rica. Eventually, the report lands in the hands of Monaghan and toward the end of the novel, he is calculating his revenge, " 'Finally, it was a nice way to spend Christmas, on the phone, cooking up the downfall of Dr. Lionel Gift and all his allies and minions' " (p.303).

No one seems to win at Moo University. When Gift's scheme hits the newspapers and a campus protest against the destruction of the rain forest takes place, the governor orders more cutbacks as a punitive measure, not for the university's association with the scheme, but for firing " 'all those bozos up there who are getting the sons and daughters of the people of this state stirred up' " (p. 350).

Professors in this novel also go to ludicrous ends to obtain grant money and perform research to win over the legislators and the university administration. Chairman X of the Horticultural Department, for example, is involved in a project to clone herds of cows which will produce calf-free lactation. Dr. Bo Jones conducts an experiment to see how big a pig will grow if allowed to eat at will, but it is discovered that he is working for a subsidiary of the Western Egg and Milk Company.

Notwithstanding the satiric framework of Smiley's novel, the professors in Moo parallel the public perception of these professionals. According to Finklestein et al. (1998), faculty have not fared well in the estimation of both the public and the policymakers:

The perception appears to be widely shared among them that faculty lead privileged, protected lives, often pursuing agendas incongruent with students' needs—in a word, say their critics, out of touch with the real world. On the whole, the faculty of the 1990's have become much more accustomed to hearing themselves characterized as a part of the problem, as a central feature of the academy that needs to be fixed if the higher education enterprise is to maintain viability (and market share) in the coming era. (pp.2-3)

The authors note that in recent years a scarcity of resources and the need for administrators and governing boards to contain costs have fueled some of the perceptions about higher education and the critical role of faculty in the enterprise. Although higher education and the faculty will always be linked, these authors predict that "tension between faculty self-interest and the broader interests of higher education's institutions,

perhaps invariably in some degree of conflict with one another, may well be intensifying” (p.3).

Professor Benjamin Puttbutt III, a Black professor at a mostly white, racist college, is another faculty member desperate to achieve tenure status in Ishmael Reed’s humorous academic novel, Japanese by Spring (1993). As in Smiley’s novel, Reed’s professors often engage in unethical maneuverings either to obtain tenure or to prevent others from getting it. Collegiality seems completely absent as faculty self-interest dominates the course of events in the novel.

When Professor Puttbutt is first introduced, he is eagerly awaiting a positive tenure decision that he feels entitled to, especially as he recalls the circumstances under which he was hired by the English Department at Jack London College.

The deal was that after three years of commuting between the African -American Studies Department, between those who believed Europe to be the center of all culture and those who said that the center of culture was Africa, he’d receive tenure in the Humanity Department. Those were the terms of the agreement he’d made with Jack London during his job interview at the MLA. (p. 4)

The reader soon learns, however, that during his time at the college, Benjamin did everything possible to secure his position in the Humanity Department, including selling out his colleagues in the African Studies Department, as well as his own ideology. Recognizing that the ideology of the day on his campus was feminism and that most of those who would vote on his tenure decision in the Humanity Department were feminists, Benjamin works hard at forming relationships with these faculty. This effort, though, is still not without its feelings of mistrust. Feeling anxious about rumors that the Humanity

Department is trying to attract Professor April Jokujoku, a radical lesbian activist, to the campus, Benjamin questions the chairperson of the Women's Studies Department about the potential new hire. Although she assures him that the rumors have no basis, Benjamin also expresses his concern to Professor Milch, Chairperson of the Humanity Department. Again, he is told that he has nothing to worry about.

Professor Puttbutt's anxiety is heightened as the semester draws to a close, and he does not receive a contract nor is his course listed in the catalogue. Although he is promised a telephone call about the reappointment the evening that he meets with the chairperson of the African Studies Department, the semester ends without his ever receiving the call. As he awaits a contract, he is led to believe that his tenure application looks positive as he is again reassured that even if April Jokujoku is hired, the appointment would not impact on his position. He begins the new semester believing, "His tenure was so close, he could taste it" (p. 59).

Benjamin's dream is shattered, however, when a short time later he receives a letter stating the committee's decision to deny him tenure. Puttbutt shares a common fate with many other fictional professors, as the college states its expectation that he will continue to teach on a year-to-year basis. As the new semester is about to begin, and Puttbutt is still getting the run-around from the departments he is associated with, problems are mounting for Jack London College. When President Stool is ousted and a new Japanese president, Dr. Yamato, takes over, Puttbutt starts his plan of revenge as the new president gains him as an ally and appoints him Academic Dean of the college. He immediately obtains the confidential report on his tenure application and a complete role reversal among faculty takes place as Puttbutt's colleagues plead for mercy when Yamato

threatens to fire everybody. In a comical scene when Professor Crabtree from the English Department recognizes the reversal of fates and asks Puttbutt to get Yamato to reconsider terminating him, Puttbutt replies: “ ‘Dr. Yamato and I decided that it would be wasting money to keep people on the staff whose courses were drawing only a few students . . . the Japanese don’t like to waste money’ ” (p. 95). Then when Crabtree attempts to defend himself about not publishing enough due to a lack of time, Puttbutt sarcastically states:

I know. Going to these Humanity conventions which provide you with an opportunity to meet women other than your wife, and to sample exotic cuisine. Why your professional organization’s program included more information on the restaurants in Chinatown than on the topics when it met last year in San Francisco. I also found out, Professor, that it was you who was instrumental in getting my tenure denied. (p. 96)

Reed allows Professor Puttbutt and the other professors to redeem themselves, however, at the end of the novel. Benjamin admits that he was angry because the Department of Humanity denied him tenure and the other professors admit having learned something about themselves and their narrow-minded value systems that were based purely on self-interest. Jack London College, however, is shut down and is seeking new investors as the novel ends.

In Japanese by Spring, the culture clash that has been dominant in many of the other academic novels takes on a slightly different perspective. Rather, Reed seems to depict a college in this novel that is void of culture. There is not a single professor here, or administrator, for that matter, who seems to be able to define the college’s culture.

Instead, everyone professes his or her own. From the feminists who do not believe a male should teach in the Women's Studies Department, to the purists in the English Department who believe a course on Milton should run even if only two students have subscribed to it, to Puttbutt himself, who publishes articles and gives lectures on whatever topic might assist him in his tenure pursuit, it is obvious that no single understanding of the mission of Jack London College prevails. Clark (1987) speaks to the topic of academic culture and admits that it is probably fragmented into many parts by the variety of disciplines in many types of institutions. However, he also believes that it is plausible for academic professionals to find a common cause and wider interests even if they work under varying conditions. He suggests that common principles about belief, commitment and interest can support an academic culture within an institution. The self-interested professors in Reed's novel are fragmented because they face the more complicated dilemma of not having the vaguest idea about what their college's beliefs, commitment or interests are.

The most simplistic interpretation regarding who is awarded tenure in American universities is given by Professor McCrimmon in John Kenneth Galbraith's (1990) novel, A Tenured Professor. Montgomery Marvin, a doctoral candidate at Cambridge University, tells McCrimmon that he wants to be an economist but also hopes to make a contribution to the liberal agenda, "Peace, a better break for the poor and inner cities, greater equality in income distribution, government assuming its proper responsibilities. I haven't got it fully worked out yet" (p. 38). McCrimmon responds to Marvin's idealistic agenda:

Most unwise, most unwise. And certainly impractical. . . . You simply won't get tenure. Tenure was originally invented to protect radical professors, those who challenged the accepted order. But we don't have such people anymore at the universities, and the reason is tenure. When the time comes to grant it nowadays, the radicals get screened out. That's its principal function. It's a very good system, really – keeps academic life at a decent level of tranquility. (p.38)

Although many fictional professors discussed thus far would hardly agree that the tenure system and tranquility are synonymous, Marvin accepts McCrimmon's premise. He follows the professor's advice, transfers to Berkeley to study economics in the conservative tradition of Milton Friedman, and completes his Ph.D. with a conservative thesis that secures him a tenure-track position at Harvard. In the middle of his first year there, Marvin is awarded tenure for seemingly having the right political attitude as well as an impressive publication record.

Professor Marvin Montgomery recognizes the professional security that accompanies tenure as do professors in other academic novels. However, Marvin also seeks the personal and professional power that he believes tenure guarantees even outside of the academy. When he creates an economic forecasting system that hints of inside trading practices, he becomes extremely wealthy and uses many of the profits to force corporate America and the United States government to become more socially conscious. Even when he expresses some fear of potential bankruptcy as the stock market shows signs of fluctuation, Marvin says, “ ‘Sure we're safe. If tenure protects socialists and communists, it has to protect capitalists’ ” (p. 87).

Tenure at Harvard University, however, does not give Marvin the power needed to move the corporate world and the federal government in another direction, nor does it protect him from bureaucrats who fear his agenda. Eventually, the SEC finds a loophole in Marvin's financial maneuvering to charge him with a violation of the securities law. At the end of the novel, Marvin loses his wife, a good deal of his money, and the right to continue his method of speculative market trading, but as Professor McCrimmon reminds him, 'Anyway, you still have tenure' " (p. 197). Marvin retreats to the academic world of Harvard University and learns that only here does tenure equate with power. He may not have had the difficulty obtaining tenure that other fictional professors faced, but he had a false sense of what it would mean outside of academe.

The academic novels discussed in this chapter depict professors fraught with tension. Forced to confront the changing climate of higher education in the 1980's and 1990's, these professors seek tenure in a system where the process is being replaced by year to year appointments and more stringent standards. These changes are often the result of financial constraints placed on institutions and dramatically impact professors' professional lives. Whether novelists deal with the topic seriously or couch the issue in a satiric framework, some common themes about the tenure process emerge: collegiality within the professoriate is often absent, arbitrary publication standards are the rule more than the exception, and a sense of despair is pervasive among the fictional professors. Tenure, with all of its ramifications, and the many other issues within the rapidly changing world of academe in the past two decades, do seem to divide faculty culture in the academic novel of this time period.

Chapter V

THE FICTIONAL PROFESSOR AS TEACHER

When my preliminary class lists arrives in intercampus mail, I match the students' names with their faces in each freshman book, curious as a blind date. They have chosen me-or at least my subject-and so have an initial advantage. They have a week to shop before committing to a final schedule, and if I disappoint in any way, they can transfer out of my domain without penalty or ostensible hard feelings. But if they elect to remain, the balance of power shifts. Then *they* must please *me*. (Erdich and Dorris, 1991, pp. 79-80)

The above quotation from the novel, The Crown of Columbus, suggests a dramatic shift in rhetoric during the last two decades when the topic of the professor's role as instructor surfaces. An analysis of Professor Roger Williams' choice of words as he anticipates beginning a new semester hardly sounds like the voice of a college professor eager to share knowledge with his students. Rather, the fictional professor sounds as if he is about to engage in a power struggle and takes some delight in the idea that he will eventually emerge victorious. Although this attitude is shared by many other fictional professors who will be discussed in this chapter, it is important to note that it represents a departure from a much earlier view of the responsibilities of a college professor.

The earliest history of American colleges and universities recalls institutions that were committed to teaching. The first president of Harvard University, Charles Eliot, declared that "The prime business of American professors . . . must be regular and

assiduous class teaching' ” (1898/1969, p. 27). Higher education's mission, began to shift, however, in the 19th century as emphasis was placed on efforts to connect learning with the nation's technological growth. For example, in 1824, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute was founded to demonstrate that students could be trained for more practical professions (Rudolph, 1962). In the post-Civil War period, land-grant colleges were established to accommodate the nation's agricultural progress. Still another aspect of the mission of higher education was toward research which had emerged from the German tradition. In the 20th century the movement was still directed toward practicality (Veysey, 1965), but after World War II, research became a model for faculty work. This change was significant to the work of the professoriate since it marked the beginning of colleges and universities giving rewards to faculty scholars whose research earned outside funding and prestige for the institutions. Glassick et al. (1997) suggest that a dramatic transformation in American higher education followed as faculty priorities moved toward research accomplishments rather than the instruction of undergraduates. Promotion, tenure, and ensuing salary gains became dependent upon research and publications, while teaching was undervalued in the overall reward system.

Events in the latter part of the century exacerbated the professors' dilemma of research vs. teaching as universities faced financial crises. Downsizing, restructuring, and budget slashing saw universities operating like businesses. Academic rhetoric was replaced by corporate jargon as phrases such as Total Quality Management and student “customers” created a very different atmosphere in higher education. Although the academic environment was becoming more competitive as institutions were vying for students, teaching excellence was still not a treasured commodity as professors were

pressured to secure outside funding and continue to publish to protect their own careers. The economic crisis seemed to further diminish professors' roles as teachers.

Many researchers of academic fiction have discussed the image of professors as teachers and many see neither quality teaching nor positive student/professor relationships emerging in academic novels. Schellenberger (1982) states that academic fiction has always represented academics as fundamentally unsuited to teaching and speaks of the often hostile attitude professors manifest toward students. More important, the author suggests that a relationship exists between professors' negative attitude toward their students and their own feelings of intellectual inadequacy. Hague (1985) furthers this negative image of professors in their role as teachers by suggesting that they are depicted in the fiction as manipulative and concerned only with shaping students' ideas so they conform with their own beliefs.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the portrayal of the fictional professor in his/her role as teacher with respect to the shift that role has assumed in the past two decades for the real-life professor. It is important, however, to note that a broader definition of the role of teacher, based on the research of Bowen and Schuster (1986), will be used. According to these researchers:

Instruction involves formal teaching of groups of students in classrooms, labs, . . . It also involves conferences, tutorials, and lab apprentices for students individually Instruction also entails advising students on matters pertaining to their current educational programs, plans for advanced study, choice of career and sometimes more personal matters. (p. 15)

The professor's job as teacher, then, extends beyond the traditional walls of the classroom into a multi dimensional role as advisor, career counselor, and personal mentor. The image of the fictional professor will be examined from this more complex perspective in this chapter.

Hedeman (1993) suggests that most of the academic novels in the 1980's expose professors as characters with obvious flaws. These flaws seem most apparent when the professors are functioning in their role as teachers and in their more encompassing relationships with students. Hague (1985) stated earlier that professors in academic fiction manifest a lack of interest in teaching which speaks to the minimal importance they place on students. In fact, this researcher states, students tend to remain faceless in these novels with few occurrences developing inside the classroom, again minimizing the importance of the student-teacher relationship. Johnson (1995), too, believes that academic fiction reveals that teaching college students is not always a rewarding experience by depicting professors who find the experience draining and discouraging.

Mickelsson's Ghosts, by John Gardner (1982), is rare among academic novels in that several classroom scenes as well as a number of intellectual discussions between professors and students take place. However, neither the scenes nor the discussions characterize a professor who exhibits feelings of satisfaction about his role as teacher. Professor Peter Mickelsson brings a myriad of problems to his position as Philosophy Professor at the State University of New York at Binghamton. His academic reputation rests solely on his authorship of a best selling book. However, the personal and professional baggage he brings to Binghamton includes a failed marriage, an emotional

breakdown which led to his resignation at Brown where he held his previous position, and a reputation as an unpopular teacher.

Throughout the novel, Mickelsson speaks of his lack of interest in teaching his courses and his attempts to avoid meetings with students after class. In the middle of one class discussion with a spirited student, Blassenheim, Mickelsson's mind wanders to his own son, also a college student, and he pauses to reflect on professors in general:

He could not bring himself, this early in the game, to call time. . . . In the back of his mind floated the thought of his own son, as least as urgent and concerned about truth as Blassenheim, though quieter, more restrained in his style; not that it mattered: his professors cut him down, or listened to what he said with their brains turned off, as Mickelsson was tempted to listen to Blassenheim, thinking all the while of how much there was yet to get through before midterm, then finals. (p. 184)

Mickelsson even admits to often being unprepared for class. In one scene he is about to greet the eight students in his medical ethics class. Although the class is supposed to be run in seminar style, Mickelsson lectures, or more accurately, reads from "old notes" (p. 195). He inwardly confesses that "no one could doubt that for the most part he was winging it" (p. 195). The professor also refuses to spend any extra time in his office "before some student could catch him and pin him in his chair with questions, requests for favors" (p. 189).

Mickelsson is obviously aware of his flaws as a teacher and does, at times, share momentary thoughts about an earlier time in his life when teaching was more rewarding. Feeling impatient during a class discussion with his students' inability to grasp a concept,

he recalls "a time when he'd have laid all this out clearly, with contagious excitement" (p. 98). He knows, too, the consequences of poor teaching as he ponders the inevitable teacher evaluation forms: "Woe was Mickelsson. They were on to him all right. Their evaluation-of-the-instructor forms would be blistering. Knowledge of subject mater: Fair. Presentation of subject matter: Poor. Interest in students: Stinko" (p. 100).

Professor Mickelsson spends much of his classroom time in the novel exercising his power and authority over his students, and he employs several tactics to retain his dominant status. For example, as one young student challenges Mickelsson's theories, the professor tries to ignore his spirited hand-waving. However, often this particular student is reluctant to be dismissed and presses for the professor's attention. Mickelsson resorts, then, to "a magic trick: deliberately changing the issue" (p. 98). If all else fails, the professor is not beneath thwarting students' opinions by adopting a completely condescending attitude which generally silences even the least inhibited student. When Michael Nugent, an upperclassman in Mickelsson's introductory course, debates the professor's ideas about Plato's Republic, Mickelsson cryptically comments that Nugent's "language lacks the kind of focus we look for in Philosophy 108" (p. 99).

The classroom atmosphere that Mickelsson creates in this academic novel is antithetical to the atmosphere students expect, according to recent academic research. Garko et al. (1994) conducted a survey at a large southeastern university to determine the types of relationships students seek with their professors. Classroom teaching behaviors was an integral part of the survey and students overwhelmingly expressed a desire for open discussion in the classroom. It was also clear that students want an atmosphere of mutual respect where they can feel free to express their opinions without fear of reprisal.

Ironically, Professor Mickelsson does somewhat better with his students when he deals with matters that are not academic in nature. Michael Nugent, for example, is a student with many personal problems which includes dealing with his homosexuality. He is also depressed by the recent death of his father and also by the death of one of his professors. Mickelsson is perfectly willing to break the rules for Nugent when he neglects to hand in the final paper for the course. Sensing that Nugent's distress "was far beyond the usual" (p. 388), Mickelsson agrees to give him a B+ for the course and encourages him to take another of his courses the following semester. Shortly after this encounter, Mickelsson learns that Nugent has committed suicide and feels guilty for not being able to do more for the troubled student. In fact, the professor offers assistance to Nugent's companion, whom he suspects is the victim of an attempted gang murder.

Mickelsson also seems more at ease when he counsels a female student who is distraught over her boyfriend's unfaithfulness, or when he welcomes students into his home. " 'Come in, make yourselves at home.' " "They would sit chatting earnestly, emptily, for hours-sometimes of the heat, sometimes of politics, sometimes of trash they'd picked up at local auctions-taking refill after refill" (p. 4).

Professor Mickelsson, then, seems to epitomize an uncommitted and authoritarian teacher when he is in the classroom, but is able to make at least a minimal transformation when matters are less academic. In the novel, Marya, A Life, by Joyce Carol Oates (1986), professors are less complex, and students are obviously less demanding. On the one hand is Professor Fein, a brilliant but remote scholar who enjoys his lofty position among his sycophantic students. Professor Marya Knauer, in contrast, assumes the role of committed teacher.

Professor Fein is consistently described in the novel as someone whose "many admirers took it for granted that he was a man of genius" (p. 191). His discipline is Comparative Literature and Languages and throughout the novel he is working on a publication that will ultimately alter scholarship in the field. As a result, Fein has amassed circles of followers, professors and students alike, who appear to worship him. They remain "passionately faithful to their master, chronically ill at ease in his actual presence, hopeful of being included in however peripheral way in what promised to be his grand sweeping conquest of his branch of the profession" (p. 192). Fein covets his role at the university, and his seminar becomes the most sought after course among students in the field. No one seems to challenge his condescending attitude as he personally interviews students for admittance to his seminar; nor does any student dare complain about the less than moderate praise that accompanies a research presentation for the course. Marya Knauer, a former student of Fein's, describes their meeting as she seeks permission to be allowed into the seminar:

He interrogated her for some minutes, keeping her standing in a doorway; neglecting, or not wishing, to invite her inside to have a seat. He wanted to see how serious she was. How substantial her background was. . . . Frankly, he and her adviser didn't get along very well; the man's notions of the medieval period were asinine. His single published book in the field was a master of misguided energies. . . . Not knowing what she did, Marya found herself nodding, smiling vaguely, seeming to agree. (pp. 186-187)

Marya and the other students become enamored with Professor Fein as the seminar progresses and seem enthralled with his often distorted views. For instance, he

professes a theory about the privilege of genius which intimates the "sacred obligation" one might have toward such a person. Although this theory resembles a master/slave relationship between a husband and a wife, no one in the class utters an objection. Later in the novel, when Fein returns from a trip abroad, his students are grateful for his return and agree that the trip must have been a success since, "He found things to praise in the several papers that were presented," and "his critical remarks were less acerbic than usual" (p. 205).

Although Marya Knauer was an ardent follower of Fein's when she was his student, she becomes a different type of professor. She assumes a teaching position in a small but prestigious college in New Hampshire after completing her graduate work with another mentor after Fein's death. Oates repeatedly reminds the reader that Marya has rejected the pompous ways of her former mentor and instead depicts Marya as a professor who is very concerned about teaching. Although the novel does not contain the intricate classroom scenes of Gardner's work, it does give ample time to expounding a teaching philosophy. Marya, for example, often reflects on the excessive time her colleagues spend on their own career speculation. She, on the other hand, often "made the point that teaching and scholarship really ought to be their primary concerns" (p. 242). Sounding, too, much more like the professor many students are yearning for, the reader is told, "She worked very hard and thrived on it, was invigorated by it, uncomplaining, zealous, filled with ideas about how to organize her classes, how to draw out quieter students, how to . . . make her way in this extraordinary phase of her life" (p.242). Marya confesses to an "ecstatic passion for teaching" (p. 234) and constantly evaluates her efforts in the classroom. She feels spirited after concluding a lesson, realizing that, "The class went

well, her lecture was a success" (p. 238). While reflecting on her qualifications, she notes that in addition to her publications, "She had acquired the reputation for being a dedicated and exacting teacher" (p. 259).

Notwithstanding the absence of classroom scenes and the lack of dialogue between teachers and students in Oates' novel, Fein and Knauer seem to represent two dichotomous images of professors with regard to their roles as teachers. For Professor Fein, teaching is a means to an end; it is far less important than the attainment of a reputation as a scholar. Students do not really matter as long as they remain within the grip of the professor and stay around long enough to flatter and cajole him. They place few demands on him, perhaps because they realize they may ultimately need his recommendation for their own scholarly pursuits. Professor Knauer, however, becomes energized by her teaching. She recognizes the importance of balancing scholarship and teaching as central to her profession. This concept parallels the research of Hague (1985) who affirms that the modern academic novel has turned its attention to the professor's attitude toward teaching and scholarship.

The 1991 publication of The Crown of Columbus by Michael Dorris and Louise Erdich is another academic novel which presents two professors who hold different views about the teaching process and their relationships with students. Although on a focused mission in search of valuable information for an important work on Christopher Columbus, Professor Vivian Twostar attempts to use her scholarly research to energize her students in her Native American Studies seminar at Dartmouth University. Again, traditional classroom scenes are absent, as Twostar hosts the end of the semester class in her home. She appears relaxed with her students and anxious to share her research findings. In

addition, as Twostar reflects on the students as they enter her home, the reader is made aware of the extent to which she has come to know them:

The class was the mix I regularly drew, including a few skeptical, sharp-eyed economics majors who had enrolled in order to fulfill a distribution requirement. . . . Then there were the solemn five or six students who were truly interested in precontact civilization, and, finally, the one or two zealots who henceforth vowed to make Indian rights their life's cause. (p. 110)

An intriguing lecture on pre-1492 tribal civilizations and lively class discussion pervade this scene. Students are comfortable enough to pose questions, and Twostar is eager to answer. More important, she recognizes the learning experience as a positive one for her students: "The students had been an appreciative audience, wowed by ethnohistory, impressed by traditional arts, fascinated by the richness and beauty I revealed" (p. 111). Professor Twostar, the reader is told, has a history of positive teaching experiences to her credit as well as the "special counseling roles" (p. 17) she fulfilled for the Native American students.

Professor Roger Williams, on the other hand, more closely resembles Professor Fein from Oates' novel. The Crown of Columbus is written in alternating first-person narrative style, so when the reader first meets Williams, he introduces himself as a "teaching scholar" (p. 79). His earliest comments have to do with his students, and as the opening of this chapter suggests, he speaks of them as people with whom he is about to engage in a power struggle. His typical commentary regarding his students always sounds aloof and they are regarded only in terms of how useful they are in the process of course subscription: "Underenrollment, on the other hand, is not necessarily all bad. Like a

slightly frayed cuff, a poverty of students can be genteel, honorable, as long as it does not constitute a trend" (p. 80). He speaks, too, of the tactic used to keep a course underenrolled, thus constituting less work for the instructor. He suggests that it all comes down to the title of the course. "The longer and more specific, the adage goes, the more limited the appeal" (p. 80). Williams refers to some of the required courses he teaches as his "purgatory." Referring to such a course, he confesses he saves it for spring, "when I am as fatigued as the material" (p. 81). Professor Williams does sound somewhat more positive, however, when he speaks of an experimental seminar that he is about to teach. Once again, the reader is reminded of Professor Fein as he admits that the focus of the course will be his own original poetry.

It becomes clear that Williams maintains his pompous attitude with students outside of the classroom as well. One evening as he is searching for Vivian Twostar's son, a troubled young teenager who has been missing for several hours, Williams suspects that the boy might be hiding in one of the dormitories. As he approaches one of the residences, his reflections confirm his apparent indifference with students' lives:

It was odd, but in all my years on the Dartmouth faculty, I had never entered a student residence. Dormitories, sororities, and fraternities were foreign countries last visited when I myself had been an undergraduate at Chicago. . . . The indignity of group showers and rows of sinks, the noisy all-nighters pulled by students improvident in their preparations until the day before a paper was due. . . . I had been a serious student, the stalwart, conscientious, assignment-on-time, anxiety prone plodder. (p. 91)

The indifferent attitude of Professor Williams toward students is a topic that Schellenberger (1982) addresses in his research on academic fiction. He suggests that it would be naïve to expect that a relationship between university professors and their students should be cordial, positive and fulfilling due to differences in age and experience in addition to the built-in strains of the academic system. However, more recent academic research reveals that students have a concern for reciprocity in the student-teacher relationship and prefer professors who are approachable and with whom they can have conversations (Garko et al., 1994).

Distinct attitudes about teaching and relationships with students among the fictional professoriate also emerge in *Moo* by Jane Smiley (1995). Not only are two extreme attitudes prevalent as in the novels discussed above, but a more numerous cast of professors in *Moo* present an even greater variety of views on the subject. Although most of Smiley's professors tend to be self-serving, at least two, Creative Writing Professor Timothy Monahan, and Foreign Language Professor, Cecilia Sanchez, seem concerned about their students and committed to their role as teachers.

Throughout the novel, Monahan's creative writing assignments preoccupy Gary Olson, a student in the professor's class. As Gary attempts to complete Monahan's assignments in frequent scenes, much is revealed about the professor's pedagogical methods. Each assignment, as it is presented to the reader, is clearly outlined. It is preceded by a definition of the writing technique on which Monahan wishes the student to focus, followed with detailed instructions about how the students should proceed and describes what they will do with the assignments when they arrive in class. In subsequent scenes, the reader becomes privy to the feedback Monahan gives on students' papers. He

poses questions for the student to ponder and makes suggestions about how the assignment could be improved. More important, he invites the student to conference with him to discuss the paper further. Smiley's goal is not to create professorial saints in this satiric novel, however. Although Monahan clearly possesses many qualities of a good instructor, he, too, becomes disgruntled when students are unwilling to accept new ideas. For instance, when he assigns students to subscribe to the New York Times, one student voices his objection to the paper's anti-Christian bias and demands that the class also subscribe to a Christian newspaper. This triggers vehement opposition by a student who then vocalizes that an Islamic paper be given equal class time. Monahan's reaction is less professorial and more human: "Tim made a point of unclenching his fists under his desk, not without reflecting that one of them could have made satisfying contact with Frank Carson's jaw" (p. 330). Smiley has Monahan's encounters resemble Gardner's depiction of classroom scenes in Mickelsson's Ghosts. Both authors tend to blame prevailing external situations for the frustration of professors. These situations might include dealing with underprepared students or with the bureaucracy of the institution. The latter is the case with Professor Cecilia Sanchez.

As a young Spanish professor of Costa Rican and Mexican decent, Cecelia brings her own personal frustrations to Moo University as she attempts to get acclimated to this Midwestern setting. However, her professional frustrations emerge from the financial constraints and accompanying responsibilities that have been placed on the university which directly impact on her role as a teacher. Although throughout the novel she tries to prevail as a committed teacher, by the end of her first year she is anticipating leaving her position:

It's not working out for me here. And I just got a notice that my class size is going up again in the fall, to forty students. How do you teach a foreign language to forty students at a time? That's an educational forced march! And then, a year after that I come up for review. How do I teach a hundred and twenty students per semester with any sort of care and still rework my dissertation so that I can get all the articles and the book accepted that I need to have to show I deserve tenure? (p. 398)

Competing responsibilities and the devaluation of teaching are realistic obstacles to Professor Sanchez' performance as a good teacher. Bowen and Schuster (1986) address this topic:

In allocating their time and energy to the several tasks, faculty members have characteristically felt pulled in different directions. For example, a curricular change or growth in enrollments may call for increased attention to teaching; the desire to earn promotion or to achieve professional recognition may call for greater effort in research; attempt of one's institution to correct a decline in student enrollment may demand more attention to student advising; or the opportunity to consult with a government agency may pull the faculty member in still another direction. (pp. 69-70)

Lionel Gift, Professor of Economics in Moo, is more impressed with the corporate influence on higher education and has adopted a business-like attitude in dealing with his students. Consequently, he neither employs the pedagogical methods of Professor Monahan, nor concerns himself with the possible negative effects of increasing class size as does Professor Sanchez. During a classroom scene, the reader is told:

Dr. Lionel Gift was well aware that he could teach this class, and even entertain and please the customers, with no thought whatsoever. What he was saying to them now was like a television program on another channel that he could switch to whenever he wanted, just to see that it was still on, just to see that he, the talking head, was still adhering to the script. (p. 152)

Gift extends the business analogy even when he talks about grading the students. He informs them that their exams will be “graded on a strict statistical curve, so seven percent of you will get F’s, no matter what” (p. 155). He also delights in the fact that his class enrollment has increased by three times since this indicates that, “Market demand had been recognized, even by the bureaucrats in the administration” (p. 152).

Relationships with students outside of the traditional classroom take on a variety of possibilities as professors assume expanded roles as suggested by Bowen and Schuster (1986) in the beginning of this chapter. One such role in Moo involves Dr. Bo Jones as the mentor of a work-study student, Bob Carlson. Portrayed as another of Smiley’s self-serving professors, Jones is conducting a ludicrous experiment to determine how big a hog might get if it is allowed to eat at will for all of its lifespan. To this end, Jones employs Carlson, a financially needy and naïve student who will assume any responsibility to help meet tuition costs. Although the many scenes with the hog, aptly named Earl Butz, provide humor in the novel, Carlson’s job can only be viewed as demeaning. He tends to the hog five times per day performing menial tasks such as feeding, emptying and refilling the water reservoir, and scratching the hog’s back. He has also promised Dr. Jones that he will not reveal the details of the job to anyone, even his parents. The reader is soon made aware of the devastating effect the job is having on Carlson’s social life, since it

demands so much time, "he has made no friends among the twenty-four thousand other students on the campus" (p. 5). While Dr. Jones maintains a secret computer file on the results of the experiment, he pays little attention to Carlson, except for a rare comment about what a good caretaker he is.

Although a humorous tone prevails in Smiley's novel, the work is not without its parallels to the real professoriate. There are certainly professors whose priorities have little to do with students' success in or out of the classroom, and those who try to remain committed to their role as teachers but whose efforts are often thwarted by external pressures that are out of their control.

Not all writers of academic fiction, however, absolve professors' frailties and place blame completely on the higher education system. Although the system is not without its faults in Richard Russo's (1997) Straight Man, Professor Phineas (Finny) Coomb, English Professor at West Central State University, displays many characteristics of an uncommitted teacher. When he is first introduced in this satire, the reader learns of his proclivity for teaching classes during unpopular time slots:

By requesting early morning and late afternoon classes, by enforcing a strict attendance policy, and by devoting the first three weeks of class to differentiating between restrictive and nonrestrictive noun clauses, Finny halves his teaching load each term. Students start dropping out by the second week of classes, and by the end of the term he has a seminar of seven or eight where once there were the regulation twenty-three. (p. 61)

In addition to diminishing the number of students who take his course, Finny does an even greater disservice to those students who choose to remain in his classes. In one

scene, the department chairman peers through the window of his classroom door and observes a disheartened group of students being victimized by Finny's boring lecture:

Finny's soft monotone makes it impossible to hear what he is saying. His students have the grim look of death camp dwellers, and in a sixty-second timed test, six of the eleven consult their watches. Four yawn. One starts violently awake. And they're only fifteen minutes into class. By the time I've completed the timed test, one or two students have noticed my face framed in the small window. Pretty soon, everybody but Finny is aware of me. A couple of these students are also taking a class with me, and they roll their eyes as if to say, "Can you believe this? Why doesn't somebody do something? Why don't you do something?" (p. 63)

The Chairman of the English Department, Professor William Devereaux, does not do anything about Finny and other professors like him, and Russo does seem to take exception with the system here. Accused throughout the novel by his colleagues of conspiring with the administration to prepare a faculty purge list in light of the latest fiscal crisis, Devereaux is easily able to identify the poor teachers in his department. However, he notes repeatedly that there is no mechanism within the system that allows for a fair process to take place. "Try as I might, I can't come up with a single criteria, or even a cluster of two or three criteria, that would sacrifice the right people" (p. 206).

Professor Devereaux, on the other hand, is portrayed as a good teacher in the novel. He has many personal faults and often hides behind his sense of humor to avoid confrontation. However, Russo does utilize a few traditional classroom scenes to depict Devereaux in a positive role. Resembling the techniques of Professor Monahan during his creative writing class in Moo, Devereaux's pedagogical methods are sound. The reader

senses that he knows his students and he maintains classroom rules that keep the focus and criticism on the piece of writing under discussion, rather than on the personality of the student writer.

There are two rules in my workshop, and most of the time these head off trouble. The first rule is that all comments and criticisms are to be directed at the manuscript and not the author. In return for this consideration, the author is not permitted to speak in defense of the manuscript. (pp. 98-99)

He is careful, too, of lavishing too much praise lest students become ensnared by publishers who make false promises. Devereaux does not always reap the rewards of his good intentions, however. In humorous but realistic scenes, the students defend their writing, question the professor's authority, and groan about assignments. He remains the steadfast teacher, however, even when a student implicates him in the murder of a goose which the professor had threatened to kill if the administration carried out its plan to build a technical careers building at the same time it was purging faculty.

Russo has Professor Devereaux counsel students outside of class, also. In an early scene, Leo, the student who eventually implicates the professor, expresses his exaggerated passion for writing:

A couple of months ago he told me, as if he suspected that I alone might understand, that he despises all other courses, not so much because they are taught by fools as because he laments any time not writing. He even regrets the necessity to eat and sleep. He lives to write. "There are lots of reasons to live," I assured him. "Especially at your age" (p. 71).

The character of Professor Devereaux is paradoxical. He exhibits the traits

of a good teacher and gives his students attention outside of the classroom. At other times, however, Devereaux appears powerless and frustrated as he copes with colleagues who perform poorly and with an administration who undervalues the role of faculty. This image closely resembles the fictional professor whom Hedeman (1993) refers to as one who is complicated and for whom no single stereotype adequately epitomizes.

For the most part, students tend to remain passive about their relationship with professors in the academic novels under discussion in this research. Except for Leo, in Straight Man, they rarely confront professors, or at most, offer minor objections to a professorial theory expressed in class. An exception to this occurs in Ishmael Reed's (1993) Japanese by Spring. A very different relationship between student and professor is present in this academic novel. Professor Chapman is a black faculty member at Jack London College which is overwhelmingly white and where racism prevails. The reader immediately learns of the lack of respect most white students display toward the professor. "While the white students called their other professors 'Professor This,' or 'Mr. That,' they called him Chappie. It took them about a month to recognize him as a member of the human species" (p. 12). In a poignant classroom scene, Professor Chapman enters the room to unusual silence and soon notices the source of the students' interest. A note on the board reads, " 'Dinner with Puttbutt. Bring your own watermelon' " (p. 13). The culprit was Robert Bass, Jr., son of a dedicated alumnus who is also president of a right-wing corporation which gives the college financial support. One would expect that Reed is soliciting sympathy for his fictional professor by depicting these scenes. However, the reader soon learns that is not the case. Rather, Professor Puttbutt emerges as a superficial character whose objective is to be as politically correct as possible even if it means

sacrificing any ideology that he once had and adapting his beliefs to this racist community. The reward, as he sees it, will be a house in the Oakland Hills section, an affluent all-white community, and, of course, tenure. One of the most scathing images of the professor occurs as he is speaking to Robert Bass Jr. one day after class:

I just wanted you to know that I have no hard feelings about that cartoon you drew of me in the school newspaper. The reason that you drew that cartoon is because you are rightly upset about the demands of black students. Their excessive demands and demonstrations. Their need to challenge instead of negotiate. Their victimization. Their need to feel that racism, no doubt, is the main obstacle to their success. Their demand for ethnic courses which are merely vehicles for spewing invective against white people. (pp. 19-20)

There is some evidence that Puttbutt's political charade upsets him since, after overhearing Bass and his friends talking in plantation dialect, "He felt as though he were suffocating. His chest felt stuffed. He felt lightheaded. He had to hold on to a desk to avoid passing out" (p. 21). However, Puttbutt appears incapable of change, determined to adhere to any artificial belief to attain his materialistic goal. To this end, he is despicable as he sells out the black students on campus to win the favor of the white forces.

Just as the reader becomes convinced that nothing is sacred to Professor Puttbutt and that his relationship with students is completely hypocritical, a new Japanese president is named at the college and Puttbutt becomes his assistant. Dr. Yamato attempts to incorporate the Japanese style of management where any waste of resources is not tolerated. Puttbutt, feeling powerful for the first time, becomes vindictive toward his white colleagues and threatens cancellation of courses and faculty purges in keeping with

Dr. Yamato's directives. He resorts to professing his true feelings about the prevalent racism on campus and begins to take the side of the black students. Although he carries his new position to an extreme, Puttbutt's character seems almost redeemable when he chastises one of the professors and appears to promote a positive teaching philosophy:

I've looked at your record. Most of your classes are taught by teaching assistants, while you go gallivanting around the world to those percussion conferences. Last semester you missed fifteen classes. Dr. Yamato has decided that all of the professors will have to earn their way. Teach. That's what we hired you for, to teach. Not the T.A.'s. Graduate students. But you. (p. 116)

Since Reed's work is a satire, similar to Smiley and Russo's academic novels, grossly exaggerated circumstances evolve. Although it is difficult to imagine, Professor Puttbutt does see the error of his ways at the end of the novel. In a ludicrous scene when he realizes that Dr. Yamato is changing the name of the college and glorifying war criminals, he and his colleagues reconcile their differences and admit that no group's extremist view is positive for the survival of Jack London College.

A research laboratory serves as the setting for Carl Djerassi's (1989) novel, Cantor's Dilemma. This setting and the dynamics between science professors and their graduate students evoke a vastly different type of relationship. Unlike any of the other situations discussed thus far, this professor/student relationship is an extremely competitive one. The author takes the opportunity to set the reader up for this relationship by commenting on the uniqueness of the arrangement between the science professor and his/her student. Celestine Price is a doctoral student in chemistry who is about to get a paper published by the National Academy of Science. She is mentored by

Dr. Jean Ardley who has enabled Celestine to obtain the grant to complete her research. In a conversation with Celestine's friend, Leah, a doctoral student in literature, the question of authorship in science publications arises. Dr. Ardley explains that both the professor's name and the graduate researcher's name are placed on publications: " 'In the laboratory sciences, there's both a teacher-apprentice relationship and collegiality which usually justify the professor's being one of the authors' " (p. 50). Although Dr. Ardley makes the process appear equitable, the reader soon learns that not every science professor is as concerned with a sense of fairness. A post doctoral student, Jerry Stafford, voices his experience with professors' names on publications where even the order of the names can cause problems. Although most papers use an alphabetical listing, Stafford points out that under the direction of his research mentor, Professor Cantor, "No Allens or Browns had ever worked with Cantor. There had been an exchange fellow from Prague, named Czerny, but that was the closest alphabetical proximity to 'Cantor' that anyone remembered until Doug Catfield arrived last year" (p. 51).

Further evidence of a strained and competitive relationship fostered by Professor Isidore Cantor is offered. His circle of students is referred to as a "select club" and only Stafford enjoys the privilege of calling Cantor "I.C." Undoubtedly, a mutual respect exists between Cantor and his research fellow, Stafford, but circumstances change when Cantor believes he has discovered a breakthrough in cancer research that could make him a candidate for the Nobel Prize. He selects Stafford to conduct the experiment that will support his hypothesis and feels confident in Stafford's ability until a leading researcher at Harvard is unable to repeat Stafford's work. Although Stafford is able to repeat the experiment for Cantor, Stafford senses a lack of trust on the part of his mentor. Later,

Stafford discovers that Cantor performed a second experiment without his knowledge. “ ‘What matters is I got the point: Cantor didn’t trust me’ ” (p. 148). Stafford confesses, too, to extreme anxiety as he repeats the experiment under Cantor’s watchful eye. In fact, his nervousness causes him to make an error which he corrects later when he is alone in the lab.

Stafford begins to doubt his own sense of ethics about correcting the experiment on his own, and he is uneasy when he is notified that he and Cantor will receive the Nobel Prize for their collaboration. When he approaches Cantor, however, it is apparent that the senior researcher is more than willing to put all doubts and mistrust aside in light of the prestige associated with the Nobel and does not even allow Stafford to speak of his return to the lab the night of the repeated experiment. Stafford emerges noble and unscathed at the end of the novel and is on his way to medical school, Nobel Prize in hand.

In their role as teachers, professors in the academic novels discussed here are depicted in a variety of ways. More often than not, however, teaching principles that emphasize sound pedagogy and commitment to students, for the most part, are absent. Although there appears the occasional professor, such as Tim Monahan in Moo, Vivian Twostar in The Crown of Columbus or William Devereaux in Straight Man, who enjoy enlightened moments with students in the classroom, at least as many fictional professors are self-centered and disinterested in their students’ lives. Still others seem to have the potential for fulfilling their roles as teachers but are thwarted by institutional bureaucracy, a reward system that undervalues teaching and too many other competing professional responsibilities. Recent academic research supports this latter dilemma of professors. Stetar and Finkelstein (1997) suggest that professors in American higher education are

less engaged in the life of their institutions because of a reward system that has devalued institutional activities such as teaching and service. Bess (1997) also notes that since achievements in society are organized on a hierarchy, it is difficult for individuals to be content with intrinsic satisfaction alone which is the only way one is rewarded for good teaching.

Research data from the Carnegie Foundation (Finklestein et al., 1998) indicate that professors are teaching more and that 77% of professors believe teaching ought to be the primary criteria for promotion and tenure. However, the same research also states that professors would prefer to teach less in order to devote more time to research. Again, professors are well aware of the reward system, and fictional professions seem to be immersed in a similar situation. Perhaps the somewhat idealized suggestion offered by Kronik (1997) will eventually impact the professoriate: "The trick, for both the institution and the individual, is to realize that the holy academic trinity of r, s, t - research, service, teaching - is a unit, even if its components get separate entries on our vitae. The trick is to realize that 'my teaching is my work' " (p. 166). In the academic fiction under discussion, it does not appear that this mantra has been adopted by many professors.

Chapter VI

THE PORTRAYAL OF THE FEMALE ACADEMIC

On a cold blowy February day a woman is boarding the ten a.m. flight to London, followed by an invisible dog. The woman's name is Virginia Miner; she is fifty-four years old, small, plain, and unmarried-the sort of person that no one ever notices, though she is an Ivy League professor who has published several books and has a well-established reputation in the expanding field of children's literature. (Lurie, 1984, p.3)

In Alison Lurie's initial description of her central character in the novel, Foreign Affairs, Virginia, "Vinnie," Miner appears as invisible as the imaginary dog that accompanies her. This early characterization could suggest that Lurie's novel is a dissection of the plight of the invisible female academic. However, this is not the case, nor does this suggestion accurately define the portrayal of women professors in academic fiction from 1980 to the present. Several studies support that a more positive depiction of women emerges from the fiction of this time period. Robinson (1989) states that most of the women professors in these novels are portrayed as committed to their careers and determined to become highly accomplished teachers and scholars. Although they frequently experience personal versus career conflicts, most have achieved autonomy and appear strong and independent.

This recent portrayal of women academics differs drastically from earlier characterizations. In fact, the very appearance of women fictional professors has increased to a large extent. Several early researchers of academic fiction (Ainsworth,

1973; Belok, 1958; Lyons, 1974; Staib, 1975) note the traditionally small proportion of female professors in the early novels and point to the negative and stereotypical images that pervaded these portrayals. Robinson (1989) also suggests that the early portrayals had serious implications for women readers about the personal and professional lives of academic women since they were often seen as neurotic, unsuccessful and submissive. By contrast, more recent characterizations define women professors as characters who seek personal and professional independence and who gain insight from their experiences. These women are not without their struggles, but as Hedeman (1993) suggests, they represent a wider range of characterization.

Academic research on the topic suggests that the change in the portrayal of women professors parallels the significant emergence of women as a viable sub-group within the professoriate (Bowen & Schuster, 1986). Men had long dominated the ranks of the professoriate, as they did in many professions, but affirmative action and civil rights legislation contributed to the increase in hiring women faculty on American campuses in the late 1970's. Bentley and Blackburn (1992) also affirm the gains women academics have made, although they still remain underrepresented.

This chapter will examine the portrayal of women professors in the novels from the time period under discussion, 1980-1997. Although Robinson's (1989) study explores the topic until 1984, little research deals with the topic beyond that date. As this research examines the many changes within the professoriate during the past 27 years, the significance of the female academic as an emerging sub-group should be considered separately to determine if any particular issues or challenges arise from the consideration of gender.

Vinnie Miner, Alison Lurie's central character in Foreign Affairs, does not conform to a stereotypical portrayal of the female professor as the opening lines of the novel might suggest. Vinnie has been teaching at Corinth University in upstate New York for over twenty years. As the story unfolds, she is leaving for a 6 month sabbatical in England on a foundation grant to continue her research on children's nursery rhymes. Laurie devotes most of the first chapter to establishing the fact that Vinnie is a serious academic. As she settles in her seat on the plane, the reader learns that she has made this trip several times in pursuit of her research, and that her reading material consists of the London Times and a variety of British periodicals. An array of other details presented by Laurie reveals that Vinnie is comfortable traveling alone and experienced at looking out for herself. "She elbows her way deftly past less experienced passengers" (p.4) and admits to an "energy and egotism" (p.5) that is contrary to most plain, older women who are supposed to be "self-effacing and uncomplaining – to take up as little space and breathe as little air as possible" (p.5).

Why, then, does Laurie begin the novel with a less than flattering depiction of Professor Miner? Even though she is a strong willed, independent female academic, Vinnie's intellectual pursuit is constantly under siege over the focus of her research, children's literature. Thus, she does feel invisible and even gives in to some self-pity which is what her imaginary dog, Fido, comes to represent in the novel. The most recent criticism of her latest book has appeared in the Atlantic which refers to her scholarly study as "playground doggerel" (p.6). This disparaging article is also an unfortunate reminder to Vinnie that "children's literature is a poor relation in her department –

indeed, in most English departments" (p.6). However, Vinnie also knows that such courses are tolerated because they attract masses of undergraduates.

Although Vinnie considers replying to the Atlantic critic, Professor Zimmerman from Columbia University, she rethinks her strategy. "It is considered weak and undignified to complain of your reviews. Indeed, in Vinnie's experience, the only afflictions it is really safe to mention are those shared by all your colleagues: the weather, inflation, delinquent students, and so forth" (p.9).

Laurie also explains why Vinnie chooses to pursue her research in England. As the professor arduously completes her research in the London Library, she anticipates the more exciting part of her project which involves collecting playground rhymes in city and suburban schools. She has received enthusiastic support from principals and teachers, reflecting an attitude which does not prevail in her own country. "Here in Britain, she doesn't have to educate the educators; her interest in folklore is seen as natural and respectable" (p.64).

It is interesting to note that Laurie has her female academic as the recipient of a grant which allows her to pursue her scholarly work. Academic research points to the disappearance of gender inequities with respect to grant support. Bentley and Blackburn (1992) note that significant gender differences in the distribution of grants had virtually disappeared by the late 1980's. Similarly, the portrayal of Professor Miner as a female academic who is engaged in producing scholarly publications also parallels recent trends which signify the diminishing difference between the publication gap between men and women. In an early work by Astin and Bayer (1973), statistics revealed that men published almost twice as much as women, due, in some part, to the fact that women

tended to hold positions in less prestigious institutions which demanded higher teaching loads and focused primarily on undergraduate students. However, almost 20 years later, Bentley and Blackburn (1992) note that there is no significant difference in publication rates based on gender.

Although Professor Miner's personal life is an integral part of Lurie's novel, the author never allows her central character to put aside her professional focus for very long. A few chapters, for example, are devoted solely to Vinnie's research. The reader is made aware of the professor's hypothesis regarding the differences in British and American children's nursery rhymes. "The British texts do tend to be older, in some cases suggesting a medieval or even an Anglo-Saxon origin; they are also more literary. The American rhymes are newer, cruder, less lyrical and poetic" (p. 109). Laurie, too, shares with the reader Vinnie's concern when it appears that this well conceived thesis may be more difficult to support than she had expected. After she interviews a precocious youngster who asks her, " 'How much you paying?' " (p. 112), Vinnie is appalled at the nursery rhymes the child recites. More important, the vulgarity of the verse completely contradicts her thesis. "A few more of these and her theory about the difference between British and American playground rhymes will be down the tube, as they say here" (p.114). The contradiction causes Professor Miner to engage in an inner scholarly debate. Should she decide to exclude the child's contribution, she might be guilty of exploiting her, but she does not savor the thought of losing support for her thesis and putting an end to negotiations with a publisher to print a selection of her rhymes as a children's book. Eventually she justifies her decision to omit these rhymes on the basis that they are not

really reflective of the verses of childhood as the title of her study suggests; rather, they represent “the rhymes of a precocious and tainted adolescence” (p. 115).

Professor Miner remains committed to her research throughout the novel, even though her personal life often intrudes on her scholarly pursuit. However, she is disappointed when she receives notice that her grant will not be extended for another six months. Again, she is convinced that Professor Zimmerman’s scathing review in the Atlantic continues to haunt her professional advancement. At the end of the novel, however, Vinnie Miner arrives back in the United States with her professional life very much intact. “ ‘I’m perfectly fine. I’m not a bit sorry for myself. I’m a well known scholar; I have lots of friends on both sides of the Atlantic; I’ve just spent five very interesting months in London and finished an important book on playground rhymes’ ” (p.291).

Similar to Vinnie Miner, Jessica Stark, a professor in John Gardner’s Mickelsson’s Ghosts (1982), also faces a dilemma regarding her scholarship, albeit a more serious one. Since she does not share the Marxist views of many of her colleagues in the Sociology Department, her impressive academic credentials notwithstanding, she is eventually forced out of the department. An integral part of the novel revolves around Jessica’s fight to maintain her position. However, unlike Laurie’s character, Gardner’s Jessica Stark is also the victim of gender stereotyping. Early in the novel, Professor Mickelsson, the male protagonist, expresses a notion of disbelief upon realizing that Jessica not only possesses many traditional feminine traits but that she also has a superior intellect: “It was unthinkable that a woman so good-looking should be a first-class

scholar. That was not cynicism but realism. All Nature uses only what it needs to thrive, and Jessica . . . had no reason to develop deep talents of the heart and mind" (p.29).

Robinson (1989) notes that earlier novels portrayed learned women as unattractive and unfeminine based on society's view. However, the portrayal of a female professor who appears to others as a contradiction between intellectuality and femininity is a more conventional notion in recent academic novels. Therefore, it seems that Jessica is not depicted as lacking in femininity because she has intellectual qualities, although there is evidence that the male protagonist views this combination of traits as a rarity.

Mickelsson also dismisses her scholarly accomplishments as he recalls that she edits a journal, Historical Sociology, "and she was the first woman in her field to have done . . . something or other. It was all very vague in Mickelsson's mind" (p.29). The reader learns, too, that Jessica is a widow whose first husband shared a similar disinterest in her career. She recalls that her husband would often call to ask that she prepare dinner for guests even if he knew she was engaged in some aspect of her work. "I don't know how he ever got it in his head that in marrying a PhD in sociology he'd bought himself a lifetime cook' " (p. 310).

As Zimmerman's harsh critique of Vinnie Miner's article haunts the professor in Foreign Affairs, so, too, does Jesssica Stark's condemnation by her colleagues for her right-wing views. At times, Jessica is able to dismiss the Marxists in her department, considering them mere nuisances who were, " 'sincere and earnest, whatever else' " (p.248). However, unlike Vinnie, Jessica realizes that her colleagues' views could have a devastating effect on her professional career. "When pressed she would admit that possibly someday they might prove a threat; she broke their solidarity" (p.248). Still, at

other times, she reminds herself that she has more publications to her credit than any of the other members in the department.

Despite her influential publication record, as the novel progresses, it becomes apparent that Jessica's position in the Sociology Department is not secure, as a result of pressure on the administration by the Marxist majority. Moreover, Mickelsson, a prestigious but self-absorbed philosophy professor who becomes personally involved with Jessica, never makes an attempt to use his influence to stop the insurrection against her.

Initially, Jessica responds to her troubles in a way similar to Vinnie Miner. While Vinnie sometimes wallows in self-pity, Jessica allows her pride to temporarily paralyze her. Although she is well aware of Mickelsson's influence, she refuses to seek his help in her fight against her department and, ultimately, the administration. As the situation worsens, Jessica begins to fight her battle to little avail. Accused of negatively affecting the spirit of collegiality in her department by adhering to a right-wing sociological philosophy, Jessica is given a job in adult education, "a Siberian-type exile in the academy" (Hedeman, 1993, p.88).

At the end of the novel, Jessica is not as self-confident as Vinnie Miner. Rather, she appears to have accepted her fate as she tells Mickelsson, " 'You know they'll get away with it' " (p. 522). Although an appeal is planned, Jessica has left the process up to her friends on her behalf and states, " 'It's just a formality' " (p. 522).

Jessica Stark's portrayal of the female academic lies somewhere between earlier depictions and more recent ones. That is, the narrow view of the protagonist, Pete Mickelsson, in the novel is the only view by which the reader can assess the character of

Jessica. As a result, the portrayal is more stereotypical with more emphasis placed on her femininity and physical beauty than on her intellectual attributes. However, Jessica does possess impressive credentials and is a scholar in her own right which makes her character more closely resemble the female academic in novels after 1980. Nevertheless, Jessica lacks the determination of other fictional female professors to seek personal and professional independence as observed by Robinson (1989).

The question might arise as to whether Professor Mickelsson's view of Jessica Stark is related to the fact that the novel's author is male. However, this research suggests that the portrayal of the female academic is not indicative of the gender of the author. A case in point is Rebecca Goldstein's (1983) The Mind-Body Problem where, again, (and as the title suggests) the academic woman struggles between femininity and intellect. The female protagonist is Renee Feuer, a graduate student in philosophy whose close friends, Ava Schwartz and Sarah Slater, allow her a first-hand view of life in the academy for female academics. They are awarded a fellowship and a faculty position, respectively, at Princeton University. Ava bears the scars of having been victimized by a mentor who demanded that she write articles for him before he would agree to read her dissertation. Consequently, her views on women in higher education are bitterly tainted. She states:

Look around at the women in academia, the women who made their living from their brains – especially those in the so-called masculine disciplines like math and physics, to take two random examples. They all feel it, too. They're telling you with the way they look and dress, the way they hold themselves and speak: feminine is dumb. You've got to stamp out all traces of girlishness if you want to

be taken seriously by others, but more importantly by yourself. . . . I can't manage to regard myself as a woman and a physicist, so one of them's got to go. And I suppose being a physicist is more important to me, so goodbye sex. Men don't have to make the choice, but we do. For us it's either-or. (p. 194)

Ava makes a deliberate choice in the novel to live only the "life of the mind" and to shun any semblance of a personal life that is not directly connected to her life as an academician. Academic research by Chamberlain (1988), however, suggests that female academics who chose to isolate themselves and show no interest in socializing or forming personal relationships actually experience greater discrimination which points to a perception that remaining single, for example, tends to force women academics out of the circles of male scholars.

Since Renee Feuer, the graduate student narrator of The Mind-Body Problem, struggles with the femininity versus intellect dilemma throughout the novel, Ava becomes a heroine for her because Ava has consciously made her own choice. Renee frequently comments on Ava's intelligence and on her ability to let go of stubborn views when presented with plausible alternatives. "She's terrifically smart, knows it, and hardly gives the fact a thought. It's taken for granted, like the color of her eyes. She has confidence in her views, but I've never seen anyone give them up less painfully on good evidence" (p.145). The reader is also reminded by Renee that Ava is a woman who has "chosen her own goals and depends on no one but herself to carry her to them" (p.272). However, this realization comes crashing down on Renee when Ava decides to leave Princeton to take a position at Caltech. She feels abandoned and more aware than ever

that determination and independence, qualities that she lacks, are necessary attributes for women in the academy.

Renee's other friend in the novel, Sarah, appears, at first glance, to be as self-willed as Ava. However, although she has known success in higher education, she secretly longs for a different life, one that she describes in "Cinderella terms" (p.150). Sarah, Renee states enviously, receives five job offers, including the offer from Princeton. Nonetheless, Sarah is unimpressed as she offers her interpretation of the hiring process. " 'It's just because I'm a woman. Departments all need their token woman' " (p.148). She also agonizes over her decision when she accepts the job at Princeton and experiences terrifying moments of "self-perceived inadequacy" (p.148). Although Goldstein does not allow the reader to witness first-hand any of Sarah's frustrations at Princeton, the professor often relates to Renee her many negative experiences ranging from "the miseries of her teaching to the agonies of he research" (p.149). When Renee questions Sarah's secret desire to enjoy a "Cinderella" ending to her life, Sarah replies: " 'Deep down I believe – no, it's too deep to be called belief. It's just reflexive. Deep down I reflex that because I'm such a good, hard-working girl, someday, on the night of the ball, the great transformation will take place' " (p.150). Sarah articulates the parallel between the Cinderella story and a woman's life in Princeton. The wicked step-relatives are akin to the insensitive members of the Philosophy Department. The Prince represents the escape route from the academic world. Like Ava, Sarah is portrayed as a female professor who feels forced to make a choice, but unlike Ava, Sarah longs for a life that is different from the academic one she

has chosen. Both characters, however, have difficulty imagining that femininity and intellect are anything but mutually exclusive attributes for women academics.

The portrayals of the women professors in The Mind-Body Problem support research by Lisherness (1985) which contrasts women in more recent academic novels with earlier portrayals examined by Belok (1958) and Staib (1972). Lisherness suggests that contemporary academic women deliberately tend to choose scholarly pursuits rather than marriage or even a combination of the two. By contrast, Belok's study of novels from 1940-1957 indicated that of the 25 female professors portrayed, none of them were engaged in serious scholarship. Goldstein expands the modern portrayal, however, by portraying at least one female academic who is not content with the choice she has made, as in the case of Sarah Slater. More specifically, it would seem that the author views modern female academics in an "either-or situation," a perspective addressed in more recent academic research by Chamberlain (1988). Goldstein's characters, then, resemble the characters in the novels of the 1970's, which Lisherness (1985) studies, in that they are productive in their careers. However, often their struggle lies with the choices they perceive they are forced to make.

Many of the female professors described thus far seem to have achieved some degree of symbolic equity. That is, Professors Vinnie Miner, Sarah Slater and Ava Schwartz, earn positions at prestigious institutions. Bentley and Blackburn (1992) point out, however, that success should include more than gender equity; in addition, it should include power. In other words, "Success includes the possession of power – women's being able to influence the rules by which the game is played. Success means being able to alter the current rules, to create an alternative set that are accepted as fully legitimate"

(Bentley & Blackburn, 1992, p.698). Even though Jessica Stark's career path appears positive in Mickelsson's Ghosts, the professor comes up against a department of colleagues who either hold narrow-minded views or who are too weak to defend any alternatives. Thus, her lack of power eventually forces her out of her position.

The antithesis to Jessica Stark is Rebecca Shepard, the protagonist in Michael Levin's (1987) novel, The Socratic Method, who wages a battle to retain the power her colleagues are so eager to deprive her of. Rebecca is a strong-willed female law professor in this satire. She is initially introduced much like Jessica Stark, according to the view of a male colleague:

Her credentials and her appearance created a case of what psychologists call "cognitive dissonance" – they simply did not add up right. In the appearance of Clapp and his colleagues, young good-looking women could be secretaries, television reporters, or second wives, but not law professors. (p.17)

Rebecca is well aware of the male perception at the fictional McKinley Law School as she is the only full-time woman professor on the faculty. She recalls that her first year at the school was a miserable experience and felt unprepared for the lack of collegiality that greeted her. She made a conscious decision, however, that hard work and perseverance were necessary if the ensuing years were going to get any better. She became the faculty adviser for the Women's Law Caucus and published several articles on Securities Law. At one point, she considered leaving McKinley to accept a tenured position at another school, but decided to remain and become the first woman to gain tenure at McKinley. As the novel unfolds, Professor Shepard is in the final stage of the

tenure process and is completing an article for the Law Review which will serve as the last piece of evidence for which she will be reviewed.

From the outset, it is obvious that in many ways Rebecca's portrayal sharply contrasts that of the other female professors discussed thus far. She possesses no self-doubts about her intellectual ability, leads a personally fulfilled life, and commits herself to the establishment of gender equity on her campus and to the acquisition of power among her colleagues, even though she experiences more blatant gender discrimination than any of the other characters. Like Professors Miner and Stark, Rebecca's scholarly interest and philosophical perspective are questioned. She is unpopular among her colleagues, for example, because she refuses to conduct her classes according to the Socratic method of interrogation. Rather, she works arduously on developing well-crafted questions for her students and seeks volunteers in the class to respond to them. Although it takes some time before students see the benefits, Rebecca does not give up, refusing to employ many of the methods that other professors utilized to maintain power over their students. This revamping of the American system of legal education, which was the subject of Rebecca's Law Review article, poses a significant risk in her quest for tenure at the conservative McKinley Law School and isolates her from her colleagues:

Despite all the success she achieved as teacher, adviser, and legal scholar-or, perhaps, because of it-many of Rebecca's colleagues curtailed their already limited contact with her. They left her certain that she was not, and would never become, a member of the club. (p.35)

The research of Johnsrud and DesJarlais (1994) parallels the statement of this fictional professor by suggesting that women faculty do report having difficult

relationships with male colleagues and, in fact, often leave positions as a direct result of these negative experiences. Moore (1987) also points to women's exclusion from the collegial culture. Rebecca's tenure dilemma also has support in academic research which indicates that disadvantages are often identified for women faculty regardless of discipline, experience, or publication record (Johnrsud and DesJarlais, 1994). Finkelstein (1984) and Rausch et al. (1989) point directly to data that indicate that women tend to be promoted and tenured more slowly and are, also, more likely to leave an institution.

Levin consistently reminds the reader about the difficulties Rebecca faces as a direct result of the negative gender perception among her colleagues:

Rarely was she able to complete a thought or even a long sentence at faculty meetings, before she was shouted down. Eventually she gave up trying to speak. When she wished to express a concern about law school policy, she would quietly visit the Dean's office and make her point without arguing or displaying excessive emotion. For those brief moments of rational discourse the Dean was grateful, although, for reasons of his own, he rarely told her so. (p.37)

Perhaps the most blatant discriminatory scene in the novel occurs during a discussion between two male professors concerning Rebecca's tenure application. Murray Frobisher, a law professor who spends more time conducting his private practice than teaching, is adamantly opposed to granting Rebecca tenure. In his conversation with the Dean, he expresses his fears about Professor Shepard and the possible changes that could result from her appointment:

Rebecca just doesn't know her place. I mean there are certain field that are okay for women to teach. Wills. Employment Discrimination. Family Law. Those are

marginal fields that women lawyers drift into in practice, and if you have to have women law professors at all, then let them teach that stuff. I checked into the figures, you know. Most of the women law professors anywhere in the country who have tenure are either law librarians, or professors of Trusts and Estates or Employment Discrimination. Why do we have to be the pioneers? (pp.78-79)

Moore (1987) discusses this issue of the female professor and the challenges she faces even within her discipline. She states that "The disciplines themselves become homogeneous in terms of social characteristics and in terms of the mode and matter of inquiry" (p.30). She suggests that an additional challenge for women academics, then, is to gain access to subject areas that have for generations been only within men's purview.

Levin does much more, however, in his portrayal of Professor Shepard, than make her a victim of discrimination. In fact, more than any of the other authors previously discussed, Levin allows the reader to see Rebecca function on a variety of different professorial levels, often in contrast to her male counterparts. For example, the fictional professor spends a great deal of time counseling students both in academic and personal affairs. "Women students were constantly dropping by her office for advice, or to describe some latest indignity suffered in a classroom or male professor's office, or merely to chat" (p.63). She also spends time "on a wide range of faculty committees in order to provide what the Dean called, without conscious condescension, a woman's perspective" (p.63). However, Rebecca is completely unimpressed with any sense of power or prestige that many of her colleagues thrive on, and, in fact, appears almost uncomfortable when students display a kind of reverence for her and states, "The view from a pedestal is pleasant, but not for long" (p.63).

Although Rebecca's dilemma in the novel is serious, she chooses to humiliate her colleagues in a humorous way. Mindful of their pompous and self-serving ways, Rebecca decides to perpetrate a prank which involves the coveted "Professor of the Year Award." She sends a letter to each of the most arrogant professors falsely announcing that he has been awarded the distinction. As she expects, the professors fall for the prank and many humorous scenes ensue as each one takes pleasure at the idea of being chosen by the students whom they have so poorly served. However, Rebecca's prank backfires just as her tenure is about to be decided. In addition, the students are in the midst of waging a strike in an attempt to obtain curriculum reform. Although humorous, this sequence of events comments quite harshly on the law school's history of its treatment of women professors. When Rebecca's role is discovered, the victims of her prank vote in the majority against her appointment. However, Jackson Ward, Rebecca's only close friend on the faculty, exposes an interesting and embarrassing fact that saves the day for Professor Shepard. It seems that the law school had made a court settlement some years before with a woman who was turned down for tenure. The court awarded the professor a monetary settlement and ruled that if the school gave tenure to a woman within 5 years, the record of the discrimination case would not be made public. This interesting disclosure explains the reason why the committee is suddenly considering granting tenure to Karen Conner, a non-threatening, adjunct professor who has taught for only four semesters and who has no publication record. Ward Jackson offers the committee a no-choice decision:

Now I'm going to make it a package deal. Rebecca gets tenure, Sanford drops the charges against Daniel Conway, the students get a curriculum review committee,

committee, everyone forgets about the Professor of the Year letter, and I guarantee the strike will end within twenty-four hours.” (p.291)

Although it seems that Rebecca ultimately gets tenure via legal blackmail, the important issue remains – she does become the first female law professor to be awarded tenure by McKinley Law School. Throughout the novel, Levin never allows his protagonist to let despair overcome her; rather, he sees to it that she remains determined to overcome the gender discrimination by her colleagues that so blatantly attempts to destroy her. As Bentley and Blackburn (1992) suggest, Rebecca goes beyond becoming just another hiring statistic; she succeeds by influencing the rules by which the game of higher education is played.

Women’s acquisition of power within the higher education system is a topic that also rises to the surface in Cantor’s Dilemma by Carl Djerassi (1989). Couched in a more serious framework than Levin’s novel, Djerassi’s work also has a female academic, Professor Jean Ardley, engaged in a discipline that is dominated by males. As a chemistry professor, Jean speaks early in the novel about gender discrimination in the field:

Do you know that not a single chemistry department in any of the leading American universities has ever had a woman as chairperson? Except for the famous Chien-shiung Wu at Columbia it would also be true in physics. Isn’t it funny that they usually call her “Madame Wu” rather than “Professor,” as if she were running a bordello? (p.45)

Professor Ardley also addresses the topic of discrimination with regard to membership in the National Academy of Sciences. She explains to a graduate student

that out of the 1,610 professors who hold membership in the organization, only 50 are women, and only one woman belongs to the chemistry section, compared with 170 men. Tenure is another issue that Ardley examines in terms of gender considerations: “So far there are very few women in tenured positions in chemistry in the top universities. None at Harvard, none at Princeton, none at Yale, one at Stanford” (p.53). Research by Rausch et al. (1989) affirms this trend in higher education by observing that, despite the efforts of affirmative action, the number of women in tenured positions remains disappointingly low and the issue continues to be a problem for women.

Ardley gets very specific, too, about the impact of impending tenure on personal choices she made. Her decision not to have children, for example, was directly related to her professional career: “I’d say that in chemistry, or for that matter in most laboratory sciences, you just can’t be a mother and get tenure during the six years you’ve got as an assistant professor. At least not in the big research universities” (p.44). Aisenberg and Harrington (1988), who interviewed academic women for their research, confirm the fictional professor’s assertion that women predict that they will not get as far in their careers if they attempt to combine professional work and family responsibilities and record that women feel a degree of embarrassment when announcing a pregnancy to their academic departments.

Much like Rebecca Shephard, however, in The Socratic Method, Jean Ardley tells of her determination to gain access in her competitive field. One of her first professional decisions, she explains, was to change her name from Yardley to Ardley. The reason for the change was to insure that her name would appear first on a publication with another researcher, since an alphabetical listing of authors is common among male researchers.

In fact, rumors often persisted that some senior faculty refused to work with a junior researcher whose name started with an earlier letter of the alphabet. Another decision Professor Ardley made was to continue at Brown University for her graduate work in order to work with a woman:

Everybody urged me to go elsewhere-you know how it is in American science: we're so afraid of inbreeding, we always recommend that our undergraduates go elsewhere for their graduate training. But I wanted a female role model and Brown was one of the very few American universitie that had a female organic chemistry professor, Caitlin Barker. So I picked her." (p.51)

Professor Ardley proves to be an extremely important mentor to Celestine Price, a graduate student in chemistry. Having been told by her high school teacher that "Chemistry is still a man's world" (p.19), Celestine chooses Johns Hopkins where her relationship with Jean Ardley begins. After completing 3 years as an assistant professor at Hopkins, however, Professor Ardley's personal and professional decisions prove beneficial. She accepts a tenured position at a mid-western university and Celestine decides to go with her mentor to continue her research. Ardley is the ideal female mentor in the novel, as she works hard to prove herself in her field and break down the gender barriers for her young research assistant, Celestine. For example, unlike the more customary practice of senior male researchers who always present their findings at symposia, Ardley encourages Celestine to present their collaborative research at a prestigious conference at Northwestern University. Perhaps Djerassi seems too idealistic in his portrayal of Celestine later in the novel when she is offered two assistant professorships, one of which is at Harvard even though she has not completed any post-

doctoral work. However, the incident could also serve as Djerassi's comment on affirmative action as Celestine acknowledges that, " 'They'd never have considered me at this stage. . . if I were not a woman' " (p.166). Celestine recognizes this opportunity, in any case, and states, " 'I'm not a fool. I'd rather get a job because I'm a woman than be refused one because I'm not a man' " (p.166).

Interestingly, Celestine turns down the Harvard appointment in favor of a position at Cal Tech as did Ava Schwartz in The Mind-Body Problem. Following the advice of Professor Ardley, Celestine chooses Cal Tech because, " 'They don't have a single tenured woman chemist' " (p.211). When she is reminded that the same situation exists in many other institutions, Celestine replies, " 'True, but they seem to be willing to do something about it' " (p.211).

Several women professors in the novels discussed thus far seem anxious to break down the gender barrier. Ava Schwartz, Jean Ardley and Celestine Price make personal and professional decisions which lead them to institutions that offer some hope that change for women is forthcoming. Others, such as Professor Rebecca Shepard, prefer to remain in an institution and wage whatever battles are necessary. In all of these cases, however, the common denominator among these women professors is determination, a characteristic observed by Robinson (1989).

A common experience among several academic women in fiction is their presence in institutions that are reluctant to award tenure. Marya Knauer is an English professor in a small prestigious New Hampshire college in the novel, Marya, A Life, by Joyce Carol Oates (1986). This fictional institution has a two-hundred year history of neither awarding any woman tenure nor promoting her to a higher rank. Even worse is

the fact that a woman had never been hired by the college until a few years ago. Once again, the reader is presented with a zealous professor in the portrayal of Marya. She has completed her Ph.D. with a scholar in the field and has written a 500 page thesis on mid-19th century American prose which is scheduled for publication by Yale University Press. Throughout the novel, Marya is consumed with professional activities:

She was so caught up in the present tense, hurrying from place to place, spending much of her free time in the library, taking notes, preparing lectures, assembling ideas for articles, essays, for her second book. She wanted to study magical narratives in nineteenth century fiction . . . apocalyptic romance of a sort. . . . She wanted to pay a good deal of attention to neglected writers, to unknown women writers, in whose work radical and even revolutionary themes might be discovered, beneath, or behind, the formal conventions of a genre. (p.241)

Marya undergoes an interesting professional transformation in this novel that is unlike many of her other fictional counterparts. Initially, Oates has her so consumed with enthusiasm for her teaching and research, Marya appears a bit naïve in regard to significant academic issues which will eventually have an impact on her life at the college. For instance, the reader is told that Marya “thought it rather petty, rather vulgar, of certain of her colleagues to spend so much time in careerist speculation” (p.242). She often made the point to her colleagues that “teaching and scholarship really ought to be their primary concerns, and this dwelling upon competing with one another, always competing, competing, made anything approaching friendship extremely difficult” (p.242). The reaction of her colleagues to such statements by Marya often resulted in laughter, “a little tinged with contempt” (p.242).

Marya's attitude changes, however, and her naivete erodes as the realistic issue of tenure rises to the surface:

Rumors had been flying about, ignoble rumors, shameful rumors, whose contract would not be renewed; who would not be given a final one-year contract, who would be granted tenure, even promoted: it was a new experience for Marya, and not a very pleasant one, suddenly caring about matters she'd resolutely promised herself to ignore. (pp. 247-248)

When Marya learns that her contract is renewed for 3 years, with an above average salary increment for her rank, the tension lessens for awhile. However, as the approaching tenure issue looms, Marya worries about her professional future. She constantly attempts to reassure herself about her qualifications: "She had published a well-received scholarly book, she continued to publish articles and reviews in her field, she had acquired the reputation for being a dedicated and exacting teacher" (p.259). A key episode in the novel occurs the day that the tenure committee is meeting. Marya spends the day bicycling with her lover/colleague who is also seeking tenure. The pair promises not to call the college to find out the committee's decision, but Gregory reneges on the pact and when Marya confronts him as to the outcome of the call, he says, "'About my position, Marya, or about yours?'" (p.269). Interestingly, the chapter ends on that note, and the next chapter begins with Marya engaged in another career as a journalist.

It is apparent that Marya does not receive tenure, indicating that the institution is continuing its long history of gender discrimination. It is also interesting that Marya chooses to pursue another career which parallels research by Billard (1994) that refers to

a 1987 review of women with doctorates who are often in jobs that are outside their primary area of training.

Marya Knauer is the only fictional professor in this research who leaves her institution for professional reasons to embark on another career. Yet, despite her unsuccessful bid for tenure, throughout the novel she is portrayed as a strong, independent woman who does not engage in the "either woman or scholar" debate and is able to maintain a personal as well as professional life. The reader is told, "She was a woman whose womanliness was neither an issue nor a distraction" (p.259).

Another serious woman scholar emerges in Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris' (1991) The Crown of Columbus. Since this novel, unlike any of the others, is written from multiple first-person perspectives, the reader is introduced to Professor Vivian Twostar as she sees herself: "By day I was Assistant Professor Twostar, hotshot lecturer in anthropology, an authority, a professional woman as well as the decent, responsible mother of a provoking and eccentric sixteen-year-old son" (p.12). Although somewhat annoyed that she has been asked to write an article on Christopher Columbus, Vivian relishes the knowledge that this publication assures her tenure at Dartmouth. She is reminded that all the other pieces - teaching, committee work, community service - were all in place, but she was "light on what (the Dean) termed scholarly publication" (p.17). Vivian knows, too, that her advantages lies in the fact that she is a woman and a minority, "a natural double bulls-eye for every college committee" (p.17). Moreover, she has been granted a sabbatical to complete her research.

Although in the midst of a personal crisis when the novel opens, Professor Twostar remains deliberate in her pursuit of research material for her project. Portrayed from the outset as a scholar, she is delighted to spend time in the Dartmouth Library:

In my years at Dartmouth this building has been a personal cathedral of sublimation, the most soothing remedy available for choked exasperation, intellectual panic, for both large-scale problems and the small everyday violences endured by the human heart. Baker's Library's interior, dry-aired, and gray, perennial temperature-controlled at a bland San Diego cool, with an ambience of aging paper and leather and glue, was itself a compelling reason for craving tenure. (p.22)

Vivian arduously takes the reader through her Columbus journey, and there is never any doubt that this is serious scholarship. Even when she finds herself locked in the library one night, she finds consolation that "there was probably no more useful place than Baker Library, in the middle of an unread pile of material on Christopher Columbus"(p.49). Vivian is also portrayed as an intuitive researcher as she uncovers a mysterious but extremely significant document on her subject. She discovers, "Not a book but a thin brown portfolio of cardboard, glossy and brittle with age, labeled with the name Cobb, but noticeable for its lack of any library markings" (p.51). This discovery consumes Vivian as she traces the document to a number of others, all of which are connected to a collection of correspondences between Dartmouth and the Cobb family, important alumni of the college. When Vivian writes to Henry Cobb, presently residing in the Bahamas, she never imagines that he will summon her to an all-expense paid trip to his home. When it becomes apparent that Cobb believes the college is in possession of

valuable documents secured by his family over 500 years ago, Vivian's curiosity is more aroused and she is determined to find the mysterious Columbus papers among the library's archives. When Vivian finds what might potentially be Columbus' lost diary, she sets out to the Bahamas to meet Henry Cobb to complete what she believes is the research coup of the century.

Professor Twostar, like Professor Shepard in The Socratic Method, is also portrayed as capable of functioning on other professorial levels. For example, her time with students offers an interesting dimension to her character. At one point in the novel, she invites her students from a seminar that she is teaching to her house for the last class of the semester. She attempts to provide a congenial atmosphere and conducts an interesting and challenging class where students are actively engaged in discussion.

It is interesting that in this novel, although Professor Twostar experiences professional problems, gender equity is never an issue. In this regard, Vivian more closely resembles Vinnie Miner in Foreign Affairs whose scholarship is challenged but who, nevertheless, emerges successful and self-confident. Throughout the novel, even Vivian's lover, an arrogant but brilliant scholar in his own field of literature, doubts her ability as a serious researcher and refers to her as a "dilettante." Furthermore, when it appears that her tenure application might face opposition, gender is not the apparent factor; rather, it is the concern that her research lacks objectivity.

No obstacle prevents Vivian, however, from pursuing her goal. The acquisition of tenure becomes secondary to the discovery and affirmed authenticity of Columbus' diary. Her determination and her intuitive research skills lead her to participate in the arrest of Henry Cobb on a variety of charges, including premeditated fraud. More

important, she establishes herself as a scholar with the publication of the unexpurgated version of Columbus' diary. By the end of the novel, she cannot keep up with the requests to make keynote addresses and present her papers at international conferences.

One final comparison between Professor Twostar and some other female professors in the other novels under discussion is that she never perceives that she must make the personal versus career choice that Jean Ardley in Cantor's Dilemma or Ava and Sarah in The Mind-Body Problem do. In fact, throughout the novel, Vivian completely combines both aspects of her life, more closely resembling Marya Knauer and Vinnie Miner. She is 9 months pregnant when the novel opens and the father of the child is her lover and colleague. Vivian never appears embarrassed, and when the baby is born, the family unit accompanies her on her research journey to the Bahamas. These observations do not suggest that Vivian is without problems, but they do indicate, as Robinson (1989) notes, that such portrayals positively suggest that academic women can lead full lives and gain insight from their experiences; that they are learning not to define their lives through other people; that they can be successful personally and professionally and that their academic future is not limited. As this novel represents one of the latter works in this discussion, its portrayal of the female professor obviously points to a more contemporary perspective which indicates that the recent degree of progress made by women in academe is impressive (Finklestein et al., 1998).

The obvious positive observation about the portrayal of female professors in fiction during this time period is that it is not stereotypical. This view seems to have originated with the research of Robinson (1989) who studied academic women in novels from 1970-1984 and who suggests that female professors may still be struggling to know

themselves, but are emerging as autonomous. The women in this study of more recent fiction seem to have made even more progress with the most significant change occurring in the scholarly endeavors they pursue. Gender discrimination still remains a factor for many of the fictional professors, but the manner in which they attempt to overcome the barrier affirms their strength and determination to succeed. Others are not willing to settle only for gender equity but desire the acquisition of power within the academy. Some women professors in the novels, too, still struggle with the femininity versus intellect issue and perceive themselves as being forced to make choices that do not always bring them personal and/or professional contentment. As the academic research of Johnsrud and DesJarlais (1994) indicates, there is more than one explanation for the experiences of women in higher education and more than one approach to guarantee their success. These portrayals of fictional academic women represent a wide range of characterizations which parallels the lives of female professors in higher education during the twenty-seven years this study encompasses.

Chapter VII

THE PROFESSOR'S PERSONAL LIFE

He was no Russian but Huguenot and Irish by descent, a Midwesterner flattened out by the prairies, a journalist and a lousy college dean. He suspected that the academic connection had been getting to him. He could feel, with Dr. Faustus, "O would that I had never seen Wittenberg, never read a book"; and it was no wonder that the classroom, the library environment, had driven him finally into the streets of Chicago. (Bellow, 1982, p. 130)

This brief description of Professor Albert Corde in The Dean's December depicts a protagonist who feels frustrated with the academic path which he has chosen to pursue after a career in journalism. The lure of academia has not proven rewarding for Corde in part because of his disappointment with the absence of idealism he longed to find in the profession. Corde is not alone among fictional professors in his disillusionment with the academy. Various reasons seem to contribute to this perception - administrative fears, lack of collegiality, a competitive environment, as well as the professors' individual personal attributes.

As this chapter seeks to complete the portrayal of the fictional professor by examining his/her personal life, it is important to note the changes that have occurred in the literature over time in regard to this aspect of the portrayal. The research devoted to the real world academic on this topic is limited for this study, since it tends to render instead a more quantitative examination of the professoriate, which is irrelevant to the focus here. Research dealing with the novelist's depiction of the professor, however, has

been more plentiful and, therefore, appropriate for this chapter. In addition, as Robinson (1989) states, to present an isolated study that only makes references to the characters' professional lives "involves the risk of seeming to indicate greater emphasis on academic matters than is actually the case in these novels" (p. 38). In fact, the novelists are concerned with all aspects of their characters' lives.

Ezor (1962) examined higher education in fiction from 1900 to 1960. As the decades progressed, he noticed a trend toward a more liberal philosophy among the fictional professors and concluded that the various periods under study accurately reflected real world academics. Click (1970) determined during the same time period that professors in novels from these decades were often portrayed in a negative light, and concurred that the depictions were a reflection of the dominant culture of the times. King (1970) studied the role of fictional professors more specifically and determined that novels from the beginning of the century through the 1960's provided deep insights into the true character of professors in that they embodied both the virtues and the weaknesses of the professoriate. In 1974, Jacobs' study examines academic novels of the 1960's exclusively and observed that the professor is beginning to question his role within the institution. She viewed these faculty members as being at odds with their institutions because of a growing tension between the universities' accepted utilitarian values and their own academic idealism. In a study that considers sixteen academic novels through 1984, Maddock-Cowart (1989) views fictional professors as solitary figures who are isolated by the circumstances and demands of their profession. She draws a parallel between the professional alienation these professors experience and their personal characteristics. She suggests that professors are not trained to act on instinct or intuition

and are, therefore, out of touch with the human connection that could enhance their happiness. She supports the idea that these professors, then, suffer in their personal lives as a result of the same attributes that bring them to the academic profession.

Maddock-Cowart's (1989) research on academic fiction parallels earlier academic research of Finklestein (1978) who addressed the personality aspects of the real world professor. Although the professoriate that Finklestein studied did not indicate that any consistent personality patterns emerge, the research does support that the academic profession is associated with a distinctive lifestyle. However, although this finding is qualified by the suggestion that faculty do show differences in the nature of family relationships, friendship patterns, and political allegiances, the research contends that the academic role is pre-emptive by selection rather than socialization. Thus, it seems that professors bring deliberate common characteristics to the profession which decrease the role of the academic environment as contributing to the disillusionment some professors face.

More recent academic research by Bowen and Schuster (1986) notes the increase of diversity among the professoriate with regard to gender, ethnicity, and even to the individualistic personalities of faculty members. However, these researchers do not hesitate to point out that the vast majority of faculty members still have much in common and, therefore, remain a homogenous group with a strong sense of identification which transcends differences in background and discipline.

Preceding chapters in this study have discussed the professional issues that fictional professors face compared to real world academics. This chapter serves to complete the picture of the professors in these novels by examining their personal lives to

determine the degree of homogeneity with regard to their personal attributes. Are the professors disillusioned, isolated individuals as Bellow's protagonist appears to be? How do they function in terms of their personal affiliations? Do their experiences in the academy enrich or hinder their personal lives? This extended perspective will expose another dimension of these fictional professors, as Maddock-Cowart (1989) suggests, "the exploration of the connection-and great void-between knowing and being" (p. 132).

Professor Albert Corde is Saul Bellow's (1982) creation of a career journalist turned academic in The Dean's December. In this novel, much about the personal life of Corde is revealed and Bellow draws deliberate connections between the professor's personality and his reasons for pursuing a second career in higher education. Corde is consistently portrayed as an intellectual and a moralist:

I gave up writing for the papers ten years ago because-well, because my modernity was all used up. I became a college professor in order to cure my ignorance. We made a trade. I teach young people to write for the papers and in return I have an opportunity to learn why my modernity was used up. At the college I had time to read scads of books. (p. 228)

However, during his tenure at the university, Corde writes a series of scathing articles on corruption which earn him a reputation as a racist and jeopardizes his success at the institution. His most grievous fault, it appears, is that he did not obtain approval from the administration before publication of the articles which attacked everyone associated with Chicago's city government. Although the Provost had led Corde through every step of the institutional and educational policies of the university when the

professor first assumed his duties, to Provost Witt, "Corde was a fool. . . . He had bollixed everything up with his muddled high seriousness" (p. 179).

It is interesting to note that quite often Corde's "seriousness" is misinterpreted as foolishness by others. For example, the articles Corde writes about city corruption are considered "unaccountable acts of destruction" (p. 69). However, he is often introspective about his sense of morality and is cynical as he acknowledges that virtue does not seem to have a place in many of society's institutions. He comments, "Somehow the media are more comfortable with phonies, with unprincipled men'" (p. 59). But Corde is never naïve; rather, he is well aware of the high price of honest journalism, especially when the image of the university is at stake. He comments on the Provost's view: "Once a man like Witt decided that you were not a man to observe discreet convention, that you talked out of turn, and that you were a fool, nothing but trouble, you were out" (p. 186). More important, however, is Corde's indictment of the university as he admits his reasons for writing the articles:

It was certainly true that Corde had found himself in Chicago looking for examples of "moral initiative," and had come up with two: Rufus Ridpath at County Jail; and Toby Winthrop, also black, an ex-hit man and heroin addict. He hadn't found his examples in any of the great universities, and there was a large academic population in Chicago. What Alec Witt would probably like to know was why Corde hadn't made his search for moral initiative in his own college. Why, thought Corde, I did look there, up and down, from end to end. (p. 188)

Bellow portrays Corde as a moralist, also, in his personal relationships. During the course of the novel, Corde has traveled to Bucharest with his wife, Minna, to be with

his dying mother-in-law, a psychiatrist and a former member of the Communist Party. In the many scenes with Minna and Valeria, Corde is sensitive and introspective. He recalls, for example, his initial acquaintance with his mother-in-law and observes that "he was strongly drawn to the old woman" (p. 12). He often speaks of his positive feelings for her and as she lies dying, he tells her he loves her. Corde's month-long stay in Bucharest allows him time to reflect not only on his relationship with Valeria but also on the tyranny of Communism as he struggles to get his mother-in-law the medical care that she needs. Many episodes, too, are devoted to Corde's devotion to his wife. Sympathetic to Minna's grief over her mother's illness, "He knew he must get up and offer her comfort" (p. 20). During Valeria's funeral, "Corde's motive . . . was to make sure that Minna had everything she might need" (p. 208). When they eventually arrive back in Chicago, Corde expresses concern for Minna's well being: " 'The trip is tiring you. We didn't make smart arrangements. We should have flown in yesterday and rested overnight in Los Angeles' " (p. 307).

At the end of the novel, Corde is forced to resign from his position at the university, and, again, Bellow contrasts Corde's idealism with the institution's pragmatic perspective. Corde recounts his final meeting with the Provost:

"He told me I could always say what I liked and say it publicly. Academic freedom protected me. I was, however, involved in a contradiction which, surely, an intelligent man like me couldn't overlook. . . . I had made the administration very unhappy. While everybody was deeply sympathetic to me, people who had sacrificed for the college, and so on, given their best energies, fought for liberal

education as well as for the very survival of the institution, were deeply wounded.

He beat on my soul good and hard." (p. 306)

Although Bellow delivers an obvious indictment of higher education in this novel, no other author portrays a protagonist as moral and as satisfied with his personal life as Albert Corde. In most cases, as this research will suggest, professors' personal lives are less than fulfilling and often play havoc with their professional situations. An example is Peter Mickelsson from the novel, Mickelsson's Ghosts (1982).

Maddock-Cowart (1989) presents an interesting theory about fictional professors, such as Peter Mickelsson, and the way in which they allow their discipline to become part of their psyche. The researcher refers to the professors' particular area of study as their "devil," as it proves to exert enormous influence over their judgment of others and of themselves. However, these professors often are seeking the place of learning in their lives and are straining to make some kind of direct application of their discipline to their personal lives. If they fail in this expectation, the result is often a sense of disillusionment followed by a personal and professional crisis.

Peter Mickelsson is a professor in one of the worst emotional states. He has been through a failed marriage and has been hospitalized for a breakdown. Forced to leave Brown University, he takes a position at the State University of New York at Binghamton where he is drinking too much, producing no research, and is too self-absorbed to engage in meaningful personal relationships. His reputation rests solely on his past accomplishments as a brilliant professor of philosophy and the author of a successful book. When the novel opens, the reader is made aware of Mickelsson's many problems as he is described in a desperate state:

Sometimes the feeling that his lie was hopeless-and his misery to a large extent undeserved (like everyone else's, he began to fear)-would drive him down to the maple or oak lined trees at night, to prowl like a murderer, looking in through strangers' windows with mixed scorn and envy, avoiding those streets where he was likely to meet someone who knew him, from the university, someone who might pity him for living like a starveling graduate student or first-year instructor after all he'd been once, not long ago, a full professor in a prestigious university. (pp.5-6)

The reader becomes more aware that Mickelsson's life is in total chaos with the many references to the professor's desperate financial situation. When he attempts to secure a loan to purchase a house, he is besieged by reminders of unpaid taxes and resulting penalties, as well as inadequate monthly payments to his ex-wife. It is during this episode that Mickelsson realizes that he is undergoing a "radical change of character" (p. 31) as he admits to himself that his "application is a pack of lies" (p. 31). From this moment on, Mickelsson makes a series of immoral choices which affect both his personal and professional life and which set him apart from Bellow's Albert Corde.

Although Mickelsson recognizes the chaotic state of his personal affairs, he continues to believe in his creative energy. He constantly reminds himself of his national reputation, for example, even when he suspects that colleagues are questioning his ability. Mindful, however, that he has not published anything in a number of years, he convinces himself that he can regain his prominence. "He must start writing something . . . Something worth real money, this time. . . . Just get the world's attention, that was the trick. . . . He would start at once, begin the first chapter this very evening" (pp. 140-

141). But Mickelsson has difficulty focusing on his book, and his singular form of inspiration comes from sexual encounters with a prostitute: "She filled his writing with power and life. It was a strange and wonderful effect" (p. 151).

Mickelsson also unconsciously redirects his creative energy. Rather than devoting his time to his research, he works incessantly on projects in his dilapidated farmhouse. Interestingly, his otherwise lack of organizational skills reverts to a highly disciplined pattern of work:

Mickelsson built a workbench, eight feet long and solid as a rock, with a deep drawer below and cupboards above for stains, glue, and tung oil, and a large space of bare wall for peg board. . . . He made the bench with meticulous care, measuring, levelling, fitting, bevelling. (p. 434)

The reader is told that Mickelsson is totally relaxed after his physical labor, sleeps until noon the next day, and returns directly to his project. It would appear, then, that, although Mickelsson is, at times, consumed with his efforts to achieve success in his discipline, he is ineffective and as Hedeman (1989) suggests, fits the description of fictional professors who are filled with self-doubt. Unlike Albert Corde, who is able to disconnect his personal life from his professional life, Mickelsson uses one as an escape from the other, and the result is dissatisfaction on both levels.

Mickelsson fails most miserably in relationships with others – colleagues, students, lovers:

But if strictly speaking he was a colleague to nobody, he knew better, instinctively, than to admit that fact too openly to himself. Sometimes after

telephone conversations with his wife, whether the tone she took was haughty or cajoling, he sensed how precarious his hold was on the world. (p. 72)

All of his human encounters indicate that he has lost the ability to tell the truth and/or to recognize the difference between good and evil. He appears complacent with the self-knowledge that he is a fraud as a teacher and colleague, and is able to easily rid himself of those characterizations "like his suitcoat and the annoyingly narrow tag, "Ethicist" (p. 73). His scenes with students, especially, affirm his ability to disavow any genuine human connection. When an earnest student approaches him after class, "Consciously, a little guiltily, he blotted the boy out" (p. 102). When another student, Nugent, an intellectual with many personal problems, also reaches out to Mickelsson, the reader is told that the professor's "heart sank, and, without entirely meaning to, he put on an expression of harassed irritability" (p. 103).

Mickelsson performs more blatant acts, however, that are either immoral or totally lacking in human compassion. Early in the novel, for example, he beats a dog to death with his walking stick. The animal had not proven to be a threat, and, in fact, did not even put up a struggle against Mickelsson's slaughter. Conscious of his misdeed and of his obvious character transformation, Mickelsson reflects:

He would call the police if he were the ethicist he'd all his life claimed to be and thought himself; but that thought had hardly entered his mind before he pushed it away forever. Back in Providence, where he'd been well-to-do and respected, he'd have gone to the police at once; but in Providence he wouldn't have killed the dog. (p. 9)

A more serious act occurs when Mickelsson steals money from a blind man who dies of a heart attack during the theft. He needed the money to give to a prostitute whom he has impregnated to pay for an abortion. He, too, proves incapable of maintaining a healthy relationship with Jessica Stark, a professor of sociology, although he seeks her comfort throughout the novel. As the novel progresses, Mickelsson abandons his students when he cannot even remember that the spring semester has begun. For a long time, he blames everyone else, even the philosophers whose teachings he has followed; then, he indulges in self-blame and is convinced he is haunted by the many "ghosts" of his past life.

At the end of the novel, Gardner allows Mickelsson a transformation, and the professor shows signs of redemption. Ironically, he does not find the solace he was seeking from his discipline; rather, he begins to find a sense of peace and comfort in the human relationships he had avoided. Mickelsson is an example of a professor who becomes entrenched in his isolation and whose avoidance of human contact results, at least temporarily, in a total breakdown of his value system. As Mickelsson's redemption is about to begin, his view of the connection between his personal and professional life is clearer:

He thought of all he ought to have done, ought to be doing, all he ought not to have done and could never atone for. He thought of the book he'd begun, messy hill of manuscript pages down by the typewriter. . . . He resisted the impulse to destroy it. . . . If anything could clean up the world, clear vision was the hope. (p. 474)

Fred Turner, a professor in Alison Laurie's Foreign Affairs (1984), shares a plight similar to Peter Mickelsson in that he, too, encounters personal difficulties that interfere with his professional life. However, his sense of morality never comes into question and he fares slightly better in relationships than Mickelsson. He is not the idealist that Albert Corde is, but he is devoted to his discipline even if it is only for his self-promotion. When Turner is first introduced, Laurie draws the reader's attention to his physical appearance. He is described as distractingly handsome, especially to young co-eds. However, the professor's sense of good-conscience, as well as his sound professional judgment, forces him to keep his students at a social distance:

He wasn't attracted to puppy fat and unformed minds; and though in a couple of cases he was tempted, he had a strong sense of professional ethics. He also suspected correctly that if he fell and was found out he might be in serious professional trouble. (p. 30)

When the source of Turner's personal problem is introduced, a trial separation from his wife, the professor's characterization echoes Mickelsson's. However, even though Fred suspects that the death sentence looms over his marriage, he is not as devastated as Mickelsson, nor is he experiencing the severe financial hardships that the latter professor faced. The circumstances do, at times, cast a dark shadow over his stay in London where he is pursuing research material, and the result is often the portrayal of a dark and somber professor:

Physically he is in London, but emotionally he remains in Corinth, in a part of his life that's ceased to exist. He is living in the historic past, as he had planned and

hoped to do-but not in eighteenth-century London. Instead he inhabits a more recent, private, and dismal era of his own history. (p. 31)

Another similarity between Turner and Mickelsson exists on the level of their academic disciplines. Although the two professors do not share the same area of specialization, both identify strongly with their respective field of study. Just as Mickelsson often draws parallels between the philosophers he has studied and the way he lives his own life, Turner often imitates writers he is researching: "Usually he walks everywhere, regardless of the distance or the weather, in imitation of the eighteenth-century author John Gay, about whom he is supposed to be writing a book" (p. 27). In another episode, Turner, who becomes involved with a British actress, Rosemary Radley, compares their bizarre relationship to the plot of a Henry James novel. He considers the actress, "the classic James heroine: beautiful, fine, delicate, fatally impulsive," while he views himself as "the sterling young American champion James himself might have provided" (p. 107). He reflects that he "has the giddy sense of having got into a novel" (p. 107), and finds it an exhilarating experience. Later, when Rosemary seems to avoid him, Turner casts her in a different role, "as one of James' beautiful, worldly, corrupt villainesses" (p. 203). As Maddock-Cowart (1989) suggests, it appears that for many of these professors, the connection between the personal and professional cannot be severed; their discipline becomes a part of their psyche.

As with many fictional professors, Turner's relationships with students and colleagues contribute to the complete portrayal. Turner's physical appearance not only causes potential sexual problems with female students; this attribute also contributes to the conscious social distance he puts between him and all his students. During his first

year of teaching, Turner wanted to be called by his first name in class, but with some regret he later changes that directive and requests more formality:

It bothers him to be "Professor Turner," to have to maintain at all times a cool distance from his students, a dry manner, to give up hope of achieving the warm, relaxed, but in no way steamy and loose pedagogic climate enjoyed by his less attractive colleagues. Time will solve his problem. . . . Meanwhile he has to put up with the belief of students that he is cold and formal. (p. 30)

Turner also possesses many inflexible ideas about a colleague, Professor Vinnie Miner, who is in London at the same time. He describes her as "eccentric and touchy," but is mindful of the fact that she is serving on the tenure committee at Corinth University. Turner has not been awarded tenure yet and chooses to limit his interaction with Professor Miner. He accepts her invitation to a party shortly after his arrival in London, but he does not plan on attending, admitting that with regard to Professor Miner, "his instinct is toward avoidance" (p. 35).

Professor Turner's personal difficulties completely intrude on his professional life throughout the novel. His involvement with Rosemary becomes close to destructive as it becomes evident that she suffers from schizophrenia, and she eventually experiences a total breakdown. This final catastrophe leaves him self-reflective and depressed about his personal and professional stagnation:

Fred is also brooding about his uncompleted book on John Gay. The directness and brilliant energy of Gay's work, to which he had been so strongly attached, now seem to him a façade. The more he studies the texts, the more ambiguity and darkness they reveal. (p. 260)

However, resembling Peter Mickelsson, Fred Turner seems capable of a transformation at the end of the novel. He questions his former opinion of himself as a decent and intelligent person and admits that, "His work, like all scholarship emptied of will and inspiration, has over the past months degenerate into a kind of petty highway robbery" (p. 266). He admits, too that his personal life "follows one of the classic literary patterns of the eighteenth century, in which a man meets and seduces an innocent woman, then abandons her" (p. 266). Drawing a parallel once again between his own life and a literary work by John Gay, Turner grows optimistic as he recalls the happy ending of The Beggar's Opera. He departs from London with a sense of confidence, committed to a reconciliation with his wife and a renewed energy toward his scholarship.

Thus far, with the exception of Albert Corde in The Dean's December, the execution of poor judgment in matters both personal and professional results in the fictional portrayal of emotionally distraught professors. In the case of Glen Cady, however, the protagonist in Novemberfest by Theodore Weesner (1994), professional problems precipitate a series of personal misjudgments that jeopardize his very existence. Although Albert Corde remains a moralist to the end, he is a sacrificial lamb for his institution. Cady, similarly, is a victim of institutional politics, but he does not possess the moral fortitude of Corde and yields to his personal weaknesses. Unlike other fictional professors discussed thus far, Cady engages in a sexual relationship with a student.

Professor Glen Cady began his career in higher education in his late forties. As a young man, he served in the army and was stationed in Germany. This experience awakened in him a desire to pursue college and graduate school as a German major, a feat he was forced to accomplish as a night student so he could keep his job as an

assembly line worker and retain some financial security. Consequently, he arrives in academe at least two decades late, a fact that is working against him as he attempts to secure tenure at a small New Hampshire college. In addition to his age, Cady also falls victim to other aspects of institutional politics. For one thing, his discipline does not draw throngs of students and his lack of publications does not make him a likely candidate for tenure: The Dean asks Cady, “ ‘Why in the world did you take this turn so late in life? And taking a doctorate in a field that’s been declining for years?’ ” (p. 8). The fact that the professor has four translations to his credit does not make an impression on the Dean or the tenure committee. However, Cady is most distraught by the fact that his obvious commitment to his discipline and to the institution is overlooked: “ ‘My commitment is real, that’s all. I’ve been around, and my commitment to the field is real. I do a good job, I work extremely hard’ ” (p. 10).

The above statement by Cady emerges as a common mantra among fictional professors. Despite their various sentiments of dejection and disillusionment, these professors are strongly committed to their disciplines. Academic research by Clark (1987) supports this view among real world academics:

There is no more stunning fact about the academic profession anywhere in the world than the simple one that academics are possessed by disciplines, fields of study, even as they are located in institutions. With the growth of specialization in the last century, the discipline has become everywhere an imposing, if not dominating, force in the working lives of the vast majority of academics. (p. 25)

As disappointed as Cady is over the likelihood that he will not receive tenure, he admits that he does not have the fortitude to fight the inevitable. He states, “If the

rejection did not destroy him, contesting it could" (p. 11). This decision causes irrevocable damage to Cady's relationship with his wife, 20 years his junior, who is anticipating a bleak future with a potentially unemployed middle-age college professor. Although mindful of his wife's disappointment and concerned about the future of his 6 year-old daughter, Cady mistakenly seeks solace in a relationship with a German student, Eicki Reiff, a single mother who is seeking her own escape from loneliness. The appeal of this relationship for Cady, however, lies not only in the pair's mutual feelings of isolation but also because Eicki bring back vivid memories of an affair Cady had with an older married woman when he was stationed in Germany 30 years earlier. In a series of chapters devoted to Cady's flashbacks of his time in Germany, Weesner allows Cady to make the connection between his personal past and his present professional dilemma. He is conscious of the fact that his experience there left him with a profound love of the country, its people, and its language which eventually moved him to pursue his studies. He contemplates explaining this perspective to his Dean:

Might he nonetheless have tried to make more clear to the dean how, returning from Europe and going to work at Chevy, there came a day when the alternative to language studies would have been to no longer possess meaning in his life? To remain in the factory-on the treadmill of the living dead. To forgo ordinary thinking and dreaming. No, he thinks, he couldn't have told that to the dean, no more than he could have told of the experiences he had coming of age in Germany, experiences with the country and with a married German woman, how they informed and even enticed his own students today. (p. 11)

Glen's liaison with his student, Eicki, strikes the final blow at his marriage, and, at the same time, he loses his position at the college. The one thing Glen does not lose, however, is his commitment to his work and his devotion to his daughter. Ironically, the translations that could not help him secure a permanent position in his New Hampshire college are appealing to the German Department at Boston University, and Glen is offered a part-time job by the chairperson, Professor Max Baumann. Max encourages him to complete a translation of an important book by an East German academic who is predicting the dissolution of East Germany. Recognizing that "his only remaining possession is the quality of his work" (p. 293), Glen "works constantly to sustain Baumann's enthusiasm and his own determination in the face of his depression and loneliness" (p. 305). Even when Glen receives the news that the University Press of New Haven has agreed to publish the translation, his elation is tempered by his sense of disbelief, and, again, he draws a parallel between his work and his personal life:

Standing at his window, Glen tries to appreciate the news. If only he could believe the prophecy himself. He doesn't, any more than he believes his own life will come together again. Reunification of divided Germany is a nice idea.

Having a new chance in life is a nice idea. But he fears they are as ethereal as the dreams of children, and he cannot really believe them. None of them. (p. 308).

Only when Glen hears on the radio a few months later that some East Germans have broken through the Iron Curtain does he begin to feel hope that his life is turning around. Simultaneously, his book is published and his instant popularity lands him a job conducting a 2 day seminar in New York for the British Broadcasting Company. More

important, Boston University invites him to the Mielein Institute for a 2 week program that is funded by a West German grant.

At the end of the novel, Glen Cady appears to have found meaning again in his life, a feat not unlike the tearing down of the Iron Curtain. Although his marriage is dissolved, he appears capable of engaging in other meaningful personal relationships, but it is his commitment to his work which ultimately brings him the satisfaction he was seeking. He emerges, much like Professors Mickelsson and Turner, transformed and energetic: "He had not believed it would happen but it has. He had thought it was a child's dream and it has come true" (p. 315).

Martin Weinstock, Michael Blumenthal's (1993) fictional professor in Weinstock Among the Dying, is another "late arrival" to higher education, "having lived on the outside of the academy for so long during his vocationally lost years as a cameraman, journalist and lawyer" (p. 6). Though younger than Albert Corde and Glen Cady, he finds himself being regarded as a serious American poet, a recognition that lands him, at the age of 36, a lecturer position at Harvard University.

Admittedly bringing his personal baggage to the campus, Martin is, nevertheless, taken aback when he notices an inscription on a student's t-shirt which reads: "Live Forever: Die Young." More disconcerting is a letter he receives from a former Harvard student who suffered a breakdown at the end of her sophomore year. She warns:

They will try and convince you that being a living writer who himself is not a fourth-generation Harvard graduate or a direct descendant of Henry IV (or married to one) is about as worthwhile as being a Band-Aid on a seam of the

space shuttle. They will try and make you into yet another piece of dead flesh with feet just like the rest of them. (p. 7)

Ironically, Weinstock's personal odyssey has been filled with life and death metaphors prior to his arrival at Harvard. Feeling the effects of having been adopted by his biological aunt and uncle (and never given an adequate explanation), Martin's confusing parentage and his uncle's preoccupation with dying has contributed to his "profound sense that to penetrate too deeply into anything had something vaguely to do with death" (p.5). This same odd perspective, however, also has bearing on his poetry. The fact that critics find his poetry energetic and able to be understood by everyone strikes Weinstock as a positive reaction. In fact, he feels "an obligation to keep doing this thing that seemed to provide pleasure to those he liked" (p. 6). At Harvard, however, he soon discovers that "the simplicity and directness he had so arduously cultivated earned him little but disdain" (p. 6). He also begins to understand what the former student meant in her letter when she tells him that he is among "the vengeful dead, who have returned to earth in the guise of the powerful to avenge themselves against those who still insist on the world as a place of joy and hope and affirmation and love" (p. 8).

Martin repeatedly encounters such metaphors at Harvard in Blumenthal's satire. He learns that the Faculty Club is referred to as "Club Dead" since the dining room is adorned with portraits of deceased Harvard presidents. He becomes aware, too, that almost on a daily basis, formal announcements arrive in faculty mailboxes informing them of some former professor who has passed away. Some faculty members, too, anxiously await the death of an ailing colleague in the hopes of gaining a tenured position. A disconcerting title for a conference, "Representations of Death," affirms for

Martin that a sense of morbidity pervades the atmosphere at Harvard, and he knows he will find it difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile this perspective with his own view. When a colleague tells Martin “ ‘We are all dead men speaking to dead men,’ ” Martin replies, “ ‘I’m alive. I don’t see any reason in the world to start playing dead until I have to’ ” (p. 27).

Initially, then, upon his arrival at Harvard, Martin Weinstock is at odds with the institution’s culture. In this regard, he resembles Albert Corde more than the other fictional professors. Whereas Albert’s idealism and value system is antithetical to that of his university, Martin’s exuberant view of the world appears to be in contrast to the sobriety that encompasses Harvard. The reader learns, however, that Martin fights an inner battle to maintain this veil of light-heartedness; in reality, he has spent a good part of his life attempting to rid himself of the somber thoughts that threaten his very existence. Several scenes in the novel find Martin on the couch in his therapist’s office where the reader obtains knowledge about the demons in his past. Most sessions revolve around Martin’s difficulty with his parentage, but even more damaging, is his bitterness about not being allowed to attend his mother’s funeral. In fact, he was never told about his mother’s illness and impending death, since the family elders believed the circumstances would be too difficult for a 10 year-old. As a result of these early traumas, Martin has, in a sense, been grieving for almost 30 years. Two aspects of life have sustained him – his poetry, and in a more destructive way, his search for relationships with women. Harvard, then, serves only to exacerbate his difficulties as a colleague affirms when he tells Martin, “ ‘ That’s the very idea of this place. No one’s supposed to feel good about themselves’ ” (p. 29).

Although Martin has difficulty sustaining a meaningful relationship with a woman, his search to do so actually teaches him a good deal about his life. He embarks on a series of destructive encounters, and like Glen Cady, becomes involved with a student, Alexis Baruch. The student becomes pregnant, and an abortion cements the demise of the short-lived relationship. Encounters with other women also end disastrously, but never without his gaining self-knowledge. For instance, one woman, Laura, reminds Martin of his tendency to get close to a woman and then to retreat:

You approach, then you turn away, and then you turn your back again expecting the person or thing that's the object of your ambivalent feelings to stay put waiting for you to finally come to rest somewhere. . . . That is, assuming you ever come to rest anywhere. (p. 152)

When Martin takes up Laura's comment with his therapist, a clearer vision of his life begins to emerge. He realizes that his need to change careers and to begin and end relationships stem from his guilt at not responding aggressively when he was forbidden to attend his mother's funeral and openly mourn her death. His therapist suggests that Martin is fearful that if he does not keep moving, he will fall into an abyss from which he will not be able to get out. Soon, Martin meets Beatrice whom he marries and with whom he says a son. He also pleads with his father to tell him the truth about the circumstances surrounding his adoption. With those personal matters settled, Martin is prepared to come to terms with his career. Although his poetry has always been the one fixed object in his life, he realizes that remaining at Harvard is stagnating him. He resigns his position and sees a new meaning in his life in his roles of husband, father, and poet. Martin Weinstock had allowed the ghosts of his past to influence his personal and

professional life, similar to Peter Mickelsson. Once again, it is difficult for these professors to separate the events in their personal lives with the circumstances of their careers.

Although exhibiting many common personality traits, fictional professors have maintained distinct identities by being portrayed in a variety of ways in these novels. Still another personality emerges with the appearance of Noam Himmel in The Mind – Body Problem by Rebecca Goldstein (1983). This novel is written as a first person narrative from the perspective of Noam's wife, Renee Feuer. Himmel's character is introduced to the reader by Rene in the opening lines of the novel: "I'm often asked what it's like to be married to a genius" (p. 5). Noam, the reader discovers, made a very early appearance on the mathematical scene at the age of 12 with the publication of a paper entitled, "On the Properties of Supernatural Numbers." Himmel had proved the existence of numbers that are so big they are used for collections too large to form sets. He entered Harvard at 16 and was teaching there 4 years later without a Ph.D., a fact that did not seem to bother anybody. Every prestigious institution in the country continued to court him, and now, at 38, he is at Princeton. As Renee is reflecting on her early encounters with Noam when she was a graduate student, she recalls a conversation which reveals a good deal about his views. She asks him if it is lonely to have a mind that works so differently from everyone else's. He replies:

Lonely? It's damned lucky. A lucky thing for me that it's been decided the things I see are the important ones, so I turn out smart instead of stupid. . . . I discovered early on that I liked ideas much better than people, and that was the end of my

loneliness. For one thing, ideas are consistent. And you can control them better than people. (p. 29)

Noam's commitment to his work is not unique among fictional professors, but his obsession with remaining a genius in his field is something no other professor has encountered. Although other professors in the novels, such as Glen Cady, Peter Mickelsson, and Martin Weinstock, believe in their scholarly ability, none have the self-important attitude of Himmel. At one point, in a discussion about theorems with another mathematician, Noam states that a theorem is obvious only if it's easy for himself and God to see. In a conversation with Renee, as he is trying to describe his feelings about his work, he says, "I feel like I'm walking out in some remote corner of space, where no mortal's ever been" (p. 93). Noah also believes in reincarnation, and is convinced that in a former life he was a famous Viennese mathematician. Also, compared with the other professors, he is the least capable of having any understanding of human behavior and, therefore, places no value on personal relationships.

From the moment they are married, Rene and Noam's relationship takes a downward spiral. Their honeymoon is a trip to Rome and Hungary where Noam is scheduled to give a series of lectures. When Renee complains that they are not spending any time together, Noam replies, "Do I really have to apologize to you? I didn't have to bring you along to Europe at all" (p. 85). After they are married a few months, Renee raises the possibility of having a child. Noam scoffs at the idea, stating, "A child is out of the question. A wife is distraction enough" (p. 180). Eventually, his incapacity to make any personal connections takes its toll on his marriage, and Renee engages in a number of extra-marital affairs, all of which Noah is oblivious to.

Noam fares no better in his relationships with other people, including his students. He often “grumbled over the numerous distractions from research that the students presented” (p. 136). Renee often observes that the teaching aspect of his profession did not matter to him; in fact, “Teaching was a nuisance” (p. 269). She recalls, too, that as other institutions were competing for Noam, the bargaining point was always less time in the classroom. At Princeton, in fact, he was only obliged to teach three hours per week. Neither did Noam get along with Renee’s best friend, Ave Schwartz, a physicist and an intellectual in her own right. Noam is condescending in his conversations with Ava, calling physicists “tinkering engineers” (p. 141). When Renee asks Noam to treat Ava less critically, he is unmoved and responds, “ ‘Look Renee, you can’t ask me to stop being me. If one of your friends doesn’t like me, okay, she doesn’t like me’ ” (p. 146).

Typical of the self-recognition many fictional professors arrive at, on the night Renee announces she is leaving her husband, a transformed but pathetic Noam Himmel makes a confession. “ ‘I’ve lost my mathematical powers,’ ” he states. He tells her that he had begun to suspect the loss shortly after they were married, and admits that he falsely blamed her: “ ‘I was angry at you, I blamed it all on you, at least at first. I kept telling myself you were distracting me, that you were draining my powers’ ” (p. 267). He also admits to his mistreatment of others: “ ‘I’m so angry all the time, at least I was. And not only with you. I’ve been terrible to the young people, the students, the ones who still have it. They have it all ahead of them, and it’s all behind me’ ” (p. 267). More importantly, Noam admits that he never had room in his life for two passions, his work and his personal life; rather, he was only able to define himself in terms of his mathematical gifts. Renee remains with her husband, and he continues his career at

Princeton where no one seems to have "caught on yet to the fact that the spirit of genius has taken leave of Noam" (p. 275).

Is there any degree of homogeneity in the portrayal of fictional professors with regard to their personal lives? This study suggests that there is, yet this affirmation does not reflect negatively on the distinct individuality of each character. Disillusionment with academic life occurs often in these novels. At times, as in the case of Albert Corde and Glen Cady, the institutions are at fault. In both cases, the institutions have little tolerance for anything that does not conform to the self-serving perspective that these universities adhere to. Therefore, Corde chooses to take his idealism back to journalism and Cady finds a university that values his particular scholarship. Other times, professors seem to be their own worst enemies as they repeatedly make personal decisions that wreak havoc in their lives. Peter Mickelsson, for example, is in no shape to take on additional professional demands as he is in the midst of catastrophic personal problems. Although he manages to delude himself, Martin Weinstock also suffers from severe emotional problems that stem from his childhood traumas. Neither is Fred Turner prepared to take full advantage of his research opportunity in London with the prospect of a failing marriage on his mind. And self-absorbed Noam Himmel becomes emotionally paralyzed at the realization that he may have prematurely reached his fullest potential as a mathematical genius. For all these professors, however, their work becomes their driving force. Often, they are not certain about the ways in which their personal lives and their professional lives connect, but they do remain committed to their discipline and even unconsciously use it as an escape from their personal pressures. The professors, too, in these novels, undergo a kind of transformation at the end. They eventually reach an

awareness of the importance of the human connection, thereby minimizing the void between "knowing and being." This aspect of these novels may reflect the potential erosion of the "ivory tower" syndrome that has plagued higher education's image and has underscored the notion that the real world academic does exist in isolation.

Chapter VIII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In an early article about the merits of academic fiction from the 1920's through the early 1960's, Yevish (1971) maintains that such fiction falls short of establishing a viable reputation since the novelists have given little regard to any legitimate aspects of university life. He further states that although these novels have been considered academic novels, they merely use an academic setting as a backdrop and no real resemblance exists between the topics dealt with and the real issues of the university. Some years later, Hague (1985) agrees with Yevish's assessment in her examination of novels of the 1960's and 1970's. Although she asserts that academic fiction has developed more fully since post World War II, she, nevertheless, asserts that novelists still have difficulty integrating academic life and real life experiences. She states more explicitly that much of the attention in the novels is given to professors, and, more specifically, to their attitudes toward scholarship. However, she suggests that these perceptions either mistakenly simplify actual experiences or are filled with false complexities, rendering an inaccurate presentation of the real academic world. In fact, she asserts that the great academic novel still remains to be written.

Distinctly different perspectives, however, are offered by Vandermeer (1982) and Thelin and Townsend (1987). Although the former researcher cautions that the academic novelist is foremost an artist rather than a researcher, she asserts the importance of the academic novel as a valuable resource in affecting the public's opinion about higher education. In support of her view, Vandermeer suggests that what the public reads as

current events about higher education have always seemed to find their way into fiction. For example, she notes that the enchantment with higher education and the subsequent enrollment increases was a topic that was dealt with in novels of the late 1940's, while student revolts served as the topic in novels of the 1960's. The later 1970 novels, she further states, reflected the disenchantment and sense of student apathy which prevailed in real academic life. The research of Thelin and Townsend (1987) echoes Vandermeer's views. They, too, affirm that academic novels project distinctive images of university life, and, in fact, provide a legitimate supplement to other non-fictional accounts of the college experience. These researchers even suggest that those studying higher education have an obligation to read the fiction that employs colleges and universities as subjects and settings.

Divergent viewpoints have also consistently emerged when the more specific topic of the image of college and university professors in fiction serves as the research topic. Lyons (1962) found that the portrayal of the professor in early novels was stereotypical and almost always uncomplimentary. He noted, too, that most of these characters were English professors. Although Click (1970) observed a trend that placed professors as more important subjects than students, he agreed that they were usually portrayed unfavorably. In the same year, research by King indicated that the portrayal of professors accurately reflected changes taking place in the profession. However, he concluded that professors were depicted as having as many favorable traits as unfavorable. In 1974, Jacobs' research which limited the span of novels to a ten year period, 1960-1970, revealed that the professor was emerging as a prototype of modern man as he begins to question his institutional role, while the research of Webber (1975)

offers a view of the fictional professor as complex and somewhat contradictory.

Maddock-Cowart (1989) studied novels of a decade later, but similar to Webber, asserts that these works, too, parallel reality and offer extensive and complex character studies of professors. In 1993, Hedeman asserts, too, that novels of the 1980's represent events of the decade. However, he believes that fictional professors are often filled with self-doubt and are generally self-absorbed characters who live unhappy lives and who find little satisfaction in their academic work.

It is safe to conclude, then, that as Robinson (1989) asserts, the question of whether academic fiction is an accurate representation of academic life has been and continues to be a major point of disagreement among researchers. Similarly, the perspectives of researchers about the more specific consideration of the image of fictional professors is also a continuous subject of debate. This study, however, concludes that academic fiction during the period from 1980-1997 is an accurate representation of issues present in the university, at least with regard to the more narrow focus of this study which examines specific concerns of the professoriate. In addition, this study finds that in the novels of this period the professor is not portrayed in a stereotypical manner; rather the characters emerge as individually distinct although some homogeneity is apparent, especially with regard to their personal lives.

It should not be surprising that research on the academic novel reveals a myriad of contradictory perspectives since academic research on higher education, and, more specifically, the professoriate, present similarly divergent viewpoints. The content of this study began with a chapter devoted to an analysis of issues that professors have faced since the emergence of the 1980's. Often viewed as a reactionary time period to the

preceding decade, a new historical context was the driving force for changes within the professoriate. External influences and a loss of professional autonomy placed added pressures on college and university faculty forcing them to perform many more tasks. As a result, conflicts between professors and administrators arose over opposing views on collegiality which was giving way to a stronger bureaucratic structure. For a group historically grounded in a collegial tradition, this changing culture had a profound effect. Additional emphasis was placed on scholarly publication, and teaching became less valued and, therefore, rarely rewarded. Another extremely serious implication was the threat to the tenure system. With restricted financial considerations, life-long employment began giving way to one-year appointments. Finally, the increase of women faculty posed new challenges in an arena where discrimination still prevailed. All of these issues took root on university campuses clearly serving as intriguing subject matter for academic fiction as this research affirms.

In the fiction discussed in this study, professors are preoccupied with the very issues stated above, especially the tenure issue. The result is that fictional professors are fraught with tension and generally feel a sense of despair over the uncertainty of permanent employment at their college or university. Therefore, they constantly face pressure over the need to publish, attempting to meet the main criterion for obtaining tenure. The issue also divides faculty, fostering a sense of mistrust and eroding collegiality. Vivian Twostar from The Crown of Columbus and Glen Cady from Novemberfest are two examples of professors whose quests for tenure are in jeopardy because of their limited publications. In both novels, the point is made that these professors have excellent track records in other areas such as teaching competence,

campus service, etc.; however, Twostar and Cady fully realize that their positions are tenuous without a strong scholarly publication record. Novelists also characterize professors as feeling trapped by the uncertainty of their future on their campuses but reluctant to leave, recognizing that similar situations exist on most other campuses. One professor who reacts in the extreme is Professor Doxbinder from Weinstock Among the Dying who, the reader is told, commits suicide when he was not granted tenure, even though he had won a Pulitzer Prize. Other real world issues plague professors in Russo's Straight Man and in Jane Smiley's Moo. In the former, faculty relationships are strained as administrators attempt to impose additional bureaucratic and financial constraints on faculty, and as faculty layoffs loom, a new building is being erected. Convinced Moo University can't run itself, the Governor of this Midwestern state attempts a takeover of the institution by undermining faculty and imposing a corporate philosophy that views students as customers. Both satires, these novels, nonetheless, expose serious implications for faculty as autonomy gives way to bureaucracy on university campuses.

Another topic central to this study is the role of fictional professors as teachers, and, again, parallels with the real academic world are accurate. An immediate observation is that very few classroom scenes take place in these novels which suggests the minimal importance placed on teaching. Mickelsson's Ghosts contains the most poignant scenes, and significant intellectual discussion takes place between Professor Mickelsson and his students on a few occasions, but even in this novel, the professor admits to his lack of interest in teaching. Sometimes professors devise ways to reduce their teaching load, like Phineas Coomb in Straight Man who deliberately offers courses at unpopular time slots or Roger Williams in Crown of Columbus who develops titles for

courses that inhibit students. Other professors, however, are portrayed as committed to teaching but are frustrated because the bureaucracy of the institution prevents them from doing a good job. Cecilia Sanchez, a language professor at Moo University, has her teaching efforts thwarted when the administration doubles the enrollment in her classes. Distinct characterizations, then, emerge as fictional professors span the gamut with regard to their commitment to teaching. As on all university campuses throughout the country, some professors regard teaching as their main priority, while others consider it to be a burden that intrudes on their professional lives and distracts from time they would rather devote to research and publishing. And, still, there are those professors who would like to place more effort in teaching and spending time with students outside the classroom, but institutional demands on their time prevent them from reaching their full potential as teachers.

The increasing presence of the female academic in recent years is also an issue that is identified in this study. The fact that significant portrayals of female professors appear in the fiction during this time period does suggest that, again, fiction mirrors real academic life. Consequently, this recent treatment of women by novelists marks significant change from earlier portrayals. As the chapter on this topic supports, early academic fiction contained few portrayals of women and when they were characterized emphasis was placed on their physical traits rather than their intellectual abilities. In addition, the portrayals were stereotypical and the women often emerged as neurotic and submissive. Recent portrayals closely parallel the contemporary academic women who still faces challenges unique to their gender but who seek professional independence. A common struggle for the fictional woman professor is the personal vs. career conflict.

Some, such as Ava Schwartz in The Mind-Body Problem, refuse to engage in a personal life. Ava chooses to devote all her energies to her professional life at Princeton, and then seeks a position at another university to further enhance her career. Sarah Slater, from the same novel, also chooses "the life of the mind" but is distressed that she feels forced to make that choice. Professor Jean Ardley in Cantor's Dilemma admits that she chose not to have children since pregnancy and motherhood would have been held against her in the tenure process. In The Socratic Method, Rebecca Shepard is blatantly portrayed as a victim of gender discrimination as she struggles to become the first woman to gain tenure at the fictional McKinley Law School. The emphasis, however, in these novels is not on the victimization of these women professors; rather, it is on their ability and determination to gain access and power in an academic world that had for generations been dominated by men. With the exception of Jessica Stark in Mickelsson's Ghosts, these women are committed in their struggle for professional independence and gain insight from their experiences. Jessica Stark, made an outcast by her fellow colleagues for refusing to adhere to their Marxist philosophy, lacks the determination prevalent in the other characters and submits to administrative pressure to accept another position outside her department. Professor Stark, however, is portrayed, as all the fictional women in this study, as a serious scholar. In fact, the focus of the women's research is often more of a problem than the challenges they face solely because of their gender. Vinnie Miner in Foreign Affairs, for example, displays feelings of professional insecurity not because she is a woman but because her research specialty is children's literature, an unpopular topic among her colleagues.

The significant increase in the portrayal of women academics and their depiction as serious scholars exhibits an awareness by the novelists of the overall impressive increase of the presence of women in the academy and the impact they are making on their campuses. However, their ongoing struggles in the novels, many of which still center on the personal vs. professional dilemma, affirm the notion that further gender equity still needs to be achieved. This perspective suggests the reason for a marked difference between genders when job satisfaction is measured, with women faculty being less satisfied than their male counterparts in all areas (Finklestein et al., 1998).

The final concern of this research centers on the personal life of the fictional professors and it is this topic that suggests a greater degree of homogeneity among the characters. Among the more common characteristics of the professors are a commitment to their discipline with a desire to make it applicable to their personal lives, a tendency to feelings of disenchantment with their institutions, and the harboring of emotional baggage. Peter Mickelsson in Mickelsson's Ghosts and Fred Turner in Foreign Affairs are two examples of professors who repeatedly seek connections between their personal lives and their field of study. Turner lives the lives of John Gay and Henry James vicariously as he constantly views events in his personal life as scenes from works of literature. Mickelsson attempts throughout the novel to gain personal solace from his research on the great philosophers. Other professors, such as Albert Corde, become disenchanted with life in the academy. In Corde's case, a conflict develops between the professor's own sense of morality and the politics of his institution. His exposure of city corruption in a series of published articles is antithetical to his university's pragmatic perspective. Glen Cady in Novemberfest also feels rejected by his institution where the

administration expresses its disdain with his submission of translations rather than research publications. All of the professors carry emotional baggage that causes serious problems for them personally and professionally. Martin Weinstock in Weinstock Among the Dying has never come to terms with childhood memories and his unconventional parentage and, therefore, is not emotionally prepared for life at Harvard where a death metaphor pervades. The most self-absorbed scholar is Noam Himmel in The Mind-Body Problem. Himmel can only define himself in terms of his mathematical ability, thinking of himself as a genius who has neither the time nor the desire to relate to another human being. All of these professors experience serious dilemmas, a fact that obviously has as much to say about the art of the novels as well as the parallels with reality. However, all of the professors are also somewhat transformed at the end of the novels. Peter Mickelsson, for example, who, more than any of the others, loses his ability to discern good from evil through a series of immoral acts, is able to find comfort in a personal relationship at the end of the novel. Even Glen Cady, who also makes poor decisions and finds himself intimately involved with a student, eventually comes to terms with his life and seems prepared to embark on a more productive and rewarding path at a new university.

The professors' commitment to their work seems eventually to assist them in remaining grounded even when it appears they are their own worst enemies. Their work is their driving force that ultimately assists them in making better personal choices. Although there are many common personal characteristics in the portrayals of these fictional professors, these traits do not detract from the individuality of the characters. As this study pointed out earlier, little academic research is devoted to the personal lives of

professors, but the fiction seems to imply two important conclusions. First, the distinctive portrayals suggests a recognition of diverse personalities among the professoriate, and, second, professors bring certain characteristics to the profession which decrease the role of the academic environment as the sole contributing factor to a sense of disillusionment professors might feel. These observations should not be viewed as contradictory, since they affirm some degree of homogeneity within the professoriate but reject the tendency to stereotype.

Although this study concludes that the portrayal of professors in these novels closely resembles real world professors in terms of timely issues and professor' reactions to these issues, and suggests, too, that the portrayals are not stereotypical but, rather, distinctive, a few relevant factors should be addressed. For example, with regard to authorship of the novels under discussion, is there evidence that any of the novelists' connection to academe might have influenced elements of reality in these novels? Ishmael Reed, Carl Djerassi, John Gardner, Theodore Weesner, Michael Blumenthal, Jane Smiley, Rebecca Goldstein, Alison Lurie, Joyce Carol Oates, and John Kenneth Galbraith have had careers in higher education. Indeed, one would expect that reality would prevail in their works. However, the works by the other novelists are no less credible in terms of their professors' portrayals. It should be noted her, too, that preparation for this research did not include a preliminary investigation as to the career backgrounds of the novelists, although a few were immediately obvious (i.e., Smiley, Oates, Lurie, Galbraith). Another consideration which arises is the type of institutions that serves as the settings for the novels. Although a few novelists do not identify the institution, even with a fictitious name, the prestigious universities are prominent.

Dartmouth is the setting in Crown of Columbus and Harvard is identified in Weinstock Among the Dying and in A Tenured Professor. Princeton serves as the setting for The Mind-Body Problem, and Cornell (fictitiously called Corinth University) is the university in Foreign Affairs. Theodore Weesner and Joyce Carol Oates both use small New Hampshire colleges for their settings in Novemberfest and Marya, A Life, respectively. A large Midwestern university is referred to as Moo U in the novel, Moo. Richard Russo has his professors inhabiting West Central Pennsylvania University in Straight Man and makes enough comments so that the reader is aware this it is to be regarded as a third-rate institution. Mickelsson's Ghosts is set in The State University of New York at Binghamton and The Socratic Method takes place at McKinley Law School which is obviously a fictitious name for what is supposed to be considered an elite institution. It should be mentioned, also, that in some of the novels much of the action takes place at a location other than on the respective professor's campus. For example, in Foreign Affairs, Professors Fred Turner and Vinnie Miner are on leave from their institutions and are in London working on research projects. Albert Corde is in Budapest tending to his wife and dying mother-in-law during the novel, The Dean's December. Since Weesner employs frequent flashback techniques in Novemberfest, Professor Cady is often observed in Germany. To complete investigation for her research on Christopher Columbus, Professor Vivian Twostar spends time on a Caribbean island. Again, no investigation of setting was undertaken prior to beginning this research and ultimately selecting the novels. Although the more prestigious institutions seem to be represented more often in the fiction, setting often appears less important than characters and events, and, more important, academic research identifies the issues as discussed in this study to

be of importance to all institutions. Therefore, the portrayals of fictional professors should not be viewed as biased simply based on the campus settings.

Although book reviews should not be the only factor in determining a novel's worth, credibility, and/or usefulness, this researcher did consult reviews more out of curiosity than out of a relevant need for this study. Interestingly, with the exception of Crown of Columbus, all the novels under discussion received generally favorable reviews. However, only Moo, Japanese by Spring, Mickelsson's Ghosts, Foreign Affairs, The Socratic Method, A Tenured Professor, Straight Man, and Cantor's Dilemma were reviewed from the standpoint of their credibility and contribution to the world of higher education. Interesting, too, Mickelsson's Ghosts, Moo, and The Dean's December are the only novels that have been reviewed by academics and in each case, the review was positive. Gardner's novel is referred to as "a serious representation of teaching and thinking" by Benjamin DeMott (1982), Mellon Professor of Humanities at Amherst College. Alison Lurie (1995), a professor at Cornell, who reviews Smiley's Moo, says that in this novel, "the university is seen to be an often ridiculous but useful and even admirable institution" and credits Smiley's accurate representations of Midwestern campus life with the fact that she is a faculty member at Iowa State University. Robert Tower (1982), a critic and novelist who teaches at Queens College praises The Dean's December and calls Saul Bellow "the best writer that we have."

Recommendations for further study on the topic of the image of the fictional professor should include additional examination by academic researchers on the personal characteristics of those who constitute the professoriate. Much has been written which quantifies the professoriate such as the number of people entering and/or leaving the

profession, minority distribution among the professoriate, ethnic, political and religious background, degree status, marital status, research and publication statistics, etc. However, personal information that could offer a psychological profile of those who enter the profession would be useful and interesting. The role of the professor is becoming increasingly complex with the professor expected to perform multi-tasks. The fiction suggests that these changes affect both the professor's personal life as well as his professional life. Personality traits often dictate how the professor reacts to his/her changing environment. Although this information could be difficult to elicit, many professors might be introspective enough to reflect on whether they tend to confront personal dilemmas by employing professional escape mechanisms as many of the fictional professors do. Such profiling might also affirm or refute the notion expressed by Maddock-Cowart (1989) that professors are trained only to "know" their discipline, and, therefore, have difficulty disengaging from it.

Another area for further study should include the life of the female academic. Some serious scholarship has been undertaken by researchers such as Robinson (1989), but additional research will be necessitated by the continual increase of female academics on college and university campuses and their logical subsequent appearance in fiction.

Since this study supports the research which affirms that the study of fiction is useful for a complete understanding of higher education, more fiction should be incorporated into academic coursework in the field of higher education. Similarly, more academicians should become involved with reviewing the fiction and offer continuing perspectives on its contributions to the discipline.

A final recommendation includes the possibility of extending this research to other genres. Images of professors, for example, could be examined in terms of their portrayals in the performing arts such as film or drama.

In the introduction to The Academic Profession, Burton Clark (1987) states that the academic profession is, in some ways, an oddity since it is “a medley of occupational fields” that are rooted in a number of academic disciplines (p. 1). As such, he continues, “its ideas speak to economy and politics, to social order and culture” (p. 2). He suggests, too, that academicians share a similar culture, even though they might experience different types of institutional constraints. Thus, Clark suggests the need to move from stereotype to reality as the examination of the professoriate continues and as the profession experiences more growth and change, and although “areas of similarity may exist, they ought to be found, not assumed” (p. 3). Academic novels in the time period under discussion appear to have fulfilled Clark’s vision for the manner in which professors are portrayed and for that reason, they are successful and make a considerable contribution to higher education. Perhaps John Kramer’s earlier assessment of the academic novel in 1981 best describes its virtues – “Even the most ill-composed novel is a heroic attempt to fabricate reality out of an environment dominated by fictions” (p. xiii).

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