**Oct. 29, 2021**

**English 433 Essay #2**

**30%**

**Length: 2500-2750 words**

**Due: Thursday, Dec. 2, 2021**

Write a **concise, well-organized, analytical research essay with a clear, fully-developed, logical argument and a sharply-focused thesis** and **close reference to the texts**. Examine the metafictional elements in Joseph Andrews and Tristram Shandy.

Reference **at least four scholarly secondary materials (scholarly books, ebooks or articles in academic journals), of which at least two must be books or ebooks**.

While providing a critical framework for your discussion and staying close to the various texts, keep in mind that you want to demonstrate as far as possible the significance of your analysis for a broader understanding of the 18th-century novel and its cultural, historical, and critical contexts.

**Review the statement on plagiarism** on the course outline. Keep **paragraphs** to at least six sentences. **Introduce, integrate, and cite all quotations carefully**, **and include a list of works cited using MLA style**. Write about historical material in the past tense, but **use present tense for writing about literature**. Give your essay an **effective title (see the topic sheet for essay #1)**. **The thesis** usually is placed at the end of the first paragraph, and it clearly states the paper’s argument (its position or stance on the assigned topic), and sets out the main steps or stages of this argument’s development within the essay. In addition, the thesis should at least hint at the broader significance of the paper’s analysis for an understanding of the period, the field or genre, or the texts under analysis etc. The thesis functions like a mini-abstract of the entire essay in one or at most two sentences. **Revise, edit, and proofread your writing very carefully**, striving to correct any particular problems noted in essay #1.

Keep in mind that **an essay covering two or more primary texts is still a single essay** and must be treated as such. As a general rule, when writing about two texts in one essay, there are two methods: discuss one text first, in approximately half of the essay, and then discuss the second text, making sure to make occasional cross-references within the discussions of both individual texts, and making certain that the introduction, thesis, and conclusion fully integrate the discussion of the two or more texts. The other usual method of handling two or more texts in one essay is to provide an overall structure divided into 2-4 categories, and then within each category, first handle one text and then the other, alternating throughout the essay. The second method works best if there are striking connections between the two texts.

**Integrate references to secondary critical sources in your essay, situating your own argument in relation to published critical opinion**. **Don’t simply cite quotations as established fact or allow them to float on their own**. **Evaluate this critical opinion fairly and briefly indicate its relationship to your own position** (they say/I say: agree, disagree, or a combination). **Follow longer quotations with some commentary**, such as, for example, “In this passage, we see…” or “Smith’s argument here stresses….” **Avoid referring to quotations as “quotations” or the colloquial “quotes” in your essay**; instead, refer to a critic’s passage, line, sentence, or phrase etc. Secondary critical opinions on a subject (sometimes called a literature review) are often integrated into a paragraph following the introductory paragraph and the thesis statement to indicate the critical context of your essay’s position. However, they may also be raised in the course of the essay.

**Marks** will be based on the content and insight of the essay as it relates to the topic; the quality of the essay’s explication and understanding of the texts; the effectiveness of the paper’s use of secondary materials; the clarity of the essay’s structure and organization; the unity, coherence, and development of paragraphs; and the strength of the writing in terms of grammar, expression, and mechanics. **Submit a double-spaced, single-sided copy of your essay with your name in 12 pt type size in the portal on Canvas.**

3. Examine the metafictional elements in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tristram Shandy*.

Sources:

1. Landers, Matthew. "Anatomy, the Brain, and Memory in Tristram Shandy: A Forensic Examination of Sterne's Narrative Structure." Configurations, vol. 25 no. 4, 2017, p. 397-414. Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/con.2017.0026.
   1. <https://muse-jhu-edu.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/article/675011>
   2. (TS)
2. <https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=-AsaBwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA212&dq=Humour+and+the+Metafiction+of+History:+Uneasy+Laughter+in+Tristram+Shandy+and+Jacques+the+Fatalist+&ots=C6i5vMfEMa&sig=SWO95wGCGQs7wHs16DaixOJ57CE&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Humour%20and%20the%20Metafiction%20of%20History%3A%20Uneasy%20Laughter%20in%20Tristram%20Shandy%20and%20Jacques%20the%20Fatalist&f=false>
   1. (TS)
3. Colton, Aaron. "Writing About Writer’s Block: Metafiction, the New Sincerity, and Neoliberalism in David Foster Wallace’s “Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way” and Sheila Heti’s How Should a Person Be?." College Literature, vol. 47 no. 3, 2020, p. 468-497. Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/lit.2020.0024.
   1. <https://muse-jhu-edu.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/article/759791>
   2. (JA)
4. Williams, Jeffrey. *Theory and the Novel: Narrative Reflexivity in the British Tradition*. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Chapters 2-3.
   1. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/theory-and-the-novel/BF7D608A3C713C73D5573D2BBF04A97A>
   2. (JA+TS)
5. Gravil, R. (Ed.). (2001). Master Narratives: Tellers and Telling in the English Novel (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315249506>
   1. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781315249506/master-narratives-richard-gravil>
   2. (TS)
6. Waugh, P. (1984). Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203131404>
   1. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203131404/metafiction-patricia-waugh>
   2. (MF)
7. McCaffery, Larry. “The Art of Metafiction” in *Metafiction*. ed. Currie, Mark. 1995, Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315844107>
   1. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781315844107/metafiction-mark-currie>
   2. (MF)
8. Currie, Mark. *Metafiction.* 1995, Routledge.

**Intro**

In the following paper I will examine elements of metafiction in Joseph Andrews and Tristram Shandy. through this examination, I will assert that these metafictional elements are a symptom of Fielding and Sterne’s narrative framework in which both authors seek to establish their narrator’s authority. Further, this examination will highlight the differences of each author’s metafictional style while at the same time drawing parallels between the two.

**Metafiction**

In order to begin this examination, it is necessary to explore the meaning behind the term “metafiction”. In plain English, ‘metafiction’ denotes what can be contrived as a fiction of fiction. On a similar note, Larry McCaffery “argues that metafictions derive from 'meta-theorems' being developed in the 1970s in other disciplines which seek to contrive [sic] 'lingoes to converse about lingoes'” (Currie 181). This is certainly a helpful definition of ‘metafiction’ but this conception of metafiction requires some flushing out as it finds its origins far beyond the conception of the texts in which this paper will be engaging with. It seems that McCaffery’s conceptualization of the ‘anti-novel’ in conjunction with his conceptualizations of ‘metafiction’ is pertinent for at least generating an idea of ‘metafiction’ to work with in regards to *Joseph Andrews* and *Tristram Shandy*.

McCaffery conceptualizes the ‘anti-novel’ as “any work of fiction whose intentions

include some sort of defiance of the current norms of fiction” and that it “occurs whenever the novel loses faith in itself, becomes critical and self-critical, wishes to break with the established norms of the medium… Tristram Shandy would be an obvious example (McCaffery 181-182). Not only is *Tristram* Shandy an example of a self-critical, norm challenging anti-novel, but, incidentally, *Joseph Andrews* fits this bill. The following sections of this paper will elaborate more on these aspects in relation to both *Joseph Andrews* and *Tristram* Shandy. For the purpose of divulging a working conceptualization of metafiction, it is important to analyze the implications of McCaffery’s designation between ‘anti-novel’ and ‘metafiction’: Taken at face value, McCaffery’s sentiments on the ‘anti-novel’ and his position on metafiction’s era of manifestation, would lead to the possibility that, given the historical context of *Tristram Shandy* and *Joseph Andrews*, neither of which could be metafictional, but rather ‘anti-novels’. Naturally, this is a shallow branding of the two novels in question, for a broader survey of ‘metafiction’ certainly implies at least that *Joseph Andrews* and *Tristram Shandy* do not only contain metafictional elements, but are truly metafictions themselves.

Though McCaffery’s conceptualization of the ‘anti-novel’ presents itself as distinct from metafiction, his conceptualization of ‘metafiction’ certainly encompasses aspects of anti-novels. As McCaffery declares, “many of the things we can say about the anti-novelist will apply to the meta fictionist” and “Metafiction resembles anti-novels of the past, for example, in tending to appear unconventional and experimental except in instances when it relies on familiar conventions for parodic purposes” (182). Here, metafiction and anti-novels are similar if not the same, yet he goes on to distinguish between the two, asserting that “the defining characteristic of metafiction, however, is its direct and immediate concern with fiction-making itself (McCaffery 182). In this vein, McCaffery further notes that “metafictions often present themselves as biographies of imaginary writers” (183). What is important about McCaffery’s conceptualization of metafiction is that it 1) tends to appear unconventional and experimental except in instances when it relies on familiar conventions for parodic purposes such as an anti-novel 2) is distinct from an anti-novel in that it is directly and immediately concerned with fiction making itself and 3) is often presented as a biography of an imaginary writer. For now, this is will serve as a narrow definition of ‘metafiction’.

In servitude of flushing out this narrow definition of ‘metafiction’, it is prudent to explore the symptoms of metafiction. The work of Gerald Prince in “Metanarrative Signs” indicates that the symptoms of metafiction or metanarrative signs are “inherent features of narrative in general” (Currie 55). Further, these features act as a codex for readers that “do not only tell us how we read – they also specify the distance between a text's self-commentary (as an appropriation of reading) and the reading process of a given reader, reminding us that a text can never fully appropriate reading (Currie 55). Adding this to the aforementioned narrow definition of ‘metafiction’ asserts that 4) metafiction describes narrational features that tell the reader how to read while making a clear distinction between self-conscious text and the experience of reading itself.

With the concept of metafiction becoming less opaque, a final addition to this working definition ought to manifest something with which an examination might take place. As previously hinted, ‘metafiction’ has not entered the critical atmosphere of literature until the 1970’s with scholars such as McCaffery and Robert Scholes. Scholes, conceptualizes metafiction as “a border-line between fiction and criticism” (Currie 21). In his essay entitled “Metafiction”, Scholes first establishes that there are four aspects of fiction: “fiction of forms, ideas, existence and essence) which correspond to four critical perspectives on fiction (formal, structural, behavioral, and philosophical) in the sense that each critical perspective is the most appropriate response to the four aspects of fiction” (Currie 21). This serves as the basis for his claim that, “because metafiction 'assimilates all the perspectives of criticism into the fictional process itself', this scheme offers a model for the typology of metafictions, so that four distinct directions in metafiction can be understood to pertain to these four aspects of both fiction and criticism” (Currie 21). In other words, given that there are four aspects of fiction that correspond to critical perspectives on fiction, and that metafiction assimilates all the perspectives of criticism into the fictional process itself, there is a direct, codependent relationship between criticism, metafiction, and fiction.

McCaffery argues that metafictions derive from 'meta-theorems' being developed in the 1970s in other disciplines which seek to contrive what Gass himself has called 'lingoes to converse about lingoes' (Currie 181).

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many of the things we can say about the anti-novelist will apply to the meta fictionist (McCaffery 182).

Metafiction resembles anti-novels of the past, for example, in tending to appear unconventional and experimental except in instances when it relies on familiar conventions for parodic purposes; the defining characteristic of metafiction, however, is its direct and immediate concern with fiction-making itself (McCaffery 182).

meta fictions often present themselves as biographies of imaginary writers (McCaffery 183).

meta narrative signs are inherent features of narrative in general, and not merely characteristics of metafictional novels (Currie 55).

a metafiction would be a fictional narrative in which the metanarrative function of signs dominate other such functions of the narrative (Currie 55).

Prince understands metanarrative signs as glosses on parts of a text and its underlying codes:

as a meta narrative commentary which builds into the text instructions on how to read. (Currie 55).

Robert Scholes is one of several writers who sought to give definition to William Gass's term 'metafiction' in the early 1970s (Currie 21).

metafiction is a border-line territory between fiction and criticism (Currie 21).

there are four aspects of fiction (fiction of forms, ideas, existence and essence) which correspond to four critical perspectives on fiction (formal, structural, behavioural, and philosophical) in the sense that each critical perspective is the most appropriate response to the four aspects of fiction. The argument then moves on to claim that, because metafiction 'assimilates all the perspectives of criticism into the fictional process itself', this scheme offers a model for the typology of metafictions, so that four distinct directions in metafiction can be understood to pertain to these four aspects of both fiction and criticism (Currie 21).

Scholes seems to conclude that the critic, and even the 'meta critic' ,is redundant with regard to such insights, but only, I think, because he is writing in the immediate prehistory to the golden age of the American meta critic, an age in which criticism sought to incorporate the same kind of aporetic insight into subject and object relations (Currie 21).

**Metafiction in Joseph Andrews**

**narrational authority**

Fielding begins Joseph Andrews with a preface that effectively sets the metafictional framework of the novel. This then digresses into the first chapter in which Fielding remarks on the power of the writer.

“It is a trite but true Observation, that Examples work more forcibly on the Mind than Precepts: And if this be just in what is odious and blameable, it is more strongly so in what is amiable and praise-worthy. Here, Emulation most effectually operates upon us, and inspires our Imitation on an irresistible manner. A good man therefore is a standing Lesson to all his acquaintance, and of far greater use in that narrow circle than a good Book” (12).

“But as it often happens that the best Men are but little known, and consequently cannot extend the Usefulness of the Examples a great way; the Writer may be called in aid to spread their History farther, and to present the amiable Pictures to those who have not the Happiness of knowing the Originals; and so, by communicating such valuable Patterns to the World, he may perhaps do a more extensive Service to Mankind than the Person whose Life originally afforded the Pattern” (12).

“…those Biographers who have recorded the Actions of great and worthy Persons of both Sexes. Not to mention those antient Writers which of late days are little read… as they are generally thought, unintelligible languages…” (12).

“In all these, Delight is mixed with Instruction, and the Reader is almost as much improved as entertained” (12).

**Metafiction in Tristram Shandy (1,7,9)**

**largely at the begginings of chapters/ volumes, vol 1 is peppered with metafictional notes, yet vol 7 has more uninterrupted narrative.**

**Differences between JA and TS**

**Similarities between JA and TS**

**Conclusion**