PhD Dissertation Theses

The Academic Novel in the Age of Postmodernity:

The Anglo-American Metafictional Academic Novel

written by

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1.   The research topic of the dissertation

The Anglo-American academic novel can boast with an impressively sizeable and versatile literary output, yet, its reception is still organized around one overwhelmingly dominant critical approach: to seek ways of confirming and elucidating how an academic novel describes, comments on or criticizes the experiential reality of higher education. The implication which lurks, unspoken, behind the surprising uniformity of the body of criticism devoted to the subgenre is that academic fiction is a homogenous body of literature which has little to offer beyond its referential reading. Perhaps it is also because of the monopoly of realist criticism that the academic novel today is considered to be an affair which, from a theoretical point of view, has been 'covered', *i.e.* all the relevant literary observations have been made about it with not much left to say. As my present research urges to testify, this is not exactly the case.

My research has led me to conclude that the stasis which the monopoly of this fundamentally realist critical mindset has cast around the subgenre has been instrumental in ignoring fundamental changes in its development which have taken place since the onset of the era commonly referred to as postmodernism. What is offered in this study is a re-examination of the Anglo-American campus novel of the post-1950s. The title of the present dissertation aims to suggest is that instead of stasis, it is development, it is change that should be applied in order to characterise academic fiction, especially as far as the period following the 1950s is concerned. One chief merit of the present investigation, I believe, lies in its breaking away from the widespread theses that academic fiction is exclusively realist, and that it ought to be made sense of by means of mimetic approaches. The intention with which I set out to write this study is to investigate a so-far much ignored, postmodern phase of the subgenre, and uncover ways in which its reception can depart from the mere seeking for realism in fiction. I wish to point out that the term 'postmodern' is a notoriously wide-ranging and much-abused notion and I feel obliged to admit that its attention-attracting application in the title of this study admits a scope of literary issues which definitely eclipses what the present dissertation purports to address. Therefore, it should be noted that from among the various manifestations of the postmodern novel and the numerous theoretical concerns of postmodern literary criticism, it is only and exclusively the metafictional novel, more precisely, the metafictional academic novel which is the prime focus of this study.

2.	**The structure and content of the dissertation**

The structural backbone of the dissertation is made up of three main parts. Firstly, there is an introduction and discussion of the mimetic approach to interpreting academic novels. A subsequent part discusses the transitory phase between the mimetic and the metafictional phases of the academic novel with ample attention paid to the generic and subgeneric contributing factors of the transition. In the third segment of the dissertation I classify and investigate the various manifestation of the metafictional academic novel by using thirteen representative novels for illustration.

Chapter One

In Chapter One, entitled 'What Is an Academic Novel?', I deal with three basic questions concerning academic fiction. Firstly, I introduce and explicate the various terms which are commonly employed to refer to novels about the world of higher education.

Secondly, I propose a working definition for selecting academic novels for the purpose of further investigations throughout the entire research. This latter objective is of crucial importance because, as will be demonstrated, currently there is no critical consensus concerning what an academic novel precisely is, and the stereotypical ideas regarding academic fiction are, more often than not, misleading. As the chapter illustrates, the setting of a university campus or the satirical treatment of higher education – which are the common stereotypical attributes of the subgenre – cannot be used as adequate criteria for selecting academic novels. Instead, the dissertation defines the university novel as a work of fiction the primary thematic concern of which is closely related to the world of higher education. Therefore, campus novels feature university teachers/students and other employees of higher education, and most frequently, though not necessarily, involve university campuses as their main setting. Some of the themes that academic novels frequently deal with are teaching, studying, the life of university teachers and students, research, academic disciplines, educational politics and pedagogical issues.

Thirdly, I explore the question of how much academic novels are actually bound by the realities of higher education. Setting up the categories of 'true to life', 'partly recognizable' and 'academic fantasies', the chapter concludes that – in fact – academic fiction contains varying degrees of fact-fiction composition from academic documentaries through satires and romances to campus novels in which authorial invention has a decidedly predominant role.

Chapter Two

What constitutes the central thesis of Chapter Two is based on the observation that in spite of the fact that authorial invention, exaggerations and distortions are organic parts of academic fiction, the critical reception of the subgenre exhibits an overwhelming uniformity in treating individual works as more-or-less faithful representations of reality. This critical mindset has determined both the methods of analysing and the evaluation of academic novels. In Chapter Two, entitled 'Inescapable Mimesis: Academic Fiction as Literary Realism', I investigate those interpretative approaches which critics most commonly employ to respond to academic novels. In an attempt to classify this fundamentally mimetic range of critical responses to academic fiction, I have set up four types of critical moves entitled the individualizing, generalizing, conceptualizing and historicizing approaches. All the relevant studies of academic fiction are employed with ample examples as illustrations of the four critical moves.

The type I critical move is based on the assumption that an academic novel documents the individual experience of either a university teacher or an undergraduate. Type I criticism would treat a university novel either as a biography, an autobiography, a memoir or a *roman á clef.*

The type II critical move applies the principles of the individualizing approach as springboards in order to design interpretations with a generalizing scope. A typical type two analysis is based on two premises: firstly, the identification of fictional professors and undergraduates as real professors and undergraduates, and therefore, the substitution of fictional experience for real experience (i.e. a type one critical move); secondly, the identification of individual portrayals as epitomes of the academic teaching profession or undergraduate communities.

The type III, conceptualizing approach to interpreting academic novels basically views the work of art as a novel of ideas. Conceptualizing is a fundamentally realist interpretative tool in the sense that it emphasizes ideological contents which are conceived and applied in the time and space of our experiential reality. In the detailed discussion of the type III approach I single out liberal humanism, issues of power and authority, pedagogy and ethics as the most influential and fruitful thematic/ideological perspectives in interpreting academic fiction.

The type IV, historicizing perspective, by nature, involves the investigation of novels written over a substantial period of time, and is constructed by the linkage of succeeding literary portrayals. Type IV critical responses to academic novels are generally applied to supporting critical statements that aim at surveying and describing the development of higher education.

In the concluding argument of the chapter I point out that the erroneous presupposition behind this overwhelmingly mimetic critical approach is that academic fiction, *per se*, aims exclusively at documenting the phenomenological world of academe. Normally, it is either an individualizing, generalizing, conceptualizing or historicizing move with the aid of which the non-realist, non-mimetic and non-documentary aspects of academic novels are suppressed, ignored or explained away by critics. What the present study finds objectionable about the monopoly of the mimetic critical response to academic novels can be formulated in two points.

Firstly, in the majority of the critical works that I have referenced so far there is an evident tendency for assigning literary merit to works of fiction based on the degree of veracity of the fictional representations they contain. In other words, an academic novel is either praised for the recognizability and accountability of its academe-related content, or condemned for the lack of it. Deviations from this fundamentally mimetic principle are normally not tolerated. The novels that fall into the categories of the 'partly recognizable' and 'academic fantasies', for example, have been basically subjected to two kinds of critical treatment: they are either exposed to unvaryingly negative criticism because of their non-conformity to the facts of higher education; or they are identified as satires and the distortions of reality they contain are endorsed as admissible violations of the mimetic principle arising from their satirical impulse.

Secondly, the monopoly of the mimetic approach in criticism has automatized critical responses to academic novels at the expense of suppressing other viable interpretative paradigms. This latter point has provided the key momentum for investigating and re-investigating postmodern academic fiction the metafictional strain of which invites a host of non-mimetic analytical tools for the elicitation of new meanings and values from university novels. The overt exclusiveness of the mimetic approach in the reception of the subgenre is understandable, because for a long while academic novels did not provide material for alternative interpretative strategies. Changes in this respect, however, took place around the 1950s and 1960s, an era commonly identified as the advent of literary postmodernism. From among the various experimental currents of literary postmodernism, it is the metafictional

academic novel which emerged most powerfully. The metafictional academic novel does not only offer conventional referential readings, but also a form of self-investigation, the scrutiny of the art of fiction itself.
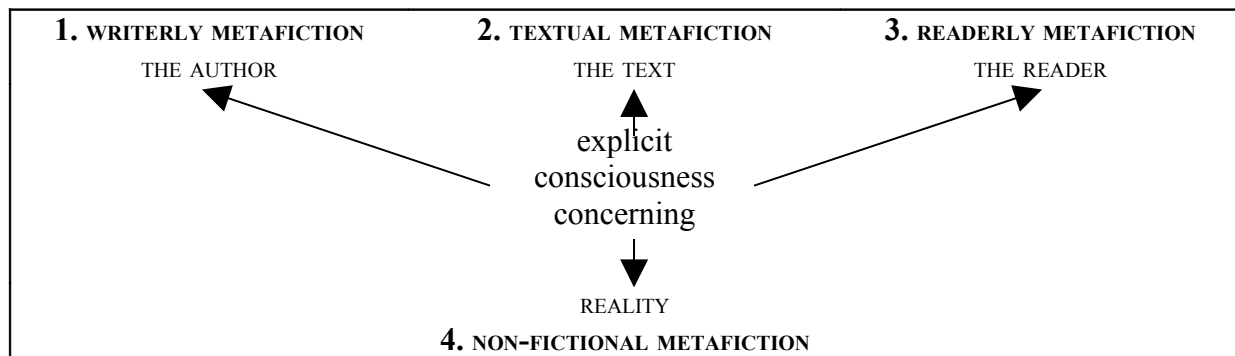
Chapter Three

The explicit critical claim embedded in the title of the present dissertation is that there is a 'pre' and a 'post' state of affairs in the development of the academic novel. While Chapter Two aims to explore the former, and Chapters Four to Ten address the latter, Chapter Three, entitled 'From Literary Realism to Postmodernism', takes the transitory phase between the 'pre' and 'post' phases as its subject matter. In Chapter Three I deal with a vital transitory period in the development of academic fiction, the so-called thematic-experimentalist shift. The argument that I put forward to support my proposition is twofold, involving both generic and subgeneric factors. Firstly, I suggest that it was around the end of the 1950s that the exhaustion of those realist representational strategies that had been dominant in the pre-war academic novel took place. Secondly, I will argue that a similar, parallel process of exhaustion of realist literary conventions took place on the larger literary platform of the novel. The central argument of the chapter is that it is these two literary changes that effected the thematic-experimentalist transition within the development of the academic novel, and made it possible for the metafictional academic novel to emerge as the dominant form of the subgenre in the 1960s. The chief merit of Chapter Three is that it isolates and identifies an existing, so-far unrecognized and unappreciated phase in the development of the academic novel. As the nomenclature suggests, the product of this new phase is the metafictional academic novel the representatives of which provide a fresh momentum for the entire subgenre, offering new interpretations, formal experimentation and uncommon ways of addressing the concerns of those who live and work within the world of higher education.

Chapter Four

My objective in Chapter Four, entitled 'Aspects of the Metafictional Novel', is to delineate those fundamental characteristics in which academic metafictions differ from their primarily realist predecessors. The theoretical discussion presented in Chapter Four necessarily includes the elucidation of the notion of self-consciousness in fiction, focusing on its development, its isolated early occurrences, its aesthetic principles, its experimental direction and its interpretative capabilities. The innovative nature of my research activity elucidated in Chapter Four, I believe, resides in the fact that it offers a so far much needed comprehensive, yet practical system for the classification of the various manifestations of the metafictional novel. The title of the chapter is a reference to the fourfold taxonomy of my own design which I propose in order to arrange and study metafictional academic novels in the remaining chapters of the dissertation. The categories that I introduce in my taxonomy – although they cover notions that are well-known for theorists – have not been applied in any way for the classification of the metafictional novel so far. Also, the terms with which I designate the four basic types of metafiction are of my coinage and have not appeared in any of the relevant publications on the subject matter.

The four types of metafiction I set up in the chart below are differentiated on the basis of the aspect of 'the art of fiction' which the metafictional technique displays consciousness about.

1. WRITERLY METAFICTION	2. TEXTUAL METAFICTION	3. READERLY METAFICTION
THE AUTHOR	THE TEXT	THE READER

explicit
consciousness
concerning

REALITY

4. NON-FICTIONAL METAFICTION

Those metafictional novels that belong to the first category – i.e. writerly metafiction –, therefore, involve narrative devices which accentuate the authorial contribution to writing fiction and address such related issues as authorial control, authorial omniscience, literary creation, inspiration, the act of writing, etc. Textual metafiction contains narrative techniques which formulate and make explicit critical propositions concerning the textual constructedness of the novel. Textual metafiction may be concerned with how the novel is structured, what organizational patterns are employed in it, it may be concerned with the formal properties of fiction, with intertextual relationships, references to other texts, etc. Readerly metafiction involves literary devices that may accentuate, elucidate or comment on the normally implicit presence and role of the reader. The most usual themes of readerly metafiction are related to such issues as the consciousness of the reader, the interpretative role of the reader, the source of meaning, various interpretations that readers explicitly spell out in fiction, etc. Based mostly on the insights of deconstructionist literary theory, non-fictional metafiction subverts the conventional assumption concerning self-consciousness by recontextualizing it in a wider framework of language philosophy. Instead of reflecting on the ways in which fiction is fiction, non-fictional metafiction demonstrates how reality is constructed, structured and perceived as fiction. Devoting one chapter to each of the four aspects of self-conscious fiction proposed in Chapter Four, Chapter Five to Eight contain the analyses of over thirteen representative instances of the metafictional academic novel.

Chapter Five

Chapter Five, entitled 'Writerly Metafiction', investigates metafictional academic novels which address literary issues related to the concept of the author. The three novels which are the central objects of investigation in Chapter Five are John Barth's *Giles Goat-Boy* (1967), Ishmael Reed's *Japanese by Spring* (1996) and Pablo Urbányi's *The Nowhere Idea* (1982).

Under the subchapter entitled 'The Well of New Tammany College: The Question of Authorship in John Barth's *Giles Goat-Boy*' I investigate Barth's unique application of the metafictional technique of authorial intrusion. The argument that I propose in this paper is that *Giles Goat-Boy* offers a metafictional interpretation which harmonizes with Barth's own critical convictions expressed in his essay 'The Literature of Exhaustion' (1967) concerning the concept and importance of the author in literature. As is demonstrated, both texts argue against the depersonalization of literature and against the 'death of the author' movement in general. Barth prefixes *Giles Goat-Boy* with a 'Publisher's Disclaimer' and a 'Cover-Letter to the Editors and Publisher' which are the parts that provide most of the novel's writerly metafictional content.

Under the subtitle 'The Intrusive Author in Ishmael Reed's *Japanese by Spring*' I discuss the ontological dimension of Reed's application of authorial intrusion. The uniqueness of Reed's intrusive author originates from the fact that instead of the ontological jolt which

intrusion-assisting narrative frame-breakings often generate in readers, *Japanese by Spring* induces a much less subdued aesthetic effect which I termed 'readerly awareness of authorial presence'. The relatively early occurrence, together with the more and more frequent and sustained instances of authorial intrusions in *Japanese by Spring* gradually elbow out the characters and fictional events from the pages of the novel and Reed literally takes over, monopolizes the domain traditionally reserved for his characters. This authorial takeover, in fact, reverses the common assumption that in fiction the author breaks down his ideas, observations and opinions and translates them into the world of fiction by using characters as mouthpieces. Reed, in a sense, sets up a counter-discourse to the concept of the invisible author endemic in traditional literary realism.

In the subchapter entitled 'Authorial Surrogacy in Pablo Urbanyi's *The Nowhere Idea*' I investigate the aspect of writerly metafiction that Urbanyi's academic novel exhibits. As opposed to Barth's *Giles Goat-Boy* or Reed's *Japanese by Spring*, in *The Nowhere Idea* Urbanyi refrains from recourse to the writerly metafictional device of incorporating himself into the fictional world of his own creation. Instead, Urbanyi employs the technique of authorial surrogacy – i.e. a character who is employed in writing within a novel. Urbanyi's choice of technique constitutes a special instance of authorial surrogacy – a variety of the so-called self-begetting novel – as his fictional writer figure is engaged in the creation of the novel he is the participant of. In fact, Urbanyi's novel is an academic novel by a university teacher – i.e. Urbanyi – about another university teacher – i.e. the surrogate author – writing an academic novel. *The Nowhere Idea* acquires its metafictional dimension during recurrent episodes in which the surrogate author asserts and foregrounds his authorial/creative status within the novel in an ostentatious and flaunting manner.

In the three cases of writerly metafiction that I investigate in Chapter Five Barth, Reed and Urbanyi employ various techniques to assist the foregrounding of the concept of the author within fiction. Barth uses a prefatory technique of intrusion; Reed takes over the world of his fiction personally by means of frequent instances of authorial infiltration; and Urbanyi employs the technique of authorial surrogacy while he personally remains outside the world of fiction. In each case the resulting effect is the dramatization of issues related to the concept of the author. What is somewhat contradictory about the three novels is that while they are tagged by the much-abused term of 'postmodernist literature', they evoke a rather traditional concept: the romantic notion of the poet, the poet who is the unique source and origin of his fictional world, controller and God of his art. Irrespective of how radical or unconventional the techniques of writerly metafiction may be, the new layer of meaning they generate is essentially an old one. In *Literary Disruptions* (1980) Jerome Klinkowitz aptly observes that 'a figure in most of Barth's work is the writer seeking immortality'[1]. I believe, Klinkowitz' statement is applicable to all writerly metafictional novels including *Japanese by Spring* and *The Nowhere Idea*. Writerly metafiction, I suppose, is the paramount literary device in the author's quest for immortality. What follows from my analyses of the three novels is that, contrary to the deconstructionist theoretical insistence on the 'death of the author', the author remains to have an undisputedly central role in postmodern fiction.

Chapter Six

In Chapter Six, entitled 'Critical Fiction: Textual Metafiction in the Academic Novel', I turn my attention to academic novels which employ metafictional techniques in order to foreground the linguistic and textual nature of fiction. Chapter Six investigates three examples of the sub-generic variety of academic fiction with the most copious instances of textual

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[1]   Jerome Klinkowitz, *Literary Disruptions: The Making of a Post-contemporary American Fiction* (London: University of Illinois Press, 1980), p. 8.

metafiction: literature-oriented academic novels. I have coined the term 'literature-oriented university novel' to identify that particular variety of academic fiction which most prominently engages into discussions of literary history, literary theory and specific literary works normally by staging an English department with a few professors of English literature as its protagonists.

In the subchapter 'A textual metafictional condition (of England novel)' I offer a metafictional interpretation of David Lodge's *Nice Work* (1988). Lodge's novel displays two metafictional notions which I have termed passive and active textual appropriations. The former phrase aims at describing a mode of textual appropriation in the course of which the appropriated discourse is simply inserted in the appropriating discourse without developing further structural resemblances with it. It is in this fashion that Lodge manages to incorporate a number of Victorian, condition of England novels into his *Nice Work*, the instances of which are detailed in the analysis. Also, as the latter term suggests, some of the appropriated discourses exert a considerable influencing force on the appropriating discourse, which manifests itself in thematic and/or structural analogies. Of course, according to the basic principles of self-conscious fiction, in both cases the insertions are greatly highlighted.

In the second analysis, entitled 'Guiding metafictionality', I investigate an extended case of active textual appropriation in Anita Brookner's *Providence* (1982). *Providence*, as a literature-oriented academic novel, is equipped with two major entry points into the world of literature. Firstly, through Kitty Maule's literature seminars the reader can read, and read about Benjamin Constant's Romantic classic entitled *Adolphe* (1816). Secondly, the novel exhibits a deep interest in the Romantic Movement itself, which, being the protagonist's fictional research topic, manifests itself in Kitty Maul's interior monologues, seminars, informal conversations and debates. Both sources are foregrounded and treated with considerable metafictional self-reflexivity. The active nature of the metafictional appropriations that are found in Brookner's novel stems from the fact that the references and quotations from *Adolphe* in the novel exert a shaping influence on the theme, plot and character deportment in *Providence*. Although in retrospect, Kitty Maul recognizes the analogies between Constant's novel and her own story.

The final analysis in Chapter Six, entitled 'Excessive textual metafictionality', studies the disproportionately metafictionally inclined literature-oriented academic novel of Austin M. Wright's *Recalcitrance, Faulkner, and the Professors: A Critical Fiction* (1999). Wright's novel is especially well-suited for investigating the notion of textual metafiction because it represents a radical type of critical fiction in which fiction is massively overshadowed by the amount of literary theory it is paired up with. *Recalcitrance, Faulkner, and the Professors*, in fact, is so much concerned with analysing and interpreting William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930) in the fictional context of a mini literary conference, that its author nearly loses all interest in creating a fictional world in order to maintain the intellectual perspectives of his discourse.

What those types of textual metafictions that I have been analyzing in Chapter Six have led me to conclude is that textual metafiction *can* harmoniously coexist with literary realism without the slightest hint of narrative discrepancy. To refer to the notion of metafiction-assisted realism I have coined the term 'metafictional realism'. This compatibility between realism and metafiction exists owing to a significant overlap between the phenomenological world and textual metafiction over the domain of literature. On the one hand, literary works and literary theory are part of the experiential world mainly in the form of written media; on the other hand, if these texts are consciously displayed in fiction, they constitute instances of textual metafiction. My readings of textual academic metafiction, therefore, support two conclusions: firstly, the notion of textual metafiction generally defies the common assumption that metafiction is necessarily and fundamentally a narrative technique of illusion-breaking;

secondly, in literature-oriented academic novels, textual metafiction, basically, is a convention. In the concluding part of Chapter Six I also investigate the dialogic potential of textual metafictions.

Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven, entitled 'Readerly Metafiction', deals with metafictional academic novels which foreground the traditionally implicit participation of the reader during the process of assigning meaning to fiction. Joanne Dobson's *The Raven and the Nightingale* (1999), James Hynes' *Publish and Perish* (1997) and John Barth's *Giles Goat-Boy* are the first three novels that I investigate. In all three novels it is the narrative device of the surrogate reader – i.e. a character who is engaged in the process of reading within a novel – which is employed in order to centralize reading as a subject matter in fiction. As is discussed in Chapter Seven, surrogate readers imitate, copy and in certain cases clone the real reader, which explains why the narrative configuration of surrogate readership can be seen as analogous to the *mise en abyme* pattern. The ordering of the referenced novels is intended to follow a gradual increase in their metafictional awareness concerning issues related to reading and interpretation.

The gauge of metafictional awareness in the analyzed novels is length, i.e. the longer a manifestation of readerly metafiction is, the more readerly self-consciousness the novel exhibits. The metafictional techniques that the first three works display are relatively short and therefore their apparent metafictional significance is moderate, which also explains why they are discussed under the sub-chapter entitled 'The surrogate reader as narrative accessory'.

In 'Readerly surrogacy as a means of interpretation' I analyze the readerly metafiction devices to be found in Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962), David Lodge's *Nice Work* and Wright's *Recalcitrance, Faulkner, and the Professors*. As the title of the sub-chapter indicates, the type of readerly surrogacy that the latter three novels contain – beyond the simple representation of reading and the reader in fiction – aim at dramatizing the act of interpretation *per se*. Therefore, the protagonists of the listed novels engage in longish monologues and discussions in which they explicate the interpretative possibilities of poems, novels and critical writings.

Chapter Eight

Chapter Eight, entitled 'Non-fictional Metafiction', basically elucidates the deconstructionist notion of metafiction. My investigation of non-fictional metafiction aims at demonstrating how post-structuralist theory has managed to subvert and upturn the Gassian, unproblematic notion of metafiction. As is demonstrated in Chapter Eight, non-fictional metafiction is premised on the approach that it is not fiction which tries to emulate reality, but – quite opposing the conventional logic of metafiction – it is reality which is structured according to the principles of fiction. The two distinct categories in the framework of which I discuss non-fictional metafiction are biographical metafiction and historiographic metafiction. The two terms are intended to signify types of fiction which: firstly, aim to supply and sustain their status of verisimilitude either by means of applying the narrative conventions of literary biography or historiography; secondly, by employing various baring devices, they alert the reader to recognizing that the discourses of fiction and reality are identical and inseparable. In a sense, what non-fictional metafiction sets out to accomplish is actually the undercutting, the undermining of the general truthfulness and realism that both biography and historiography claim.

For the purposes of illustrating biographical metafiction at work I provide a metafictional analysis of A. S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance* (1990) and Graham Swift's *Ever After* (1992). As is concluded, the fundamental difference between the two applications of biographical metafiction is that while Byatt supplies a fictionalized, reconstructed biography in her novel which comes to existence as a result of the unseen, creative endeavour of the novelist – i.e. Byatt; Swift entrusts his main protagonist with the same job, who does excellent biographical work and the true metafictional quality of the novel is continually asserted by his own reflexive and self-reflexive activity in creating the fiction around the skeletal fragments of fact.

In the sub-chapter entitled 'Historiographic metafiction' I analyze Malcolm Bradbury's *The History Man* (1975) for the purposes of illustrating novels which acquire their metafictional dimension by overtly laying bare the fictional nature of historiographic modes of discourses.

The criticism that I formulate considering the notion of non-fictional metafiction in the concluding part of the chapter is that the detection and appreciation of biographical and historiographic modes of non-fictional metafiction are highly dependent on readers' endorsement of the deconstructionist premise that reality is discourse-based. Biographical and historiographic academic metafictions are normally implicit and rarely go beyond suggesting a relationship between fiction and reality. It is for these reasons that I consider non-fictional metafiction to be the most minimal form out of the four metafictional classes that I distinguished in Chapter Four entitled 'The Four Aspects of the Metafictional Novel'.

Chapter Nine

Chapter Nine, entitled 'Two Readings of David Lodge's *Small World*', is intended as a practical demonstration of how the theory of metafiction can extend the already existing referential meanings of postmodern academic novels. The chapter is made up of two analyses of David Lodge's *Small World* (1984). The former, entitled 'Literary Theory at the Crossroads: A Referential Reading of David Lodge's *Small World*' is premised on the traditional mimetic view of literature and focuses on elucidating how Lodge's novel informs its readers on the nature of contemporary literary theory, and the reception of deconstructionism in the literary scene of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The latter analysis, entitled 'Textual Metafiction in David Lodge's *Small World*', concentrates on the various instances of textual metafiction that the novel exhibits. As is demonstrated in Chapter Nine, the self-conscious nature of Lodge's novel resides in its conscious reworking of the narrative conventions of the romance tradition.

Chapter Ten

Chapter Ten, entitled 'Conclusion and Speculations', provides the explication of the various theses that I have succeeded in establishing during my research concerning the nature of the metafictional academic novel. Also, Chapter Ten contains all the relevant observations that I have discovered with regard to the relationship of academic fiction and the notion of metafiction. As will be argued, the metafictional academic novel, although in a more subdued form, has inherited the experimental impetus of modernism proper, and in the closing part of the dissertation I formulate my argument concerning the future potential of self-conscious writing.

3.   **Sources and methods of research**

For the exact delineation of the stereotypical notion of the academic novel I collected and collated definitions and descriptions of academic fiction from book reviews, journals, newspaper articles, dictionaries, bibliographies, companions and encyclopaedias. The criticism of the stereotypical notions of the university novel is based, firstly, on the theoretical contribution of such experts of academic fiction as Mortimer Proctor, John O. Lyons, David Bevan, Ian Carter, Wolfgang Weiss, Janice Rossen and Kenneth Womack; secondly, on the rigorous probing of the delineated definitional criteria in the case of ninety-one academic novels and short-stories.

The elucidation of the mimetic approach to interpreting and evaluating academic novels is based on the classification of book reviews, critiques and critical writings by such commentators and theorists of the subgenre as Elaine Showalter, Malcolm Bradbury, John O. Lyons, Mortimer Proctor, Ian Carter, Janice Rossen, David Bevan, Palotayné Lengváry Judit, Kenneth Womack, Wolfgang Weiss, George Watson, Brian A. Connery, Sanford Pinsker, Albert Gelpi and Kimberly Rae Connor.

The background research which enabled me to isolate, outline and explicate the transitory phase between the mimetic and the postmodern phases of the academic novel consists of, firstly, the critical writings and commentaries of such outstanding literary critics and historians as Jerome Klinkowitz, Mortimer Proctor, Ian Carter, Adam Begley, Janice Rossen, John O. Lyons, Elaine Showalter, Kenneth Womack, Rubin Rabinovitz, Pamela Hansford Johnson, William Cooper, Raymond Williams, Stephen Spender, Paul West, C. P. Snow, William Cooper, Susan Sontag, Louis Rubin and Leslie Fiedler; secondly, reading over fifty representative specimen of twentieth-, and twenty-first century academic fiction.

The theoretical backbone of the fourfold taxonomy that I propose for the classification of metafictional novels in Chapter Four: one, is partly based on M. H. Abrams' fourfold compartmentalization of the various analytical approaches applied in literary theory[2]; two, is based on the critical observations of such experts of self-conscious fiction as William H. Gass, John Barth, Robert Scholes, Linda Hutcheon, Patricia Waugh, Gerard Prince, Hayden White, Susana Onega and Mark Currie.

The method of literary analysis that I apply to academic novels found in Chapter Five to Chapter Nine is made up of the following steps and processes. During the preparatory phase of the research I carried out read academic novels extensively with the purpose of locating and identifying metafictional techniques and episodes in them. In order to find a representative selection of academic novels for the purposes of the present investigation, I also consulted annotated bibliographies, monographies and book reviews, and asked the professional advice of colleagues specialized in the field of postmodern fiction and theory. After having selected thirteen adequate academic novels, I identified and isolated the metafictional techniques and episodes found in them and applied the fourfold taxonomy explicated in Chapter Four for determining whether the dimension of self-consciousness the novels exhibit is characteristic of the writerly, textual, readerly or non-fictional metafictional categories. Combined with the theoretical contributions of John Barth, W. K. Wimsatt, Monroe C. Beardsley, T. S. Eliot, Roland Barthes, Brian McHale, Gabriel Josipovici, Patricia Waugh, Jerome Klinkowitz, Louis Hjelmslev, Linda Hutcheon, Elaine Showalter, Judith Gies, Robert Ellis Hosmer Jr., Galen Strawson, Mark Currie, Steven Connor, Gerard Genette, David Lodge, Mikhail Bakhtin, Hayden White and Robert Scholes I applied the technique of close reading in order to develop and elucidate the metafictional terms, notions and significance of authorial intrusion, authorial surrogacy, the death of the author, depersonalized literature, frame-breaking, readerly surrogacy, the *mise en abyme* pattern, the deconstructionist notion of non-fictional metafiction, etc.

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[2]   M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press,1953)

4.   Theses

Thesis number one: the development of the academic novel can be divided into two main periods. The first is the so-called mimetic period which lasted up to the 1960s. Novelists of the mimetic academic fiction characteristically focussed on either the documentation or the thematic address of higher education. The second, so-called postmodern period, can be dated from the 1960s.

Thesis number two: out of the various forms of postmodern fiction it is metafictional self-reflexivity which has had the most profound impact on the subgenre of the academic novel since the 1960.

Thesis number three: the metafictional academic novel not only is technically different from its mimetic predecessors, it also offers a thematic enhancement by investigating the art of fiction within the boundaries of fiction: its origin, its constructedness, its reception and its constituting force on reality.

Thesis number four: the mimetic-metafictional shift in the development of academic fiction is the joint consequence of, firstly, the exhaustion of the subgenre's internal representational devices which had been employed to further the mimetic exploration of higher education; secondly, the large-scale exhaustion of the realist novel's generic representational conventions.

Thesis number five: in spite of the dramatic changes that have affected both the thematic scope and representational conventions of the academic novel, critics essentially still interpret academic fiction on the basis of its referential content. This critical automatism has prevented the identification and appreciation of the metafictional academic novel.

Thesis number six: metafictional techniques can be placed in a fourfold system according to whether they exhibit explicit consciousness concerning, one: the author, two: the constructedness of the text; three: the reader, and four: the constructedness of non-fiction according to the rules of fiction. The four categories are respectively labelled as writerly, readerly, textual and non-fiction metafiction.

Thesis number seven: as far as authorial intention is concerned, metafiction clearly runs counter to the so-called anti-intentionalist school in literary criticism. It is especially writerly metafictions which provide irrefutable evidence that the critical reception of the metafictional academic novel can, and at times should be predicated on an attempt to seek authorial intention.