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Towards Spatial Porosity: Revisiting the Contemporary American Campus Novel

Kyriakidou Evangelia

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Declaration:

This submission is my work. Any quotation from, or description of, the work of others is acknowledged herein by reference to the sources, whether published or unpublished.

Signature:

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Abstract

This dissertation joins a vibrant conversation in the humanities concerning the study of space as an interdisciplinary endeavor. In particular, my work explores the literary presence of the American University Campus in contemporary American literature. Collectively, the novels in this study articulate the fact that the American Campus—its space, its architecture, the relationships developed within it but also those with the surrounding community—not only registers but also produces social dynamics. I contend that the American Campus in the novels examined is not an Ivory Tower that stands aside from society but a porous space that allows interaction with society and promptly registers the tensions that affect each era. In literature and architecture porosity in space has been likened to porosity in nature with many sociologists and architects borrowing from Biology and contending that porosity is a critical feature for the viability of an organism since it functions at once as a boundary that keeps the identity of the organism and as a sieve that helps in the interaction with the surrounding environment. Expanding on this analogy I will be analyzing the porous quality of campus space as it is represented in the contemporary American campus novel. The American campus is in constant negotiation with the world that lies beyond the walls of academia, and it serves as a nest for new ideas that find their way back to society. The representation of the American Campus in literature underlines the fact that even though campus spatial practices are imbued by the dominant ideology, the characters moving in this space write their own spatial stories, thus allowing for a reconsideration of academia that moves away from its traditional image of the unyielding Ivory Tower. Methodologically, *Towards the Porous Campus: The Contemporary American Campus Novel* moves through socio-spatial situations and fictional Campuses in an interdisciplinary manner borrowing from architecture and theories of space. More specifically among others I am using Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau, Gaston Bachelard and Richard Sennett's theory of the porous city. The interdisciplinary nature of this inquiry highlights the interrelationship between the literary production of the Campus Novel and issues of spatiality and power in this highly distinctive American place, the Campus.

Περίληψη

Η παρούσα διατριβή αποτελεί μέρος ενός ανοιχτού διαλόγου στις Ανθρωπιστικές Επιστήμες για τη μελέτη του χώρου ως διεπιστημονικό ζήτημα. Συγκεκριμένα, το παρόν πόνημα ασχολείται με τη λογοτεχνική παρουσία του Αμερικανικού Ακαδημαϊκού Μυθιστορήματος στη σύγχρονη Αμερικανική Λογοτεχνία. Υποστηρίζω ότι η Αμερικανική Πανεπιστημιούπολη στα μυθιστορήματα που εξετάζω δε συνάδει με το στερεότυπο του αποκομμένου από την κοινωνική πραγματικότητα χώρου όπου η υψηλή διανόηση αρνείται να ανοίξει δίοδο επικοινωνίας με τον έξω κόσμο. Αντιθέτως, πιστεύω πως η Αμερικανική Πανεπιστημιούπολη παρουσιάζεται σαν ένα πορώδες οικοδόμημα το οποίο επιτρέπει την αλληλεπίδραση κοινωνίας-πανεπιστημίου και καταγράφει τις κοινωνικοπολιτικές εντάσεις κάθε ιστορικής περιόδου. Η αμερικανική πανεπιστημιούπολη, στα μυθιστορήματα αυτά, βρίσκεται σε συνεχή διαπραγμάτευση με τον κόσμο που βρίσκεται πέρα από τα τείχη της ακαδημαϊκής κοινότητας και χρησιμεύει ως φωλιά για νέες ιδέες που βρίσκουν το δρόμο τους πίσω στην κοινωνία. Η αναπαράσταση της αμερικανικής πανεπιστημιούπολης στη λογοτεχνία υπογραμμίζει το γεγονός ότι παρόλο που οι χωρικές πρακτικές της πανεπιστημιούπολης εμποτίζονται από την κυρίαρχη ιδεολογία, οι χαρακτήρες που κινούνται σε αυτόν τον χώρο γράφουν τις δικές τους ιστορίες στο χώρο, επιτρέποντας έτσι μια επανεξέταση της ακαδημαϊκής κοινότητας που απομακρύνεται από την στερεοτυπική της εικόνα. Αυτή η συνεχής αλληλεπίδραση του πανεπιστημιακού χώρου με την κοινωνία καθίσταται εφικτή μέσω της διαπερατότητας των πανεπιστημιακών τειχών, η οποία αναλύεται στην παρούσα διατριβή μέσω της αναλογίας της με τη διαπερατότητα της κυτταρικής μεμβράνης, μία αναλογία που ακολουθεί ο Richard Sennett για να μιλήσει για την ανοιχτή, πορώδη πόλη. Μεθοδολογικά η διατριβή κινείται στο χώρο της Λογοτεχνίας αλλά και της Αρχιτεκτονικής Θεωρίας. Ειδικότερα, εκτός από τη θεωρία του Sennett για την πορώδη πόλη μεταξύ άλλων χρησιμοποιώ τη θεωρία των Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau και Gaston Bachelard. Ο διεπιστημονικός χαρακτήρας αυτής της έρευνας υπογραμμίζει τη σχέση μεταξύ της λογοτεχνικής παραγωγής του Ακαδημαϊκού Μυθιστορήματος και ζητημάτων χωροταξίας και εξουσίας σε αυτό το εξαιρετικά ξεχωριστό αμερικανικό μέρος, την Πανεπιστημιούπολη.

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I. Introduction

The very idea of the university as an institution of higher learning emerged from medieval monasteries; it was through the structure and subject matter studied in medieval monasteries that the notion of the university sprouted. More specifically, we could say that the modern university is an evolution of those first catechism guilds that catholic friars formed in monasteries so as to teach the Christian doctrine to children from 1200 to 1225 CE (Nnaji 228). As Martin Heale, Reader in Medieval History in the University of Liverpool, points out the history of the college and the monastery are intertwined (Heale) to the point where the medieval college remained under the shadow of the monastery for a long time. It is due to this common ground shared between the monastery and the college as well as due to the first colleges' monastic setting that the university as a notion has long been perceived by popular imagination as an Ivory Tower reserved for the elites and as a site that propagates intellectual exclusion and privilege. The term Ivory Tower for all institutions of higher learning is not a fortuitous moniker; it is strongly connected with the perceived exclusive, elite position of the university and with the impractical attitude to life of the typecast absent-minded professor. According to Steven Shapin, professor of the History of Science at Harvard University, the origins of the term ivory tower can be traced back to antiquity¹ and later to religion, especially in the field of Mariological² study, in the 19th century it was connected to the aloofness of artistic endeavors and finally in the 20th century it became a common term to characterize the academy (Shapin 1-13). Steven Shapin observes that the word ivory was associated with phantasy, illusion—if not delusion—and that's why the word became linked with artistic production. Shapin explains that Ivory is *elephas* / *elephantodonto* in Greek and it plays upon the word meaning of the Ancient Greek verb *elephairo* which means deceive, cheat (2), connoting to the artistic deceit of being told a story which is not true but fiction. The term ivory tower is, thus, linked to artists who retreat to their

¹ Shapin cites Penelope's words on dreaming of Odysseus' return: 'Those dreams that pass through the gate of sawn ivory deceive men, bringing words that find no fulfilment. But those that come forth through the gate of polished horn bring true issues to pass.' (*Odyssey* BK 19 506-509).

² Mariology is the theological study of the Mother of Jesus Christ, Mary. Shapin in his 2012 "The Ivory Tower: The History of a Figure of Speech and Its Cultural Uses" refers to the Mariological usage of the term to denote the inviolateness of Mary's virginity, therefore the very opposite of porosity.

Ivory Tower to create art and to academics who are notoriously reputed as cut-off from the real world. Especially after World War II, the term Ivory Tower has been exclusively linked to academia. Despite efforts to dispel the notion that the university is a place isolated from society, the campus has acquired the dimensions and properties of an Ivory Tower in the popular imagination as well as in critical production. For certain marginalized groups academia has been heavily contested as a site of meritocracy and equal access for all, while for others the Ivory Tower is not an inaccessible locus but a place where access is granted based on intellectual achievement. Alongside these popular beliefs, the image of academia as an Ivory Tower that is set apart from the rest of society dealing with issues that are of no immediate interest to society is a persisting image of the university. Traditionally, it has been perceived that a university campus is a space that is physically removed from society in so far as it is built away from the urban sprawl; on top of that, campus architecture has always been unique and majestic so as to denote that this is indeed a “Tower,” a place that is set apart from common preoccupations, a locus of the intellect where the imposing architecture reflects the inner workings of an equally grand intellectual life.

Despite its remote physical placing, the university is culturally central in American life. The tenacity of the university’s appeal on the American people is evidenced through its plethoric representation in popular culture. There are numerous films, songs, plays and novels³ where the university has the lead role. The proliferation of campus novels, in particular, attests not only to a marked interest on the part of the writers to engage with the campus but also to a readership eager to read such novels. The *Oxford Encyclopedia of American Literature* entry cites the scope

¹ *Educating Rita* (1983), *The Strawberry Statement* (1970) and even campus satires like *Animal House* (1978) are some of the cinematic representations of the campus. The award-winning series *How to Get Away with Murder* (2014-) largely takes place on campus and the protagonists are a Law Professor and her students. It has been compared in scope and plot with Donna Tartt’s 1992 novel *The Secret History*. David Mamet’s play *Oleanna* (1992) offers a controversial take on political correctness on campus, its recurrent staging as well as its film adaptation in 1994 bear proof to the campus drama appeal to audiences. Songs like “Don’t Go Back to Rockville” by the R.E.M., “College Girl” by Travis Porter and “Campus” by Vampire Weekend express the feelings of different generations of college students about the experience of going to college. The campus features in numerous campus novels: from Roth’s *The Human Stain* (2000) and Smith’s *On Beauty* (2005) to campus mysteries like *A Darker Shade of Crimson* (1998) featuring Harvard and *Blue Blood* (1999) based on Yale, by Pamela Thomas-Graham.

of “Academic Novels” as twofold limiting their existence solely to answering the questions: “What happens on a college campus?” and “What is college for?” (Morris 1). However, this definition does not do justice to the literary wealth offered by the campus novel.

There are also those campus novels which, in relation to the aforementioned use of space as denoting academic aloofness, in their emphasis on the architectural space of the university, attempt to address questions of an epistemological nature surrounding the relationship between architecture, ideology and the lived experience of space.

When does the meaning of space arise? Does it reside solely in the built object itself? Does it arise during the design process of its conception? Is it articulated during the appropriation of its built outcome by the people who live within it? And, can we claim that space itself is a nexus of relations and is not singular buildings or autonomous objects, which produce meaningful events? (Terzoglou, “Architecture as Meaningful Language” 122)

The place-specific nature of the campus novel encourages us to ask these questions about the meaning of space and in turn helps us answer socially significant questions about race, gender, class, identity formation, elitism and belonging within educational institutions in America. More than that, the campus novel offers a blueprint of how campus space opens up to social space, how the university endorses and incorporates or rejects social concepts, ideas and ideologies coming from outside academic walls.

This study is concerned with the contemporary American campus novel through the lens of spatial porosity, a term that will be analyzed in the course of this introduction and which lends this dissertation part of its originality. I will interrogate the nature of the American campus in the novels examined not as a secluded place, removed from society and its tensions but as a porous space that allows interaction with society and promptly registers the tensions that affect each era. The current work, thus, problematizes the popular culture image of the University as an Ivory Tower and, through an examination of campus space in contemporary American campus novels showcases the porous quality of the campus. The historical arc of my investigation extends from the late 20th to the 21st century and its geographical trajectory is focused on the USA. The primary focus of my dissertation is campus space and since the American campus space has seen such an idiosyncratic and unparalleled evolution, especially after the WWII, my research interest

is the American campus novel and not its British counterpart. As Jeffrey Williams rightly points out in his article “The Rise of the Academic Novel”: the “traditional model of the British campus suggests a cloister, in physical design as well as bearing, since it retains the stamp of its medieval origins, parceled in small, self-contained “colleges,” walled-in with individual quads and locking gates” (7) while the traditional model of the American campus is built in the inspirational motif of what Thomas Jefferson called “academical village”, based on which he created the University of Virginia, whereby the campus buildings are arranged around a quad, a commons, thus “suggesting the public square of American democracy” (7). Indeed, the fifties marked an unprecedented growth in the publication of campus novels reflecting the analogous development of campus space. In the aftermath of the WWII torrential social changes in America altered higher education by opening up the campus gates to a diverse cohort of students: the G.I. Bill (1944) that gave financial benefits to war veterans so that they could acquire higher education as well as the unfailing prosperity that followed WWII allowed the demographics of the campus to change radically. Ever since the 1950s the outpour of novels that are written about the academy has not abated proving that the genre of the campus novel in America is not only a resilient literary medium but also a significant literary vehicle for creating and sustaining a dialogue between society and academia.

Kingsley Amis’s *Lucky Jim* (1954) is one of the first campus novels to give a glimpse to the inside of the Ivory Tower of academia to the readership and at the same time “notoriously and hilariously frame the university as a place of ‘niggling mindlessness’” (English 134) and complete detachment from society. Although *Lucky Jim* belongs to the British tradition, which is outside the literary scope of the current work, my point in revisiting Kingsley Amis’s seminal campus novel is to draw the reader’s attention to the crucial role played by the campus novel production in the second half of the twentieth century in carving a literary niche for the campus novel and turn it into a genre that deserves critical interest especially as the genre develops into the late twentieth and twenty-first century. Indeed, the publication of *Lucky Jim* made the genre of the campus novel popular in the 1950s while around the same time Mary McCarthy with *The Groves of the Academy* (1952) put the campus novel on the map for the American readership. Disproving those who had predicted the demise of the campus novel, like literary critic J. Bottum who has famously observed that the campus novel has become “utterly worn out [...] in less than fifty years’ time” (31) and others who have labeled the campus novel as nothing but a guild

genre interesting only to a coterie market, the campus novel rose to prominence especially later in the 20th century. Ever since the second half of the 20th century the campus has never ceased to be the protagonist in numerous novels. And despite the grim announcement by literary critic John O' Lyons that "the novel of academic life has fostered no Fielding, Flaubert, or Tolstoy" (xv), a vast array of canonical writers has been enchanted by the malleable setting of the campus thus focusing much of their novelistic production on the campus novel. Authors belonging to different literary traditions ranging from Don DeLillo and Philip Roth to Francine Prose and Richard Russo converge in choosing the literary vehicle of the campus novel to paint a dynamic picture of American society and culture.

The majority of literary critics and scholars point out the closed system that a University campus appears to be in the campus novel; they emphasize the enclave nature of the campus as well as the distinct position it occupies from the rest of society and they analyze the depiction of this gated community in the novel. Elaine Showalter in her *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and its Discontents* (2005) nods in agreement with David Lodge in that the campus "can be the site of pastoral, or the fantasy of the pastoral—the refuge, the ivory tower" (3) affirming a view of the campus as a closed system. Terry Eagleton starts his essay "The Silences of David Lodge" (1988) stating that the success of the campus novel as a genre is not difficult to understand; he attributes the genre's success to the farcical representation of University professors, the readership's controversial attitude towards the intelligentsia and the campus's spatial specificity: "As a place set somewhat apart, the university has the glamour of the deviant and untypical, providing the novelist with a conveniently closed worlds marked by intellectual wrangling, political infighting and sexual intrigue." (99) Along similar lines, Showalter cites Cambridge professor Steven Connor who underlines that the appeal of the campus novel lies primarily in its setting:

The university is a closed world with its own norms and values which is thick with the possibilities of intrigue. Indeed, the very restriction of elements in the academic world, the stock characters, with their cozily familiar routines of evasion and abstraction, and their conspicuous, if always insecure hierarchical structures, and the well-established situations and plot lines, seem to generate a sense of permutative abundance. (69)

Jay Parini, talking from his privileged dual capacity as an academic and a writer explains that the campus is the ideal setting for novelists to write: “Novelists adore small, enclosed worlds—ships at sea, country houses, prep schools—and few such enclosures offer as much variety and madness as the college” (B12). Despite a spate of critical articles where the campus novel is analyzed as a guild type of novel, giving the reader a voyeur view of how an exclusive institution functions, some critics have tried to express the dual nature of academia as both a gated community and a place in-touch with the real world. Terry Eagleton has gone a step beyond the Ivory Tower depiction, mentioning the simultaneous inside-and-outside-of-society position of the university, since to his mind it is both an asocial and apolitical territory but also an exact scale model of society (93-94). Even though there has been a relative change in viewing the campus novel as an isolated site, critics such as Parini still insist on the idea of the campus as a closed system, as a microcosm, “a place where humanity placed out its obsession and discovers what makes life bearable” (B12). My dissertation departs from such assessments of the campus novel; I contend that they overlook the fact that the campus novel is an aesthetically rich and diverse genre featuring a dynamic and ever-changing setting: campus space. As it will be shown, the stereotypical depiction of the campus as an Ivory Tower rests on faulty assumptions and should therefore be contested. Moving towards this direction, I propose that the contemporary American campus novel features a walled-in enclave with porous, membranous walls that allow for certain elements from the outside world of non-academics to enter academia and alter it in multiple ways.

The concept of porosity is the theoretical and conceptual framework applied to analyze the contemporary American campus novel. Porosity is a dialectic term with a long tradition in critical thinking: the idea of porosity was first analyzed by Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis in their 1925 essay on Naples and later, when Benjamin parted with the term porosity other scholars were quick to adopt it; Ernst Bloch used it in his essay “Italien und die Porosität” where, as Sophie Wolfrum explains, the author focuses on the habits of the Italian and uses the term porosity as a soundbite, later in the 20th century Amin Ash and Nigel Thrift talk about porosity as a quality that allows city space to “continually fashion and refashion itself” (qtd in Wolfrum x). More recently, sociologist Richard Sennett used the term porosity in his examination of what constitutes an open city and elaborated on what is an open and what is a closed system when it comes to urban space. Sennett’s theory about porosity in urban space inspired me and opened up

new trajectories on how to analyze and revisit the imagined space of the campus. This study is invested with our approach to campus space through the campus novel, it seeks to unravel how this space is presented to the reader as porous and how this quality of porosity navigates social tensions and contradictions within campus space. The Sennettian porosity is described as an urban quality that promises to keep cities healthy, versatile and open while the opposite (closed system) is described as a disaster that will lead cities to wither and stop developing. I adopt the Sennettian porosity rather loosely and apply it to my analysis of campus space in the American campus novel to make a point about campus space being porous and therefore evolving rather than closed and stifling. The concept of porosity for Sennett is described as a positive force in urban development and this is where my analysis departs from Sennett's theory. I approach porosity as a natural condition of campus space, one that leaves the campus open to both positive and negative social changes allowing academia to develop a dialectic relationship with society. My examination of the contemporary campus novel has rendered this endeavor possible, proving that the campus novel is a literary genre attuned to society. My dissertation is organized spatially in an attempt to emphasize the significance of the campus space and its porosity in the narratives analyzed. My choice of novels to be analyzed has been deeply informed by spatiality, hence all of the novels explored in this dissertation feature a strong connection between campus space and social values. More specifically, this work is divided in chapters each focusing on one of the nodal points of campus space: the dormitory, the commons room, the classroom, the faculty office, the library and the quadrangle. A blueprint of any campus would reveal a certain ordering of space, first divided in the broad categories of outer and inner campus space. Outer campus space includes the quadrangle, sports facilities or gardens; inner campus space incorporates classrooms, faculty offices, the library, the dormitory and the common room. Within the broader categories of outer and inner space, the distinction of private versus communal space emerges, highlighting a qualitative connection between space (campus space) and agents (people in campus space.) The following mental map further clarifies these connections and provides an overview of how I have organized the dissertation as well as how I approach the novels analyzed.

Inner Campus Space (Private)

Classroom

The Human Stain
Blue Angel
On Beauty

Faculty Office

The Human Stain
Blue Angel
The Secret History
Straight Man

Inner Campus Spaces (Communal)

Library

The Book of Daniel
 4 3 2 1

Dormitory

Indignation
A Loner at Harvard
The Secret History
The Marriage Plot
Blue Angel

Common Room

The Secret History

Outer Campus Space (Communal)

Quadrangle

Monday, Monday
Straight Man

I examine each campus space separately through the lens of porosity to highlight the interaction between the built-space of the campus and social values and tensions coming from the outside. After a close reading and analysis of those campus spaces I conclude with a chapter focusing on the significance of naming those spaces.

The main body of the dissertation opens with an exposition of the theoretical background supporting this thesis. I refer to the spatial theories that inform my work and then I move on to provide a brief history of the campus space giving special mention to college architecture and the collegiate ideal in order to highlight the spatial considerations in the study of the campus in America. Next comes an overview of the American Campus Novel. I trace its history and then proceed to present some of the campus novel subgenres. The purpose of this chapter is twofold: on the one hand it is aimed to demonstrate the significance of the university—as a built symbol of higher education—in American history and culture and on the other hand to underline the relevance and importance of the campus novel as a genre in American literary production.

The first chapter of my dissertation titled “Spatial Porosity ‘Writes’ Spatial Stories on Campus: The Classroom and the Faculty Office in the Campus Novel” focuses on the space of the classroom and the faculty office on campus as depicted in the campus novel. Acknowledging the significance of the symbol of the classroom as a place of learning and the faculty office as a spatial reminder of hierarchies on campus space, I offer a close reading of the fictional representations of these spaces to demonstrate the fact that they are in fact permeable allowing an interaction with society, thus breaking with the concept of the Ivory Tower. Therefore, this section of my dissertation is dedicated to a thorough analysis of the classroom and the faculty office which I read closely as porous academic loci. In particular, I analyze the classroom boundaries in Zadie Smith’s *On Beauty* (2005) and the classroom space in Philip Roth’s *The Human Stain* (2000) and Francine Prose’s *Blue Angel* (2000). I also examine the faculty office in Donna Tartt’s *The Secret History* (1992), *Straight Man* (1997), *The Human Stain* and *Blue Angel*. I use the concept of Richard Sennett’s porosity in order to highlight the membranous quality of the campus spaces in these novels and exhibit how the campus is not adequately world tight but au contraire penetrable by politics and social forces outside of academia. Such forces cause a tidal wave of change on an ideological and social level and allow for a change in academic space too: political correctness, affirmative action, class elitism and the neoliberal dogma find their way in university space with dire consequences on both academic space and the people within this space.

The second chapter of the dissertation examines the space of the dormitories. The dormitory as a nodal site on campus has a long tradition in campus architecture and planning.

The creation of the dormitory changed the nature of higher education in America since it signified that the college experience was so much more than just attending classes; it underlined the lived experience of college and—at least until the first half of the twentieth century—accentuated the in “loco parentis” nature of the university. As analyzed more thoroughly in the chapter “The Porous Dormitory,” the campus novel capitalizes on the centrality of the dormitory in academic life as evidenced through the plethora of representations of dorm life in the novel. “The Porous Dormitory” explores the spatial dynamics of dormitories depicted in five contemporary campus novels in order to exhibit their porous nature. Philip Roth’s *Indignation* (2008), Teddy Wayne’s *Loner: A Novel* (2016), Jeffrey Eugenides’s *The Marriage Plot* (2012), *The Secret History* (1992) and *Blue Angel* (2000) all share descriptions of the campus dormitories as well as incidents that bear proof to the interaction of politics, social values and vices with academic space. From toxic masculinity and neoliberalism to extreme conservatism and influences from the Korean War to murder, the campus dormitory becomes a site that absorbs and in turn reflects social forces that invade it from the outside. In my reading of the novels, I employ the Sennettian porosity but also concepts elaborated by Bourdieu, Foucault, Simmel and Mulvey in order to provide a spatial analysis of the campus dormitory.

The third chapter of the dissertation is titled “Porous Social Spaces on Campus” and investigates spaces shared by students, faculty and administrative staff at all times of the day on campus. The chapter starts with an analysis of these spaces, namely the library, the quadrangle and the commons room / dining room. Each of these campus spaces share great architectural significance; the library is often called the heart of any institution of higher learning and also bears a symbolic significance as the place where students gain access to knowledge. The quadrangle and the commons room are places where students and faculty are given the opportunity to interact freely, to socialize, exchange ideas outside of the classroom and meet with people they would not come into contact under different circumstances. These social places on campus encourage the intersection of people coming from different paths in life outside of the campus space and it is essential to examine their representation in the campus novel. For this purpose, five novels are delved into in this part of the thesis: E.L. Doctorow’s *The Book of Daniel* (1971), Donna Tartt’s *The Secret History* (1992), Elizabeth Crook’s *Monday, Monday* (2014), Paul Auster’s *4 3 2 1* (2017) and Richard Russo’s *Straight Man* (1997). In all five campus novels, the campus social spaces are permeable with the disruptive forces of politics,

social revolution, performative protest and violence. In order to dissect the spatial permeability of the campus I use Sennett's ideas of openness and porosity, Ray Oldenburg's concept of what constitutes an operative third place and Judith Butler's analysis of the performative nature of protest in public space.

The fourth chapter of my work probes the politics of campus place-names. Titled "From Bimbo School to Harvard University: The Politics of Campus Space Toponymies" the final chapter of this dissertation investigates three campus novels and analyses their use of toponymy. The novels in question are Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (2005), Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000) and *Indignation* (2008). The name choices for spaces in the fictional campuses featuring in these novels are significant on many levels of interpretation and bear proof to the porosity of campus space in so far as these names connote, denote and serve as reminders of values and politics coming outside the academia.

This dissertation seeks to highlight a deeper connection between fictional space and geometrical space. Examined through the eyes of the architect, this connection is clear for Nikolaos-Ion Terzoglou who underlines: "Literature represents, or rather reveals, a hidden spatial dimension—aspects of 'lived space', the space of 'experience'—, which is different from the real, material or geometrical space in so far as it is distorted and altered through various intellectual eyeglasses." ("Architecture as Meaningful Space" 125). Within this conceptual framework, my dissertation investigates literary representations of space thus paving a bridge to connect two arts—literature and architecture—that already share a lot of common ground. "Fiction for architects" Terzoglou posits "functions as an operator for anchoring arguments on memory, texts, expressive symbolic forms, ideas, values and concepts. Every great architect moves into a universe of fiction". ("Ideal Types of Relation Between Literary Narrative and Architectural Space" 47). Nodding in agreement to the close relationship between narrativity and architecture, my dissertation contributes in the study of humanities by opening up new avenues of inquiry into the investigation of the campus novel as it shifts the manner in which we perceive and read literary representations of campus space. Thus, the present study lays the groundwork for further research into the campus novel through the lens of spatial porosity hoping to yield more findings from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives.

II Conceptual Framework and Background

Space

“The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space”

Michel Foucault- “Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias”

The quotation opening this chapter is part of Foucault’s uncannily prescient statement of half a century ago that famously marked the spatial turn in social sciences. An immediate repercussion of this spatial turn has been a marked interest in the role of space in sociopolitical and cultural processes as seen in the field of social studies, history and the humanities. It could be claimed that Foucault’s prophecy was a self-fulfilling one since his assertion that space had been neglected in critical studies was crucial in so far as it helped bring space to the fore as an analytical tool to dissect social relations. Foucault’s profound interest in human interaction with spatial organization inspired thinkers in a wide-ranging breadth of disciplines to focus on the spatial aspects of human activity.

Space is indeed an ontological category by which people relate to the world. We are directly influenced by conditions on space, we are contesting over space; we write and read about it. The proliferation of social theories on space is proof enough of the importance of space as well as of its complex nature. Especially since the second half of the twentieth century and the dawn of the twenty-first century, the concept of space has been examined by various thinkers and theorized through diverse ideological filters: from phenomenology to Marxism and from post-structuralism to post-modernism. Gaston Bachelard (1957), Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), Michel de Certeau (1984), Henri Lefebvre (1974), Saskia Sassen (1991), Edward Soja (1996), David Harvey (2001) and Juhani Pallasmaa (2005), to name but a few, are thinkers who re-discovered space and used it as an analytical and critical tool to demonstrate the interaction between space and social relations, binding embodiment, identity and materiality. In architectural history there has been—ever since the beginning of the twentieth century—an increasing interest in how space helps shape human experience and is in turn shaped by it. There are many different inquiries on the way the built

space influences humans and vice versa. This chapter will provide an overview of some of the most influential of these explorations and it will discuss how these inquiries on space seek to investigate how space influences human dynamics. More specifically, it will examine the porous nature of the university campus in relation to its human agents, which is the focal point of this dissertation.

The impact of the built, physical space on human embodied consciousness has been thoroughly examined by phenomenologist thinkers. In phenomenologist thought, the built space acquires great importance as it is the world, we find ourselves in that completes us in what we are. In other words, people are immersed in the world and this immersion is qualitative; a person experiences awe when they enter a church, delight when they enter a well-tended house and melancholy when they enter an abandoned house. The aim of the phenomenologist architect is, therefore, to become more aware about the specific qualities of the built environment and the human experiences these induce in the built space. The pioneering philosophy that established spatial thinking in contemporary thought was Martin Heidegger's *Building Dwelling Thinking* (1953). Heidegger's interpretation of dwelling emphasizes the importance of the built space, since it offers a certain embodied sense of the world, a specific way of taking up the body and the world⁴ (Jager 154-155). In this way, dwelling is more than a mere extension of existential space. It becomes rather "the fundamental human activity, in the light of which both place and space find their first clarification" (Jager 154). Influenced by Heidegger's phenomenology, Maurice Merleau-Ponty is concerned with how the human body is generative, productive of space and examines the process by which space structures human consciousness. In a now famous excerpt from his work "Eye and Mind," he argues that "I do not see [space] according to its exterior envelope; I live it from the inside; I am immersed in it. After all, the world is all around me, not in front of me" (178). By focusing his insights on the relationship between

⁴ In his essay "Building Dwelling Thinking" (1953), Heidegger used the image of a cabin in the Black Forest to describe both building and dwelling. Heidegger's evocation of the peasant cabin in the Black Forest serves as the exemplification of dwelling, a concept notorious for its lack of specificity. Heidegger was able to dwell in the hut in so far as he was able to connect with nature, and exhibit a kind concern for land, things, creatures, and people as they are and as they can become (Harries 149).

human body and space, Merleau-Ponty reformulates the question of how to understand space in how to be open to the experience of space.

Based on the phenomenological approach of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, Yi-Fu Tuan argues that space is not a single thing but a concept that can be approached as a multiplicity of perceptual constructions that are all intertwined with the human body and its environs. In *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977), Tuan explores diverse themes related to how our perceptions of space alter space and how in turn space creates “spatial values” and is associated with personal relations and the body. Tuan’s differentiation between the terms space and place is imbued with the phenomenological philosophy that informs his work since the distinction between space and place is made in the extent to which human beings have assigned meaning to a particular space thus rendering it into place.

Tuan contends that “[W]hen space feels thoroughly familiar to us, it has become place” (73). Analyzing this further, Tuan stresses that “Place can acquire deep meaning for the adult through the steady accretion of sentiment over the years. Every piece of heirloom furniture, or even a stain on the wall, tells a story” (33). Tuan’s reference to a stain that tells a story might remind readers of Philip Roth’s *The Human Stain* (2000) one of the novels which will be analyzed in this dissertation. In Roth’s novel the evocative stain in the title might take on a number of possible meanings, all of which tell a story or stories. This stain could tell the story of the Oval Office transgression between the then President Clinton and Monica Lewinski as well as the ensuing scandal. It could, also, tell the story of the tainting of an intellectually pristine place like the University campus with human interference and human passions. In Tuan’s wording we come to the understanding that the value of a place is derived from the intimacy of a specific human relationship and not in place in and of itself.

Giving emphasis on the lived experience of place, Tim Creswell argues that the most straightforward definition of “place” is that of “a meaningful location” (7). The word “meaningful” is here loaded with existential delight, even though not all theorists use the terms space and place in contradistinction with one another, but rather opt for an interchangeable use. Gaston Bachelard offers a “topoanalysis” of the “space we love” the home, in his book *The Poetics of Space*. In contradiction to Creswell, Bachelard uses the term space indistinguishable from place. Writing about home and human experience Bachelard contends that “A house that

has been experienced is not an inert box. Inhabited space transcends geometrical space” (210). His work is an ode to the home and to the “topography of our intimate being” (209). This is where Bachelard’s conception of “vital space” is useful, for it is a sheltering space, both imagined and concrete, which defines the subject’s existence and where thought, and daydreaming begin. “We should therefore have to say how we inhabit our vital space,” says Bachelard, “how we take root, day after day, in a ‘corner of the world’” (4). In Donna Tartt’s *The Secret History* (1992) Hamden campus is subjected to a Bachelardian topoanalysis through the eyes of Tartt’s young hero, Richard Pape. In this case, campus space is described through a haze as if Richard deems all the lights and then gives the reader an image of campus space where all corners have been dulled and all flaws have disappeared as he tries to take root in that corner of the world.

Where phenomenologists put emphasis on the intimate experience of the built place, post-structuralists focus on buildings as sites of deploying power. The concept of power for Foucault is not based on a straightforward duality of dominators and dominated. Instead, Foucault emphasized the instrumentality of the built space in the spread of regimes of power by analyzing the different manners in which specific building types both allow and deny certain practices. In this respect, the built space took on the role of an apparatus for the shaping of social ranks and roles. From a Foucauldian perspective the regimes of power become visible in the built space, and they articulate the social relations that are developed within the given built space (Archer 430). In his analysis of Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon, Foucault demonstrates the way in which power manifests itself and is essentially embodied in architectural spaces. The panopticon is described as:

at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. (“Discipline and Punish” 201)

In this detailed depiction of Bentham's panopticon, Foucault illustrates the way in which architecture can potentially take the place of an apparatus for both creating and sustaining power relations. The panopticon exemplifies how architectural tropes may engender a form of social control (Leach 120). In *The Human Stain* Silk Coleman receives a malevolent note alerting him to the fact that "Everybody knows you are exploiting an abused and illiterate woman half your age" (38). The wording of the poisonous letter "everybody knows" points to the fact that Athena College is a place that functions like a panopticon, everybody knows because everybody can see you, your actions do not go unnoticed and you should know that everybody knows that the socially deviant act you have perpetrated will not go unpunished. The panopticon is a recurrent image in the campus novels analyzed in this dissertation, either realistic like the architectural construction of the Tower in the midst of the University of Texas from where the tragedy unfolded in August 1966 in *Monday, Monday* (2014) or figurative like the panopticon feeling that Prose's protagonist Professor has when entering Angela Argo's dormitory room in *Blue Angel* (2000).

Another recurrent notion in the campus novels examined is that of the habitus. Pierre Bourdieu theorized on how the built space interacts with social beliefs and practices and how this interaction is maintained both on an individual and social level, which he named habitus. Habitus for Bourdieu is "society written into the body, into the biological individual" (Bourdieu "In Other Words" 63). More specifically, habitus is those cognitive structures that motivate each person into action, "not least regarding the relation between built space and the self" (Archer 431). The mutually sustainable relationship between habitus and built space is further evidenced in Bourdieu's inspiration in forming the notion of habitus. Bourdieu was inspired to develop the concept of the habitus by a book written by Erwin Panofsky. In the book, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, Panofsky analyzed how the elements of gothic architecture were isomorphic to the formation of knowledge and learning as it was inculcated in medieval times. In other words, Panofsky traced a correlation between gothic architectural tropes and the development of scholastic philosophy. Bourdieu, who translated Panofsky's book in French in 1967, wrote in the afterword that he was surprised at how Panofsky uses the Aristotelian notion of habitus in order to explain this correlation between the built space and thought (Holsinger 97). For Bourdieu the built space is a reference system according to which knowledge and human activity is produced. Built spaces "shape the dispositions constituting social identity" (Bourdieu, "The Logic of Practice" 71).

Bourdieu's approach gives architects a rich ground to work upon regarding how exactly architectural elements such as light, color, architectural style, enclosure or openness can influence and sustain different dimensions of human life such as identity, class, gender and status (Archer 431). A person's habitus, this set of dispositions that he / she can hold in common with other members of the same class, is enacted upon and limited by the built space that engrosses those dispositions. The habitus is inextricably linked to the built environment, yet none is predominant over the other. Considerations of the habitus can be clearly seen in *The Secret History* (1992) and in *Loner: a Novel* (2016) where the academic space of Ivy League colleges—fictional Hamden College and Harvard respectively—not only reflect social stratification but also shape the character of the heroes leading to choices and actions that are directly linked on the one hand with their habitus and on the other hand with their desired social identity.

The role of built space and social class has also been the focus of Marxist geographers like David Harvey. In *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1992) Harvey contends that spatial practices are intertwined with class considerations:

The grid of spatial practices can tell us nothing important by itself. To suppose so would be to accept the idea that there is some universal spatial language independent of social practices. Spatial practices derive their efficacy in social life only through the structure of social relations within which they come into play. Under the social relations of capitalism, for example, the spatial practices portrayed in the grid become imbued with class meanings. To put it this way is not, however, to argue that spatial practices are derivative of capitalism. They take on their meanings under specific social relations of class, gender, community, ethnicity, or race and get 'used up' or 'worked over' the course of social action. (223)

Harvey analyzed the urban fabric and saw space as a demarcation of social class but also as a site of resistance. However, the analysis of the built space "often has been among the weaker aspects of Marxist studies, in part because of the imperative to address broad-scale relations of class and capital" (Archer 431).

Standing out from such considerations, Henri Lefebvre explored the role of space in shaping society. Lefebvre argues that space is not an inert construction but rather a product of social relations (Archer 431). For Lefebvre "social space is not a thing among other things, nor a

product among other products: rather it subsumes things produced and encompasses their interrelationships, in their coexistence and simultaneity—their (relative) order and / or (relative) disorder” (73). To explain how exactly space is produced Lefebvre put forth his “conceptual triad”: a. spatial practice, b. the representation of space, c. representational space. Spatial practice (the perceived) “embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation” (33). The representation of space (the conceived) is “conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic sub-dividers and social engineers” whom “identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived” and is the “dominant space in any society (or mode of production).” Representational space (the lived) on the other hand is “space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’” (38-39).

In terms of place Lefebvre’s theory explicates that we are influenced by concrete structures (the built environment) that in some cases were there before we came into existence but that does not mean that our actions are entirely dependent on these structures. Related to Lefebvre but influenced by poststructuralist thought is Michel de Certeau whose conceptualization of space underlines issues of place, practices and power. His fundamental question in his work *The Practice of Everyday Life* is: “what popular procedures (also ‘miniscule’ and quotidian) manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them?” (XIV). To answer this question de Certeau introduces two terms in spatial discourse: strategy and tactic.

A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as *proper* and thus serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it. [...] I call a ‘tactic’, on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a ‘proper’ (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of the tactic belongs to the other. [...] A tactic insinuates itself to the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. (XIX)

The relation between strategy and tactic is directly linked to space; it is a spatial relation. Both strategies and tactics function on space “but what distinguishes them at the same time concerns the types of operations and the role of spaces: strategies are able to produce, tabulate,

and impose these spaces, when those operations take place, whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces” (291). De Certeau is particularly interested in the urban environment and on the way these strategies and tactics are played out in cities. In the city de Certeau sees the product of an “urban discourse.” In this space, which is produced by strategies, he sees the interplay of tactics:

but the city is left prey to contradictory movements that counterbalance and combine themselves outside the reach of panoptic power. [...] Beneath the discourses that ideologize the city, the ruses and combinations of powers that have no readable identity proliferate, without points where one can take hold of them, without rational transparency, they are impossible to administer. (95)

De Certeau takes on the Foucauldian ideas of disciplinary power and locates the potential for change not in space but in an array of practices within space.

Porosity

Porosity refers to those physical or organizational structures that are infinitely open to new initiatives or that are open for improvising in terms of space use. The term porosity in relation to architecture and city planning first appears in writing in Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis’s 1924 essay “Naples.” Inspired by the porous Neapolitan rock, Benjamin offers an analogy between the quality of the rock and the city’s architecture: “As porous as this stone is the architecture. Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades and stairways. In everything they preserve the scope to become a theater of new, unforeseen constellations. The stamp of the definitive is avoided. No situation appears intended forever, no figure asserts its ‘thus and not otherwise’.” (Benjamin 169). The concept of porosity is central in Benjamin and Lacis’s view of the city of Naples. They both agree that Naples is porous insofar as there are no rigid demarcations in space. They assert that the inexhaustible law of life in Naples is porosity and that porosity as a quality reappears everywhere (“Naples” 417). For Benjamin and Lacis, the Neapolitan house is an architectural case in point for porosity since it allows for a constant permeability between public and private: “just as the living room reappears on the street, with chairs, hearth and altar, so, only much more loudly, the street migrates into the living room”

(Benjamin 174). There is a two-way permeation in Benjamin's description: the movement is described as coming from inside to outside and from outside to inside. Benjamin goes on to compare and contrast the Nordic home to the Neapolitan home in order to make the difference in living perception more marked. The Nordic house is designed with more rigid demarcations while the Neapolitan house is characterized by porosity in design as it is characterized by porous living. He compares the stairs of the Nordic and Neapolitan house in order to indicate the discernible difference between the two: "The stairs, never entirely exposed, but still less enclosed in the gloomy box of the Nordic house, erupt fragmentarily from the buildings, make an angular turn, and disappear, only to burst out again" ("Naples" 417). Benjamin's choice of verb in German "hervorzusturzen" that is translated "burst out" is very significant insofar as it signifies energy, and it comes in stark contrast with the words "dumpfen" that is "gloomy" and "geschlossen" which means "enclosed" that characterize the Nordic house. This comparison proves that the porosity of the Neapolitan house is accompanied with energy and joie de vivre while the rigid demarcation of the Nordic house brings about stagnation and gloominess. What impresses Benjamin and Lacis in Naples is the lack of specific function in each room in the Neapolitan house. This lack of spatial specificity allows for a temporal vagueness too. They observe: "Sleeping and eating have no set time, often no place" ("Naples" 314). To control these bodily activities is akin to exercising absolute control over the body itself and by defining and specifying the time and space where these activities take place it is the architecture of the space that exercises control over the body of the person that makes use of these spaces. Therefore, the types of architecture that a people produces are influenced by the normative behavior of this people while, in turn, the architectural types that are established in a specific society support and strengthen this normative behavior. In Naples people's behavior is not fixed by the architecture around them thanks to the quality of porosity as Benjamin underlines. This is why there is also a marked temporal porosity in their everyday activities. As Benjamin and Lacis observe the everyday activities of Neapolitans lack compartmentalization, hence: "A grain of Sunday is hidden in each weekday. And how much weekday there is in this Sunday" ("Naples" 417). While Benjamin and Lacis praise the benefits of porosity in Naples, they do not omit to report the negative repercussions of porosity in the Neapolitan society. The porous quality of the Neapolitan milieu allows for plenty of openings and opportunities for the Camorra (Mafia) and the Catholic Church to intersect and interact, creating power networks that not only influence

one another but also exert influence on the lives of the citizens. To illustrate the power of Catholicism over the Neapolitans, Benjamin narrates the following incident:

Some years ago, a priest was drawn on a cart through the streets of Naples for indecent offences. He was followed by a crowd hurling maledictions. At a corner a wedding procession appeared. The priest stands up and makes the sign of a blessing, and the cart's pursuers fall on their knees. So absolutely, in this city, does Catholicism strive to reassert itself in every situation. Should it disappear from the face of the earth, its last foothold would perhaps not be Rome, but Naples. (167)

The borders separating these different power networks are porous hence they allow for interaction and mutual influence:

Confession alone, not the police, is a match for the self-administration of the criminal world, the camorra. So it does not occur to an injured party to call the police if he is anxious to seek redress. Through civic or clerical mediators, if not personally, he approaches a camorrista. Through him he agrees on a ransom. From Naples to Castellamare, the length of the proletarian suburbs, run the headquarters of the mainland camorra. For these criminals avoid quarters in which they would be at the disposal of the police. (167)

Therefore, the city's open-endedness can also be a hindrance to the legal functioning of the community allowing for negative elements to seep through the porous community borders and intermingle with other status elements thus creating power structures that influence the citizen. In a similar vein, in the campus novels analyzed in this work, the quality of porosity identified in the built space of the campus also has negative repercussions on the academic community. Regardless of their status as positive or negative, the effects of porosity on the academic community create, in turn, a network of power relations that have an immediate impact on those within the academic gates. Examples of negative elements seeping through the Ivory Tower can be demonstrated in *Loner* (2016) and in *Monday, Monday* (2014). In these campus novels, the negative elements of toxic masculinity, rape culture, mental illness and mass violence manage to seep through the porous walls of academia with deleterious results.

Porosity as a quality and as spatial notion has been examined by other thinkers apart from Benjamin who introduced it in his Naples essay but did not analyze it in his further work. As observed by Sophie Wolfrum, editor of the book *Porous City: From Metaphor to Urban Agenda* (2018) the term porosity “has since taken on a life and force of its own” (16). Wolfrum goes on to underline the frequency with which the term porosity is being used in urbanist discourse and enumerates the number of implications the term has acquired today:

Porosity invokes a panoply of interdependent connotations such as:

- interpenetration, superimposition, and multilayering of spaces
- integration, overlapping, and communication of spatial elements
- ambiguous zone, in between space, and threshold
- permeability, spaciousness, and ambiguity of borders
- coexistence, polyvalence, and sharing
- blurring, ambivalence, and even weakness
- provisional, incomplete, and even kaput
- openness of processes concerning coincidence, rhythm, and time
- the flaneur’s perspective and a performative approach to urban architecture (16)

These symbiotic implications of porosity are often encountered in the work of Georg Simmel, Henri Lefebvre and more recently Richard Sennett. Georg Simmel, whose work problematizes the creation of borders and boundaries in society, has observed that “the boundary is not a spatial fact with sociological consequences, but a sociological fact that forms itself spatially” (qtd in Frisby 142). In his work on boundaries and borders Simmel plays around the idea of spatial porosity when he identifies the quality of porosity in human beings. He observes: “the human being is the bordering creature who has no border” (Simmel 10). Hence, thanks to their inherent porosity humans are not only “bordering creatures” but also “connecting creatures” (Simmel 10) trying to create around them an environment that both separates what needs to be separated but also striving to create connectivity. In his 1909 essay “Bridge and Door” Simmel compares the role of the bridge and the door in the human built environment and he attempts to give it a social dimension. At the same time, through this essay Simmel’s preoccupation with borders and boundaries becomes more pronounced. The need of humans to connect can be seen in the symbol of the bridge, which defines the banks of the river as separate but not completely

apart since thanks to the bridge the act of crossing is a possibility. The door is a more complicated symbol since it symbolizes more than our need to border. Simmel emphasizes that the “enclosure of his or her domestic being by the door means...that they have separated out a piece from the uninterrupted unity of natural being” (10). At the same time, the door can be opened and closed at will so the person within the house, protected by the privacy given to them by the closed door can simply open the door in order to let others in or open it to step out themselves thus enjoying “the possibility at any moment of stepping out of this limitation into freedom” (10). Therefore, the door is a porous border that both separates and unites. In this respect, the door functions like a porous membrane that either allows or forbids entry to specific elements from the outside and vice versa.

The apposite analogy is given by Henri Lefebvre who in *The Production of Space* (1974) notes how and why porous membranes are created in the genesis of all biological organisms.

Very early on, in the phylogenesis as in the genesis of the individual organism, an indentation forms in the cellular mass. A cavity gradually takes shape, simple at first, then more complex, which is filled with fluids. [...] The cells adjacent to the cavity form a screen or membrane which serves as a boundary whose degree of permeability may vary. [...] A closure thus comes to separate within from without, so establishing the living being as a ‘distinct body.’ (175-176)

However, the closure that Lefebvre mentions is only a relative closure:

The membranes in question generally remain permeable, punctured by pores and orifices. Traffic back and forth, so far from stopping, tends to increase and become more differentiated, embracing both energy exchange (alimentation, respiration, excretion) and information exchange (the sensory apparatus). The whole history of life has been characterized by an incessant diversification and intensification of the interaction between inside and outside. (176)

Therefore, the notion of enclosures and borders in nature is relative as it is in social order:

A defining characteristic of (private) property, as of the position in space of a town, nation or nation state, is a closed frontier. This limiting case aside, however, we may say

that every spatial envelope implies a barrier between inside and out, but this barrier is always relative and, in the case of membranes, always permeable. (176)

In a built environment that consists of porous borders like the membrane-like borders described above, porosity becomes a habitation experience that characterizes urban living. Urban sociologist Richard Sennett uses the term porosity as well as the membrane analogy—which he analyzes further—to explain how the urban environment should be. In his essay “The Open City” (2006) Sennett juxtaposes the characteristics of the closed city, or a “closed system” and the open city, or “open system” and he expounds on the benefits of an open urban system.

The closed city is full of boundaries and walls; the open city possesses more borders and membranes. The closed city can be designed and operated top-down; it is a city which belongs to the masters. The open city is a bottom-up place; it belongs to the people. (14)

Although there is no definitive planning model for the ideal open city, Sennett supplies the reader with certain ingredients that are needed to achieve and maintain openness in the urban environment. One of these preconditions is the creation of porous edges (“ambiguous edges”) both demarcating and uniting parts of the city. Sennett takes the membrane analogy a step further by citing the significant work of geneticist Steven Gould who differentiated between two types of edges in nature: borders (porous membrane) and boundaries (cell wall).

The boundary is an edge where things end; the border is an edge where different groups interact. At borders, organisms become more inter-active, due to the meeting of different species or physical conditions; for instance, where the shoreline of a lake meets solid land is an active zone of exchange where organisms find and feed off other organisms. Not surprisingly, it is also at the borderline where the work of natural selection is the most intense. Whereas the boundary is a guarded territory, as established by prides of lions or packs of wolves. (8)

At a cellular level, Sennett explains extending the biological analogy, we encounter another natural edge condition: that of the cell wall and the cell membrane.

The cell wall retains as much as possible internally; it is analogous to a boundary. The cell membrane is more open, more like a border—but membranes reveal something important about what “open” means. The membrane does not function like an open door;

a cell membrane is both porous and resistant at the same time, holding in some valuable elements of the city, letting other valuable elements flow through the membrane. Think of the distinction between wall and membrane as a difference in degree: at the cellular level, conservation and resistance are part of the equation which produces openness. (8-9)

As much as Sennett praises the condition of openness, he laments the notion of a closed system. Sennett likens closeness with the death of a species:

In the scheme of evolution biology, closure occurs when a species proves incapable of adaptation to a new environment; dinosaurs, for instance, proved incapable of adapting in form to suddenly-changed conditions in temperature and light; so far as is currently understood, their respiratory and circulatory systems were too rigidly fixed to adapt. (*Blackwell City Reader* 263)

For Sennett to adopt an architecturally closed system is akin to the death of an urban environment, so it must be avoided by city planners and architects at all costs. Porosity, on the other hand, establishes the right conditions for the creation of an open urban system that is healthy and ensures the longevity of the city. To elucidate this, he brings the example of the medieval walls that although appeared to be perpetuating the closed system model of the city, they were in fact porous:

inside Avignon's walls there grew up by the sixteenth century uncontrolled, unregulated housing; outside, informal markets selling black-market or untaxed goods nestled against the stones; foreign exiles and other misfits gravitated toward the walls, far from the controls of the center. Though they certainly don't appear to, such walls functioned more like cell membranes, both porous and resistant. (Sennett, *Craftsman* 228)

The porous condition of the walls bears proof to the fact that even though the walls were originally built to shield the city from the enemy, in social practice they functioned according to what the people needed at any given moment in history. As Lefebvre points out: "Because of its diversity, urban social life brings about the satisfaction of a wide range of human needs. Yet it also modifies and creates new needs, and people constantly struggle to reshape social space to reflect and to serve these new needs" (*The Urban Revolution* 68). This for Sennett translates into architectural and structural porosity. Expanding on Sennett's idea of porosity in urban space, I

examine the porous quality of campus space in the American campus novel. Before the investigation of the novels, however, a brief history of the American campus is offered as well as an analysis of the political implications of the campus space.

The American Campus

In his book *The History of American Colleges and their Libraries in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Bibliographical Essay* David Zubatsky explains that the American Institutions of Higher Education were “transplanted in America from England and transformed by the educational ideas and values of the colonial family, church and community” (2) and “emerged at the eighteenth century with distinctively American traits” (2). The first American colleges, following the example of their British equivalents did not so much focus on the acquisition of new knowledge but on the conservation of existing knowledge and the formation of moral character to the young men that attended college at the time (2). The mission of the first American colleges was to train the “special elites for community leadership in all fields of endeavor” (2). In this respect, the similarities between the English and Scottish universities with their American brethren stop in the Gothic architectural tropes adopted by the latter; in fact, the American University moves away from strict Oxbridgean models and is unique in its pastoral conception. As the respective study shows, the first American universities did not take after the monastic example of their English counterparts but put an emphasis on the rural, idyllic aspect of the campus-as it has been mentioned above the American campus focused on the pastoral ideal that dictated that life away from the urban centers was a step towards a restoration of the harmony between man and nature. A perfect example of this pastoral campus is the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, founded by Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson⁵⁵, who had begun formulating the Campus design long before the Virginia State Legislature approved of his plans, envisioned a design that moved away from constructing a single, monumental building. Instead, he had

⁵⁵ One of America’s founding fathers and its third President (1801-1809), Jefferson also designed Monticello and the Virginia State Capitol that became models of the idea of employing neoclassical architecture for public buildings. Architectural historian Fiske Kimball called Jefferson “the father of our national architecture”.

proposed smaller, separate buildings that would accommodate both housing and teaching. More specifically, he opted for a teaching hall on the ground level and Professors' housing above it. All these buildings would be organized around a grass quadrangle and would be connected with student housing. This was the initial plan of what Jefferson termed the "academical village"⁶. The values inherent in the design of the Jeffersonian academical village would imbue the design of the typical American campus constructed in the late nineteenth century.

Stressing the unique nature of the American campus and its qualitative difference to the English campus, Paul Venable Turner, writer of the 1984 book *Campus: an American Planning Tradition*, describes the all-American campus as one full of green spaces and the impression of openness (3). As mentioned above, openness is a characteristic lacking from the English University where the quadrangles are enclosed and the different colleges that belong to the main university look like clusters of walled in monasteries. Turner explains that the first American colleges "rejected the inward-turning enclosed quadrangle of English colleges and turned to the world around them" (38) therefore endeavoring to express the more open, democratic and extroverted American culture and educational values. Although, American Universities opted out of the monastic seclusion displayed by their English counterparts in terms of architectural layout, they still emulated their pastoral isolation in terms of location. Oxford and Cambridge were situated far from the cosmopolitan bustle of London. Similarly, American campuses were situated away from urban centers. In fact, the campus location constitutes "a message about how the founding goals of the institution were wedded to an idea about the nature of place" (Chapman xxiii). In the minds of university officials of the time the pastoral location of these campuses shielded their students from urban distractions and at the same time strengthened their sense of forming an intellectual community. That period was influenced by Transcendentalism, a 19th century movement that viewed the city as an alienating force, corrupting the individual. For the Transcendentalists this spiritual alienation could be countered with a return to nature as nature to them was the pure source of intellectual renewal. Transcendentalism in architecture meant a

⁶"Thomas Jefferson's Plan for the University of Virginia: Lessons from the Lawn (Teaching with Historic Places) (U.S. National Park Service)." *National Parks Service*, www.nps.gov/articles/thomas-jefferson-s-plan-for-the-university-of-virginia-lessons-from-the-lawn-teaching-with-historic-places.htm. Accessed 26 Nov. 2016.

return to past architectural tropes such as the gothic and the byzantine combined with an emphasis on gardens, landscaping and public parks (Barlow 55). This pastoral ideal is reflected in the park-like campuses of that era which has withstood the test of time and still remains one of the pillars of campus planning and architecture.

Nevertheless, Jefferson's lasting metaphor of the academical village extends to more than just pastoralism. The American University Campus is not only a village in terms of its countryside location and planning with "separate buildings set in open green space" (Turner 4) but also because it "summarizes a basic trait of American higher education from the colonial period to the twentieth century: the conception of colleges and universities as communities in themselves—in effect, as cities in microcosm" (3). In reality, the first colleges placed great emphasis on "the residential pattern of life for students" (2) and this pursuit is deeply inscribed in the architectural layout of the first American colleges. Dormitories, common rooms for studying, dining and congregating marked the communal nature of the first colleges. Therefore, the planning and building of a university campus was not only "the design of individual buildings but of a whole community" (3).

That is the reason why, as Turner again stresses, the design of the American college became "an experiment in urbanism" (4). By "an experiment in urbanism" Turner, in essence, meant that the planning and architecture of the American college experimented in form so as to imitate an ideal community. College builders attempted to manipulate "the environment in which human nature was shaped" (Howe 158) in order to produce a collegiate republic, a community that would both embrace the pastoral ideal through its ideological positioning between wilderness and civilization and form a virtuous city in microcosm. In the mid-1800s college builders who perceived the male dominated gathering places of the city—taverns, post-offices and even the public streets—as full of corruption and disorder (Sumner 84) strove to:

inculcate their own ideals into their communities and regions, thereby reminding inhabitants of the necessity of classical virtue. They hoped to offer their world as a blueprint for how the wider world should look, demonstrating to their fellow Americans an odd, yet fascinating model of virtue in action. As they moved around their communities, on and off campus, college families were determined to show how classical

virtue could be made to fit easily into American society. It all depended on the design.
(84)

The design blueprint of these early colleges was dictated by the set of ideals and values found “within the mental toolboxes” of college builders (Sumner 85). College buildings were built in symmetry and order—both values that visitors to these early colleges expected to find inscribed on college campuses. Visiting these academical villages was a popular pastime for republican travelers who were quick to observe irregularities and disorder in the towns surrounding the campuses but were deeply impressed by the regulated order of college structure in the campuses (Sumner 86). These symmetric, orderly spaces represented the collegiate ideal of intellectual communities that stood as paradigms of virtuous cities in microcosm.

Following this urban analogy, it is fitting to cite urban historian Spiro Kostof, who in his 1991 work *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings through History*, explains how the campus planning tradition in America contributes to the discourse of the “city as diagram” (199).

Left to its own devices, human nature is resistant to regimentation, while it may crave for order. What price liberty. It is of course a question all non-centralized political systems must address daily, and fight for daily, in the making of their cities. Such systems function between extremes of total control and total laissez faire... Our daily urban diagrams are created, in fact, by zoning, economic pressures and the like. The question is whether ‘we’ the citizens decide the nature and finality of the diagram, or whether we let ‘authorities’ decide them for us. (207)

For Kostof diagram cities are created to embody a certain religious, social or political ideal, similar to campuses that are built to embody and propagate the collegiate ideal. The physical construction of these diagram cities is imbued by the cosmology of its urban planners, like the physical construction of the campus is informed by the ideology of its architects. The diagrammatic city—as Kostof defines it—is the will of a sole actor to create a specific form of urbanity regardless of social context. Campuses were created to uphold the collegiate ideal and the mission of their founders and planners along these diagrammatic cities. Kostof’s diagrammatic cities, though, often move away from the original ideals that prompted them to life in the first place. The inhabitants of these cities practice the city differently; they bring cultural diversity, they live their lives as they wish and they inscribe different patterns on the urban

landscape that in most cases are opposite to the cultural patterns and ideals of the founders of cities (200). The university campus evolves along similar lines with these diagrammatic cities often breaking away from the original mission and collegiate ideal that brought them to life.

The communities formed on campus adhere to a different value system compared to the one that informed the inception of the college. Some American colleges were built with a specific educational mission and then, adapting to social change, moved away from this mission. Colleges that started as small community colleges evolved into sprawling institutions; men's colleges developed in coeducational institutions while certain Ivy League colleges incorporated financial aid programs that included students from all classes. Any kind of change in the original "mission" of the college is often reflected in the architectural design of the campus. The idiosyncrasies of the space of the American campus and the remarkable interdependency of space and people within it has made the American campus popular in fiction. Before going through a genealogy of the American campus novel as a genre it is imperative to briefly state the main factors affecting its growth historically.

The campus novel flourished mainly in the aftermath of WWII. The genre's development is analogous to the unprecedented expansion of campuses in America after the Second World War. In his 2006 book *American Places: In Search of the Twenty-first Century Campus*, Perry Chapman cites four "momentous forces" (31) for the expansion of colleges in America after WWII. These are: the GI Bill of Rights, the "Sputnik effect" on national science policy, the baby boom generation reaching college age, and the forging of a national idea on the postwar role of education (31). The GI Bill of Rights was enacted in 1944 providing federal tuition funds to veterans of World War II and later to veterans of the Korean Conflict. In the four years between 1945 and 1949 more than 2.2 million GIs enrolled in Colleges across the U.S. (Freeland 74). The change this flood of GIs brought to the educational landscape was more than quantitative; it was also a qualitative one. The absorption of these GIs by colleges shattered the traditional image of the University student. "Mature, toughened by the experience of the war and intent on building a new peacetime life, they brought a pragmatic sense of purpose to their quest for a college education [...] They injected American Higher Education with an egalitarian flavor not felt since

the rise of public universities after the Morrill Act⁷ (Chapman 32). Another factor that altered American higher education was the Sputnik effect. As Chapman very eloquently puts it: “the steady beep emanating from Sputnik alerted the United States that they had fallen dangerously behind in the cold race for scientific and technological supremacy” (32). Therefore, competition with the then U.S.S.R. saturated every aspect of American life, including education. President Roosevelt called MIT scientist Vannevar Bush to draft ideas for federal support of university science that would give America not only a cold-war weapon but also a series of long-term benefits for postwar America (Chapman 33). Bush drafted a report titled: *Science, the Endless Frontier* (1945) that recommended the formation of a partnership between the Government and American Universities that would eventually form the National Science Foundation (Chapman 33). By 1960 the government had increased its investment in research and facility loans for universities to \$1.5 billion annually, a sum that is 100 times over the increase of the two previous decades (Kerr 1062). After the development of the university’s scientific infrastructure that brought about a ballooning of U.S. campuses, another factor aided in the sprawling expansion of the American Campus. It was the injection of the Baby Boom generation into colleges. “The offspring of the GI generation, born between 1946 and 1964, added a prodigious 78 million souls to the U.S. population. [...] They redefined collegiate life, numbers and attitudes” (Chapman 33-34). The number of higher institutions in America expanded immensely. Chapman cites the cases of the University of Virginia that grew from 5,000 to 17,000 students, the Missouri University “blossomed from a single campus in Columbia to four campuses across the state” (34), and a score of small public colleges that flourished into state universities. Finally, the development and blossoming of colleges in America can be attributed to the unprecedented socioeconomic buoyancy of the country that in turn brought about a redefining of the purpose of education in the United States. In the late forties it was mainly two commissions that stood out concerning the purposes of higher education and whom it should be serving (Chapman 35). It was the President’s Commission on Higher Education (known as the Zook commission from the name of its chairman George Zook) and the Commission on Financing Higher Education funded by the

⁷ The Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act (1862) was the final law Lincoln signed “putting the federal government in charge of the development of public colleges and universities” (Loss A17).

Rockefeller Foundation and the Association of American Universities (Chapman 35). In a summation of the two commissions' positions Richard Freeland observes:

At the heart of the differences between the two reports were divergent views about the implications of "democratic" values of higher education. For the Rockefeller group, there was no conflict between democracy and elitism. Admission procedures must be fair and accessible, but they could also be highly selective. The Zook commission was less ready to accept a system that limited its advantages to the few. In its view, democracy implied not only fairness of treatment but also equality of status for a wide range of abilities and fields. (77)

Even though there was no federal legislation enacted as a response to the two commissions' recommendations, the "discourse was fruitful in defining the benchmark ideas that would guide an extraordinary era of change in American Higher Education" (Chapman 36). In the decade of the sixties, campus enrollment went from 3.6 million to 7.9 million, the number of campuses increased by a third and the average college size tripled (Freeland 88). Evidently, the value of higher education had taken hold in America. Freeland stresses that "For most of the period, the dominant view—inside and outside of higher education—was that expansion was improving the academe as well as the country, but the turmoil of the late 1960s raised fundamental doubts about the character of postwar change" (70).

This deluge of forces altered American campuses drastically and this change and growth is evidenced in the campus novel. The campus novel production is greater after the Second World War while alongside it can be witnessed a change in scope too: the American campus novel after WWII does not focus on the prankster type—as it will be analyzed in the next section—of undergraduate life on campus that stands oblivious to social change but on the contrary touches upon social aspects of higher education too. Moreover, a spatial analysis of the campus novel offers insights to the power structure at work in the American campus as well as its porous quality.

The enclosed campus space makes power structures more pronounced and more apparent than in society at large and this is what makes campus space a very idiosyncratic place. The hierarchies that inform the Campus are evidently played upon the built and non-built space of the University itself. Space in the university is what it is as a result of the decisions and actions of

the people who designed it, the people who use it on a daily basis, its administrative and custodial staff. Overall, the space of a university helps determine what the university really is. As Hillier and Hanson claim in their work, “the ordering of space in buildings is really about the ordering of relations between people” (2). Lefebvre suggests that space “serves as a tool of thought and of action...it is also a means of control...of power; yet...it escapes in part from those who would make use of it” (26). Particularly university space is a special kind of place permeated by a complex set of ideologies and values that inevitably affect, influence, even *contaminate* human behavior within its realms.

The notion that university buildings have a *message-sending* function has been widely supported in literature. Brian Edwards in his book *University Architecture* (2000) suggests that we can perceive “the exacting agendas of intellectual inquiry, of scientific experiment, and refined taste [...] in the design of many university buildings” (150). Following a similar line of thought Chapman (2006) claims that “the institutional story is told through the campus [...] The campus is an unalloyed account of what the institution is all about” (xxiii). Chapman goes on to explain how the character of the architecture and the landscape depict in the most “uncanny accuracy” (xxiv) the values the university fosters:

The architectural narrative of an elite residential college is likely to be one of the intimately scaled and lovingly preserved buildings in a gracious landscape setting; for a flagship public university, architecture and place have been transmuted several times over to express the successive economic and social priorities of its public constituencies.
(xxiv)

Nevertheless, other writers feel that the claim that epistemologies or narratives are embedded in buildings is in need of qualification. For example Gabrielsen and Saugstad note that “it is not obvious...[how the] values that are related to the non-physical qualities of the institution are exchanged into the building” (2007). What is important to stress is that a campus is not designed to tell *a* specific story—although its designers probably had something in mind while planning the campus—but to tell *stories*. Therefore, the claim that iconic university buildings “are cultural currency...charged with allegorical significance and perceptual connotations and meaning” (Dober 5) tells half the story, since in reality each person related to the campus in one way or another—professors, custodial staff, the student body or even

visitors—“will set their own exchange rate for this currency. Even so, the psychological charge of the building may become intertwined with its architecture, to such an extent that they cannot be separated” (Temple 2)

The Role of Campus Architecture

“Through architecture and its allied arts we have the power to bend men and sway them as few have who depended on the spoken word. It is for us, as part of our duty as our highest privilege to act . . . for spreading what is true.” Ralph Adams Cram American architect and author of *Gothic Quest*, Ralph Adams Cram endorsed and promoted the Gothic Revival style in the American Architectural scene at the dawn of the 20th century. Cram’s view of the influence gothic architecture exercised on educational settings was complemented by his antithesis towards modernism. Cram disagreed completely with the modernist premise that the only valuable ideas were new ideas and therefore, the gothic style was out of place in the modern world. On the contrary, in his view the gothic was the most relevant architectural style for certain buildings. Although a gothic skyscraper would be irrelevant in modern times, or as he put it, it would be nothing but a “clumsy fad” (Shand-Tucci 53), he nevertheless was a fervent supporter of the collegiate gothic in what he deemed more fitting settings. For Cram, institutions such as the Church and the College, which retained their ties to the Middle Ages, had to be expressed through gothic (Shand-Tucci 53-58). This mentality is clearly manifested in Cram’s gothic Revival buildings in Princeton during his office as the University’s first Consulting Architect (1907-1929). As Cram’s words in the above quotation emphasize the built space is important not only because it creates power structures but mostly because it reproduces them. Thanks to Cram, the gothic style became the most prominent university architectural design in twentieth century America. As mentioned above however, architectural style is not neutral, but affects, consolidates and reproduces the power structure endorsed by the educational institution. It is for this reason that it is important to examine the adoption of the collegiate gothic architectural style in the building of American campuses.

Indeed, architecture was one way to unite American Colleges under a common cause as well as connect them to the mission and substance of the great Anglo-Saxon tradition of educational institutions. The architectural style that was widely employed in the first university

campuses in America was a style termed “collegiate gothic.” More specifically, the collegiate gothic is a style of architecture which was zealously adopted by American Universities in the late 19th and early 20th century. Alexander Jackson Davis was perhaps the first American architect to use the term “collegiate gothic” by which he seems to have meant the late medieval styles found at the English universities (Turner 124). This style fervently mimicked the architecture of Oxford and Cambridge as models for university life. Around the late nineteenth century, a combination of forces shaped the Gothic pastiche that is today recognizable as “college” even to people from other cultures that have never set foot on a traditional American Campus. The American campus, although imitating the Gothic style of its British counterparts, was truly unique. The British university—true to its monastic roots—was cloistered, organized around an enclosed quadrangle that emphasized the campus’s insularity from the secular world, whereas the American campus diverged in its use of space opting for an open green quadrangle and rows of freestanding buildings (Turner 23-31). In adopting the collegiate Gothic, the American campus became a unique American place that represented a union of Puritan ideals and Oxbridgean values.

But how did the Collegiate Gothic come into existence? American universities in the late 1800s wished to emulate the Oxbridgian architectural ideal of a University Campus: impressive gothic buildings built in an open-ended ring around a quadrangle. The problem was that American colleges in the nineteenth century were not as affluent as their British brethren since administratively they were not connected to a university. Lack of funding for nineteenth century American universities, in essence, meant that for their growth they relied solely on private donations and the donors often had the right to choose an architect. The practice of allowing the donor to make architectural decisions led to a non-descript architectural style. This architectural pastiche gradually gave way to a more direct imitation of Oxford and Cambridge and that was the collegiate gothic. In her interview to Robert Meyer, author of the article “How Gothic Architecture took over the American Campus”, Johanna Seasonwein—a fellow at Princeton University Art Museum—stressed that: “What Gothic meant changed depending on the time. When Victorians⁸ emulated Gothic, they did it sloppily, mixing styles and idioms. Something

⁸ Seasonwein here refers to the Gothic Revival movement that was a major trend in architecture between 1840 and 1870. This style of architecture is also referred to as Victorian Gothic, Neo-Gothic, Jigsaw or Carpenter Gothic. Gothic Revival borrows elements from the

Islamic, something Byzantine might get thrown in there.” (6). However, the collegiate gothic had a more specific form since it drew inspiration immediately from the medieval style found in Oxford and Cambridge and adapted it to the campus design of their American counterparts hoping to project an image of age, learning and respectability (Turner 124). In most cases, architectural homogeneity was damaged as buildings of different architectural idioms were not demolished to accommodate the collegiate gothic style buildings but instead stood there alongside the collegiate gothic. A case in point is Cram’s experience in Princeton, where, as the University’s Consulting Architect (1907-1929) he proposed to demolish a number of buildings on campus before embarking on his plan to create Oxbridgean quadrangles in Princeton. One of the buildings that Cram found particularly offensive was the Victorian Era Marquand Chapel whose mash-up architectural style he detested (*Princeton University Art Museum* “Princeton and the Gothic Revival: 1870-1930), however his wish was never granted as the Chapel was never demolished. Cram disapproved of the Victorian Gothic and its assorted idioms in architecture accusing them of merely being “archaeological” and “fraudulent” as they just copied the gothic without contributing to architecture with a new approach to the gothic as he would aim to (Shand-Tucci 49). Cram wished to take up the Gothic tradition as it was in England before the 16th century when it was interrupted by the Protestant Reformation. He strongly held that the gothic still had force and promise in the 19th century and that there was potential in it as long as the gothic was not limited to “archeology” (49). Cram promoted a different kind of gothic. He clamored for a new approach to the gothic tradition that would articulate modern necessities (49). However, before Cram’s collegiate gothic took on a more homogenous form the majority of American colleges had adopted an assortment of architectural idioms as a result of the lack of funding from a federal government. In more detail, the lack of government funding for colleges in America made university administrators turn to donors for campus development. These donors donated money to develop college buildings but that meant they also had the final word for the choice of architect and architectural style. This resulted in a patchwork of architectural styles.

Historian David Whisnant remarks that visitors of Princeton are often informed “with a mixture of amusement and embarrassment, that from a certain spot on campus one can see a

original 16th century gothic style: scalloping, lancet windows, decorative features, hood moldings and finials.

dozen or so architectural styles” (545). In the University’s webpage virtual visitors are informed that: “Renowned for its park-like beauty, Princeton's open campus features extraordinary architecture. The buildings by distinguished architects span more than four centuries and include a variety of styles, including colonial, Collegiate Gothic, Italianate, Romanesque and modern”⁹. The nature of architecture transmits the narrative of the campus and reveals to the visitor what its circumstances have been over time.

However, as Whisnant stresses, something more radical than “a change in architectural idiom is needed to eliminate the spatial deficiencies of the university” (545). He therefore calls for “a better understanding of the behavioral implications of spatial organization and hence a different philosophy of University space” (545). Whisnant believes that campuses are designed with a particular agenda in mind and that we can no longer afford to assume that campus spaces are “neutral receptors of any kind of activity we wish to put in them” (545). Whisnant’s attitude toward university space reflects that of Ralph Adams Cram. Little did Cram know in the beginning of the 20th century that what he described as the power of architecture to “bend men and sway them” would, throughout the next century, create such a tangled web of ideologies and diverse lived experiences.

The Campus Novel

The *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*¹⁰ defines the campus novel as “a novel which has a university campus as its setting. The greatest number of campus novels has been written by those who were or are academics” (107). The word campus carries a whole set of expectations. As Turner stresses more than any other term the word campus “sums up the unique physical character of the American College and University” (4). In reality, the word campus not only encapsulates the distinctive physical qualities of the American University but also “its integrity as a self-contained community and its architectural expression of educational and social

⁹ “Buildings & Architects.” *Princeton University*, The Trustees of Princeton University, www.princeton.edu/main/about/facts/buildings/.

¹⁰ ed. J. A. Cuddon

ideals” (Turner 4). The campus novel seeks to offer people a privileged perspective of this multifaceted space either in order to satirize it or discredit it or simply use it as a familiar setting to a plot. In all cases, however, the campus plays a significant role in the ways it affects the characters or is affected by them. Jay Parini, a University Professor himself claims that:

Colleges make delicious targets, and readers seem to want books that make fun of academic rituals and pomposities. Today's readers were once students themselves, and they still wonder what went on behind closed office doors and in the homes of their professors. Their deep suspicions of academic life, fueled by the press, are further fanned by the general anti-intellectualism that has always run rampant on our shores. (4)

Parini sides with the scores of other literary critics that tend to categorize the campus novel as a satire of academic mores and nothing deeper than that. Nevertheless, I contend that the Campus novel has been grossly underrepresented in the critical field and that it deserves more examination than is actually allotted to it. In fact, through the literary representation of the American campus and its interaction with the characters of the novel we can see how the Campus is not an Ivory Tower that through gothic architectural tropes propagates a specific, unchanging set of values but rather a space that is continuously evolving by engaging in dialogue with the characters and by emphasizing its porous spatial quality that brings about openness to society. In addition, I contend that in the postmodern era the campus novel serves as a blueprint of society. As the ideology of education changes in our neoliberal global era, so does the American campus novel.

Campus novels abide in a wide range of typified professors and students—the absent-minded professor, the philandering professor, the minion professor, the un-tenured professor, the idiosyncratic genius professor and on the other side of the power grid we get the gifted prodigy, the lazy student, the fratboy and sorority chick, the nymph, the brat, the wide-eyed novice the rebel-without-a-cause student and the party-animal. This diverse student body and faculty are called to co-exist in a specific campus space; the campus novel lays bare the interdependency between campus space and human action. The built space creates needs, expectations, marks relationships, influences decisions and in turn is altered by subversive use, it is loitered,

destroyed, torn down and replaced. The representation of the campus in the campus novel makes these connections and influences explicit.

As stated above, literary critics, though, have overlooked this side of the campus novel and instead have been treating it lightly. English professor John O. Lyons who wrote *The College Novel in America* in 1962 treats the genre of the campus novel rather negatively in terms of literary aesthetics and value. As early on as the first paragraph of his introduction to his work he explains to his readers that: “A study of the novel of academic life in America must inevitably be concerned more with the history of the novel as a literary form and social document than with genius” (xiii). He goes on to call campus novels “sleepers” and assert that many of the worst campus novels are interesting only in terms of the “particular axe the writer has to grind, or simply because of their abysmal ineptness” (xiii).

Putting aside aesthetic values and assessments, one cannot but notice the explosion in the production of the genre in recent years. Such a proliferation can be attributed to the radical cultural changes taking place in post-war America. The American youth have become consumers, a profession nowadays means a lot more than in the past thus knowledge is considered a cultural asset and is changing rapidly because of technological advancement. All these factors have brought about a commercialization of education. Campuses are sold as consumer products. Since they are commodified, they not only have to disseminate knowledge, but they must also please aesthetically. These changes are reflected in the explosive use of campus heterotopias which exist like mirrors, or counter-sites to society. Borrowing from Foucault, I contend that campuses are heterotopias, that is:

places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. (Foucault, *Of Other Spaces*)

The campus novel attests to the significance of campuses in contemporary society. It is a treasure trove of themes and social issues. The reviews of Philip Roth's *Indignation* (2008), *The Human Stain* (2000), Saul Bellow's *Ravelstein* (2000) and Francine Prose's *Blue Angel* (2000)

have been largely enthusiastic.” (Parini, “The Fictional Campus” 1). The success and popularity of campus novels lies perhaps as Parini concludes, in the fact that writers have found in college campus “a compact and controlled universe, ideal for satire and serious explorations of the human condition” (3). The genre of the campus novel is the ideal vehicle to depict, reflect, represent, copy, record but at the same time to distort the place of the campus in contemporary American society.

A History of the Campus Novel

A comprehensive history of all the campus novels in American literature confirms the plethora and wealth characteristic of the genre. John O. Lyons’ *The College Novel in America* (1962) as well as John E. Kramer’s similarly titled book *The American College Novel* (1981)—reprinted in 2004—offer a survey of campus novels written from the nineteenth century to modern times. Both authors record Hawthorne’s *Fanshaw* (1828) as the first American College Novel. It was published twenty-one years after Bowdoin College-Hawthorne’s Alma Matter-graduated its first class. Reportedly, Hawthorne “thought so little of it that he later tried to have the copies suppressed” (Lyons 17). The roster goes on to include numerous Ivy-League inspired campus novels-dating between the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century-and finally lists Mary Mc Carthy *The Groves of Academe* (1952), Randall Jarell *Pictures from an Institution* (1954), Stringfellow Barr *Purely Academic* (1958), Bernard Malamud *A New Life* (1961) and their immediate successors counting 648 campus novels until the year 2002 according to Kramer’s 2004 annotated bibliography. The academic novel offers such a variety in the plots that it is possible to categorize it in terms of themes too, hence Kramer wrote an annotated bibliography on *College Mystery Novels* published in 2000.

The annotated bibliographies on the campus novel make it possible to draw certain conclusions from the long line of academic fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Lyons explains that the earliest novels about American college life were written in an atmosphere of boyish horsing around and he observes that the novel of Academic life begins at Harvard due to the uniqueness of this Ivy League university. In fact, he cites a long list of Harvard inspired novels: William Washburn’s *Fair Harvard* (1869), Frederick Loring’s *Two College Friends* (1871), George Tripp’s *Student-life at Harvard* (1876), Mark Severance’s

Hammersmith: His Harvard Days (1878). These works, observes Lyons, are “uniformly episodic accounts of pranks, athletic events, and tavern bouts, ending with the young men getting the right girls. Each was published shortly after the authors’ graduation, and often by a vanity press” (8). According to Lyons, the first work of fiction worth “the idle reader’s time is *Harvard Episodes* by Charles Macomb Flandrau (1897), a member of the class of 1895” (7). Flandrau’s conclusion is that “Harvard offers a taste from the American melting pot and in this lies its strength” (8). Nevertheless, in Pire Watkin Mc Carthy’s *The Chance*, Harvard is questioned in terms of its democratic status, so the evidence given by Flandrau of the silver spoon Harvardians is hardly the same with the evidence in *The Chance*.

Flandrau publishes yet another novel campus—*The Diary of a Harvard Freshman* (1900)—that is mostly a “wide eyed mockery of campus types and academic dalliance” yet the hero conforms to his Harvardian role so that at the end of the academic year he is all sentiment as he joins a torchlight parade as one of the first ten chosen for the Dicky club. In 1903 Owen Wister’s *Philosophy Four* is published for which Theodore Roosevelt wrote to Wister in 1916: “you may think it a skit. I regard it as containing a deep and subtle moral” (14). After Flandrau and Wister, three novels dominate the genre of the campus novel in terms of popularity, influence and the scandal they created. It is Owen Johnson’s *Stover at Yale* (1912), Fitzgerald’s *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and Percy Marks’s *The Plastic Age* (1924). These novels are also remarkable in so far as they mark a new era for the campus novels. Up to then, the college novels “describe undergraduate disillusionment of simple maturation, but never awakening” (Lyons 57), however these novels describe an intellectual awakening of the characters. Amory Blaine in *This Side of Paradise* and Carver in *The Plastic Age* experience a true awakening in the University, while Stover witnesses a great maturation. What is interesting to note though, is that this awakening does not take place in the traditional space of learning, the classroom, but in the dormitories where both Amory and Carver are reported reading avidly. This is evidence that other spaces than the familiar classroom are becoming crucial on campus through porosity: there is a marked spillover of space into space allowing for a dissipation of spatial mono-functionality.

Novels such as *The Plastic Age* and *This Side of Paradise* demand to be examined separately as they mark a different path insofar as the different assumptions and feelings of the characters concerning their Alma Mater are consistently inscribed onto the built space of the

college: the campus. In *The Plastic Age*, that takes place in the fictional men's college Sanford, Marks opens with a description of the conglomerate architecture which clutters the naturally beautiful campus: "Hugh Carver paused to admire the pseudo-gothic chapel. He felt a little thrill of pride as he stared in awe at the magnificent building. It had been willed to the college by an alumnus who had made millions selling rotten pork" (qtd. in Lyons 7). It should be noted, at this point, that already the style of the chapel is described as "pseudo-gothic," thus indicating the persistence of gothic architectural design within the campus but also the conflict between the elitist style versus the nouveaux-riches alumni who influence the architectural layout of the campus. In the same vein, Amory Blaine, the hero of *This Side of Paradise*, is taken to night strolls on campus and Fitzgerald through Amory extols the gothic architecture of the Campus and all that it inspires to the young freshman:

The tower that in view of his window sprang upward, grew into a spire, yearning higher until its uppermost tip was half visible against the morning skies, gave him the first sense of the transiency and the unimportance of the campus figures except as holders of the apostolic succession. He liked knowing that Gothic architecture, with his upward trend, was peculiarly appropriate to universities, and the idea became personal to him. The silent stretches of green, the quiet halls with an occasional late-burning scholastic light held his imagination in a strong grasp, and the chastity of the spire became a symbol of this perception. (54)

Amory is inspired by the gothic architecture of Princeton to partake in the academic community and excel intellectually. Later on he reveals scandalous stories of "petting" by "lounge lizards" and "baby vamps"—all sons and daughters of respectable families, as he becomes more and more disillusioned by the collegiate ideal. Amory is soon to find himself witnessing sin on campus, fraternity brawls and weekend orgies. These scandalous revelations on the part of the Princeton freshman make the previous description of the gothic campus seem at least ironic¹¹. Leaving the "roaring twenties" behind the next example of a character who vividly comments on the campus architecture comes from the mid-forties as the campus novel genre witnessed a hiatus

¹¹ Especially for Fitzgerald space seems to play a critical role. In *The Great Gatsby* (1925) he depicts East Egg, West Egg and the Valley of the Ashes in language that reflects the stratification of society and the differences in people's attitudes.

in its production mainly because of the Second World War that transposed so many young men from college to the trenches. J. D. Salinger himself was such a young man. He attended a writing course at Columbia University before serving in the Second World War and he took part in the Normandy invasion. His disillusionment in war and his native country is evident in his writings. In *The Catcher in the Rye* (1945) he voices his disillusionment with American culture through his teenage hero Holden. Salinger in *The Catcher in the Rye* makes a comment about the new dormitory where Holden Caulfield stayed which was named “Ossenburger Memorial Wing” after Ossenburger an alumnus who had “made a pot of dough [...] he started these undertaking parlors all over the country that you could get members of your family buried¹² for about five bucks apiece” (Salinger 14). One of the major themes informing *The Catcher in the Rye* is the discrepancy between authenticity and artificiality, therefore for Holden the naming of his prep-school dormitory after a “phoney” is an indication of the artificiality his school buildings stand for and by definition the whole educational system he wants to escape. It is interesting to note that campus space, its layout, its architecture and its uses is directly related to how the students experience the campus.

The Female Campus Novel

Despite the recent interest in feminist epistemology—proof of the great influence of the female scholar and researcher on the academia—the tradition of the female campus novel has been ignored. Shedding light on all-women’s colleges as well as on the female intellectual will in turn shed light on the past and future of the academe as a whole. In her book *How British Women Writers Transformed the Campus Novel* Ann McClellan insists it is imperative that we reclaim these women and their campus experiences in order to better understand “their conflicted relationships with gender roles, education, culture and writing” (15). The same holds true for

¹² The comment on Ossenburger becoming rich through a burial business could be a comment on the war. The next line from *The Catcher in the Rye* is even more indicative as Holden remarks that “he probably just shoves them in a sack and dumps them in the river” (14). The reference to dead bodies and how they are treated for someone else’s gain might be an anti-war comment on the part of Salinger.

women writers recording the educational experiences of women in American all-women colleges; their campus experience needs to be examined alongside that of their male counterparts.

In Lyon's annotated bibliography on the American Campus novel the female campus experience is not given enough credit. Lyons view is that "all of the novels about women's colleges, and especially those about Vassar, are not only violently critical but also bad" (63). Despite Lyons's evaluation, important conclusions can be drawn from the bulk of the female college novels. In 1900 Vassar college was only 35 years old and many people tried to negotiate the emergence of higher education for women. One of them, Sophia Kirk, a contributor to important magazines of the time says:

The college girl, though golf and tennis have brought her nearer than of yore to her generation in society, and the sense of her being harder to talk to than other girls is wearing off, is still regarded curiously and a little askance. There is a certain myth afloat in regard to her nature and existence. She is subjected to three processes which in the eyes of the world at large are occult and mysterious, separating her from her kind, fraught with possibilities and dangers: she passes through a terrible ordeal known as the entrance examination; she plunges into the abyss of intellectual work; she is surrounded by the strange enchantments of college life. (qtd in Marchalonis)

Kirk then goes on to ask a series of questions that occupied the fancy of society at the time: "Will her health, her spontaneity and joy, be forever ruined by the first? Will the second engulf forever her womanliness, her charm, her religious faith? Will she be unfitted by the third for home life, for social life, for the best of human life?" (qtd in Marchalonis). The novels produced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are a literary attempt to address these questions. Novels like Helen Brown's *Two College Girls* (1886) and Abbe Goodloe's *College Girls* (1895) celebrate a female space that functions with its own rules and offers women opportunities that were unfathomed before.

College space in these early female campus novels is depicted like a "green world" that embraces the young heroines and nourishes their intellect in a spirit of sisterhood until they are ready for the real world. Northrop Frye coined the term the "green world" to talk about

Shakespearean comedies where “the action [...] begins in a world represented as a normal world, moves into the Green World, goes into a metamorphosis there. . . and returns to the normal world” (85). This green world is often maternal in so far as it engenders new life and often there is a female character that dies—whether spiritually or physically—and is then revived. Entering this “green world” was the rule in the female campus novel. Professor of English and Women’s Studies at Penn State Berks Shirley Marchalonis observes that this rule seems to reinforce the:

discovery and expansion of self, talent, and desire, and glorifies the resulting happiness that comes from stretching the self and enjoyment of the process. Above all, interests need not conform; there is respect for individual talents and differences. Physical space may be confined and restricted, mental space is not. (12)

In Dorothy Canfield’s *The Bent Twig* (1915) the story marks a radically different trajectory that needs to be examined separately. For Canfield’s heroine Sylvia Marshall the college campus is not the “green world” of Shakespearean comedy that commonly resembles so much the female community of the all-women’s college. Sylvia Marshall experiences a less democratic spirit in college, she is not invited to join one of the three older sororities and hurt by this she later refuses to join one of the lesser sororities. What is described in *The Bent Twig* is a conflict of the haves and the have-nots on campus since Sylvia belonged to the Marshall family a faculty family who was far from the select circle of the exclusive town set. *The Bent Twig* though was the sole exception to the rule of green world collegiate fiction.

The canon of the Shakespearean green world female collegiate fiction remained unalterable until the 1930s. After the 1930s female collegiate fiction changed in scope and theme. The green world of the academia seizes to be a free world that helps women to grow away from a restricting society. Women in the 30s could vote, bobbed their hair, wore shorter dresses and were no longer the asexual nineteenth century subjects. The physical barriers of a university campus, the traditional gothic architecture with its spires and buttresses seem to reinforce the “restrictive ‘image’ of the college product” (Marchalonis 14). Marchalonis chooses the example of two female collegiate novels of the 30s to make a point:

Far from a sphere or space where women are encouraged to find their abilities and develop them, Mary Lapsley in *The Parable of the Virgins* (1931) and Kathleen Millay in *Against the Wall* (1929) create spaces that oppress because the aim is to mold the young women into conformity—to clone them into an image established as desirable by those who are more concerned with the outside world's judgments than with the needs of the students, who can leave the place, as Millay's Rebecca does, or can hang on with a kind of pitiful grimness to get the education—or the degree—that they want. (Marchalonis)

In addition to the experience of female oppression within the campus walls, *The Parable of the Virgins* and *Against the Wall* are two in the long line of collegiate fiction that reflect the notion that lesbianism was commonly practiced among female students in single-sex institutions of higher education. Carol Denny Hill's novel *Wild*, Wanda Neff's *We Sing Diana*, Lillian Hellman's play *The Children's Hour* as well as Tess Slesinger's short story "The Answer on the Magnolia Tree" are only a few indicative texts produced in the 20s and 30s "intimating that a single-sex institution leads to lesbianism among both students and faculty" (Inness 38). Sherrie A. Inness stresses the fact that:

the very prevalence of these texts and the popularity of some of them suggest their importance in helping to construct and to promulgate cultural fantasies about the women's school, fantasies that most likely had a greater influence on how the mass populace conceptualized women's single-sex education than did the actual institutions themselves. (39)

The evolution of the female collegiate novel "is not a record of steady gains and movement from restriction to freedom, but rather a mixture of views reflecting ambivalence about women—and, indeed, women's ambivalence about themselves" (Marchalonis). In the course of this dissertation, special mention is reserved for the female voice on campus. As stressed by educational historian Carol Dyhouse "since education was (and is) one of the few areas of public life where women have achieved a measure of status and authority, the history of education is a good arena in which to explore the social history of sexual politics and that of sex and gender generally" (qtd in McClellan 1).

The Mystery Campus Novel

The campus murder mystery is a themed category within the campus novel that begs for analysis as a subgenre within the campus novel genre. Institutions of higher learning have very often been used as the setting of many intriguing crime stories. In his 1948 essay “The Guilty Vicarage” poet W.H. Auden writes that a good murder story needs a few ingredients:

1) A closed society so that the possibility of an outside murderer (and hence of the society being totally innocent) is excluded; and a closely related society so that all its members are potentially suspect (*cf.* the thriller, which requires an open society in which any stranger may be a friend or enemy in disguise).

Such conditions are met by: (a) the group of blood relatives (the Christmas dinner in the country house); (b) the closely-knit geographical group (the old-world village); (c) the occupational group (the theatrical company); (d) the group isolated by the neutral place (the Pullman car). (407)

Auden adds another ingredient deemed important in the creation of a good murder story:

an innocent society in a state of grace, *i.e.*, a society where there is no need of the law, no contradiction between the aesthetic individual and the ethical universal, and where murder, therefore, is the unheard-of act which precipitates a crisis (for it reveals that some member has fallen and is no longer in a state of grace). (407)

The campus milieu has all the ingredients necessary for a good murder story hence it is the perfect locus for a mystery campus novel. It is a closed society, it is indeed a small village, an academical village as Jefferson said, populated by people “in a state of grace”, since the academia is marked by higher pursuits of the intellect.

In his annotated bibliography *Academe in Mystery and Detective Fiction* (2000) John E. Kramer¹³ anthologized 483 campus murder mysteries dating from 1910-1999. Some of the first

¹³ John E. Kramer, Jr. is Professor of Sociology Emeritus at SUNY-Brockport. He is the author of both *Academe in Mystery and Detective Fiction: An Annotated Bibliography* (2000) and *The American College Novel, An Annotated Bibliography* (1981).

campus murder novels include: Clifford Orr's *The Dartmouth Murders* (1929), Dorothy L. Sayers's *Gaudy Night* (1936), Michael Innis's *Death at the President's Lodging* (1936) and Morris Bishop's *The Widening Stain* (1942). While some contemporary novels of this idiosyncratic campus novel category are Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* (1992), Robert Barnard's *School for Murder* (1984), Robert Grudin's *Book* (1992), Joanne Dobson's *Quieter than Sleep*, Edith Skom's *The Charles Dickens Murders*. Finally, one should add Pamela Thomas-Graham's Ivy League murder series which includes: *A Darker Shade of Crimson* (1998), *Blue Blood* (1999) and *Orange Crushed* (2004). In this series, the novels take place in Harvard, Yale and Princeton respectively where, as the blurb of the Gallery Books edition reads, "the highest levels of human intellect can court the lowest impulses of the human heart."

The clash between "the highest levels of human intellect and the lowest human impulses" is crudely inscribed in the paradox of depicting murdered bodies in the realms of the collegiate architecture that is supposed to nurture the human soul. The porous nature of campus walls allows for a penetration of violence and murderous plots into campus space. In *A Darker Shade of Crimson*, the Afro-American Professor / sleuth stumbles upon Ella Fisher's body in a classroom building in Harvard during a blackout. In *Orange Crushed* Prof. Earl Stokes, the country's leading scholar in urban economics, is found dead at the site of the new Afro-American building. In Edith Skom's *The Mark Twain Murders* the story takes place in Midwestern University—a near clone of Northwestern—and the body of a co-ed is found in the Library. In *Death Calls the Tune* (1999) by M.D. Lake Evan Turner the former director of the music school is very fittingly found dead in the Music School Building. In *The Secret History* the murder of Bunny Corcoran is planned out in the Library of Hamden College by a group of very sophisticated students of classics.

In the murder mystery campus novel, the rules and regulations governing students and faculty alike are abandoned only to give their place to a blatant desecration of the campus space. A murder on campus subverts all the rules of the civilized society while at the same time—in a metaphoric way—it subverts the dominant ideology of campuses by breaking one of the most fundamental commandments of civilized society: thou shall not kill. Pauline Reynolds notes a pattern in the campus novel: the institution of the University is depicted as safe and idyllic in representations before the twentieth century while it is rendered unsafe and scary throughout the

twentieth century (25-27). Reynolds does not offer any explanation for this shift, however I contend that this change in the nature of the campus novel has very much to do with the insecurities bred by the Great Depression and the wars that plagued the twentieth century; suddenly, nothing was idyllic and pure anymore, young men would die in poverty or in the trenches so the image of pre-war Harvardians nonchalantly coming of age in the “green space” of the university seemed inauthentic or even mocking. The campus space represented in the campus mystery novels is no longer celebrated as the “Great Good Place” (Kramer, *Academe in Mystery*, 8) and institutions of higher education are no longer noble enterprises (9). Following the convention of Agatha Christie murder mysteries, the campus—as stated above—functions as the enclosed, and least likely space where a murder takes place. The marked difference between the two genres is that although in the Agatha Christie mysteries the characters scatter after Miss Marple or Hercule Poirot solves the case, in the campus mystery everyone stays after the end, other than the villain and the victim (Reynolds 27). Kramer suggests that this organizational feature is the key to understanding campus mystery novels (*Academe in Mystery*, 8). During the investigation for the murderer on campus, the reader finds out all the skeletons in the faculty closet. This feature paints a decaying and imperfect image of an institution of higher education since these “immoral and amoral obsessives and eccentrics” (8) stay. Kramer posits that the popularity of the campus mystery novel mirrors the disintegration of institutions of higher education since the liberal arts feature strongly in these novels serving a nostalgic function for a liberal arts education that is under constant threat. Kramer’s approach is remarkable, but I contend that the murder mystery transposed to an academic setting is a reflection of the increasing violence in society that has sadly infiltrated American campuses. Multiple school shootings¹⁴, the rape culture dominating campuses across the U.S. as well as fraternity and sorority transgressions have changed the public’s view of the Shakespearean “green world” campus. The campus murder mystery holds a mirror to a social violence that knows no

¹⁴ One example is the novel *Monday, Monday* (2014) by Elizabeth Crook which is loosely based on the University of Texas 1966 shootings when an armed student barricades himself in the University Tower and shoots people passing through the quadrangle beneath. That was the first mass shooting on an American Campus, with many more such violent incidents to follow—the man Charles Whitman was an engineering student in the University, former U.S Marine with psychological problems. Whitman was at the time studying in college on the G.I. Bill, consequently I suggest that the G.I. Bill has not only diversified the student body but also rendered it more susceptible to trauma.

boundaries; even the academia is affected and corroded by it. In my opinion, the campus mystery novel is thus indicative of a more sophisticated 20th century audience with a honed appetite for (hyper)realism.

Chapter 1. Spatial Porosity “Writes” Spatial Stories on Campus: The Classroom and the Faculty Office in the Campus Novel

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I will investigate the nature of spatial porosity on campus by analyzing representations of the classroom and the faculty office in the campus novel of the nineties and 2000s. Five very influential novelists, Philip Roth, Donna Tartt, Francine Prose, Zadie Smith and Richard Russo use campus space as the terrain on which their stories unravel, making insightful comments on American society and capturing the zeitgeist of their times. For the specific authors, the campus is an all too familiar territory since all five of them had been granted an inside view of the academy either as students of Ivy League institutions or as students first and professors later. Philip Roth taught in Universities across America for almost four decades. He started at the University of Chicago as a writing instructor in 1955 and retired from the University of Pennsylvania in 1991 teaching creative writing. Donna Tartt studied Classics in Bennington College, New England alongside authors such as Brett Easton Ellis and Jonathan Lethem; her alma mater left such a mark on her that her first novel *The Secret History* (1992) takes place on a campus much like Bennington College. Francine Prose, who graduated from Radcliffe College in 1968 is still today Visiting Professor of Literature at Bard College. Zadie Smith has graduated Cambridge University and has taught in other elite institutions such as Harvard, Columbia and in the Creative Writing Program of New York University. Richard Russo spent almost ten years in the University of Arizona studying for his Bachelor's, his Master's and his PhD degrees and then went on to teach in the English Department of Southern Illinois University Carbondale until 1986 when his first novel was published. However, the fact that these authors have chosen to write a campus novel goes far beyond the “write what you know” age-old adage of creative writing classes; I contend that far from being a guild genre, the campus novel emerges as a powerful tool to address sociopolitical issues in America through the tensions, conflicts and anxieties of academic life. In the current section of the dissertation, I will shed light to how spatial porosity allows for an interaction between academic values, which are found within the walls of the institution, and social change coming from the society outside the walls reinventing campus space as a dynamic, open system.

As my dissertation is organized spatially, this first chapter pores into the university classroom and faculty office through their representation in *The Secret History* (1992) by Donna Tartt, *The Human Stain* (2000) by Philip Roth, *Blue Angel* (2000) by Francine Prose, *On Beauty* (2005) by Zadie Smith and *Straight Man* (1997) by Richard Russo. In these novels academic space is represented in such a way as to tell a story that more often than not comes in contrast with the spatial story that the planned campus architecture intended it to tell. This discrepancy in initial design and later use or repurposing is addressed by American writer Stewart Brand in his influential book *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They Are Built* (1994) where he analyzes the concept of “The Scenario-Buffered Building” (178-190). In the opening lines of his chapter, he declares: “All buildings are predictions. All predictions are wrong” (178), to make a point about the mutability of a building’s purpose. In that vein, I borrow the term “spatial story” by de Certeau to demonstrate how the built-space of the campus is able to narrate different spatial stories than the one story intended by the architect. The term “spatial story” was coined by Michel de Certeau to capture the concept of space as a place, an entity of social construction, rich in layers of individual experience and history. In his groundbreaking book *The Practice of Everyday Life* de Certeau opens his chapter “Spatial Stories” with an example from modern Athens:

In modern Athens, the vehicles of mass transportation are called metaphorai. To go to work or come home, one takes a “metaphor”—a bus or a train. Stories could also take this noble name: every day, they traverse and organize places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories. (15)

De Certeau explains that “space is a practiced place. Thus, the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers” (117). In short, de Certeau views space as being actuated by the “ensemble of movements deployed within it” (117). Extending de Certeau’s analogy, I observe that University space is transformed by the people using the campus, while the stories narrated in the campus novels are metaphors that seek to “traverse and organize” campus space in an effort to help us comprehend the intricacies of this particular space. It is my intention to bring these alternative spatial stories to the fore in order to facilitate a deep understanding of campus space and shed light to our interactive relationship

with it. Moving in that direction, this section of the dissertation is dedicated to an in-depth analysis of the classroom and faculty office space which are read as porous academic loci.

1.2. The Politically Correct Classroom in *The Human Stain* and *Blue Angel*

In *The Book of Tea* Kakuzo Okakura claimed that “the reality of a room [is] to be found in the vacant space enclosed by the roof and walls, not in the roof and walls themselves.” (24) I contend that, the reality of a built space is both the “roof and walls” and the “vacant space” within, but at the same time I must emphasize the existence and function of passages—“pores”—in the built space that account for a communication between inner and outer space and for a dissolution of strict spatial demarcations. In the case of campus space, the relationships between people are influenced by a distinctive spatiality; the protagonists’ conduct is dictated by the university space they interact with but more than that it is often the design of the university buildings in space that determine power relations on campus. Referring to the attributes of the open city Richard Sennett maintains that buildings may or may not have a specific functionality. In the case of the fictional representation of campus, built space resists monofunctionality, as I will demonstrate. At the same time, in this section a spatial analysis of the classroom and the faculty office will be provided aiming at shedding light to the interdependency of students and faculty in two spaces that not only reflect but also establish the relationship between agents. In the first section of this analysis, I will be examining Roth’s *The Human Stain* and Prose’s *Blue Angel* as two novels where classrooms and offices, two places in the space of the campus open up to accept political correctness and in turn allow it to shape relationships and hierarchies within the campus.

College classrooms contribute to the construction of a stifling politically correct environment that informs the plot of *The Human Stain* and *Blue Angel*. Both novels were published in the same year, 2000. Both take place in a university campus and they both provide us with a powerful satire of the pc¹⁵ politics that took over America in the mid-nineties.

¹⁵ Merriam-Webster dictionary defines PC, which is sort for Political correctness as: “conforming to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated”

Contemporary politics and ideologies find fertile ground in the campus novel where the campus is not represented as an Ivory Tower, disconnected from society but as a space rooted in ideology, reflecting contemporaneous politics; the campus is represented as a porous space that informs the habitation experience of people living / working on university premises by loosening the borders of the gated academic community. In this context, as I will demonstrate through a close reading of *The Human Stain* and *Blue Angel* in the course of this chapter, the American Campus of the mid-nineties is a hothouse of political correctness bearing proof to the porous nature of academia that allows values from society to infiltrate the inside of the campus. *The Human Stain* and *Blue Angel* are set in around that time at fictional campuses situated in Northern New England.

Roth's *The Human Stain* is considered by critics as the last part in a trilogy together with *American Pastoral* (1997) and *I Married a Communist* (1998). Indeed, Roth himself has admitted, in an interview with *The New York Times*, viewing *The Human Stain* as the third part in a thematic trilogy closing in on the historical moments in postwar America that have left an indelible mark on the collective American psyche (McGrath). In the same interview he identifies these defining historical moments as the McCarthy era (*I Married a Communist*), the impact of the Vietnam War (*American Pastoral*) and President Clinton's impeachment (*The Human Stain*). Although I would not go as far as Judith Shulevitz who read *The Human Stain* "as an allegory of the Clinton presidency" I must stress the fact that Roth, one of the most insightful chroniclers of American culture, chooses the campus to stage this last scene of the American political drama. His choice signals to the significance of campus space in American life and to the power of the campus novel as a vehicle to tell the story of American politics. Francine Prose acknowledges this power too when choosing to write a campus novel about sexual harassment with a twist. In her own article in *The New York Times*, she deplores the suspension of her friend Professor Stephen Dobyns from Syracuse University over a sexual discrimination and harassment accusation in 1995. This was perhaps what gave her the impetus to use campus space to make a point about political correctness in American society. W. G. Tierney considers *Blue Angel* "a companion piece to *The Human Stain*" (169) and while I understand Tierney's impulse to read *Blue Angel* in this way, I find this categorization a rather reductionist one; more than a companion to *The Human Stain*, *Blue Angel* chronicles the fall of a typical man, a likeable man

and poses questions over academic identity and human nature using the space of the campus as an American culture arena.

The campus novel is the fictional vehicle employed by these authors to depict America struggling to come to terms with a shaken value system. The plots of both novels are imbued with the nineties spirit of political correctness and resonate with the sexual indiscretions of the Clinton administration. In *The Human Stain*, Coleman Silk a 71-year-old classics professor is accused of racism and is made to resign Athena College after an—absurd—accusation of making racist remarks in class. Prof. Silk referred to two of his black students as “spooks”—“Does anyone know these people? Do they exist or are they spooks?” (6), which—among other meanings—is a dated derogatory term to refer to black people. However, never having laid eyes on them Silk was certainly not making a racist remark. Similarly, in *Blue Angel* the condemning word is not “spooks” but “yum”. In a college neighboring Euston College, the campus where *Blue Angel* takes place, a History of Art professor was put on probation after uttering the word “yum” while showing his class a slide of a classical Greek sculpture of a female nude. America in the nineties was an era that was highly sensitive to sexual harassment innuendos especially following such notorious cases as Anita Hill versus Clarence Thomas in 1991¹⁶. Restrictions on language use, word choice, expressions and phrases under policy became a sine qua non in the majority of workplaces across the United States in an effort to avoid sexual harassment as well as shield racial and social minorities from practices that had been placing them at a disadvantage. These policies and regulations came to be known under the umbrella term political correctness.

Political correctness first appeared as a term after the Russian revolution of 1917 to denote strict adherence to the communist party line and it later started being used wittily “by liberal politicians to refer to the extremism of some left-wing issues, particularly regarding what was perceived as an emphasis on rhetoric over content” (Roper). The first places influenced by

¹⁶ Anita Hill accused her supervisor at the United States Department of Education and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of sexual harassment. Clarence Thomas was at the time being nominated for the U.S. Supreme Court and the pornographic details of Hill’s testimony that were heard within the Senate’s august walls sent shock waves to an entire nation. That marked the beginning of a series of sexual harassment lawsuits in the workplace with academia being one of the most prominent places for anti-harassment policies being instituted.

political correctness, as conservative circles labeled this turn in the curricula as well as in policies and use of language, were universities across the US. Starting from a shift in the focus of the syllabi and curricula, that moved away from the primarily western, white, male teaching matter, universities adopted political correctness across the board within campus space. It is important to note that the novels examined in this chapter of the dissertation are set in the nineties but are penned in 2000 which means that the writers “read” political correctness in the safe distance of a decade after its peak thus being able to dissect it more accurately and show its negative effects on academia. In that vein, the lecture halls of campuses in the 1990s as represented in these novels are saturated by stifling political correctness rules and regulations. A Professor delivering a lecture on campus should conform to political correctness and abide to its strictures when addressing students otherwise he will be readily accused of warping young minds or suppressing the minorities in his class. “Every classroom’s a lion den, every teacher a Daniel,” Prose writes to depict the nineties classroom milieu. The space allocated to a lecture hall has acquired a new dynamic ever since political correctness entered the American Campus. There is a spate of academic papers and articles¹⁷ written on the issue of political correctness on campus. In all of them there is a marked concern that the trend of political correctness will, in the words of Joan Wallach Scott, a professor at Brown in early nineties attack the whole enterprise of the university “and with it that aspect that intellectuals most value and that the humanities most typically represent: a critical, skeptical approach to all that a society takes most for granted.” (30)

To represent the zeitgeist of this era¹⁸, the campuses in these two novels are described like minefields of political correctness where professors tiptoe carefully not to cause an

¹⁷ Henry, III, William A., Jeanne McDowell, and Erik A. Meers. “The Politics of Separation: Minorities Are Increasing On The Nation's Campuses, Complicating The Debate Over Political correctness And Multiculturalism.” *Time* (1993): 73. Academic Search Premier. Web. 16 Jan. 2017.

Scott, Joan Wallach. “The Campaign Against Political correctness.” *Change* 23.6 (1991): 30-43. Academic Search Premier. Web. 16 Jan. 2017.

Van De Wetering, John E. “Political correctness.” *Vital Speeches of The Day* 58.4 (1991): 100. Academic Search Premier. Web. 16 Jan. 2017.

¹⁸ Let us not forget that the nineties started with the case of Anita Hill versus Clarence Thomas, as mentioned before, and ended (1999) with the impeachment trial of the then U.S. President Bill Clinton who was accused of perjury in the aftermath of the scandalous revelation of his extramarital affair with a White House intern. Both were high profile cases that brought

explosion. Starting with an analysis of *Blue Angel*, I am tempted to read the novel as a political correctness parable. However, upon a closer examination of the novel I must point out that political correctness is the symptom that points to a far more serious and chronic illness: that of an ailing, misplaced academic identity on the part of the protagonist. This problem is demonstrated by the writer through the ailing academic space; an academic space that “suffers” from stifling political correctness rules and regulations that further exacerbate the lives of academics while limiting their freedom of expression on campus space. A very strong case in point is illustrated for the reader in the opening of the second chapter which starts with a college meeting “to review Euston College’s policy on sexual harassment” (18). The University’s president delivers the speech in the campus chapel—the place itself quite telling of the sermon-like talk that is about to be delivered to a small group of bored professors who are simply there because they have to. The speech is prompted by the “yum” incident at the neighboring State College which, incidentally, Swenson’s daughter Ruby attends. Swenson arrives at the Chapel with his wife Sherry, who is also the campus nurse. In keeping with the campus novel tradition that typifies faculty members, Prose describes faculty members as “tense anemic junior lecturers, [Swenson’s] own grizzled generation, even the retired emeriti” (20), who have flocked obediently to the campus chapel to listen to the Dean in the same way that centuries ago believers flocked to listen to:

the Reverend Jonathan Edwards, on the hell-fire circuit, the Sinners on the Hands of the Angry God Tour, terrified his listeners with descriptions of the damned cast into the flames and roasted, screaming, to ashes. In memory of that occasion, a burnished portrait of Edwards glowers from the chapel wall, peering over the shoulder of Dean Francis Bentham, who, when he rises to go to the lectern glances back at the painting and fakes a tiny shudder as he tiptoes past, The Faculty giggles, smarmily. (20)

The Dean has Euston’s sexual harassment policy documents in hand and goes on to read it out loud to the faculty. Swenson and his wife feel that Euston’s fear “of litigation is as intense as Jonathan Edward¹⁹’s fear of hellfire” (21). So far, “undergraduate paramours were a perk that

political correctness in the limelight rendering it the trend of the nineties with both positive and negative repercussions.

¹⁹ Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) was a revivalist preacher and a Congregational Protestant Theologian (Minkema 17). He is one of the most important American Theologians

went with the job” (22), from now on though, the Dean warns everybody that their conduct on campus should be more cautious than ever. For Swenson, who although flattered by the attention of some of his students has never slept with any of them during the course of his twenty-year old career in Euston, this talk should be nothing more than a trivial reminder of what constitutes proper behavior. However, Dean Bentham’s speech makes Swenson indignant. What the Dean emphasizes is that nothing has to actually happen to find oneself facing a sexual harassment charge. “Every classroom was a lion den and every teacher a Daniel” (23), every little utterance—like the “yum” that got the State professor fired and the college sued—could ignite a spark of accusations and a whole pc witch-hunt. Dean Bentham’s speech paints a new picture of the institution; one that is consonant with the Panopticon in structure. Even the Dean’s name is reminiscent of Jeremy Bentham whose brainchild—the Panopticon—was described by himself as “a new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example” (29), a structure where “[m]oral [would be] reformed—health preserved—industry invigorated—instruction diffused—public burthens lightened—Economy seated, as it were, upon a rock—the Gordian Knot of the poor-law not cut, but untied—all by a simple idea in Architecture” (29). Bentham’s idea was that of an institutional building that would be situated and constructed in such a manner as to allow constant surveillance. In more detail, Bentham’s plans included a central watch tower encased in glass, with wooden blinds which would overlook a series of rooms. The premise behind this construction was mainly that the guard in would be able to monitor the inmates in the rooms opposite the tower, at all times. The key to the effectiveness of this system is not the watchtower per se but the uncertainty of whether or not you are being watched by the guard. The inmates cannot make sure they are being watched but they are made

especially prominent for his Puritan sermons. His sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” is a classic work of early American Literature and marks the content of the rest of his work. His work is a series of sermons delivered to awaken his congregation to the terrible punishments incurred to the sinner by God. In the fictional Euston Chapel a portrait of Edwards, the hellfire preacher, hangs above Dean Bentham while he delivers his sexual harassment policy “sermon” to the faculty / congregation. Moreover, it is interesting to note that shortly before his death Jonathan Edwards served as President of the College of New Jersey (Princeton). His role both in the academe and in religion further insinuate an interrelationship between the two especially in so far as they are both concerned with molding people—in this case molding is intertwined with monitoring and preaching. Therefore, Prose’s choice of “decorating” Euston Chapel with Edwards’s portrait places greater emphasis on the Panopticon analogy since the preacher’s watchful eyes add to the surveillance power represented by Dean Bentham.

aware of the fact that being watched is the constant possibility. The inmates have no privacy. This analysis goes in tandem with the Foucauldian concept of power whereby schools, prisons and clinics are all places where the Panopticon structure is used to ensure that a particular form of behavior is imposed. The exact quotation from *Discipline and Punish* reveals that the Panopticon is in fact:

...polyvalent in its applications; it serves to reform prisoners, but also to treat patients, to instruct schoolchildren, to confine the insane, to supervise workers, to put beggars and idlers to work. It is a type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons. Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behaviour must be imposed, the panoptic schema may be used. (205)

Dean Bentham proposes a new kind of Panopticon on Euston Campus when he delivers his sexual harassment speech. The new Panopticon is not based on the tangible structure of a watchtower but functions along the same lines and it, too, is based on uncertainty. With the Dean's speech Euston Campus enters an era of uncertainty; uncertainty as to what constitutes sexual harassment, what might entail sexual harassment and who is likely to file a complaint on sexual harassment.

This upsets Swenson who is after-all teaching a Creative Writing course where students often write about unsettling issues. Even before Dean Bentham's speech Swenson shows signs of a burn-out and is described as feeling that something went wrong with his life. In short, Swenson is facing a mid-life crisis and when Angela Argo comes along, a most unlikely love object, "a skinny, pale redhead, with neon-orange and lime-green streaks in her hair and a delicate, sharp featured face pierced in half a dozen places" (8) he is ripe for the fall.

Swenson's life is seemingly perfect, in harmony with the American Dream, complete with a long-running career, a loving, beautiful wife and a nice house. He is an academic, belonging to an intellectual elite and a writer whose first book made him famous. However, Prose presents a man who is in the thralls of a double crisis: a mid-life crisis and a professional identity crisis. In one of the opening scenes of the novel, we see Swenson trying to guide a

Creative Writing class discussion on bestiality. He feels that it is a weekly struggle for him to guide class discussions on students' short stories "so that no one's feelings are hurt" (5) and he is genuinely irritated that his colleagues think his job is easy since he doesn't lecture or give tests.

A perusal of Swenson's relationship with the built space of the campus around him reveal more about his shaken professional identity than he might even realize at the moment he is introduced to the reader. Swenson's feeling of alienation from his colleagues is further stressed by the locale of his class, thus also underlining how meaningful the blueprint of the fictional campus is in the campus novel. Swenson's class is, thus, situated "high in the college bell tower" (2) with a "panoramic campus view" (5) envied by most of Euston faculty who ignore the fact that it is too hot during summer months (5) and that the sound of the college's bells is deafening. "The Euston bells are in the cupola just above them. When they ring the hour, halfway through Swenson's class, the slow funereal chiming vibrates in the bones. Conversation stops. Let the professors who covet this classroom—who hear the bells ringing sweetly from across campus—deal with this every week" (9). This disheartening description of Swenson's classroom takes all glamour away from his ivory-tower at the same time also stripping his academic status off its glamorous connotations too. Ultimately, what is at stake here is not only his relationship with his colleagues or the administration but the alienation he experiences from his very identity. His condition can be read applying Richard Sennett's distinction between a cell wall and a cell membrane; Sennett explains how a cell wall's function is "that of a container holding things in" while a cell membrane is "at once porous and resistant, letting matter flow in and out of the cell, but selectively so that the cell can retain what it needs for nourishment" ("The Public Realm" 593). To adopt Sennett's membrane analogy, Swenson has developed a symbiotic relationship with the academic world he lives in, to the point that when social forces enter the porous academic walls, he feels lost. Sennett invites us to see that porosity concerns the relationship between groups and individuals as well as the relationship developed between individuals and the built space. Similarly, to what happens at deep levels of biological organization, Swenson's identity is interwoven with academic space to such an extent that their relationship has become dynamic and changing. Political correctness changes the institution and, seeing the boundaries of the institution opening up to absorb new ideas, Swenson starts re-examining his own identity and role within this institution. Incidentally, his ensuing love affair with Angela Argo does not satisfy his libido but goes part and parcel with his search of self within an institution that has

shaped his identity and conception of self for so many years that he simply took it for granted without questioning it. This search for his true self within the campus that made him what he is, soon leads Ted Swenson to his downfall. In this respect, Swenson is not unlike Coleman Silk in *The Human Stain*, who has to redefine his identity outside the academia rather abruptly and who—amid the allegations for wrongful conduct—cannot find support in his colleagues either.

Both Swenson and Silk learn a lesson in political correctness in the classroom space where they are purportedly the ones to give lessons or in the old sense of the word lecture, disseminate knowledge. Foucault's idea that knowledge is linked to power and that it doesn't only assume the authority of truth but also has the ability to make itself truth (*Representation* 49-50) is applied in the case of Athena College. In *The Human Stain*, Athena College is the empowered institution disseminating knowledge and, by definition, the truth to those who are found within the university's sphere of influence. Foucault's analysis on the dissemination of knowledge and its relation to power informs the scene where Prof. Silk delivers his lecture on *Iliad* in a class full of students—where he is clearly the disseminator of knowledge and the empowered individual due to his position in the University—and later when reading the scene where Prof. Silk is accused by his students of racism. The latter is a scene very indicative of how power is not monopolized by one center, but “deployed and exercised through a net-like organization” (*Representation* 49-51). Therefore, Prof. Silk who was the authorial figure distributing knowledge to his students is now—in the same amphitheater—the one who is going to be given a lesson in a different discourse: political correctness. The college classroom in *The Human Stain* becomes a porous space that allows political correctness to inform the narrative and turn the tables on Prof. Silk affecting his very identity. Prof. Silk's identity has been a construct from the start since—as it is revealed in the course of the novel—Silk is passing for white, choosing to identify as a Jewish Professor of Classics. His light skin gives him the ticket to pass for white, while academia gives him the paraphernalia to build a sense of self around the persona of the Professor. Silk's identity is interwoven with university space; a space he respects and thrives in. Athena College has benefited from Silk's efforts to make the College great, and his hiring practices are known to have brought diverse personalities on campus. More than that, to have him—a black man of all people—accused of uttering a racist slur is absurd. Roth capitalizes on that absurdity to create a kind of dramatic irony that runs throughout the novel to emphasize

on the absurdity and irony of political correctness and cancel culture that have been running rampant on academic space since the nineties.

Upon closer examination of the classroom scene in *The Human Stain*, before the politically incorrect hamartia on the part of Prof. Silk, the reader witnesses him reciting a great work of literature by a great Greek poet within classroom walls. Prof. Silk, recites the introduction to Homer's *Iliad*: "Divine Muse, sing of the ruinous wrath of Achilles... Begin where they first quarreled, Agamemnon the King of men, and great Achilles.' And what are they quarreling about, these two violent, mighty souls? It's as basic as a barroom brawl. They are quarreling over a woman. A girl, really. A girl stolen from her father" (4). The classroom walls reverberate with Homeric lines, thinning out to history, transporting the students back to classic years. In this context, Prof. Silk's identity is draped in the gravity and significance of the reader of obscure texts, the mediator of classic wisdom to modern minds; he is the Professor of Classics at Athena College. At the same time, his reading of the *Iliad* and his analysis of the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon, bring to the fore the concept of arrogance, which is Achilles's fatal flaw, his hamartia, in *Iliad*. In a Rothian irony in the story Prof. Silk, is another Achilles who displays arrogance in his daring to reinvent himself first in passing for white and then within academia. Prof. Silk chooses whiteness because he wants the advantages given to the white man, he does not want to fight for the rights of black people, be an advocate for civil rights, he simply wants what is not being given to him. On top of that, in academia he is also invested with an added status that helps him construct the identity he comes to display when the reader meets him in that classroom reciting from the *Iliad*. In a sleight of hand, Roth strips him off his academic identity and removes him from academic space to see what happens. Indeed, the powers of political correctness that have brought about fundamental changes in Athena college shake Silk's identity construct and threaten to reveal his personal secret to the academic community and beyond. Roth conveniently "kills" the tragic hero before he is made to reveal his true error to the academic community while the reader witnesses a change both in the hero himself and in the space of the classroom in which he was once the leading figure. Shaped and governed by political correctness, the classroom is no longer the place of learning and the classics, but it becomes a battleground—true to the description of the epic fight that initiated all of European literature—where power is reversed, and identities redefined.

Prose and Roth wrote their respective campus novels *Blue Angel* and *The Human Stain* inspired by true incidents that happened to their friends because of political correctness taken too far. In his *An Open Letter to Wikipedia* Roth admits having written *The Human Stain* lamenting the bad luck of his friend Melvin Tumin, sociology professor at Princeton, who one fine day in 1985 while taking roll in class uttered the exact same, fateful word that would change Silk's life forever in *The Human Stain* so many years later: spooks. Tumin's subsequent ordeal to prove himself innocent of the charge of racism despite the fact that he had been a civil rights activist in the sixties and that he had written extensively on race matters in American society throughout his academic career, made the irony stronger for Roth who took Tumin's story a step further and wrote about political correctness as another aspect of hypocrisy in American society using the campus space as his stage. Francine Prose embarks on a similar mission inspired by a sexual harassment charge against her good friend professor Stephen Dobyns; Prose was struck by the hypocrisy and almost Victorian seriousness of the committee meetings that were held to decide the dismissal of her friend from the University. The fact that two great American writers decided to use the literary vehicle of the campus novel to demonstrate how campus space—and in this case the space of the classroom—is decisively altered by the powers of political correctness, does not only point to the significance of the campus novel as a genre but is also an important indicator of the porosity of classroom boundaries that renders campus space open to social norms outside of academia.

1.3. Affirmative Action as Alterer of Classroom Boundaries in *On Beauty*

Being born in a mixed-race family and raised in a multicultural community, Zadie Smith often reflects this experience in her novels (*White Teeth*, *On Beauty*). I find that, despite her rejection of the label “Black British Writer” and her insistence that she wanted to write novels that go beyond her personal demographics (Carter et al. 77-78), Smith's insightfulness in depicting the struggles of multicultural communities is greatly derived from her personal experience. In *On Beauty* Smith illustrates the interracial conflicts and multicultural identity crises using as backdrop a culturally diverse town and a university campus in turmoil. Both these spaces are all too familiar to Smith, an academic herself. However, I must underline that apart from sheer familiarity there is more into what prompted Smith to write a campus novel. Zadie

Smith employs the conventions and stylistics of the campus novel to touch upon issues of political correctness in modern academia; more specifically Smith dares to touch upon the issue of affirmative action, the cornerstone of political correctness, in *On Beauty*, thus taking the issue of the culture wars that Roth and Prose spatialized in *The Human Stain* and *Blue Angel* a step further.

The campus novel genre presents Smith with the flexibility to represent a multitude of different voices and offers her the spatial boundaries to contain the story and safeguard it from turning into a Babel. Reviewers of *On Beauty* tend to focus primarily on the multicultural tensions bred within and between Wellington communities, rather than on the locus where these tensions take place. In her article “Sameness in Contemporary British Fiction: (Metaphorical) Families in Zadie Smith’s *On Beauty* (2005)” Sabine Nuniu dismantles the identities of members of the different communities formed within Wellington and suggests that “sameness never exists in an absolute, enduring form but is always implicitly interspersed with differences, which have to be actively suppressed in order to uphold the illusion of homogeneity” (121). While identity formation and cultural difference inform the plot in *On Beauty*, I suggest that academic space is a key factor in shaping identities and eliminating differences; a key factor that has been overlooked in the critical analysis of the novel. Notably, one scholar that has probed on the importance of place in *On Beauty* is Regine Jackson who focused on the significance of the presence of Haitian immigrants in the fictional town of Wellington in the creation of social relations in city space. Although her work sheds light to the urban ethnographies of “America’s celebrated post-racial society” (855), there is a glaring omission; Jackson does not analyze the impact of Wellington campus in identity formation, nor does she investigate the interaction of the campus with society. Instead of acknowledging the interactive nature of the campus, Jackson dismisses it calling Wellington an “insulated world” (871). I draw emphasis on the interactive nature of Wellington campus using the idea of affirmative action as a tool to read campus porosity. Affirmative action as a set of laws and regulations to ensure access to employment and civic life for marginalized ethnic groups and disadvantaged individuals was initiated by the administration of President Lyndon Johnson (1963-1969) in order to improve employment opportunities primarily for African Americans (Britannica “Affirmative Action”). Initially, therefore, affirmative action was concerned solely with employment rights “to ensure that applicants are employed, and employees are treated during employment, without regard to their

race, creed, color, or national origin” (Kelly and Dobbin 970). Soon, though, affirmative action found its way to college admission policies making the connection between campus politics and societal needs all the more pronounced. Ever since affirmative action legislation extended to higher education, many voices challenged it lamenting the rules as a form of reverse discrimination. However, these voices ceased to be so loud in the late nineties when due to political correctness gaining more traction, affirmative action became a strangely undebated issue in American education. In progressive circles a person who dares criticize affirmative action in college admissions is immediately tagged as politically incorrect, Leaf Van Boven stresses in his essay “Pluralistic Ignorance and Political correctness” (268). I observe that Zadie Smith initiates this taboo dialogue in her campus novel, placing her characters endorse different ideas and then putting the idea of affirmative action to the test on Wellington campus. Smith’s tour de force in *On Beauty* is that she spatializes the debate on campus space and more specifically—as I will demonstrate in this section of the dissertation—she uses the classroom as a case in point of how porosity can drastically alter the boundaries of learning space.

On Beauty, Zadie Smith’s 2005 prize-winning novel, deals with the academic rivalry between Montague Kipps a conservative Trinidadian who lives in London and Howard Belsey the liberal pater familias of a mixed-race family who live in the affluent university town of Wellington in New England. Kipps and Belsey, both university professors, are involved in a bitter academic feud rooted in the difference in their political beliefs. The Kippses are Montague Kipps, his wife Carlene and their two children Victoria and Michael; they are Christians, politically conservative and passionately opposed to affirmative action in American society. The Belseys Howard Belsey, African American wife Kiki and their three children: Jerome, Zora and Levi; they are all atheists with the exception of Jerome who is a born-again Christian, they all share liberal political beliefs and are pro-affirmative action. The two worlds of the Belseys and the Kippses clash when, through a novelistic twist, reminiscent of David Lodge antics in *Changing Places*, Prof. Kipps is appointed lecturer in the Black Studies Department in Wellington, the Harvard-like university where Prof. Belsey also teaches. Thus, campus space turns into an arena where two multiverses of conflicting ideologies are brought one against the other specifically on the issue of affirmative action in academia. As Kiki Belsey puts it when,

during her anniversary party where all the English Department is congregated, she is asked about Monty Kipps:

He is just a black conservative—thinks it's demeaning for African American kids to be told they need special treatment to succeed, etcetera. It's terrible timing for Wellington, having him here—there's an Anti-Affirmative Action bill working its way through the Senate and it's gonna cause trouble. We need to stand firm on the issue right now.
(122)

Affirmative action is a major issue in Wellington since there is a debate among the faculty about whether or not to allow Claire Malcolm—poetess and Creative Writing lecturer—to take in discretionary students in her Poetry class, that is people who are not Wellington students but belong to the down-and-out young people of the wider Wellington community in an effort to widen the membranous pores of academic walls and create interaction opportunities between academia and community. When Dean French attacks her affirmative action choices in her class as a threat to make her accept talentless Zora Belsey in the Poetry seminar, Claire rebels:

Jack, I don't believe we're doing this...it was agreed *three years ago* that if I wanted to take on extra students, above and beyond my requirements, then it was under my discretion. There are *a lot* of talented kids in this town who don't have the advantages of Zora Belsey—who can't *afford* college, who can't *afford* our summer school, who are looking at the army as their next best possibility, Jack an army that's presently *fighting* a war [...]. (160)

I maintain that Claire's class is transformed because of affirmative action since by opening its doors to non-students not only does it diversify the college demographics, but it is also evidence of the membranous nature of the academic walls of Wellington. Claire's Creative Writing class takes eighteen students every semester. Upon her insistence Wellington's board accepted that she take a number of non-students based solely on their talent not their ability to pay tuition. Notably, this opening up of class boundaries is also reflected on the spatial architectonics of learning.

Claire opens up class boundaries by transferring learning outside the privileged Wellington walls and seeking to connect the student learning experience with the broader community. To do so, Claire takes her Poetry class to The Bus Stop—a Wellington institution (211), a Moroccan club-restaurant where various unknown artists perform—not only to open up her students’ eyes as to what can constitute poetry but also in order to recruit students for her class. The Bus Stop was initially a Moroccan restaurant attracting both students and professors, however when the restaurant went into the hands of the owners’ son he converted the spacious basement of the restaurant into an alternative club space where a variety of events took place; from classes and community seminars to parties. Smith’s omniscient narrative voice describes the club space as an alternative learning space where:

... the visuals of Star Wars were shown alongside the soundtrack of Dr. Zhivago. Here a fleshy, dimpled red-headed lady explained to a gang of willowy freshman girls how to move one’s abdomen in tiny increments of clockwise motion, the art of belly dance. Local rappers performed impromptu sets [...] Morocco, as it was reimagined in The Bus Stop, was an inclusive place. (212)

The convergent space of The Bus Stop has paradoxically been overlooked in critical readings of the novel the majority of which focus on a comparative analysis of Smith and Forster’s work. I urge a closer look into this marginal space as I observe that the interaction of diverse people and art in The Bus Stop exemplifies the openness and lack of rigid demarcations, control and order that Sennett praises in his Open City essay where he is clearly deploring the “freezing of the imagination” in urban space. On top of the diverse and open locale, every two months The Bus Stop boasts the Spoken Nights event where the boundaries between high art and pop culture blur. Claire Malcolm would take her poetry class there to show “her new students that poetry was a broad church, one that she was not afraid to explore” (212). Her students perceived this visit to The Bus Stop as an important educational experience and longed for it. Claire’s moving the class out of the designated boundaries of the Wellington classroom is a bold move, one that radically transforms class boundaries by exhibiting the fact that learning does not only take place within the four walls of an academic institution. Upon closer examination, I bring to the fore a direct analogy between campus novel paradigm and educational theory: Claire Malcolm’s classroom experimentations point to her attempts to integrate a type of place-based

education for her poetry class. Place-based education is defined by Laurie Lane-Zucker in the introduction to David Sobel's book *Place-based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities* (2004) as:

... the pedagogy of community, the reintegration of the individual into her home-ground and the restoration of the essential links between a person and her place. Place-based education challenges the meaning of education by asking seemingly simple questions: Where am I? What is the nature of this place? What sustains this community? It often employs a process of re-storying, whereby students are asked to respond creatively to stories of their home-ground so that, in time, they are able to position themselves, imaginatively and actually, within the continuum of nature and culture in that place. They become a part of the community, rather than a passive observer of it. (6)

As I see it, Claire employs a slightly different type of place-based education, one that moves away from the conventional definition of place-based pedagogy. While the model of place-based pedagogy offers a fresher outlook on the learning experience of students within a given community, it may still be a problematic concept. As pointed out by Claudia Ruitenberg in her 2005 Derridean reading on the experience of the local titled "Deconstructing the Experience of the Local: Toward a Radical Pedagogy of Place": "much of the literature on place-based education focuses on the natural and rural environment [which is] presented with more than a hint of nostalgia and romanticism" (212). Lamenting the limitations of such place-based education, Ruitenberg points out that: "the uncritical celebration of rural over urban and nature over culture reinscribes old dichotomies and does nothing to help an examination of the role of place in education" (2013). Ruitenberg cites historian of British and Irish art, architecture, and urbanism, Robin Usher to emphasize the fact that "such understandings deeply embed "warm" notions of local community whilst at the same time displacing the conflicts, oppressions and limitations of bounded places..." (qtd in Ruitenberg 213). In this sense, Claire's decision to take her Poetry class to The Bus Stop does not fall into the category of the conventional place-based educational philosophy, but rather involves notions of Ruitenberg's "radical pedagogy of place" where "the lived experience of a local environment and community is a starting point for inquiry into the instability of meaning attributed to an always already mediated experience of the local" (213). Claire Malcolm helps her students see beyond the walls of their academic isolation and

understand that their local community is more than the privileged enclave they move in and out of. The Bus Stop is the focal point of a disadvantaged, marginalized locality that finds its voice thanks to the freedom of expression within the specific space. For Claire's students a visit to The Bus Stop "indeed to Kennedy Square, was as exotic as a trip to Morocco itself" (Smith 213). The "ethnography of the basement" (220) was enough to shake them off their illusion of a homogenous, WASP-ish community, which is the picture they would perpetuate if they had never left the confines of their Wellington classroom. At this point, it must be stressed that, although Claire's character acts as a catalyst in exploring further the dynamics of space in *On Beauty*, it is the porous nature of the academic walls of Wellington allows Claire to disentangle herself and her class from the four-walled "safe" and homogenous enclave of her classroom and instead opt for a broadening and loosening of classroom borders. Claire's stretching of classroom borders by adopting a radical pedagogy of place bears proof to Sennett's notion of porosity, since the walls of Wellington are indeed as porous as a cell membrane allowing for different elements from outside the academic world to enter academia. The Bus Stop is, thus, transformed into a border where the academic world of Wellington encounters the richness of the lived experience of the other half of the broader Wellington community. In this sense, The Bus Stop acquires the characteristics of Sennett's ecological border. An ecological border, according to Richard Sennett:

is a site of exchange where organisms become more interactive. The shoreline of a lake is such a border; at the edge of water and land organisms can find and feed off many other organisms. The same is true of temperature layers within a lake: where layer meets layer constitutes a watery zone of intense biological exchange. An ecological border, like a cell membrane, resists indiscriminate mixture; it contains differences but is porous. The border is an active edge. (*Craftsman* 227)

Analogous to the workings of the Sennettian membrane, the basement of The Bus Stop becomes an active edge where, despite the differences among elements, there is great interaction. Through the street art of Spoken Word, the Wellington kids are not only exposed to a different kind of poetry, but they also get to be immersed in the different and often trouble-ridden lifestyles of the disadvantaged, local, young people. At the same time, The Bus Stop interacts with Wellington as it becomes evident in the "recruiting" of certain Spoken Word young poets

who find their way into Claire's class. Interestingly enough, this interaction is not without a certain degree of friction. After the performance of Queen Lara, an Afro-American female performer of *The Bus Stop*, the unsatisfied Wellington students clap reluctantly while one of them shouts: "Bring on the poetry!" (221). When Doc Brown²⁰ hears the comment, he answers:

"Bring on the Poetry?" repeated Doc Brown, wide-eyed, looking into the darkness for the mystery voice. "Shit, now how often do you get to hear that? See, that's why I *love* The Bus Stop. *Bring on the poetry*. I know that be a Wellington kid..." (222)

Doc Brown continued the interaction with the Wellington crowd in a half-mocking manner that nevertheless reveals the inherent status differences between Wellington as a privileged space and *The Bus Stop* as a shelter for the marginalized.

"*Bring on the Poetry*. We got some educated brothers in here tonight. *Bring on the poetry*. *Bring on the trigonometry*. *Bring ON the algebra—bring that shit ON*", he said, in the 'nerd' voice with which black comedians sometimes imitate white people.

"Well...you're in luck young man, cos' we about to bring on the poetry, the Spoken Word, the rap, the rhyming—we gon' do *alla* that for you." (222).

In *The Bus Stop* the two worlds of the "educated brothers" of Wellington and the streetwise local kids merge in an interesting manner, creating an interaction akin to the ecological border interaction lauded by Sennett. After the Spoken Word performance of a group of Haitian immigrants, a girl in Claire's class asks: "Is this political?" (228) to which Claire

²⁰ Doc Brown—real name Ben Bailey Smith—is Zadie Smith's younger brother. He is a comedian, actor and rapper. In a joint interview to *The Guardian* conducted by Laura Barton just before the release of *On Beauty*, readers are informed that: "Zadie's younger brother, Ben, is a youth group worker at a local school, working largely with the children of refugees and asylum seekers. However, Ben has simultaneously carved out a niche for himself on London's underground hip-hop scene, as Doc Brown" (Barton 1)

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2005/mar/04/poetry.popandrock> Ben (a.k.a Doc Brown) is given a 'role' in *On Beauty*, as Zadie Smith herself surprises the reader in a cameo appearance ala Alfred Hitchcock when she appears as the "feckless novelist on a visiting fellowship" that escapes through the "squeaky double doors" of the Library where an interdisciplinary Faculty meeting takes place but does not "retire unobserved" since "Beady Liddy watched her go and made a note" (324). These appearances in *On Beauty* confirm Smith's winking mischievously at the reader in a kind of shared understanding that the author leaves her imprint by slipping in the pages of her own work.

replies: “They seem to be angry about America’s involvement in Haiti. The rhymes are very...crude, is the best way to put it” (228). The disbelieving students ask: “We have something to do with Haiti?” to which Claire replies: “We have something to do with everywhere” (228), endowing her class with edgy politics of the kind they would not hear in a regular Wellington class. The Bus Stop brings them in contact with hands-on politics that they would not encounter easily in a sanitized academic environment. Apart from the lesson in American foreign policy, Claire goes on to teach them a lesson in poetic form too, to underline the fact that teaching can take place everywhere:

“It’s a very worthy effort [...]. They have the power of the troubadour voice...But I’d say they have a little to learn about integration of idea and form—you break a form in two if you have all this undigested political fury in it.” (229)

The academic dissection of the Haitian boys’ verse transforms The Bus Stop once again into a classroom where lessons bigger than Creative Writing are taught. Towards the end of this “field trip” into the heart of the community, Claire approaches Carl, the winner of the Spoken Word competition, and downright asks: “Are you interested in refining what you have?” (232) inviting him to attend her class as her discretionary student. Earlier on, Carl in his first verse had sung about his “trying to prove he had Native American blood in order to get into the top colleges in the country” (230); Carl, thus, makes a reference to affirmative action laws in education that hold places for a number of Native American students in order to help them get an education as an ethnic minority that needs help. “This—close to the bone in a college town—drew broad laughter” (230). Wellington students as well as the disadvantaged young people from The Bus Stop very well know about the affirmative action laws related to education and they all understand the social implications as well as the limitations of such laws. Carl is not Native American, he is just not wealthy enough to attend Wellington, affirmative action laws cover a specific number of students from marginalized communities but are not enough to help educate the majority of people in need.

Claire’s initiative helps Carl attend a university class thus emphasizing the porous nature of her classroom walls that come to function as a cell membrane allowing for an interaction between academia and the college town. In this way a usually homogenous class of an elite institution becomes a contested space, one that—if I can deduce so employing a Lefebvrian

sensitivity—is founded by cultural, socio-political, historical and discursive practices (*The Production of Space*). Carl is the outside element in Wellington and his presence in class not only helps him personally but also enriches the learning experience for all parties involved. When Carl reads his rap, like all the students read their work in class he gives his classmates a glimpse out of their academic seclusion in Wellington. Likewise, he gets a glimpse into a world he believed he would never fit in.

The first thing Claire did with Carl's rap that day was show him of what it was made. Iambes, spondees, trochees, anapaests. Passionately Carl denied any knowledge of these arcane arts. He was used to being feted at The Bus Stop but not in a classroom. Large sections of Carl's personality had been constructed on the founding principle that classrooms were not for Carl. (259)

The porous nature of Claire's classroom allows for an interaction of values and lived experience that produces a new kind of space within the academic territory; a space of original diversity that is manipulated to create an enriched critical pedagogy. According to Burbules and Berk, critical pedagogy can be defined as:

an effort to work within educational institutions and other media to raise questions about inequalities of power, about the false myths of opportunity and merit for students and about the way belief systems become internalized to the point where individuals and groups abandon the very aspiration to question or change their lot in life. (50)

While endorsing Burbules and Berk's definition of critical pedagogy as well as acknowledging its importance in education, I still insist that critical pedagogy cannot be placeless. Claire's classroom had to expand its physical boundaries and adopt an alternative venue, it had to open up enough to include the Bus Stop to fully teach critical pedagogy.

In his most famous book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Paul Freire takes the concept of critical pedagogy a step forward and discusses the idea of a critical pedagogy of place. Freire favored the knowledge that learners are human beings that exist in a certain cultural context:

People as beings "in a situation", find themselves rooted in temporal-spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark. They will tend to reflect on their own

“situationality” to the extent that they are challenged by it to act upon it. Human beings *are* because they are in a situation. And they *will* be more the more they not only critically reflect upon their existence but critically act upon it (109)

Gruenewald nods in agreement to Freire but emphasizes the importance of place as the *sine qua non* context in which the Freirean “situations are perceived and acted on” (5). Thus, Gruenewald opening up a dialogue with Freire introduces the term “critical pedagogy of place”. Freire deplored the “anti-dialogical and anti-communicative deposits of the banking method of education” (110), while opting for engaging students in “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (110) through place. It is my assertion that the broadening of classroom boundaries so that students are exposed to the situationality of the Other is one decisive step ahead in achieving critical pedagogy in education. I, therefore, read Claire Malcolm’s creative writing class openness as an effort to integrate critical pedagogy in her teaching, even though Wellington frowns upon her choices. Yet a sober analysis of Megan Boler’s observation that Universities function as “white men’s clubs” and as such propagate the empowerment of those that are already part of the status quo (5) points to the immediacy of using university space alternatively so as to create the conditions of critical pedagogy. Boler suggests that since universities favor those who are already powerful in the “real world” the duty of critical educators is to produce “unreal spaces” where the interaction and debate between diverse students and faculty is based on affirmative action pedagogy (5). I assert that Claire’s classroom space exemplifies the unreal space suggested by Boler. Not only has Claire defied classroom boundaries by turning The Bus Stop into a classroom, thus avoiding the repercussions of teaching within the four walls of an academic institution haunted by “historical legacies of inequality, exclusion and education for social and economic reproduction (hegemony)” (Weems 558), but she has also managed to alter classroom dialogue within the classroom confines by allowing students of a radically diverse background to enter the lauded walls of academia. Claire’s bet is to make affirmative action policy a permanent issue in Wellington and not just a discretion allowed by Dean French to her on the grounds that she is the “communist looney-tune anti-war poetess” (262). To this end, she asks Zora Belsey to address the upcoming interdisciplinary faculty meeting where the future of affirmative action policies in Wellington is on the agenda. Zora is excited at the prospect of delivering a barnstorming speech to the faculty of Wellington College so she quickly accepts: “I

mean what are we *doing* [...] if we can't extend the *enormous* resources of this institution to people who need it? It's so *disgusting*" (263). The implementation of affirmative action in Wellington is a precarious issue, one shaken by the air of neoliberal ideals putting profit above people and contested by such people as Monty Kipps who is against affirmative action claiming it is a "demoralizing philosophy" (365), lamenting the message one gives to their children "when we tell them that they are not fit for the same meritocracy as their white counterparts" (365). Affirmative action in education is a debated issue and one all the more contested in American institutions of higher learning at the moment, since in July 2018 under directive of President Trump the American Department of Justice decided the rescinding of 24 different guidance documents²¹ one of which is the guidance on Universities on how to implement affirmative action laws. This is a decisive step towards demeaning affirmative action policies in education. The campus novel as a genre not only brings these social issues to light but it facilitates our understanding of the significance of creating a more democratic and truly inclusive university classroom space where characters like Zora and Carl can coexist and learn from each other. A similar urgency is voiced in the representation of the faculty office in the campus novel, as I will delineate and analyze in the subsequent section of the current work. The main difference between the classroom and the office is one of a qualitative nature: the classroom is a porous space of a public nature whereas the faculty office is a porous campus space of a semi-private nature, since apart from functioning as the private study of the professor the office opens up to meetings with students, colleagues and administrators. In the sub-section that follows, I will analyze the representation of the faculty office in the campus novel and demonstrate how campus porosity allows for several social powers to infiltrate campus space and affect power relations within campus space, either altering power hierarchies or changing the way people interact within the academic institution.

A Semi-private Porous Space: The Faculty Offices

It is not by a random word choice that many researchers²² in the field of education use the term "territory" to refer to Faculty offices. The word territory is endowed with a whole set of

²¹ The 24 guidance documents rescinded under President Trump's directives can be found in the website of The United States Department of Justice

<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/attorney-general-jeff-sessions-rescinds-24-guidance-documents>

²² Edney, J. J. *Human Territoriality*, Psychological Bulletin, 1974, 31, 959-975

connotations of power, dominance and control. Richard Zweigheft in his article “Personal Space in the Faculty Office” underlines: “It is no coincidence that important individual meetings between faculty and students take place on the territory of the higher status person; the office is home *turf* for the teacher, but for the visiting student it is another's territory and thus a potentially dangerous place” (emphasis added, 529). The term territory is endowed with a whole set of connotations of power, dominance and control. I would add that the faculty office is not only the territorial ground defining the interaction and power relations that form between teacher and student but also between faculty members. The faculty office is an under-examined academic space of the inner campus that dictates the spatial interaction of groups of people that belong to different power grids within the same academic space. The office as academic space bears a specific agenda. The very size of the office brings with it connotations of power. In their article on the case of faculty offices and their importance in academic space allocation Professors William Boyer and Stephen Happel stress the fact that “many faculty view their offices in a manner similar to how middle management in private industry views the size of desks—a symbol that signals their importance to others in the organization” (37). Apart from the size of the office, its location and view, the decoration of the office is also inextricably linked with matters of prestige and hierarchy. There has been extensive research on how personality and interior office design are linked. Research has proven that “the arrangement of an office (e.g., desk placement, status symbols, aesthetics, tidiness) [...] elicit(s) impressions of the officeholder in the minds of potential visitors” (McElroy 541). Therefore, it follows that even in educational institutions where the offices are designed in a way that mainly expresses the University mission statement there is still room for personal touches and spatial adjustments that can potentially paint the picture of the occupant of the office space. In Ivy League institutions the faculty office evokes the gravitas of the Professor as a figure of authority. Hence, the semantics of interior decoration require college professors’ offices to be heavily furnished and velvety draped to invest their occupants with an added air of sophistication. In contradistinction, the faculty office of the community college is fundamentally different. The architectural layout of community

_____, *Territoriality and Control: A Field Experiment*. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1975, 31, 1108-1115.

De Long, A. J. *Dominance-territorial relations in a small group*. Environment and Behaviour, 1970, 2, 170-191

colleges and that of their four-year counterparts reflect a difference in scope, purpose and educational philosophy. In community colleges, a visitor will not see:

an office designed solely for quiet reflective space [as that] does not serve the needs of such faculty members. Nor do private little cubicles, each with a desk and bookshelves. Social spaces that build community — group meeting rooms, adjoining kitchens, and offices visible and clearly accessible to students who need courage to even think about asking a professor for help — would support them far more. (Mellow B16)

In the novels examined in this section, namely *The Human Stain*, *Blue Angel*, *The Secret History* and *Straight Man* the faculty offices represented do not belong to community colleges but to four-year educational institutions that try to evoke the traditional image of the prestigious Professor whose office is awe-inspiring and imbued with the collegiate ideal. Roth's *The Human Stain*, Francine Prose's *Blue Angel* and Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* examine contemporary American culture through life within academic walls in northern New England, while Richard Russo's *Straight Man* deviates from the stereotypical prestigious setting of the American campus. Russo's plot unravels in the fictional small American town of Railton on the campus of West Central Pennsylvania State University where "promotion is a little like being proclaimed the winner in a shit-eating contest" (27) because of the budget concerns and other problems that stem from the neoliberal nature of education in America in the late nineties. The faculty offices represented in the campus novels under investigation in this section of the dissertation highlight the porous nature of campus space that brings together bordering areas and as a consequence bordering events and actions taking place in the faculty office space. More specifically, the representation of the office space in these novels gives me the opportunity to investigate my research questions more thoroughly. How is campus porosity evident in the novels examined? What are the social forces that penetrate university space and how is the interaction between space and people influenced because of these forces in each novel? What is the role of the office in accentuating hierarchies within campus space and what spatial stories are told by the faculty office in the campus novels investigated in this section? To answer these questions promptly, I offer a close reading of the faculty office as a porous campus space in *The Human Stain*, *Blue Angel*, *The Secret History* and *Straight Man*.

1.4. *The Human Stain* and *Blue Angel*: Faculty Offices in the Age of P.C.

The faculty office is one of the campus spaces that feature center stage in the campus novel thanks to its instrumentality in depicting power relations on campus space. In Athena College, the fictional college of Roth's *The Human Stain*, the faculty offices are housed in either one of the two main Halls: North Hall and Barton Hall. Silk's office was in North Hall, "the ivied, beautifully weathered colonial brick building where, for over a decade, Coleman Silk, as faculty dean, had occupied the office across from the president's suite" (*Human Stain* 153). It is in this office situated in the "college's architectural marker, the six-sided clock tower of North Hall, topped by the spire that was topped by the flag [and] could be seen the way the massive European cathedrals are discerned from the approaching roadways by those repairing for the cathedral town" (*Human Stain* 153) that Coleman Silk interviews Delphine Roux and eventually hires her. In this first meeting, their relationship is in part shaped by the office they find themselves in. It is the Dean's office and Delphine Roux, the interviewee, is "seated across from the dean" (186). The interaction between Coleman Silk and Delphine Roux is orchestrated in accordance with the spatial arrangement of the office. Primarily, it is at the higher status person's territory that such meetings take place so automatically Silk is the hierarchical superior of the two, while at the same time Roux's positioning across from the dean means that there is the dean's desk between them. The desk is an office prop that takes on the role of a physical barrier between the two people and eventually succeeds in separating and further distancing the two, exemplifying spatially the fact that the distance between them is both inscribed in space and in status. Richard L. Zweigenhaft, the Dana Professor of Psychology at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina, brings our attention to research that "suggests that individuals tend to sit opposite one another in competitive situations and adjacent to one another in cooperative and affiliative situations" (529). Delphine Roux is clearly at the opposite side of the power grid in this exchange since she is the interviewee, but the tables are clearly turned when five years later it is in Delphine's office that an exchange of a different nature takes place. Coleman Silk retires from Dean and returns to the classroom before retiring altogether, Delphine Roux has in the meantime become Chair of the Department of Languages and Literature, a department that has absorbed the Classics Department where Silk belongs, and it was now she who "was calling him to her office to be the interviewee" (190). Prof. Roux had received a complaint by one of her

students about Prof. Silk teaching two ancient Greek plays, namely *Hippolytus* and *Alcestis*, using, in the words of the student parroting Delphine, “engendered language” (191). She calls him to her office to discuss matters, but the conversation quickly turns bitter. What is interesting to note here is Delphine’s effort to capitalize on the fact that the conversation takes place on her own territorial ground and that it was now she who was sitting on the powerful end of the desk. Delphine in this scene in her office seems to relish the perks that go with her office and consequently with her academic identity and newfound status. Her office, her academic turf, is the space that makes it possible for her to reprimand Coleman Silk, the man she feels intimidates her and represents “a fossilized pedagogy” (193).

The space of the office transforms the identity of the individuals in it while at the same time, through its porous nature, allows for a connection with values coming from outside the gated campus community. In this case, political correctness is the core value that enters university space through its membrane-like walls and it changes university politics and relationships between agents within academic space. Having already examined the effects of political correctness in the classroom, this subsection pores into the repercussions of politically correct dogmatism in the office. As mentioned previously, the classroom was analyzed as a public space whereas the office is read as a semi-private sphere where two agents are conflicting or cooperating each time. In the case of *The Human Stain* Delphine Roux is not only empowered in light of her position but more importantly on the grounds of her righteous politically correct crusade on campus. In more detail, outside this office Delphine Roux is a young woman who would not be seen reprimanding a 71-year-old man. However, in this office Delphine Roux, is head of the Department of Languages and Literature, a completely different person who has the power to call Prof. Silk in order to lecture him for using “engendered language” (191). In this instance, she has all the authority invested in her not only by her position, but also because of the fact that she has an office of her own, a big, luxurious office bearing her name and title on the door. It should be noted that, the exchange between Delphine and Coleman takes place by day, during working hours. The space of the office takes on a completely different guise by night, off working hours. The same office does not invest her of any authority at night, when: “as she sat alone at the computer long after dark, the only person left in Barton Hall, unable to leave her office, unable to face one more night in her apartment without even a cat for company” (262), she was typing a personal ad to the classified section of *The New York Review of Books*. Philip

Roth presents Delphine Roux here as a lonely woman seeking some company and not as the powerful, opinionated Head of Department despite the fact that she is in the same office she spends so many hours on decision making and dictating. Therefore, Roth invites the reader towards the assumption that during working hours in her office Delphine is asexual, while it is at night, off working hours that her office becomes a private space, and it changes function as she becomes gendered. It is in this office that she writes and re-writes the personal ad seeking a male companion. “Youthful, petite, womanly, attractive, academically successful French-born scholar, Parisian background, Yale Ph.D., seeks mature man with backbone. Unattached. Independent. Witty. Lively. Defiant. Fortright. Well educated. Satirical spirit. Charm.” (273) Her office tells a different “spatial story” at night as she assumes a different identity in it. What happens next is even more indicative of the power space exercises on its occupants and vice versa, as Prof. Roux, who accidentally sends her personal ad by email to every member of her department, ransacks her own office in order to pretend there was a break-in and that it was in fact Silk who broke into her office and computer to send this email on her behalf and ridicule her. Again, at the crack of dawn, while there’s no one on campus Prof. Roux using her keys unlocks Barton Hall and takes matters in her own hands. She “pulls all the hanging files out of her drawers and hurls them on the floor. Empties the entire drawer. [...] whatever is piled on her desk, whatever is decorating her walls” (281-282). The space of her office imposes on Prof. Roux a certain behavior, a set of normative behavior which she unsettles, upsets, and transgresses making a different use of space. Her act of vandalism against the office takes another more profound meaning, as by attacking the office as plain space Delphine is actually attacking a whole set of mentality that she now finds dysfunctional and suffocating for her. For Delphine it is not political correctness that makes her office space unbearable but the academic identity and paraphernalia that go with it.

The Professor’s office in *The Human Stain* is a spatial symbol of power akin to another political symbol, the Oval Office. These two seemingly different spaces converge in Roth’s narrative right from the start of the novel. The semiology of the Oval Office comes into stark contrast with the sexual scandal that unravels within its walls. The Oval Office with the Presidential Seal on the ceiling and the two flags behind the President’s desk is invested with powerful connotations and reverence: decisions that define the nation and even the world’s fate are signed within those walls. The fact that President Clinton used this unlikely space for his sexual dalliances turned the private into public and destroyed his reputation. In a similar vein, the

novel opens with the chapter “Everyone Knows,” which begins with the narrator Nathan Zuckerman talking about Coleman Silk’s confession that “he was having an affair with a thirty-four-year-old cleaning woman who worked down at the college” (1). This confession is all the more shocking since it is coming from the lips of seventy-one-year-old former Dean of Athena College Coleman Silk. This shocking revelation is coupled with commentary on the Bill Clinton/Monica Lewinski affair. While the national imagination is ignited with images of the “youthful middle-aged president and a brash, smitten twenty-one-year-old employee carrying on in the Oval Office like two teenage kids in a parking lot” (2), a fellow colleague tries to convince Coleman Silk that the University community feels the same about him. Delphine Roux, a professor of Languages and Literature, writes Coleman the anonymous note: “Everyone knows you’re sexually exploiting an abused, illiterate woman half your age” (38). This “everyone knows” note is in fact loaded with significance about what no one really knows. Although Coleman and Faunia develop their relationship outside of academic walls, unlike what happened in the Clinton scandal, Coleman’s identity is so intertwined with Athena College that the private becomes the public allowing Roux to write this note. The note represents what in all likelihood would be the popular consensus about Coleman and Faunia’s relationship. As Nathan Zuckerman accurately affirms to Coleman, it “doesn’t conform to decency’s fantasy blueprint for who should be in bed with a man of your years and your position” (42). Coleman Silk is a 71-year-old classics professor, and she is a 34-year-old illiterate (or so she claims) janitor. They meet and form a romantic relationship after Silk’s resignation from Athena College. Coleman is aware of this fact; he even mentions it to his friend Zuckerman: “Forget that I was once the Dean where she now cleans the toilets” (40). In all probability, this relationship would never have happened if Coleman Silk was still Dean and simply passed by Faunia, dressed in her janitorial uniform, in one of the campus corridors. A happenstance meeting within the inner campus would elicit a normative behavior dictated by the unwritten rules of inner campus space. They wouldn’t even exchange a word apart from a cursory greeting, as within campus space their identities are not simply gendered, they are not a man and woman, but a respected figure of campus authority and a member of the cleaning crew helping in the maintenance of the campus. The hierarchies dictated by the place they work and interact in would not permit any other kind of relationship being formed there and then. However, their chance meeting outside the campus where Coleman is just an old widower and Faunia a young divorcee allows them to form a sort of liaison that

would be impossible had they met on campus. Campus spaces would dictate a different kind of relationship between the Dean of the College and a cleaning lady.

In contradistinction, the inner campus does not dictate the same “spatial story” to “Smoky” Hollenbeck. “Smoky” Hollenbeck—the head of the cleaning and maintenance crew on campus—was “recruiting girlfriends from his own custodial staff and [...] rendezvousing with them right on campus” (40–41). Hollenbeck, who had an affair with Faunia too, had remarkably well-hidden “trysting places [...] tucked away in remote corners of the old buildings that no one but the boss of the college physical plant could know existed or have access to” (40). Reckless though it is for Smoky to indulge his sexual appetites on campus—that is not only his working place but also a place revered and respected in society—he seems to derive a sense of power through having sex in a place where he is something other than just a man; on campus he is the boss of the janitorial staff, outside campus he is an ex-college football star, a father of five, a man vaguely involved with the cleaning crew of the local campus. It is within the campus premises that he feels empowered, it is therefore not surprising that he chooses remote spots in the inner campus to play out his sexual fantasies. Consequently, campus space takes on different meanings for different people interacting with it: both Smoky and Silk are authorial figures on campus (sharing different degrees of respectability), but while Smoky uses the campus space to enhance his power and take advantage of it, Silk being a man “who led virtually the whole of life within the bounds of the communal academic society” (41) does not need to do this. The impact of the authority attributed to Prof. Silk by the campus and the authority it entails is so powerful that it simply seems to follow him even outside the campus.

It is interesting to note that political correctness exerts power mainly in spaces of the inner campus, that is within the campus classrooms, professors’ offices and amphitheaters, as the outer campus is untouched by the rigidity of such discourse. A very telling example of this is the incident in the campus park where Prof. Silk overhears a conversation about Monica Lewinski and Bill Clinton. Three faculty men are discussing the sexual scandal that shook America back in 1998 using very obscene language and actually supporting the view that Clinton was “insufficiently corrupt” (149). They call Monica Lewinski “a total narcissist, a conniving little bitch, the most exhibitionistic Jewish girl in all the history of Beverly Hills, utterly corrupted by privilege” and they wonder “If he can’t read Monica Lewinski, how can he read Saddam Hussein? If he can’t

read and outfox Monica Lewinski, the guy shouldn't be president" (148). Using street-talk, not inhibited in the least by the fact that they are on campus the three young professors suggest that President Clinton should have had anal sex with Monica Lewinski because that is how "you create loyalty" (148), by giving somebody "something they can't talk about [...] you involve them in a mutual transgression, and you have mutual corruption" (149). The three young men, new to the faculty since Silk's time, were relaxing in the campus park "drinking bottled water or decaf out of containers, just back from a workout on the town tennis courts" (151), the obscene language they are using, so incongruous with their image suggests that for them the outer campus is markedly different from the inner campus. The outer campus functions as a kind of Agora, where people simply meet and commend and none of them is chastised for what they say or what they support. It is a public space within the campus shared by professors, staff and students alike, but it doesn't fall in the category of public campus spaces restrained by political correctness, as the amphitheater or the classroom is. My assertion is that the inner campus space allows for a more significant openness to cultural values from outside the constraints of the gated community, while the outer campus space follows a more relaxed adherence to such rules since the spatial openness makes the people interacting there feel more comfortable and open. To follow up on the Agora analogy, I will cite Richard Sennett's lecture on "Democratic Spaces" at the Berlage Institute (2004) where he expertly distinguishes between the deliberative and associative model of democracy clarifying these sociological notions with spatial examples; the Pnyx and the Agora. He explains that the deliberative model has to do with the political notion that democratic procedures may often impose a decision which citizens must obey to without necessarily endorsing it since it is the voice of the many, while the associative model is concerned with community building in the sense that people who differ—in opinion, race, class—can still come together and express their opinions not only tolerating each other but more importantly than that coming in direct contact with each other (40-43). Sennett further clarifies that Pnyx is the ultimate example of deliberative democracy in so far as citizens surrender their free will in voting thus submitting to the democratic wish of the many in a very public, visual way in a theatrical space where everyone can see how you vote. This is reminiscent of the Foucauldian notion of surveillance; Sennett underlines that for Ancient Athenians "visual surveillance is necessary for the people to take responsibility for their words" (43). In opposition to the deliberative spaces of democracy stands Agora; the central space in the city, a combination of marketplace, a little space called Heliaia which was a law court and place

of prayer. In none of these designated areas decision-making could take place. Agora is a multifunctional place, Sennett emphasizes, it has nothing to do with the political monofunctionality reflected in the Pnyx (43). In the Agora bodily meanings are prioritized over verbal signs, hence people associate with each other more freely, outside rules and procedures in more physical propinquity. At this point it is most noteworthy to observe the notion that public space has no building in it: “It is an empty zone that defines the convention. Thus, an undefined, amorphous space may elicit the overcoming of passivity and mere tolerance than the space inflected with form” (44). In *The Human Stain* the classroom and the faculty office function more in the notion of deliberative democracy whereby a consensus is to be always respected, whereas the outer campus, unfettered by built-space constraints, takes on the guise of an associative democratic space where people express their opinion freely knowing that they do not participate in decision making.

Overhearing the Agora-like conversation of his colleagues Prof. Silk wrongly assumes that the people who participate in this “rough talk, pretty raw for academic banter” (151) could have “served as a cadre of resistance” (151) when he was being accused of racism. What he neglects to take into consideration is the political monofunctionality of the inner campus space that would serve as an open Bema, or forum for his colleagues to vote for or against him in a very public way. Considering the politically correct rules and regulations imbuing campus space at the time, no one would openly support a dissenter of these rules for fear that they would be similarly ostracized from campus space. Knowing the power of campus politics, Silk quickly dismisses the thought that he could really find support in his colleagues: “No, no. Up on the campus, where not everyone’s a tennis buddy, this sort of force tends to get dissipated in jokes” (151). Silk’s comment rings true since on campus collegiality is a term defined differently than in other workplaces where co-workers might even rally together to support one another.

Both in *The Human Stain* and in *Blue Angel* the reader is faced with the representation of college professors who are unsympathetic—even hostile—towards their colleagues in need of support. In my opinion, the influence of power on campus is so great that never fails to dictate human behavior and orchestrate interpersonal relationships. Silk is right: “up on the campus [...] not everyone is a tennis buddy” (151). During Silk’s persecution in the aftermath of the “spooks” incident, no one rallies for him. The lack of support from his older colleagues to whom Silk had caused inconvenience when he was Dean, makes sense, but what is surprising is the lack of support

from those he had singlehandedly selected and hired when they were nothing but recently graduated. The fluctuation of power among faculty members exemplifies the constant shift of influence within academic space. Coleman Silk confounds his bitterness to his only friend Zuckerman: “These shenanigans were so much jockeying for power. To gain a bigger say in how the college is run. They were just exploiting a useful situation” (17). Zuckerman is not an academic, he is a writer and Silk wants him to write a book called “Spooks” on his behalf spewing all the bitterness of the unfair treatment he received without deserving it from Athena College. After a life dedicated to academia, Silk is alienated from all his acquaintances in Athena College, as if he is ostracized for tainting democratic practices with his refusal to obey to campus rules and regulations revered by all of his colleagues.

Prof. Swenson has a similarly bitter experience in *Blue Angel* when he is persecuted for indecent conduct with a student. Suddenly, Swenson is the scapegoat of an entire institution’s quest to obliterate sexual harassment from college grounds. Even colleagues he considered his friends do not help him while the entire college—from the librarian to the last student—is called to testify against him in something resembling eerily the puritan witch-hunts. Carlin Romano, in his article “On Collegiality, College-style,” talks about what leads faculty members to treat each other with a lack of genuineness. Romano coins a term that deftly describes faculty relationships: “colleagueality.” Unlike collegiality, colleagueality describes the “backbiting, envy, irresolvable feuds, hidden agendas, contempt, cowardice” present in many faculty departments (B6). Although, this behavior is not surprising in big corporations where executives fight for power and money, it is unexpected and almost shocking in universities where the intelligentsia supposedly teaches the young members of society about higher endeavors. As Romano suggests in his article, faculty members fake a façade of a connected, civilized group whereas in reality they are often at odds with each other in their quest for power, recognition, and advancement.

In *Blue Angel* the relationship between office space and identity is reflected in the relationship of Prof. Swenson with his own office. Many critics have singled out Prose’s Swenson as the quintessential professor in crisis in campus fiction. Lorna Sage describes him as “a 47-year-old college professor who teaches creative writing, a blocked novelist and family man whose life has been passing in tenured tranquility while inwardly he seethes with discontent” (2). William Tierney describes Swenson as a likeable, unremarkable, middle-aged Professor who has been teaching at “mediocre Euston College in rural Vermont for twenty years” (169) and who is

“respectably middle-class” (170). While the majority of critics focus on Swenson’s professional identity and middle-aged crisis, I am underlying the significance of place in *Blue Angel* by offering a place-based analysis of his character. I am, thus, demonstrating that Prof. Swenson’s identity is defined by the academic space around him, and in so far as his relationship with his office is concerned a different spatial story is told than the one intended by the campus convention. In Prof. Swenson’s case, the power hierarchy is reversed, and his treatment of office space is indicative of how he views himself in academic space.

In more detail, Prof. Swenson feels disenchanting by academia due to its many shortcomings, one of which is the absurdity of political correctness regulations put in place on campus and another being the professional dead-end he experiences, these feelings of inadequacy to cope with his academic identity are in turn reflected in the use he makes of campus space; this bears proof to the fact that his identity is conceptually and spatially framed within the porous office space he interacts with. Swenson feels suffocating in his academic identity and this feeling of a trivial, dead-end life is promptly inscribed on college space due to the porosity of campus walls that permits an interpenetration of building and identity formation. This is further evidenced in his treatment of the office space. When asked in class about his office hours Prof. Swenson is taken aback:

Office hours tomorrow? He schedules two conferences per semester, though actually, he’d rather not go into his office at all. He’d rather be home writing. Trying to write. If he has to be in his office, he likes to sit and think. Or jerk off, or make long distance calls on the college’s nickel. (31)

His office is found in Mather Hall, a “turreted Victorian firetrap [...] built on the site of the lake drained by Elijah Euston after one of his daughters drowned herself in its murky depths” (39). The gothic architecture of the turreted Victorian building conjures an air of respectability and academic prominence. Prof. Swenson, who is going through an identity crisis, treats his office in an un-academic way. He either disrupts the spatial story of the Professor’s office by engaging in un-academic activities in it, or, as he admits he does not spend time in it at all: “Swenson’s study has a yeasty smell of sweaters left in a drawer. How long since he’s been here? He honestly can’t remember” (86). Swenson’s academic identity is intertwined with the office space he is allotted. Similarly to Prof. Roux in *The Human Stain*, who in vandalizing her office is symbolically tearing

down her academic identity, Prof. Swenson ignores his office in the same way that he wants to let go of his academic identity which he feels disenchanted with. In their first meeting in his office, Prof. Swenson has forgotten about the student conference and rushes to his office only to find Angela waiting for him outside his office. When they do enter the office, Prof. Swenson tries to assume the professional pose of the Professor who is advising a student, but Angela refuses to fit the stereotype. Angela simply cannot sit still. Her refusal to sit down across him on the desk in the way prescribed by the unwritten Teacher-Student etiquette that we witness in *The Human Stain* sets their relationship in an unconventional power grid.

Angela flops backward into the leather armchair across from his desk. First, she crosses her legs on the seat in a failed attempt at half a lotus, then scoots down and pulls her knees up to her chest, then moves back and puts her feet on the ground and taps her ring on the chair arm. Swenson's never seen anyone having so much trouble sitting. (88)

Angela is more comfortable standing and cruising around his office while he remains seated behind his desk. "Angela sidles along the walls, inspecting his vintage postcards and framed photos, pausing to stare at Chekhov, Tolstoy, Virginia Woolf" (92). Her inspection of the place is uncharacteristic of the familiar Teacher-Student relationship that is played out in Faculty offices, while at the same time equally uncharacteristic is Swenson's reluctance to view his office as his "academic turf": "It's been so long since anyone-including himself-has noticed what he's chosen to surround himself with" (93). The behavior of both Swenson and Angela transgresses the boundaries set by the faculty office walls. It is especially interesting to note Angela's "body ballet" in the office; her body is restlessly moving as opposed to sitting still on one edge of the Professor's desk, she is thus not conforming to the student role she is endowed with by the space she occupies. David Seamon believed that everyday movements are related to the spaces people move in and out and take on the form of a habit. Such movements are unconscious, and they exemplify the:

inherent capacity of the body to direct behaviors of the person intelligently, and thus function as a special kind of subject which expresses itself in a preconscious way usually described by such words as 'automatic', 'habitual', 'involuntary', and 'mechanical'. (155)

Seamon calls this subconscious sequence of movements a body-ballet. When such movements are sustained and reproduced over time then this body-ballet is called a "time-space

routine” and when many time-space routines are repeated within a specific location then, Seamon explains, a “place-ballet” emerges. This place-ballet is an “evocative metaphor for our experience of place” that suggests that “places are performed on a daily basis” (Creswell 34). Seamon suggests that someone’s status as an insider or outsider in a place is determined to a great extent by their ability to participate in these daily performances, the “place-ballet.” Angela does not conform to the “place-ballet” dictated to her by the space she is in. The fact that she seems to ignore the movement routine required by the Professor’s office renders her at the same time an outsider and a dissenter. Her restless body signifies her reluctance to conform to the law of the academic space. De Certeau stresses the fact that “there is no law that is not inscribed on bodies” (139). “Through all sorts of initiations (in rituals, at school, etc), it transforms them into tables of the law, into living tableaux of rules and customs, into actors in the drama organized by the social order” (139). Here, Angela refuses to be transformed into a table of the law by defying rules with her body. Her body image has already been rendered unconventional by the multiple piercings, her neon-orange and lime hair, her punk attire; in the same way, her body refuses to follow the normative behavior prescribed by the spatial story of the faculty office.

This also foreshadows the imminent power reversal; Angela is not the powerless student nor is Swenson the powerful academic. Both characters assume alternative roles that are played upon a different level than the one inscribed on their bodies by the University space they occupy. Angela is not only a student under the authority of her Professor; she is also a writer and a woman. Her power lies in her literary talent, which is superior to Swenson’s fading one and in her seductive power that she is soon to set in motion. This specific power narrative re-writes the spatial story of Swenson’s office.

1.5. The Faculty Office in *The Secret History*: A Study in Elitism

In Donna Tartt’s *The Secret History* the inner campus spaces are shaken by political forces of a different kind; in Hamden College it is not political correctness that imbues the campus porous structure defining hierarchical relationships, but it is the power of class stratification and elitism that delineates spatial arrangements and governs inner campus relations. This is going to be my focus in this section of the dissertation where I will be dealing with the power of campus porosity

to bring elitism to the fore in academia, a place where class stratification is supposed to be eliminated in favor of intellectual pursuits and a life of the spirit. My point is, that a spatial analysis of the Professor's office in *The Secret History* reveals a direct relation between academic space and class elites, one that further strengthens my argument that campus space is porous thus allowing social forces from outside the academic world infiltrate academia and affect the interaction between people and space. Renowned critic John Mullan called *The Secret History* "a modern classic" and went on to deconstruct the elements of fiction of the novel in weekly articles in the *Guardian Saturday Pages* during a whole month praising its structure, Tartt's ingenuity and talent in seeing "the dark potential" of high pretensions mixing with human weakness. Along the same lines, Michiko Kakutani described the novel as an imaginary combination of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Euripides' *Bacchae* "set against the backdrop of Bret Easton Ellis's *Rules of Attraction* and told in the elegant, ruminative voice of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*" (18). Donna Tartt's much praised first novel features an elite campus as the setting in which to unravel the intricacies of power relations in space. In this section, as mentioned previously, I will be shedding light to the peculiar space where Julian Morrow, the Classics professor of Hampden College, both holds his classes with the select coterie of Hellenophiles students and uses as his office space.

Hampden College, a thinly veiled Bennington College-Tartt's Alma Mater, is depicted as the quintessential Vermont College: small, elite, picturesque, and in New England. The narrator of *The Secret History*, Richard Papen had been in love with Hampden Campus even before laying eyes on it; through the college's brochure. Richard, a nineteen-year-old boy from Plano, California is inundated with escape fantasies from his rather bleak surroundings. Richard admits having spent dozens of hours during his senior year in high school studying Hampden College catalogue; "studying the photographs as though if (he) stared at them long enough (he) would by some kind of osmosis, be transported into the clear, pure silence (10). Richard lived his whole life in Plano California, a hot, dusty place, full of harsh, transparent light that exposed reality for what it was. Richard opts for the foggy, autumnal, mysterious twilight of Vermont that leaves space for dreaming and imagination. Full of faith in the historical importance of the place and motivated by his love for the picturesque, Richard applies for the position despite his poor financial situation and his parents' disapproval. He is not deterred by such obstacles as for him becoming part of Hampden means more than simply escaping the dull existence of his parents; it means fashioning

a new identity for himself, creating his own home, just like Jay Gatsby with whom he feels he shares “certain tragic similarities” (79).

Hamden campus does not fall short of Richard’s expectations, but appearances can be deceptive, as the very title of the novel suggests. As literary critic Pieter Steinz has observed, Tartt borrows the title *The Secret History* from the sixth century court historian Procopius’ chronicles of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, because both books give accounts of “a horrible reality underlying a façade of normality” (25). This façade of normality is soon to be broken by an intruder to the academic world of Hamden. Richard, an outsider in all respects and purposes, notices the coterie of the five select Greek students and wants to be one of them. These students are described as “intensely cultivated” (32) and distinct from the rest of the college in various ways: they are wearing pale clothes, as opposed to the black-clad student body at Hamden, they walk together around campus, they take classes with Julian²³ Morrow, a very eccentric teacher who insists that students need only one teacher, and, most importantly, they are geographically separated from the rest of the college since their class is situated in the far end of the campus, in a building which is abandoned. This place is called the Lyceum. This is a reference to Ancient Greek Academics, most commonly associated with Aristotle. The Lyceum at Hamden is located near a grove of trees exactly like the original Lyceum in Classical Athens. The Ancient Lyceum was connected to one of the manifestations of Apollo (Apollo Lykeios)²⁴ so Hamden’s Lyceum is the haven of the Apollonian spirit where only Julian and his students are allowed and only, they are privileged enough to experience the sublime during their classes there. As a place the Lyceum is very powerful in an academic, Apollonian sense; it is the realm of reason. In the Lyceum it is not only the world of non-academics which is excluded but also the world of chaos and disorder. It is not coincidental that after Bunny’s murder the grove outside the Lyceum “was

²³ Tartt’s choice of Prof. Morrow’s name is not random. JULIAN (m) From the Roman name Julianus, which was derived from JULIUS. This was the name of the last pagan Roman emperor. The reader can make an association between the name and the role of Prof. Julian Morrow in the pagan rituals his students organized. In general, Tartt’s novel is rich in intertextual references that lend *The Secret History* to multiple readings and inferences.

²⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica, “Lyceum”,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/352514/Lyceum> (9/9/2015)

trampled and littered like a fairground” (395). The crowds of people helping in the search for Bunny had trespassed this selective place and, in a sense, desecrated it. The boundaries marking and differentiating the inner from the outer campus are in this respect more tangible. The Lyceum itself belongs to the built space and is part of the inner campus which is spatially dubbed Apollonian in the sense that it represents a life dedicated to the intellect. This dichotomy between the inner and outer campus is more strongly felt in the desecration of the outer campus space. This desecration could be interpreted as a violation of the world of reason by the spirit of chaos (Dionysus). It is reminiscent of the war between these binary opposites: the Apollonian and the Dionysian.

The Hamden Lyceum, a primarily Apollonian place, is not for the uninitiated. Its material construction heightens this inaccessibility. Richard himself admits that finding the Lyceum “wasn’t easy at all” (15). He describes it as “a small building on the edge of campus, old and covered with ivy in such a manner as to be almost indistinguishable from its landscape. Downstairs were lecture halls and classrooms, all of them empty, with clean blackboards and freshly waxed floors” (15). Julian’s Greek class congregates in a room that can be found only by following a “staircase-small and badly lit-in the far corner of the building” (15). The classroom’s privileged status is conveyed by the difficulty of accessing it, both metaphorically and literally/physically. Richard expresses his wish to join the Greek class as he feels that only by grouping with them will he ever belong somewhere:

I envied them [the Greek students], and found them attractive; moreover, this strange quality, far from being natural, gave every indication of having been intensely cultivated. [...] I wanted to be like them. It was heady to think that these qualities were acquired ones and that, perhaps, that was the way I might learn them. (32-33)

In this indicative “window” to Richard’s thoughts, we recognize the traces of Bourdieu’s cultural capital; Bourdieu talks about the cultural capital as that which will infallibly identify you to others as a person of a certain culture with a likely trajectory in life (471). He divides it in three sub-categories: the embodied state (pronunciation, dialect), the objectified state (cultural goods, such as books, records) and the institutionalized state (the educational qualifications one acquires). Richard who comes from a working-class environment and whose cultural background is very low struggles to go to Hampden in order to acquire the institutionalized cultural capital

that will enable him to become one of the others; the bourgeois students he so much admires. At the same time, Bourdieu's reference to the objectified state of cultural capital is highlighted by his predilection for libraries and books. The embodied state he hopes to acquire is reflected in his realization that "it was heady to think that these qualities were acquired ones and, perhaps, that was the way I might learn them" (*Secret History* 32-33). Richard lies about his roots and tries to emulate bourgeois tastes and behavior throughout the novel in his effort to be included in the group of Greek students. Bunny, who is the least affluent of them all but is extremely sensitive to commodities that define class hierarchies, incessantly afflicts Richard with comments that always verge on exposing his modest origins. Richard admits that Bunny "Even in the happiest times [...] made fun of my Californian accent, my secondhand overcoat and my room barren of tasteful bibelots" (250) and that he would play tricks on him just to embarrass him in front of their friends. Richard knows that there is no way he can really infiltrate this tight group of elite students other than knowledge.

For Richard it is through acquiring the cultural capital that he can belong not only with the elite students but also fit in their exclusive and luxurious classroom. The inaccessibility of Julian Morrow's class was touched upon before in this part; however, it is also important to talk about the unconventional office/classroom space and its rich symbolism so that we can dissect Richard's topophilic predilection for this special space of learning.

Richard describes Morrow's office/classroom as if he is in an aesthetic trance:

It was a beautiful room, not an office at all, and much bigger than it looked from the outside—airy and white, with a high ceiling and a breeze fluttering in the starched curtains. In the corner, near a low bookshelf, was a big round table littered with teapots and Greek books, and there were flowers everywhere, roses and carnations and anemones, on his desk, on the table, in the windowsills. (28)

Morrow's office space—which serves as a classroom when he meets with his group of select classicists—is definitely a unique space unlike any other on campus. It is more like a personal space rather than the professor's offices usually represented in campus novels. Morrow's office space bears proof to the porous nature of campus walls, since Morrow's personal traits overflow and interact with space creating a classroom / office that is neither a classroom nor an office in the typical sense of what academic space regulates. This personalization of the office/classroom

space posits Morrow in the opposite grid of the typified academic who conforms to his institution's rules and fits the stereotypical image of the professor. Morrow's eccentricity overflows and is inscribed on his office space. Richard's description acquires an olfactory quality when apart from the room itself he goes on to describe the smells that inundate and characterize this space: "The roses were especially fragrant; their smell hung rich and heavy in the air, mingled with the smell of bergamot, and black China tea, and the faint inky scent of camphor. Breathing deep, I felt intoxicated" (28). The sense of smell adds to Richard's aesthetic sensitivities and heightens his perception of the room he craves to be part of. The description of Morrow's room does not only emphasize Richard's aestheticism but more importantly it underscores the almost sacred nature of this space of learning. Tartt does not only describe a room full of beautiful knickknacks and intellectual paraphernalia but goes so far as to liken it to a Byzantine church through the beguiled eyes of Richard.

Everywhere, I looked was something beautiful—Oriental rugs, porcelains, tiny paintings like jewels—a dazzle of fractured color that struck me as if I had stepped into one of those Byzantine churches that are so plain on the outside; inside, the most paradisaical painted eggshell of gilt and *tesserae*. (28)

The religion related metaphors that describe the place of Morrow's office mirror the cult-like devotion of the students he teaches as well as the content of the material taught. When Richard enters Morrow's office for a kind of an interview with him in order to be accepted in the selective class of the classicists, he admits that despite the aesthetically pleasing office décor he "was still captive in his office" (29). The meeting between professor and student in Morrow's office is unlike any of the student professor interactions described earlier in this chapter. Prof. Morrow does not sit behind a desk like Prof. Silk or Roux in *The Human Stain* nor like Prof. Swenson in *Blue Angel*; he sits in an armchair by the window (28) and invites Richard to sit in a similar manner too. His questions to Richard are not following a scripted format for a student interview but are rather personal in nature while the very décor of the office is not only unconventional but also inappropriate for an institution of higher learning. Morrow's space can be interpreted as an extension of his eccentric personality while the seating arrangement both reflects and establishes an alternative professor-student relationship. The professor-student relationship developed between Morrow and his students moves away from the typical

representation of teacher-student relationship in the novels discussed in this chapter and is dully inscribed on campus space.

The office scenes in *Blue Angel* depict Prof. Swenson positioning himself behind his desk thus placing a physical barrier between himself and his student Angela. The same holds true for Dean Silk when he hires Prof. Roux; he uses the desk as a barrier between him and his interviewee therefore signifying the hierarchical difference in their respective statuses. Julian Morrow's office behavior does not follow the blueprint of how a professor should conduct with a student as his office space breaks free from academic symbolisms. In fact, Morrow and his students' relationship resembles more that of a father and his children or that of a cult leader and his devotees rather than that of a college professor and his students and his office space reflects this kind of relationship. His insistence that they only have one professor, himself, and that they quit all of their other classes to concentrate on the study of classics with him show a complete disregard for college regulations. Morrow's views oppose those of the academic community of scholars: "I believe that having a great diversity of teachers is harmful and confusing for a young mind, in the same way I believe that it is better to know one book intimately than a hundred superficially" (32). In the same manner, the spatial arrangement of his classroom and his style of teaching oppose the idea of the campus as the academical village:

Julian's classes met in his office. They were very small classes, and besides, no classroom could have approached it in terms of comfort or privacy. He had a theory that students learned better in a pleasant, non-scholastic atmosphere; and that luxurious hothouse of a room, flowers everywhere in the dead of winter, was some Platonic microcosm of what he thought a classroom should be. (34)

Nevertheless, despite Morrow's eccentric classroom and peculiar style of teaching and conduct he is still the teacher in the student-teacher dichotomy. He does not function in loco parentis; he does not forgive his students for murdering Bunny nor does he take them back as a magnanimous parent would do but instead he chooses to disappear from Hamden College. Richard remarks that "he kept a gentle but firm distance from his students" (365) and although he was fonder of his classics students rather than the next professor would have been, he still did not develop with them a "relationship of equals, and our classes with him ran more along the lines of benevolent dictatorship than democracy" (365). Despite Morrow's isolation from

campus—both spatially and in terms of mentality—his teaching persona is attuned to the script required from him as a college professor. ““I am your teacher”, he once said, “because, I know more than you do”” (365). This emphasis on the un-democratic elements in education is observed throughout *The Secret History* narrative where the classroom/ office is described: everything from the privacy and exclusivity of the locale to the belief that the classicist students are special and selected among many to be taught separately. Morrow’s classroom / office layout and decoration tell the spatial story of the unconventional almost religious influence he exerts on his select few students strengthening my point that space is intertwined with power relations. In this case, Morrow’s class/ office tells the story that not everyone is welcome in Morrow’s class but a handful of people, an aristocracy of learning. The Professor’s office/classroom in *The Secret History* tells a different spatial story than the one intended by the original designer of the built space: instead of a classroom/ office that would accept all students, and be a democratic locus of learning, Morrow’s office/ classroom becomes an elitist place that selectively accepts the chosen ones in a cult-like manner. The porous walls of academia allow for a different spatial story to be told thus verifying what Stewart Brand says of buildings: “All buildings are predictions. All predictions are wrong”.

1.6. The Neo-Liberal Office: The Faculty Offices in *Straight Man*

Straight Man (1997) is Richard Russo’s fourth novel. It was met with critical appraisal at the time of its publication and was immediately categorized as a campus satire, loyal to the tradition of David Lodge and Kingsley Amis. Despite its wildly satirical tone and absurd campus-based incidents, *Straight Man* is not a light-hearted novel but a social commentary on the neo-liberal values that corrode academia’s purpose in society. The plot line that Richard Russo follows is straightforward and reminiscent of many campus novels; the novel describes the academic adventures of a fifty-year old, one-time novelist turned professor, turned interim chair of the English Department in West Central Pennsylvania University, a state university. This time, the influences on academic space move away from p.c. politics and elitism and are infused by the more pragmatic forces of neo-liberalism that manage to seep through the pores of the campus walls and significantly impact both the built-space and the agents interacting within the membranous gates of West Central Pennsylvania campus. However, since the book was

published in the height of political correctness—late nineties—there are numerous instances where p.c. politics are observed shaping campus conduct; the focal point is hardly that, though. In this section, the faculty offices will be analyzed through the scope of neo-liberal politics affecting American higher education in the late nineties.

Neo-liberalism, according to Harvey, is defined as “a project to achieve the restoration of class power in the wake of the economic crisis of the 1970s” (*A Brief History of Neoliberalism* 16). He further explicates the concept of neo-liberalism as follows:

in the first instance [it is] a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-beings can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. (*A Brief History* 2)

In higher education neo-liberalism is a force that commodifies knowledge and validates a free-market logic in universities. More specifically, “the neoliberal university is marketised, privatised, commercialised, franchised corporatised, managerialised, vocationalised, technologised, surveilled and securitised, and increasingly individualised, infantilised and casualised” (Kenway, Boden, Fahey 262). In Russo’s *Straight Man* the satire is directed towards this neoliberal model of higher education that is primarily inscribed on the spatial universe of the fictional campus.

Two of the basic organizational “crutches” of neoliberalism in higher education is managerialism²⁵ and the commodification of knowledge. Both of these aspects are depicted in spatial terms in *Straight Man*. The managerialist nature of higher education is exemplified in the appointment of Campus CEO, Dickie Pope and the description of his lavish office on campus while the commodification of knowledge is evident in the construction of the new College of Technical Careers Building.

²⁵ “Managerialism combines management knowledge and ideology to establish itself systemically in organisations and society while depriving owners, employees (organisational-economical) and civil society (social-political) of all decision-making powers. Managerialism justifies the application of managerial techniques to all areas of society on the grounds of superior ideology, expert training, and the exclusive possession of managerial knowledge necessary to efficiently run corporations and societies” (Kikauer 7).

Early in the novel, Hank Deveraux ironically describes the nature of the results of scarcity on higher education: “Every year the threatened budget cuts are implemented [...] What will probably be next year is more belt tightening, more denied sabbaticals, an extension of the hiring freeze, a reduced photocopy budget” (9). Moreover, what is hanging over the heads of faculty members of the English Department, where Hank serves as interim chairman, is “persistent rumors of an impending purge” (51) that will decimate the English Department at West Central Pennsylvania University, a third-rate school. Dickie Pope, campus executive officer, has asked Hank to draft a list of faculty members that he considers deadweight so that he can let them go. When Pope was hired two years before there were rumors circulating about him being called to purge West Central. His “strengths were in the areas of budget and fund-raising not academics, so a rumor quickly began circulating that he’d been hired to preside over budget cuts and executions, though so far he’s done little more than absorb into his own budget academic positions freed by retirements...” (113).

In the construction of the new Technical Careers building on campus there is evidence of the demise of the Humanities on campus, audaciously replaced by the technocrats. With the university pouring all its resources—however scarce—into departments like Technical Careers or in Management and Computer Sciences it is impossible for the Humanities Department to be granted the budget they need to keep the adjunct faculty let alone hire new stuff. The neoliberal university is governed by the rules of the free market, so it defeats the technocrats’ logic to invest money on something as commonplace and impossible to “sell” as Literature and the written word. Dickie Pope is there to create the university the public will want to buy, his job as campus CEO emphasizes the corporate nature of the university in the modern world and his neoliberal tactics are dully inscribed on the spatiality of the West Central campus. The collision of the tenured and the unionized staff faced with staff cuts and programs shifts that aim to absorb budgets from the liberal arts and suffuse them to the technical school is evidenced in the construction of this multimillion-dollar building that targets at boosting student enrollment and maximizing profit.

I argue that the description of Dickie Pope’s lavish office on campus is consonant with the neoliberalist ideological wave that swept higher education in the nineties, and which is the point of satire for Russo. Pope’s office is situated in the administrative building on campus

which has been tongue-in-cheek—but also very fittingly—called the Vatican ever since Dickie Pope was hired. The moniker “Vatican” brings connotations of absolute—almost religious in nature—power and Dickie Pope is in essence the Pope of West Central, revered and feared by most of the staff. In a telling scene from *Straight Man*, Hank is waiting in the outer office for Dickie Pope to see him and he thinks to himself that Pope:

provides no reading matter in his waiting room, the walls of which are turquoise fabric upholstered. But then they don’t provide Catholics with magazines outside the confessional either, and those who visit Dickie’s Vatican are either penitents or supplicants. Apparently, we’re to use the time contemplating our sins and desires. (152)

The spatial arrangement of the CEO’s office is consistent with the power relations exercised on campus. The administration building itself “affords a sweeping view of the campus all the way to the duck pond” (166); its privileged positioning on campus agrees with the role of the administration in a university’s organizational structure: the administration oversees all campus practices and is responsible for the allocation of funds for educational programs and facilities. Its Panopticon status on campus is further accentuated by its undistracted view to the entire campus. Fittingly enough the person in charge of the administration of the university is given the largest and most luxuriously decorated office. Dickie Pope’s office space is separated into two rooms; one is the turquoise upholstered outer office that serves as the waiting room for people who wish to see him and the other is his actual office, which is spacious, with book-lined walls and “high windows” (154) that offer a Panopticon view to the campus. The office of a campus CEO does not only have to be luxurious in order to give an air of respectability and academic elitism, but it also has to exhibit traces of the Bourdieuan cultural capital. This is achieved through the book-lined walls of the office. In fact, to accentuate the absurdity and the artificial nature of hiring a CEO who is not an academic himself, Hank offers an anecdote related to how Pope acquired these books in the first place.

during the early summer of his hiring, Dickie Pope arrived in Railton with a large moving van crammed with everything but books. Apparently, these built-in bookcases in the CEO’s office can accommodate about a thousand, and the fact that he didn’t have any caused Dickie some slight embarrassment. (155)

Pope sensed that books are more than simply a trick of interior decoration for a campus CEO's office but most importantly they are evidence of his being attuned to his academic environment and a manifestation of the objectified state of the cultural capital. Pope attributes so much importance to books that he commissions Gracie DuBois—a poet and an English Department faculty member—to find books for him “at local auctions and secondhand bookstores in State College and make sure they were all delivered to his office sometime in August, before the fall semester started” (155). The books were delivered to his office from “a rear entrance of Administration Building, where two custodians off-loaded fifty boxes of books onto hand trucks, scooting them inside as quickly as possible, like a shipment of stolen VCRs” (155). As a consequence:

By the time the semester began, Dickie's office was book-lined, floor to ceiling, as befitted the chief executive officer of an institution of higher learning. Even better [...] unlike the books in Gatsby's library²⁶, the pages of Dickie's books had been not only cut

²⁶ The reference to Jay Gatsby's uncut books that are nevertheless contained in Gatsby's “high Gothic library, paneled with carved English oak” (45) accentuates Pope's fraudulent façade. In *The Great Gatsby*, the eponymous hero attempts to sustain the façade of the Oxford educated man who is also well-read and appreciates knowledge by filling his mansion library with books to the brim. At first, the Owl-man—a bespectacled drunk who practically lives in Gatsby's library—thinks they are fake books, made out of cardboard (“I thought they'd be a nice durable cardboard. Matter of fact, they're absolutely real. Pages and — Here! Lemme show you” (45), but on closer inspection he realizes the books are real however they have never been read as the uncut pages indicate. He shares his realization with Nick and Jordan when they enter the library and find him there: ““See!” he cried triumphantly. “It's a bona-fide piece of printed matter. It fooled me. This fella's a regular Belasco. It's a triumph. What thoroughness! What realism! Knew when to stop, too — didn't cut the pages. But what do you want? What do you expect?” He snatched the book from me and replaced it hastily on its shelf, muttering that if one brick was removed the whole library was liable to collapse” (46). Like Belasco who directed his plays paying great attention to detail so as to draw the audience into the illusion of naturalism, Jay Gatsby is the director of his own play where he is the protagonist. As a result, Gatsby's house becomes a stage full of props to reinforce the illusion. Following this line of argumentation, the comparison between Dickie Pope's fake library and Jay Gatsby's uncut books underpins the intent of both characters to deceive their entourage by modifying their personal space in such a way as to resemble the space of a sophisticated man of letters. At the same time, the ominous utterance by the Owl-man that if a brick (book) is removed from the library the whole library is liable to collapse is a reference to the fragility of Gatsby's deception and in the case of Pope it reflects on the frailty of the neoliberal dogma artifice.

but read, their margins full of sophomoric scribbling in a thousand undergraduate hands. (155)

Hank, who closely scrutinizes the bookshelves while waiting for Pope's return, observes that they are not organized in any other manner "except perhaps by size and color" (155). Therefore, the campus anecdote is confirmed: Pope's book-lined walls are only higher education props, esteemed by their owner only as "interior decoration" (158). During Pope and Hank's meeting the seating arrangement is seemingly more relaxed than the one between Professor-Student (*Blue Angel*) or Department Head-Interviewee (*The Human Stain*): the two men sit on the same sofa and not on chairs with a desk as a physical barrier between them. This ostensibly democratic seating arrangement is nonetheless nuanced by the fact that it is Dickie Pope who indicates to Hank where to sit. I argue that more than etiquette this positioning in space indicates who is on top of the encounter or, in spatial terms, on whose turf the two men will negotiate.

While the inner campus in *Straight Man* is more clearly governed by the neoliberalist dogma, the outer campus space offers vestiges of resistance as it is to the outer campus and more specifically to the campus pond that Hank Deveraux turns to find resources to resist the neoliberal wave that has swept over the campus. In a farcical twist Russo's pen places Prof. Deveraux in the center of an absurd scene: Deveraux slips on a fake nose and eyeglasses, approaches the campus pond and grabs one of the geese by the neck shouting: "So, here's the deal. [...] Starting Monday, I kill a duck a day until I get a budget. This is a nonnegotiable demand. I want the money on my desk in unmarked bills by Monday morning, or this guy will be soaking in orange sauce and full of cornbread stuffing by Monday night" (115). Deveraux's threats are televised as there is a local TV crew on campus waiting to cover the dedication of the University's new multimillion Technology building and soon there is a group of beleaguered students demonstrating against the slaughtering of the geese on campus. They are carrying placards with "Stop the slaughter" written on them and Deveraux notices "...I used to carry a sign like that in Vietnam" (173). The campus reality has changed since Deveraux's days. During his college years demonstrations on campus were on different politics; students protested the Vietnam War then, while now they protest the threat to kill a goose and later on they organize another protest about the demise of the goose. Deveraux notices: "Animal rights thugs guarding the pond, sexual harassment lunches, the detoxing of the Modern Languages. Something's

happening here. What it is ain't exactly clear" (177). The campus space becomes the locus for student protest on the prevalent politics of each era since the porousness of the campus walls prevent the academia from being disconnected from social politics. Hank Deveraux witnesses the air of change in his academic universe as this change is promptly inscribed on campus space: the neoliberal dogma dictates the building of a state-of-the-art Technology Careers on campus at the expense of the English Department, there is a group of 150 animal rights activists congregated around the campus pond to protest the goose incident, the department secretaries are attending a sexual harassment lunch on campus while the Modern Languages building is undergoing an asbestos removal process. To my mind, this detoxification of the Modern Language building is a symbolic removal of longstanding values and timeworn politics from campus space to make room for new politics and allow for a reconsideration of academic values. At the same time, the open public space of the campus functions like the Agora in Ancient Athens where people were able to socialize and express their opinion freely. In an earlier section of this chapter, I discussed the open campus space in *The Human Stain* in the context of the Agora, emphasizing its openness and marked difference with the built space of the campus. Notably, the open campus space is represented as an associative democratic space (Sennett) where the voice of opposition to normative behaviors can be heard loud and clear. Therefore, Russo creates a campus space that appears open to receiving and evaluating politics and values coming from society. In *Straight Man*, Russo creates porous campus spaces that, imbued as they are by the neo-liberal dogma characteristic of the marketplace outside of the academia, affect interpersonal and inter-professional relations within the campus space creating farcical results well-known to any of us who have crossed the gates of an institution of higher learning in the era of neoliberalism.

This close examination of the classroom and faculty office has contributed in our understanding of the intricacies of the politics of space in the American campus novel. In particular, I have used the socio-architectural notion of porosity to illuminate the never-ending interaction between campus space and social politics from outside academic gates. The membranous campus walls allowed for political correctness, affirmative action, class stratification and neo-liberal values to find their way into the classroom and the faculty office and shape professional and interpersonal relations. Alongside these changes, students and professors moving and interacting in the classroom and the office also leave their indelible mark on academic space trying to negotiate spatial politics on campus. Roth, Smith, Russo and Prose

provide their readership with a portrait of a vibrant and ever-changing campus space that tries to absorb social values from the outside so that it both serves societal needs and that it remains standing and robust in the light of financial powers that shake education.

Chapter 2. The Porous Dormitory

The architectural significance of the dormitory in shaping the nature of the American campus is interwoven with the threshold experience it offers to students; college students pass from childhood to adulthood as they are expected to live away from the family abode, on campus grounds. The first day in college is often marked with photographs of the students and their personal belongings being unloaded in front of the dormitory doors, a practice that bears proof to the importance of dormitories in the college experience. In her 2019 groundbreaking study of dormitories, *Living on Campus: An Architectural History of the American Dormitory*, Carla Yanni stresses the social aspect of the dormitory: “Residence halls are not mute containers for the temporary storage of youthful bodies and emergent minds. Dormitories constitute historical evidence of the educational ideals of the people who built them.” (2) Additionally, underlying the porosity of campus architecture, which is one of the main research pillars in this dissertation, Yanni adds that “The varied designs of residence halls reflect changes in student life, as well as college officials’ evolving aspirations for their institutions, the students themselves, and society at large.” (2) Capitalizing on the centrality of the dormitory in college life, the American campus novel thrives in representations of dorm life. Such representations imply that the dormitory as an architectural construct does not simply serve the purpose of housing students, but more than that it reflects both the collegiate ideal as well as the social values of different eras in American history. In the pages that follow, I will briefly trace the history of the dormitory as an architectural construct and I will subsequently examine this space through the lens of the American campus novel in order to shed light on how the dormitory is represented as a porous space that evolves and continues “living” in tandem with social change. At this point, it should be stressed that the incomparable contribution of the campus novel in bringing out the significance of campus space—in this case, the dormitory—is indicated in Yanni’s opening to her book on the architectural history of the American dormitory. Yanni opens her book with an extensive mention to Philip Roth *Indignation*, in a move that can be characterized more as paying tribute to the genre rather than as a flitting interdisciplinary inspiration. The young protagonist’s inability to fit in college life is reflected in his constant dormitory change, a fact that worries his Dean. Yanni’s final comment on this is that the purpose of university life is not only to get an education but also “practice the fine art of getting along” (1). Along these lines,

the dormitory emerges as an irreplaceable campus space that reflects the educational ideology of the American campus.

To answer the basic question of why American educators and university administrators have placed such faith in housing students in order to educate them, we need to delve deeper into the history and significance of the dormitory. A dormitory or residence hall is a building offering on-campus residence to a large number of university students. The word dormitory derives from the Latin word *dormitorium* which can literally be translated as “sleeping place” and is a derivative of the Latin verb *dormire* which means to sleep²⁷. The word Dormitory has been largely replaced by the more contemporary Residence Hall today to reflect the residential aspect of the collegiate experience. The earlier, exclusive use of the term “dormitory” reflected “the sleeping chamber with multiple beds designed for inmates of a monastery, school or other institution” while the use of the term residence hall “suggests a different mindset towards the autonomy of students” (Cravey and Petit 104). This integration of students’ living and learning experiences is not a novel concept in educational matters. In ancient times, young men traveled hundreds of miles to meet the wise men of their times—Confucius, Plato, Socrates—and when they reached their destinations, they were urged to live with each other and with their teachers presumably because it was thought that this daily interaction would enhance their learning experience. This assumption still holds true thousands of years later, when we witness faculty and students living together on campus facilities (Rudolph 86). Rudolph also attributes the residential nature of American Colleges to

a tradition so fundamental, so all-encompassing, that to call it merely a tradition is to undervalue it. For what is involved here is nothing less than a way of life...the collegiate way the notion that a curriculum, a library, a faculty, and students are not enough to make a college. It is an adherence to the residential scheme of things. (87)

Rudolph comes to the conclusion that early American colleges adopted the residential style partly because of the formation of their founders who had come from the English educational

²⁷ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines dormitory as “a building for housing a number of persons as at a school or resort” and traces its origins and etymology back to the Latin language: “Middle English *dormitorie*, from Latin *dormītōrium*, from *dormītōrius*, of sleep, from *dormītus*, past participle of *dormīre*, to sleep” (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*)

system and were accustomed to student residential housing. Added to this legacy was the nature of American campuses. As Rudolph puts it “had the first American colleges been the work of Scotchmen or of continental Europeans, perhaps a curriculum, a library, faculty, and students would have been enough” (87).

The residential style of housing was not without its critics though. In the early 1800s more and more critics found the concentration of young men in residence halls to be one of the factors that contributed to “moral decay and rebellion” (Palmer, Broido & Campbell 88). In 1842 Brown University’s President Francis Wayland attributed

most of the evils of college life ... to dormitories: the inappropriateness of the same rules and regulations for students of all ages, the spread of diseases by epidemics, the tendency of students to exercise too little, the exposure of many young men to the vice and habits of evil leaders, the isolation of the college from the life of the community and of the works, the expenditure of money needed for libraries on living facilities, [and] the imposition on the college of responsibilities it was unable and unprepared to carry out effectively. (Rudolph 99)

Despite President Wayland’s exaggerated claims one of his arguments rang true: the original American college was indeed tasked with responsibilities that it was both “unable and unprepared to carry out effectively.” In the early American campus, it was the faculty that was responsible for the running of the dormitories. As Rudolph points out, with the influence of the German model of education on American educational standards the “faculty devoted more time to research and there emerged new administrative units that assumed responsibility for student life outside of the classroom.” (90) One of the responsibilities of these administrative units was to run the dormitories, a task that until that time was the responsibility of the faculty that to a large extent functioned in loco parentis²⁸ for students.

²⁸ In ‘loco parentis’ is Latin for ‘in the place of the parent’. It is important to note that in the early 20th century American communities did not have High Schools. Therefore, students going to college then did so immediately after grammar school which means they were about 14 years old upon entering college. Their young age made the faculty serve in loco parentis with out-of-class duties that involved building a moral character to these adolescents as well as regulating their behavior (Palmer, Broido & Campbell 88).

Apart from the administrative change, college dormitories withstood another more radical change. During the 1950s a spate of WWII veterans flooded American Universities on funding by the G.I. Bill. Some of them moved in college with their families. This created the need for new student housing facilities, apartments that would accommodate families. A decade later the “baby boomers” inundated college creating the need for high-rise residence halls that could house hundreds of students (Palmer, Broido & Campbell 89). As Sarah Williams points out in her article “The Architecture of the Academe”: “The true campus symbol for the tumultuous decade of the 1960s wasn’t a picket line; it was a construction crane” (15). And she goes on to cite staggering numbers to support this rather surprising claim: “As enrollments during the period shot from 3.8 to 8.6 million students, an unprecedented wave of construction took place: in 1967 alone, 522,000 more students surged on campus and 53.4 million square feet of building space was brought on line to accommodate them” (Williams 15). But once the construction phase was efficiently dealt with, concerns over the living-learning spatial divide on campus took over.

In the early 1960s it appeared that “housing was perceived primarily as a service unit and that its functions were largely divorced from the academic mission of the institution, or at least divorced from the academic curriculum” (Palmer, Broido & Campbell 89). However, after the mid-sixties the educational literature is infused by works that demand for a demolition of the living-learning divide. Harold C. Riker, the then Director of Housing in the University of Florida, penned a monograph entitled *College Housing as Learning Centers* in 1965, wherein he admonishes college trustees and administrators alike that:

The time is at hand when trustees and administrators will recognize out of necessity that housing designed and administered for formal or informal teaching purposes is not a philosophical ideal that is “nice if we can afford it.” It is a requirement produced by changing times and conditions. For those who say that they cannot afford educationally oriented housing, the fact of the matter is that they cannot afford not to have it on the future residential campus. (2)

Ever since the publication of Riker's monograph there has been a plethora of articles and books²⁹ on the relation between the residential experience and the overall college experience. The sheer bulk of this literature points to the immense importance of the function of the dormitories as an academic space.

The importance of dormitories in college life is duly evidenced in campus novels. The literary representation of dorms reveals a lot about the spatial particularities of this academic space. In campus novels such as *Blue Angel*, *Indignation*, *The Marriage Plot*, *The Secret History* and *Loner: A Novel* the reader is confronted with a depiction of dorms that is organic not only in the denouement of the plot but also in the interaction with the characters. In these novels the dormitory walls are characterized by a distinctive porous quality. This remarkable porosity allows for campus dormitory boundaries/walls to be constantly challenged, blurred, removed or altered drastically creating unique spatial modalities within academic space.

2.1. Dormitories of Rituals and Dissent: Philip Roth's *Indignation*

Critics such as Rita D. Jacobs described *Indignation*, published in 2008, as a "slight book", a "novelette" even, that capitalizes on Roth's favorite duo: sex and death but "with a twist" (66) while Jonathan Cape harshly states that "Indignation doesn't meet the high standards Roth has set for himself" (10). While many critics read *Indignation* as another Rothian novel obsessed with sex and death or another insight on what it is to be Jewish in America, others have singled it out as a unique masterpiece. British short story writer and novelist Tibor Fischer proclaims himself a converted Philip Roth fan after reading *Indignation*. "With the death of Saul Bellow, the silence of Salinger, the diminution of Updike, Roth has smoothed his way to the front of American letters. He's the Don" (42) Fischer declares in his review of *Indignation*. He goes on to say that "*Indignation* is one of the strongest skeletoned of Roth's novels and is a model of authorial misdirection and narrative muscle" (42). Similarly, Robert Hanks praises

²⁹ Palmer, Broido & Campbell cite a sample of books related to the importance of residence halls to student development: *Commuting Versus Resident Students* (Chickering, 1975), *Maximizing Educational Opportunities in Residence Halls* (Blimling & Schuh, 1981), *Realizing the Educational Potential of Residence Halls* (Schroeder, Mable, & Associates, 1994), *Educational Programming and Student Learning in College and University Residence Halls* (Schuh, 1999), *The impact of College on Students* (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969), *What Matters in College?* (Astin, 1993b) and *How College Affects Students* (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005)

Indignation as a work that touches the human soul as deep as a fable, as work that swirls with “oceanic depths of feeling and thought” (87). To me, *Indignation* is a masterful glimpse in American life in the fifties through the unremarkable life of a young college boy who is called to live within the strictures of an average educational institution of that era. In the words of Fischer: “Winesburg College is a small canvas to work with, but Roth cultivates it masterfully” (42).

In more detail, Philip Roth’s *Indignation* (2008) offers a very insightful view of student life in the fifties. Exactly because it is set in the late 1950s—the dawn of the golden period for campuses in America—it illustrates more graphically the dichotomy, the borders between society and the campus. The campus in *Indignation*—the fictive Winesburg³⁰ college in Ohio—is not only a closed world—“closed” in the sense of a porous enclave—but also a haven, a protective space from the outside, dangerous reality. With the Korean War raging overseas all young men were susceptible to being drafted and shipped to Korea where they would most likely get killed. College students were spared, so to become a university student was synonymous to remaining alive. At Winesburg there are fraternity houses, dress codes, segregated dormitories and even compulsory chapel attendance. There’s also the Dean of Men who presides over the campus like a typical pater familias of the fifties and there is the scenic campus with its brick paths and green quadrangles, a very typical image of college campuses in the fifties. As Roth himself writes on Winesburg “with its tall shapely trees (...) and its ivy-covered brick quadrangles set picturesquely on a hill, (it) could have been the backdrop for one of those Technicolor college movie musicals where all the students go around singing instead of studying” (18). From the very first pages of *Indignation* the reader is given the description of both Winesburg Ohio, with its Technicolor feel, and Robert Treat³¹, its urban counterpart, the first College that Marcus

³⁰ Roth’s choice to name his fictional college campus Winesburg and place it at Ohio is an intertextual reference to Sherwood Anderson’s *Winesburg, Ohio* (1901), a collection of short stories that take place in the American heartland, the quintessential American town, Winesburg. During the dawn of the twentieth century when this small-town setting had been nostalgically regarded as an American ideal by an increasingly urban nation, Anderson wrote a series of short stories that exposed the alienation, loneliness, and eventually the disenchantment that life in a small American town holds for its residents. In the same vein, I dare say, Roth’s Winesburg College, Ohio is a haven for Marcus Messner insofar as it shelters him from the ugly reality of the Korean War but it is nonetheless a hub of small-town mentality, loneliness and alienation.

³¹ Robert Treat (February 23, 1624 – July 12, 1710) was an American colonial leader, militia officer and governor of the Connecticut Colony between 1683 and 1698 and the founder

Messner, Roth's hero attends before opting for the more picturesque rural Winesburg—with the grave consequences that brings about in the life of Messner. Robert Treat—again fictionalized since a College bearing the name Robert Treat does not exist—“was tucked away at the northern end of the city's busy downtown of office buildings, department stores, and family-owned specialty shops, squeezed between a triangular little Revolutionary War park where the bedraggled bums hung out (most of whom we knew by name) and the muddy Passaic” (16). Most importantly, Robert Treat:

consisted of two undistinguished buildings: an old abandoned smoke-stained brick brewery [...] that had been converted into classrooms and science labs, and, several blocks away, [...] a small four-story neoclassical stone building with a pillared entrance that from the outside looked just like the bank it had been for much of the twentieth century. (16-17)

This latter building's interior—the one that used to be a bank for the most of the twentieth century—now housed the college administrative offices and some of the classrooms. None of the College buildings, situated in the heart of Newark, served as dormitories as the college population largely came from Newark, so after attending classes students returned to the safety of their homes. Marcus Messner decides to stop attending Robert Treat for personal reasons—his father increasingly afraid of his son's safety is unbearably burdening Marcus with rules and regulations that suffocate the young man to the point that he makes the fateful decision to matriculate at Winesburg, Ohio a good “five hundred miles from our back door's double lock” (18) as Marcus admits. Ohio is a seven hour's drive from Newark and Marcus feels safer living at such a distance from his domineering and progressively paranoid father. That means that instead of sleeping at home he has to sleep at one of Winesburg dormitories. Sleeping at a dorm house is part of the collegiate experience; it is in fact enhancing the collegiate experience since it meant living in college grounds, becoming more wholly part of what is collegiate tradition. The way the dormitory as a spatial category informs Roth's narrative through his mouthpiece, Messner, is the focus of this section of the dissertation. Messner was assigned to a dormitory

of Newark, New Jersey. Despite the importance of the man Robert Treat, there is no real college by that name in Newark, New Jersey or elsewhere in America. There is only Robert Treat Academy in New Jersey which is a Kindergarten and Elementary School. Therefore, we come to understand that both colleges in *Indignation* are fictional.

room in Jenkins Hall with three other young men of Jewish origin and this arrangement strikes Marcus as odd immediately, since “part of the adventure of going to live in far-off Ohio was the chance it offered to live among non-Jews and see what it was like” (18). Marcus is thirsty for the experience College would offer him to mingle with people different than he is, to live in a space accommodating and welcoming multiple identities, to cohabit a space that according to Richard Sennett would display such a wall-less porosity that would render the walls of his dormitory room both flexible and at the same time resistant (Sennett, “The Architecture of Cooperation”, 42:08) so as to help in the interaction of otherness without simultaneously blurring the lines of what College tradition is. It is especially interesting to note that this remarkable porosity which is so evident in the spatial metaphors in campus novels and even in *Indignation*, despite the fact that Roth situates his novel in the conservative fifties, leaves Marcus Messner untouched and even creates problems to him. Before unraveling the intricacies of the walled porosity that Messner is incapable of benefiting from it is essential to disentangle the young man’s psychological make-up and background.

Faithful to the Rothian literary tradition whose heroes belong to the hordes of young American-Jewish men who are having a hard time to reconcile their hyphenated cultural identity with their lives, Marcus is yet another one nice, Jewish boy from Newark. Marcus is raised in the Orthodox Jewish faith by a hard-working kosher butcher father and a hard-working mother, both typical fifties parents of no education higher than their local high school. He never left Newark, New Jersey but to attend College in Winesburg, Ohio and his choice was a very deliberate one as it will be explained further, to escape his increasingly paranoid for his safety father. Marcus Messner has worked with his father in the butcher shop throughout his teenage years, he wants to be an A student in college, he works in the College taproom not to aggravate his parents further and he is the good, clean-cut boy of the fifties who has never caused any problem to anyone. He has been dreaming of college the way college was engraved in the collective memory of young American people in that period. College for Messner was a vague picture of “...big leafy trees on either side of [the] two happy students, (who) were walking down a grassy hill with ivy-clad, brick buildings in the distance behind them” (115). This topophilic picture on the cover of Winesburg College brochure had made him apply to Winesburg in the first place and had even made him buy the exact same outfit the happy boy in the picture wore spending all of his savings-money he had earned working hard in his father’s

butcher shop all year round that year. (115-116). Marcus Messner went to college to be that boy in the picture. That boy in the picture was accompanied by an all-American girl:

In the photo, he was walking beside a girl wearing a two-piece set and a long, full dark skirt and turned-down white cotton socks and shiny loafers. She was smiling at him while they walked together as though he'd said to her something amusingly clever. (115)

On the contrary, when Marcus goes to Winesburg College culturally conditioned to be the boy in the picture of the college brochure, ready to meet the dreamy, clean-cut girl of the brochure and make life-long College friends as legend would have it, he is instead confronted with the porosity of college walls. He meets Flusser, a homosexual who is obsessed with him and even goes so far as to vandalize his dorm room to get his attention, he has a sexual encounter (his first and last) with Olivia Hutton, a suicidal girl who has transferred to Winesburg as her last option, he meets people of different religions, sexual preferences and social classes, people belonging to different value systems than himself and his family. Unfortunately, Messner does not benefit of this integration, of this architectural cooperation as Richard Sennett calls it, as his resistance to this porosity causes him to be expelled from college and be dispatched to Korea where he is to meet his untimely and tragic demise. My premise is that despite the conservative fifties rules and regulations the porosity of the college walls was still operative and could have allowed some ray of hope and resistance even in the most conservative of educational institutions; architectural cooperation as Sennett understands it in his book *Together: the Rituals, Pleasures, and Politics of Cooperation* (2012) lends a different view to how our everyday interactions and social exchanges with colleagues, friends, and even strangers are a continual—and often unconscious—reformulation of shared behavioral norms.

Sennett would see the walls of Winesburg as a sort of geographical edge (*Together* 79) between society and academia, a sort of edge separating the town and gown. “Edges come in two sorts; boundaries and borders. A boundary is a relatively inert edge; population thins out at this sort of edge and there’s little exchange among creatures. A border is a more active edge, as at the shoreline dividing ocean and land; this is a zone of intense biological activity, a feeding ground for animals, a nutrient zone for plants” (*Together* 79). In the case of academia, Winesburgian walls are edges fraught with activity, like a living organism and to extend the biological analogy given by Sennett himself, the walls of academia function in a way similar to a cell membrane and

not a cell wall. A cell wall is a container while a cell membrane is marked by flexibility. Biologically, many edges in cells can switch from the wall condition, entirely focused on retention, to the membrane condition. Membranes are both porous and resistant: they're not simply open doors but work out the balance between porosity and resistance. That combination of porosity and resistance is a spatial precondition for cooperation between people who differ (*The Architecture of Cooperation* 42:10).

In the case of Winesburg, this professed porosity is evidenced in more than just differing people. One thing that drastically alters in Winesburg because of porosity is the course syllabus. The Korean War affected the academic culture of the fifties and made a semester of ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps); or Military Service “as the program was designated in the catalogue a requirement for all male students” (33). Students who like Marcus Messner had “every expectation that when [they] graduated [they] would be sent to serve as a lieutenant in Korea” (30) had to take “no fewer than four semesters of ROTC” (33). The University may be sheltering the young students from being drafted to the Korean War but the Institutions of Higher Learning in America are not completely oblivious to the fact that there is a war raging overseas, claiming young lives. This is proof that the Ivory Tower is not an impervious kingdom of spiritual abstraction but a very practical space after all; a space that interacts with historical realities and society and is not blind to what is taking place outside its ivied walls. As Messner explains:

if you only took the one required semester, on graduating you would just be another guy caught in the draft and, after the basic training, could well wind up as a lowly infantry private with an M-I rifle and a fixed bayonet in a freezing Korean foxhole awaiting the bugles' blare³². (33)

Although, “[F]rom an educational perspective [ROTC] seemed to [Marcus] a childish waste of time” (33), because of “dimwitted” instructors and “material that was of no interest at all” (33), Marcus took ROTC very seriously as he thought he would have far better chances for survival if

³² The Chinese announced their nightly attacks—they usually started their attacks after midnight—with the sound of a bugle. The Americans admitted that the sound of that bugle in the middle of the night, followed by a cacophony of whistles, drums, gongs, flutes and shouting that was done by the Chinese to disguise their targets, was bringing them to the edge of madness (Stueck William, *The Korean War: An International History*)

he entered the army as an officer. Marcus tries a little too hard to emulate the boy in the brochure from imitating the collegiate look of his clothes to an iota to the girl at his arm to the ivied background in the picture Marcus tries to be the boy in the picture in a topophilic effort to “do everything right” (34) in college. In the brochure picture there is an air of openness since the two students, boy and girl in their 1950s college attire are “walking down a grassy hill with ivy-clad, brick buildings in the distance behind them” (115). “Open space signifies freedom, the promise of adventure, light, the public realm, formal and unchanging beauty” (Tuan 28). However, despite Marcus’s longing to escape his father’s paranoia and at the same time set off for an adventure in college far away from Newark, I contend that he was not open enough to college experience, shutting himself out from the various experiences, college had to offer in a clear trajectory which is also inscribed in his spatial relationship with the campus. His negative attitude towards the collegiate experience as a whole has seeped through the campus walls and has saturated his environment because of the quality of porosity.

His spatial dissonance with the academic locus is evident during his first dorm room assignment. Marcus’s disenchantment with the built space of his college is mirrored in the description of his room: “The dormitory room was long, narrow, smelly, and poorly lit, with double-decker bunk beds at either end of the worn floorboards and four clunky old wooden desks, scarred by use, pushed against the drab green walls” (19). The description of Marcus’s drab, nondescript surroundings are in tandem with the relationship he develops with his roommates in that very dormitory. He shares the dorm with three other freshmen, all Jews, two of them indifferent towards him while the third of them, Flusser, mercilessly taunting him; we find out later on that Flusser is gay and infatuated with Marcus but Flusser’s torturing behavior is a mystery to Marcus for a good part of his stay in Winesburg. Flusser is playing his records late at night and he is reciting Shakespeare lines aloud after-hours making Marcus stay up; this is unacceptable to Marcus who wants to make the Dean’s List and work at the same time to help his father who is paying tuition. Marcus “within only days of arriving on the campus [...] began to look around the dormitory for somebody with an empty bunk in his room who would agree to have [him] as a roommate” (23). The opportunity soon came and Marcus found an empty bunk in room in Jenkins Hall, only a floor underneath the room where “Flusser was driving [him] crazy” (28) so, after filling the appropriate paperwork “with the secretary to the dean of men [Marcus moved in] with a senior in the engineering school” (28). Marcus’s new roommate

Elwyn Ayers Jr. is only interested in his black four-door LaSalle Touring Sedan and he is not engaging in conversation apart from the wonders of his car's engine. Marcus feels like he is living alone in his new dormitory.

Marcus moved from his first dormitory assignment as he could not assimilate with his peers, his main problem being the noise created by his roommate Flusser. During his stay at the second room with Elwyn, Messner is approached by members of the Jewish Fraternity who wish to take him in their Fraternity House, but Messner refuses to join a fraternity —“I don't believe in fraternities” (39)—despite the rather enticing picture of fraternity life painted for him by Sonny Kottler:

Believe in them? What is there to believe in or not believe? A group of like-minded guys come together for friendship and camaraderie. We play sports together, we hold parties and dances, we take our meals together. It can be awfully lonely here otherwise. You know that out of twelve hundred students on this campus, less than a hundred are Jewish. That's a pretty small percentage. If you don't get into our fraternity, the only other house that'll have a Jew is the nonsectarian house, and they don't have much going for them in the way of facilities or a social calendar. (39)

In *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* Richard Sennett stresses exactly the importance of getting to know someone well through everyday activities like the ones described above in order to eliminate differences among different people and maximize the effect of cooperation.

Sensing how different you are from someone else wears off in time; if you drink or dine with him or her twenty times the provocation is likely to disappear. It's certainly true that a brief encounter might change your life—the short love affair, the unexpected hour of personal straight talk from a colleague at work—but what of the lasting effects on how you cooperate? (Sennett 81)

Marcus does not want to take any part at this experience somehow afraid that joining a fraternity would ruin his academic performance. He has an offer to join yet another fraternity—the nonsectarian fraternity—which he also turns down (40-41) replying that: “I'd rather be on my own and study” (41) when asked to explain his downright refusal. Messner is a college boy who

does not want any part in the college boy experience. On the one hand Messner's refusal to join a fraternity dorm house is understandable since living in a fraternity house he would miss out on the opportunity of essentially befriending people different than he was. It is not a random spatial metaphor that, when he describes the monotony of the American suburb, David Riesman chooses the image of an American fraternity, a "fraternity house in a small college...in which like-mindedness reverberates upon itself" (134). However, Messner displays a stubborn single-mindedness that prohibits him from forming any ties with his peers, either different or similar thus alienating him from groups he could have belonged; the fraternity was one of the groups he rejects early on in the novel. His rejection of dormitory life is akin to a rejection of all that goes with the dormitory experience: opening oneself up to new experiences, knowing different people, learning to become more tolerant of otherness and relying on others.

The only thing that unsettles his determination to study, get straight A's and not end-up a rifleman in Korea is a girl. Olivia Hutton is not the All-American girl he had been "promised" about in the college brochure but a complicated girl with whom he engages in his first sexual act in Elwyn's LaSalle. It is when Elwyn insults Olivia that Messner decides to change dormitory room once more.

It took a week for me to discover a vacancy on the top floor of Neil Hall, the oldest residence on the campus, dating from the school's beginnings at the Baptist seminary, and despite its exterior fire escapes, a building commonly referred to as The Firetrap. The room I found had been vacant for years before I again filed the appropriate papers with the secretary of the dean of men and moved in. (72)

The room itself in Neil Hall was a tiny room, "at the far end of a hallway with a creaky wooden floor and a high, narrow dormer window that looked as though it hadn't been washed since Neil Hall was built, the year after the Civil War" (73). Marcus chooses to isolate himself further from the college body; in the Neil Hall dorm room he does not have a roommate, he lives alone. In the words of the Dean of Men when he calls Marcus to his office to discuss his moving to three different dorm rooms in just his first weeks in Winesburg the room he has chosen to live in is the least desirable room in the entire Campus.

A room where no one has chosen to live or has had to live for many years now. Frankly, I don't like the idea of you up there alone. It's been the worst room on the worst floor of

the worst dorm for a hundred years. In winter it's freezing and by early spring it's already a hotbox, full of flies. And that's where you've chosen to spend your days and nights as a sophomore student here. (95)

During their conversation about his problem fitting in dormitory space and hinting at Marcus's challenges fitting in at large—"Tolerance appears to be something of a problem for you, young man" (95)—Marcus is mentally singing the Chinese National Anthem repeating the word "indignation" over and over again as this is how he feels. One of the things that the Dean points out as a fault in Marcus's moving out so much is his intolerance to different people: "Now that you're living as an adult on his own with twelve hundred others, and what there is for you to master here at Winesburg, aside from mastering your studies, is to learn how to get along with ³³people and how to extend tolerance to people who are not carbon copies of yourself" (96). To that Marcus blurts out: "Then how about extending some tolerance to me?" (96). In this exchange that takes place in the turf of the hierarchically strongest of the two, the Dean of Men, Marcus feels all the more indignant and all the more the outsider he has been feeling ever he has been admitted to Winesburg. His bodily reaction, another biological response to spatial dissonance is to vomit in the Dean's office. In tandem with the analogy of the college walls as a cell membrane that retain or reject certain microorganisms selectively, or in this analogy the values that they see as corrosive to the traditions of Winesburg, Marcus gets sick within the heart of an organism that cannot contain him and when this organism cannot assimilate him with the other "cells" he gets expelled.

Critic Maggie McKinley has proposed that in his effort to understand the unfamiliar Winesburg Campus Messner has relied on specific principles of Jewish kosher ritual (187). *Indignation* is rife with blood imagery while the role of ritual in the novel becomes especially important as it contains a number of representations that arise from a variety of different traditions. This practice underlines the porosity of academic space even further as it exemplifies how elements from outside the academy are granted access into academic space and are either transformed into different aspects of the same tradition or help the hero make sense of his new life. McKinley explains that the Messner family practices religious kosher ritual but this is not

the only ritual present in the novel, since Winesburg functions under its own rituals and traditions. In Winesburg students are required to follow a ritual of chapel attendance without which they cannot graduate—and which becomes the reason for Messner's expulsion from college—another ritual in which the whole male student body of Winesburg engages is the rebellious panty raid ritual, while at the same time “in the backdrop of the novel, the country is engaged in the ritual of war” (McKinley 188). It is worthwhile to be noted that the whole novel itself marks a rite of passage, albeit an unsuccessful one, that of Marcus Messner who goes through college following a blueprint of ritual (kosher) transposed on a secular space (college campus) trying to figure out a way of existing in a place he is considered an outsider. In that vein, Sennet stresses that: “Ritual's role in all human cultures is to relieve and resolve anxiety, by turning people outward in shared, symbolic acts; modern society has weakened those ritual ties. Secular rituals, particularly rituals whose point is cooperation itself, have proved too feeble to provide that support.” (*Together*, 280)

Marcus confused and out of his depth in Winesburg tries to relieve his deep-seated anxiety by extending, although “problematically”—as McKinley emphasizes—his knowledge of Jewish kosher ritual to various phenomena at Winesburg. He tends to think of his work at the Winesburg taproom as a disagreeable task that nevertheless had to be performed: “I persisted with my duties determined to abide by the butcher-shop lesson I learned from my father: slit the ass open and stick your hand up and grab the viscera and pull them out; nauseating and disgusting, but it had to be done” (28). Marcus “encounters the first of many instances in which the limitations of rituals and ritualization prevent him from making sense of his surroundings” (McKinley 191). The space of the college taproom is uncharted territory for Marcus despite his efforts to “read” it through ritualization. Extending McKinley's example of the taproom I would also like to point out that Marcus also fails to read the space of the dormitories and understand how he should behave and tolerate roommate behavior because of his obsession of following his own rules in order to get As and eventually please his father; this fixation with being the “nice Jewish boy” (*Reading My Self and Others*, Roth, 175) by adhering to a set of a ritualistic behavior that would alienate him from his peers and lead him to the least desirable dorm room in the entire campus.

This dorm room, a space already marked as undesirable that as such would only emphasize Marcus's pariah status on campus, is further rendered consecrated by being vandalized in a horrible way by his first dorm room roommate, Flusser.

My room. My room, my home, my hermitage, my tiny Winesburg haven—when I reached that Friday [...] I found the bedsheets and blankets and pillows strewn in every direction and the mattress and the floor overspread with the contents of my dresser drawers, all of which were flung wide open. Undershirts, undershorts, socks, and handkerchiefs were waddled up and scattered across the worn wooden floor along with shirts and trousers that had been pulled by their hangers from my tiny alcove of a closet and hurled everywhere. Then I saw—in the corner under the room's high little window—the garbage: apple cores, banana skins, Coke bottles, cracker boxes, candy wrappers, jelly jars, partially eaten sandwiches, and torn-off chunks of packaged bread smeared with what at first I took to be shit but what mercifully only peanut butter. (193-194)

His room was also full of mice and after more careful inspection Messner realizes that his clothes and undergarments are full of sperm an indication that someone—Flusser—had been ejaculating in his dorm room to further desecrate his “haven” as Messner himself calls his room. The word “bacchanalia” (195) used by Roth to describe Flusser's perverted way to revenge Marcus by defiling everything that belonged to him is an interesting choice of word that further strengthens my argument that Marcus extends his ritualization to dorm rules and regulations in order to understand college life. Bacchanalia was the Roman festival in honor of the God Bacchus (Dionysus) that was celebrated with “dancing, song and revelry” as the Merriam-Webster Dictionary informs us but which also had a more sinister side, one associated with sexual transgressions and religious rites that included drunken orgies. Through this interesting word choice Roth describes what happened in Messner's room and that is the aftermath of another ritual—Bacchanalia—this time a transgressive one, one that leaves chaos in its wake. The sudden prompt to the dark, sinister Greco-Roman ritual functions as a reminder of the fact that Marcus's overextending of religious ritualization to the secular environment of the campus is problematic exactly like the bacchanalia rituals of Flusser was problematic and brought about nothing but destruction and disorder in Marcus's room. In line with this idea, McKinley observes that “Marcus's misguided ritualizing effectively brings new meaning to the old saying ‘nothing

is sacred” (192). This phrase takes us back to Marcus lament “My room. My room, my home, my hermitage, my tiny Winesburg haven” (193) upon seeing his vandalized personal space and he bitterly realizes that truly nothing is sacred.

This bitter realization that nothing is sacred is further reinforced by the Winesburg panty raid which is witnessed by Marcus right after the vandalizing of his dorm room. Winesburg is a place ruled by ritual, regulations and long-held traditions, where “conservatism and Christianity are the guiding principles” (McKinley 196). In this conservative space the dormitories are segregated in female and male Residence Halls and these spaces are subjected to very strict dating regulations that make dating a very formal affair on campus, I would dare say almost a ritual. In Marcus’s words we find out that female students: “...couldn’t stay out past nine on weekdays or past midnight on Fridays and Saturdays nor of course, were they ever allowed in male dormitories or in fraternity houses except at chaperoned events, nor were men allowed inside the women’s dorms (48). It is evident that the College administration did everything within its powers to keep sex off campus by making privacy a virtually impossible feat. Most students longed to be left alone in the privacy of a vehicle but even that was not easy to accomplish as campus security would always check on cars parked on the premises for too long. Another issue was that “students other than seniors were prohibited from having cars on campus” (48). To make matters worse on Fridays and Saturdays “to break up the necking sessions, every half an hour or so one of the town’s police cars would cruise slowly along the alleyway with its brights on” to frighten and ultimately chastise student couples who would stop whatever it was they were doing and flee back into the taproom inn (26). The situation at Winesburg, with the compulsory chapel attendance, the stifling dating rules, the austere dormitory arrangements and the continuous surveillance of campus activity lead to the “Great White Panty Raid of Winesburg College” (203), when male students, full of pent up sexual energy and fed up with all the strict rules and regulations, raided the girls’ dormitories “entering and sacking all the rooms to ferret out every pair of white panties they could find and to set them sailing down onto the picturesquely whitened quadrangle below” (204) where they were welcome by drunken boys who chanted “We want girls!” (205) and “masturbated in the pairs of stolen panties” (205). For McKinley the Great Panty Raid scene of Winesburg represents a “climactic confrontation of the many different kinds of rituals already represented—religious, secular, institutional, generational—each of which, as we have come to see, is governed by its own set of rules that is

assumed to be whole authoritative (196). For me, apart from the obvious ritualistic nature of the Great Panty Raid the scene where the Winesburgians are described in such great detail raiding the female dormitories and dismissing all codes of behavior imposed by the college administration, underlines the porosity of the institutionalized “walls.” Winesburg is ruled by strict rules and regulations as the 1950s mores would impose on sons and daughters of bourgeois background; these values are promptly mirrored in the dating rules and the dormitory regulations described above. At the same time, the porosity of the membrane wall of the institution allows the mayhem of the war raging overseas to find its way into the campus. The anxiety of the war and the pent-up sexual energy of the young men find vent in the riot of the female dormitory. Roth’s description of the roar of the riotous students that “carried all the way from the campus, which lay about half a mile up Buckeye Street from the Jewish fraternity” (201), where he had temporarily given a bed after his dorm room vandalism, and its analogy to the roar “that rises from a victorious nation at the conclusion of a hard-fought war” (202) is a clear reference to the Korean War and how much this had affected the students at Winesburg. The Campus walls can keep the students safe until graduation, but none is oblivious to the rampant War that is claiming so many American lives. Roth’s Panty Raid description is not without an aide-mémoire of the blood that saturates the entire novel and is a clear reminder of this war ritual:

There were **flecks of red blood** in the clean snow from where some of them [the students] had been cut by the flying debris, which now included textbooks and wastebaskets and pencils and pencil sharpeners and uncapped ink bottles [...] But their **bleeding** did nothing to dilute their ardor. The sight of their own **blood** in the white snow may even have been what provided the jolt to transform them from playful children recklessly delighting in the surprise of an unseasonable snowfall into a **whooping army** of **mutineers** urged by a tiny cadre of seditious underclassmen to turn their rambunctious frivolity into stunning mischief [...] (203 emphasis mine)

Apart from the overwhelming blood imagery, this time contrasted by the white snow, Roth provides a lot of army related vocabulary to make the war imagery all the more vivid. The rituals of war cannot but penetrate the membrane walls of academia and cause a belligerent explosion in the young men who are subsequently punished but who nevertheless manage to show that there can be a crack in the seams of the institution wall. The president’s reprimanding

comments targeting the student body after the panty raid doubly echo the war mimicry that according to the President was an ignominious attack to the collegiate spirit: “Does any of you here [...] happen to know what happened in Korea on the day all you he-men decided to bring disgrace and disrepute down upon the name of a distinguished institution of higher learning whose origins lie in the Baptist Church?” (217) President Lentz reminds the students—riotous and not—not only of the high principles on which the College is founded and which they disgraced but he also reminds them of the War. In the rest of his speech he does not only refer to the Korean War overtly talking about the “U.N and Communist negotiators in Korea reach[ing] tentative agreement for a truce line in the eastern front of the war-torn country” (217) and about “Four thousand young men like yourselves, dead maimed and wounded” but he also uses vocabulary to connote of the war when he refers to the Panty Raid Riot. “Tell me, did you think you were being **heroic warriors** by **storming** our women’s dormitories and scaring the coeds to **death**? Did you think you were being **heroic warriors** by **breaking into** the privacy of their rooms and laying your hands on their personal belongings? (219). This imagery of destruction, death as well as the repetition of the phrase “heroic warriors” is, I believe, a connotation to the Korean War that has crept in the dormitories of the American College by means of the porosity of the institution.

Ironically enough, it is not the students that caused the Great Winesburg Panty Raid that were destined to be expelled and consequently drafted and sent to Korea but Marcus, the Rothian quintessential Good Jewish Boy who does everything wrong because he wants to do everything right. So, although it is not the porous dormitory per se that was meant to send Marcus to Korea it nevertheless triggers his own final act of defiance against Winesburgian rituals and traditions: chapel attendance. One of the many traditional rituals of Winesburg was Chapel attendance. Students at Winesburg had to attend forty of them before being able to graduate. Marcus Messner describes these speeches as sermons the religious content of which “had been diluted-or camouflaged as- a talk on high moral topics” (79) while a Christian hymn delivered by a choir of about fifty students always opened and closed the hourly sermon (79). Messner, an ardent atheist, objects strongly to “everything about attending chapel, beginning with the venue” (80). The venue was not any of the college’s public halls but significantly enough it was “a Methodist church, the most imposing church in town, located halfway between Main Street and the campus, and the only large enough to accommodate the student body” (80). The fact that the whole

student body, regardless of religious faith, was obliged to attend chapel forty times before graduation is a senseless, parochial Winesburg ritual that Marcus strongly objects to. The ritualization is further accentuated by the off-campus venue, an imposing Christian Church that reminds students by means of the imposing, all-encompassing building, of the connection between the Collegiate and the Christian principles. Winesburg is after all a college founded on Baptist principles and the President does make a clear reminder of this in his reprimanding speech to the students after the Panty Raid incident. It is these principles, the venue, and the mandatory nature of chapel attendance that prompt Marcus to talk to Dean Caudwell and nearly recite all of Bertram Russell's lecture "Why I Am not a Christian" to explain in all his youthful honesty and ardor the reasons why he objects to wasting his time in chapel attendance and how he has spent his time in chapel "trying not to learn to lead a good life in accordance with biblical teachings" (117-118). Not only has he failed to persuade Dean Caudwell but he has also managed to get himself on the Dean's radar as a student who needs attention, a dissenter in all respects and purposes, a student who does not fit-in. On the contrary, Sonny Kottler, the boy "who looked like he'd just finished shooting scene on the MGM lot opposite Ava Gardner" (119) whose invitation to join the Jewish fraternity Marcus turns down, knows exactly how to handle situations like chapel attendance. "But [...] who goes to chapel? You pay somebody to go for you and you never have to go anywhere near chapel" (119), he tells a flabbergasted Marcus. In the course of their discussion, he calls Dean Caudwell "the biggest Christer around" (220) and he emphasizes to Marcus that he had made the biggest mistake bringing up Chapel with the Dean (220). His advice to Marcus is: "Keep your mouth shut, your ass covered, smile—and then do whatever you like" (220). The only time Marcus takes this advice is when, on Kottler's admonition and in the privacy of Kottler's dorm room in the Jewish fraternity he hires Marty Ziegler "for only a buck and a half a session to be (his) proxy at chapel—to sign (his) name on the attendance card, to hand it in at the church door on the way out, and to speak to no one about the arrangement" (199). That is the only time Marcus decides to play by the covert rules of Winesburg and pretend he is following the ritualistic traditions of college, and this is the time he gets caught. And then instead of remembering "glib," "cocky" (198) Kottler's advice to keep his mouth shut and smile when Marcus gets caught and is asked to make a written apology to President Lentz for hiring Marty Ziegler to attend chapel in his place and as punishment, au lieu of expulsion attend chapel eighty times, Marcus tells the Dean "Fuck you" (230-231). Paradoxically enough, Marcus was

the only one of his classmates, Roth poignantly stresses, to be killed in the Korean War mainly as a consequence of not being able to keep his mouth shut (231). This “fuck you” uttered in the worst possible of all places, the Dean’s office, brings to mind another “fuck you” dismissive of similarly restrictive and tyrannical values, one that is deliciously uttered fifty-six years later by Lilly Allen in the song of the same title that was performed at the Glastonbury Festival (2009) and targeting the British National Party. Sennett begins his book *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* with an anecdote related to Allen’s song. According to Sennett one of his grandson’s friends once blasted out this particular song on the school’s public-address system “Fuck you, fuck you very much, cos we hate what you do and we hate your whole crew!” The school authorities were appalled by this caper and Sennett was too (3) he informs the reader and then he clarifies that the youngsters who were thrilled with Allen’s carefree “Fuck you” over the public-address system were oblivious to the fact the singer “meant to mock her own words” (3). Instead, they thought this “Fuck you” to be “a straightforward declaration of us-against-you” (3), as did Marcus in *Indignation* when he shouted the dismissive two little words that signed off his fate to the Dean more than half a century ago. Another discrepancy in the scenario is that in Marcus’s two-word dismissal of Winesburg ritual, tradition and values there is not an “us-against-you” but an “I-against-everyone” since Marcus seems unable to cooperate with anyone or form any kind of alliances in Winesburg. In this section I established that Winesburg College is porous allowing for certain values, social and historical influences to enter Collegiate walls and alter its make out. However, as porous the campus dormitories are, Marcus Messner the person is certainly impenetrable, not allowing for anything to sway his frame of mind even a little.

2.2 Gender-based Violence in College Dormitories: *A Loner* at Harvard

In *The American College Novel: An Annotated Bibliography*, John Kramer provides a list and brief descriptions of 650 campus novels covering an impressive time span: from the mid-19th century to 2002. According to Kramer’s meticulously anthologized campus novels Harvard is by far the institution that features the most since it is the protagonist in 77 novels. I would add that Harvard is also the covert lead in numerous other novels, since it also features in novels incognito, in fictionalized form as few writers of academic fiction could resist dealing with the

Ivy League paragon that is Harvard in the American imagination. *Loner: A Novel*, Teddy Wayne's third novel, was published in 2016 and takes place in Harvard. The immediate connotation of writing about an elite academic institution is touching upon issues of social stratification and the repercussions of class privilege on the characters, and while Wayne's *Loner* does that to a great extent, it does not exhaust itself to that. American novelist Lucinda Rosenfeld pointed out that Wayne's protagonist represents the all-American middle-class boy of our times, marred and defined by a voyeuristic internet culture. In fact, Rosenfeld observes:

As Bret Easton Ellis did with Patrick Bateman in *American Psycho* (1991), Wayne seems to imply that David Federman is somehow emblematic of this particular moment, with its apparently insurmountable class divisions paired with a voyeuristic internet culture. In this light, the character's delusional longings can be seen as speaking less to mental illness than to the anxieties of a middle class fighting to stay relevant (20)

Adding to Rosenfeld's observations, I underline that *Loner* explores the more sinister ramifications of toxic masculinity, social media saturation, sexual assault and sexual violence in an academic environment. In the current chapter section, I will investigate this violence within the academic space it is perpetrated and especially the space of the dormitory where these acts seem to concentrate and eventually culminate. My assertion is that the university walls, where these actions take place, take on a porous quality that works both ways thus allowing for a penetrability of the university walled boundaries that eventually leads to elements from the outside (society) permeating the walled-in community that the campus is; in the case of *Loner* the element that creeps its way through the University membrane wall is violence, and in particular violence of a specific kind: misogynistic violence. What renders this type of space uniquely interesting to investigate is the fact that the bearer of this violence in the academic space, David Alan Federman knows all about the jargon of the violence he perpetrates. David is not a thug who came from somewhere outside of the academia to shake its grounds, nor is he a marginalized pariah who has lost his footing in the academic jargon of the Ivy League space like Carol in *Oleanna*. He talks about scopophilia with the ease of a seasoned academic and even helps Veronica Morgan Wells, the object of his desire, write a paper on the male gaze in *Daisy Miller*. The eponymous loner, the anti-hero of Wayne's novel and the carrier of violence in the academic space of the Harvardian dormitories is a freshman at Harvard, a brilliant young man,

quite the opposite of what we would associate with violence. However, this is a different kind of violence—institutionalized violence—and current events of sexual assaults on campus, the increasing rates of date rape and even the more graphic culmination of the 2014 Isla Vista killings have led to a sudden awakening as to what types of violence have infiltrated academia. *Loner* is about the explosive kind of violence that academic environments can carry and that may or may not culminate in specific violent events like the 2014 Isla Vista Killings that coincidentally—or uncannily enough—happened at the same time that Wayne sent the *Loner* manuscript to his editor. The real-life loner of the Isla Vista Killings was Elliot Rodgers a twenty-two-year-old dropout of Santa Barbara City College who, on May 23 2014 and after having meticulously killed his three roommates one after the other, went on a shooting spree near the University of California Santa Barbara targeting female students. He first knocked at the door of the Alpha Phi Sorority House and when no one responded he shot three Delta Delta Delta Sorority sisters. He then moved on to shoot more people in a shooting spree that caused the deaths of six University of California, Santa Barbara students, the injuries of fourteen people and his suicide. The reasons for Elliott's rampage could not escape anyone as he made sure everyone was alerted through the Internet since he left extensive YouTube videos with explanations as to what led to his actions. His video speeches are marinated in misogynistic hatred, targeting women who refused to date or socialize with him, and men who thought little of him and showed him disrespect throughout his life. His goal was vengeance and his toxic attitude towards gender was inscribed at every word of his internet manifesto. Is *Loner*'s anti-hero an Elliot in the making? The climactic scene of deviance within university walls in *Loner* is not a rampage akin to what Elliot Rodger caused in real-life. Nevertheless, campus novel readers can imagine that while Elliot Rodger was videotaping his manifesto, Wayne was penning the scene in which Rodger's fictional counterpart was trying to rape a student in her dorm room. Fiction and reality dangerously intersect while this coincidence plays with the readership's imagination; could David become an Elliot under the right circumstances? What are the qualities of the academic milieu that nourished and led David and Elliot to their respective course of action? Can we have Davids in today's campuses? In the current section I will offer answers only to questions that have to do with fiction, that is questions that have to do with *Loner* and its anti-hero David, but one could not but draw some analogies to the two incidents especially when incidents of campus violence take place more and more often.

In one of the most emblematic scenes of the novel in the very first pages David's parents help him move into his Harvard dormitory his first day in College and the narrator—David—pauses to give the reader a long, detailed description of the dormitory door where there is a sign listing the previous occupants of the dorm room: "My room's read like an evolutionary time line of American democracy, beginning with a procession of gilded Boston Brahmins, gradually incorporating a few Catholics, then Goldbergs, and Jacksons and Guptas, and, in 1970s, Karens and Marys and Patricias" (2). This list offers a short note to the democratizing powers that have swept over America and have in turn influenced Academia equalizing it and rendering the specific space of the dormitory a proof of its political victories over the years. The list is long: the narrator first mentions class politics; the golden Boston Brahmins that exclusively lived in the dorm room in the turn-of-the-century came to be substituted by "a few Catholics," presumably the names of young men who were not the scions of Boston aristocracy but nonetheless belonged to the upper-class, then the list mentions the names of people that do not belong to the WASP elite "the Goldbergs, and Jacksons and Guptas" which is a direct remark to racial politics infiltrating the campus and allowing admission to people other than white Christians and finally the writer refers to the change of the dormitories to co-ed with the intrusion of female names to the list. The political victories of American society in the field of racial, class, gender politics and the civil rights movement are duly inscribed on the space of the dormitory. The dormitory as an academic space has allowed the societal changes described above to alter it in so far as it has permitted different agents to occupy the dormitory at each period of time. This bears proof to the porosity of the academic walls that choose which values to allow in functioning more like a sieve, more like what Sennett described a cell membrane does. Talking about the qualitative distinction between the cell wall and the cell membrane in his lecture on "The Open City" Sennett explains that:

The cell wall retains as much as possible internally; it is analogous to a boundary. The cell membrane is more open, more like a border—but membranes reveal something important about what "open" means. The membrane does not function like an open door; a cell membrane is both porous and resistant at the same time, holding in some valuable elements of the city, letting other valuable elements flow through the membrane. Think of the distinction between wall and membrane as a difference in degree: at the cellular

level, conservation and resistance are part of the equation which produces openness. (The Open City)

Extending Sennett's analogy to campus space, the walls of academia prove to be membranous thus retain some of the academic values while at the same time letting other valuable elements flow through the membrane. The scene where David reads the student names on the door thus "reading" different eras passing and leaving a mark on the built-space of the campus is indicative of the Sennettian membrane analogy. The dormitory space seems to be a politically contested space where the history of American democracy has been inscribed temporally.

David feels at awe that his name too might be emblazoned on the door of this dormitory, thus be part of Harvard history and, through the porosity analyzed above, part of American history. He imagines that he will be noticed by people in fifty years' time but at the same time acknowledges the fact that he feels rather inconspicuous and boring; it is clear that he expects Harvard to elevate not only his career prospects or social level but give him a certain identity that he is now lacking. After deploring his bland name and equally insipid existence he brags: "But now my ID card read David Alan Federman, Harvard Student" (3). His change in status is not only linked to the place-based definition (Harvard student) but also to his space-based allocation in the dorm room. David already envisions his room turning into "a revolving door of campus characters popping in, lounging on [his] bed, gossiping late into the night" (3). He, therefore, links his newfound Harvard identity to his space-based dorm identity, the one that he is about to make for himself as soon as he settles in at Harvard. David's linking his identity to the collegiate ideation structured around Harvard is evident also in his appraisal of the iconic Annenberg Hall. David takes it all in: the picture-perfect "cathedral-like space" of the majestic Hall that he has seen so many times "across brochures and websites, where glowing ethnically diverse faces rounded out every photo" (16), the one he has also visited during a campus visit with his father and he derives a sense of belonging in being in that place as he says "no longer a mere spectator of its burnished walnut paneling, stained-glass windows, and chandeliers; I was standing in the brochure itself; ready for my close-up" (16). The mention to ethnically diverse faces crowding the Annenberg Hall is another allusion to the porosity of academia that has allowed racial diversity into its walls despite the pervasive WASPishness of the past. What is omitted at this

point though, but is an assumption we come through David's observations, is that what is still not achieved in Harvard in terms of diversity is class diversity; the only fluctuation in class lines is among the wealthy, David whose parents are both lawyers but complain about the tuition, and the really rich like Veronica and her peers. McGurl points out that when students of lower means enter the walls of academia feel a tension between their "class identity (who you feel yourself to be) and their "class positionality" (where you currently stand)" (301). He explains that this tension is made possible due to the fact that higher education allows one's class positionality to be "changeable" more readily while on the contrary one's class identity is changeable "only gradually, and perhaps always incompletely" (304). As far as I'm concerned, David experiences this tension between his class identity and his class positionality at Harvard despite the fact that he is not a student of lower means. Both of his parents are lawyers, and he has grown up in an upper-middle class home. But at Harvard he meets people that are what he calls "old money" and who have already networked and formed close-knit groups. Indeed, one of the issues Wayne brings forth in *Loner* is how wealth and status find a way to form alliances within college walls excluding anyone who is "less than." Along those lines, Rosenfeld observes that:

Wayne adroitly homes in on the way in which, thanks to various private schools or exclusive resorts or familial connections (or all of the above), the moneyed seem to arrive at elite colleges already knowing one another and immediately form their own closed tribes. If entrance to the Ivy League would seem at first glance to promise an equally elevated playing field to those lucky enough to gain admittance, for those from humble origins, even solidly bourgeois ones, it can also serve as a harsh reminder of how much the game is already rigged. (20)

Wayne's protagonist is all too sensitive to notice these class hierarchies played out at Harvard. Especially since the object of his desire, Veronica Morgan Wells, belongs to this class of privileged people he admires from afar: "One thing was obvious, from your clothes, your body language, the impervious confidence you projected, as if any affront would bounce off you like a battleship deflecting a BB pellet: you came from money" (18). Then it is the unavoidable comparison between his family and her family: "My parents made good salaries practicing law, but nothing close to the assets of your families, where a crack about tuition and parking would never even come to mind, let alone be verbalized" (18). David's problems stem from avarice and

not from want which is perhaps a symptom of our times and scopophilic internet culture which is also a problem that has crept into modern academic space via porosity.

However, despite his flaws in the first chapter David becomes a likeable character, he passes for the stereotypical gawky but brainy hero of the typical coming-of-age campus novel who is looking for a place to belong in the quintessential elite college. It is reading on, that David evolves into somebody we could make a clinical case of, a narcissist and a stalker. It is interesting to note that it is his interaction with the campus space that sparks at once his feelings of inadequacy and absurd narcissism. The whole novel is written from the point of view of David, so when David sees Veronica and is instantly infatuated by her, he refers to her as “you” for the entire novel. David spots Veronica early on in the novel and is immediately alerted to the fact that she is not only out of his league as girls were in high school where he was simply the unpopular kid; here Veronica is the classy girl that does not only come from money but is surrounded by an air of sophistication that David does not possess: “It wasn’t just your financial capital that set you apart; it was your worldliness, your taste, your social capital. What my respectable, professional parents had deprived me of by their conventional ambitions and absence of imagination” (18). For David being at Harvard is not enough: “I’d done everything I was supposed to my whole life, played by the rules. It had gotten me to Harvard but look where I was sitting; with Subatomic Steven and the rest of our lost-and-found bin” (18). David displays an entitled behavior, he is not lonely nor is he marginalized, he just wants more and more out of Harvard. He has friends, and he even has a girlfriend, but he feels he deserves more. As Wayne himself describes in one of his interviews David feels he deserves a better girlfriend, better friends, “The idea of a life that remains on the margins of the truly elite surrounding him is intolerable” (Sacks 5). Wayne goes so far as to link David’s attitude to that of other toxic males that ended up exhibiting violent behavior towards women on campus since they share a disturbingly similar profile. That is: “they’re usually shunned, especially by girls. The combination of the invisibility they feel and the social rewards they think they’re entitled to is a potent, dangerous one” (Sacks 5). David’s dangerous behavior essentially escalates from the more innocuous “spying” of the girl he likes to full cyberstalking and from this to stalking her and finally to sexually assaulting her in her own dorm room.

Violence is a complicated notion. *The Oxford Dictionary* entry can give us three meanings for the word: “1. Behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something 2. The unlawful exercise of physical force or intimidation by the exhibition of such force. 3. Strength of emotion or of a destructive natural force.” Violence is hard to pinpoint in a definition however everyone will recognize violence if they encounter it. In this respect violence and pornography share a common characteristic: they are both elusive in definition but everyone would be able to identify them if they would come upon them as social phenomena. The reference to pornography is not random at this point, since David in *Loner* gradually takes on all the traits of a peeping Tom whose scopophilic gaze has a direct link to the objectifying force of violence that ultimately leads to his deviant act. In her essay on “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” Laura Mulvey talked about Freud’s notion of scopophilia in relation with the cinematic projection of women and their objectification under the male gaze. “Freud”, she pointed out, isolated scopophilia as one of the component instincts of sexuality which exist as drives quite independently of the erotogenic zones. At this point he associated scopophilia with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze” (8).

While Mulvey’s 1975 essay links the Freudian notion of scopophilia with the cinematic projection of women, *Loner* is a 2016 novel that bears proof to a contemporary type of scopophilia and objectification: the one conducted through the social media. The screen from which David derives voyeuristic pleasure is not the silver screen of a crowded auditorium but the screen of his computer in the privacy of his dormitory room. The very walls of his dormitory room have now thinned out and disappeared to cyberspace, David’s world is not four dimensional but three dimensional and a-temporal. He can transcend the boundaries of his dorm room to “wade into the waters of [Veronica’s] photogenic past, skimming over close-ups of food and panoramic sunsets to linger on images of [Veronica]” (85). Rosenfeld is quick to observe that “the rise of social media has surely added grist to the mill of class anxiety” (20) and nodding in agreement I would like to add that in David’s case his class anxiety is coupled with erotic desire to the point that he cannot separate the two: he desires Veronica because she looks enticing and for all the rich-girl trappings she displays in the pictures he sees. David insatiably takes it all in: Facebook pictures of “European pictures, what appeared to be [her] family’s wrap-around-porched oceanfront vacation home, a couple from childhood (wobbly on skis; crying on Santa’s lap), [her] and high school friends posing with tipsy hilarity at bars and nightclubs” (85).

He even cyber-spies all of her Facebook friends who are tagged at Harvard so when he is introduced to them in well-orchestrated “chance” meetings that would put Patricia Highsmith’s Tom Ripley to shame, he mentally recites their details in a computer-like manner. When he follows Veronica and he spots her traversing Harvard Yard with a fellow student, David recited as if logging information in an invisible pad: “you crossed paths with one of your dining hall friends, a sharp-faced, nearly translucent girl with blond hair (Jan Pelletier, East Eighty-Seventh Street in New York; a fellow alumna of the Chapin School)” (42). Or in another similar case in point: “En route to Sever you ran into your black-haired friend Suzanne Marsh (Ilchester Place, London; Marymount International School London). The daughter according to Google, of a famous British artist” (94). But more importantly than simply plying him with information about Veronica’s past and present as well as about her acquaintances, social media prove to be a helpful tool in David’s construing a phallogocentric narrative around her life based on her pictures. “Careless sunglasses half hidden in windswept hair, a collared shirt with just enough pearl-snap button unfastened to make your décolletage inviting but not tawdry. Behind you, an indeterminate bifurcation of sea and sky, your serenely unimpressed smile implying the background was a perennial vacation spot rather than a one-off outing” (22). This is Veronica’s picture and some of David’s interpretation based on what he studies on the picture itself, and then what follows is his own story of the picture, a story he constructs based on her fragmented snapshots and his own expectations and desires. “You had wrapped up a day lounging in a secluded cove on a private beach, reading a Russian novel from a clothbound volume, wondering how you could feel so lonely in such a lovely place—you’d always worried there was something defective about you, were scared people wouldn’t like you when they got to know the real you, maybe you’d meet someone at Harvard [...] and next summer you could take him back here” (22). David is projecting his own social awkwardness and fears of rejection on Veronica, thus creating his own Galatea³⁴ shaped the way he wishes. And while the Pygmalion Syndrome is

³⁴ The Myth of Galatea and Pygmalion is one of the most well-known Ancient Greek myths. It is the myth of the creation—Galatea was a statue—that is shaped and given life to by the creator—Pygmalion was a talented sculptor—and that is why it is desired and loved. The myth of Pygmalion and Galatea is based on the premise that the creation is molded as the creator desires. That is why it has inspired various modern renditions like George Bernard Shaw’s play *Pygmalion* (1912) where Professor Higgins transforms a Cockney working-class girl Eliza Doolittle as much as she needs to pass for a young member of the aristocracy. Eliza Doolittle is a

revisited in David's efforts to help a seemingly clueless Veronica write an essay for one of her classes, David's manic spiraling into full-blown stalking continues in cyberspace. David is always sleuthing the corners of the internet for any social media vestiges which he can bring together to stitch up the stories he has in mind for Veronica, as more than anything he has a certain phantasy of her that he unremittingly projects and derives pleasure from, either watching her online or on site. The vernacular used in his descriptions of Veronica bear proof to her objectification. When he follows her to the dorm room entrance, he scrutinizes her skin and likens it to a sophisticated and rare European treat, something that can be devoured: "Up close your skin appeared like the unperturbed shell of some creamy European confection" (28). Along the same lines, when he follows her around in the Yard he sees her smoking and although at first he disapproves then he observes: "And yet, there was something attractive about it, a yesteryear femininity to the way you handled the cigarette. I held up my phone, zoomed in with the camera, and snapped. It caught you with a plume of smoke escaping your mouth, your lips in a perfect O" (42). Veronica is eroticized and objectified through David's eyes and through David's camera. In Mulvey's words: "The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female form which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness" (11). David eroticizes Veronica and especially her mouth that shapes a perfect O, fragmenting her and further objectifying her to suit his phantasies. Veronica is the lead in his scenarios in a manner similar to what Mulvey observes when she touches upon the manner in which women actresses are used to aid the denouement of the plot in films: "She is isolated, glamorous, on display, sexualised. But as the narrative progresses she falls in love with the main male protagonist and becomes his property, losing her outward glamorous characteristics, her generalized sexuality, her show-girl connotations; her eroticism is subjected to the male star alone" (12). Completely disregarding the fact that Veronica has not showed him any trace of attention, David treats Veronica in a similar manner in his phantasies. It is imperative to stress that David's phantasies are played out within the walled boundaries of his dormitory room; a place designed to shelter, be a home-away-from home for students, offer the right conditions to allow them to thrive academically and socially. The original purpose of the

Galatea figure. In *Loner*, Veronica is not a Galatea figure but understands the appeal of being one even in 2017 Harvard.

dorm room is subverted the minute David enters the cyberworld. In a very telling window to David's perturbed mind the reader is given a lengthy phantasy-scenario instigated by a praise by one of his English Literature Professors. David imagines himself to be a professor of literature, wearing "one of those jackets with the patched elbows, stroke [his] beard in an armchair and apply nuanced close readings without breaking sweat" (78), while Veronica would be next to him, a lovely but docile existence standing by his side at "stultifying faculty parties" and "jet[ting] around the world" with him as he was:

crowned with laurels at academic conferences, joking with awestruck attendees and protégés about how impenetrably dense my books were while shooting a private look that said you did, of course understand them (I had taught you so much), these are the self-effacing comments we must make so as not to appear so full of ourselves, when can we get out of here and fuck in our hotel room? (78-79)

Mulvey cites Budd Boetticher to explain the impact women have in such narratives and to extend the analogy to male phantasies: "What counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents. She is the one, or rather the love or fear she inspires in the hero, or else the concern he feels for her, who makes him act the way he does. In herself the woman has not the slightest importance" (11). In this respect, Veronica in herself has not the slightest importance for David, she is there simply as an object to set his phantasies in motion, or as a simulacrum to aid the story of himself proceed. Though scopophilia is associated with the Freudian idea of "taking other people as objects" (8), a similar process of objectification informs violence since the perpetrator of a violent act against another being tend to "dehumanize their intended victims and look on them not as people but as inanimate objects" (Nagle 12). This link between the scopophilic gaze and the objectifying force of violence underlies the narrative of *Loner* and saturates the spatial structure of the college dormitories where David's violence explodes.

My assertion is that Veronica is not the only female figure that David's violent behavior finds an outlet; Sara is also a victim of this objectifying violence. Sara acts as a steppingstone to David's plan to get closer to Veronica, as she becomes his girlfriend. This plan conforms to the leitmotif of women acting as mere facilitators to male phantasies as Mulvey's essay points out. Despite that Sara's "loose-fitting clothes—amorphous jeans, a long-sleeved shirt—stymied lecherous inspection of her figure" (47) David still sized her up and decided that she "carried

little excess fat without being toned” (47); he even compared her to a “peeled potato³⁵, solid and compact” (47) which brings to mind the earlier simile he made about Veronica and her creamy complexion that reminded him of some European confection. To David, women are compared and found wanting while himself is deemed worthy of the better “treat.” Ultimately, as I see it, David, fresh off High School, is testing his “manliness” on campus bringing within academic walls a type of enacted masculinity he has been socialized in but with which he is still experimenting, testing people’s boundaries. What is interesting to note, however, is Wayne’s mockingly reflective writing, his use of a metanarrative whereby David re-enacts a behavior he himself is scrutinizing in Literature: David is actually using Laura Mulvey’s ideas on scopophilia to dissect *Daisy Miller*, David knows the term “male gaze” and how it is used, he is also present when a girl in a lecture he attends points out the magnification of the feminine mouths in visual culture being about “isolating the non-taboo main orifice” (43) minutes after he has zoomed in on Veronica’s lips with his camera. On closer examination, David is set as the example of how academia to a certain extent fails to put the message across: although David is eloquent in Harvard parlance and he has memorized his SATs vocabulary to perfection, he still fails to endorse the true meaning of what he learns, he fails in living the life of the intellect, he simply cares about upward mobility and the social rewards that go with it. David is given the tools with which he can dissect, analyze and remedy the problem however he is so culturally conditioned that he cannot use those tools properly in order to help solve the problem but only to talk about the problem “academically.”

David’s parroting literature terms and baroque vocabulary does not take him far concerning relationships with others. His bad-taste jokes in the Final Club at Harvard manage to alienate gay students while he cannot understand the reason: “I’m pretty sure to take a feminism class here you have to be either a woman or flaming”, he says. When the students respond badly to the word “flaming” he corrects: “Excuse me”, I said, smirking along. “*Queer*. I need to brush up on my microaggressions dictionary” (104). Not only did his joke not land, but he also

³⁵ The comparison of both young women to edible products does not simply eroticize them but fetishizes them and renders them commodities. In fact, they become commodities in a game of comparison whereby one of them is described as basic as a “potato” that will barely satisfy David’s sexual hunger while the more desirable of the two is described as a “European confection” since she is more of a luxury and would satisfy his sexual appetite on another more sophisticated level.

insulted people around him. In a similar vein, he had tried to show off his wit making a pun about “the male gaze” and the homophonous “male gays”: “It’s great how much social progress the male gays have made lately. Pun *intended*” (68), to which Veronica was not even mildly entertained. The repetition of such jokes, as well as his obsession with SPH porn (Small Penis Humiliation)—which he watches in his dorm room while being angry with Veronica—are not only indicative of his insecurities over his masculine identity but also of violent acculturation. Manhood is equated with power and in David’s understanding there is a certain behavioral pattern he should conform to in order to be labeled masculine.

Masculinity bears a direct link to violence and the socialization of men to be violent is a severe problem in society:

While politicians and policy makers may seek to reduce the levels of violence in society, they invariably fail to subject to critical scrutiny the masculinist culture that feeds and validates the violent practices of men... If we are to have some understanding otherwise inexplicable acts of violence by men, whether it be serial killing, sexual assault, rape, child abuse, mass violence, random violence or torture, then we must recognize that dominant forms and codes of masculinity serve to legitimize, to some degree, that which is, arguably, the major social problem of our time. (Whitehead 38)

This social problem infiltrates the campus rendering it a unique location of focus regarding cultures of sexual assault and rape. It is suggested that aggression and violence might be a way of enacting masculinity, “doing” masculinity (Messerschmidt), in which case David’s behavior could be attributed to trying to “do” masculinity—albeit in a twisted manner. The purportedly “safe” space of the dorm room, which had been glorified in the first pages of the novel as the locus of inscribing the greatest landmarks for democracy and civil rights in America, is repeatedly consecrated by acts of lewdness and sexual violence throughout *Loner*. David uses the internet to watch humiliating acts of sex in order to be aroused in the privacy of his dorm room, he commits various sex acts with Sara—who not so coincidentally is Veronica’s roommate—while thinking of Veronica in the adjacent room. At the same time, he is accused by the inexperienced Sara that he had crossed a line since she had never actually agreed to having sex with him. When after breaking up with Sara, his roommate confronts him with this information David is bewildered: “She didn’t explicitly say no, either” (138). It is in the same

dorm room that the first violent episode targeting Veronica transpires. David attempts to kiss Veronica in his dorm room and when she recoils he violently explodes: “What the hell?” My tone and volume surprised us both. You held the picture frame up in front of you for protection.” What’s your fucking problem?” I felt myself becoming hard. “You think I’m not good enough for you?” (158). To this violent outburst, Veronica responds in a docile manner calmly repeating “There’s no problem” (158) to David. Perhaps sensing danger, she decides to appease David by calming him down and letting him boss her around while she is running the picture frame up and down his crotch until he ejaculated. Then she whispered to his ear: “You really are an asshole” (159) and left the dorm room in a flash. The description of this disturbing event is topped off with David’s final words: “It was happening” (159), which is his misinterpretation of the incident as the start of a kind of a relationship. His obsession with SPH porn makes him mistake Veronica’s humiliating utterance with an invitation to flirtation and further sex acts. When he finds himself in the company of old high school friends who brag about their sexual conquests at their respective colleges, David is asked: “You tap any Harvard ass yet?” (164). David shows them Veronica’s Facebook picture and says she gave him a hand-job and that it is a matter of time before they have sex (164). The boys all talk in a similarly degrading manner about women while the attention is on Daniel “who was cataloguing his adventures with blackouts and six-packs, bongs and sluts” (163). David Leverenz argues that “ideologies of manhood have functioned primarily in relation to the gaze of male peers and male authority” (769). Therefore, these young men are trying to impress each other in a primitive fight to prove who the manliest man of the tribe is by cataloguing their conquests—real or fictional. However, their talk should not be perceived as innocent banter since the objectification of their female classmates and the description of nights of endless drinking and reckless partying makes up the frame of the rape culture that has infiltrated campuses and has turned dormitories into the most prevalent space of sexual assault on campus. According to the Clery Act:

In 2014, 3,658 out of 4,971 (74 percent) of all reported rapes and 1,236 out of 2,521 (49 percent) of all reported fondlings occurred in on-campus residential housing. When looking only at on-campus occurrences, as opposed to the total of on- and off-campus occurrences, the percentages are even higher. Approximately 82 percent of all reported on-campus rapes (3,658 out of 4,464) and 53 percent of all reported on-campus fondlings (1,236 out of 2,330) occurred in campus housing. (Curcio)

Prof. of Law at Georgia State University College Andrea Anne Curcio reveals the results of a ten-year study (2001-2011) that looked at rapes and various kinds of violence targeting women on campus: “The study found that 81 percent of all reported rapes and assaults occurred in the dorms, 9 percent occurred in houses or apartments and only 4 percent occurred in fraternity houses” (10). The majority of sex crimes happened in dormitories; the placing of these acts is extremely significant not only in so far as it demarcates an unsafe locus where women surmised, they were safe but most importantly because it demarcates yet another boundary corroded by a type of violence that is clearly born outside of the academia but not checked out the door. In tandem with this masculinist violence that corrodes the dorm walls and enters academic environments, Wayne creates an anti-hero that chooses to take his revenge on Veronica for taking advantage³⁶ of him in the way that he deems appropriate. David hides into Veronica’s closet and waits patiently for hours until she gets back to her dorm room, he waits for her to undress and once he hears her sleep, he slowly approaches her sleeping body and undresses her. He is not aroused until he holds his hand over her neck. Veronica wakes up and resists: “You continued thrashing to no avail, my arms becoming someone else’s more muscular arms, my legs doubling in size, my body lengthening and massing as you shrank in direct proportion under me. But this is how you wanted me to act all along, isn’t it” (198) David is subdued by Sara, and he is left alone in Veronica’s room until the police are alerted. He wears Veronica’s sweater and lies in her bed taking in her odor waiting to be arrested. David’s violent behavior and his ensuing mental breakdown is a symptom of how toxic masculinity has corroded academic spaces. Men have been collecting and interpreting societal messages of what constitutes a “man’s man” from a very young age (Renault 4-5). This regulation of masculinity that is prevalent in society finds its way into campus gates by means of porosity and it manifests itself in the perpetuation of sexism, homophobia and sexual violence in American institutions of higher learning. The

³⁶ As the plot unravels it becomes clear that Veronica “uses” David and Liam—her boyfriend—to write a paper for her class “Gender and the Consumerist Impulse”. This final paper involves “anthropological study requiring local fieldwork” (182) and Veronica decides to write a paper entitled: “A QUID PRO QUO: A Market-based Study of Fe(male) Sexual Transactions” in which she explains how with both David and Liam she has to exchange either sexual favors for commodities (Liam) or the mere suggestion of sexual reward with the writing of papers even in violation of the Honor Code (David). When David finds out about this paper, he becomes enraged with Veronica, especially with her mentions of him as “a lower-value male” (184).

campus novel is the ideal literary vehicle to register these tensions and deliver them to the modern reader with such shocking clarity.

2.3 *The Secret History* of Hamden Campus Dormitories

Upon publication *The Secret History* confused literary critics who were initially at a loss as to which genre the novel belonged. Mystery, campus novel, a murder campus novel, a whodunnit, a whydunnit? Reviewing *The Secret History* in *The Partisan Review*, Pearl Bell misinterprets Tartt's novel as a whodunnit and laments its lack of suspense since the reader knows the culprit all along (64). Deploring Tartt's dense language and constant intertextual allusions, Lee Lescaze writes in the *Wall Street Journal* that *The Secret History* is "a work that amply demonstrates that a little learning is a tiresome thing" (220). Nevertheless, other critics, such as James Kaplan and Alexander Star did not fail to appreciate the whydunnit quality of Tartt's debut novel as well as praise her writing skills and narrative technique (Hargreaves 73). Taking into consideration all of the critical voices discussing *The Secret History*, I am inclined to side with those who read the novel as a campus novel mystery, a whydunnit with a twist: the dark academic milieu and the obsession with the classics play a game with time within campus space, transporting the reader back and forth into Ancient Greece and then in contemporary New England again. In other words, the "when" is not only the noisy eighties of a campus similar to the one described by Bret Easton Ellis in *The Rules of Attraction* (1987), but also a parallel "when" rendered possible by the study of the classics. As with the students in Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), to which Tartt's plotline is often likened, the students in *The Secret History* wish to take their education a step further and actualize what they are taught, live by the teachings of an influential mentoring figure. In *Rope*, the two students commit murder influenced by the Nietzschean teachings of their preparatory school professor while in *The Secret History* the group of classicists act out Bacchanals and kill under a Dionysian frenzy. As my primary research interest is space, it is interesting to note that in both *Rope* and *History* the students violently alter the dynamics of space by bringing violence and murder into civilized heimlich surroundings. In the case of the *Rope*, the two students, inspired by the Nietzschean superman who defies good and evil, strangle their friend and hide his body in a chest which they subsequently leave it in plain sight in the living room and proceed to organize a dinner party. In *The Secret History* the murder does not take place within campus space, but the group of friends

plot to kill their friend within academic walls thus bringing the element of violence and murder on campus. In this section I will deal with how class issues are reflected on Hamden College dormitories, and I will demonstrate how Richard's perception of this initially idyllic, topophilic space dramatically alters after the element of violence and murder is introduced, by means of porosity, in his own space; the dormitory.

The description of the Hamden dormitories is given to the reader through the words of Richard Papen, the low-class but talented classics student, who is given the privileged position of the narrator in *The Secret History* by Tartt. Papen's gradual rise to academic status is duly inscribed on space as the reader witnesses his social migration from a community College in Plano, California to an exclusive College in Vermont, New England. However, Richard's geographical relocation from Plano, where nothing had been "established much before 1962" (10) to Hamden, Vermont established in 1895 is significant in more than just academic status; it is important in so far as it denotes a spatial interchange that is equated to an identity shift. Richard wishes to fashion a new identity for himself, and he is determined to do so as far away from Plano as possible. New England is not only important as a choice in terms of its geographical distance from California but in multiple ways. When it comes to higher education and college cachet there is no other place in America that can approach the assortment of historic campus buildings and legendary Universities boasted by New England. Fictional Hamden is described as a select New England institution and Richard is given to detailed descriptions of the campus and its built spaces, the lawns and even the quality of the light which he finds different "from anything he had ever known" (10), "a light that made me think of long hours in dusty libraries, and old books, and silence" (10). Campus space is very important to Richard as it is with this institutionalized space that he has linked his Hamden identity and by extension his newfound life as an academic citizen. His dormitory is his new home, and he is given to lengthy descriptions of this domesticated space obviating his predilection for this new home of his compared to his Californian home. This is particularly important as it reveals a lot about the dormitory as an institutionalized space and as a site of shared human experience that takes on different meanings for each dorm inhabitant. Much as geographers Davidson and Bondi underlined space is hardly "abstract geometry" since this simplistic characterization would completely disregard "differences of gender, age, class, "race" and other forms of social differentiation [that] shape(s) people(s) lives" (17). The space of the dormitory is semantically

diverse for students of diverse backgrounds. Interestingly enough, the walled boundaries of the dormitory in *The Secret History* function more like the medieval walls of Avignon that Sennett describes in *The Craftsman* where although the walls of the gated community were created to ward off possible interaction with the outside world due to the lack of porosity of walls, the walls of the medieval community functioned more like “cell membranes both porous and resistant” (228). In the historic context of the city of Avignon this porosity translated into unregulated activity—uncontrolled housing and black-market commerce—within the otherwise extremely regulated and controlled boundaries of city life. Nevertheless, the porosity described here was a quality that would not allow for an enemy intrusion. Therefore, the walls of Avignon both porous and resistant only allowed for those kinds of activities that would somehow give more life to the city around the boundaries, the edges of the city walls. Likewise, the dormitory walls in *The Secret History* allow for some elements to infiltrate the academic world of Hamden but are at the same time resistant to other elements from the outside.

Richard, who functions as the outsider to the exclusive world of Hamden, is the voice whose descriptions are going to reveal which elements are left out and which elements are retained by the porous walls of Hamden. While Richard’s elite classmates of the Greek class live in off-campus apartments it is himself and Bunny who live on campus lodgings. The only slightly different living arrangement is Francis’s who lives in an off-campus apartment that is nevertheless situated in a 1970s building owned by Hamden College. Richard observes that Francis’s apartment “was roomier and more private than the old oak-floored houses we lived in on campus, and as a consequence was much in demand; as a trade-off there were linoleum floors, ill-lit halls, and cheap, modern fixtures like at a Holiday Inn” (177). On the contrary, Richard’s dormitory is in one of the “white clapboard houses with green shutters, set back from Commons in groves of maple and ash” (11), while his room had “big north-facing windows,” was “monkish and bare, with scarred oak floors and a ceiling slanted like a garret’s” (12). Richard’s attachment to Hamden campus, his love of everything he sees on campus as well as the direct reference to his dorm room reminding him of a garret brings to mind Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* and the latter’s observation that the more nooks and corridors and especially if a house has a garret and a cellar “our memories have refuges that are all the more clearly delineated” (8). Thus, Richard’s description of his dorm room insinuates right from the start the creation of memories and in this case of complicated and life-changing reminiscences tied in with space as Bachelard

suggests. In *The Secret History* Richard's voice narrates the events of his Hamden past through the spatial arrangement of the campus, therefore Richard recounts his memories of Hamden through space and in view of space. Bachelard underlines that: "All our lives we come back to them [our memories] in daydreams. A psychoanalyst should, therefore, turn his attention to this simple localization of our memories" (8). Richard's narrative descriptions of his dorm read much like a daydream. His tone, the images he evokes and even the quality of light he invokes is indicative of this fantasizing. In one of the numerous scenes where Richard dreamily describes his Hamden room, the young hero has just returned from a trip in Hamden Town where he bought new clothes—albeit from the Salvation Army—to match his newfound academic persona and he is laying out his loot on his dorm bed: "The cufflinks were beaten up and had someone else's initials on them, but they looked like real gold, glinting in the drowsy autumn sun which poured through the window and soaked in yellow pools on the oak floor—voluptuous, rich, intoxicating" (27). Hamden walls have become porous enough to contain students like Richard who are there on "such considerable financial aid" (33); whereas in the past the 30,000-dollar tuition fee³⁷ (33) would be prohibitive for students belonging to nothing else but the upper-class to attend an exclusive institution like Hamden. In the mid-eighties that Tarrt's novel unravels, the educational gap between the haves and have-nots is gradually bridged as more grants, either government issued like the G.I Bill and the Pell Grant, or institutionally based like different financial aid programs are available choices for low-income students nation-wide. "By the late 1980s proprietary school students received one-fourth of all Pell Grant funds and more than one-third of guaranteed loan volume" (Moore 15). However, as Christopher Findeisen underlines in his article "Injuries of Class: Mass Education and the American Campus Novel", we must not forget that the "educational capital" is not an apt "substitute for actual capital" (294). In this respect, Richard's acceptance to Hamden is not enough to make him part of Hamden. His need to buy new clothes in order to fit in, his taking up a menial work-study position with Dr. Roland, his obsession with campus space around him exhibit a person out of his depth, awed by the lavish surroundings he would normally not be privy of. As for his preoccupation with clothes and style—he is not only interested in what others wear and describes it in detail but he is also very particular about his choices going into Hamden Town to buy his own clothes from Second Hand

³⁷ The monetary equivalent of the thirty-thousand-dollar tuition in the late eighties that *The Secret History* is probably dated would be today around sixty-five-thousand dollars.

clothes shops hoping his new attire would look more expensive than it was—I contend that his behavior reveals far more than a simple puerile interest in self-image but evokes his understanding of the importance clothes have in enacting and even creating power relations, especially in an elite enclave such as Hamden.

The clash between Richard's "class identity (who you feel yourself to be)" and his "class positionality (where you currently stand)" (McGurl 301) is more strongly felt in how he negotiates space. His dorm room is his safe haven and is described favorably in almost all occasions, but he is not as free to walk in and out of the campus setting as his privileged classmates are. A case in point is the incident during the winter break when, because of his destitution, he places his own life in danger as he cannot afford a heated room and has to find refuge outside Hamden in a cold warehouse since "because Hamden was so far north, and because the buildings were so old and expensive to heat, the school was closed during January and February" (114) and Richard could no longer stay in his dorm room. While Richard stayed in the warehouse "a cavernous, dusty room with a plank floor and high exposed rafters" (124), "attempting to live in an unheated building in upstate Vermont during the coldest months of the year" (125), his friends had all left campus and were dispersed to diverse places such as Italy, New York, Boston and Virginia. During the Winter Break Hamden campus is deserted since all students have either gone home or to other destinations: "The dorms were black and silent, and the big parking lot behind the tennis court was empty except for a few faculty cars and a lone green car truck from Maintenance. In my dorm the hallways were littered with shoe boxes and coat hangers, doors ajar, everything dark and quiet as the grave" (122). Richard feels depressed at this uncanny view of the uninviting campus which, now empty of its student body, looks like a ghost city. Deprived of his right to use the dormitory now that the school is closed for the winter break, Richard's descriptions of the campus take on a different tone. He walks to campus from the warehouse every morning to work for Dr. Roland and he goes downstairs in "the cellar, in a disused and rather sinister-looking room—white tiles, exposed piping, a drain in the middle of the floor—that had been part of a makeshift infirmary during World War II" (126) in order to shave, wash and make himself presentable for the day ahead. The disheartening description of the campus space he makes use of comes to stark contrast with the previous glorious depictions of the campus and especially of his dorm. The spatializing of his activities in the cellar is rather important as it evokes the Bachelardian status of the cellar as "the dark entity of the house, the

one that partakes of subterranean forces” (18) and I contend that it happens as a direct consequence of Richard’s second-rate positioning within university walls. Richard might have been granted access to an exclusive system due to “need-blind” admission practices, “sympathetic professors [who] wrote letters” and “exceptions of various sorts [having been] made” (12) but Richard “has nothing in common” (9) with his wealthy classmates and there are spatial reminders of this painful divide throughout *The Secret History*. The educational opportunity given to Richard through financial aid is not enough to alter his class identity despite the fact that it raises his hopes for a class positionality that will be on a par with that of his Hamden peers. Regardless of his hopes for class mobility through education, Richard is sent to Hamden stripped off all the Bourdieuean forms of cultural capital that he would need to be successfully assimilated in a place like Hamden. Therefore, it becomes evident that Richard not only lacks the financial capital needed to subsidize his studies and—on a more basic level—fend himself against the Vermont cold, but he also lacks the cultural capital that would enable him to take a step forward in the narrative of equality and meritocracy granted by American Higher Education so as to both embrace and benefit from these values.

Bourdieu broadly defines cultural capital as the set of a person’s education and intellectual skills that will potentially provide the person who has acquired this cultural capital in achieving better social standing in society. In *The Forms of Capital*, Bourdieu explains that:

Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e. in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines etc), which are the trace or the realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc; and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualification, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which is presumed to guarantee. (47)

Possessing no cultural capital places Richard in a vulnerable position at Hamden. Julian’s teachings of Plato’s *Republic* reverberate Richard’s vulnerability and precarious position on Campus. In one of their exclusive lectures Julian says:

In America, the rich man tries to pretend that the poor man is his equal in every respect but money, which is simply not true. Does anyone remember Plato’s definition of Justice

in the Republic? Justice, in a society is when each level of a hierarchy works within its place and is content with it. A poor man who wishes to rise above his station is making himself needlessly miserable. And the wise poor have always known this, the same as do the wise rich. (235)

To this Richard does not react publicly but thinks that this statement cannot hold any truth because if it did, “where does that leave me? Still wiping down windshields in Plano?” (236). Richard’s thinking is faulty because it functions on the premise that his moving out of Plano and into Hamden campus and his having a place in the dorm automatically rises him in the social hierarchy, while in reality it takes more than that to include him to Hamden elite. His want of cultural capital is quickly perceived by Bunny who in “repetitive sadistic games” (246) relentlessly points out the various components where Richard is found lacking. Richard recalls bitterly the various merciless games Bunny would play with him in the presence of others: “Gorgeous necktie”, he’d say, “that’s Hermes, isn’t it?—and then, when I assented, reach quickly across the lunch table and expose my poor tie’s humble lineage” (246). This would be an attack to Richard’s lack of the objectified state of the cultural capital to which Bunny is particularly sensitive, himself proudly displaying in his dorm room a series of:

flawless family memorabilia, all of them perfect as a series of advertisements: Bunny and his brothers waving lacrosse sticks on a luminous black-and-white playing field; family Christmases, a pair of cool, tasteful parents in expensive bathrobes, five little yellow-haired boys in identical pajamas rolling on the floor with a laughing spaniel, and a ridiculously lavish train set, and the tree rising sumptuous in the background. (246)

Bunny is mercilessly taking apart the institutionalized state of Richard’s cultural capital first attacking his parents’ alma mater and then questioning Richard’s own stories about where he went to school. “Where’d your parents go to school anyway? [...] Are they Ivy League material? Or did they go to some kind of State U?” (246). Richard, who has lied about going to a prep school in San Francisco only because the rest of his Greek classmates had gone to expensive prep schools in England, Switzerland and elite American ones (247) is being questioned mercilessly about the preparatory “tennis-y, indifferent sort of boys’ school” (247) even though Bunny himself went to Saint Jerome “an expensive remedial school, the sort of place you’d see advertised in the back of *Town and Country* as offering specialized attention for the academic

underachiever” (247). As Richard admits: “Even in the happiest times he’d make fun of my Californian accent, my secondhand overcoat and my room barren of tasteful *bibelots*” (250), his friend Bunny ridiculed everything on him: from his accent and clothes (embodied state of the cultural capital) to his dorm room decoration (objectified state) to his educational background (institutionalized state) thus rendering his experience at Hamden a simulation of inclusiveness and not a truly welcoming open system.

The more Richard realizes the discrepancy between the professed democratizing mission of the university and the reality he experiences on campus space the more he provides the reader with dormitory descriptions that veer towards the sinister. On his first night on campus, Richard sits on his dorm bed taking in the surroundings, watching the color of the walls changing from gold to black in the twilight while “listening to a soprano’s voice climb dizzily up and down somewhere at the other end of the hall until the last light was completely gone” (12). After finding out about the murder his elite classmates had committed his dorm room ceases to be a refuge from the outside world, as Hamden campus ceases to be a romanticized, oneiric locus of the intellect. After Bunny’s drunken confession of what his classmates had done to the farmer—Richard is already informed about the murder by Henry, however, to see Bunny in such a state and to listen to his incoherent narration unsettles him greatly—Richard feels his dorm room invaded by forces he cannot control. In a very symbolic move, Bunny enters Richard’s room through the window (273) and leaves through the door, which he carelessly leaves wide open behind him (276). Bunny’s unorthodox entrance and exit to Richard’s dorm room is evocative of Simmel’s spatial metaphor of the window and the door which he delineates in his essay “Bridge and Door” (1909). In the metaphor of the door and by extension in that of the window, Simmel illustrates “that connection and separation are the two sides of the same act and that consequently the door is also an image of the border” (Houtum and Struver 141). The window also signifies a spatial demarcation of the inner, private sphere uniting with the external, public sphere and in the case of Bunny entering Richard’s dorm through the window we bear witness to an unconventional invasion of the public into the private. On top of this invasion of privacy, Richard’s domesticated abode that up to that moment signifies safety and has been linked to fantasies of spiritual elevation and academic valor—“I can’t remember the air ever seeming as high an cold and rarefied as it was that night, or ever feeling farther away from the low-slung lines of dusty Plano” (12), Richard reports feeling in his dorm room during his first night on

Hamden campus—is soon to be shattered by the terrible admittance of witnessing his friends murdering a man. This appalling utterance transforms the space of his dorm room and the view he has from the window of his dorm room to the campus space outside:

The objects in the room seemed to swell and recede with each thump of my heart. In a horrible daze, I sat up on my bed, one elbow on the windowsill, and tried to pull myself together. Diabolical rap music floated from the opposite building, where a couple of shadowy figures were crouched on the roof, throwing empty beer cans at a disconsolate band of hippies huddled around a bonfire in a trash can, trying to smoke a joint. A beer can sailed from the roof, then another, which hit one of them on the head with a tinny sound. Laughter, aggrieved cries. (276)

The language used to describe his dorm room is not the oneiric language that evoked Bachelard, but a nightmarish milieu that reminds the reader of the outlandish settings of Edgar Allan Poe. Even the music that reaches him is not the voice of a soprano similar to that during his first night at Hamden but “diabolical rap music.” The scene he witnesses through his dorm window is not a scene typical of an exclusive institution of higher learning, but a scene taken out of some urban dystopia. The window functions as an aperture offering a view to the external world from a privileged, safe, inner space, that of the dorm room in this case. However, after his drunken confession that so drastically alters Richard’s surroundings and his view of the campus space outside his dorm borders, Bunny leaves the door to the room open behind him. Following Simmel’s spatial metaphor that understands the door as “the blocking and permitting effects of borders [...] constructed to be able to exclude the world outside, as well as to open for the world outside” (Houtum and Struver 143) I contend that the open door in Richard’s dorm room is the symbol of an opening to the outside space of a now seemingly menacing campus space, a campus that has lost its luster for the disillusioned hero. In Simmel’s words: “By virtue of the fact that the door forms, as it were a linkage between the space of human beings and everything that remains outside it, it transcends the separation between the inner and the outer” (65). Therefore, the door functions amid the inside and the outside as a sort of a mediator between the two spheres since it can either open or close akin to the function of a membrane “both porous and resistant” (Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 228), opening wide enough to allow some elements from the outside in while closing to leave other elements out. Simmel underlines that precisely

because a door can be opened “its closure provides the feeling of a stronger isolation against everything outside this space than the mere unstructured wall. The latter is mute, but the door speaks” (65). Richard spends some time staring at his dorm-mates’ doors discovering that even when they are closed, sheltering their inhabitants from the outside world, they are not mute at all. Judy Poovey’s door is adorned with pictures of car crashes “lurid headlines cut from the *Weekly World News*, and a nude Barbie doll hanging from the doorknob by a noose” (173). His own door is pristine and white but it is the only one in this untainted state of purity since all other doors on his suite are full of “taped-up religious propaganda and posters of the Fleshtones and suicidal epithets from Artaud” (173). Richard wonders how these people “were able to put all this crap on their doors so fast and why they did it in the first place” (173). I assert that the doors in the communal space of the dorm “speak” in so far as they express the ideology, the tastes, the eccentricity of the dorm room inhabitant. The door in this context functions as a porous, membranous material that permits a look—albeit a selective one—into the inner space of the dorm room. The act of using the dorm room as a personal billboard whereupon the inhabitant of the room unravels their personality—or rather what aspects of it they choose to make public—is an act of reaching out to the “stranger” living next to you. In Simmel’s essay “The Stranger” (1908) it is argued that being and feeling socially close are two conditions that do not require spatial proximity, in other words people who live close to one another but belong to diverse groups can be socially remote. This can be applied on the case of people living in the spatial proximity of the dormitory who are nevertheless strangers to one another. The act of “opening” up their doors by decorating them in a personal manner, is a kind of reaching out to the stranger next door thus forestalling the demarcation of their own territory for a while for the sake of belonging to a group. Overcoming these borders is “overcoming the socially constructed imaginations of belonging to a certain place and of the need for a spatial fixity” (Houtum and Struver 142). To overcome these borders then asks “for the reimagining of borders and the reimagining of outsiders as insiders” (142). Richard remains the outsider in his hall as his is the only door that is undecorated. This time his outsider status is not earned in light of his humble class origins, but due to his choice to become part of the elitist group of Classics students. Richard’s pristine door in this context is a closed system, a door that remains mute, uninviting because he is reluctant to open up to the inhabitants of Monmouth Residence Hall. He has chosen another very particular and selective group of people to be part of and he is burdened

with their ominous secrets. The open door after Bunny reveals the murder his friends had committed signifies the loss of this spatial fixity his dorm room had granted him with.

After Bunny's murder while feigning ignorance as to his whereabouts Richard happens to notice Bunny's dorm room window at night: "His window on the ground floor, stared back at me black and silent. I thought of his spare glasses lying on the desk; the empty bed; the family photographs smiling in the dark" (323). The reference to the windows staring back at him evokes the Poesque House of Usher where the ominous building is described as having "vacant eye-like windows" (Poe 365). This gothic reference of the anthropomorphic dorm room adds to the portentous description of the dorm that has now acquired an *unheimlich* quality. When a group of his friends, including his murderers, decide to open his dorm room to look for clues as to where he might be the open door to his room reveals a far more *unheimlich* setting: "It was eerie. Terrible. Bed unmade, dust everywhere, half an old Twinkie lying on his desks and ants crawling all over it" (349). In his essay "The Uncanny", Freud defines the uncanny, the *unheimlich* through the *Heimlich*, that is the homely, the familiar. The uncanny, Freud postulated, "is that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" (1). Bunny's dorm room creates an uncanny feeling to those who enter it, as the once familiar room, with the everyday objects of the now disappeared person has acquired an upsetting feel to it precisely because it used to be *Heimlich*, that is: "arousing a sense of peaceful pleasure and security as in one within the four walls of his house" (Freud 3). The dorm room has acquired a porous quality allowing for the creation of such ambivalence of meaning as to finally become *unheimlich*, uncanny: "Unheimlich is in some way or other a sub-species of *Heimlich*" (Freud 4). The porous quality of the dormitory space in *The Secret History* allows it to acquire a multimodality that makes it possible for different kinds of people—in terms of class, origin, educational background—to live in a commonly shared space and use their own flexible boundaries to communicate with the "stranger" next door as well as demarcate their "turf." Alongside discussions of social diversity and interaction within the dormitory space, this section analyzed the effect the deviant act of Bunny's murder had in altering the quality of the dorm room for the disillusioned Richard. The reader is confronted with a gradual change in how Richard perceives and describes the dormitory prior to and post his disillusionment: both on a class level and especially after Bunny's murder. The climactic moment when the boundary of taking a life is crossed marks for Richard a radical change in how he experiences campus space

and in particularly his dormitory: it is rendered into an uncanny space in the midst of an otherwise civilized, enlightened milieu, that of the university campus Richard had always dreamt of attending.

2.4 *The Marriage Plot*: Dormitories in the Age of Neo Liberalism

Jeffrey Eugenides's third novel *The Marriage Plot* (2011) came out almost a decade after Pulitzer-prize winning *Middlesex* (2002) and became an instant critical and commercial success. Critic Tim Adams appreciated a newfound maturity in *The Marriage Plot* :“The tight plotting and internalised psychology of this new novel, allied to the full sweep of ideas and social observation and quiet comedy that characterised Eugenides's earlier works, are signs of a new maturity” (48), he says, while William Deresiewicz praised the author's “patience” in how he approached his subject matter which for Deresiewicz remains the same in all three of his novels: “the drama of coming of age” (16). In *The Marriage Plot* this drama is acted out at different educational settings during the early to mid-eighties. The young heroes of the novel get entangled in what seems like a love triangle that cannot be resolved by the nineteenth century marriage plot narrative but gets further complicated by semiotics, issues of class, academic prominence and mental disorder. The heroes—Mitchel Grammaticus, Leonard Bankhead, Madeleine Hanna—move in and out of exclusive and inclusive spaces adorning the identity of either the Brown undergraduate student, or the Pilgrim Lake Laboratory Fellow or the Indian Hospital volunteer. The characters' movements into space are dictated by the free-market logic that stretched out beyond the sphere of finances and was adopted by the academia. My focus in this section is the dormitory spaces and residence halls occupied by the students throughout their college life and perambulations as well as how the quality of these spaces is dictated by the free-market logic of the neoliberal dogma that has ever since infiltrated higher education.

The novel opens on the young heroes' graduation day from Brown University where Madeleine studies English Literature, Mitchel Religious Studies and Leonard Biology. Eugenides decides to unravel the storytelling at Brown—his own alma mater—and not at a fictional campus therefore the name of Brown alone is enough to evoke the exclusivity of the institution of higher learning and all its socio-spatial connotations. The descriptions of the dormitories, the naming of the buildings as well as the streets within the Brown campus are all true to life. Reading the

Marriage Plot is like reading a walkthrough Brown in the 1980s. In the first pages of the novel, Madeleine is reported walking through College Hill observing that:

Providence was a corrupt town, crime-ridden and mob-controlled, but up on College Hill this was hard to see. The sketchy downtown and dying or dead textile mills lay below, in the grim distance. Here the narrow streets, many of them cobblestone, climbed past mansions or snaked around Puritan graveyards full of headstones as narrow as heaven's door, streets with names like Prospect, Benevolent, Hope and Meeting, all of them feeding into the arboreous campus at the top. The sheer physical elevation suggested an intellectual one. (9-10)

Madeleine's observation is not deprived of sociopolitical dimensions. Her identity as a Brown student sets her apart from Providence residents and grants her entrance to the "arboreous campus" at the top of College Hill where the physical elevation of the landscape insinuates an intellectual one. A further analysis of the issue of borders leads us to Sennett's clarifications that it is at the site of exchange (the border) where organisms become more interactive reaching the conclusion that "an ecological border, like a cell membrane, resists indiscriminate mixture; it contains differences but is porous. The border is an active edge" (*The Craftsman* 227). Extending the ecological analogy to the built human environment, Sennett postulated that people often build walls with a view to function as cell walls with the capacity to ward off elements from the outside, like the wall Israel built through the West Bank territory which is not coincidentally built with metal—the least porous material of all—and he also brings the example of a gated community whose walls also function as a cell wall in biology with the power to discourage attacks from the outside. "The gated community is yet another modern variant, life sealed within its walls, policed by surveillance cameras" (Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 228). The campus is a gated community, however its walls function more like porous borders and less like impenetrable boundaries since although the campus space retains a lot of its elements of collegiate tradition, it also allows for some other elements of the outside world to enter the academic gated community and enrich the collegiate experience. Sennett himself allows some space for doubt in so far as the walls of gated communities is concerned: "Walls themselves are worth a little more thought, because in the history of cities, walls meant to be inert boundaries have occasionally morphed into more active borders" (228). Brown University campus in *The Marriage Plot* is a gated

community that exhibits degrees of both porosity and impenetrability. From the syllabus of the English Department that embraces the then trendy semiotics to the admittance of financial-aid students the academic walls surrounding Brown seem porous enough to allow in elements that will keep Brown at the forefront of academic sophistication and educational meritocracy.

Madeleine who soon discovers that “college is not like the real world” (23) since in the real world “people dropped names based on their renown”, while in college “people dropped names based on their obscurity” (23) begins hearing names like “Derrida,” “Lyotard,” “Foucault” and “Baudrillard” and decides to take up Semiotics based on her “reflexive ability to separate the cool from the uncool” (25).

If Restoration Drama was getting you down, if scanning Wordsworth was making you feel dowdy and ink-stained, there was another option. You could flee K. McCall Saunders and the old New Criticism. You could defect to the new imperium of Derrida and Eco. You could sign up for Semiotics 211 and find out what everyone else was talking about. (25)

So, despite Madeleine’s disapproval of the “upper-middle class kids who wore Doc Martens and anarchist symbols” (23) who were the main proponents of the French School, she succumbs to the new fad of Deconstruction that infiltrated academe in the 1980s and studies Semiotics. Writing about a different eighties exclusive Campus and semiotics, Christopher Findeisen comments on Ellis’s *Rules of Attraction* (1987) that even if Dick Jared “graduates thinking that semiotics is the study of laundry it will make no difference to his economic prospects, since the same banks paying his tuition will one day secure his future” (258), referring to the Banks that have been in Dick’s family about a century and a half. Findeisen makes another comment this time subtly attacking the nature of Dick’s studies: “Of course, even if Dick did have to apply for jobs, not knowing the definition of semiotics would not hurt him any more than knowing the definition would help him, since no one believes that a comprehensive understanding of semiotics qualifies an applicant for any job whatsoever” (285-286), unless they become editors, or academics themselves, in which case they would not capitalize on their expensive studies. “In that sense,” Findeisen continues, “the connection between the educational process and its outcomes is made meaningless by Dick’s wealth, and what he chooses to study at his scholastic bacchanal matters as much (or as little) as the value of his diploma (286). Madeleine who comes

from an upper-class background studies at Brown without financial aid and carries all the cultural capital needed to succeed academically and professionally using her father's connections once she graduates. What gets in the way of success in the materialistic sense of the term is her choice of Major: Humanities. In a neoliberal world that favors careers that can make a profit in the free market the humanities have withstood a great blow. Although Madeleine is accused by her former boyfriend Dabney—a talentless struggling actor/ student—that: “It must be nice to be rich and sit around all day catching subtleties. What do you know about needing to make a living? It’s fine for you to make fun of my ad. You didn’t get into college on a football scholarship” (38), she has chosen a major that is no longer a privileged field of studies in the “real world.” The discrepancy between her status within and without Academic walls subtly alerts Madeleine to the fact that she will never be materialistically successful through the study of English Literature. She gets an internship for a nonprofit organization on the Upper East Side only to discover that her duties were sadly reduced to limited editing and helping whenever the photocopy machine or printer malfunctioned (38). Her next endeavor was a job interview at Simon and Schuster which she arranged through her father’s connections. The editor “gave Madeleine a stack of manuscripts from the slush pile to critique, offering to pay her fifty bucks a pop” (40). Instead of reading the manuscripts, Madeleine leaves the office, buys a bag of cookies cuts her hair a la Annie Lennox and decides to focus on the writing of her thesis. Madeleine’s retreat into the safe world of the campus after some disappointment with the Humanities in the real world is indicative of her need to belong to a place where she has a specific identity that has some currency. Thomas Lemke, whose work relies heavily on Foucault, stresses that the expansion of the rationale of the free market to society has led to social relations being defined primarily on market terms, which means that individuals are turned into economic actors therefore everything from interpersonal relationships to social institutions is understood as commodities (190-207). Madeleine’s worth is directly linked to her free-market efficacy. In this neoliberal framework her studies are judged in terms of whether or not their educational outcomes are liable to aid in the accumulation of future wealth, if not then they are found wanting (Vogel 102-104). In this case, a degree in the Humanities is found wanting especially in the eighties when degrees in the field of Economics, Management, Biology and Medicine fared much better in the marketplace compared to a degree in Human Sciences.

Despite the unsuccessful free-market image Madeleine Hanna projects in the real-world, in the microcosm of the campus she is the well-to-do girl who lives in a nice, cliquy dormitory on Benefit Street in “a much nicer apartment building” than that of either of her suitors (100). Madeleine’s building “a Neo-Romanesque castle called the Narragansett that wrapped around the plunging corner of Benefit Street and Church Street, has been built at the turn of the century” and was graced with such period details as “the stained-glass skylight, the brass wall sconces, the marble lobby” and an elevator (7). Nevertheless, the collegiate atmosphere of the traditional architecture is intercepted by posters in the foyer that root for:

New Wave bands with names like Wretched Misery or the Clits, the pornographic Egon Schiele drawings by the RISD kid on the second floor, all the glamorous Xeroxes whose subtext conveyed the message that the wholesome, patriotic values of her parents’ generation were now on the ash heap of history, replaced by a nihilistic, post-punk sensibility that Madeleine herself didn’t understand but was perfectly happy to scandalize her parents by pretending that she did. (8)

The foyer of the Madeleine’s exclusive residence hall is situated beyond the threshold of the Narragansett and functions as a communal space where students can express themselves. I would say that the foyer because of its role as the intermediate space between the exterior and interior of a building acquires in this case the role of mediator of experience too linking the experience of the outside world, the youthful eighties culture with the architectural collegiate tradition of the building. In this sense the foyer of Narragansett functions as the perfect example of a membranous material which like a living organism attains the structural elements of the organism—architectural tropes that propagate the ivy league narrative through space—but at the same time grants entrance to those elements from the outside that are going to help the organism thrive and not wither, in this case insignia of a pop culture that is raging outside the walls of academia. The decoration of the residence hall foyer in such a manner denotes that this is a building where young people live without at the same time showing disrespect to the building’s spatial message. Even though I would not go so far as to call this “architectural symbiosis,” the effort to decorate a living space in a fundamentally different manner than the architecture of the space indicates is inching towards an architectural symbiosis. Architect Pierre Lahaye sees the concept of symbiosis outside of biology and transcribes it onto the field of architecture much like

sociologist Richard Sennett did with the concept of cell wall, cell membrane and porosity. South African architect Lahaye writes: “Symbiosis is defined as an interaction between two different organisms living in close physical association, usually to the advantage of both. In the context of architecture, this translates into a view of the art of architecture as an expression of the spirit of an era” (qtd in Nimr 300).

Another example of architectural symbiosis through the decoration of the collegiate space is evident in the residential hall where Leonard lives. There the decorative intervention is far less subtle and since the collegiate space is not as majestic as Madeleine’s building, the historic Narragansett, they are reduced to posters and stickers that adorn the students’ dorm doors and not the intermediate space of a foyer. Leonard Bankhead is a brilliant Biology major who attends the undergraduate program of Brown on Financial Aid. He “has a studio apartment on the third floor of a low-rent student building” (60). His residence hall is described as such: “The halls were full of bikes and junk mail. Stickers decorated the other tenants’ doors: a fluorescent marijuana leaf, a silk-screen Blondie. Leonard’s door however was as blank as the apartment inside” (60). As analyzed in previous sections of this chapter, the door is one of the most active architectural elements controlling the connection between the private and the public. However, the door is “more than a “switch” or a mere threshold, it is a space in its own right, a space of transition, and a place of decision. It is the place where you make the decision, if you let somebody in or not, the place where you learn about the other person” (Vogler, Jorgensen 5). By decorating their doors with different kinds of stickers or posters the inhabitants communicate their personal affiliations, tastes and their politics allowing through the membranous material of the dorm door elements of their personality to seep through the semi-public space of the dorm corridors. Nevertheless, Leonard makes the active decision not to share information about his personal tastes, politics or other affiliations by decorating his dorm door as was customary in college. His door is empty as his apartment is devoid not only of any decoration but also of most of basic amenities. “In the middle of the room, a twin mattress lay beside a plastic milk crate supporting a reading lamp. There was no desk, no bookcase, not even a table, only a nasty couch, with a typewriter on another milk crate in front of it. There was nothing on the walls but bits of masking tape” (60).

This lack of basic furnishing can be attributed to multiple factors in Leonard's case. It could be put down to his destitution, mental disintegration or even to the fact that he had never received any affection in his parents' home. Madeleine is adamant that what he lacks is affection: "The apartment had a message. The message said: I am an orphan" (60). Nevertheless, this proverbial "orphan" would be breaking free from his humble Brown abode and upgrading his college dorm residence thanks to his biology degree. Being a biology graduate gave Leonard more "real world" currency than Madeleine and this gravitas translated in a prestigious nine-month fellowship at Pilgrim Lake Laboratory. According to free-market logic a degree in Biology could potentially lead to the accumulation of wealth in the future, therefore is more marketable in a neoliberal society. Automatically, this degree marketability renders Leonard a candidate for more prestigious fellowships and scholarships compared to Madeleine, who is happy to postpone her postgraduate applications for nine months and be Leonard's "bedfellow." "That was the term used for the partners of research fellows: bedfellows" (176).

Unlike Brown which is not a fictional University, Eugenides models Pilgrim Lake Laboratory on Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory³⁸, New York which makes Pilgrim Lake a fictional place. Despite its fictional nature, it shares a lot of similarities with Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory beginning with its exclusiveness and luxurious spaces. Leonard is accepted as a fellow to Pilgrim Lake Laboratory and Madeleine decides to be his "bedfellow" at Cape Cod Bay for these nine-months. They are both speechless when they approach the facilities: "Who took my saliva?" Leonard said, as the buildings, where they were to live for the next nine months, appeared" (173). Madeleine is surprised at the luxury of the place: "She hadn't expected that there would be six indoor tennis courts, or a gym full of Nautilus equipment, or a screening room that showed first-run films on weekends. She hadn't expected that the bar would be open twenty-four hours, or that it would be full of scientists at three in the morning, awaiting test

³⁸ Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory is a highly prestigious biomedical laboratory, founded in 1890. According to information drawn from its website: "it has shaped contemporary biomedical research and education with programs in cancer, neuroscience, plant biology and quantitative biology. Home to eight Nobel Prize winners, the private, not-for-profit Laboratory employs 1,100 people including 600 scientists, students and technicians. The Meetings & Courses Program hosts more than 12,000 scientists from around the world each year on its campuses in Long Island and in Suzhou, China. The Laboratory's education arm also includes an academic publishing house, a graduate school and programs for middle and high school students and teachers" (<https://www.cshl.edu/about-us/>).

results” (173). This image is far from the monastic image of universities of the past. In this case the institution of higher learning is linked with affluence and luxury. It is in every way a gated community where the scientist is given all that they need in order to maximize their productivity without needing to leave the premises. It is in an eerie way what happened in Mountain View in California in terms of the compartmentalization of space and the creation of simulated communities such as Googleplex, and other communities created to shelter the employees of companies such as Microsoft, Symantec, Intuit and LinkedIn. In the case of education and research, prestigious labs create luxurious all-accommodating facilities to draw in aspiring and talented scientists from around the world to do research in their premises in order to promote specific research, often heavily funded by pharmaceutical companies. Madeleine is quick to notice “the limousines ferrying pharmaceutical executives and celebrities in from Logan to eat with Dr. Malkiel in his private dining room” as well as “expensive French wines and breads and olive oils hand-selected by Dr. Malkiel himself” (173). Dr. Malkiel, the star Biologist and fundraiser of Pilgrim Lake Laboratory, “raised huge sums of money for the lab, lavishing it on the resident scientists and luring others to visit” (174). This is an example of the expression of neoliberalism and the extension of free-market logic adopted by higher education. The research institutions of higher education have focused on applied research in order to eventually commercialize the products that will stem from the particular study with one goal in mind: the maximization of profit (Slaughter & Rhoades 201). Pilgrim Lake Laboratory functions in the same way as they have created a gated community that works along corporate lines treating its academic fellows and researchers like live-in employees. The first night at Pilgrim Lake Dr. Malkiel welcomed the newcomers “indicating the lavish dining hall, the white-coated waiters, and the rows of tables set with bunches of wildflowers. “Don’t get used to it. This isn’t what research is usually like. Usually it’s take-out pizza and instant coffee” (267) he says, as if to remind them what the more ascetic side of scientific research and academia. Their purpose above and beyond the enjoyment of the “creature comforts” (266) is to be efficient in research as the neoliberal dogma prioritizes income generation and productivity in order for an institution to be branded as successful. Therefore, the neoliberal paradigm is inscribed on space.

Another case in point of this neoliberal spatial inscription is evident in Dr. Malkiel’s obsession with art. In this case, Malkiel considers art a trope, evidence of the Laboratory’s materialistic success and cutting-edge aesthetics. “It was Malkiel who had bought the Cy

Twombly painting that hung in the dining hall and who had commissioned the Richard Serra that stood behind the Animal House” (174). The painting and the sculpture mentioned above are two minimalist works of art that set the tone for the modern aesthetics of the Pilgrim Lake Laboratories that comes into a direct juxtaposition with the traditional, collegiate gothic of Brown that is depicted earlier in *The Marriage Plot*. In monetary terms, these artworks cost a treasure trove of money as they belong to the artistic elite of the time and would be sold at exorbitant sums of money at auctions today. Their display at the semi-public spaces of Pilgrim Lake Laboratory—the dining hall and the Animal House—underline the exclusive nature of the space while endowing the people who are privy to these spaces with an air of superiority. You cannot ignore the fact that you are eating in a communal space looking at a—bearing a minimum estimate—35million dollar painting. Bourdieu’s cultural capital is at full play here, since the Twombly painting and the Serra sculpture symbolize far more than simple aesthetic pleasure; they symbolize the objectified state of the cultural capital that in this case involves not a person’s but an institution’s property—works of art, scientific instruments—that can be transferred for economic profit (bought or sold) but which at the same time denote cultural capital.

The cultural capital objectified in material objects and media, such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc., is transmissible in its materiality. A collection of paintings, for example, can be transmitted as well as economic capital (if not better, because the capital transfer is more disguised). But what is transmissible is legal ownership and not (or not necessarily) what constitutes the precondition for specific appropriation, namely, the possession of the means of ‘consuming’ a painting or using a machine, which, being nothing other than embodied capital, are subject to the same laws of transmission.

(Bourdieu 252)

In a very interesting manner, the objectified state symbolized in the artefacts exhibited in Pilgrim Lake Laboratory reinforced by the exclusiveness of the spatial politics of the gated community that is Pilgrim Lake, functions in a loophole of power fortifying the institutionalized state of the researchers working in this privileged space. Their work at Pilgrim Lake Laboratory counts as hard currency in the neoliberal market economy.

At the same time that Leonard and Madeleine enjoy their neoliberal status in the gated community of Pilgrim Lake Laboratory, Mitchel has chosen a different path. Mitchel, a

Religious Studies Major, took a year off school to see Europe and then to do some volunteer work at the Home for Dying Destitutes in Calcutta. Professor Richter, one of his Professors at Brown, had called him in his office before graduation to offer to help him get “a full scholarship to the Princeton Theological Seminary. Or to the Harvard or Yale Divinity School” (99). Before this meeting, Mitchel had never thought about continuing his education, but the “idea of studying theology—of studying anything as opposed to working nine-to-five—appealed to him” (99). Mitchel, decides to take his year off and write Professor Richter what he decided upon his return. Mitchel’s lodgings around Europe and especially at Calcutta are downtrodden and lack basic facilities. However, Mitchel gains valuable experience about the world outside the walls of academia and ponders at “how few useful skills he’d acquired in college” (144). Mitchel’s behavior exhibits a blatant indifference towards the building of the human capital which in the dogma of neoliberalism has been aggrandized to a thing of great importance since it refers to the sum of those activities that will eventually influence future income. These activities entail schooling, fellowships, work training, connection building, migration and health care (Becker 11). Mitchel’s degree in Religious Studies and his volunteer work in Calcutta might have been an enriching experience for himself but cannot compete with Leonard’s Biology degree and his Pilgrim Lake Laboratory Fellowship in the free-market logic that has infiltrated the walls of academia. In the final analysis, Eugenides *The Marriage Plot* does not only read as a coming-of-age romance on campus but as a comment on the infiltration of neoliberalism in academia and the intellectual angst that accompanies the choices young people are called to make within a changing academic landscape.

2.5 The Dormitory of a *Blue Angel* in the Era of Political correctness

The nineties in America was an era that is marked by an intense preoccupation with sexual transgressions that caused immense embarrassment to a whole nation. From Pamela Anderson and Tommy Lee’s sex tapes to the pubic hair on Anita Hill’s Coca Cola can on the Anita Hill versus Clarence Thomas case and from Heidi Fleiss’s Hollywood prostitution ring³⁹ to

³⁹ All the cases mentioned briefly here show an intense preoccupation the nineties had with sex. They are all scandals that shook the nineties. The first refers to the private, homemade sex tape of Baywatch and Playboy model Pamela Anderson and then husband Rock star Tommy Lee. In 1995 the sex tape was stolen from their Malibu mansion and leaked to the media causing a lot of media controversy at the time. The second case is Anita Hill versus Clarence Thomas,

the stain on a blue dress that caused the impeachment of the President in President Clinton's case, the nineties limelight sex as a recurrent theme that—almost in all cases—results in punishment and disgrace. The campus novel capitalizes on this theme and creates a pattern that indirectly problematizes the by default onset of Political correctness in universities with a rigor that is unprecedented. Francine Prose's *Blue Angel* (2000) follows the literary paradigm of a host of other early 2000 novels that interestingly enough, but not coincidentally at all, time the denouement of their plot during the Clinton Era. Campus novels such as Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* (2001), Philip Roth's *The Dying Animal* (2001) and *Mustang Sally* (1992) by Edward Allen share common literary tropes: "they employ the same setting (the campus, substituting the ivory tower for the White House), character types (the ambiguous Humbert-Lolita/rapist-seductress paradigm), plot (a downward spiral with no redemption, passively set in motion by the professor but carried to its fulfillment by opposing forces), tone (black comedy), and period (the 1990s)" (Kavadlo 12). In the modern academic world, the students and faculty are confronted with the daunting task of negotiating through a massive bulk of sexual theory, poetry, texts but at the same time they have to be very cautious about what constitutes sexual harassment within the academic space despite spending so much time dealing with all this sexual politics. As Kavadlo points out in every one of these campus novels the "novel's antagonists sexualize theory but desexualize the body" (12). In the blurb of *Blue Angel*⁴⁰ we are informed

when in 1991 President George H. W. Bush nominated Clarence Thomas for the Supreme Court his former assistant Anita Hill accused him of repeatedly sexual harassing her in the workplace and she therefore thought he was unworthy of such a high position. The reference to the pubic hair on the coke can is found on the court hearings where Anita Hill had to disclose a lot of the matters Judge Clarence spoke about in her presence: "He spoke about ... such matters as women having sex with animals and films showing group sex or rape scenes." She also added that he talked about his "his own sexual prowess" and she also recounted a particularly embarrassing instance when he examined his can of coke that was on his desk and asked: "Who has put pubic hair on my Coke?" (Hearings Before the Senate Committee 55). The next scandal I refer to is Heidi Fleiss's prostitution ring. Fleiss, known as the Hollywood Madame, had the most well-known and profitable Hollywood brothel, catering high-end escort and sex services to the elite of Hollywood and at the age of 25 she was already a millionaire. She got arrested in 1993 for pandering and was jailed but she never revealed the names of the clients in her little black book. The nineties, was a decade that was obsessed with sex and the culmination of the sexual scandals of the nineties was the Bill Clinton-Monica Lewinski scandal in 1998, involving President Clinton and White House intern Lewinski.

⁴⁰ The specific mention to *Blue Angel* refers to the HarperCollins 2006 Edition as do all subsequent references to it.

that the novel is “a withering take on today's academic mores and a scathing tale that vividly shows what can happen when academic policies collide with political correctness”. In her review of the novel Lorna Sage suggests that Prose has not simply reversed the politically correct line “for mischief’s sake” but rather to “up the stakes” and offer the reader Angela Argo the artist and not Angela/ Lolita the objectified nymphet (12). The main focus in this section is a spatial take on political correctness on campus and more specifically on the dormitory, offering a close reading of the climactic sexual—or a-sexual—scene between Angela and Swenson.

What should be the culminating scene of academic policies being breached is the dormitory scene where Prof. Swenson and Angela Argo have—or try to have—sex in Angela’s dorm room. Nevertheless, the writer’s tone—black comedy—and the unconsummated act of intercourse leave a lot to be desired in order for this scene to qualify as a preternatural sex scandal scene that deserves the punishment that Swenson eventually begets. Despite the fact that Swenson is very well aware of the politically correct ambience of the era and—more specifically—of the new campus regulations about what constitutes sexual harassment on campus and what the rules between Professors and students should be as these were read out to the whole faculty in the College chapel by Dean Bentham in the beginning of the semester, he drives Angela to buy a computer in town and then back to her dorm. The dorm room is a private student area that has not been left untouched by the Clinton Era of sexual scandal paired with the political correctness climate that has infiltrated the academic world. A faculty member is not allowed in a student residence hall, let alone a dormitory room therefore for Swenson to be seen entering or coming out of Angela’s room is akin to a deadly sin for his academic career and reputation in Euston. When Angela extends the invitation to her room he is aware of the political correctness climate that has permeated academia and the rules regulating campus behavior, however he is not able to refuse. Angela is the powerful agent in this exchange, inviting the professor to her “territory” in a symmetric literary inversion of their first one-to-one encounter in Swenson’s office. Angela boldly proposes: “Listen. You could say no. But I was hoping you could help me carry this stuff into my dorm room. And help me set it up. I’ll understand if you

say no. I don't want to take up your day" (221). When Swenson makes a joke about gentleman callers being "permitted at this hour?" (223) Angela replies: "Are you kidding? This is a co-ed dorm. It's been, like, a trillion years since they had rules about visiting hours. Guys can come in anytime. Anyhow, you're a professor. You can do anything you want" (223). This short exchange reveals the gap between the two not only in terms of age but in terms of politics too. Angela is aware of the stifling rules of the past that did not allow men in the women's dormitories, and she is glad that she now enjoys the freedom of living in a coed dormitory that allows "guys", "anytime". She is however oblivious to—or posits as unaware of—the fact that there are other rules governing the campus of the nineties and that the freedom of visiting hours between girls and boys is not the only progress a campus should boast. Swenson is quick to make an acerbic observation on her comment about his status as a professor allowing him to do anything he wants: "Given the current climate, that makes me all the more suspect" (223). Angela pretends not to understand his comment at that moment but will use what is about to transpire between them as abuse of power on his part as the plot unravels. The climate described by Swenson is the all-encompassing atmosphere of political correctness that had infiltrated academic spaces and especially student dormitories. The dormitory per se is an intimate structure, the living quarters of students, therefore the presence of a professor in one of the rooms might insinuate an abuse of power and sexual harassment. Angela's words "You are a professor, you can do anything you want" is the premise on which power relations politics on campus were built in the long past, however the tables have been dramatically turned with this phrase resonating particularly ironic throughout *Blue Angel* and Swenson's downfall.

Through the writer's tone and descriptions, the reader is immediately alerted to the fact that the dormitory is Angela's spatial "turf", her territory of dominion. Even before we are given a privileged tour inside, the description of the surrounding space suffices to set the tone of the scene and set the scales on who is the empowered individual on spatial terms. Swenson was in power in his office, but here is deprived of agency. In a repetition of the panopticon schema, that was first encountered in the placement of his classroom in the Campus Bell Tower and then Dean Bentham's name that reminds the reader the creator of the Panopticon and who by implementing the sexual harassment regulations on campus installs a metaphorical panopticon on campus, Swenson observes—or thinks he observes—people spying on him outside the dormitory. "Who are all these voyeurs, detectives and spies cleverly disguised as teachers and

students, all displaying an unnatural interest in Swenson, peering into his car, stopping conversations to watch him cruise by? He feels like a pederast trolling the schoolyard. What if someone sees him?” (213). The aim of the Panopticon structure was to single out the body in order to keep it at constant display and ensure it moved within the boundaries of normative behavior.

Traditionally, power was what was seen, what was shown, and what was manifested...Disciplinary power, on the other hand, is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time, it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is this fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection. And the examination is the technique by which power, instead of emitting the signs of its potency, instead of imposing its mark on its subjects, holds them in a mechanism of objectification. In this space of domination, disciplinary power manifests its potency, essentially by arranging objects. The examination is, as it were, the ceremony of this objectification. (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 187)

In this sense, Swenson’s obsession with the act of seeing and Prose’s choice of words that create a visual impact of intense surveillance on campus—“voyeurs,” “detectives,” “spies,” “peering,” “watch,” “sees”—reinforce the culture of “normalizing individuation” that had permeated the membranous academic walls in the nineties. The Foucauldian concept of normalizing individuation could be defined as the rendering of a subject into a resource of the power dictated by the institution through the total of mechanisms in institutional settings that cooperate in order to force the subject into obedience. Swenson refuses to be part of the processes of normalizing individuation the moment he steps in Angela’s dormitory fully aware of all the regulations he is breaking through this spatial transgression. Prose undermines the element of passion inherent in the relationship between Swenson and Angela from the start of the novel. Angela is physically described as the opposite of a desirable young woman, a seductress who could incite lust to a middle-aged Professor. Despite the titular connotations, Angela is by far removed from Lola Lola since the former is a “leather-jacketed toothpick” (33), with a “streaked green and orange ponytail spraying straight up from the top of her head [that] makes

her look like a garish tasseled party favor” (33). I, therefore, contend that it is not physical desire that prompts Swenson enter Angela’s dorm room but an unconscious, political desire to escape the categorization of normalizing individuation. Swenson’s transgressing the dormitory boundaries is ultimately a dissenting act in Euston Campus during the Clinton Era even if we look at it outside the scope of sexual transgression.

Angela’s dorm foyer, the intermediary space between the outside—society—and the inside—academia—is devoid of any personal touches. It is described as having “a soda machine, a bulletin board bare but for a list of fire regulations” (224) and the reader is informed that it is smelly. As the two climb a flight of stairs, they see a deserted TV lounge that would be the communal space of the dormitory “furnished with a Ping-Pong table and a few grimy armchairs apparently chosen for the undiluted purity of their institutional ugliness” (224). Unlike the communal spaces described in other campus novels the communal spaces in the dorm room of *Blue Angel* are empty of any personal touch. In the words of the author: “there’s not one touch of hominess, not one poster on the wall, no sign that humans spend time here” (224). This reluctance to decorate the semi-public space of the foyer or the lounge with posters or announcements might be an indirect intimation on the part of the author of a generation of students that is too sensitive of the political, too sensitive to perhaps insult someone with their politics, a little too cautious with their beliefs to make them public just in case they hurt someone else’s feelings. Their desire to tiptoe around the sensitivities of people might have created a generation too politically correct to personalize the communal space of their residence hall. They opt for safe spaces instead; perhaps, so safe that they become inane boring. The students sharing the dorm room have taken great pains to decorate their rooms but they refuse to give the communal space the same care and personal touch they do their private space. I argue that this is akin to their attitude towards politics and the community; they might foster some political beliefs, some of them hypocritically so but they refuse to extend these beliefs to the community thus negating the very nature of politics. The majority of the girls in Angela’s dorm, as Angela informs Swenson with a touch of contempt in her voice, profess no political affiliations opting for “the one perfect poster of Brad Pitt over the bed” (225). Unlike the middle-of-the-road attitude of these nineties young women, Angela apprises us—in no less contemptuous tone—that Makeesha’s dorm room is “all done up with Black Panther shit, posters and rasta flags, and this huge blow-up poster of Snoop Doggy Dog” (225). Makeesha has decorated her walls with

political symbols in order to identify herself with the space she inhabits and personalize it. In her case, the walls of her dorm function as cell membranes that allow in the type of politics she endorses and she proudly exhibits for display to the people entering her room. Makeesha's room, thus, becomes an extension of herself allowing her guests a glimpse into her system of beliefs. However, Angela accuses her of being hypocritical about her revolutionary politics as "everybody knows Makeesha's dad teaches at Dartmouth. They're way richer than my parents' (226). At this point, Angela accuses Makeesha of appropriating political values she does not authentically endorse but chooses to exhibit in her dorm room only to create a persona she chooses to project. Another intimation she makes is that class and status being impossible to sustain revolutionary movements; since Makeesha is the daughter of a university professor and belongs to the moneyed classes then how can she entertain revolutionary ideas that work on the premise of overthrowing the status quo she belongs to? For Angela, Makeesha is appropriating political ideas that to her mind might render her interesting to anyone visiting her dorm room or Makeesha might be going through a political transformation in college. A potential visitor to Makeesha's dorm room will get the message that is communicated to them through the walls of the room—again refuting Simmel's famous proclamation that "The wall is mute" in his 1909 essay "Bridge and Door"—and this message is that Makeesha is a young college student, very political, a proponent of controversial African American community politics and quite outspoken about it.

Angela has her own dorm room walls decorated in a very singular manner. "This isn't a room", observes Swenson "It's an installation" (225). Every inch of her dorm room walls "is covered with postcards of actors, writers, saints, musicians, artists" (225). Angela has used a specific order to place them on the wall, so nothing about their placement on the dorm wall is random; every placement of every postcard is carefully calculated and planned as—we will find out—is Angela's every move in *Blue Angel* until she gets what she wants. As Swenson enters Angela's room he "stops frozen by the hundreds of faces staring back at him" (225). The recurrent theme of the Panopticon and surveillance is also evident here with Swenson noticing the decoration of Angela's room being hundreds of pairs of eyes belonging to famous people "staring at him". The rest of Angela's room is sparsely decorated with "a single bed, narrow as a monk's, covered with a monastic brown cloth. Running the length of one wall is a white Formica desk" (225). To my mind, her room decoration suggests an ambitious writer, devoted to her task,

attempting to draw inspiration by the collage of famous people plastered on her walls. Angela is empowered in the space of her dorm room; unlike the first meeting Swenson and Angela had in the former's office where Angela was awkward, maladroit and expectant for Swenson's cue for where to sit, it is now Angela who is in command. Angela puts down the computer boxes on her desk and "motions for Swenson to do likewise" (225), then seeing that he cannot help her with setting up the computer she says: "Do me a favor. Sit down on that bed over there and, like I said, just be there if I need moral support, if I start freaking out..." (227), "Swenson does as he's told" (227). The tables are turned; Angela is in power now. She is the one dictating the positioning of their bodies within the spatial confines of the dormitory room. This becomes further clarified in the awkward erotic scene that is initiated by Angela. After they kiss, it is Angela who asks: "Are you sure you want to do this?" (229), a question that makes Swenson briefly wonder: "Isn't *he* supposed to be the one asking Angela's permission?" (229). And while his body is awkwardly trying to manage the logistics of the "challenge of moving while still kissing Angela across the room to her bed, navigating the obstacle course of discarded computer boxes" (229) Angela's body is "walking smoothly backward, guided by some sort of sonar. All he has to do is follow" (229). Swenson's clumsiness comes into stark contrast with Angela's graceful movements. This invokes David Seamon's concept of the body-ballet. Seamon defines a body-ballet as "a set of integrated behaviors which sustain a particular task or aim" (157). When these body-ballet patterns take place for substantial time then Seamon talks about a time-space routine (158) and when within the same place we encounter many time-space routines and body-ballets then we can talk about place-ballet. "The place-ballet is a fusion of many time-space routines and body-ballets in terms of place" (159), Seamon observes. Analyzing Seamon's phenomenological concept, Cresswell takes it a step further by observing that "a place-ballet is an evocative metaphor of our experience of place" (34). He also points out that: "Those who do not know the routine will appear clumsy and out-of-place simply through the non-conformity of their bodily practice" (34). Swenson is the outsider in Angela's dormitory room, while Angela whose body-ballet is eloquent and flawless suggests that she is the insider, the empowered individual in the interaction within the spatial boundaries of the dorm room.

Prose's description and choice of animalistic similes evoke danger and seduction. Angela is described as pulling Swenson across the room, she "steers him round, pushes him down on the bed. There's no resisting, no evading her gaze. It's like being charmed by a snake, not a king

cobra, obviously, but a tough little adder, weaving slightly, holding him in an unblinking stare” (230). The snake is a multifaceted literary symbol, evoking the preternatural sin, betrayal, and also signaling danger. Angela is in charge during the whole short sex scene between them, getting on top of him and procuring a condom, until his tooth cracks and they stop having intercourse. When Swenson asks whether the door is locked, Angela admits to having locked it “when we first walked in” (233), therefore admitting to her having engineered the incident. This sexual gaffe unavoidably alters the dynamics of their relationship. When Angela hands him the pages of her book chapter she is stark naked and “rolling her eyes—all irony—shook his hand” (235). This Angela is not the same person who awkwardly came into Swenson’s office and could not sit still. This is evocative of the Foucauldian notion of power: “Power is relations; power is not a thing, it is a relationship between two individuals... such that one can direct the behavior of another or determine the behavior of another. Voluntarily determining it in terms of a number of objectives which are also one’s own” (Interview, “What our Present Is” 410). The fact that the sexual encounter takes place in the space of the student dormitory which is Angela’s territory reinforces her empowerment in this exchange and further incriminates Swenson by default. The porous dormitory walls have allowed a mixture of politically correct sexual politics and “the banality and venality of academic vindictiveness and piety [as well as] the stereotypical assumptions about professorial misconduct” (Patai 87) to enter the campus and further underline “the unavoidable small-minded Schadenfreude as colleagues and students get to revisit old grievances and slights, and the sheer cynicism of faculty and administrators claiming to be concerned with students’ welfare.” (87)

Chapter 3. Porous Social Spaces on Campus

The campus as a physical space offers a multiplicity of built and non-built areas where students can interact thus creating and enriching the sense of academic community they share. The students, faculty and administrative staff of a university develop a sense of institutional belonging that is tied to space thanks to public campus spaces, that is campus spaces that allow for an interaction of all people sharing the campus without strictly categorizing them into students, faculty or custodian staff. The classroom is a private space insofar as it is used to deliver lectures. In this use of the classroom the agents are the students and the faculty members. If, on the other hand, during slightly altered circumstances, there is a lecture open to the public then the classroom as a space is radically altered too since it opens its doors to the wider public, the larger community thus transforming into a public space. Following a similar line of thought the campus built-space is divided by several porous boundaries that designate a blurring of private and public areas on campus. This porosity is also marked by the use the agents make of campus space; this use is susceptible to change as the campus space is an “event marked by openness and change rather than boundedness and permanence” (Cresswell 39). Since a college campus is open to the community surrounding the physical university only on occasion, the term public acquires a different meaning in this context; a space within a gated campus community cannot be public in the sense that academic spaces are limited to a particular group of people, i.e. faculty, students, university administrative and custodian staff. In the context of the campus, public spaces can be loosely defined as spaces “where strangers mingle freely” (Zukin 259), where people of all of the abovementioned categories working, living and/ or matriculating on campus can socialize without restrictions. These spaces are important “because they continually negotiate the boundaries and markers of human society” (Zukin 260). On a university campus these public spaces where people can cross paths informally, interact casually and socialize democratically are the library, the quadrangle and the commons room. In this chapter, I will first analyze the significance of these spaces on campus and then I will dissect their literary presence in the campus novel where they function as membranous spaces allowing for an interaction with social values and politics at different times in American history with both positive and negative outcomes.

I. The Library

The academic library has been largely described as being “at the heart of the University” (Urquhart 2). This is often reflected in the centrality of the university library both geographically and intellectually. Commenting on the spatial significance of the university library Brian Edwards noted that “Disraeli’s dictum that universities are places of “light, liberty, and learning” is nowhere more evident than in the design of the university library” (187). The university library is the symbol of learning on campus and as such it is often built in a manner that communicates this message. Hence, it can often be seen “centrally on campus as a symbol of independent intellectual inquiry” (Edwards 184) and is “usually the most prominent building on the campus” (185). Edwards observes that since the “library is a magnet for all members of the academic community, it requires a central position, prominent form and well-lit approaches” (185). According to Wilson as quoted in Edwards, the university library “has assumed the role of flagship for their institutions, with the emphasis on innovative architectural design, high quality construction and fittings, generous use of space, accessibility and transparency” (187). In many cases in Europe and in the United States the architectural design of the academic library has gone through a kind of structural resurgence with many university libraries being award-winning buildings. A case in point is Norman Foster’s central library at the Free University in Berlin, which is nicknamed the “brain” thanks to “its organic shape and central cortex of information services” (Wilson qtd in Edwards 188). Another example is the emblematic Herzog and de Meuron’s academic library which can be found in Cottbus, former East-Germany at the Brandenburg Technical University (Edwards 188). This building won the “Library of the Year Award” in 2006 not only owing to its futuristic design—it is designed like a “castle encased in etched glass that reflects the sky by day and glows after dark” (188)—but also thanks to its double function as both a media center and book repository, which according to Wilson shows a respect to the academic values of the twenty-first century (37). In the United States, a biennial award recognizing the “distinguished accomplishment in library architecture by an architect licensed in the United States for any library in the US or abroad” (Morehart) was first sponsored by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1963 and has been awarded ever since. Among recipients of the AIA Library Building Awards is the South Mountain Community Library, Phoenix (2013 Winner) and the University of Oregon Allan Price Science Commons & Research Library (2017 Winner). The South Mountain Community Library in Phoenix is lauded for its

innovative design that is “modeled on an integrated circuit, providing insulation between disparate functions and promoting interaction and connection between like functions and spaces” (Morehart). The University of Oregon Library was originally an underground library which after the renovation and additions boasted 4,000 square feet of new space that is extolled for its “new entry pavilion [that] supplements a brutalist courtyard that exacerbated the subterranean conditions of the existing library and maximizes available light below” creating to people using the subterranean library a feeling of being well above the ground (Lynch 1). Interestingly enough, the majority of the Library Buildings that won prestigious Architecture design awards are those which have been renovated and altered in such a manner as to adapt to the sweeping changes in higher learning. This bears proof to the fact that the academic library buildings that thrive are the ones that—instead of being secluded from society persisting in keeping their traditional structure intact—have successfully adapted to change. This structural adaptability of the academic library is also evidence of the openness of academia to transformations shaping society outside the gates of the campus. These transformations are not only socio-cultural in nature; nor do they have to do with a change in style and aesthetics, but they are much more concrete and practical often having to do with a change in the transmission of knowledge for example. When the book was the dominant medium of knowledge in higher education, the structure of the library adapted to this power by giving the reading room a celebrated space and allowing for more room around this space in order to shelve the books appropriately.

The eighteenth and nineteenth century academic library celebrated the reading room by setting it within a generous domed space. Typical is the work of the architects McKim, Mead and White, who placed grand circular reading rooms at the heart of their libraries for New York and Columbia Universities. (Edwards 186)

In modern times, a “similar gesture of spatial significance” (186) is given to the computer room. As Edwards points out since the needs of computer space differ from the spatial requirements of book-based reading, the library had to adapt to accommodate this differentiation by adjusting lighting design and even ventilation systems making the “shape of the technology-rich library reflect the environmental engineering of the space” (186). These spatial accommodations make us conclude that it is the media of the library that regulate “not just the use of space but its basic architectural form” (186). The academic library building exists on the

ecological border between traditional collegiate architecture and the modern state-of-the-art “learning commons” and is, thus, an active “site of exchange” (Sennett, *Craftsman*, 227). This function of the library as a porous space that “resists indiscriminate mixture” (227) but is able to contain differences is evidenced in the campus novels under scrutiny in this dissertation. The library buildings in these campus novels are porous spaces where values and politics from outside the academia breach the boundaries of the ivory tower and negotiate the spatial territory of the library on campus grounds.

II. The Quadrangle

A remnant of the monastic architectural design of British universities the quadrangle is a landmark of collegiate architecture in both Europe and the United States. During the twelfth and thirteenth century the English Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were modeled on monasteries, thus adopting Gothic architectural tropes and the enclosed monastic design that involved university buildings built around a quadrangle. The quadrangle is an open-air space usually rectangular or oblong in shape that can be either verdant or paved like a courtyard in the middle of the campus whose sides are entirely occupied by university buildings therefore forming a type of fortress that is sheltering the university campus from the town (Wood 268). When American university planning adopted the European model, the quadrangle or quad was still an integral part of campus design, but it was adjusted to accommodate the American campus. The enclosed quadrangle was rejected not only in a gesture that exhibited a marked dislike for the monastic seclusion of their British counterparts but also for a more practical reason. The buildings had to be separated from another and they had to reject the four-sided monastic model due to fear of fire, a precaution not necessary in England where the buildings were made out of stone and not wood as in America (Turner 23-31). Nevertheless, I contend that the architectural alterations in the quad’s structure involved far more than the practical reasons mentioned above. The enclosed British quadrangle was “a built symbol of a conservative educational philosophy” (Campos-Sotelo 126), while the open American quadrangle expressed a more open educational paradigm. The inscription of educational values on the built and non-built spaces of the campus had been a dream of campus planners since the first American campuses were built. A case in point being the University of Virginia that represented Thomas Jefferson’s dream of an “Academical Village” in Charlottesville (1817) where, as Campos-Sotelo points out:

“Jefferson conceived a spatial typology that dressed architecturally the vision of a community of learning. Thus, architecture became a projection of the educational values of the brand-new institution” (125). The quadrangle carries the spatial typology of the European heritage of the campus but also serves as a reminder that the quad is an open space, common for everybody using the campus. The quad is a space akin to the ancient Greek Agora the center of democratic life in ancient Greece where free-born citizens could gather and talk about politics, philosophy and casual matters. The ancient Agora was an open space located in the center of the city often demarcated by colonnades to form three sides of a rectangular or a regular square (Ring, Salkin, Boda 66). The structure and function of the Agora influenced the Roman forum which was a gathering place of great social significance. Literally translating as “public place outdoors” the Roman Forum was a place where vendors could sell their goods and people could exchange their views freely (Abbott, Chester 12). Borrowing from the function of the Agora and the Forum the quadrangle is a public space outdoors that inspires people to speak and socialize democratically. In the campus novels under examination in this dissertation the quadrangle serves as an open space that functions as a membranous academic space allowing democratic interaction of ideas and values entering the academic walls from outside the gates of the ivory tower and in some cases negotiating violence that also comes from outside the academic world a case in point being the quadrangle in *Monday, Monday* where an awful act of violence finds its way into campus through its porous walls.

III. Commons Room/ Dining Hall

The Commons Room and the dining halls on campus are communal spaces where students can dine together or spend some time conversing or playing games. These shared spaces are designed in such a manner as to develop a sense of community among students on campus. The university “need(s) spaces designed to generate interaction, collaboration, physical movement, and social engagement as primary elements of the student learning experience” (Jamieson 121). Spaces that allow for meaningful interaction and exchange of ideas among students instill a sense of institutional identity and academic community in the student body. Such spaces can be defined as third places. Oldenburg and Brisset (1982) developed the notion of the third place: “Third places exist outside the home and beyond the “work lots” of modern economic production. They are places where people gather primarily to enjoy each other’s

company” (269). These places can take many forms, Oldenburg gives the example of the tavern, the local coffee shop, the barbershop and outlines some basic criteria for a place to qualify as a third place. First “there must be neutral ground upon which people may gather. There must be places where individuals may come and go as they please, in which none are required to play host, and in which all feel at home and comfortable (46) and secondly third places are levelers in the sense that people of all social strata can participate in the discussion in a third place: “Third places counter the tendency to be restrictive in the enjoyment of others by being open to all and by laying emphasis on qualities not confined to status distinctions current in the society” (47). Another characteristic of third places is the supremacy of conversation and the playful mood that dominates therein (48-50). “The game is conversation and the third place is its home court” (Oldenburg 53). Third places are also accessible to all and a home away from home to “regulars”. “It is the regulars whose mood and manner provide the infectious and contagious style of interaction and whose acceptance of new faces is crucial” (55). In their research on “The Impact of Third Places on Community Quality of Life” (2009), Jeffres et al. made a list of possible places that match the abovementioned criteria and can therefore be listed as third places within the community. They identify as third places various places: community centers, senior centers, malls, shopping centers, malls, churches, schools and—what is of interest in this case—colleges and universities (333-345). The commons room on campus serves as a third place insofar as it is open to all students, it has some regulars, it is an open, democratic place where—given the diversity of the student body—people of all walks of life can gather and communicate freely and where conversation is centerpiece. As Jeffers et al. point out: “Third places function as unique public spaces for social interaction, providing a context for sociability, spontaneity, community building and emotional expressiveness” (335). I contend that the campus commons room is a third place and that thanks to its democratic quality and openness it functions as a porous space where values from outside the academic space can be expressed freely. However, in *The Secret History*, the campus novel where the commons room is given particular attention, the Commons is depicted as a democratic space that is “contaminated” by un-democratic, elitist ideas and later on by murder thus subverting the third-place quality of the academic space as I analyze below.

3.1 The Porous Academic Library in Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel* and Auster's *4 3 2 1*

Opening this subsection of my dissertation, it is important to note that I am hereby examining the library in two books that describe the exact same time in the history of America but are written 46 years apart. E. L. Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel* (1971) and Paul Auster's *4 3 2 1* (2017), albeit different in plot and narrative style both present the student uprising at Columbia University in New York in 1968. Although neither *The Book of Daniel* nor *4 3 2 1* snugly fit under the category of the campus novel, both works use campus space sporadically in their plot but with great significance in the lives of the protagonists. Especially the Columbia student uprising of 1968, a landmark in American history, is told by both authors in a different manner but using the backdrop of the university library. Doctorow wrote about this only a few years after the events being influenced by the zeitgeist in America, but Auster opts to write about the Columbia uprising almost fifty years later in his gargantuan novel. For Auster, having the luxury to look back in time, the Columbia student revolt is one of the most significant political events in the political formative decades of the sixties and seventies in America and in *4 3 2 1* he presents how America is shaped by these events through the parallel lives of his protagonists. The fact that the American campus and especially the space of the library is used as the backdrop of such a significant political event used by both authors, in novels written so many years apart, is for me a finding in itself proving the importance of university space as well as the interaction between campus and society. I am, therefore, interested in analyzing this emblematic moment in American political history through the scope of university space and point out the spatial significance of the library in these novels.

The coda of E. L. Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel* takes place in the Columbia University Library. Daniel Isaakson is writing his doctoral thesis in the library when he is interrupted by a student announcing that the library is closed.

"Time to leave, man, they're closing the school down. Kirk must go! We're doin' it, we're bringing the whole motherfucking university to its knees!"

"You mean I have to get out?"

"That's right, man, move your ass, this building is officially closed."

“Wait—“

“No wait, man, the time is now. The water’s shut off. The lights are going out. Close the book, man, what’s the matter with you, don’t you know you’re liberated?” (367)

The student talking to Daniel refers to Kirk Grayson the then President of Columbia University who was asked to resign by protesters who had sieged Columbia University buildings, including the president’s office, demonstrating against two major issues: one was the university involvement in the defense industry and the second was Columbia’s plan to construct a gym on the site of a Harlem neighborhood park that would not allow Harlem residents to use the facility (Bradley 5-16). Doctorow’s novel is a work of historiographic metafiction that is according to Linda Hutcheon a work that displays “a theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (historiographic metafiction⁴¹) [that] is made the grounds for [a] rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past” (5). In *The Book of Daniel*, Doctorow treats the Julius and Ethel Rosenberg trial and execution through their corollaries Paul and Rochelle Isaacson parents to Daniel and Susan. When Paul and Rochelle follow a fate similar to the one of their non-fictional counterparts, the Rosenbergs, the Isaacson children are adopted by the Lewins. In Doctorow’s version of the story, Susan Isaacson replaces one of the Rosenberg sons. *The Book of Daniel* is an account of Daniel’s life told in flashbacks. Daniel is a postgraduate student at Columbia in 1967-1968 and while the book is an account of his traumatized childhood and sadistic adult behavior, “mirroring Doctorow’s disillusionment with American national arrogance and dangerous imperialism that were responsible for the atrocities of the Vietnam War as well as for domestic brutality” (Tsimpouki 53).

The culminating scene in the academic space of the library is an emblematic one for *The Book of Daniel*, since 1968 was a time marked by student revolts around the world. I contend that the choice of the library is not a random one. As no actual records of the library building

⁴¹ The term “historiographic metafiction” was coined by Hutcheon in her 1987 essay “Beginning to Theorize the Postmodern” and was later further developed in her *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) where she makes it clear that novels that fall under the category of historiographic metafiction are those that “are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages” (5).

being occupied by the revolting students exist,⁴² the writer's positioning Daniel on a desk writing the last pages of his dissertation when the student uprising takes place "liberating" him from his task endows the library with particular spatial significance. The library site "at the heart of the University" (Urquhart 2) functions as a strong symbol of the knowledge disseminated by the university as an institution. Doctorow presents the reader with a university space that is open to the world, not an ivory tower secluded from politics. The Butler library is, thus, transformed into a membranous space that allows for an interaction with politics from the outside world despite its initial construction and original intended use as part of a gated community where "life [is] sealed within its walls" (Sennett, *Craftsman* 228), being heavily under surveillance as Sennett describes. The space of the library rejects the inert boundary of the gated community and opts for the membranous border wall that functions as a sieve negotiating with the social values and politics in a homology to what an organism in biology would do to remain healthy and functional. In the case of the University of Columbia, this political interaction was met with staunch resistance from the traditional values represented by the institution. The use of their bodies to occupy a space where they are ostensibly prevented from doing so, takes on a political effect turning occupation into a tactic against the institutional strategies. Commenting on the embodiment of occupation, Judith Butler maintains that when demonstrations and other forms of public protest occur in space "the very public character of the space is being disputed and even fought over" (Butler, "Bodies in Alliance" 1). Analyzing her point further, Butler observes: "So though these movements have depended on the prior existence of pavement, street, and square, and have often enough gathered in squares, like Tahrir, whose political history is potent, it is equally true that the collective actions collect the space itself, gather the pavement, and animate and organize the architecture" (1). Along the same lines,

bodies in their plurality lay claim to the public, find and produce the public through seizing and reconfiguring the matter of material environments; at the same time, those material environments are part of the action, and they themselves act when they become

⁴² During the University of Columbia April 1968 sit-in, the dissenting students occupied administrative buildings, classrooms, including the School of Architecture, the President's office in Low Library but no actual Library (Bradley 164-191). The importance of the sieging of Low Library which is an Administrative building but a Library in name since its original use was that of a Library is analyzed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

the support for action. In the same way, when trucks or tanks suddenly become platforms for speakers, then the material environment is actively reconfigured and re-functioned, to use the Brechtian term. (1)

Following Butler's urban analogy and transcribing it to university space, I contend that occupiers, through the seizing and reconfiguring of academic space manage to make claims to certain parts of university life that have so far excluded them. These facets of university life—political participation, partaking in decision making—are tied to space. In an attempt to make the link between space and political participation more evident Butler draws on Hannah Arendt's "space of appearance." In *The Human Condition* Arendt defined the space of appearance as:

unlike the spaces which are the work of our hands, it does not survive the actuality of the movement which brought it into being, but disappears not only with the dispersal of men — as in the case of great catastrophes when the body politic of a people is destroyed — but with the disappearance or arrest of the activities themselves. Wherever people gather together, it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever. (199)

Butler takes Arendt's space of appearance to make a point about the power of bodies to recreate space: "Space and location are created through plural action. And yet, her view suggests that action, in its freedom and its power, has the exclusive power to create location" ("Bodies in Alliance", 2). Hence, the library space under the student occupation is recreated; it is a different space. To further emphasize the library's significance, it is his experience in the library that prompts him to act, to give himself to the historical moment and "abandon himself to the flow of revolutionary change" (Tsimpouki 55, 56).

In a manner similar to Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel*, Paul Auster's *4 3 2 1* (2017) narrates the historical 1968 Columbia sit-in and ensuing student revolution through the personal story of Archie Ferguson, or rather through the fourth possible path of Ferguson's life. In this possible life, Ferguson is a student at Columbia during the Spring of 1968 so he and his girlfriend Amy Schneiderman are actively involved in the events that lead to the explosive May of 1968. Temperamentally, Ferguson is described as someone who was "not inclined to throw bricks" (513). However, "the agitation of the times were such that the reasons for not throwing bricks were beginning to look less and less reasonable, and when the moment finally came to throw the first ones, Ferguson's sympathies would be with the brick and not with the window"

(513). Auster chooses this suggestive image to describe Ferguson's mild politics as opposed to Amy's more radical political affiliations: Amy was part of SDS⁴³ and "her positions had hardened during the crazy-making months of early sixty-eight, pushing her deeper into a stance of radical militancy and anti-capitalist fervor, and she could no longer laugh off their small differences of opinion, no longer understand why he didn't agree on all her points" (635). Despite their political differences, both students take part in anti-war demonstrations that take place out of campus but also in anti-war speeches that take place within campus boundaries. At one point, during a speech by Colonel Paul B. Akst on Columbia Campus concerning modifications to the draft laws "several students dressed in army fatigues started playing a fife-and-drum rendition of "Yankee Doodle Dandy" while others waved around toy weapons" (638). The student protest ends abruptly when "someone sitting in the front row stood up and threw a lemon meringue pie in Colonel Akst's face" (638). The Vietnam War raging overseas had affected the academic world within the campus: Colonel Akst talks to the students about the draft laws, while the student body reacts to the war either by attending ROTC seminars or by demonstrating against the War and joining one of the many anti-war student organizations SDS, SAS, Praxis Axis and Action Fraction. The interplay of strategies and tactics on campus space is evidence of the porosity of academic walls since it shows the interaction of academic and social values, the clash between governmental will and people reactionary politics. The 1968 occupation of Columbia University buildings by students as well as the resulting stifling of the revolt by police powers that led to the most popular student occupation and to, in the words of Marc Rudd, "model of student militance and audacity" (Bingham 3) reflects what de Certeau defined as the conflict between strategies and tactics in urban space. It is my assertion that de Certeau's theory can be applied in the academic setting and that it can offer an alternative blueprint of what happened in Columbia in May 1968. De Certeau identifies two main powers at work in society: strategies and tactics. In particular in his preface to *The Practice of Everyday Life* he explicates:

I call a 'strategy' the calculus of force relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution [a

⁴³ Students for a Democratic Society, a U.S. student activist movement that was formed in the 1960s and that was one of the main representations of the New Left (Davidson 25)

university]) can be isolated from an environment. A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper (propre) and thus serves as the basis for generating relationships distinct from it ... Political, economic and scientific rationality has been constructed on this strategic model. I call a 'tactic', on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a 'proper', (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place fragmentarily, without taking over its entirety. (xix)

The strategies employed by the Columbia University administration are met with the tactical resistance coming from the student body in university space. More specifically, the Columbia University administration is organized under the powers of the strategic authority of the State and functions according to its will disseminating that branch of knowledge that will one day issue citizens that will perpetuate the state ideology and be part of the state apparatus. According to de Certeau's theorization of how power works in urban settings, Columbia University represents the potent strategy while the student body who disagrees with the strategic implementation of how space should be allocated in the University Campus or about the University's implication with the Vietnam War tactically "insinuate [themselves] into the other's place fragmentarily, without taking over its entirety" (xix) by means of their brief occupation of University buildings. The student tactic of gathering together and claiming space, publicly and collectively opens up political possibilities for the future since it opposes the political strategies of the present. Paul Auster, who coincidentally, witnessed the 1968 Columbia occupation as a freshman student, writes in great historical detail of the events that lead to the stifling of the student revolt in his *4 3 2 1* where it becomes evident that the occupation was a physical manifestation of bodies into the university spaces that managed to rewrite the parameters of those spaces and allow the students to participate, feel and hope in a different manner although that was for a brief amount of time.

Never before in the annals of. Never before so much as thought. The widening gyre, and all at once everything turning within it. [...] The centre could not, the things could not, the horde could not not not do other than it did, but anarchy was not loosed, it was the world that loosened, at least for a time, and thus began the largest, more sustained student protest in American history. (645)

Auster uses fragments of lines from Yeats' poem "The Second Coming" to describe the feeling of imminent anarchy that the protest signifies but then immediately rushes to point out that the anarchy unleashed is not merely anarchy due to the student protest but anarchy due to the situation globally. This passage is particularly important insofar as it proves the interconnection between the academic milieu and the global situation, further stressing the Senettian porosity of academic gates that allows for the students to unionize and create the student movement that demonstrates against the war. W. B. Yeats wrote "The Second Coming" (1919) in the aftermath of WWI reflecting the chaotic, almost religiously apocalyptic global situation that brought the whole world to its knees. Likewise, Auster uses fragments of Yeats' poem to show that the students were protesting within the boundaries of the Columbia University campus for global evils, stressing "it was the world that loosened." The globality of the student protest and the far-reaching effects that stretched the university boundaries far from American ground is evidenced in the placards held by the student protesters that read "Columbia Paris" (659). By linking the Columbia University occupation with the May 1968 student protest and general social unrest the Columbia protesters open up a dialogue with their Parisian counterparts thus proving the porosity of academic walls and their openness to the wider world. The students seemed to understand what was at stake in the Columbia building occupation so Tom Hayden's famous call to action in order to create "one, two, three, many Columbias" (Hayden 345) across university campuses around the world sounded especially prophetic when students from the Sorbonne in Paris sent a telegram to the SCC (Student Coordinating Committee) at Columbia: "We've occupied a building in your honor. What do we do now?" (Hayden 346). It seems that the Columbia campus Sundial inscription that read HORAM EXPECTAM VENIEM (Await the Hour, it Shall Come)—which Auster mentions too (646) in his description of the April-May 1968 events—had finally come true.

In both literary works the Columbia University Library (Butler Library) is depicted as a porous site that allows the interpenetration of values and ideas from outside the gates of academia. The Butler Library, a neoclassical majestic building with marble columns above which are engraved the names of influential thinkers from antiquity, seems to be an inert monument of wisdom and knowledge and becomes alive with contemporary politics. In both *The Book of Daniel* and *4 3 2 1* Butler Library is depicted as a site of contestation and political activity as opposed to the stereotype of the Ivory Tower that stands aloof from society and

history. The brutality of the Vietnam war and all its political implications seeps through the walls of academia and affects academic life. The walls of the Butler library in the two novels, function as a double edge creating an openness akin to that of the cell membrane as Sennett underlines. The porous edge of the library engages in a dialectic relationship with history, with society, with the world outside the gates of academia. The siege of a Library is the symbolic siege of the heart of the University, and it does not only signify the political activity that takes place around its walls, but it also stresses the unpredictability in the function of the building thus it enhances its porosity.

3.2 Elizabeth Crook's *Monday, Monday* and Richard Russo's *Straight Man*: Quadrangle

Porosity, Violence and Performativity

The quadrangle dealt with in Elizabeth Crook's 2014 *Monday, Monday* is the University of Austin at Texas quadrangle at the time of the first mass shooting taking place on campus space in American history. *Monday, Monday* is based on the fateful events of August 1st, 1966 when Charles Whitman got atop of the University of Texas Tower situated majestically in the middle of the campus quad and started shooting faculty and students below; his shooting spree left seventeen people dead and thirty-one people wounded. In the words of author Gary Lavergne: "It took Charles Whitman an hour and a half to turn the symbol of a premier university into a monument to madness and terror. With deadly efficiency he introduced America to public mass murder, and in the process forever changed our notions of safety in open spaces" (xi). Up until August first, 1966 murder in Austin, Texas had been a private issue, usually committed secretly so the shooting rampage taking place in an educational setting was not only an event unprecedented in its irrationality but also an event that introduced America to domestic terrorism. In the opening chapters of *Monday, Monday* Crook details the 96 minutes and immediate aftermath of the University of Texas massacre using a non-fictional descriptive blueprint of the campus quad and buildings, but changing the characters involved in the tragedy. The reader then follows the dramatic developments in the lives of three fictional students touched by the collective tragedy of August 1st as they deal with their own traumas in the span of decades to come.

The University of Texas at Austin had "25,511 students enrolled in 1966" (Lavergne 40) and during the first of August the student population might have been diminished but not

significantly dwindled from campus, as the summer courses were in full session. In the opening scene from *Monday, Monday* we witness Shelly, the typical 1960s clean-teen, attending a Mathematics class in the sweltering heat and through her eyes we are granted a view across the quad first to the Littlefield Fountain Memorial and then to the landmark Tower:

From her seat beside the window, Shelly could see out over the trees and walkways of the South Mall. At the nearest end of the mall, a gaudy fountain of bronze horsemen reared from a pond of turbid water into a shower of sunlight. Far away at the opposite end, beyond the branches burdened with ball moss and summer foliage and large flocks of grackles, the massive stone Main Building, with its pillars and terraces and tower rising nearly thirty stories, imposed itself against a hot, pale, cloudless sky. (8)

The Littlefield Fountain Memorial described by Shelly as “a gaudy fountain of bronze horsemen reared from a pond of turbid water into a shower of sunlight” (8) was erected in 1933 as a monument to students and alumni that died in the Great War. The monument is named after its benefactor Major George Washington Littlefield who had originally envisioned the monument to be dedicated to the dead of the Confederate Army. The sculpture is designed by Italian-born sculptor Pompeo Coppini, it is placed in front of the Main Building Tower and it depicts the prow of a ship emerging from the stone wall behind it, in front of it there are two hippocampi, two of which are mounted by mermen (Smithsonian). There are two bronze plaques adorning the limestone wall behind the fountain, one of which lists the names of all the alumni and students that died in the First World War: “THESE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS GAVE THEIR LIVES TO THEIR COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WAR” (Sminthsonian). The erection of this sculpture and its placement in the middle of the campus quadrangle signifies the porosity of the open, public spaces on campus since by referring to the First World War and connecting it to academic ground it exemplifies how the academic world embraces important sociohistorical events and also demonstrates how this interaction with the world outside its gates makes Academia less rigid in its structure and more encompassing in its values. The University of Texas Tower, that Shelly can also see from her classroom window, is the emblematic landmark of the University of Texas: “Austin's tallest building, rose 307 feet above an area of Austin which was itself 606 feet above sea level; the state capitol rose 311 feet above an area 600 feet above sea level. This meant that the Tower was taller by two feet, and for

some Texans this was significant” (Lavergne 40). The Tower was linked with events that spanned across the boundaries of academic life since all four sides of the massive structure were lit—and are still lit forming an orange 1—in case the University of Texas Athletic Teams win in National Championships (Lavergne 42) but also during the celebration of Texas Independence Day⁴⁴ and in National Holidays. During World War II, the Tower housed Austin’s air raid warning system so in those days Texans had associated the Tower with the sound of potential combat, however on Victory Day⁴⁵ the Tower carillons played “America” while students and Austin citizens stood and listened (Berry 27). Therefore, in the aftermath of WWII the Tower stood as a symbol of both war and peace for the citizens of Austin who could see it standing out miles from university premises. The Tower itself was built in the thirties with funds provided by Roosevelt’s New Deal and after university officials identified the need for new spaces to house a library and main building (Davis and Colson 21). Its architectural design was in tandem with that of many buildings of the thirties like the Empire State and the Chrysler Buildings that stood high above the urban landscapes they dominated (Lavergne 43). Nevertheless, the Tower was not without its critics: “In a 1947 article, Thad W. Riker, Professor of Modern European History, called the Tower “a mongrel, a hybrid. It is partly classical, partly Spanish” (43) while folklorist and Professor J. Frank Dobie characterized it as a ridiculous thing that does not suit Texas but would be better suited in a campus in New York where space is a consideration (43). Despite the critical voices, in view of its remarkable size and conspicuous positioning in the heart of campus and in the midst of Austin, the Tower remained a landmark not only for the University of Texas at Austin but also for the whole of Austin community.

It was that architectural collegiate landmark, the Tower that had captured the imagination of Charles Whitman as he had admitted to various friends and to the campus psychologist shortly before his shooting rampage. “A person could stand off an army from atop of it before they got

⁴⁴ Texas Independence Day refers to the day when the State of Texas adopted the Declaration of Independence (2nd of March 1836) and is celebrated annually on the 2nd of March (Davis 82). Texans celebrate their Independence Day with festivals, re-enactments, chili cook-offs and story-telling sessions about how Texas gained their independence from Mexico.

⁴⁵ Victory Day here refers to VJ-Day, or Victory Day over Japan, August 6 and 9 1945 when America dropped atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively. This event led to early celebrations for the end of the war all over the world and especially in America, although the official Potsdam Proclamation between the Japanese and the Allies would not be signed until the 2nd of September 1945 (Hakim Joy)

to him” he had said once to his friend Francis Schuck Jr. while they were seating on the balcony of Charles’ dorm room on the University of Texas looking at the landmark Tower (Lavergne 23). The awkward remark was followed by the more uneasy admission that “he would like to go to the observation deck and shoot people” (23) which was met by a feeling of disbelief on the part of the amused Schuck. It seems that the Tower had a persistent appeal on Charles Whitman’s mind since only days before the event had shared only one fantasy with Dr. Heatly, the University Psychologist that he had often thought “about going up on the Tower with a deer rifle and shooting people” (71). Nevertheless, Dr. Heatly was not particularly worried since it was not the first time he had heard a reference to the Tower by a student; usually students threatened to jump off the Tower. Heatly was nonplussed but not worried enough to report it to him the Tower was “a mystic symbol of the University and the frustrations of College life. Since its construction it had been impossible to think of UT without thinking specifically of the Tower” (72). Therefore, Heatly must have thought of Whitman as another frustrated student.

Charles Whitman was more than a frustrated student. He was a U.S. Marine who was studying in the University of Texas on a NESEP scholarship. The Naval Enlisted Science Education Program (NESEP) “intended to train engineers who would later become commissioned officers” and it had intensified its recruitment policy especially after the then Soviet Union launched Sputnik I (Lavergne 19). Whitman applied for a NESEP scholarship and after attending preparatory school for Math and Physics he was accepted in the University of Texas on 15 September 1961 (20). The NESEP scholarship was a substantial scholarship; not only did it take care of tuition and campus fees for its scholars but it also awarded recipients a 250-dollar stipend per month (20). The NESEP scholarship is proof of the porosity of academia since—along with the G.I. Bill and ROTC—it diversified the student body especially after the WWII. Enabling war veterans and former marines to enter the academic world in America would not only help the veterans themselves but also benefit the educational institutions that seemed to be desperately inert in their uniformity. Talking about cities Sennett postulated that in order for them to be healthy they need to “constantly absorb new elements” (*Craftsman* 229) and that, in urbanism, “working with resistance means converting boundaries into borders” (229). To extend the urban analogy to the campus, the influx of young marines in higher education institutions converted the more inert gated academic boundaries of the campus into porous borders that allowed the new elements to seep in and gradually change the demographics of the up to then

elitist academia. Hence, the gates of academia proved to be porous enough to let these new values pass through but at the same time another condition became acquainted to the academic world through the new battle-hardened student body: trauma. This trauma crept into academia and found its expression through violence in university space.

In *Monday, Monday*, the quad—just before it is transformed into a heterotopic landscape by the first bullet shot by Whitman—seems peaceful and typically sixties as Shelly walks the reader through the statue of Woodrow Wilson and the UT plaza, offering an olfactory tour of the mid-60s campus in August with the sound of the Mamas and the Papas “Monday, Monday” blaring from a transistor radio, the sunlight whitewashing “the massive stone arches and the carved pillars of the main building before her, making the tower look as flat against the sky as if it had been pasted on blue poster board” (10). In a matter of seconds, a boy is shot dead before her eyes and then she is shot too. Various people hearing the shots are in utter disbelief:

“There’s something happening on the mall,” the student said. A girl got up and looked out. “I think it’s something to do with the Drama Department” (12). Even when numerous students and a professor warn other students that “Someone in the tower’s shooting people on the plaza” students still cannot grasp at the fact: “Is this the experiment in psychology? The one where they see if we’ll go help?” (13) In another instance, after the frantic warnings that there was a shooter in the tower, students thought it was a prank and laughed it off. (14) The unreality of someone shooting at people in an educational setting underlines not only the unprecedented nature of the mass shooting in an institution of higher education but also the denial that any form of violence other than performative—a prank, a psychology experiment, a Drama club performance—could take place in the campus quad. In an interview to the *Austin American-Statesman*, ten years after the tragedy on 1 August 1976 Norma Barger, real life witness of the shootings is quoted as saying that she thought that the incident was a campus prank and she expected the six to get up and walk away laughing, before seeing the blood and realizing more people were falling down (Lavergne143). The campus quad is transformed by the shooting spree, there are dead bodies spread on the green while the setting resembles a war zone:

People had started firing up at the tower; gunshots came from the English and history buildings and peppered the air from the football stadium. An ambulance from the funeral home backed hurriedly toward Wyatt and Jack on the narrow street that ran between the

steps and the tree covered parts of the mall. Then a bullet pierced the rear window, and the driver pulled forward again. Wyatt felt the girl's wrist for a pulse. But he knew she was dead. (19)

The once peaceful quad that served as a communal open space for students and faculty to cross, mingle, gather, talk had now been transformed into an uncanny space of violence and death. Using de Certeau's spatial tool-kit to deconstruct the scene unraveling in the UT quad that Monday morning in August 1966 I could extend the urban analogy to the campus space and draw parallels between the pedestrians and various city types and the campus characters trapped in the quad drama.

One of the main characters, Wyatt observes the Tower and recalls having been up there many times: "He knew the view. It was open, clear to the horizon. Austin spread like a puddle. Pedestrians were the size of bugs. To the south, the capitol dome looked small; to the west, storefronts lined the Drag. To the east and north were dormitories, classroom buildings" (15). Up on the observation deck of the highest building in Austin, Whitman must have felt omnipotent; an all-seeing god. His strategic positioning is more than the positioning of a Marine shooting at moving targets below the ground. The description of the view from the UT Tower is reminiscent of de Certeau's description of being lifted to the summit of the World Trade Center, "out of the city's grasp" (*The Practice of Everyday Life*, 92).

When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors and or spectators. [...] His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was 'possessed' into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a Solar Eye, looking down like a god. (92)

Whitman stands on the Tower, privileged with a bird's eye view of the entire UT campus and the ability to observe not only the pedestrians walking on the quad below him but on a second layer of interpretation he is also privy to their "mortal" stories written through their pedestrian speech acts enacted beneath his watchful eyes. As the "ordinary practitioners of the city live "down below," below the thresholds at which visibility begins" (93) likewise the ordinary practitioners of the campus live and interact down below, on the level of the quad, they walk through the quadrangle to go from building to building, they gather around the plaza for

informal meetings, they socialize and use the quad as a kind of Ancient Greek Agora. Their perambulations leave a trace, they tell a story. “They walk—an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, Wandersmänner, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban “text” they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other’s arms” (93). The stories they write on the quad are interrupted, cut short, or altered and re-written by Whitman who shoots at the walkers from above the Tower. He is the only one who can read the campus script being “written” by the pedestrian speech acts below and he is the one in power to re-write or interfere with the re-writing of the spatial stories of the people on the quad by a push at his trigger. The walkers below follow a different trajectory than the one they would routinely follow had it not been for Whitman; some are stopped at their tracks, others are forced to hide, while others are made to run to a different direction. “Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together. In that respect, pedestrian movements form one of these “real systems whose existence in fact make up the city. They are not localized; it rather they that spatialize” (de Certeau 97). The walkers’ movements on the quad at the time of the shooting draw a line on the campus map that tells a spatial story which is different than the story they would tell under different circumstances. It tells a delinquent story. According to de Certeau: “If the delinquent exists only by displacing itself, if its specific mark is to live not on the margins but in the interstices of the codes that it undoes and displaces [...] then the story is delinquent.” (130) The story written on the campus quad that August morning escaped the official spatial mapping of the quad, at the same time underlying the porosity of the academic space since it defied the predetermined function of the campus and enhanced unpredictability and improvisation.

In the campus novel as well as in the non-fictional account of the events of that fateful Monday morning in 1966 there are students who are reported as assuming that the shooting is not the work of a single sniper but of multiple armed men and that the shooting rampage in the quad is the result of a revolution. “Half a dozen underclassmen stood there guessing about how many gunmen were up in the tower. One of the girls said this must be the start of a revolution or a student uprising. A stout boy in Bermuda shorts said Cubans were attacking” (Crook 15). The people trapped in the campus quad try to rationalize the violence they witness through the sociocultural and historical situation America was going through at the time. The academic

world of the 60s could not but have been invaded by the politics of the time. The Vietnam War had been raging overseas for eleven years in 1966 (1955-1975) drafting thousands of young Americans who found refuge in universities at home while the Bay of the Pigs Invasion (1961) had failed creating a feeling of insecurity among American people. University students at the time were divided between the musical tastes and ideologies of two “Barrys” as Mark Hamilton Lytle puts it in *America’s Uncivil Wars of the Sixties* (2009). They were divided between those who listened to Barry McGuire’s cynical “Eve of Destruction” (“Violence flarin', bullets loadin' /You're old enough to kill but not for votin'”) or to the patriotic “Ballad of the Green Berets” by Sgt. Barry Sadler (“Fighting soldiers from the sky /Fearless men who jump and die /Men who mean just what they say /The brave men of the Green Beret.”) In any case, American politics and the constant fear of a pending revolution or armed conflict had infiltrated academic space in the mid-sixties. *Monday, Monday* captures not only Whitman’s shooting rampage but the zeitgeist of a sixties institution fraught with fear and foreign politics, the draft and dissent, always on the verge of a violent incident. The quality of porosity allows for a culture of fear, violence and trauma to enter the campus gates and alter the green-pastures idea of an Arcadian institution of higher learning.

Another campus quadrangle deserving our attention in terms of its porous representation in fiction is the quad in Richard Russo’s *Straight Man* (1997). The quality of campus porosity has already been touched upon in relation to *Straight Man* in Chapter One, wherein I examined the novel in relation to the neoliberal values that had infiltrated the campus and especially the professors’ offices in the nineties. My focus had been Dean Pope’s office and the building of a new multimillion-dollar Technical Careers Complex that would translate into budget cuts that would, in turn, lead into the minimizing of the Humanities Department of the University. In this section, I will turn my focus on the open space of the quad and the performativity of protest deployed upon the public space of this Agora-like space of the campus.

The very idea of performativity started within the field of linguistics, in the speech act theory (1955) of John Langshaw Austin, who attacked the predominant philosophical views of the time that utterances simply state facts but instead, postulated that certain utterances gave the speaker the power to act, to perform an action; these are called performative utterances (Austin 5-6). In the William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955, in order to

elucidate the term performative utterances Austin gave the example of naming a ship “I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth” or the act of bequeathing an object in the reading of a will as in: “I give and bequeath my watch to my brother” (6). That was not only the breakthrough in linguistic studies since Austin’s influential ideas were quickly adopted by other fields and soon performativity “made its debut performance in art as well” (Klimke and Scharloth 47). Artist Alan Kaprow conducted his now famous “18 Happenings in 6 parts” where the audience received their admission tickets with strict directions about what they had to do, even the specific times when they would be able to applaud. They would move about different rooms, each separated with plastic, transparent walls where they would see different scenes with no connection between them. This type of performance inaugurated the type of “happening” performance that came to mean “a spontaneous, undirected occurrence” (Klimke and Scharloth 47). These early types of performative happenings marked the beginning of the performative protest happenings of the 1960s and 1970s. The premise of performative protest can be found in the work of Harold Garfinkel and in particular his breaching experiments. Garfinkel expanded on performative theory by exploring how people in ordinary settings react to a breaching of commonly accepted social norms (Baert 86f). He proposed that the stronger the reaction elicited, the stronger the social rule breached. Some of these breaching experiments include intentionally mistaking customers for waiters and vice versa and treating them accordingly in a restaurant, or violating the social terms in an interpersonal interaction thus creating a breach in communication (Garfinkel). Klimke and Scharloth observe that:

Such breaches of convention create troublesome events, which help to reveal the ordinary practices used to achieve stability. Like happenings, breaching experiments are a type of performance that involve the audience and break traditional rules to generate reflexivity about methods of making sense. (48)

Garfinkel’s breaching experiments were essential to the performativity of protest in the sixties, since they lay the theoretical foundation of challenging social order, and by definition the status quo, through interrogating collective types of perception (Klimke and Scharloth 49). Examples of notable performative embodied protest, breaking the normative use of space is Rosa Park’s 1955 refusal to ride the segregated buses, the Selma march in 1965 or the performative protest conducted by students sitting down at a segregated lunch-counter in Greensboro, North

Carolina. As cited in Klimke and Scharloth these were all breaching experiments that caused a great upheaval in American society proving Garfinkel's theory that the stronger the reaction, the stronger the rule: "The violent response they provoked from local authorities and angry citizens revealed how deeply ingrained racial inequality was in American society" (Klimke and Scharloth 49). The performative protest legacy of the sixties continued well into the seventies with some prominent cases of performative protest in public space⁴⁶. Examining the performative protest legacy onto the literary plateau, *Straight Man* offers very apt examples. While Russo's underachieving hero is in no way directly linked to political movements like the ones described above, he is still a child of the sixties for whom protest is to a great extent a performative matter. He had taken part in the Vietnam protests as a student and now as the interim Dean of the English Department he feels the need to protest the budget cuts to his department. Therefore, in an effort to protest the budget cuts or perhaps in an improvising act prompted out of anger and "a sudden act of self-righteousness" (114) Prof. Deveraux grabs Finny the goose by the neck and threatens to kill a goose a day until he gets the budget he needs to hire his staff in order to have his freshman composition courses the following fall (115). I contend that Prof. Deveraux's threat to kill a goose a day is more than a comedic feature of the novel. It is a performative form of protest on the part of the Professor as a remnant of the sixties counterculture he represents within the space of a neoliberal campus of the nineties:

I have slipped on the fake nose and eyeglasses. First, I identify myself as a department chair at the college who wishes to remain anonymous, then I explain that I do not, even at

⁴⁶ A case in point is the protest of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina and the various 'pots and pans' protests (cacerolazos) in Latin America. These protests were based on embodiment and symbolic elements to put the political message of resistance across. In the first case, the Mothers de Plaza de Mayo performed weekly silent marches towards the presidential office building, the Casa Rosado (the Pink House), they were all wearing white scarves and they all shared the universal experience of having lost at least one child by the Argentinian junta. The cacerolazos protest started in 1971 in Chile to protest the shortage of food during the Salvador Allende administration. Hundreds of people armed with pots and pans would come out of their homes, flood the streets and make as much noise as possible banging the cacerolas (kitchenware) in order to protest the governmentally implemented food ratios. While the first cacerolazos were spontaneous and non-partisan, the phenomenon was later more organized and politicized. The performative nature of both protests as well as the fact that there are based on the use of the body and on strong symbolism in public space to transfer their claims across borders is what renders them so effective.

this late spring date, have a budget for next year that will allow me to hire the adjunct staff I need to cover freshman composition courses next fall. Despite the fact that the university has committed millions to a new building project, it can't seem to commit to the additional dozen or so comp sections we'll need, even though these will cost a paltry three grand per section. (144-115)

The theatricality of his protest does not fall flat since the media of the nineties are quick to pick on a piece of news that will increase their ratings; they are even “not in the least interested in the scheduled dedication” (115) for which they had come to West Central Pennsylvania State University in fictional Railton, that is the dedication of the Technical Careers Building. Nevertheless, “the insight that symbolic actions – performative actions in everyday life as well as artistic performances – have the potential to create or undermine social reality” (Klimke and Scharloth 47) was not shared by the majority of Deveraux's students and fellow faculty members who did not appreciate the performativity of Prof. Deveraux's “happening” for all its staged, symbolic quality. “Happening” and “performance” were the avant-garde terms in the international jargon of a sixties intellectual (Klimke and Scharloth 47). As Allan Kaprow, quoted in Klimke and Scharloth, later writes: “A happening, unlike a stage play, may occur at a supermarket, driving along a highway, under a pile of rags, and in a friend's kitchen, either at once or sequentially . . . It is art but seems closer to life” (47). I argue that, in *Straight Man* Deveraux threatens to do away with one goose a day, holding the goose by the neck to add dramatic effect in front of the cameras unwittingly paying homage to his sixties days when such performative protests could communicate a message on campus. However, the message is not communicated but misunderstood thus miscommunication ensues as this generation of students—and some of his colleagues even—do not understand this form of protest; they fail to read its symbolic message, they neglect to appreciate its farcical dissenting quality but opt to see it one-dimensionally as animal abuse. The very next day after his performative protest in front of the campus pond, Deveraux witnesses a large group of protesters having gathered around the campus pond demonstrating against his protest carrying placards saying: “STOP THE SLAUGHTER” while the group was also chanting the same (Russo 172). Deveraux is surprised to find out that some of the placards had “[his] grainy, blown-up photograph on them in the center of the now ubiquitous symbol of the forbidden” (172). The protesters are animal rights activists that have infiltrated the campus, students and even some faculty members. “As I' m

surveying the protesters, it occurs to me that they aren't all strangers. I recognize one thin, balding, young fellow from faculty meetings, though I have no idea what department he's in. He notices me at the very moment I notice him and he points me out to youngish women at his elbow. They observe me through narrowed eyes, pass the information along to the others" (172-173). Deveraux bitterly observes that he used to carry "a sign like that during Vietnam" (173). This bitter realization brings to the fore a shift in the values that diachronically imbue academic walls. In the late sixties when Deveraux was a student himself anti-war politics and in particular the Vietnam War protest shook academia in America, while his own students in the nineties protest on academic grounds about a different set of values, the protection of animal rights being a case in point. Russo continues the analogy with the Vietnam War protests on campus through the bewildered Deveraux when—after the goose is found dead, hanging from a tree on campus—he notices the campus teeming with people "protesting the demise of a single goose" (229). Deveraux—who is innocent for the murder of the goose—remembers his own days as a "sign carrier" (229). The continuous juxtaposition between older possibly more "important" values and contemporary "trendier" values on campus is evident as the campus quad is diachronically occupied by different forces. The effect of unpredictability, improvisation and performativity brought about by Deveraux's farcical performance underlines the threshold quality of the campus where different voices are expressed. More importantly so, the Sennettian porosity of academic walls is once more confirmed as the university walls prove to function like a cell membrane "a container both resistant and porous" (Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 227) that allows for this interpenetration of politics on campus.

3.3 The Commons Room: A Porous Third Place on Campus

In Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* (1992) the Commons Room represents an essential academic locus articulating several spatial oppositions; it is at once a democratic third place that provides Richard with shelter and warmth when he most needs it and a space where democratic qualities are eschewed by talk of murder in a manner that subverts equality and egalitarian values. As discussed earlier in this section, sociologist Ray Oldenburg is the father of the term third place which he coined in his 1989 book *The Great Good Place* that comes with the explanatory subtitle: *Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons and Other Hangouts at*

the Heart of a Community. His third place is more than a sound bite⁴⁷. It has to do with a public setting, beyond the home and the workplace, where regulars can meet around coffee, food or drinks to enjoy playful conversations on a variety of topics. More specifically, he defines a third place as: "...a generic designation for a great variety of public spaces that host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals' and is a core setting of informal public life." (16) The Commons Room in Hamden College is a third place in so far as it is populated by regulars who voluntarily anticipate their gatherings at this site not only for communal meals but also for conversations, to play games and share intimations. The Commons at the same time functions as a social leveler since students from all walks of life cross paths and have the opportunity to socialize, as Oldenburg underlines: "a place that is a leveler is, by its nature, an inclusive place." (24) The fact that Richard, who is an outsider, finds refuge in the Commons Room during the harsh winter break he spends at Hamden College, while the rest of the classics students are away from school, bears proof to the inclusiveness of the place. Richard admits remaining every evening in Commons in what he calls his "sessions of prolonged loitering" (130) when he sought to spend as much time as possible "hanging in one public space and then another" (130) in order to avoid the Vermont cold and delay the moment he would have to go back "home" to the unheated warehouse he stayed in for the winter break. He admits: "I became an expert at making myself invisible. I could linger two hours over a coffee, four over a meal, and hardly be noticed by the waitress. Though the janitors in Commons roused me every night at closing time, I doubt they ever realized they spoke to the same boy twice" (130). At this point, it should be pointed out that Richard's very survival is tied to his staying at Commons for as long as possible. This in turn reflects a deep pessimism on a student's survival outside of the status quo that the Commons represents as a brick-and-mortar component of the educational

⁴⁷ Howard Schultz, Starbucks CEO borrowed or according to some circles appropriated the term "third place" to create a sound bite to envelop the popular Starbucks coffee-shops. In his book *Pour Your Heart in It: How Starbucks Built a Company One Cup at a Time* ((1997) Schultz explains how Starbucks cafes are "places between work and home where people get a break that takes them far from the routines of their daily lives" (281) and that Starbucks is fundamentally different than McDonalds and other chain restaurants in that: "We're not in the commodity business. We've created a third place". This view is seen by many as a blatant attempt to advertise Starbucks by appropriating the term third place without actual merit (see essay: "Consuming Third Place: Starbucks and the Illusion of Public Space", by Bryant Simon)

system. The explicit message is that if it hadn't been for the warmth provided by the aegis of the Commons building Richard would not be alive to be the narrator of *The Secret History*. The implicit meaning is that the chances for survival for students like Richard are nonexistent outside the boundaries of academic space, therefore Richard's survival is tied to the status quo. In any case, in Richard's circumstance Commons functions as a home away from home offering warmth and support when he most needs it. In this way, Commons sanctions another purpose of an original third place: "Though a radically different kind of setting from the home, the third place is remarkably similar to a good home in the psychological comfort and support that it extends." (Oldenburg 42)

Taking the analogy of Oldenburg's third place a step further it must be underlined that once murder becomes part of the lives of the five college students by means of porosity, Commons loses most of the integral characteristics that render it an authentic third place and instead becomes ominous and undemocratic in all of the subsequent scenes in the novel. Commons is not a bubble where no news from the outside can contaminate it; Bunny's girlfriend, Marion, has a subscription to a local newspaper "something to do with the Early Childhood Center" (206) and this is one of the ways news from the town can pass through the ivory tower borders. This is along the lines to how Richard Sennett describes the interaction that takes place in an ecological border: An ecological border, like a cell membrane, resists indiscriminate mixture; it contains differences but is porous. The border is an active edge" (*Craftsman* 227). Sennett makes an analogy to the built human environment saying that walls are supposed to function in the same manner as cell membranes that are porous and allow for a certain interaction of material in biology. In the case of Commons, the academic walls are porous and allow for a certain degree of interaction since the news of the farmer's murder become widespread via the print medium of the newspaper. The news of the murder is used in a warped manner by Bunny that eventually manages to subvert the third-place quality of Commons.

When Bunny found out about the murder of the farmer in Battenkill County by reading it in Marion's newspaper in Commons "the first thing he said practically across the room was "Look here you guys, some farmer got killed out by Francis's house" (206) breaking one of the rules of third place conversation which is "speak in a low voice as will allow others to hear" (Oldenburg 28). Bunny was relentlessly teasing his friends about the incident in the space of the

Commons: “Hey. November tenth? That’s the night you guys were out at Francis’s. The night you ran over that deer [...] If I had a suspicious mind, I’d guess you’d done it, Henry, coming back from Battenkill County that night with blood from head to toe” (206). Bunny incessantly talks about the farmer’s murder in Commons which is as Henry says “packed” (206) while “Marion and her friend were listening to every word, and besides, you know how his voice carries...” (206). His annoying mentions to the murder that monopolize the conversation, veer to downright threats: “You know if the cops had pulled you over that night, you’d probably be in jail right now. There’s a phone number to call if anybody’s got any information. If I wanted to, I bet I could get you guys in a heck of a lot of trouble...” (206-207). In the series of threats Bunny delivers towards his friends he breaks a succession of third place conversation rules thus cancelling out Commons status as a third place. He monopolizes the conversation ignoring the “remain silent your share of the time” (28) rule, he speaks in a very loud voice making himself heard to people that are not partaking in this conversation, sounding ominous to his friends and he obsesses over the farmer murder thus blatantly ignoring the rule about avoiding topics not of general interest (Oldenburg 28). By breaking the aforementioned third place conversation rules Bunny manages to subvert the “democratic order or the leveling that prevails in third places” (Oldenburg 28) since he momentarily seizes power by blackmailing his friends. The leveling quality of Commons dissolves under the power of blackmail since blackmail renders Bunny more powerful than his friends. Having committed the murder, Bunny’s friends are not simply uneasy by mention of the murder in the Commons, they are afraid: “It was right before lunch, all these security guards were standing around, half of them connected with the police force in Hamden...” (207). Henry’s observation of the police guards “standing around” Commons underlines the function of Commons as a state apparatus thus shattering its previous third place position in the reader’s imagination. Not any type of conversation is open and free in Commons, if Bunny continues his seemingly innocent teasing about the murder and the security guards overhears this the five friends are going to be called in for questioning as Henry deduces: “there was no way our story could stand up to even peremptory examination and I knew it. Obviously we hadn’t hit a deer. There wasn’t a scratch on either of the cars. And if anyone made even a casual connection between us and the dead man...” (207). It becomes obvious that after Bunny brings up the matter of the farmer’s murder as a subject of conversation, the academic space of

Commons loses its third-place properties to the point that being within Commons walls becomes ominously uneasy for the five college students implicated in the murder.

After the incident of Bunny's overtly threatening his friends in Commons, the next time the reader finds herself reading a scene that takes a place in Commons is after Bunny's murder. It is late, Henry and Richard decide to dine at Commons but by the time they arrive the dining hall was closing and Commons is all but deserted with just a few janitors mopping the floors and the kitchen being closed (355). Henry and Richard ask for some sandwiches while Henry fixes tea (355) and they prepare to sit down at Commons to discuss, however it is evident that they are the only two students there. In his *The Good Old Place* Oldenburg underlines that "[t]hird places that render the best and fullest service are those to which one may go alone at almost any time of the day or evening with assurances that acquaintances will be there" (32). In their case, Henry and Richard are by themselves. "The main dining room was deserted. We sat at the table in the corner, our reflections mirrored in the black of the plate-glass windows" (355). Their purpose is to fill in the evaluation forms for Julian Morrow, their eccentric Classics Professor whom Henry worships but Richard is skeptical about. The act alone of filling in an evaluation form for such an eccentric teacher, a Professor that had insisted on separating them from the rest of the College and persisted on them to take classes only with him renders their meeting in Commons a sort of private meeting albeit in a public place while the space itself does not function as a third place in this respect. Commons is described as almost uninviting: "For a moment there was no sound except the scratching of Henry's pen and the distant crash of dish racks in the kitchen" (355). The absence of people from Commons deprives it from its third-place status. As Oldenburg underlines: "The third place is just so much space unless the right people are there to make it come alive, and they are the regulars" (33).

Nevertheless, what marks Commons as the least fully operative third place is the culminating instance of the discovery of Bunny's body. When this takes place the five young classicists are gathered in Commons. Minutes before the discovery, Commons is described as drizzle and damp, smelling like wet clothes, "everything dark and subdued" (414). The negative description of the academic space of the Commons not only foretells the unsettling discovery but also underlines the unsettling of spatial norms that had hitherto turned Commons into a threatening space and not an authentic third place. Tartt emphasizes the gloomy atmosphere that

becomes increasingly more disquieting: “Huge, rain-splashed panes of glass-tinted gray, so they made the day seem drearier than it was-walled us in on three sides and we had a prime view of the loading dock itself, where the butter and egg trucks pulled up early in the morning” (414). Soon, it would be from that rain-splashed windowpane on the second floor of Commons that they would witness the ambulance that would carry Bunny’s body away. Throughout the ominous description of the space of the Commons the lack of conversation among the close friends is quite noticeable and at the same time it is indicative of the dissolution of the most important third place characteristic. As Oldenburg explained in his *The Good Old Place*: “Neutral ground provides the place and leveling sets the stage for the cardinal and sustaining activity of third places everywhere. That activity is conversation” (26). Therefore, Commons devoid of conversation is not an operative third place. The people that used to be vibrant and participate in conversation of various kinds are now described by the author being as subdued as the space of the Commons: “I found Henry and Camilla upstairs at a table by the window, a full ashtray between them, Camilla with her chin propped in her hand and a cigarette burning low between her ink-stained fingers” (414). What replaces the third-place conversation that customarily happens in Commons is Henry’s monologue who instead of engaging in conversation with his friends he was as an alternative “talking on and on in a low voice about Schliemann’s *Ilios*, the fingertips of his big square hands poised on the table’s edge as if it were a Ouija board⁴⁸” (414). To add more discrepancies to the functionality of the third place Tartt describes Commons at that time of day when it holds the least amount of people: “It was late. Lunch was over, people were leaving. A misshapen old janitor trudged in with mop and pail and began, with weary grunting noises, to slop water on the floor by the beverage center” (415). Commons is described when it is least populated while a third place is defined as such mostly by

⁴⁸ The image of Henry reading Schliemann’s *Ilios* (1881) which is a book about the archaeological digs in Ancient Troy coupled with references to the Ouija board which is a board marked with letters used by spiritualists to communicate with spirits reinforces the heavy atmosphere in Commons only minutes before the discovery of Bunny’s body. This image, moreover, offers, a triple allusion to ghosts: Through reading Heinrich (Henry) Schliemann, Henry who is very interested in archaeology stands in Commons as Schliemann’s doppelganger, the Ouija board is the medium through which ghosts can communicate with the living and Bunny who will soon appear from the dead to “haunt” the friends is another ghost that will subvert the third place democratic status of Commons and render it an unwelcoming place for the group of students.

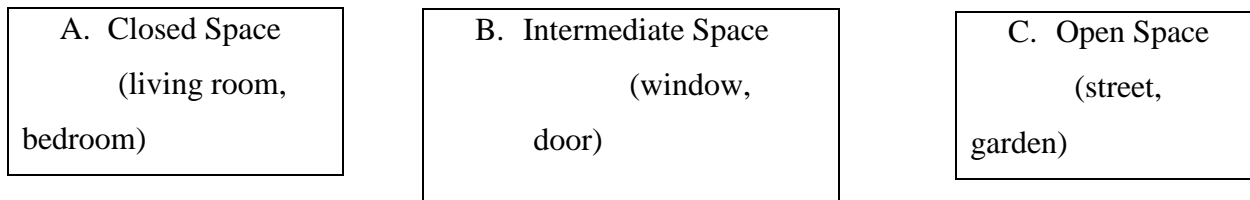
the presence of people in it: “The third place is just so much space unless the right people are there to make it come alive (33). So, already Commons is described to the reader in bleak colors and in a very un-third-place-like manner even before the moment when Bunny’s body is discovered.

In a last masterful hit, Tartt places the friends in the Commons when the discovery of the body becomes known to them thus completely dissolving any traces of third place solace and democratic ideals left to the academic space of the Commons Room of Hamden College. What is of particular interest is the medium through which the news of the discovery of Bunny’s body reaches the interior of Commons: “Camilla was staring out of the *window* (emphasis added). Suddenly, her eyes got wide. Slowly, incredulously, she raised her head; and then she was scrambling out of her chair, craning to see. I saw too, and jumped forward” (415). It is through the second-floor window that Camilla and then Richard, the narrator of *The Secret History* become witnesses to the scene that unravels right beneath the Commons windows:

An ambulance was parked directly beneath us. Two attendants, pursued by a pack of photographers, hurried past with their heads bent against the rain and a stretcher between them. The form upon it was covered with a sheet but, just before they shoved it through the double doors (long, easy motion, like bread sliding into the oven) and slammed them shut. (415)

The movements of the ambulance beneath the windows, in the space where usually butter and egg trucks pulled up early in the morning as well as the hasty movement of people, that are not the usual College people but have been eerily replaced by ambulance attendants and reporters, mark space in an irrevocable manner. The contours and course of observation from the window filter the narration while the positioning of Richard in the second floor of Commons is an important stratagem to displace and shift narrative focus: “Shouts, far away, downstairs in Commons; doors slamming, a growing confusion, voices shouting down voices and then one hoarse voice, rising above the others: ‘Is he living?’” (415). Philippe Hamon has talked extensively about the importance of windows and mirrors in Zola’s fiction and has remarked on their function as media of not only introducing description but also of self-reflection in the text (Mikkonen 131), in *The Secret History* the window is used as an intermediate space that through the semi-private closed space of the Commons Room permits the narrator a glimpse to the public

open space and thus enables the description of the scene that unravels outside the sheltered space of the Commons; in other words, the window is what renders the Commons Room a porous space. According to Hamon⁴⁹, as cited in Alikí Spyropoulou (43) narrative space becomes possible through a tripartite schema and it usually consists of a closed, an intermediate and an open space in the following manner⁵⁰:



The tripartite schema described above articulates and structures space while at the same time offering a narrative of the exterior space coming from the advantaged interior space. Therefore, this tripartite system not only creates a locus that organizes and structures the narrative in space but also facilitates the creation of spatial oppositions insofar as the intermediate space of the window can unite two opposing cultural scenes. A case in point is the window through which Camilla witnesses the ambulance that carries away Bunny's body. Camilla is situated in the Commons Room (Closed Space) and looks through the window (Intermediate Space) the dramatic scene taking place in the street beneath Commons (Open Space), hence the privileged, closed space of the Commons—that used to function as a democratic Third Place—is “infiltrated” by the vulgar, undemocratic spectacle of the murdered body. Through the intermediate space of the window, that works as a porous material, a cell wall membrane, that can open and close at will permitting and/or disallowing the viewing of certain scenes, the reception of the murdered body becomes a reality for Camilla and then immediately for Richard who in turn narrates the scene to the reader. What follows is a description of the mass hysteria that gets a hold of Hamden's academic universe exactly because of the displaced status of the dead body in the sophisticated academic locus of a campus. After the subverting scene of the murdered body has entered the formerly third place of the Commons Room through

⁴⁹ Hamon, Philippe, *Du Descriptif*, Paris: Hachette, 1993 pg 205-239

⁵⁰ The diagram has been loosely based on Alikí Spyropoulou's book *Patterns of Living in Athens at the End of the Nineteenth Century: Architectural Space and Literature*, pg 43

the porous opening of the *intermediate space* of the window, the spatial porosity is further consolidated since the main room of the Commons hence the *closed space* is invaded by the external, the *open space* of the campus. On this note, Tartt ingeniously places in the middle of the main Commons Room “a cluster of grim-looking policemen, the sheriff, the game warden, security guards, a strange girl crying and someone taking pictures and everybody talking at once” (417); all of them elements from the *open space* of the campus, taken from the scene witnessed by Camilla earlier. Moreover, there are reporters on site to take the news of the dead body discovery further outside the gated community of Hamden College: “Flashbulbs went off everywhere and there was a riot of microphones and camcorders in our faces” (417). In her descriptions of what takes place in the Commons Room the author uses specific images to further link the interior with the exterior and thus emphasize the porosity of academic space. In her description of “The black snout of a camcorder” that “was thrust in [Henry’s] face” (417) Tartt alludes to the discovery of Bunny’s body that had taken place earlier in the woods outside campus by a golden retriever who had been taken for a walk: “I guess Milo [the dog] had dug him up” (416). This allusion to “snout” reinforces the two-way flow of porosity. As for the presence of journalists within the Commons, this is spatially substantial insofar as it signifies that the spatial porosity of Commons functions in a two-way movement: not only does the open space movement invade the inner Commons Room’s spatial reality but at the same time, the on-site discovery of Bunny’s body will soon “escape” the gates of academic space to inform the Hamden community and this information feed might work in a constant feedback loop.

Chapter 4. From Bimbo School⁵¹ to Harvard University: the politics of Campus Space Toponymies

The seldom elaborated on premise that naming is what turns a space into place is extremely useful as it reassesses the popular assumption that naming is a process devoid of any complexity or significance. As Guy Puzey and Laura Kostanski point out the implications of place-naming have been noted by numerous scholars ever since Claude Levi-Strauss's 1962 observation that place is named space (273). In their introduction to *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* authors Carter, Donald and Squires stress that "it is not spaces which ground identifications, but places" and they immediately proceed to directly answer the burning question: "How then does space become place? By being named" (qtd in Puzey and Kostanski 273). In the same vein, Tim Cresswell agrees that "when humans invest meaning in a portion of space and then become attached to it in some way (naming is one such way) it becomes place" (qtd in Puzey and Kostanski 273). Toponyms, or, placenames are the cornerstones of the construction of a spatial identity this is why assigning a toponym is an act of great political import. A socio-political approach understands place as a socially constructed site where multilateral meanings play out to create a contested political territory. Under this light,

⁵¹ Bimbo School is the name of an actual school that operated from 1914 to 1960 in Saskatchewan "and its name was mostly bestowed by its founding families mostly Hungarian" (Lestock qtd in Lehr and McGregor 111). As noted in Lehr and McGregor the word bimbo did not carry any negative connotations at the time of the school's operation. It is more probably an aptronym originating from the Hungarian word for bud (Lehr and McGregor 112), connoting the budding, or, early developmental stage of the students attending Bimbo school. Conversely, Harvard University is one of the many institutions of Higher Learning that was named after a benefactor. John Harvard was an English Minister in America and the first major benefactor of Harvard College. As the Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia informs us "He immigrated in 1637 to Charlestown, Mass., where he was assistant to the pastor and teaching elder of the First Church. He bequeathed £780 (half his estate) and his library of 320 volumes to the new established college at Cambridge, Mass., which was named in his honor" (1). I use the two cases (Bimbo school and Harvard University) in the title to demonstrate two instances of toponymic, campus representation with different political approaches. Bimbo school is a linguistic aptronym with Hungarian roots thus demonstrating the multicultural basis of the community that the school district serves and at the same time strengthening the educational value of cultural diversity. Harvard University carries with it the air of the exclusive, elite, Ivy League campus and the reminder that it was baptized after the person who helped it when it was nothing but a newly established college at Cambridge by donating books and half his estate reinforces the notion that wealthy donors have primary rights over the educational space they help create.

toponyms—through their meaning giving capacity—function as pores connecting university space with society, history and place politics thus activating further perspectives about place. On that note, Nash proposes that placenames are “inscribed onto the physical landscape, reproducing layers of meaning that structure our experience and understanding in complex ways” (46).

Through assigning a toponym to a building we help in the construction of its spatial identity. As explained above, it is through the act of naming space that it is turned into place, imbued with political power and invested with a certain identity. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that toponymic signifiers are innocent spatial references (Alderman and Inwood 212). Much more than that: place names “are embedded in social power relations and struggles over identities of places and people” (Alderman and Inwood 212) and this is the reason why, as Alderman and Inwood stress, toponyms hold a contested territory⁵² in people’s lives.

In the case of the toponymical representation of campuses and campus buildings college administrations have traditionally followed naming conventions put in place by the U.S. Department of Education and the relevant university officials, while the final approval of any name changes rests with the Board of Regents⁵³. As for the naming conventions followed by U.S

⁵² After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, on the contested Palestine region, prime minister Ben-Gurion was adamant that “No names of places that existed should be included in the new map” (Roberts 130). As Roberts explains “For the prime minister the destruction of the villages and their cartographical erasure were of one cloth” (130). Indeed, by 1964 6,865 places had acquired a Hebrew name. Similarly, during the Kosovo conflict there were maps circulating on line written in the Cyrillic alphabet—written by the Serbian side—and maps where the place-names were written in Albanian—written by the Albanian Kosovars. It is interesting to note that the Serbian maps had marks on the Orthodox Church monuments thus underlying the religious nature of the conflict. In the same vein, in Chechnya, Chechen nationalists produced maps where the place-names were exclusively written in the Chechen language (Christ 119). The list of examples from history is inexhaustible and bears proof to the fact that the act of assigning a toponym is primarily of a contested, political nature.

⁵³ Public education in America is largely overseen by governing bodies in all 50 states. The body that administers the university and college system is called the board of regents. “Regent” means “ruler” in British English and in the British system a regent was the person to preside over debates in the academy. Governing boards of universities in the United States largely vary in size. Smaller boards may have about ten members, while larger boards can have over 50 members (Freedman 9-15)

institutions of higher learning, as Professor Geoffrey Pullum observes, they tend to abide by the subsequent linguistic formula:

Proper names for colleges and universities are of three main types, syntactically. The first, which I'll call the XU type (for simplicity I limit discussion here to names with the head noun *University*) has a modifier preceding the head noun, as in *Harvard University*. The second, the UX type, has a postnominal complement, usually a preposition phrase headed by the preposition *of* and almost always specifying a location, as in *the University of California* (UC). The third, the XUY type, has both prenominal modifier and postnominal complement, as in *the City University of New York* (CUNY). (1)

In the three variants of this naming formula, the X in all types can either be a location specification—New York University—or the name of a benefactor—Brown University. Moreover, universities have encouraged a strong bond with history by naming campus buildings after historical figures.⁵⁴ In the majority of cases though, college buildings have been named

⁵⁴ The practice of naming campus buildings after historical figures has proven to be a problematic one since buildings named after politically controversial figures are the focus of a hot debate among current students and faculty members. A spate of student activism has emerged targeting U.S. campuses named after Confederate Generals, or Ku Klux Klan leaders asking for the removal of the name. The examples are numerous: “In August, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, removed the name of William L. Saunders — a historian, lawyer, newspaper editor, Ku Klux Klan leader and North Carolina secretary of state — from a building that had bore his name since 1922. The building was renamed Carolina Hall” (Chan). In the same vein, “Yale Law School students began a petition to rename Calhoun College, one of Yale University’s 12 undergraduate residential colleges” (Chan) since the name of John C. Calhoun “one of the most ardent segregationists in ante-bellum America” commemorates white supremacy ideology. Another example is the petition to rename the Princeton Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. The majority of the student body claims that Wilson’s racist views that intensified the segregation in the federal work force (Chan) would be celebrated with a building adorning his name. On top of the campus naming controversy, American campuses are also tantalized by a wave of student activism that seeks the removal of all things that trigger the politically uncomfortable past such as statues and other on-campus monuments. With accusations of Jefferson having been a “racist, rapist” and forgetting all of his political contribution to the Declaration of Independence “activists at the University of Missouri and the College of William & Mary have protested statues of Thomas Jefferson, the nation’s third president, who was a leading slaveholder and fathered several children with his mixed-race slave Sally Hemings” (Chan). Along the same lines, Wole Soyinka’s admission that he felt the urge to vandalize a Churchill bust when he attended Churchill College, Cambridge provides a political basis for the student protests. More specifically, Soyinka, the Nigerian Nobel laureate, spoke of his days in Cambridge where he was in political exile and he narrates how “each morning he

after wealthy benefactors or famous college alumni. “John Harvard got his name on a college in 1639 by bequeathing 400 books and 779 pounds, and one of that school’s former students, Bill Gates, has his name on a \$30 billion foundation” (Forbes). Harvard is not the only example of a benefactor’s name emblazoning itself on the name plaque of an educational institution. The list of Institutions of Higher Learning whose appellation commemorates a wealthy donor includes other great University Campuses: Brown, Carnegie, Clark, Cornell, Duke, Johns Hopkins, Rice, Tulane, Vanderbilt, Vassar and Yale. The practice of naming campuses after the highest bidder has proven equally, if not more, problematic than assigning a campus toponym to commemorate a historical figure. A recent example is Setton Hall a Catholic University in New Jersey that despite upholding high moral values such as honesty, humility and integrity has created its own hall of shame by giving the names of three alumni donors who were accused of corporate crimes and misdeeds to three buildings⁵⁵ in its South Orange campus (Byrne 14). Holding a mirror to life the American campus novel has several notable examples of campus names that do not reflect the University mission in the least. A literary case in point is the infamous Ossenburger Memorial Wing of Holden Caulfield’s dorm in *The Catcher in the Rye*. Holden explains to the reader that Ossenburger was named after a Pencey alumnus who “made a pot of dough in the undertaking business after he got out of Pencey. What he did, he started these undertaking parlors all over the country that you could get members of your family buried for about five bucks apiece” (Salinger 14). Holden’s simple explanation for the honorary naming of Ossenburger dorm is that Ossenburger “gave Pencey a pile of dough, and they named a wing after him” (14). Holden’s reaction to the hypocrisy of naming an educational space after the

would pass a bust of Winston Churchill, colonialist extraordinaire, on the staircase, and every time he passed it, he says, he “had an overwhelming desire to push it and watch it crash” (Havergal). It should be mentioned though, that this daily aggravation that he had to withstand in Cambridge was a catalyst for his literary brilliance (Havergal) so whether or not we should remove names and statues of historically controversial figures remains to be examined more carefully.

⁵⁵ “There’s Kozlowski Hall, named after Tyco’s ex-CEO Dennis Kozlowski, who’s charged with running a “criminal enterprise” that looted more than 600 million dollars from shareholders. Across the green is the library, named after Frank Walsh Jr., a former Tyco board member being sued by Tyco for breach of fiduciary responsibility for receiving \$20 million from Kozlowski without the board’s approval. Next to it is the recreation center named for Robert Brennan, founder of First Jersey Securities, who was convicted for bankruptcy fraud and money laundering” (Byrne 14).

highest bidder reminds us that “the happy American formula in which philanthropy allows commercial wealth to gain academic blessings in exchange for bricks and mortar does not always work” (Thelin 142). To illustrate how this formula is not a successful one let us take a look at the case of the University of Pennsylvania where a decade ago, in 2008, a prominent building in the west Philadelphia campus was named after Claudia Cohen, a New York Post Page Six gossip columnist (Williams 2). Claudia Cohen was the ex-wife of Ronald O. Perelman a wealthy New York businessman who “acquired the right to rename the building when he donated \$20 million to his alma mater in 1995” (Williams 2). The building was originally named Logan Hall after James Logan who had been a secretary of William Penn and one of the first trustees of the University (ibid). The pragmatism of the University’s naming conventions was seen by most of its faculty members with dismay: some lamented the change stating that they are accustomed to seeing campus buildings with names such as Copernicus, Darwin or Newton and not buildings dedicated to the deceased loved ones of rich alumni. Some others commented, in a tongue-in-cheek manner, that nothing less was expected from a school founded by Benjamin Franklin. History professor Bruce Kuklick remarked that since “Franklin was the arch modernizing pragmatist of the American founding, a guy who always had his eye on the main chance. It would be surprising if they didn’t rename Logan Hall to the highest bidder” (Williams 2). This comment highlights the interconnection between the name of the building and the values of the Institution naming the building. American researcher, author and former Professor at Boston College Philip Altbach observed that in the area of naming campus buildings “academe fits right in with the larger culture, which has named everything from AutoZone Park to Gillette Stadium to the children's wing of your local hospital” (48). Altbach’s comment highlights the porous nature of university campuses in so far as they allow for a penetration of values from outside of academia; in this case, the neoliberal dogma that has pervaded American society and culture has found its way into Higher Education too. Interestingly, Altbach laments the trend of name-branding University Campuses remarking that while in the past “place and merit were recognized” (49) in modern days the naming of an institution is primary linked with monetary gains. He moves on to give numerous examples⁵⁶ of such a practice only to come to the

⁵⁶ “Many schools even give donor names to classrooms and seminar rooms. More than one institution of higher education puts names on its chairs --the kind on which one sits, not endowed professorships. Professorships have long been named for donors of endowments, but

conclusion that “[A]ll this naming distracts from the mission of an institution that has almost a millennium of history and cheapens its image. It is a sad symbol indeed of the commercialization, bifurcation, and entrepreneurialism of the contemporary university” (49). Nevertheless, there are examples of universities that resist this trend. Hence, diametrically opposed to the pragmatist attitude of most institutions of higher learning to naming campus buildings stands the recent decision of Delta State University who named its laundry building⁵⁷ after a retiring African American employee who worked on campus for a total of 47 years, never missed a day of work and was in all respects a “compassionate, caring, hard-working Christian” (*American Laundry News*).

The “christened” bricks and mortar can tell a lot to the future historian about the values of an Institution of Higher Learning. The value-carrying capacity of the named campus building is seen in the campus novel where the toponymies of campus buildings are either used as aptonyms or as signifiers of multiple spatial stories being possible. As Bourdieu has stressed “the power to nominate” is one of the central ways of place forming and place contestation. The focal emphasis of the fourth chapter of this work is the toponymical significance of campus buildings in the campus novel and the layers of spatial meaning that are attributed to them through the quality of porosity.

some chairs named recently have raised eyebrows—for example, the Kenneth L. Lay Chair in Economics at the University of Missouri (currently unoccupied); the Burpee Chair in Plant Genetics at Bucknell University; the Dow Chemical Chair in Sustainable Science, Technology, and Commerce at the University of Michigan; the Bank of America deanship in the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley; and others. Naming a chair can run from a few hundred thousand dollars up to \$10 million, with many in the \$1 million-plus range” (Altbach 49)

⁵⁷ The laundry building of Delta State University in Mississippi is now named the “Odealier Morgan Laundry”.

4.1. The Helen Keller Library in *On Beauty*: Spatial Stories (re)Told

Despite the political power of naming and its branding capacity, naming does not function as a sacrosanct mantra that consolidates the uses and the virtues of the named campus space. Conversely, campus porosity renders the identity of the named building fluid, prone to uncertainty, turning the named campus space into a hybrid space or a space of reconciliation. The Library of Wellington College in Zadie Smith's 2005 novel *On Beauty* is the perfect case in point to illustrate the porosity of the named campus space. The library where all "faculty meetings for the Humanities are conducted" in the fictional Wellington College of *On Beauty* (2005) is named the Keller Library. The narrative voice supplies the reason for the naming:

In the early years of the last century Helen Keller embarked on a lecture tour of New England, enthraling audiences with her life story (and occasionally surprising them with her socialist views). En route she made a stop at Wellington College, and there named a library, planted a tree and found herself the recipient of an honorary degree. Hence the Keller Library: a long, draughty room on the ground floor of the English Department, with a green carpet, red walls and too many windows—it is impossible to heat. On one wall hangs the life-sized portrait of Helen dressed in academic cap and gown, sitting in an armchair, her blind eyes demurely directed into her lap. (319)

Helen Keller was an American political activist, author and lecturer. She remains today the symbol of surpassing adversity and rising above the fate carved for her in life, through hard work and perseverance. However, she was so much more than a "plaster saint," an apolitical symbol for determination and individual achievement (Herrmann & Ronald xv). Keller was a political activist fighting for the rights of the disabled and other marginalized minority groups. She was also a member of the Socialist Party of America and later on a member of the Industrial Workers of the World. Keller was very outspoken about her ideas and travelled a lot, not only within America but also around the world, to lecture and campaign on various social issues including socialism, workers' rights, women's suffrage and anti-militarism. The distortion of her image is lamented by Keith Rosenthal in his article "The Politics of Helen Keller: Socialism and Disability" published in the *International Socialist Review*:

The image of Helen Keller as a gilded, eternal child is reinforced at the highest levels of US society. The statue of Helen Keller erected inside the US Capitol building in 2009,

which replaced that of a Confederate Army officer, depicts Keller as a seven-year-old child kneeling at a water pump. Neither the statue itself nor its inscription provides any inkling that the sixty-plus years of Keller's adult life were of any particular political import. (1)

Rosenthal's quotation is important in two ways: not only does it reveal the distortion of Keller's political identity by her own national government, but it also points out the political importance of honorary representations, commemorating monuments and naming in society. The statue of Helen Keller was erected inside the Capitol after taking down the statue of a Confederate Army officer. This replacement was of political importance since the confederate officer's status carries a set of political beliefs that are contested in America at the moment, on the other hand Keller's sanitized image—deliberately stripped of all political connotations—serves as the model of rising above adversity with the power of education and hard work, which is in tandem with America's protestant work ethic and individualism. The case of the Capitol statue replacement had political weight since it followed the wave of replacing many confederate army symbols across the United States especially in buildings sheltering political activity as well as in Educational Institutions. *The New York Times*⁵⁸ covered the replacement of the statue as follows:

Ms. Keller, depicted as a seven-year-old standing over her famous water pump in a statue unveiled in the Capitol Rotunda this morning, is the first child ever to be represented in the Capitol's collection. The bronze likeness replaces a statue of former Representative Jabez Curry, a Confederate officer from Alabama, who was once well known for advocating for free public education. (Lorber 1)

Alongside the removal of Confederate Army symbols and statues from American public spaces comes the renaming of such spaces so as to rebrand themselves under a new light. Naming according to de Certeau is an important practice since proper names have multiple functions and manage to transform the place they name:

⁵⁸ Lorber, Janie. "Keller Statue Replaces Confederate Soldier." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 7 Oct. 2009, <https://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/10/07/keller-statue-replaces-confederate-soldier/>.

They [proper names] make the place they clothe with a word habitable and believable (by calling their classifying power they put on authorization); they recall or evoke the phantoms (dead and supposedly gone) that still stir, lurking in gestures and walking bodies; and as they name—i.e. as they impose a command issuing from the other (a history)—and as they alter functionalist identity by breaking off from it, they create in the site itself this erosion or non-site carved out by the law of the other. (141)

The naming of a public space after a Confederate General endows the space with the values of the Confederate party, hence amplifying the tension in minority populations that are made to use the toponym ad infinitum thus affirming a dark spot in American history. Confederate symbols bring along connotations of white supremacist values, the demeaning of minority populations and are widely used by racist groups today in the United States. In America and especially in the South there is a proliferation of educational institutions named after Confederate army figures:

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), there are at least 109 public schools named after Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis or other Confederate icons in the United States. Of those, “27 have student populations that are majority African American, and 10 have African-American populations of over 90 percent,” according to the SPLC’s 2016 report. (Holland⁵⁹)

On the other hand, there is a portion of historians who disagree with the changing of names in public spaces and institutions. Dr. Cheryl Hudson, lecturer in American History in the University of Liverpool, whose research focuses on histories of race and political culture in the United States, states that:

Cultural symbols are open to changes in interpretation as part of an organic social process but it is wrongheaded to hand down changes as a form of collective cultural therapy. The built environment can’t operate as if it were a therapist’s couch or a group form of cognitive behavioural therapy [a talking therapy that can help you manage your problems

⁵⁹ Holland, Jesse J. “US High Schools Named after Confederate Generals Could Be Forced to Rebrand.” *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 30 Aug. 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-high-schools-confederate-generals-identity-new-academic-year-robert-e-lee-stonewall-jackson-a7919676.html>.

by changing the way you think and behave]. Removing uncomfortable reminders will not – and arguably should not – alleviate the suffering and conflicts stirred by our traumatic past. (Hudson)

I contend that although the debate on place-naming and changing toponyms is not going to abate soon, the above examples of conflicting views on toponymic representation are employed to suggest that indeed place-naming offers “a window to the politics of place by acting as coalitions of spatial meaning that trigger wider perspectives about place” (Nash et al. 46).

In the case of the—fictional—Keller Library of Wellington the political connotations risen by the name of Helen Keller are linked with Keller’s socialist views. In this manner, the space of the Keller Library becomes imbued by the values represented by the cultural icon of Helen Keller. According to Catherine Nash:

Linking language and geography, place names at once both, material and metaphorical, substantive and symbolic-read, spoken, mapped, catalogued and written in the everyday intimate and official bureaucratic geographies of road signs, street names and addresses—are all about questions of power, culture, location and identity. (457)

Despite the socialist values honored through the naming of the Keller Library, the faculty meeting that is conducted within the specific space puts forth ideas of a neoliberal nature. In this way, the spatial expectations one has of the Keller Library are subverted. The library space is infiltrated by values from the outside world, values that come to clash with the socialist ideas the specific academic space connotes. This is the direct outcome of the academic porosity that enables the interaction of different belief systems and values. One would say that the walls of the Keller Library are membranous in so far as they contain the original values of the place but also allow the infiltration of different contemporary beliefs. The Keller Library, thus, represents a border, what Sennett calls “an active edge” (*Craftsman* 227), where different ideals come into contact with each other but not indiscriminately (227). To further elucidate the function of the library as an “active edge” it is important to look into the interdisciplinary Faculty meeting as it offers an example of how the Keller Library acquires a porous nature.

The conflict in value systems and beliefs within the Keller Library has to do with the two most debated issues under discussion during the meeting. The main items in the faculty meeting

agenda is a motion by Prof. Belsey concerning a proposed lecture series by Prof. Kipps (Smith 324) and the criteria for class admission since affirmative action policies are under threat in Wellington. The two Professors are divided by an academic feud based on their different political beliefs. Prof. Kipps—a conservative well known for his convictions against affirmative action, homosexuality, race and gender—will deliver a series of lectures in Wellington and Prof. Belsey files a motion in order for the College to “be given the text of the lectures; that failing this we will be given a proposed outline of the lectures; or failing that, we should be told this morning what the intention of the lectures is” (326). Prof. Kipps dismisses all suggestions to give his lecture notes for scrutiny as he deems this an act of censorship: “In answer to his requests I fear I must decline all three, given the free country I stand in and the freedoms of speech I claim as my inalienable right” (327). Kipps goes on to touch upon another issue he feels strongly about and that is affirmative action class admissions—which is item number four in the meeting agenda:

We might discuss the under-the-counter manner in which class discussions are organized here at Wellington—a policy that is a blatant corruption of the Affirmative Action bill (which by the way, is itself a corruption)—whereby students NOT enrolled at this college are yet taught classes here, by professors who, at their own “discretion” (as it is disingenuously put), allow these “students” into their classes, choosing them over actual students better qualified than they—NOT because these young people meet the academic standards of Wellington, no, but because they are considered needy cases—as if it helps minorities to be pushed through an elite environment to which they are not yet suited. (329)

This attack to the premises and practices of affirmative action is very unlike the spatial expectations risen by the name of the Keller Library, a space that is linked to aiding and defending the rights of minorities as Helen Keller herself had done all her life. Keller was concerned by the state of the disabled, the destitute, the rights of workers in a capitalist world and the state of the black people in America. In one of her letters to a friend she wrote the following lamenting the condition of the “colored:”

This revolt has never slumbered within me since I began to notice for myself how they are degraded, and with what cold-blooded deliberation the keys of knowledge, self-

reliance and well-paid employment are taken from them [. . .] It stabs me to the soul to recall my visits to schools for the colored blind which were shockingly backward, and what a hard struggle it was for them to obtain worthwhile instruction and profitable work because of race prejudice. The continued lynchings and other crimes against Negroes, whether in New England or the South, and the unspeakable political exponents of white supremacy, according to all recorded history, augur ill for America's future. (Keller & Nielsen 278)

By assenting with de Certeau's claim that proper names have a "classifying power" one would by definition contend that the Keller Library is classified as an academic space that shares the values of the person whose name it bears. In this sense, Keller's support for the "colored" and her indignation that they are deprived of the "keys to knowledge" in American society would translate in her support for affirmative action. The fact that the invective against affirmative action policies in the University is delivered within the Keller library tells a different spatial story than the one its name connotes. Kipps's neoliberal narrative attacking affirmative action and equal opportunities in the Keller Library is a politically different story told in a space that invites liberal agendas. De Certeau explains that "a space is a practiced place" (117) and illustrates this using the image of the street being transformed by the walkers who write their own spatial stories through the act of walking (117). In a similar vein, the place of the library is transformed into a space through the act of telling different stories within its confines. At the same time, de Certeau reminds us another important function of spatial stories and that is the creation of boundaries. In this sense, de Certeau's stories "shed light on the formation of myths, since they also have the function of founding and articulating spaces" (122-123). This means that spatial stories delimit space by narrating where and how boundaries are formed and who or what is left out from or within the specific boundaries. In the case of the Keller library, the spatial stories that create the space narrate both the formation and transgression or non-transgression of these boundaries. In the library two different spatial stories clash: one is Kipps's neoliberal rhetoric that specifies that social boundaries should not be transgressed and the other is the spatial story weaved by the socialist connotations brought on by the library's toponymy as well as by the rhetoric represented by Zora's pro-affirmative action speech. The ideologically conflicting spatial stories that formulate the library space at once turn the latter into an in-between space, a border. Sennett claims that such in-between spaces, homologous to the function

of ecological borders, are fraught with life and interaction. As stated before, in *The Craftsman* Sennett explains how borders are “active edges” that may “contain differences but [are] porous” (227). In the same vein, de Certeau claims that the border privileges “a logic of ambiguity through its accounts of interaction. It turns the frontier into a crossing, and the river into a bridge. It recounts inversions and displacements: the door that closes is precisely what may be opened; the river is what makes passage possible; the tree is what marks the stages of advance; the picket fence is an ensemble of interstices through which one’s glances pass” (128). De Certeau’s description not only emphasizes the porous and connective nature of the border but also privileges the border as an in-between space, as a “third element” in the spatial story it creates (127). He quotes Morgenstern’s ironic poem to underline this importance:

One time there was a picket fence
 With space to gaze from hence to thence.
 An architect who saw this sight
 Approached it suddenly one night
 Removed the spaces from the fence
 And built of them a residence
 The senate had to intervene
 The architect, however, flew
 To Afri- or Americoo (127-128)

Morgenstern’s poem tells the story of an architect who appropriated the in-between space created by the picket fence in order to build “a great edifice” not realizing—as de Certeau stresses—that the cementing of the in-between space “is working toward the political freezing of the place” (128). I contend that—as evidenced in the example of the Keller Library—even a “cemented” place, a built space like an academic Library can still retain its porosity and is nothing but politically frozen. To conclude, porosity in the case of the Keller Library in *On Beauty* permits the fictional library space to acquire a deeply political character as it tolerates and even condones an interpenetration of different political ideas and systems as well as it offers the freedom to

create microspaces within the library space where people who would never intersect in life now not simply cross paths but also exchange views.

4.2 The Classicist Onomastics of Place in Roth's *The Human Stain*

The Human Stain (2000) is the last novel in Roth's American Trilogy that includes *American Pastoral* (1997) and *I Married a Communist* (1998). In tandem with the previous two novels in the Trilogy, *The Human Stain* features "a provocative subject (in this case political correctness and academy), a larger-than-life tragic protagonist, and an ethical subtext pertaining not only to a particular historical moment but to American culture at large" (Royal 116). Derek Parker Royal points out that due to this formula and in line with the-seemingly-forthright story unfolded in *The Human Stain* the majority of critics have focused on either the political subtext of Clinton's impeachment in the aftermath of the President's affair with Monica Lewinski or with the implications of political correctness in academia (116). Critics such as Lorrie Moore, Norman Podhoretz and J. L. Halio concentrate on how Roth disparages the ills of political correctness while other critics like Carlin Romano, John Podhoretz and David L. Kirp turn towards the pitfalls of the academic world. A smaller body of critics like Gustavo Sanchez Canales, Jose Carlos del Ama, Geoffrey W. Bakewell and Elaine Safer have offered insightful analyses on the mythological and classical theme that runs through *The Human Stain*. While all these analyses allow a penetrating look into the novel's overt themes, they do not say much about the overwhelming importance of the porous nature of academic space that enables the interaction of the Classic world with modern academia. Although my promise in this section of the dissertation is to deal with toponymics, the case of *The Human Stain* is such that the toponymies blend with the naming of the characters creating a nexus of onomastics that cannot but be examined as a whole to make better sense of the power of space/agents interaction as well as of the campus porosity that brings together a Classics story with modern academia. Therefore, I assert that the use of names for both the characters as well as the campus space is more than an ingenious display of wit on the part of Roth; it underscores the notion that naming creates political expectations and that more often than not the original naming of a space does not consolidate nor perpetuates the values this naming carries.

The title of Philip Roth's 2000 novel *The Human Stain* denotes among other things the flawed nature of human beings and in this respect, it connects modern academia with the ancient world preparing the reader for the plethora of ancient Greek tragedy allusions that resonate throughout the novel. Faunia uses the phrase that serves as the title when talking about the inability of a crow raised in captivity to re-integrate with other crows: "That's what's coming of hanging around all his life with people like us. *The human stain*" (242, emphasis mine). The human stain is what makes everybody flawed. As the illiterate 34-year-old woman explains with the insight of a person who has been stricken through a series of personal tragedies: "we leave a stain, we leave a trail, we leave our imprint. Impurity, cruelty, abuse, error, excrement, semen—there's no other way to be here. Nothing to do with disobedience. Nothing to do with grace or salvation or redemption. It's in everyone. Indwelling. Inherent. Defining" (242). The human stain, which according to Faunia is an inherent part of our nature as human beings, is fundamental in Roth's novel wherein the main characters are all flawed and tragic in their own manner similar to Greek Gods: "They are pretty. They quarrel. They fight. They hate. They murder. They fuck" (242). Faunia Farley, Les Farley, Delphine Roux, Coleman Silk are all depicted as Homeric heroes and heroines denoting "the strong link that exists between the modern and classical worlds" (Canales 111). Through the quality of porosity, Athena College becomes the central stage of this Rothian tragedy where the ancient world of Gods and human passion intermingles with the vices of modern academia. In this part of the dissertation, I will examine the porous nature of modern academia that allows for an interconnection between ancient Greek drama and academic world as this is established through Roth's ingenious onomastics both for his characters and the campus spaces they negotiate.

Apart from the novel's title that is not fully analyzed until the middle of the novel, Roth makes it evident from the very first pages of *The Human Stain* that his novel is inextricably connected with the Ancient Greek world. The very epigraph in the beginning of the book is taken from Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*, denoting, as the novel unravels, a direct relationship between Coleman Silk and Oedipus:

Oedipus: What is the rite of purification? How shall it be done?

Creon: By banishing a man, or expiation of blood by blood...

Oedipus is the Sophoclean tragic hero who being in search of his existential beginnings precipitates Fate's cogs to move to the direction of his own destruction. Coleman Silk is a man who having denounced his very roots in an effort to escape his predetermined Fate, moves in the opposite direction plunging headfirst into his own demise. The similarities between the two heroes do not end at this point; to end the ravaging plague that was brought upon Thebes by the Gods because of Oedipus's hamartia in marrying—albeit unbeknownst to him—his own mother, Oedipus seeks to find Laius's murderer in order to expiate “blood by blood.” In his search for the culprit he reaches the point of painful realization and self-sacrifice. Similarly, Silk is sacrificed to put an end to Athena's epidemic:

An epidemic had broken out in Athena—that's how my thinking went in the immediate aftermath of his death—and what was to contain the epidemic's spreading? It was there. The pathogens were out there. In the ether. In the universal hard drive, everlasting and undeletable, the sign of the viciousness of the human creature. (291)

Coleman Silk's hamartia consists in his trying to escape the fate carved for him in life through passing for white. As researcher Jose Carlos del Alma points out: “The theme of the individual who rises up against the destiny the gods have arranged for him is very common in the Greek tragedy. The transgression that most upset the Greek gods was when the heroes ignored the divine will and tried to construct their own identity” (96). In a similar manner to how the plot unfolds in the Greek tragedy the hero is forewarned against the hamartia he is to perpetrate usually through an oracular voice. In *The Human Stain* it is Silk's mother who warns him: “Now, I could tell you there is no escape, that all the attempts to escape will only bring you back to where you began” (140). Comparable to Oedipus, Silk's transgression is punished with the latter's fall after the “spooks” incident. The nature of the incident that precipitated his fall underlines “the expressive potential of the paradox” (del Ama 94) since “Silk, the professor accused of having discriminated against African American students, is black himself” (94). Apart from Silk's similarities with Oedipus, the references to Greek tragedy and mythology are inexhaustible stressing furthermore the importance of naming in the context of *The Human Stain*.

The allusions to Ancient Greek tragedy are all the more reinforced through the recurrent references to *The Iliad*, either directly or indirectly. Coleman Silk, in his survey course “known

as GHM, for Gods, Heroes and Myth” (4), explains to his students that: “All of European literature springs from a fight” and then proceeds to read directly from *The Iliad*:

“Divine muse, sing of the ruinous wrath of Achilles...Begin where they first quarreled, Agamemnon the King of men, and great Achilles.” And what are they quarreling about, these two violent, mighty souls? It’s as basic as a barroom brawl. They are quarreling over a woman. A girl really. A girl stolen from her father. (4)

By the same token, Coleman Silk and Les Farley fight over Faunia, with catastrophic results. Both men are enraged with a blinding anger that is akin to that of Agamemnon and Achilles. Les is a Vietnam veteran suffering from PTSD angered with how his country treats veterans and incensed over Faunia’s infidelities and neglect of their children that led to their death, while Coleman is irate with Athena College and how they treated him in relation to the spooks incident. The golden apple of Discord in their fight is Faunia. Her name alone alludes to Fauna the Roman goddess of fertility and protector of the woodlands and nature. Faunia is indeed depicted throughout *The Human Stain* as connected to the land, nature and animals, however her tragic story bears no justice to her name as far from being linked with fertility and life, Faunia is connected with death and destruction; the farm she kept with her ex-husband Les Farley goes bankrupt, her two children die and she keeps their ashes under her bed “in a canister” (28) then she tries to take her own life in two separate occasions. Throughout the novel, Coleman Silk calls Faunia, Voluptas (37,47,116, 157,234) as he had called his first great love, Steena: “Used to call her Voluptas. Psyche’s daughter. The personification to the Romans of sensual pleasures” (23). Thus, Faunia becomes Coleman’s Voluptas, a woman representing both life and carnality:

In bed is the only place where Faunia is in any way shrewd, Nathan. A spontaneous physical shrewdness plays the leading role in bed—second lead played by transgressive audacity. In bed nothing escapes Faunia’s attention. Her flesh has eyes. Her flesh sees everything. In bed she is a powerful, coherent, unified being whose pleasure is in overstepping the boundaries. In bed she is a deep phenomenon. (31)

The connection of Faunia Farley with Fauna and Voluptas underlines the subversion of the classical naming: not only in her clashing with the idea of fertility and life as mentioned above but also through her status as a cleaner in Athena Campus. The image of a Goddess of

sensual pleasures “cleaning the toilets” where Coleman was the Dean is as incongruous as the naming of Athena campus which is in reality far removed from classical values despite its appellation. Faunia’s liking to a femme fatale continues with her comparison to Helen of Troy. In tandem with *The Iliad* analogy, Faunia is called Helen of Troy by the infatuated Coleman: “There’s no one like you. Helen of Troy” to which Faunia replies: “Helen of Nowhere. Helen of Nothing” (232), alluding to her losses in life so far and, at the same time, foreshadowing her imminent death (Canales 117). The *Iliad* parallel, where Faunia is Helen of Troy, Coleman is her Paris and Les is a modern-day Menelaus who starts a war to get her back, reinforces the porous nature of Athena college that allows for a deeper connection between “the Homeric Greek world and the Rothian modern world” (Canales 117). The walls of Athena College appear to be porous similar to a cell membrane that, as Sennett has pointed out in his lecture “The Open City,” retains certain valuable elements while at the same time letting go of other valuable elements so as to achieve openness. At the cellular level, Sennett underlines, “conservation and resistance are part of the equation which produces openness” (“The Open City” 9). In *The Human Stain* the campus is a par excellence porous space where conflicts arise and are sustained exactly because incompatible values and contradictory forces are at play; the force of Political correctness is a new element that seeps through the porous campus walls to clash with the long held Classicist and Humanist values which had been harbored by Athena College and served by Coleman Silk.

Delphine Roux, Chair of the Department of Languages and Literature in Athena, heralds the changes brought to the academic curriculum and politics of Athena College. With her adherence to political correctness Delphine marks the massive changes that turned Athena in nothing more than a farcical place aptronym. According to Elaine Safer, Delphine’s name is an allusion to the Delphi oracle (214) in a distorted view of the latter. Delphine is the writer of the resentful anonymous letter received by Coleman: “Everyone knows you’re sexually exploiting an abused, illiterate woman half your age” (38). The beginning of her poison letter “Everyone knows” bears a direct link to one of the three Delphi oracle engravings: “Know Thyself” (Canales 117). Unlike the Delphi oracle priestess Pythia, who through the power of Greek god Apollo, was able to know the Truth, Delphine knows nothing, not even herself. Delphine, who has a Classic education, openly rejects Coleman’s approach to teaching the Classics: “[...]some of the students develop irritating personal mannerisms when they are confronting fossilized pedagogy. If you persist in teaching literature in the tedious way you are used to, if you insist on

the so-called humanist approach to Greek tragedy you've been taking since the 1950s, conflicts like this are going to arise continually" (193). However, although she discards Coleman's approach to the Classics as well as outwardly despises the man himself, she appears to be subconsciously attracted to him as it is evident from the personal ad she writes wherein she seeks for:

Mature man with backbone. Unattached. Independent. Witty. Lively. Defiant. Forthright. Well educated. Satirical spirit. Charm. Knowledge and love of great books. Well spoken and straight speaking. Trimly built. Five eight or nine. Mediterranean complexion. Green eyes preferred. Age unimportant. But must be intellectual. Graying hair acceptable, even desirable... (273)

Her attraction to him is underlined through yet another allusion to Greek myth. Despite her à la mode appearance Delphine always wears a ring with "a carving of Danae receiving Zeus as a shower of gold" (118) which apart from being "a love token" (186) marks an almost Freudian attraction to Coleman Silk who in the first pages of *The Human Stain* is linked to Zeus⁶⁰ through his taking Viagra: "Thanks to Viagra I've come to understand Zeus's amorous transformations. That's what they should have called Viagra. They should have called it Zeus" (32). Despite Delphine's association with Danae, whose story is nuanced with heavy sexual undertones, Delphine herself is dissociated with sexuality. After several failed love affairs, Delphine is "unable to face one more night in her apartment without even a cat for company" (262) and it is this loneliness that pushes her to place the personal ad that sets in motion her final vengeful act against Coleman.

⁶⁰ There is a strong link between God-like, all-powerful professor Coleman Silk and the King of the Gods Zeus. As Canales points out, since Athena College is a satirical counterpart of Mount Olympus, the House of the Gods, the analogy starts with Silk's status as tyrannical Dean of Athena College (7-10) which is in line with Zeus presiding over Mount Olympus. Moreover, just as Zeus-King of the Gods-was married to Hera-Queen of the Gods- and had several children-not only with Hera but with multiple mistresses he took-Silk too is married to a woman who is described as a force of nature and who looked very majestic in her huge mane of hair, his Queen. Just like Zeus and Hera had twins Apollo and Artemis, Silk also has twins Marc and Lisa who have the most complex relationship of his four kids with him. Finally, Silk's pre-occupation with sexual potency and the descriptions of his sexual affairs with both Steena and Faunia underline his link to Zeus and his myriad sexual dalliances.

A product of her vengeance is the online eulogy for Faunia “posted on the Athena fac.discussion news group” (288). The post is anonymous and even though it is not traced directly back to Delphine, Zuckerman assumes it is a mischief “prompted by Delphine’s mischief, but more artful, more confident, more professionally demonic by far—a major upgrade for the venom” (289). The anonymous writer of the poisonous eulogy signs the post with a pseudonym: “clytemnestra@houseofatreus.com” (289) underlying the resentful and vindictive nature of an attack similar to that of Clytemnestra’s onslaught against her husband Agamemnon. Besides, the use of an Ancient Greek tragic name, Clytemnestra, through a modern technological network, the internet, stresses the porous nature of Athena Campus. The Athenian porosity on the one hand allows for a deeper connection between the ancient and the modern spheres and on the other hand, it underlines the intrusion of other more modern values like the rules of political correctness that reigned supreme in the 1990s.

Paradoxically enough, this modern Rothian tragedy takes place on a campus named Athena College, after the Greek goddess of wisdom: Pallas Athena. Nevertheless, this is an aptonym that serves as an ironical reminder of how Athena College has betrayed its classical name and purpose by succumbing to petty mass behavior and a rejection of the teaching of the classics. My understanding of Athena College as a spatial system where each space could potentially serve as a theatre stage, where multiple Ancient Greek tragedies are performed, underlines the idea of campus porosity even further. In his essay on Naples, Benjamin makes an astounding parallel between porosity and theatre. He describes Neapolitan houses as being “divided into innumerable, simultaneously animated theatres” (167). In this spatial layout, one can perceive all the elements of the Neapolitan built space as parts of a theatre where “balcony, courtyard, window, gateway, staircase, roof are at the same time stage and boxes” (Benjamin 167). Along the same lines, the Athena College campus is like an Ancient Greek theatre stage where the protagonists enact an Ancient Greek drama of modern proportions. Upon observing Coleman’s son grieving over his father’s death in the campus cemetery where Coleman was to be buried next to Iris, his wife, Zuckerman comments:

He thought Coleman was going to stay here till the whole play could be performed, as though he and Coleman had been set down not in life but on the southern hillside of the Athenian acropolis, in an outdoor theatre sacred to Dionysus, where, before the eyes of

ten thousand spectators, the dramatic unities were once rigorously observed and the great cathartic cycle was enacted annually. (314)

However, catharsis is not achieved in *The Human Stain*. As Zuckerman stresses:

The human desire for a beginning, a middle, and an end—and an end appropriate in magnitude to that beginning and middle—is realized nowhere so thoroughly as in the plays that Coleman taught at Athena College. But outside the classical tragedy of the fifth century B.C., the expectation of completion, let alone of a just and perfect consummation, is a foolish illusion for an adult to hold. (315)

The expectation of a beginning, a middle and an end is singled out as an unrealistic pursuit elsewhere in *The Human Stain* too. In the passage where a group of Athena Professors talk in the vilest of languages about the Monica Lewinski affair there is one Professor who laments the tendency of 90s youth to hyperdramatize “the pettiest of emotions” (147). “Their whole language” this professor complains “is a summation of the stupidity of the last forty years” (147). And he goes on to analyze the tendency to pore over closure:

Closure. *There’s one*. My students cannot stay in that place where thinking must occur. Closure! They fix on the conventionalizing narrative, with its beginning, middle, and end—every experience, no matter how ambiguous, no matter how knotty or mysterious, must lend itself to this normalizing, conventionalizing, anchorman cliché. Any kid who says ‘closure’, I flunk.” (147)

The Athena Professor’s lamentation alludes to the porosity of the academic space in so far as different sets of values clash within Athena. The students, who long for closure, are only one of the symptoms of the “culture wars of the 90s” that *The Human Stain* paints a picture of. Professor Silk’s traditional approach to the Classics aligns with a more conservative view of education one that privileges the canon over the more alternative ethnic and/ or feminist approach to literature. Delphine Roux’s attack represents the nineties political-correctness-tainted academia. Through the power of naming, Roth has managed to represent the conflict between classical ideals and modern academia while at the same time underlying the porosity of the campus space that made this interaction possible. The walls of the Athena campus are membranous in the way that Sennett has proposed in his book *Together*: they are both porous

and resistant, far from being open doors they keep a balance between porosity and resistance. It is that combination of porosity and resistance that becomes the spatial precondition for interaction between people who differ. Hence, Athena College hosts both opposing values under the same aegis thanks to the nature of porosity that allows for an interaction of both conservative and new ideas.

4.3 Intertextual Onomastics in Roth's *Indignation*

At the beginning of *Indignation* (2008) Marcus Messner leaves Newark's Robert Treat⁶¹ College to escape his increasingly maddening father in order to enroll to Winesburg College in Ohio a good "five hundred miles from [their] back door's double lock" (18). Reading on, the reader realizes that Marcus, the ever-indignant and omniscient narrator of Roth's 29th book is dead; a literary conceit the reader has encountered before in many works of fiction such as in Flann O' Brien's *The Third Policeman* (1966) and in Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones* (2002)⁶².

⁶¹ Robert Treat (February 23, 1624-July 12, 1710) was the founder of Newark, New Jersey. He was also an American colonial leader and Governor of Connecticut (Connecticut State Library Archive). Being the founder of Newark, many buildings in town bear his name. However, apart from Robert Treat Academy Charter School (roberttreatacademy.org) no other Institution of learning bears that name in Newark, let alone a College. *Indignation's* Robert Treat College is a fictional place. Roth probably wished to stress the locality of the College. In the author's descriptions of Robert Treat, the Newarkness of the place prevails: "Robert Treat was tucked away at the northern end of the city's busy downtown of office buildings, department stores, and family-owned specialty shops, squeezed between a triangular little Revolutionary War park where the bedraggled bums hung out (most of whom we knew by name) and the muddy Passaic" (16). The College building itself is again described as rooted in Newark's history since it was built on what used to be "an old abandoned smoke-stained brick brewery down near the industrial riverfront that had been converted into classrooms and science labs and where [Marcus Messner] took [his] Biology course and, several blocks away, across from the city's major thoroughfare and facing the little park that was what we had instead of a campus—and where we sat at noontime to eat the sandwiches we'd packed at dawn while the bums down the bench passed the muscatel bottle—a small four-story neoclassical stone building with a pillared entrance that from the outside looked just like the bank it had been for much of the twentieth century" (16-17). This description of Robert Treat underlines the porosity of city-campus space since Roth presents us with a membranous campus space that spills onto the city park and allows for a free interaction between the students and the park "bums," thus dissolving the Town and Gown dichotomy that entrenches relationships in other campus novels. The built space of Robert Treat is also characterized by porosity since "porosity goes hand in hand with the technical and material modification and adaptation of spaces" (Wolfrum 22).

⁶² In *The Third Policeman* the reader only realizes that the narrator has been dead all along only when they reach the end of the narration and they come to the conclusion that all the ghastly incidents happening to the hero were a punishment for the killing he commits at the

This literary conceit makes Messner's voice all the more doomed as he is the condemned protagonist in a no-man's land and the sole tour-guide for the reader in a nightmarish campus in the fifties. This outlandish campus where the plot of *Indignation* unravels is Winesburg College, Ohio; the name of the campus is more than an intertextual nod at Sherwood Anderson's short story collection *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919). As I will demonstrate in this part of the dissertation Roth's choice of place onomastics draws a deep connection with Anderson's short story cycle underlying the porosity of a campus space—Winesburg College, Ohio—that takes on the quality of a small fictional American city—Winesburg, Ohio—by virtue of appropriating its name.

As a way of introducing the power of space onomastics in *Indignation*, I will first turn my attention to the appellation of the hero's first College, Robert Treat. The act of naming is one of the key components in the process of literary design, as the name provides two essential elements: identification and reference (Pocock 9-19). The reader can infer a great deal of information about a fictional place by means of the connotations this name brings. Roth's choice to name Messner's first college Robert Treat is a case in point. The name is closely related to Newark's history since Robert Treat was the founder of the town. Therefore, choosing to name his fictional college by the same name, Roth wanted to stress the locality of the place and later on juxtapose it with Winesburg College which, again, by means of its name carries a different set of connotations. In the author's descriptions of Robert Treat, the Newarkness of the place prevails: "Robert Treat was tucked away at the northern end of the city's busy downtown of office buildings, department stores, and family-owned specialty shops, squeezed between a triangular little Revolutionary War park where the bedraggled bums hung out (most of whom we

opening of the novel. Sebold's novel is more similar to Roth's approach to the dead narrator device in so far as the reader realizes from the start that the narrator 14-year-old Susie Salmon has suffered a violent death and is still around to tell us what happened. In *The Lovely Bones* Susie stays around long enough to see what has happened during her absence and how her family coped after her death:

These were the lovely bones that had grown around my absence: the connections—sometimes tenuous, sometimes made at great cost, but often magnificent—that happened after I was gone. And I began to see things in a way that let me hold the world without me in it. The events my death brought were merely the bones of a body that would become whole at some unpredictable time in the future. The price of what I came to see as this miraculous body had been my life (Sebold 363).

knew by name) and the muddy Passaic” (16). The College building itself is again described as rooted in Newark’s history since it was built on what used to be:

an old abandoned smoke-stained brick brewery down near the industrial riverfront that had been converted into classrooms and science labs and where [Marcus Messner] took [his] Biology course and, several blocks away, across from the city’s major thoroughfare and facing the little park that was what we had instead of a campus—and where we sat at noontime to eat the sandwiches we’d packed at dawn while the bums down the bench passed the muscatel bottle—a small four-story neoclassical stone building with a pillared entrance that from the outside looked just like the bank it had been for much of the twentieth century (16-17).

This description of Robert Treat underlines the porosity of city-campus space since Roth presents us with a membranous campus space that spills onto the city park and allows for a free interaction between the students and the park “bums,” thus dissolving the Town and Gown dichotomy that entrenches relationships in other campus novels. Moreover, the built space of Robert Treat, that used to be an old, brick brewery is characterized by porosity since “porosity goes hand in hand with the technical and material modification and adaptation of spaces” (Wolfrum 22). Robert Treat is built on the site of a brewery and was gradually adapted to classrooms and labs, while the administration building was modified from a neoclassical stone building that used to be a bank. Philip Roth manages to convey all the qualities of the local college just by the use of an aptronym.

Roth’s decision to name the college where the main plot of *Indignation* unravels Winesburg, Ohio, is by no means to be taken lightly. Winesburg College in *Indignation* is given the name of another fictional place: the titular town of Sherwood Anderson’s *Winesburg, Ohio*. Through the quality of porosity, the two Winesburgs are connected in a literary, intertextual universe as they share similar values and attributes. It is surprising to note how little critical attention this intertextual relationship has gathered; reviewers who have dealt with *Indignation*, such as Charles Simic in *The New York Review of Books* and Christopher Hitchens in *The Atlantic*, mostly focused on the sexual frustration of the young hero and drew analogies between *Indignation* and *Portnoy’s Complaint* (1969) in so far as the strained father-son relationship goes. Some reviews make reference to the intertextual reference to Sherwood Anderson but have

not analyzed it thoroughly. One such case is Derek Parker Royal's review of *Indignation* in *Philip Roth Studies* in 2009: "This ivy-tinged (and fictional) liberal arts college, a significant tip of the pen to Sherwood Anderson's famous treatment of repressed desires and stifled dreams, should be just the place for Marcus to pursue his education unmolested and unscathed, but fate places into his path a series of obstacles..." (Royal 130-131). To my mind, Roth's choice of place onomastics for his hero's College digs below the surface of "a significant tip of the pen" and creates multiple layers of meaning.

Throughout Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) the narrator, George Willard, speaks directly to the reader and in 22 short stories traces life in the small American town of the first decades of the twentieth century. In the words of Clarence Lindsay, for Anderson "the small town, home, is where, [the] essential American drama of identity is most intensely felt" (qtd in Kealy 2). George Willard is a young man whose parents run the New Willard House, the only hotel in town and who is a reporter for the *Winesburg Eagle* the town's only newspaper. The stories George tells the reader betray a sense of uncertainty and confusion in him however as the novel unravels the narrator reaches a level of maturity which enables him to branch out of Winesburg. The dilemma of leaving the small town for a big city adventure has been a recurrent theme throughout *Winesburg*, but since George has an especially complicated relationship with his mother he does not feel free to leave Winesburg until after her death as described in the short story "Death." George's maturation process through the iteration of the stories of the grotesques renders *Winesburg, Ohio* a bildungsroman. George Willard shares some key similarities with Marcus Messner. Marcus too is young and impressionable, confused and insecure. He has a tense relationship with one of his parents, in his case, Marcus's father who is as overprotective and possessive as George's mother, Elizabeth Willard. Messner is also the omniscient narrator of the novel who tells not stories, in the plural, but his own, singular story from Winesburg campus. He, too, is insecure and confused and his maturation process involves meeting different types of grotesque, surreal people in Winesburg in a way very similar to George Willard. However, *Indignation* breaks with the bildungsroman tradition. George managed to mark some development and leave Winesburg when he was ready to enter adulthood; Marcus left Winesburg still immature, unready and faced an untimely death in Korea.

Another parallel worth exploring is the two boys' workplace; George Willard works at The Winesburg Eagle—the town's newspaper—while Marcus Messner works at the Winesburg taproom which is similarly named: The Winesburg Owl. The eagle has historically been the symbol of strength, leadership and vision; this is a fitting name for a small-town newspaper as it connotes the all-seeing eye of the reporter and hence underlines the reliability of the stories printed. The owl is another significant symbol from mythological times; it is the symbol of Athena Pallas, the symbol of wisdom but more pragmatically too the owl is a nocturnal animal so the owl might as well represent the capacity of the taproom as a place where students can stay up. On a more morbid tone, the owl is also a harbinger of death therefore the lines where Messner—the dead narrator—serves beer to the students who rudely call him “Hey Jew! Over Here!” (27) are laden with a morose meaning and reinforce the Death theme that—as analyzed further below—is a common thread in both *Winesburg, Ohio* and *Indignation*. Messner becomes no wiser to the ways of neither the world nor the campus working at Winesburg Owl, but the reader is given a glimpse of how Winesburg students spend their Friday and Saturday nights out. The parties at the Winesburg Owl are described by Messner like drunken, raucous affairs where female students tried to flirt modestly in their effort to get “pinned” and eventually marry their college sweetheart, while boys—especially fraternity boys—got drunk and tried to find a way to channel their sexual energy that was being constantly oppressed on a fifties campus.

There were “pinning” parties held almost weekly in the taproom to celebrate the informal engagement of a Winesburg boy to a Winesburg girl by his presenting her with his fraternity pin for her to wear to class on the front of her sweater or blouse (26)

This relatively innocent ritual was a passage or initiation to a more diverse sexual repertoire for the young people who tried to find the most obscure nooks and crannies on campus to indulge their desires. These “necking sessions” were invariably interrupted by the town's police cars (26). This demonization of sex is not coincidental not only because it captures the zeitgeist of the conservative fifties in America but also because it underlines the destructive power of sex in *Indignation*. In fact, both *Winesburgs*, Anderson's and Roth's, share not only the same name but also a similar fear that sex is a power that destroys people's lives as well as a certainty that it is universally doomed.

Their shared attitude to sex is one more attribute that puts the *Winesburg, Ohio* townsfolk into direct conversation with the characters of Winesburg Campus in *Indignation*. The quality of porosity that allows this connection between the two fictional loci by virtue of sharing the same name not only underscores their sameness in other ways too, but it also leaves the pores, the passages open for a dialogue between the two works of fiction. As I see it, in both *Indignation* and *Winesburg, Ohio* sex is the physical act that replaces the lack of any other form of communication. To begin with in both works the reader is confronted with small communities that lack real communication. Analyzing *Winesburg, Ohio* Stamatina Dimakopoulou underlines

The cultural and the psychological density and bareness of Winesburg also comes about through the characters' realization of their exclusion, isolation and marginality are more intensely dramatized as tales progressively unfold and the reader moves through Anderson's portrait gallery. (184)

Along the same lines, *Indignation* is also a novel where characters move around Winesburg campus without truly communicating. We are told the tales of those who are isolated and marginalized through the voice of a person who has been most misunderstood in his short lifespan. To my mind, in both novels the characters interact flatly with one another lacking the slightest shred of pure communication. Everything seems to be a big misunderstanding even when one of the characters tries to reach out to another. Anderson warns us about these misunderstandings in a forthright manner in some of his stories: "the story of Louise Bentley, who became Mrs. John Hardy and lived with her husband in a brick house on Elm Street in Winesburg is a story of misunderstanding" (*Winesburg* 43). A reader familiar with both works of fiction can easily imagine a similar opening for *Indignation* warning the readership that Marcus Messner's life is but a story of misunderstanding. Messner is misunderstood by his father as he is taken as a boy who will get in trouble, he is in turn misunderstood by the Dean of Winesburg who believes he wants to break campus rules and then mistakenly believes that he has impregnated Olivia Hutton, he is also misunderstood by his classmates and by the students who frequent the Owl and have simply tagged him the "Jew." Both Winesburgs are places where misunderstandings ensue because the people who inhabit these places are alienated from one another and lack the tools that will lead them to real communication and empathy. David T. Humphries points out that "Winesburg is primarily about the way such "misunderstandings"

limit the lives of the town's residents" (51) and I will add that in a similar manner *Indignation*, by means of appropriating the name of Winesburg, extends the notion of misunderstanding as it demonstrates not only the limitations imposed on the lives of the characters interacting on Winesburg campus but most importantly the tragic domino effect it can have on a young man's life. My assertion is that at the moment where the lack of communication and the alienation of the characters in both works of fiction reach a peak, the physicality and intimacy of the sexual act is mistaken for communication. Even though in the majority of Anderson's stories the reader witnesses the destructive nature of sex, it is in the short story "The Teacher" concerning Kate Swift that the intense desire for communication is mistaken for physical desire is best exemplified. Kate Swift is a thirty-year-old schoolteacher, she has returned to Winesburg after traveling abroad, she is described as sensitive and "the most eagerly passionate soul" among Winesburg residents. In "The Teacher," Anderson places Kate amid a snowy, frozen setting to emphasize the metaphorical coldness that envelops Winesburg residents and has her communicate with George Willard a former student whom she deems talented. The teacher wants to convince George that he is a talented young man in whom she had "recognized the spark of genius and wishes to kindle the spark (Anderson 160) but "so strong was her passion that it became something physical" (Anderson 162). George does not know how to interpret Kate's fervent words of praise and her strong interest in his talent, so he amorously embraces her. She is shocked and leaves in the snowstorm. She was never able to communicate to George whatever it was that she wanted to communicate, and George simply acknowledges that Kate Swift is a mystery to him. Rachel Luria also points out the conflict between sexual desire and emotional intimacy in Anderson's work in her article "Sherwood Anderson's Legacy to Contemporary American Writing" where she also uses Kate Swift's example, only to conclude that: "the need to communicate and connect is so strong that it becomes something physical which is then confused with physical attraction" (113). Ultimately, physical desire is mistaken for emotional communication and intellectual connection (Luria 113).

Through the act of naming Winesburg College after Anderson's fictional small town, Winesburg campus has adopted by means of porosity the values and vices of its namesake. Therefore, along the same lines, in *Indignation* sexual acts are used—albeit unsuccessfully—to bridge the chaos of misunderstanding and alienation on Winesburg campus. Olivia Hutton, a sexually precocious and active girl in a very conservative milieu, performs fellatio on Marcus

Messner. Olivia uses sex to reach out to people in Winesburg trying to find love. She has attempted suicide in the past and there are hints of having been abused in her family environment. Olivia mistakes corporal intimacy for communication and acceptance. Messner overanalyzes her motives: "It's because her parents are divorced. There was no other explanation for an enigma so profound" (59). After communicating with Olivia through letters that abide to the rules of teenage flirt but allow the two to form a relationship of mutual trust in a place that relationships are described as perfunctory and based on *quid pro quo*, Messner finds out that Olivia has built quite a reputation at Winesburg. When Sonny Cottler tells him that "You have already located the Blowjob Queen of 1951" (122) Messner is furious: "Fury swiftly mounted in me, the very fury that I'd felt toward Elwyn when he called Olivia a cunt" (123). Cottler continues: "...blowjobs are at a premium in north-central Ohio. News of Olivia has traveled fast. Don't look so puzzled" (123). Messner does not fight with Cottler as he had done with Elwyn, instead he leaves: "I jumped from the bench and, in a dizzying state of confusion about what there was (or wasn't) in me that made relations with others so wretchedly disappointing, fled Sonny Cottler and sped off to my government class..." (123). Messner has a picture-perfect idea of relationships one that complies with normative heterosexual assumptions of what a relationship should be. He has such a strong fantasy of himself being the boy advertised on the Winesburg College catalogue that he spends all his money to buy the exact same ensemble and secretly wishes to find a girl like the one walking next to the boy adorning the catalogue. "In the photo, he was walking beside a girl wearing a two-piece sweater set and a long, full dark skirt and turned-down white cotton socks and shiny loafers. She was smiling at him while they walked together as though he'd said to her something amusingly clever" (115). Messner admits choosing Winesburg because of that picture. His topophilic aspirations fail him because of sex as it is evident in the following remark: "Those were the clothes I was wearing when Olivia went down on me in Elwyn's LaSalle" (118). His disillusionment is such that he goes on to underline: "Yes, there's the picture of the boy and girl that should adorn the cover of the Winesburg catalogue: me in those clothes being blown by Olivia and having no idea what to make of it" (118). His assumptions of what a relationship should be and what rules governed relationships did not allow him to reach out to Olivia; on another level, his heteronormative assumptions on relations did not allow him to see that Flusser was a homosexual man in love with him. As Messner admits: "[...] like most heterosexuals my age I didn't believe that anyone was homosexual" (40).

Flusser's story in *Indignation* is another Winesburg campus story that could be told separately in the manner that Anderson tells his *Winesburg, Ohio* stories where the characters' lives unravel in the same frozen place, intersecting but not touching. Messner tells us: "I didn't understand, even while he was sleeping directly above me, that Bert Flusser was homosexual. That realization would arrive later" (41). This admission allows us to grasp the magnitude of the inability to communicate that reigned in Winesburg even in the same dorm room, between people sharing a bunkbed. Flusser who is presented as a cynical intellectual is obviously distressed in not being able to vent his desires in such a strict, sexually oppressive place. His act of vandalism and sexual defilement of Messner's dorm room in Neil Hall—however hideous and disgusting—could be interpreted as his way of erupting, as a misplaced effort to deliver a message to Marcus Messner, the object of his desire. Evading Messner's personal space and ejaculating on his belongings, was Flusser's way of connecting with the space of his loved one. While Messner was hospitalized recovering from an appendectomy, Flusser found the perfect opportunity to appropriate the space of the person he loved unrequitedly. Although we often attempt to interpret vandalism through applying delinquency theories onto its causes, in Flusser's case it is useful to employ Lippman's frustration-aggression schema:

Vandalism, like other types of pathological behavior, represents an outlet for aggression or feelings that have not been solved in a healthy or acceptable manner. It is usually an expression of deep unrest and a need to react with destruction of property or a creation of unhappiness in order to lessen the feelings of unrest (Lippman qtd in Richards 482)

In tandem with feelings of deep unrest and a need to react, vandalism, Lippman asserts, fosters feelings of inferiority and "a need to punish others or get even for real or fancied offenses against them" (qtd in Richards 482). Richards explains that "consistent with such reasoning are models based on assumptions about sex-role insecurity or anxiety about masculinity" (482). Flusser's case, I contend, is vandalism originating from his extreme frustration to fit in as well as his inability to communicate and put his message across.

Another act of vandalism that illustrates a similar frustration and lack of communion on campus space is the "Great White Panty Raid of Winesburg College," where the fraternity boys vandalize the girls' dormitories and throw their underwear out of the dorm window (*Indignation* 201-203). The inability to communicate and the impossibility to get one's message across are

two elements that Anderson's Winesburg bequeathed Winesburg campus by means of naming. The omniscient narrator, Messner just like Willard in *Winesburg, Ohio*, describes the Panty Raid as an almost beastly attack: there is a roar, they move about in the snow and next in the women's dormitory like a pack of wolves vandalizing everything, masturbating on the white panties. The words used convey herd behavior: "the roar," "the roar of a crowd at a football game," "cavorting," "hurling beer cans at one another," "the invaders," "ferret out," "en masse," "battering down the doors with fists, feet, and shoulders." (201-204) The only phrase they chant is "We want girls." This animalistic behavior and vandalism of the women's dormitory reflects the extreme gender entrenchment and sexual frustration reigning on Winesburg campus in the fifties, but it also illustrates the channeling of their inability to communicate this frustration to anyone as the campus space they have to negotiate daily is averse to creating a climate of mutual respect and communication between peers exactly like Anderson's Winesburg is not able to foster the creation of meaningful relationships and communication between its residents. By christening Winesburg College with the name of Anderson's dysfunctional town, Roth creates a porous campus that acquires all the traits of Winesburg, Ohio.

In *Winesburg, Ohio*, George Willard paints a similar plateau of alienation and frustration. David Stouck observes that Anderson sees America as "made up of lonely, frustrated individuals who cannot communicate with each other and who form a procession of the living dead" (529). In his essay "*Winesburg, Ohio* as a Dance of Death" Stouck makes the interesting proposition that Anderson's stories collection is structured around the medieval concept of the Dance of Death. Stretching his suggestion further, I, in turn, propose that thanks to the quality of porosity the Winesburg campus in *Indignation* adopts the same structural concept. Indeed, death is the running thread that binds *Indignation* together while the characters one by one seem to be moving towards their inescapable end. From the dead narrator, to the death-ridden imagery *Indignation* reminds the reader that Winesburg's porous borders have allowed death in; the Korean War is happening in a remote place, but it hovers over America and it infiltrates the campus membranous walls. The geographical seclusion of the campus does not make it isolated, on the contrary, the interrelation, the interdependence is inescapable. *Indignation* is narrated by a dead boy, a young man who died in the Korean War and this sets the tone for a nightmarish reading, one that brings the reader closer to death. Apart from the narrator's flashbacks that open a window to his childhood in Newark, the denouement of the plot mainly takes place on the

campus of Winesburg College during the Korean War. While the Korean War (1950-1953) is claiming thousands of American lives overseas, Winesburg College seems like a protected enclave where male students remain undrafted and enjoy the carefree, albeit conservatively constrained life of the American youth of the era. To my mind, this sheltered, gated community by means of porosity allows for the Dance of Death to penetrate the campus walls and sweep along with it most of the main characters. On a symbolic level, all the characters lead empty, dead lives of alienation and loneliness. They seem to be moving around the confines of Winesburg campus in a kind of living death, where they are condemned to live seemingly ad infinitum confronted with each other like the characters of Sartre's *Huis Clos*⁶³ (1944). Similar to the characters in *Winesburg, Ohio* their death is a spiritual one. As Stouck remarks: "The central insight in the book concerning human relationships is that each man lives according to his own "truth" and that no one can understand and express fully that truth for someone else" (525). However, the references to actual Death in both works abide. Stouck isolates one paragraph from Anderson's book where many of the book's main concerns are singled out. It is the passage where Elizabeth Willard is "hungering for death:"

She personified the figure of death and made him now a strong black-haired youth running over hills, now a stern quiet man marked and scarred by the business of living. In the darkness of her room she put out her hand, thrusting it from under the covers of her bed, and she thought that death like a living thing put out his hand to her. "Be patient, lover," she whispered. "Keep yourself young and beautiful and be patient." (qtd in Stouck 526)

In a similar vein, Marcus Messner's father vaguely personifies Death not as a lover but as the vicious World who "is waiting, it's licking its chops, to take your boy away" (*Indignation*,

⁶³ *Huis Clos* is a 1944 existentialist play by Jean-Paul Sartre. It has been translated in English as *No Exit* when it would more accurately translate into in-camera which is a legal term that signifies in-chambers, for court procedures that are private, not open to the public. The play revolves around three characters, Joseph Garcin, Ines Cerrano and Estelle Rigault who are led to room by a secretive, mysterious valet. It turns out all three of them are dead and they have to spend eternity in this room in a version of hell they had not imagined. They are guilty of various crimes each and their purpose in this closed room is to be each other's tormentor. At some point in the play, Joseph concludes that "L'enfer, c'est les autres"- "Hell is other people" which came to summarize Sartre's view that our struggle as human beings lies on our continuous struggle to see ourselves as an object from another consciousness (Danto 210).

14) and prophetically warns Messner Jr.: “the tiniest, littlest things *do* have tragic consequences” (14). Indeed, Messner’s slightest move in Winesburg—his moving dorms, his rendez-vous with Olivia, his meeting with the Dean, his refusal to attend Chapel and his hiring a proxy for Chapel attendance—synthesized a macabre choreography that led him first out of Winesburg campus and then out of Life itself. Congruent to Marcus Messner’s Death Dance is the fate awaiting his one-time dorm mate Elwyn Ayers who also dies an untimely death. Elwyn died on the night of the Great White Panty Raid of Winesburg College attempting to outrace the midnight freight train with his 1940 LaSalle (209-210). His moves are described in detail and resemble the moves of a complicated but carefully calculated dance that lead Elwyn to his End with great precision akin to a Holbein’s Danse Macabre illustration⁶⁴.

...after finishing his homework, he had [...] spent the remainder of the evening back at the fraternity house, camped at his LaSalle, running the engine to keep it warm, and getting out only to sweep off the snow that rapidly settled on the roof, the hood and the trunk and then to spade it away from the four wheels so he could attach a brand-new set of winter chains to the tires. For the sake of the automotive adventure, to see how well the powerful 1940 four-door Touring Sedan with the lengthened wheelbase and the larger carburetor and the 130 horsepower, the last of the prestigious cars named for the French explorer that GM would ever manufacture, could perform in the high-piled snow of the Winesburg streets, he decided to take it for a spin (208-209)

Elwyn’s moves described by Roth in short sentences, separated by commas give the reader the impression of a succession of carefully calculated dance steps leading Elwyn to the crescendo of his danse macabre: “...the LaSalle skidding out of control, spun twice around on the tracks and was struck head-on by the snow-plow of the locomotive bound from points east to Akron [...]

⁶⁴ The Dance of Death or Danse Macabre is a Late Medieval artistic genre that underlines the universality and totalizing power of Death, as Death the Leveler. It consists of personifications of Death leading people to their grave in a kind of dance, their final dance on earth thus underscoring the fragility of living. Hans Holbein (1497-1542) produced woodcuts of his designs of the Danse Macabre. These woodcuts appeared in proofs with titles in German and his first book edition of the woodcuts was published at Lyon in 1538. His work was really popular which reflects the curiosity people had for death and their need to come to terms with the fragility of their existence (Davis 97-130)

Elwyn Ayers Jr. was killed, apparently on impact, and then quickly burned up in the wreckage of the car that he had cared for above all else in life and loved in lieu of men and women” (209). Elwyn dead at 21, as Marcus Messner admits “in death as in life, still opaque to me” (211).

Olivia Hutton, Messner’s girlfriend, is a young woman who has attempted to commit suicide by slitting her wrists in the past. The healing scars on her wrists evoke images of the sharp object that she slit her skin with and strengthen the thread that binds the novel together: death, kosher sacrifice, blood and that reminds us of the porous nature of Winesburg that has allowed all these to enter the seemingly secluded campus space. Roth, using Messner as his mouthpiece, helps the reader draw the analogy more easily:

That is what Olivia had tried to do, to kill herself according to kosher specifications by emptying her body of blood. Had she been successful, had she expertly completed the job with a single perfect slice of the blade, she would have rendered herself kosher in accordance with rabbinical law. Olivia’s telltale scar came from attempting to perform her own ritual slaughter. (161)

After her failed suicide attempt, Olivia seems to be followed by Death as she performs one self-destructive act after the other: she becomes an alcoholic, she becomes promiscuous, she suffers multiple mental breakdowns. Olivia leaves Winesburg as she has another nervous breakdown and is taken away by an ambulance (189). She is examined and found to be pregnant. Her fate is undisclosed to the reader, however it will in all probability be a living death. Messner’s fate is soon revealed to the reader in more detail. It is also linked to the blood imagery and kosher sacrifice that Olivia’s suicide was described. Messner sees all the blood around him and is reminded of his childhood in Newark: “he’d not been encircled by so much blood since his days as a boy at the slaughterhouse, watching the ritual killing of animals in accordance with Jewish law” (226). Now Marcus Messner the student, is Private Messner: “And the steel blade that sliced him up was sharp and efficient as any knife they used in the shop to cut and prepare meat for their customers” (226). Messner dies in the Korean War led there through a series of choreographed dance steps of minute decisions with tragic consequences. Following Marcus Messner’s death, his father deeply depressed while working in the butcher shop “was paying so little attention to what he was doing that *his knife slipped on a bone and the tip of it entered his abdomen and there was a gush of blood* and stiches were required. In all it took eighteen months

for his horrendous loss to torture the wretched man to death” (emphasis mine, 229). The sharpness of the knife and the blood imagery again underscore the Death Dance imagery that seems to be picturing Death personified leading Mr. Messner to his final abode.

Nevertheless, as in *Winesburg, Ohio* “the idea of death does not signify only the grave, but more tragically, it denotes the loneliness and frustration of the unlived life” (Stouck 532) in *Indignation* too. The characters move about Winesburg campus leading unhappy, unfulfilled lives of meaningless repetition and routine centered around a specific ritual—classes, Chapel attendance, dormitory regulations—that strongly relate the campus community rituals with the kosher rituals. In *Winesburg, Ohio* David Stouck explains that the tiring repetition of day-to-day existence and cycle of routine for the Winesburg people is only broken by the sudden “restlessness of the individual who grows increasingly oppressed by his loneliness and his inability to express himself to others” (532). He describes this expression of frustration as a type of frenzied dance (532). “In each story,” Stouck underlines, “when the character reaches an ultimate point of insupportable frustration or recognizes that he can never escape his isolation, he reacts by waving his hands and arms about, talking excitedly, and finally running away.” (532) Several of Anderson’s stories typify the frenzied dance that Stouck describes as akin to a *Danse Macabre*. In “Drink” Tom Foster who is described as “living in the shadow of the wall of life” drinks a bottle of whisky and becomes a grotesque figure walking on the road: “his head seemed to be flying about like a pinwheel and then projecting itself off into space and his arms and legs flopped helplessly about” (Anderson 217). In this frenzied state he tries to communicate to George Willard that he has made love to Helen White but the young reporter refuses to listen to him as he himself is in love with Helen. Tom Foster says that “everyone suffers” but his drunken dance render him an unreliable narrator, so his message remains undelivered. In other short stories, as Stouck points out, the frenzied dance also appears, making the dance a pattern that stands for the explosion of the frustrated, alienated individual in Winesburg. Another case in point can be found in the story “Queer” where Elmer Cowley frustrated and oppressed at not being understood by anyone in Winesburg resorts to waving his arms up and down and talking spasmodically. At the end, not being able to reach to anyone he embarks on the train to flee small-mentality-Winesburg and still speechless he breaks into a grotesque dance: “Elmer Cowley danced with fury beside the groaning train...With a snarl of rage he turned and his long arms began to flay the air. Like one struggling for release from hands that held him he struck out,

hitting George Willard blow after blow on the breast, the neck, the mouth” (Anderson 201). Congruently, George Willard is beaten by Kate Swift due to the misunderstanding that ensued between them and then she ran into the night. “That same night,” as also observed by Stouck, Reverend Hartmann “who for weeks has paced the streets at night imploring God to keep him from his sinful habit of peeping into Kate Swift’s bedroom window, bursts into the office of the Winesburg Eagle “shaking a bleeding fist into the air as an emblem of his triumph” (535). The Reverend had broken the window that had enabled him to peep through Kate Swift’s bedroom. In “Adventure” Alice Hindman after years of waiting for her lover desperately runs naked in the rain one night, Louise Bentley at a moment where her loneliness reaches a peak point drives her horse and carriage at great speed through the streets of Winesburg similar to what Elizabeth Willard, George Willard’s mother had done in her youth before she got in an accident. In another story, Jesse Bentley’s drunken brothers drove along Winesburg streets shouting at the stars. Time and again the incoherent characters of *Winesburg, Ohio* burst into a spasmodic kind of dance or they run. All of these inarticulate, lonely figures form a grotesque procession which “becomes a Dance of Death when the writer comes to recognize his own mortality. The death of his mother awakens George Willard to both the brevity and the loneliness of human existence” (Stouck 537).

In closing, the medieval Dance of Death “was a highly ritualized art” (Stouck 542); the qualities of stylized repetition, the tableaux of the grotesque, desperately lonely people, as well as the closed spaces—Winesburg, Ohio and Winesburg Campus—where their inarticulate lives are played on are rendered in a masterful manner in both works of fiction, thus underlying not only the tragic nature of life in both Winesburgs but also the significant artistic endeavor of both Anderson and Roth. At the same time, the two works of fiction are connected through the quality of porosity that allows for an intertextual relationship that extends beyond the scope of onomastics and achieves to create a perforated universe where both Winesburgs intersect and share far more than a name.

Conclusion

Campus space has provided rich material for fiction ever since the golden era of the campus novel, the 1950s. Significant American writers have dealt with the genre of the campus novel in their work. Mary McCarthy, Willa Cather, Philip Roth, Don DeLillo, John Barth, Francine Prose, Jeffrey Eugenides, Randal Jarrell, Donna Tartt, Bret Easton Ellis and many more have all been inspired by the American campus, finding in campus space a rich setting for exploring complex themes and issues. The university environment is a microcosm of society, and is often used to explore larger social, cultural, and political issues while the college experience is a formative time in many people's lives, and is therefore ripe for exploration in literature. A pleiad of American writers have used the campus novel to offer a satirical or critical examination of the academic world. Writers can use the campus novel to critique the sometimes insular, hierarchical, and privileged world of academia, as well as to examine larger social and cultural issues. In multiple cases, writers who have worked in academia themselves may use the campus novel as a way to reflect on their own experiences and observations of university life. The campus novel can be a way for writers to explore the themes of youth, coming of age, and the search for identity. The college experience is often a time of experimentation and growth, and writers can use the campus novel to explore the complexities and challenges of this period of life. The campus novel remains an ideal literary vehicle to dissect social complexities and address controversial issues in American society.

From the campus satire to the campus mystery novel, the space of the campus has, thus, taken the lead in numerous academic novels that have served as how-to guides for students, faculty and aspiring academics, or as windows to the life of an exclusive community for people outside the academia. For the majority of readers and critics, the image of the campus displayed in the campus novels is that of an impenetrable and unyielding Ivory Tower, an idyllic place far removed from the ugliness of the outside world, a place untarnished by the vices of society where Professors delve into obscure subjects and students are trained into a life of the intellect; the metaphor of the Ivory Tower paints academia as an isolated, elitist, and sometimes

oppressive world that is disconnected from the concerns of the wider society. This perception is evident in the depiction of academics as eccentric or out-of-touch with the real world, absent-minded or quirky individuals who are more interested in the pursuit of knowledge than practical concerns. Alongside the idiosyncratic depiction of professors, popular culture offers a portrayal of academic institutions as isolated and exclusive. In many movies and TV shows, universities are shown as walled-off and isolated from the surrounding community, with their own separate customs and traditions. The use of academic jargon in academia contributes to the perception of academia as a closed and exclusive world. In popular culture, academics are often depicted as using complex, obscure language that is difficult for outsiders to understand. Another point that furthers the alienation between academia and the real world is the emphasis on credentials and status within academic circles. In popular culture, academics are often portrayed as obsessed with their own credentials and status, with a focus on obtaining tenure or other forms of recognition within the academic community. These are some of the most important factors that contribute to the perception of academia as an Ivory Tower that is removed from society. While this perception is often exaggerated or caricatured in popular culture, it reflects a real tension between the world of academic scholarship and the broader social and cultural context in which it is situated. While most of the scholarly work on the campus novel in America plays around the idea of the Ivory Tower engaging with the campus novel as a form of social critique and exploring its potential for challenging dominant narratives and power structures, my thesis breaks from this traditional approach; My dissertation revisits the stereotypical depiction of Academia as an Ivory Tower and provides a spatial reading of the contemporary Campus Novel in America. My assertion is that campus space is porous thus allowing for a constant dialogue between academia and society, rendering the university a living organism in the heart of American society and culture.

In the four chapters of the current work, I investigate the notion of campus space and spatial porosity in 20th and 21st century American campus novels. The three first chapters analyze the main campus spaces depicted in the novels offering an alternative reading of the faculty office, the classroom, the quadrangle, the dormitory and the commons room. The fourth chapter of the present work investigates the politics of campus toponymies in the campus novel making assumptions about the correlation of naming and spatial identity. The main methodological tool being Richard Sennett's notion of porosity, I come to the conclusion that instead of an Ivory

Tower, the contemporary American campus novel paints the picture of a Tower made of a material porous enough to allow certain values to enter the academic world, while retaining core ideals inside the cell of the campus. In this respect, the campus walls function in a manner very similar to the membranes of a living organism. The membrane wall of the campus functions as a border with the outside world and not as a boundary. Sennett explains that boundaries are more definitive, marking the edge where things end, while borders are the edges where “different groups interact” (“The Open City” 8). He argues that it is at the edge of such borders that more activity is registered: “The boundary is an edge where things end; the border is an edge where different groups interact. At borders, organisms become more interactive, due to the meeting of different species or physical conditions” (8). I contend that this is the condition of campus walls as represented in the contemporary campus novel. The different forces and values penetrating the campus from society do not necessarily mark a negative development in the history of the campus. Therefore, I depart from Elaine Showalter who, in her book *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (2005), states that because of the intrusion of new social realities into campus “the Ivory Towers have become fragile fortresses with glassy walls” (119). A major defect of this categorization of the campus is that it neglects to take into account the membranous nature of the campus walls thanks to the flexibility of which academia is able to remain standing and not crumble. I conclude that instead of glass, or ivory the image of the campus walls emerging from the contemporary American campus novel are porous rendering the American campus a living organism, fraught with activity and interaction.

My research demonstrates the deep correlation between campus space and social transformations and proves that the university not only registers social tensions but is also transformed because of those tensions. A disquieting tendency is the neoliberal turn of the university. The neoliberal dogma has infiltrated university space and the results are observed in university architecture and facilities. This capitalist turn is reflected in the campus novel and my assertion is that the campus novel of the future will feature a different type of university space that might even revert to the elitism that this institution has been blamed of, for so long. It is a fact that American universities have undergone a significant transformation since the mid-20th century. In his book *The Capitalist University: The Transformations of Higher Education in the United States since 1945*, Henry Heller illustrates how academic capitalism has become the norm, with universities increasingly seeking to engage in profitable research and other forms of

productive activity. Heller explains how this has led to new connections between academia, government, and private business in an effort to foster profitability especially in the years after 2010. He also comments on the shifting nature of the American university because of these connections:

The shift from public good to private benefit, from university as a commons to a corporation, from student as citizen to customer, from professor as public servant to academic entrepreneur, and from knowledge as a common good to intellectual property, signaled the end of the university as we knew it and the emergence of a new capitalist university. (Heller 3)

One of the consequences of this transformation, as the author observes, is that American universities establish overseas campuses in their attempt to profit from the American model of higher education. At the same time, within the United States, many institutions have sought to reach the status of elite universities by building prestigious research components and thus raising their rankings. In his review of Heller's book, Konstantinos Blatanis in turn emphasizes that the university has indeed undergone a transformation in its mission in the post-WWII period. He asserts that the university has become increasingly commodified and oriented toward market values rather than public good (5). Moving on in his analysis of Heller's 2016 book, Blatanis concisely points out that Heller offers an insight into the ways academia functions as a corporate endeavor by elucidating the specific ways in which the university has consolidated its connections to big business and has become a virtual instrument of the U.S. state. The invasion of the neoliberal dogma in education, as described by Heller, is a social phenomenon that has profoundly influenced campus space and will continue to impact it in the years to come concomitantly influencing the campus novel.

The neoliberal dogma affecting the university can also be observed in the reshaping of the modern campus to adapt to the spate of globalization and will constitute future research material. While the traditional university is rooted in place and defined by location, the modern university stretches its campus walls to faraway places, by definition curving new trajectories in scholarly research both on campus space and on the development of the campus novel. The

phenomenon of branch university campuses⁶⁵ around the globe bears proof to the porosity of campus space that is underlined in the modern campus novel. The creation of a global university network is a harbinger of the restructuring of the modern university, as John Sexton—former NYU president—stresses in his essay “Global Network University Reflection.” This global network is mainly made of university branches in affluent Gulf countries such as Qatar or the United Arab Emirates. The porosity of the campus is evidenced in the creation of physical university facilities in other continents that bear the architectural characteristics of an American campus and share the mission of the “mother” institution. Sexton calls these campuses portal campuses: “The initial and fundamental organizational element of the global network university is the portal campus—a point of primary affiliation and activity, with the capacity to accommodate fully its constituent faculty and students.” (5) NYU has three portal campuses, one in New York and the other two in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai. The choice of the term “portal campuses” underlines the opening, the porosity of the university space that extends its educating mission globally. These branch campuses typically follow the American model of higher education and offer American degrees. It remains to be seen whether these campuses will be successful in the long run, as they may face cultural and financial challenges, among others. However, if American campuses do thrive in other parts of the world, it may impact the genre of the campus novel by expanding its scope beyond the traditional American campus setting. Campus novels set in international American branch campuses may offer a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities of American higher education in a global context. Additionally, the presence of American campuses in other countries may also lead to the emergence of new literary genres that explore the cultural interactions and conflicts between American and local students and faculty, that will in turn create the need for a new approach in scholarly research.

⁶⁵ International branch campuses of US institutions are increasing in number. In 2016 there were 78 worldwide. A joint analysis by the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education at Oxford University and the Cross-Border Education research team from Penn State and the University of Albany showed that this number constitutes one-third of all branch campuses in existence. The locations of these branch campuses varies: from European countries to China, Hong Kong, South America, Africa and the Middle East (Editorial in *Nature Methods*, July 2018)

A similar opening of the University to the world is achieved through distance learning. The offering of online classes from accredited institutions of higher learning to any place in the world blessed with internet connection is also evidence of the campus openness and its porous nature. The campus walls thin out into cyberspace and create virtual classrooms thus globally underlying the existence of pores, or portals that help the institution reach a far wider spectrum of students and faculty. Especially, in the aftermath of the Coronavirus lockdowns and the sudden switch to online learning, the existence of virtual classrooms becomes a major concern for the academy. Teaching college students while the physical campus is out of reach has become a challenge but also a reminder that the campus space is indeed a porous space that does not restrain itself within its brick-and-mortar gates. Distant learning and AI have the potential to greatly transform the campus space and alongside the campus novel genre. With the rise of distant learning, students may not need to physically attend classes on campus as much as they did before. This could lead to a decline in the importance of certain campus spaces, such as lecture halls and libraries, and an increase in the importance of virtual spaces, such as online fora and discussion boards. AI can help create a more personalized learning experience for students. It can help teachers identify gaps in student knowledge and provide targeted feedback and recommendations to help students learn more effectively. This shift towards personalized learning could also change the way students engage with the campus space, as they may spend more time in individual study spaces rather than in group lecture halls. As students spend more time learning online and in virtual spaces, the culture of the physical campus may change. The campus novel, a literary genre that explores the social and cultural dynamics of campus life, may need to adapt to reflect these changes. However, distant learning and AI also have the potential to create new narratives within the campus novel genre. As students engage with new technologies and learning methods, the genre may explore the ways in which these changes impact student experiences and interactions with each other and the physical campus. Although the overall impact of distant learning and AI on the campus space and the campus novel remains to be seen, we cannot but admit the fact that these changes have the potential to transform the way we think about education and the ways in which we tell stories about campus life. As for the concept of spatial porosity that informs this dissertation, I am convinced that it will also help in deciphering and analyzing the relationship of campus space and learning in an online environment.

This dissertation answers questions related to the nature of campus space, its relationship with human agents—and vice versa—as examined through the lens of American literature. It places the groundwork for future scholarly research on the nature of campus space and the evolution of the genre, as detailed above in the branch campus and the distant learning model of education. The use of technology in both learning and teaching has already been a source of inspiration for science-fiction writers such as Vernon Vinge (2006) and Charles Stross (2005), who have creatively constructed a utopian reality where technology revolutionizes education and stretches the limits of the traditional classroom. In turn, the campus novel as a genre that registers and explains the tensions shaking the contemporary campus will probably respond to the modern realities. In tandem, scholarly research on the campus novel will evolve and address a different set of questions related to the American campus and spatiality. Will the next American campus novel feature a campus in Abu Dhabi? Will it be about a cyberspace campus? Will it focus on a software that imitates human writing thus blurring the boundaries between AI and plagiarism? Future research on the campus novel will reflect the reshaping of the campus space as a portal campus or as a virtual campus and analyze human conduct and growth in this academic environment.

Despite the fact that we cannot make safe predictions about the trajectory of the future campus novel, this dissertation has helped in understanding the nature of the contemporary campus novel, it has brought to light the spatiality and porosity of the American campus and finally it has underlined the genre's versatile nature in capturing the zeitgeist instead of presenting its readership with pages of fun escapism. After putting the final touches to this dissertation, I will continue investigating different aspects of the campus novel through the lens of spatial theory searching for findings that will help us make sense of how a literary genre such as the campus novel navigates social tensions and historic contradictions in campus space.

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