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# A STUDY OF THE MODERN ACADEMIC NOVEL IN AMERICA

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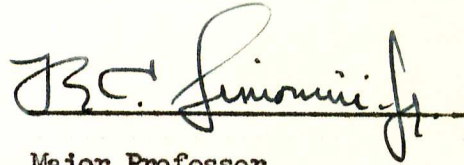
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Aug. 2, 1961

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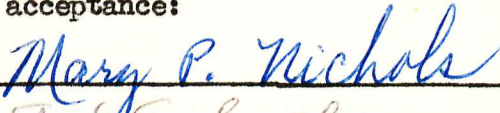

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Grace O. Burton entitled "A Study of the Modern Academic Novel in America." I recommend that it be accepted for six semester hours of credit in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education.



Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend

its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:



Chairman

A STUDY OF THE MODERN ACADEMIC NOVEL IN AMERICA

by

Grace O. Burton

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Council of Longwood  
College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in Education

Farmville, Va.

July 1961

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## A Study of the Modern Academic Novel in America

### I

#### Introduction

The subject for appraisal involves novels which have their setting on an American college campus, and which have been written during the past four decades, from F. Scott Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise (1920) to Georg Mann's The Dollar Diploma (1960) and John W. Aldridge's The Party at Cranton (1960). This thesis will attempt to evaluate the contemporary American novel of academic life as a literary genre. It will study the themes of the various authors and attempt to show how they treat them, how these themes are related to the problems of the modern American campus, and how they are related to the frustrations caused by these problems. This study could not be complete without presenting an awareness of the weaknesses of modern education in America and the reflected weaknesses in the products of many of our colleges and universities. It is also interesting to note the variety of techniques and methods of presentation which are employed by the various authors.

Many critics agree that "the ruling type and form of literary art today is the novel, and almost by its very nature, almost *eo ipso*, the novel is the social novel, it is a social critique." <sup>1</sup> The academic novel is one of social criticism of the modern American college, sometimes from the standpoint of the administration, but often from the standpoint of the students. The romantic novel, which was a development of the nineteenth century, went out of fashion in the twenties and thirties. Only four of the novels considered in this treatise

were written in those decades; they are This Side of Paradise, Scott Fitzgerald; The Professor's House, Willa Cather; Not to Eat, Not for Love, George Weller; and Doctor's Oral, George R. Stewart. It is obvious that the modern American academic novel is chiefly a product of the last decade.

Certain possible factors have contributed to the development of the academic novel. The enrollees of our colleges have been products of World War II, and the enrollment has increased tremendously beyond the capacity of the colleges to assimilate them. The modern college students were spawned by World War II, and they represent the biological result of the hasty marriages of immature parents and often the ultimate broken homes of that unsettled period. Randall Jarrell, who has written an academic novel himself, has said that the educational problem in America is that we have been trying to "give a continent a college education."<sup>2</sup> Hence, frustrations have ensued both for students (many of whom have low ability rating) and also for faculty and administration, who ponder "behind the ivy walls" how they can "make ends meet."

The aim of this thesis will be to evaluate a group of novels depicting college life in contemporary America and to show the weaknesses of these novels as a literary genre. As this evaluation proceeds, the novels will be discussed from the standpoint of certain literary qualities and also as criticisms of contemporary American society.

This evaluation is the result of careful reading, intensive personal study, and the combined comments and criticisms of such literary critics as Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Henry James, Sylvan Barnet, Bruce McCullough, Kingsley Widmer, Peter Oliva, Edna Furness, and critical reviews of the novels themselves.

II

Themes

The chief theme of the novels considered is frustration, with the emphasis in some of them upon upon economic and educational problems and in some upon character maladjustments. But always there is a tremendous gap between reality and the ideal, and the result is a feeling of insecurity.

Doctor's Oral by George R. Stewart, This Side of Paradise by Scott Fitzgerald, and The Dollar Diploma by Georg Mann are examples of novels in which economic problems are emphasized. Although the central theme of Doctor's Oral is the oral examination that Joe Grantland takes in order to be granted his Ph.D., the chief problem is financial because Joe needs a job to support his prospective family, and a job can be obtained only if he passes the oral and is awarded his Ph.D. In This Side of Paradise, Scott Fitzgerald reveals Amory Elaine as an ambitious boy who was trying to get to the "top of the world" by attaining a college education at Princeton. To Amory poverty represented "the ugliest thing in the world." (p.75) In the poverty which he witnessed in the life of the city, "Amory saw only coarseness, physical filth, and stupidity," and he realized that "this problem of poverty.....might some day be his problem....." (p.274) However, Amory conceded that social acceptance, such as membership in restricted organizations , might be a better criterion of success than the amount of wealth one might possess.. In The Dollar Diploma by Georg Mann the problem is that of the administration of Fox University in raising \$50,000,000 for academic expansion. Incidentally, The Dollar Diploma deals with problems of the administration, whereas Doctor's Oral and This Side of Paradise deal with problems of the college student.



Educational problems are dealt with in Pictures from an Institution by Randall Jarrell, Purely Academic by Stringfellow Barr, and Mary Mc Carthy's The Groves of Academe. In Pictures from an Institution, Randall Jarrell gives an insight into higher education by using descriptions and character sketches of various members of the faculty at Benton College. The author admits the superiority of European education. The Russian Irene declared, "I cannot remember not knowing English and French." (p. 163) "The students' conversation.....and extra-curricular cultural activities....were made, as much as possible, the curriculum." (p.83) No emphasis was placed upon scholarship. The faculty frittered away in committee meetings valuable time which should have been spent in instructional pursuits. Irene's husband, Gottfried, agreed that "American education is.....of all the educations that have yet been devised the best for the eyes of the children." (p.181) The result of our educational system is finally summed up in the statement of John Robbins: "I don't learn anything at school." (p.273)

In the second of these novels, Stringfellow Barr describes life in a typical American college where nothing happens "relevant to liberal education." (p.34) Futility permeates the educational program. Graduate students get Ph.D.'s for dissertations on such subjects as "An inquiry into flavor deterioration in peanut brittle," from the chemistry department, and "Prepackaging in chain groceries considered as customer stimulation toward slightly deteriorated fresh vegetables," from Nast's department of economics. In return for endowments to the college, wealthy alumnae were rewarded with honorary degrees, even if President Ponton had to coin new ones.

The low quality of the typical student mind presented a very real problem to the professors. Snelder of the history department dreaded grading examinations because the students had read little and were incapable of writing correctly. "These nice kids.....had never learned their own mother tongue. Brought up on comic strips, they had listened in infancy to soap operas, and in adolescence they had sat for hours before the television screen." (p. 151)

In Mary McCarthy's The Groves of Academe, the students were "disorderly or lazy or ill-trained." (pp.81-82) The college had an experimental philosophy and indulged in the "field system" (p.272), which besides taking time from essential studies, was an annoyance to the proprietors of the local business establishments and to the regular employees who lost their jobs to the student workers.

Many of the novels present character studies relative to the theme of personality maladjustment. Weaknesses may be moral and sexual as in Robie Macaulay's Disguises of Love, Oakley Hall's The Corpus of Joe Bailey, Hallie Burnett's This Heart, This Hunter, and C. G. Lumbard's Senior Spring.

Disguises of Love is the story of a psychology professor in a university in Michigan, Dr. Howard Graeme, and his affair with a blonde student, Frances Mitchell, who finally takes a plane for Mexico and leaves the professor to his wife and son. The story shows that even an expert in psychology with an accumulation of knowledge regarding motives and attitudes may yet lack moral integrity. A similar weakness is even more pronounced in Oakley Hall's The Corpus of Joe Bailey. Not only did the student Joe Bailey lack character, but his best girl friend, Connie Robinson, was an adultress. Ralph Waller was a homosexual, and even Polly Davis, whom Joe finally married, had not been above reproach.

In Hallie Burnett's This Heart, This Hunter, Victor Cardwell, a college senior, possessed exaggerated sex impulses, especially when he was under the influence of liquor. The unplanned marriage of Victor and Felicia Richardson resulted in a stroke and the death of her father Henry, the brilliant college president. Victor's instability was reflected in a subsequent affair with Nina Murdock, the deceptive bad woman of the town. C. G. Lombard's Senior Spring also deals with sexual maladjustment. He presents Steve Burnett as the chief character who is glib about dates with co-eds, social drinking, and violent petting, especially with the wealthy Cassandra Kane with whom he shared a marital relationship "without benefit of clergy."

Personal weaknesses of jealousy or vengeance and deception are shown in Mary McCarthy's The Groves of Academe. In the words of one of the faculty members, Domna Rejnev, professor of Russian literature, "There's a certain noblesse oblige that we owe to people who criticize us and whom we have the power to harm." (p.131) The deception of Professor Henry Mulcahy of the literature department forms the basis for the entire novel. With regard to his deception about the true state of his wife's health (in his efforts to gain reappointment), Domna says, "I think I would tell the truth." (p.207) The author comments, "Oh, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive."

A perverted sense of values is seen in A Friend in Power by Carlos Baker and The Professor's House by Willa Cather. In the former, Dr. Edward Tyler has to make the choice between a professorship with an annual salary of \$7,000, but which would allow him time to complete a worthy book on Voltaire, and the position of university president which carried with it an annual salary of \$20,000 but would consume all his time.

In the end, Dr. Tyler accepted the presidency, although he admitted he was "just putting Voltaire on the skids." (p.312) He conceded that friendship and ideals might be lost "through accession to power."

The Professor's House presents a contrast between real values and those of a superficial nature. To Professor St. Peter's wife, his literary prize of five thousand pounds meant a new home; but his old study was home to St. Peter, and his greatest joy was not in the new house but in the writing of his prize-winning history of the American Southwest. A contrast in ideals is also illustrated in the same novel. The fine character of young Tom Oakland who made valuable discoveries in the field of physics and who, if he had lived, might have married the professor's daughter, Rosamond, contrasts with the worldly and suave Louie Marcellus who did marry her and help her spend the wealth which Tom had willed to her. A perverted sense of values had also been shown in Blake's sale of the newly found Indian mementos to a collector, while Tom was in Washington trying vainly to get government aid for their preservation. Tom's altruistic idea was that the mementos should belong to the American people and to posterity.

The Party at Cranton by John W. Aldridge and The Spire by Gerald Brace present social weaknesses. The former shows the unreality of social life where people wear a veneer of grace and good will in spite of their personal jealousy. Too many cocktails and too much Bourbon finally led to the playful crowning of Arthur Buchanan, president of Cranton University, as the "last of the illustrious house of Bourbon and Hangover." (p.146) In The Spire, Gerald Brace tells of the attraction of the bachelor dean, Henry Gaunt, for Lizzie Houghton, daughter of a

former mathematics professor of Wyndham College. Apparently the father had been unjustly retired; the daughter was a woman with a past; the mother was dead; and the teen-age boy was a victim of the social maladjustment of the home. Finally, Dean Gaunt, who had honest love for Lizzie, resigned his position, married her, and took her to Oregon.

The Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger and Hangsaman by Shirley Jackson are examples of extreme mental or psychological maladjustment of a boy and a girl respectively. The Catcher in the Rye is a monologue in which Holden Caulfield, a sixteen-year-old, maladjusted prep-school boy who has been sent to a mental institution, tells his story to a psychiatrist and enumerates the things which he hated -- which included almost everything. His favorite expression apart from excessive profanity was, "That kills me." Holden represents a type of brilliant individual "confused and frightened and even sickened by human behavior." (p.246)

Hangsaman is about a rather brilliant seventeen-year-old girl who enters college but is not accepted by the other girls. Natalie Waite had always been shielded at home, and she was unprepared for life among a mass of girls who lived without restraint; but this absence of restraint, "it was clear, would prepare them for the adult world." (p.61)

In contrast to the above mentioned novels, Theodore Morrison's The Stones of the House shows the reward of integrity, and May Sarton's Faithful Are the Wounds depicts integrity in spite of frustration. The theme of the former is the philosophical question of Andrew Aiken, acting president of Rowley University,

"What good does it do to do good?"

But Aiken, a conscientious administrator, survived all the problems

attendant upon his position and finally even secured the new library for Rowley University, a gift of Badger Bratten in memory of his boys. Andrew, often called Andy boy, represents a sustained effort to do good, and the university campus provided an incidental setting for an affirmative answer to the skeptical question about the value of doing good.

Faithful Are the Wounds has as its theme the words from Proverbs 27:6, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." The author, May Sarton, attempts a solution of the problem involving the suicide of Edward Cavan, a brilliant professor at Harvard University. The novel deals with the mental and spiritual struggle of the brilliant young Socialist who had been falsely accused of Communist subversion. Cavan, although one of a close group of intellectuals, was a lonely individual, cut off from family associations by an incident in the past. His mother to whom he was devoted had died while he was doing a year's study as a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, and he could not get over the fact that the family did not let him know about her illness and that he had not come home while she was living. Faithful Are the Wounds illustrates "the value of the dissenter in our society." (p.147)

Each author in his own way has dealt with the inability of the characters to cope with the problems of life. Not only is lack of adjustment demonstrated, but <sup>also</sup> the causes for the resulting frustrations are shown. In some novels the problem was that of personality maladjustment; in others it was of an economic nature; in still others the chief problem was educational. But always there is the feeling of a lack of security.

## III

## Treatment of Themes

The aspects of emphasis in the various novels are overlapping, and it is difficult to make an ironbound classification. However, there are psychological, philosophical, and social reasons<sup>low</sup> the characters behave<sup>ism</sup> as they do. The various authors of the contemporary American academic novels<sup>ls</sup> have used psychology, philosophy, sociology, and, sometimes, undisguised satire in an effort to present a picture of American society and in order to point out the weaknesses in the institutions of higher education in this country.

The novels which emphasize the psychological represent characters that are frustrated because "of repressed emotions craving expression."<sup>I</sup> These novels not only reveal the mental states of the characters but also contain many psychological terms in the text. J. D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye reveals the mental state of the young and unfortunate Holden Caulfield as he tells his story to the psychiatrist in a mental institution. The "lousy shape" in which Caulfield described his condition (p. 171) might be attributed to his failure to readjust after the death of his fine older brother. Caulfield had built up a wall of hatred toward almost everything and everybody (except his little sister Phoebe), and his whole personality had been warped and dissipated<sup>y</sup> by that hatred.

Robie Macaulay's Disguises of Love is an intimate study of the mental attitudes of the characters<sup>of the characters</sup>, especially of the psychology professor, Dr. Howard Graeme, who indulged in an extra-marital relationship with a student. The author makes free and frequent use of psychological terms, such as schizophrenia (p.34), psychological simples, (p.263), paranoia (p.272), the theory of id (p.4), the dream theory of

Freud (pp.34, 111, and 250), Jung's theory of the reincarnation of souls even in another race (p.34), reference to Locke (p.173), and nihilism which was expressed in the remark, "That's because these people have no beginning and no ending. They came from nowhere and they go nowhere." (p.241)

Professor Carl's explanation about how he happened to start to drinking (pp. 174-178) presents a psycho-analytical study. Reference is made to Jung's statement that Americans are "Europeans with Negro manners and an Indian soul. (p.34)

Faithful Are the Wounds is psychological in that Edward Cavan had dedicated his life to the cause of personal liberty, and he could not reconcile his ideals with reality. Cavan is the epitome of loneliness, and the author, May Sarton, shows the emotional suffering which results from "bucking" the stream of life.

According to Welleck and Warren, the philosophic novel "adds to chronology the structure of causation."<sup>2</sup> It involves a conscious rationalizing. A character deteriorates or improves as the result of causes over a period of time, or the situation at the end of the story may be very different from that at the beginning. This is Welleck and Warren's explanation, but some of the literary critics do not use the term philosophical at all. The philosophical novel might be more aptly called a "moral fable" — the type of novel in which the "fable-writer starts off with his vision, his moral 'truth' and, so to speak, tries to blow life into it.....It is perhaps to get to the heart and the difficulty of the moral fable to say that it illustrates an idea about life."<sup>3</sup> According to Arnold



Kettle, in the successful fable "the 'truth' .....happens to be in itself so profound.....that it can bear deep probing..... or else the writer.....so fills his creation with the breath and tensions of life that the fable transcends the idea which evoked it." <sup>4</sup> A book of this type is philosophical in tone, and yet the reader may not be able to make an estimate in terms of a precise philosophy.

Philosophical novels which have been considered in this study include Scott Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise, Theodore Morrison's The Stones of the House, Hallie Burnett's This Heart, This Hunter, and Carlos Baker's A Friend in Power.

In This Side of Paradise, the great influence of Amory's life was Monsignor Darcy who spoke of a "half-miraculous sixth sense by which you miraculously detect evil; it's the half-realized fear of God in your heart." (p.116) Again, according to Darcy, "personality is a physical matter almost entirely;.....I've seen it vanish in a long sickness." (pp. 113-114) As a young man, Amory's philosophy was that we should "learn to look on evil as evil, whether it's clothed in filth or monotony or magnificence." (p.167) In a letter to Amory, Monsignor Darcy had warned him, "Beware of losing yourself in the personality of another being, man or woman." (p.236) Amory concluded, "It is not life that's complicated, it's the struggle to guide and control life." (p.293)

In Theodore Morrison's The Stones of the House, much of the story is revealed through the philosophizing of Andrew Aiken, the college president, and of Dean Abner, young Badger, and Andrew's secretary, Angela. President Aiken could say with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." (p.347) His patience was finally rewarded in the realization of his dream for a new library—because of an endowment from the cantankerous alumnus, Badger Bratten. This would be a substantial and positive

answer to the philosophical question with which the book began, "What good does it do to do good?" One philosophical question of Andrew's was taken from Santayana, "Who was it said that the young man who has not wept is a savage, and the old man who cannot laugh is a fool?"

In This Heart, This Hunter, Hallie Burnett philosophizes upon spiritual questions. Felicia was thinking, "Daddy was fond of pointing out how the inconsistencies of a man not only showed the complexities of the human spirit, but also his chance of glory." (p.161) Again she remembered his saying, "Correction is a man's prerogative,.....but punishment is God's." (p.162)

Mrs. Black, the preacher's widow, expressed a philosophical point of view in her advice to Sandy, her son, "No young boy—and no one else—.... had a right to so regard another with anger, knowing only half the facts ....." (p.212) Again Lily Black says, ".....life itself punished enough." (p.212) The characteristics of Victor's fickle nature were shown in the comment, ".....nothing ever lasted long....." (p.150)

In A Friend in Power, Carlos Baker sums up the philosophy of his book in the words of Cos, "I would have given him the answer that no purpose is higher than the search for truth." (p.239)

Karl Beckson in his list of the types of the English novel defines the thesis novel as "a narrative which treats a problem, generally social or political, in order to suggest a thesis." <sup>5</sup> In this study, the novels treated with particular emphasis upon the sociological include Oakley Hall's The Corpus of Joe Bailey, George Stewart's Doctor's Oral, Willa Cather's The Professor's House, Gerald Brace's The Spire, and C. G. Lumbard's Senior Spring.

The Corpus of Joe Bailey deals with the sex affairs of a group of frustrated young college people, and particularly with Joe's misdirected relationship with Connie Robinson as he continually sought a false security.

Doctor's Oral, which is sociological in character, depicts the economic problems of the depression (p.25) when college graduates stood in line at employment offices and worked for a mere pittance at odd jobs, or, if lucky, for the W.P.A. Joe could have finished his doctor's degree a couple of years before, except for the fact that he had to work on the side in order to support himself. The problems of Joe's romance with Judy were the result of Joe's financial inability to marry and establish a home.

The chief problem in Willa Cather's The Professor's House deals with the financial returns on Tom Outland's discovery in physics. After his death, Louie Marcellus married Kathleen, to whom Tom had willed his estate. Louie and Kathleen lived in luxury while the remainder of the family lived in modest circumstances, and Professor Crane, who had been Tom's partner, was a needy semi-invalid.

Gerald Brace's The Spire is largely sociological in the isolation of Lizzie's family and in Dean Gaunt's defiance of public opinion in order to be a friend and suitor of Lizzie's. Brace comments, "What splendid surgery! You take a knife and with one masterful stroke you cut out all the old stinking ulcers.....you take the old monster of injustice which has been accustomed for centuries to being bowed and scraped and curtsied to, and you sentence it to death." (p.194)

In Senior Spring, G. M. Lombard, by presenting a lewd story of the relationship of Steve Burnett and Cassandra Kane, shows how one

who defies social conventions finally reaps the whirlwind. Even Cassandra's own father would not protect her from the results of her sin.

Some of the novels may be classified as satires, namely Mary McCarthy's The Groves of Academe, Randall Jarrell's Pictures from an Institution, Georg Mann's The Dollar Diploma, Stringfellow Barr's Purely Academic, John W. Aldridge's The Party at Cranton, and Shirley Jackson's Hangsamen.

Critics classify The Groves of Academe as undisguised satire. The Atlantic Monthly describes the author, Mary McCarthy, as "a brilliant writer with a rare talent for corrosive satire, but in this novel her acid touch has become extreme acidosis. She appears to revel in making every character contemptible or ludicrous; in making every aspect of the academic life in some way nauseating." <sup>6</sup> Robert Halsbad, in the Saturday Review says that The Groves of Academe pictures Jocelyn College in Pennsylvania which "specializes in progressive education." He adds, "Against such haunts the satiric weapon can be very effective, and healthful too, in stripping away neo-academic pretentiousness, and in exposing the mores of an intellectual caste." <sup>7</sup>

Miss McCarthy's novel involves lazy and ill-trained students, and it also sometimes shows persecution and sometimes toleration of subversion. Maynard Hoar was the president of the college and a liberal. Professor Henry Mulcahy was said to be a former member of the Communist party, and Domna Rejnev, who was professor of Russian literature, made frequent references to Tolstoi. Professor Furness gives the key to the story when he says, "And our presidents, poor fellows, live.....a life of exposure and contumely for trying to put into practice literally the precepts of a primitive liberalism." (p.296) Finally President Hoar resigned, rather than fire Mulcahy.

Randall Jarrell's Pictures from an Institution satirizes the various

faculty members of Benton College and depicts the weaknesses of American education in contrast with education in Europe. "Benton was an illusion, the faculty 'archetypal' " (p.87) The satire applies not only to progressive education but also to the students who are products of broken homes, to the limited salaries of the professors, and to the infiltration of Communism. Since Jarrell's book has no well-defined plot, it might be placed in a separate category, such as an impressionistic novel. Beckson and Ganz define impressionism as "the technique of centering on the mental life of the chief character rather than on the reality around him."<sup>8</sup>

Kingsley Widmer in The Partisan Review calls Purely Academic by Stringfellow Barr a "comic melodrama."<sup>9</sup> It satirizes college people and books in a western university (p.112), and describes a state of anti-intellectualism in America (p.287) which resulted in a sense of the lack of accomplishment in education. (This has been dealt with at some length on page 4 of this paper.) Of this satire S. S. Smith in the Library Journal says, "Stringfellow Barr has said more about the plight of American higher education than any dozen tomes or surveys."<sup>10</sup>

Of Georg Mann's The Dollar Diploma, his publishers say, "Never have the Groves and their dramatis Personae been spoofed so soundly." The book, a humorous satire, has for its setting the campus of Fox University and its problem the raising of \$50,000 000 for academic expansion. The most striking satire of The Dollar Diploma involved numerous allusions to Russia and Communism. Finally, Senator Lether's investigation clarified the subversion of the economics department and revealed the cause for the invitation to Messaline Deuxrouge, a visiting lecturer. However, this was after she had delivered the communistic lectures and returned to Europe. The epitome of satire occurred when the administration accepted an endowment of \$25,000,000 from the Russian Tschirky (p.193).

In The Party at Cranton, John W. Aldridge has produced a humorous satire which revolves around the invincibility of Arthur Buchanan, president of Cranton University and the idolized king of a social group of the professors and their wives. The author speaks of a course that gives a "peep at literature" (p.61). The story is told from the point of view of Richard Waithe, and the reader is amused at the pretense of Dorothy Murchison who is a visiting lecturer, at Lester Fleishman who pretended to be in love with the novelist Miriam Hornblower, and at Buchanan's wife who summed him up in the words, "Awl he evah does naow....is tawk, tawk, tawk." (p.83) According to Widmer, Aldridge's novel is "one elaborate equivocation."<sup>11</sup>

Shirley Jackson's Hangsaman is a satire on college education, particularly on progressive education in which there was no restraint. (p.61) The author says, "It was supposed that modern dance and the free use of slang in the classrooms might constitute an aura of rich general culture....." (pp. 60-61) Parts of the book picture Natalie in a kind of dream world. Yet one can see sanity in the author's revelation of dissipation and wasted time in a modern American college. Natalie's father said, "I sent you to college to enjoy yourself, not to get an education." (p.123)

The authors of the contemporary academic novels have employed a variety of methods relating to literary techniques, forms of presentation, and style of diction. Symbolism often adds an interesting touch. Symbols include the church steeple of the college chapel in The Spire, which was a constant reminder of the high ideals and worthy traditions of the college; the hotel key (p.65) which to Victor was a symbol of success in This Heart, This Hunter, and in the same book the killing of the cardinal might have suggested Henry Richardson's death. In A Friend in Power, Baker symbolizes the phoe-

nix on the sundial (pp.131, 133, 223, 259, and 305), for Enfield University had arisen anew from the ashes of a fire in the 1880's. However, Dr. Tyler carried the symbol further as he thought of the "fire in the brain..... which makes men swink and sweat away in labs and libraries....." (p.306) From such sacrifices, great ideas and discoveries are born. Other symbols in A Friend in Power include the bust of Voltaire (p.306) which represented the ambition of Dr. Tyler to write a worthy biography of the great French philosopher, and another was the boys' tree-house (p.228) which might have symbolized an ideal from which one could fall. As Cornie, one of Tyler's boys, fell from the tree-house, so Dr. Edward Tyler would fall from his life-long ambition--when he became a victim of power and accepted the presidency of Enfield University. In Robie Macaulay's Disguises of Love, the clock is a Freudian symbol. (p.111) May Sarton uses symbols effectively in Faithful Are the Wounds. The wound of the old chestnut tree represented the death of Edward Cavan and the loss to the university by his death. (p.165) The university was like a tree without a limb. Reference to the phoenix in this novel (p.146) might be a symbol of the life of Cavan's ideals after he was gone. The spire of the chapel (pp. pp.195-196) was symbolic of "a hope fulfilled and sanctified and half-forgotten." The gold dome of the statehouse (p.239) was a reminder of true values, and the penguin in Fosca's study (pp.165-166) may have represented sameness. In This Heart, This Hunter, the cave might be a symbol of secrecy. (p.78)

In a different way, Edward Cavan himself was a symbol. (p.177) In The Professor's House, the unpolished turquoise which Tom gave Rosamond was symbolic of Tom's unpolished integrity. Badger Bratten in Morrison's The Stones of the House was a prototype of many alumni (pp.307-308). Morrison spoke also of the author Scott Fitzgerald "as the symbol of an era." (p.312)

The examples which have been cited illustrate the effectiveness of the use of symbols. Arthur Symons considered symbolism as a basic means of communication, and Feibelman concluded that everybody operates symbolically. <sup>12</sup>

Striking similes are used in some of the novels. In The Party at Cran-  
ton, the student Shelby idolized Buchanan and swallowed knowledge like cap-  
sules. (p.72) He was like "a savage presented for the first time with a safe-  
ty match. He expected it to.....light up the world." (p.72) Shelby's loss  
of faith in Buchanan was referred to as his "fall from Paradise." (p.92) In  
describing Shelby (pp.71-72), to him knowledge was "the alchemy by which he  
might.....be able to transmute everything he fancied into the pure gold of  
hard fact....."

The use of similes is a favorite technique of Gerald Brace. In The  
Spire, he compares injustice to an ulcer (p.194); the cab driver "looked as  
if he had been rolled in dough" (p.214); "a branch would rustle and shake it-  
self free of the remaining snow, as though throwing off a choker." (p.232)  
Again "ancient pinetrees.....drank the moisture almost from the clouds, and  
it foamed and dried a rusty white foam at their roots like beer foam on a  
mustache" (p.233); ".....their works, like apples picked while they are  
green, have ripened of themselves, mallowing gradually and growing richer  
in meaning" (p.285), and ".....the town is getting to be like the woods.  
There's a smell of decaying leaves and mushrooms." (p.188)

Randall Jarrell's humor in Pictures from an Institution is evidenced  
in picturing Mrs. Robbins as one who "poured tea as industrial chemists  
pour hydrofluoric acid from carboys" (p.13); in describing Flo (pp.44-45)  
and other characters; in comparing the faculty to a flock of sheep (pp.  
100-101); and in Irene's criticism of American musical compositions which



like "The Spirit of '76" always used a piccolo. (p.182)

Robie in The Disguises of Love spoke of life as "a stupid circle."  
(p.143)

Macaulay is unique in the telling of the story in Disguises of Love from different points of view, which may change several times within a chapter. The first three chapters are related by Gordon, and then the boy's father Howard and Gordon's mother take up the story. Again, Gordon's monologue ends and Howard's begins with no explanation. (pp.212-216) The changing points of view is confusing to the reader.

As an explanatory device, some of the authors resort to the epilogue, prologue, preface, suggestive chapter titles, or quotations or mottoes. Georg Mann's The Dollar Diploma has a prologue, and May Sarton uses both an epilogue and a prologue in Faithful Are the Wounds. Robie Macaulay's Disguises of Love has for its preface a quotation from Viscount St. Albans:

"This same truth is an open daylight, that doth<sup>not</sup> show the masques and mummeries and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearle, that showeth best by day: but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds, vaine opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poore shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves?"

In Doctor's Oral, George Stewart uses as a motto the Latin inscription on the library pediment of the unnamed university: "Scientiae amor disseminetur" which translated means "Let the love of knowledge be spread abroad." Incidentally, the students often mistranslated this to say, "Let the knowledge of love be spread abroad."

In The Catcher in the Rye, Salinger gets his title from hearing a child chanting Robert Burns' poem (p.224): "If a body meet a body comin' through the rye....."

In The Dollar Diploma, Georg Mann quotes, "Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny." (p.197) His suggestive quotation on the flyleaf was taken from Robert Burns: "A chield's amang you taking notes."

Reference to Greek mythology is used in John Aldridge's The Party at Cranton (p.1) when he speaks of Pegasus. Stringfellow Barr in Purely Academic refers to Mephistopheles. (p.295)

As an explanatory device, the authors sometimes use dreams and fables. The comparison of Job and President Aiken in The Stones of the House might be considered an example of this technique. Shirley Jackson's Hangsaman does not use dreams in the usual sense, but parts of the novel are told in an unusual and psychic manner. Although the clever use of dreams or fables often enhances the appeal of a novel, in the case of Hangsaman the girl lives in a dream world because she cannot adjust to the reality of college life.

Flashbacks are found in John W. Aldridge's The Party at Cranton, when Richard Waithe tells of his intimacy with Dorothy Murchison during World War II; and in the second section of The Professor's House, when Tom Outland's story is told from his diary. Flashbacks are also seen in Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye as Holden Caulfield talks to the psychiatrist and tells his life story. George Stewart's Doctor's Oral uses flashbacks to clarify the brief story. The use of letters, for example those from Monsignor Darcy in Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise, also creates an illusion of reality. Shirley Jackson in Hangsaman uses the same technique.

According to Wallek and Warren, (pp. 212-215), the author may employ

*interior*  
internal monologue or dramatic dialogue as an objective method to reveal the psychic in which there is a controlled "point of view," ironic narrative in which the author "deliberately magnifies the role of the narrator" (p.213), or he may use simple narrative as the "omniscient author" tells the story in the third person. <sup>13</sup>

Examples of the monologue are Robie Macaulay's Disguises of Love in which Howard and Helen Graeme and their son Gordon take turns in telling the story, and C. G. Lumbard's Senior Spring in which Steve Burnett, who is a senior at the University of California, is the spokesman for the Beats in the college crowd. John W. Aldridge's The Party at Cran- ton is also a narrative told from the point of view of Richard Waithe, a professor at Cranton University.

The dramatic technique in which dialogue is used is exemplified in Scott Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise as Amory Blaine, Tom D'Invilliers, Fred Sloane, and Amory's girl friends, Clara, Rosalind, and Eleanor reveal their characters through conversation. Oakley Hall uses much dialogue in The Corpus of Joe Bailey in which Joe, Connie, Peter, Hicky, Polly, and others participate. Carlos Baker's A Friend in Power is another example of a novel in which there is a great deal of dialogue, although at times the story is revealed by Dr. Tyler's monologue.

In the objective method "in which the author must never anticipate what lies ahead," <sup>14</sup> there may be a shifting of the point of view as in Robie Macaulay's Disguises of Love, or one character may reveal his psychic life as in the story of Holden Caulfield in J. D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye or in the story of Natalie Waite in Shirley Jackson's Hangsaman, the former of which is a modern adaptation of James' "stream of consciousness." <sup>15</sup> According to Henry James, a novel may be an "objective rendering of a specific subjectivity." <sup>16</sup>

McCullough cites the picaresque novel which may be told either by narrative or dialogue, but the tone is that of the burlesque. Where the author assumes the position of an "ironic narrator" as in Randall Jarrell's Pictures from an Institution, Georg Mann's The Dollar Diploma, Stringfellow Barr's Purely Academic, and Mary McCarthy's The Groves of Academe, the question might be whether the picture is realistic or whether it is satire or caricature.

The novelist may simply tell the story in the third person as the "omniscient novelist." J. W. Aldridge does this in The Party at Cranston, and also Theodore Morrison in The Stones of the House, Gerald Brace in The Spire, Hallie Burnett in This Heart, This Hunter, and George Weller in Not to Eat, Not for Love.

The various authors of this group of novels employ a variety of patterns in sentence and paragraph construction, in plot, and in choice of words. Mary McCarthy in The Groves of Academe uses especially long paragraphs, sometimes covering one and a half pages. Most of the novels have rather simple plots. In Randall Jarrell's Pictures from an Institution, there is no well-defined plot, for the story consists mainly of a series of character studies.

A great deal of college slang is used in Oakley Hall's The Corpus of Joe Bailey and in J. D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye. The latter is written almost entirely in the vernacular of the typical college student, involving the use of simple sentences and slang expressions with degraded euphemisms. Oakley Hall gives the slang expression "able to dig all this (p.430) and "she gave me the moldy fig (p.240)." Salinger uses such slang expressions as "doesn't have all her marbles (p.67)" meaning old and feeble-minded, "in the sack" (p.69) for in bed asleep, "butt-

twitcher of a dress (p.167) in describing a stylish looking girl, "shooting the crap" (pp.50 and 87), "gave my kid sister Phoebe a buzz" meaning called her on the telephone (p.87), "crumby stuff (p.81), "can" for toilet, "the carrousel (p.271), and "lousy shape" (p.171 and elsewhere) for his poor condition.

In direct contrast is Theodore Morrison's choice of words in The Stones of the House which deals with high ideals and is written in an elevated style, often with the use of such unusual or coined words as chiaroscuro (p.74), kalendo of finality (p.322), pullulative (p.200), "moral turpitude" (p.369), and uxorious (p.373). Scott Fitzgerald in This Side of Paradise also makes use of unusual words as raconteuse (p.6), fortaccio (p.218), "ingots of expression" (p.220), and "phallic worship (p.302)." He also spoke of simpatico (p.213), pariah (p.30), plethoric (p.131), misogyny (p.137), and sauterne (p.226). In The Dollar Diploma, Georg Mann uses such words as "mirmillones and retiaris" (p.199), catatonic (p.178), endemic (p.183), panegyric (p.186), mympho-maniac (p.196), and cyrogenics (p.197) In Stringfellow Barr's Purely Academic such words are found as microcosm (p.262), encomium (p.279), and cataclysmic stroke (p.295), and in Oakley Hall's The Corpus of Joe Bailey are such unusual words as pogrom (p.142), ineluctable (p.155), ancey (p.172), amtrac (p.352), escarpment (p.435), and proscenium (p.472).

Gerald Brace's The Spire is especially notable for the use of figurative expressions, such as "caskets of smoky topaz (p.80)" in describing frosted windows, and "their work like apples picked while green (p.285)."

Repetitive or double adjectives are especially noted in Hallie Burnett's This Heart, This Hunter, as "round white collar (p.252)," "strong, tense fingers (p.234)," "strong, short nose (p.236)," "warm, moist hand

(p.253)," and "dark, veiled eyes (p.253)."

Many of the authors from Scott Fitzgerald to Georg Mann make reference to Russian/literature. Randall Jarrell in Pictures from an Institution refers to the Lorelei from Faust (p.120), and there is a reference to Oedipus (p.7) and one to Marx (p.40). Georg Mann speaks of the Russian novelist Pasternak (p.138). Mary McCarthy in The Groves of Academe refers to Tolstoi's Anna Karenina (p.249). Scott Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise also contains many allusions to Tolstoi (pp.134 and others). He alludes also to Byron and to Phillips Brooke (pp.283 and 161). One of the characters, Tom D'Invilliers, is called "a blighted Shelley (p.230)." George Stewart in Doctor's Oral made quite a scene out of Joe Grantland's effort during his oral examination for the Ph.D. to identify exactly the number of lilies in the hand of the girl in Rossetti's "The Blessed Damozel" (pp.197-199). Randall Jarrell refers to Lensky's Aria (p.156) in Pictures from an Institution, to Aristotle (p.132) and Spinoza (p.133). In Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye, there is reference to Ernest Hemingway's Farewell to Arms and The Great Gatsby and of course to Robert Burns' poem from which the title of the novel is derived. In The Spire, Gerald Brace brings in Shakespeare in the amateur enactment of Hamlet in which Lizzie Houghton stars. Robie Macaulay refers to Jung (p.34) and Freud (p.111). Carlos Baker in A Friend in Power makes much of Voltaire, and in this novel Dr. Edward Tyler is an authority on Voltaire. Theodore Morrison quotes from a Biblical character, Job (p.339), and there is reference to Biblical interpretation in the advice of Monsignor Darcy to Amory in Scott Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise, ".....if you don't use heaven as a continual referen-

dum for your ideas you'll find earth a continual recall to your ambi-  
19  
tions."

A suggestive and allegorical literary allusion in Weller's Not To Eat, Not for Love is the quotation from Emerson which the author uses for a frontispiece and for his theme: "Went yesterday to Cambridge and spent most of the day at Mount Auburn; got my luncheon at fresh pond, and went back again to the woods. After much wandering and seeing many things, four snakes gliding up and down a hollow for no purpose that I could see—not to eat, not for love, but only gliding....."

## IV

## Conclusion

A close examination of the modern academic novels of America reveals definite developments within the last few years. There is an emphasis upon the importance of time. Instead of covering a considerable period as does Scott Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise and Willa Cather's The Professor's House, J. D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye takes place during a week end, George Stewart's Doctor's Oral covers one day, and J. W. Aldridge's The Party at Cranton covers only a short period of time. The authors handle time and space in such a way as to produce a greater illusion of reality.

There is a notable influence of the short story upon the novel. Most of the newer books are brief. Those having less than three hundred pages are May Sarton's Faithful Are the Wounds (281 pp.), George R. Stewart's Doctor's Oral (259pp.), Randall Jarrell's Pictures from an Institution (277 pp.), J. D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye (277pp.), The Professor's House by Willa Cather (283 pp.), Robie Macaulay's Disguises of Love (282pp.), C. G. Lumbard's Senior Spring (243 pp.), Georg Mann's The Dollar Diploma (204 pp.), John W. Aldridge's The Party at Cranton (184 pp.), and Shirley Jackson's Hangsaman (280 pp.).

The novel is a result of social pressure, and not only is its content a reflection of the age, but also, since the modern reader does not have time to spend on a long-drawn-out story, the time span has been considerably shortened, and the actual relating of the story has been streamlined until some of the more recent novels are brief enough to be read in a few hours. No longer must a novel contain from three hundred to five hundred pages, but it may contain less than two hundred pages, as



does John W. Aldridge's The Party at Cranton.

The plots of the recent novels have also become simplified, and the tendency is away from the saga. Most contemporary novelists adhere to simplicity in plot construction rather than <sup>than</sup> attempt to use two or three interlocking plots as did earlier writers. The books have fewer characters, and the motivation is often stimulated by the psychological rather than the physical.

The new novels are without a great deal of description. They employ much dialogue and action and often satire in order to achieve animation. Especially do John W. Aldridge, Randall Jarrell, Stringfellow Barr, Mary McCarthy, and Georg Mann resort to satire which is often humorous. In their satirical realism, they employ burlesque, and the novels fall into the group which some critics label "picaresque." The term "picaresque" comes from the Spanish word picaro, meaning rogue or knave. <sup>2</sup> The characters in this type of novel are singular in their lack of security and lack of morals. A noticeable trend is away from the romantic of the Scott Fitzgerald era of the nineteen-twenties, and to the use of more philosophy and psychology. Within the last decade, the American academic novel has become a more realistic presentation of the problems of the college campus.

The writers of the modern academic novels have depicted the frustration and search for escape which are characteristic of the age. Most of them reveal excessive drinking by college students and, sometimes, by faculty members, both socially and privately. Sex relationships in some of the novels, namely The Corpus of Joe Bailey, This Heart, This Hunter, Senior Spring, and Disguises of Love, are revolting and disgusting. Some of the authors do not leave to the reader's imagination any of the sor-

didness of the unrestrained sex relationships. Oakley Hall, Hallie Burnett, C. G. Lombard, and sometimes Robbie Macaulay are revolting in their recital of sexual intimacies.

Profanity is used in most of the novels, but it is rampant in The Catcher in the Rye, This Side of Paradise, The Corpus of Joe Bailey, and The Disguises of Love (especially pp. 170 and 205). In all of these and The Party at Cranton there are even blasphemous expressions which make the reader recoil. John W. Aldridge could have omitted the blasphemous analogy (p.66) in The Party at Cranton and also the sacrilegious<sup>sp</sup> references to the Sistine Chapel (p.15) and the Grail. However, this use of profanity may have been done in an effort to show lack of restraint on the part of the characters.

None of the authors present subversiveness as if they agree with it; but on the contrary, most of them either hint at or expose the infiltration of Communism in American colleges. This is noted in A Friend in Power (Baker), Pictures from an Institution (Jarrell), The Groves of Academe (McCarthy), The Dollar Diploma (Mann), The Party at Cranton (Aldridge), Purely Academic (Barr—pp. 100, 108, 159, 213, 222, 223, and elsewhere). Georg Mann is probably the most pronounced of all the authors in his exposé of the infiltration of Communism.

Some of the novels reveal anti-Semitism and race prejudice, or reference is made to the poor social status of Jews and the low social/economic status of Negroes. Anti-Semitism is shown in This Side of Paradise (pp.52 and elsewhere), The Corpus of Joe Bailey (p.244), This Heart, This Hunter, The Stones of the House, and in Senior Spring (p.3) when there is a comment about keeping Jews and Negroes out of the fraternity.

This Heart, This Hunter refers to Negroes and to the Ku Klux Klan (p.67) and other racial references are found in Disguises of Love (p.34) and in Pictures from an Institution (p.103) where Randall Jarrell speaks of integration of races and creeds. The Party at Cranton (p.38) notes the suffering and loneliness of the colored race.

The novels present almost a unanimous criticism of modern education in America. Some, like Randall Jarrell, John Aldridge, and Stringfellow Barr, satirize the administration or faculty. Georg Mann's The Dollar Diploma indicates that too much emphasis is being placed upon the possible financial problems of a college. Not To Eat, Not for Love showed emphasis upon athletics. John Aldridge's The Party at Cranton satirized the social life of the college faculty. In Aldridge's book and also in Robie Macaulay's Disguises of Love, moral weaknesses and excessive drinking were noted.

Stringfellow Barr in Purely Academic pictured a college where students picked easy courses (p.47) and where comic strips and T-V had comprised much of their educational background. The quality of the student mind was low, and many of the course offerings were not intellectually stimulating. Robie Macaulay in Disguises of Love satirizes high school education (p.12 and p.51) and speaks of memorizing facts and filling in blanks as training in English. Randall Jarrell in Pictures from an Institution shows that no emphasis was placed upon scholarship (p.83), and he satirizes progressive education (p.180). Some of the novels show how students get others to do work for them as in The Catcher in the Rye when Caulfield did an English paper for his friend. In Salinger's book and also in The Corpus of Joe Bailey, Hangsaman, and Senior Spring, there seemed to be practically no real studying. The students wasted their

time in dissipation.

It can generally be seen that there was too much social freedom for students, and this lack of restraint often led to excessive drinking and an exaggerated emphasis upon sex. These weaknesses of character are especially noticeable in The Corpus of Joe Bailey, This Heart, This Hunter, The Catcher in the Rye, Senior Spring, and Hangsaman.

The lust for power is manifested in many of the academic novels, and the authors present criticisms of the "prevailing power and.... demand for counterpower."<sup>4</sup> There is "the obscenity of covert power in the sentimental academic novel."<sup>5</sup> Most "academic novels are concerned with power, and rarely with ideas, forms of sensibility, or explorations of new experience....."<sup>6</sup> In The Party at Cranton, John Aldridge mentions the "longing for unlimited power"<sup>7</sup> Other novels which deal with power are Carlos Baker's A Friend in Power, Burnett's This Heart, This Hunter, Mary McCarthy's The Groves of Academe, and Georg Mann's The Dollar Diploma. Others concerned with obtaining security through success are Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise, Oakley Hall's The Corpus of Joe Bailey, and George Stewart's Doctor's Oral. In Pictures from an Institution, Randall Jarrell says "Sex, greed, envy, power, money: Gertrude knew that these were working away at Benton.....!" (p.106)

Academic novels deal with a quest for "more freedom of the academy from the wrong sort of politics. This was especially noticeable in Georg Mann's The Dollar Diploma. Professors may even be required to sign a loyalty oath, which may be all right in itself but is not required of members of other professions. There is a notable lack of freedom of expression for the administration, and, sometimes, a lack of freedom in the management of one's personal affairs as was the case with Dean Gaunt in The

Spire. The fact of being on a college faculty prevents one from speaking or acting as a private citizen. Especially are professors handicapped in the enjoyment of freedom of speech and the right to teach the truth as they see it. The academic novels present criticisms of "styles of life, sex, or teaching." This freedom, or the present lack of it, is "one of the few ideas in the academic novel."

There is in the novels a general feeling of futility or nihilism. John W. Aldridge ends The Party at Cranton with Buchanan and the girl wading out in the polluted stream until they are lost from view, with the story closing on a note of nothingness. This suggestion of nihilism is noted in Purely Academic, Faithful Are the Wounds, The Corpus of Joe Bailey, Pictures from an Institution, The Catcher in the Rye, The Disguises of Love, and Senior Spring. The latter probably best represents the Beatniks. In Pictures from an Institution, Jarrell refers to the philosophy of escape of Spinoza.

## V

## Evaluation

In an effort to evaluate the academic novels from the standpoint of literary criticism, one must consider such extrinsic values as the authors' backgrounds, the purposes of the authors, and the quality of the books.

The authors are, to a large extent, professors and literary critics. These include John W. Aldridge (Hollins), Theodore Morrison (Harvard), Mary McCarthy, Carlos Baker (Princeton), Robie Macaulay (Kenyon), Stringfellow Barr (Virginia), and Randall Jarrell (Woman's College of the University of North Carolina).

Willa Cather, author of The Professor's House, and May Sarton, author of Faithful Are the Wounds, represent professional writers.

In general, the purpose of the authors seems to have been to show the weaknesses of American education and of present-day American society. Some of the moral weaknesses and salacious happenings may have been used for sensational effect. The authors also use exaggeration and often satire. Of education as reflected in the academic novel, Widmer says "A law of the academic novel..... is that where educational ideals are most emphatically asserted, intellectual corruption is most advanced."<sup>1</sup>

The reader is often appalled by the revelation of moral weaknesses, by the low mental ability of many students, the financial problems of college administrators which sometimes place them in embarrassing situations in order to secure endorsements, and the infiltration of Communism in American colleges.

It is interesting to note comments of the critics concerning some of the better academic novels. Edward Weeks in the Atlantic

Monthly says that "Theodore Morrison is not only a poet and Director of the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference but a Harvard professor of some twenty years' standing.....The people involved in Andy's administrative problems are recognizable types....." <sup>2</sup> Weeks also comments that Morrison makes "shrewd observations on the nature of good and the ironic sequels possible to the best intentions." In the Saturday Review, Frederick Hoffman says, "We wonder about the extremes that this novel and Miss McCarthy's The Groves of Academe represent.....The weakness of Morrison's novel, if it is a weakness, is the realization of Aiken's incredible goodness." <sup>3</sup>

Of Not To Eat, Not for Love, Frederic I. Carpenter says in the American Quarterly that critics agree that this novel by George Weller is the "best serious novel of American college life." <sup>4</sup> The theme, taken from the quotation on the title page, suggests the lack of two motives of students, the economic motive and the love motive. The hero says, "The hardest thing I know is not to be a snob." <sup>5</sup>

With the exception of Theodore Morrison's The Stones of the House, George Weller's Not To Eat, Not for Love, and Randall Jarrell's Pictures from an Institution which became a best seller, and possibly Georg Mann's The Dollar Diploma; there is hardly an outstanding book in the entire collection of American academic novels. According to Kingsley Widmer, "the events of the last fifty years.....have dangerously narrowed the areas of subject matter available to writers and, consequently, crippled their means of discovering themselves and their age." <sup>6</sup> In adhering to their responsibility to give a picture of the age, the novelists of academic life have been handicapped. The results of progressive education, a decline in the social mores of America,

and the lust for power with its crippling results have thwarted the production of great books.

A consideration of the intrinsic values of these novels involves stylistic analysis which has been discussed in detail (pp. 17-26 of this paper), the accomplishment of the author's purpose, the academic novel as a genre, the future of this type of novel, and its challenges to society and to the literary world.

By various means, the authors have shown what is wrong with American education. In this way, they have made a contribution in awakening the reading public to the realization that much could be done for the improvement of education and that much needs to be done in the field of ethics. With the exception of The Catcher in the Rye, which is written in the vernacular of the typical college student, most of books are the/written in effective English. The authors know how to handle the language. Emotive effects have been produced by the use of myths and fables, and the quality of the novels has been enhanced by style. However, the characters are secondary and not very real (except in Randall Jarrell's Pictures from an Institution). This is a weakness of these novels as a literary genre. A number of the books picture the "intellectual rogue" and "absurd adventures," and many of them suggest a "yearned-for real world outside."<sup>7</sup>

The American academic novel may be considered a new genre in the classification of literature. "With the addition of new works, our categories shift."<sup>8</sup> Genre should be conceived....as a grouping of literary works based, theoretically, upon both outer form (specific meter or structure) and also upon inner form (attitude, tone, purpose — more crudely, subject and audience)."<sup>9</sup>



The American novel is, for the most part, the product of the middle years of the twentieth century. Definitely, the long novel of romance with tedious descriptions has vanished with a vanishing era. The new novel is more like a long short story or novelette. Widmer concludes that the "academic novel.....may be with us for some time."<sup>10</sup> Few of the novelists have succeeded in writing strictly a campus novel. They get involved with personal affairs. One critic says that the reader is "terribly impatient with much that the American novel is now bringing forth."<sup>11</sup> A critic in the Saturday Review, H. S., says "the novel is the heart and center of our literature, and it continues to broaden its aspects so that it presents not only a history of our time, but the changing nature of our lives."<sup>12</sup> He speaks of the present "Beat" generation, and states that "it is becoming a Way of Life."<sup>13</sup> If, as he asserts, the novel has great power in its influence, there may be unrealized possibilities in the future academic novel in America. According to Harry T. Moore of Southern Illinois University, "Just now, a big multi-leveled university novel should be most welcome."<sup>14</sup>

Moore seemed to think that the academic novels have dealt chiefly with administrative problems. Frederic Carpenter also concludes that the majority of these novels concern the faculty rather than the students.<sup>15</sup> However, student life is the background for Doctors Oral, This Side of Paradise, The Corpus of Joe Bailey, Senior Spring, Hangsaman, This Heart, This Hunter, and Not To Eat, Not for Love.

Carpenter says the "word 'academic' has become a term of reproach." His appraisal is that there are no first-rate novels in this group. Some have failed because of unimportant problems involved, and

some failed "because they became critical tracts rather than im-  
<sup>16</sup>aginative narratives." He says there seems to be a lack of vital materials, and that titles like Purely Academic and The Groves of Academe are suggestive of this. In contrasting the contemporary novelists with Scott Fitzgerald, Carpenter thinks many of the newer books show an emotional starvation and a negative attitude. The result, he says, is poor novels.

The critic, Frederick Hoffman, asks, "What has happened to the college as a setting for fiction since the 1920's? It seems no longer the place where it is fitting either to formulate or to revere undergraduate profundities, as Scott Fitzgerald did in This Side of Paradise." <sup>17</sup> He points out that the perspective has changed. "For Fitzgerald, the professor was a minor figure, the dean remote in time and place. In recent novels, the point of view is the 'mature' one of the professor (as in Robie Macaulay's Disguises of Love and Mary McCarthy's The Groves of Academe) or the dean (Gerald Brace's The Spire)..... The problems of academic freedom, the threat of Communism, the criticism of policies by the alumni: these issues have all but crowded out the young men who lived at the very center of the earlier campus novel." <sup>18</sup>

In spite of all their weaknesses, if the modern academic novels of America should arouse the American public to the existent defects in our decadent civilization, the authors should be forgiven for the obscenity and all the revolting episodes which they have related in their various literary productions. There is an answer for all the frustrations; but that answer lies not in escapism or nihilism, or sensuality, but in a knowledge and acceptance of the Way.

## Footnotes

### Chapter I — Introduction

1. Sylvan Barnet, Morton Berman, and William Burto, The Study of Literature (Boston, 1960), p.254.
2. Randall Jarrell, Pictures from an Institution (New York, 1955), p. 221.

### Chapter III — Treatment of Themes

1. Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz, A Reader's Guide to Literary Terms (New York, 1960), p.94.
2. René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York, 1956), p.204.
3. Arnold Kettle, "Life and Pattern", Discussions of the Novel (Boston, 1960), p.15.
4. Ibid., p.16
5. Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz, A Reader's Guide to Literary Terms (New York, 1960), p. 214.
6. Charles J. Rollo, "Potpourri" in The Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 189, April 1952, p. 86.
7. Robert Halsbad, "Academic Mazes" in The Saturday Review, Vol. 35, March 8, 1952, pp. 13-14.
8. Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz, A Reader's Guide to Literary Terms (New York, 1960), p.89.
9. Kingsley Widmer, "The Academic Comedy," in The Partisan Review, Summer 1960, p. 531.

10. S. Stephenson Smith, "Fiction," The Library Journal, Vol. 83, Jan. 1, 1958, p. 79.
11. Kingsley Widmer, "The Academic Comedy," The Partisan Review, Summer 1960, p. 531.
12. Maurice Beebe, Literary Symbolism (San Francisco, 1960), pp. 8-9.
13. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York, 1956), pp. 212-215.
14. Ibid., p. 214
15. Ibid., p. 214
16. Ibid., p. 214
17. Bruce McCullough, Representative English Novelists (New York, 1946), p. 58.
18. Wellek and Warren, Theory of Literature (New York, 1956), p. 213.
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