

Chapter – 3

Geographies of time:

Cyclic and Redeemed time in *Small World*

Things must change to make a story, and change can only happen in time.

- David Lodge

Small World is an academic romance, which builds itself up as a mosaic of quotations. It reflects the contemporary literary world to which David Lodge its author belongs as novelist, critic and university teacher of English Language and Literature. *Small World* shares with David Lodge's other academic novels a comic mode, a cast of characters, and a self-reflexive narrative technique. In *Small World* realism and parody, life and literature, feed on and reflect each other, creating a comical but nonetheless disturbing confusion of realms.

Lodge's novels, like his criticism, explore the nature, mechanisms and conventions of fiction in challenging and entertaining ways. One of the truly fascinating aspects of Lodge's writing is the way in which he manages to treat major contemporary themes and issues with a mixture of comic irony and seriousness. He writes innovative novels that "breach the boundary between apparently separate fields and make literary theories and critical practices a centre of their attention"

(Stevenson 122), spreading “structuralist and poststructuralist ideas about fiction more widely than anyone else in the process” (Currie 51).

Lodge approaches the question, ‘whether a literary text is constructed by its author or by its reader’ from the post structuralist angle in *Small World*. His work is marked by the influence of Bakhtin's dialogic vision of the language of fiction, by structuralist and poststructuralist views on literature, and the death or survival of the author as the authoritative originator of meaning, as well as by distinct socio-cultural developments in post-war Britain, in the U.S. and in the world at large.

Small World is a sequel to *Changing Places* an academic novel which traced the hilarious adventures of two professors who exchange positions for a year: the English academic Philip Swallow and the American critic Morris Zapp. In *Small World*, Lodge enlarges both the scope and the literary ambitiousness of his material but without losing the comic touch and human appeal of his earlier novel. *Small World* is told in third person omniscient narration, without the device of a formal narrator as a character. The narrative voice is unbiased and privy to the characters' inner thoughts. The author tells a linear tale, beginning in spring, when college students go on vacation, leaving their dormitory rooms free for academics to occupy. The story extends through the busy summer convention season and ends on New Year's Eve. In spite of this linearity,

in *Small World* a succession of different episodes collapses into a temporal amalgam from which the reader can infer the cyclical narrative development. The various episodes that are alluded to merge different times and spaces i.e. different chronotopes.

In *Small World*, Swallow and Zapp, the main characters of *Changing Places* reappear as supporting characters to the central figure of Persse McGarrigle, a young Irish poet. While Zapp and a host of other satirically drawn international critics compete for their ultimate Grail (a \$100,000-a-year UNESCO position that requires no work whatsoever), McGarrigle scours the conferences in search of Angelica, a beautiful and mysterious graduate student. Lodge deftly interweaves the many plot threads that result from these parallel quests. As Zapp and crew amble through a variety of academic jousts and sexual affairs, McGarrigle dedicates himself with single-minded, medieval fervor to the winning of his dark-haired maiden.

Written language functions at different levels- above the line (text), below the line (context) and between the lines (subtext). Lodge incorporates a multi connotative structure in which it is possible to synchronize many levels of meaning, ranging from the simplicity of story (at the level of the text) through the exploration of individual situations and specific settings (at the level of context) to the inference and

extrapolation of deeply embedded contemporary and universal themes at the sub textual level. David Lodge advanced the argument that everything in a novel could be explained by reference to an author's choice of language, and that therefore character is only a convenient abstraction from verbal signs.

At one level, the plot of *Small World* explores the social construction and functioning of the elite academic circles through its inversion of the usual power and discrimination pattern. It shows how the academic superiority or inferiority of university professors are assessed which leads to a complete reorganization of power relationships. Read with this focus *Small World* is obviously meant to expose the hypocrisy of an elite academic society. The comic novelist in Lodge wanted to address some of the pretentiousness and ostentation present in the other world inhabited by Lodge-the academic-and--critic. Lodge can be considered a satirist exposing the academic fraud of conference-hopping professors. On the other hand *Small World* can be considered a grail novel with its numerous quests composing the narrative texture.

Interlacing of Myth and Romance

In *Small World*, Lodge marries the pre-novelistic romance—knights errant, damsels in and out of distress, dragons to slay and foes to

defeat, asking the right questions when they need asking—with the campus novel to produce a delightful farce in which he both ridicules the modern academic's propensity for trotting off to conferences and lecture tours and paints a sympathetic picture of some of the more humble players in the academic drama. It is a combination of the realistic "it happens because..." with the metafictional "what if..." The metafictional mode following the conventions of romance gives Lodge an excuse for exaggeration and coincidence, as well as a distinct structural framework. Playing with the conventions of romance offers the freedom to indulge both exaggeration and coincidence, while dealing with myth helps cope with the latter.

In an interview with Raymond Thompson, Lodge reveals how romance became the central organizing principle in his work.

...I remember writing in my book something like, what the novel needs is some kind of principle of unity--perhaps some myth which would function like the Odysseus myth in James Joyce's *Ulysses*... It gradually grew on me that there was an analogy between my story and the Arthurian story, particularly the Grail quest in which a group of knights wander around the world, having adventures, pursuing ladies, love, and glory, jousting with each other, meeting

rather coincidentally or unexpectedly, facing constant challenges and crises, and so on...This all corresponded to the modern world with its Round Table of professors: the elite group who get invited to conferences, who go around the world in pursuit of glory...Once I realized that the Grail legend could provide the structural principle for my story, then I really felt my novel could work.

Lodge then started to broaden out the generic intertextuality of it, to include not just the Arthurian story but the romance tradition to which the Arthurian stories belong, going back to classical Alexandrian romance, and forward to Renaissance epic romance. The motto taken from Nathaniel Hawthorne's Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* encourages the reader to meditate about the nature of the romance as a literary form. Thus there's a little epigraph in the front of *Small World*, which says, "When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume had he professed to be writing a Novel."

As for the mythic approach, it becomes noticeable from early on in the novel. It exploits the legends surrounding King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, especially the quest for the Holy Grail, at the

time myth criticism and archetypal criticism were all the rage in the academic world, especially in America. Postmodern writers like Lodge were less willing to accept the mythical figures as static symbols and tended to improvise more on the central figures of the myth as well as the myth itself.

In principle, there is nothing metafictional about the mythic approach, quite the contrary, as myth is a unifying manner of finding meaning in an apparently chaotic world. There is some irony in the way Joyce employs the mythic approach in *Ulysses*, which often creates self-reflexive, metafictional effects, while the same method used by T.S. Eliot seems to have little to do with them. Although Lodge draws heavily upon Eliot's *The Waste Land*, his method is closer to Joyce's.

The character that brings myth and romance together in the most noticeable way in *Small World* is Persse McGarrigle, a dreamer and idealist, an innocent, belated Romantic lost in a rather prosaic world. Persse is a modern-dress descendant of Sir Percival of the Round Table, and the whole novel resounds with artful echoes of Malory, Spenser and a wealth of other literary precedents from *The Tempest* to T. S. Eliot. McGarrigle appears to mean in Irish "Son of Super-valour." The Irishman is honest, naive and innocent in more ways than one.

The beautiful, elusive, and formidably well-read Angelica who bears the same name as the heroine of a famous romantic epic, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* shows up at conferences with well-posed questions and leaves conferees wondering where she is from. The mysterious Angelica Pabst becomes Persse's own Grail. Interestingly enough, Angelica Pabst is making her research on the literary genre romance and this enriches the novel on a highly metafictional level. For this reason, when meeting Persse, Angelica is surprised by his telling name, which makes clear references to Perceval, the young knight of medieval romances and to Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* as well. His second name, McGarrigle, meaning "Son of Supervalour" in Irish, goes hand in hand with his role in the romance. Persse falls in love with Angelica the moment he sets eyes on her.

Persse McGarrigle finds himself swept up in the world of conferencing, although his interest is not really in the papers presented. Persse travels around the globe trying to locate the mysterious Angelica Pabst. As he travels, he must cope with his sexual desire and his religious ideals as well as with the disturbing information he uncovers about his love. Pabst seems to always be at the next conference, so that as Persse drains his money trying to fly to Hawaii, Japan, America, and various

parts of Europe, he seems to always have just missed the beautiful woman he wants to marry.

During his adventures, Persse learns a great deal about himself. He is also instructed by Zapp in the bewildering new realities of the literary profession. "Scholars these days are like the errant knights of old, wandering the ways of the world in search of adventure and glory," says Zapp (*SW* 291), in explaining why professors now spend so much time globe-trotting from conference to conference rather than in the traditional pursuits of teaching and research. "A conference virgin," as Morris Zapp calls him (*SW* 245), Persse is the innocent who asks lots of questions whose answers the other academics take for granted. He asks the question that will make all the difference at the end of the book for Arthur Kingfisher, a character encompassing the attributes of King Arthur and the Fisher King.

Persse's quest is made difficult by a number of circumstances that will defer his illusory success. It is greatly hampered by the existence of two identical twins, the apparently angelic Angelica and the less so Lily. When he thinks he has found and made love to Angelica at last, he is told that he has just had sex with Lily. So his quest is not over. And after he discovers that Angelica is about to be married to someone else, Persse realizes that he has been in love with Cheryl Summerbee. Or so he thinks,

the eternal knight errant. The novel will end, but his quest will probably go on forever, like in the medieval romances.

...Persse walked slowly away from the Information desk and stood in front of the huge Departures flutterboard, with his hands in his pockets and his bag at his feet. New York, Ottawa, Johannesburg, Cairo, Nairobi, Moscow, Bangkok, Wellington, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Baghdad, Calcutta, Sidney... On to the surface of the board, as on to a cinema screen, he projected his memory of Cheryl's face and figure—the blonde, shoulder-length hair, the high-stepping gait, the starry, unfocused look of her blue eyes—and he wondered where in all the small, narrow world he should begin to look for her. (SW 578)

As seen above, Persse is never tired of his quest. He does not care about traversing the whole world and spending all his money on his pursuit. McGarrigle's quest in life is not Angelica but romance indeed. Namely, he is not in love with a woman, but with the notion to love a woman. This is why he gives up Angelica, but never leaves his pursuit, this time with some other woman, Cheryl Summerbee.

Lodge creates a parallel between McGarrigle's unending erotic quest after an ideal of beauty and the reader's futile search for a unifying principle of significance in the book. Like Appleby and the other protagonists of Lodge's campus novels, *Small World's* Persse McGarrigle is one of those few who are aware of the essentially fictional nature of their lives. Ironically, this awareness complicates McGarrigle's effort to discover a source of reality solid enough to anchor his personal identity.

Small World can be grasped not only as one romance plot, but a collection of romances. Although the quest of Persse McGarrigle frames the narrative, a multitude of other love threads and quests are detectable in the novel. In fact, the characters are involved in so many love affairs and pursue so many goals that it is these threads that finally compose the narrative texture. Persse McGarrigle pursues his idealized lover; Philip Swallow is in search of pleasure and women; Ronald Frobisher, a failed writer, is looking for a style that would return the talent he has lost; Cheryl Summerbee, a check-in clerk at Heathrow Airport and an ardent reader of romantic fiction, is waiting for the knight who would make her romantic dreams come true.

A great deal of other people starts out as protagonists of single, independent episodes. But as the reader proceeds, these secondary plotlines slowly but surely meet and fuse, and the final narrative develops

into a collection of interrelated romances, a multiple romance. *Small World* can be conceived as a collection of interlaced romance subplots. The structure of the various subplots, however, is far from being identical: some of them result in failure, some of them result in success and some of the quests remain unfinished, as if it had been on purpose to display the complete spectrum of romance endings.

Small World has a double ending: on the one hand the Perceval question puts an end to the 'waste land' marked by impotence and sterility, on the other hand Persse's quest for love remains unfulfilled. The first ending reminds one of the Shakespearean romance by presenting 'scenes of family reunion and reconciliation' and, therefore also a celebration of marriage. The second ending follows the conventions of medieval romance and sends Persse in search of Cheryl, whom he now believes to be the real object of his love.

The allusions and allegorical devices cluster most thickly around the story of Persse and Angelica, but they spill over into the various subplots of *Small World* as well. The UNESCO Chair represents the Holy Grail for the academics in *Small World*. The Holy Grail is a position with a salary of \$100,000 tax-free, great opportunities to attend any conference, a private office, no students to care about, no trouble of paper grading; all of which are worthy of competition. Namely, the Holy Grail

of the academia is indeed a quest of a paradise on earth. On the whole, *Small World* characters each having his/her own small quests are after this biggest quest. The Holy Grail acquires different shapes in the modern world: idealistic love, sex, intensity of experience, creative writing, the UNESCO Chair of literary criticism, or, quite generally, the meaning for life.

Arthur Kingfisher, the grand old man of literary theory, who is supposed to be the chief assessor for the much coveted UNESCO position, is a bird of the same plumage as the sterile Fisher King of *The Waste Land*. When he finds himself "rejuvenated" and cured by Perse's final question at the MLA convention at the end of the novel (a situation which obviously parallels Perceval's miraculous question that cures the Fisher King in the Chapel Perilous), Kingfisher will announce his return and 'acceptance' to get the chair himself.

The other knights looking for the Holy Grail are well-established academics of various orientations: Fulvia Morgana, a rich Italian Marxist, Sigfried von Turpitz, a Teutonic response theory specialist, Michel Tardieu, a French narratologist, Morris Zapp, an American critic and Philip Swallow, the most traditional and apparently the only one with a love of literature. The Holy Grail for them is the newly announced UNESCO Chair of Literary Criticism.

Small World is both a campus novel and a romance because it deals with university life, its main characters being university teachers who are all looking for their Holy Grail. The second paragraph of the Prologue already explains the nature of the characters' quest: "The modern conference resembles the pilgrimage of medieval Christendom in that it allows the participants to indulge themselves in all the pleasures and diversions of travel while appearing to be austere bent on self-improvement" (SW 225). The journey is presented as a ritual of initiation since it enables the pilgrims to have new experiences, to see places or meet people, and thus widen their knowledge of the world.

Lodge concentrated upon the Grail legend seen through the lens of Jessie Weston and T. S. Eliot. The creation of the reception theorist, Siegfried von Turpitz was also inspired by Weston to the extent that he has the black glove on his hand. This glove is a source of sinister power because nobody knows what's underneath it. "That detail was suggested to me by the story of the black hand in the Grail Chapel, in one of the versions of the Grail legend that Weston discusses" (qtd in interview with Raymond Thompson).

Influenced by Weston, Lodge had interpreted the Grail legend as a displaced form of a fertility myth. "Fertility myth suited my purpose very well, because I was concerned with intellectual and artistic sterility" (qtd.

in interview with Raymond Thompson). The novel ends with a number of characters who have been blocked or become sterile, in one way or another, suddenly being released from that spell and becoming fertile . In the climax of the novel at the M. L. A. conference, the question that Persse asks is straight out of Jessie Weston. The idea of the weather suddenly changing, winter turning into spring, was related to the idea of the Grail legend being a displaced fertility myth.

In *Small World* the readers will have to make their way through a maze of allusions, mythic and romantic parallelisms and echoes. The self-referentiality of *Small World* resides precisely in the fact that the already outlined multiple romance structure is blended with a great deal of romance-related theory. Beyond the remarkable acrobatics of the plot and the adventures of the naïve hero the readers perceive a certain commonsensical attitude to critical theory. Persse's romantic adventures are 'theoretically' supported in a shocking way in the academic field by advocates of deconstruction, who engage in the most sustained metafictional game in the novel.

One of them is Morris Zapp, who gives a presentation on "Textuality as Striptease." Zapp likens reading to striptease viewing: "The dancer teases the audience, as the text teases its readers, with the promise of an ultimate revelation that is infinitely postponed"(SW 253).

The American's presentation goes on and on, providing an initial frame that the young protagonist seems to be 'naively' following throughout the novel.

With regard to romance, some of the novel's characters show a keen interest in theorizing this genre. One of them is the young Angelica Pabst, who is writing her doctoral dissertation on romance. She admits that finding a theory of romance is not an easy task at all because, although she has already read romances by various writers ("Heliodorus and Apuleius, Chrétien de Troyes and Malory, Ariosto and Spencer, Keats and Barbara Cartland") (SW 251), she has not been able to find an appropriate theory for all of them yet. The inclusion of Barbara Cartland—a writer belonging to popular culture—on the above list of classical writers ranging from Antiquity to Romanticism creates a strong comic effect. David Lodge uses parody as a means of subverting the literary canon. Equally comic is the moment when Cheryl Summerbee, a petty employee of the British Airways, describes the "Bills and Moon type of romance" (SW 344), which she usually reads, as "debased versions of the sentimental novel of courtship and marriage that started with Richardson's *Pamela*" (SW 493).

Another interesting character which discusses romance is the retired Miss Sybil Maiden of Girton College, Cambridge. She is very well

acquainted with Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* and with T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, works to which *Small World* makes several references. Miss Maiden occurs as both a faithful disciple of Jessie Weston and as the stereotypical spinster who is obsessed with sex. Her interpretation of the quest motif according to a phallic theory obviously parodies T. S. Eliot's famous poem. The old woman becomes even funnier when she applies Weston's theory of the Grail to *Puss in Boots*. She explains *Puss in Boots* as a Grail story in an exaggerated and most vulgar manner. At the same time her whole thinking seems to be directed to identifying phallic symbols of the Grail everywhere. This phallocentrism is finally adopted by Angelica Pabst, too, who claims to have found the so long looked for theory of romance.

At the end of the book it is Angelica who comes up with another speech that "deconstructively" depicts romance:

Epic and tragedy move inexorably to what we call, and by no accident, a "climax".... Romance, in contrast, is not structured in this way. It has not one climax but many No sooner is one crisis in the fortunes of the hero averted than a new one presents itself; no sooner has one mystery been solved than another is raised; no sooner has one adventure been concluded than another begins.(SW 560-561).

Angelica's lecture is not merely a feminist-deconstructionist-psychoanalytical analysis of the romance form. Apparently, action in *Small World* develops very much according to the theoretical observations she outlines.

***Small World* as a Postmodernist Narrative**

The sense in which Lodge's novel counts as a postmodern literary piece is that it is heavily charged with metafictional qualities. Although the metafictional nature of the novel manifests itself in various types of language use, its basic mechanism originates from a common linguistic notion. Part of *Small World* is metalanguage i.e., a language that, instead of a non-linguistic entity, refers to another language. Using structuralist dichotomies, a metalanguage is a language that functions as a signifier to another language, and this other language thus becomes its signified.

The subtitle of the novel, *An Academic Romance*, already attends to this metalinguistic function by focusing on the literary conventions that the upcoming text exhibits. The academic 'novelness' of *Small World* does not reside in its interest in the romance as a narrative form. As Lodge said, "to me it was just a device. It's not as if I have a thematic interest in that particular body of material. [...] One likes each novel to

look like a new solution to the problems of narrative” (qtd. in interview with Raymond Thompson).

Lodge’s last statement, nevertheless, carries weighty implications. He talks about the problems of narrative and offers a solution by endorsing the romance as a form of narrative configuration. The problem of the narrative is, of course, ultimately the problem of language, the problem of how human beings reflect, construct and mediate their experience of the world by using words. “Language is the net that holds thought trapped within a particular culture. But if one could only strike the ball with sufficient force, with perfect timing, it would perhaps break through the netting, continue on its course, never fall to earth, but go into orbit around the world” (*SW* 371). Accepting that our experience and knowledge are mediated through language, literary fiction (worlds constructed entirely of language) becomes a useful model for learning about the construction of ‘reality’ itself .

Lodge's design will weave, initially through apparently clear-cut oppositions, but gradually through difference-through-similarity and similarity-through-difference, a comprehensive and panoramic culture-scape. Distortion and exaggeration allows Lodge to create a whole network of comic situations, across which subversion and reversal contribute to character development. The fragmentation of narrative and

the puzzling out of meaning lends itself to a dynamic text that seduces the reader into turning the pages. Lodge in *Working With Structuralism* says: “I am fascinated by the power of narrative, when skillfully managed, to keep the reader turning the pages, but I also aim to write novels that will stand up to being read more than once”(51).

It would be difficult to engage in any analysis of David Lodge’s novels without referring at some point to his decision to position himself “on the threshold between theory and fiction, between academia and the outside world” (Hopkin 54). Most critical approaches, allusions, and parallelisms are dramatized and often explained in the discussions of the academics in the novel, so even people ignorant of the stuff most of the metafictional games are made of are able to enjoy the book’s pyrotechnics. The readers are treated to a dazzling, but comprehensible dialogic discourse, where illusions, discourse shifts and contrasts are usually commented upon, either by the narrator or by some of the characters.

David Lodge calls his interest in different theories a “quest for a poetics of fiction” which came to an end with his reading of Bakhtin’s consideration of culture as dialogic. Lodge presents his understanding of the Bakhtinian dialogism in his book *After Bakhtin. Essays on Fiction and Criticism* where he emphasizes the idea that polyphony is specific for

the novel: “It was the destiny of the novel as a literary form to do justice to the inherent dialogism of language and culture by means of discursive polyphony, its subtle and complex interweaving of various types of speech (e.g. parody) – and its carnivalesque irreverence towards all kinds of authorian, repressive, monologic ideologies” (Lodge, *After Bakhtin* 21).

The novel is by definition dialogic and carnivalesque, features which make it opposed to totalitarian ideologies. Lodge overtakes Bakhtin’s interpretation of the dialogic as including “the relationship between the characters’ discourses and the author’s discourse (as represented in the text) and between all these discourses and other discourses outside the text, which are imitated or evoked or alluded to by means of doubly-oriented speech” (Lodge, *After Bakhtin* 68).

David Lodge draws attention to Bakhtin’s point that “the variety of discourses in the novel prevents the novelist from imposing a single world-view upon his readers even if he wanted to” (Lodge, *After Bakhtin* 69). “As soon as you allow a variety of discourses into a textual space—vulgar discourses as well as polite ones, vernacular as well as literary, oral as well as written— you establish a resistance [...] to the dominance of any one discourse” (Lodge, *After Bakhtin* 70). The main idea here is the fact that presenting a multiplicity of discourses and viewpoints in the

novel means favouring none of them, or, in other words, freedom and variety.

It is amazing how the novel, in spite of its unity, makes use of discourses which are so different. As far as the concept of the author is concerned, Lodge agrees that there should not be a single voice in a novel, but his position is still different from that of Foucault. To Lodge, the author is not the God of the novel, but he or she still preserves a voice although it gets mixed with those of the characters. The author's discourse enters a dialogue with the other discourses and the result is a polyphonic or dialogic novel, to use Bakhtin's terms. This plurality of discourse, says McHale, is achieved by the use of different stylistic features corresponding to the different uses or registers of language (McHale, *PF* 166). *Small World* with its heteroglossic narrative breaks up the "projected world into polyphony of worlds of discourse" (McHale, *PF* 167). *Small World* is a mosaic of different registers like that of myth, romance, literary jargons, psychoanalysis and philosophy.

Robert Morace, in his study of Lodge's dialogic novels, considers that "Lodge is able to carnivalize so adroitly because he cannibalizes so well"(5). He supports this statement by showing how the author can prey on, integrate (devour, cannibalize) a wide range of texts of all types. Robert Morace believes that Persse and Angelica cannot be considered

the main characters, but they provide the dialogic parameters for the overall patterns of the novel. The two characters' incompatibility and complementarity, "like the intersection of their narrative lives and lines, recapitulate the novel's underlying dialogic principle and serve as the recurrent background against which the rest of Lodge's narrative plays itself out" (Morace 14).

It is one remarkable merit of Lodge's to have accommodated in his 'dialogism' an appetite for self-reflexivity with a willingness to keep his fiction close to the reasonable boundary between 'readerly' and 'writerly' texts, challenging readers, but also entertaining them. Lodge follows a self-reflexive narrative technique in *Small World*. *Small World* is full of allusions to and parodies of other literary works from medieval and Renaissance romances through Jessie Weston's scholarly study *From Ritual to Romance* and the great modern poem it influenced, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. These metafictional features expose the artifice behind the illusions of reality and ultimately blur the distinctions between art and life.

Small World is perhaps the best example of David Lodge's talent as a postmodern novelist and especially as a parodist. This novel is particularly concerned with the quest for truth: on the one hand there is a metafictional level on which self-conscious characters try to find the most

suitable theory of romance, on the other hand there are several theorists competing for the UNESCO Chair of Literary Criticism. All the literary theories are presented in a most comic manner which confers the book a clearly parodic aspect. *Small World* parodies not only the genre of romance and the attempts to define it, but also literary criticism in general. As nearly all the characters are teachers of English language and literature, their quest is one “for interpretation” as Morris Zapp very well puts it.

The last part of the novel gathers the literary critics together in the mega-conference organised by the Modern Language Association. The famous conference, held in New York, is the context in which the conferees whose greatest wish is to occupy the UNESCO Chair of Literary Criticism present their papers: Philip Swallow lectures on the function of criticism in a traditional tone being a promoter of liberal humanism; Michel Tardieu exposes his belief in structuralism; Siegfried von Turpitz claims that reception theory best explains a literary text; Fulvia Morgana adopts a Marxist position regarding literature as a specifically bourgeois phenomenon; and Morris Zapp holds a poststructuralist standpoint.

Morris Zapp and his critical orientation occupy a more extensive place in the novel. The controversial American chooses to apply a

poststructuralist approach to literature. Starting as a critic confident that literary texts can be interpreted, Zapp used to describe himself as “*the Jane Austen man*” whose quest was one for the ultimate truth: he wanted to analyse her novels from all possible points of view and thus establish their true meaning. Morris Zapp states that his goal “was to be utterly exhaustive, to examine the novels [of Jane Austen] from every conceivable angle— historical, biographical, rhetorical, mythical, structural, Freudian, Jungian, Marxist, existentialist, Christian, allegorical, ethical, phenomenological, archetypal, you name it. So that when each commentary was written, there would be nothing further to say about the novel in question” (SW 251).

He then admits that his project is impossible to carry out because language lacks a stable meaning. He expresses the impossibility of grasping the real meaning of words. He further claims that “conversation is like playing tennis with a ball made of Krazy Putty that keeps coming back over the net in a different shape”(SW 252). Zapp expresses Derrida’s deconstructionist ideas especially in his slogan “every decoding is another encoding” (SW 252), which can be interpreted as a comic parody of poststructuralism.

Morris Zapp’s presentation “Textuality as Striptease” deals exclusively on the relation between the reader and the text. He describes

the reading process as follows: “a flirtation without consummation, or if there is consummation, it is solitary, masturbatory. ... The reader plays with himself as the text plays upon his curiosity and desire, as a striptease dancer plays upon her audience’s curiosity and desire” (SW 253). The theories of Michael Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes and Sigmund Freud find their way into this presentation.

The idea that the text does not have any established meaning to be discovered reminds us of Michel Foucault’s consideration of knowledge as discursively constructed. The quest for the possession of meaning indicates the pursuit of truth as well as power in Foucaultian terms. There are a lot of references to Jacques Derrida’s concept of deferral of meaning in Zapp’s presentation (Zapp’s terms “delay” and “displacement”). Roland Barthes’s ‘Pleasure of the Text’ is echoed when Zapp considers the reading process comparable to sexual pleasure. The presentation has also Sigmund Freud’s elaboration of the Oedipus complex.

The comic effects are derived not only from the exaggerated and partially vulgar manner of presentation, but also from the shocked reaction of the audience culminating with the breakdown of a young man. Hence it is justifiable to regard Morris Zapp’s lecture as highly parodic of both psychoanalysis and, what is more important, of poststructuralism.

Lodge is definitely not a down-and-out postmodernist writer, but his living and playing with poststructuralist/ postmodernist features are important components of his dialogic fiction, where no discourse appears to be privileged at the expense of the others, all of them undergoing parody and being subject to irony and an all-encompassing comic vision. The novel's central postmodern quality resides in its formal experimentation and self-referentiality. Though *Small World* refrains from probing the depths of other fundamental postmodern concerns, its uniqueness in contemporary literature proves that the novel very much fits into the experimental impetus of postmodernist fiction.

Ludic Mode

Small world is a dialogic text that manifests the ludic mode in a host of ways, including parodic-travesty, as well being a satirical attack on global follies. The ludic mode of *Small world* manifests itself on the lexical, textual and metatextual levels. The ludic mode that lives and breathes through language will always embody energy and difference, promote change, resist closure and affirm freedom. (It is play, and play plays.) Through its principle of energy and difference, the play is simultaneously in language and with language, and its forms include the broad fields of word play, elements of genre and self-reflexive metafictionality.

Allusiveness and intertextuality in Lodge's work have become functional contributions in the collaborative game between author and reader. Allusion is a key manifestation of the ludic mode, allowing a play of references and quotations that acknowledges other sources. *Small world* is not an isolated, solitary story but a literary product existing among thousands of other quest narratives. The consequence of its reflexivity is an opportunity for play in the ludic mode. Manifesting in a host of ways, metatextuality acknowledges the fictionality of the fiction.

Small world parodies a mythic quest paradigm that depends on the realist tradition for structure and unity, and therefore it cannot be purely ludic. Lodge's choice of mythic structure pre-determines a partly traditional approach to character. His treatment of character is comic, satiric and ironic but the characters are not fully ludic in the sense of totally destabilizing conventions. That is, they are partly ludic.

Small world might take an ancient hero myth as its structure but the ludic mode is always as current as today, and its ability to produce endless meanings acts to disrupt the presence of mythological narrative. The journey of the hero is sometimes mocked and subverted, his motives questioned and found wanting. The carnival spirit identified by Bakhtin is the ludic mode in harlequin dress, and the ludic mode of *Small world* equally celebrates freedom, liberation, reflexivity and renewal. The old

topos and tropes of the adventure quest, with its masculinist narrative, its privileging of the First World and Europeans, and its repetitive structure, is played in the novel, offering the hope of seeing its artifice and a possibility of change.

Temporal distortions through Intertextuality

The fact that any discourse is born out of other discourses is called in literary theory 'intertextuality.' Barthes defined a 'text' as "a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture"(Barthes 148). Intertextuality is considered to be a necessity in the process of creative writing, its very condition: "Art necessarily imitates other art, and intertextuality may be seen as one of the writer's struggle with originality" (Barthes 27). In other words, making numerous references to other texts reflects not only the writer's quest for originality, but also his awareness of the fact that originality is no longer possible.

The relation Text/Intertext is omnipresent in Lodge's novels; in all of them there are references to other texts. "The meaning of a book" Lodge himself states in his *Working with Structuralism*, "is in large part a product of its differences from and similarities to other books"(3) and

“Any adequate reading of a text” thus “involves identifying and classifying it in relation to other texts”(4). Therefore, it is clear that the references made and theories mentioned in Lodge’s novels are not to be thought to address just the world of academia but any reader who enjoys wit and whimsy at the same time.

Bakhtin provides the formula that seems to fit Lodge's pluralistic, parodic, metafictional view on fiction. Bakhtin considers that "the novel parodies other genres; it exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language; it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others into its own peculiar structure, reformulating and reaccentuating them"(Forms, 183). Julia Kristeva, in *Revolution in Poetic Language* suggests that Bakhtin "was one of the first to replace the static hewing out of texts with a model where literary structure does not simply exist/ but is generated in relation to another structure"(21).

What Bakhtin introduces is a "dynamic dimension" to literary theory, and an awareness that any text is intertextual, constructed as "a mosaic of quotations." “A text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody [and] contestation” (Barthes 171). An assertion that more than emphasizes Bakhtin’s claim that ‘the word in language is half someone else’s’ (Bakhtin, *Discourse* 293). In *Small World* the word is at least that.

The dialogic nature of language which forces the word to an existence on the boundaries of several styles, intentions and contexts, leads straight to the intertextuality that plays such a prominent part in Lodge's construction of the novel.

In *Small World* what Lodge achieves is the kind of dialogic intersection of narratives that Bakhtin discovered in Dostoevsky's exemplary novels: "In Dostoevsky's world," Bakhtin writes, "all people and all things must know one another and know about one another, must enter into contact, come together face to face and begin to talk with one another. Everything must be reflected in everything else, all things must illuminate one another dialogically. Therefore all things that are disunified and distant must be brought together at a single spatial and temporal 'point'" (121).

Lodge revels in intertextual games, and his use of conscious intertextuality calls to mind the reading process where readers unconsciously refer to their knowledge of texts to process any particular narrative. To give an example of the densely intertextual nature of *Small World*, we need to look no further than the first page of the prologue.

WHEN April with its sweet showers has pierced the
drought of March to the root, and bathed every vein of earth

with that liquid by whose power the flowers are engendered;
when the zephyr, too, with its dulcet breath, has breathed life
into the tender new shoots in every copse and on every heath
,and the young sun has run half his course in the sign of the
Ram, and the little birds that sleep all night with their eyes
open give song (so Nature prompts them in their hearts),
then, as the poet Geoffrey Chaucer observed many years ago
folk long to go on pilgrimages. Only, these days,
professional people call them conference. (SW 225)

By means of the third person narration, the time of the story is given, namely the month April. The use of a prologue, the presentation of the wet weather specific of April and the pilgrims alluded to constitute evident intertextual references to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the name of the poet being explicitly mentioned in the text. The narrated time is not chosen at random; as the quoted fragment states, it is the moment of regeneration of the whole nature celebrated by the sun, too; it is a new beginning in the cycle of life, the right moment for the beginning of a new quest. The last sentence vaguely introduces the characters, who are to be academics and, at the same time, already shows that the quest takes different forms in modern times: the knights are replaced by university professors travelling from one conference to another all over the world. It

does not deal with a religious quest, but, nevertheless, it contains both Christian and pagan elements.

After the Prologue, the first part of the novel begins with the opening line of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, another important intertextual source of the book:

“April is the cruellest month,” Persse McGarrigle quoted silently to himself, gazing through grimy windowpanes at the unseasonable snow crusting the lawns and flowerbeds of the Rummidge campus. He had recently completed a Master's dissertation on the poetry of T. S. Eliot, but the opening words of *The Waste Land* might, with equal probability, have been passing through the heads of any one of the fifty-odd men and women, of varying ages, who sat or slumped in the raked rows of seats in the same lecture-room. For they were all well acquainted with that poem, being University Teachers of English Language and Literature, gathered together here, in the English Midlands, for their annual conference, and few of them were enjoying themselves.(SW 229)

T. S. Eliot's poem, which is to provide further material later, is here introduced together with the main character of the novel, Perse McGarrigle, through whose eyes the omniscient narrator also presents the setting. If the narrated time has already been mentioned, the place is now revealed, too: the characters, all university teachers, are together at an annual conference in Rummidge, situated in the English Midlands. The atmosphere is not very pleasant as boredom is to be read on the faces of most of the conferees and the "unseasonable snow" does nothing to lighten the mood, but, on the contrary, it intensifies the general spirit of dismay.

The time, the setting and the characters of the story are introduced in the first pages which already let the reader know that this romance is populated by university professors who take the place of the medieval errant knights in search of the Holy Grail. The academics in *Small World* are like chivalric knights. Conferences are where they are the most powerful as they have the chance to reveal their creativity. While the chivalric knight is heavily armed with battle equipment, travelling on his horse; the arm of the academic in *Small World* is his daintily prepared paper and the academic's horse is the plane that he embarks. Both the knight and the academic are ready to traverse the world and discover the unknown lands to prove his powers and to win honour.

The idea that there is going to be a lot of journeys and adventures is obvious while the intertextual references to other romances imply the beginning of numerous quests. Intertextuality becomes interaction: interaction between author, reader, and genre. The novel, especially the individual romance threads, heavily draws on the tradition of romance literature by borrowing parts of texts or textual qualities from the Arthurian legends, *Orlando Furioso* by Ludovico Ariosto, *The Faerie Queene* by Edmund Spenser, "The Eve of St. Agnes" by John Keats, Tennyson and his vision of Victorian Medievalism and Eliot's *The Waste Land* with its imagery saturated by the legend of the Fisher King.

The premier critic of the art of parody, Linda Hutcheon in her *Theory of Parody* discusses the intertextual space as involving both the decoder and the text, and emphasizes the context of encoding where "the sharing of codes between producer and receiver are central" (37). Hutcheon asserts, "There must be certain codes shared between the encoder and the decoder" (27). This act of "sharing" becomes the central readerly act that underscores an approach to parody. As Hutcheon points out, "The encoder, then the decoder, must effect a structural superimposition of texts that incorporates the old into the new" (33). Thus, when reading *Small World*, readers "superimpose" their knowledge

of earlier romance novels as well as the Arthurian myth onto the new narrative created by Lodge.

There is no mistaking about the close correlation between Lodge's use of literary allusions and the novel's structure. These intertextual references—often quoted or acted out by the characters of *Small World*—exert a shaping force on the narrative. The idea of interweaving action instead of just a linear series of adventure stories originates from Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*. The Arthurian legends, the classical Alexandrian and the Renaissance epic romance patterns further enhance the quest and love elements of the novel.

... I came across the term "entrelacement"—interlacing—which Renaissance writers like Philip Sidney introduced into works like *Arcadia*. Instead of just a linear series of adventures, you had these interweaving stories. Though I wasn't familiar with the concept when I wrote *Small World*, that is exactly what I was trying to do. It appears during pauses in the action, when characters tell their own stories. That's a device I used, consciously, in *Small World*.” (qtd. in interview with Raymond Thompson)

Julia Kristeva explores the sense of ambivalence that intertextuality creates in her essay "*Word, Dialogue, and Novel*." She argues, "two texts meet, contradict, and relativize each other" (78). In other words, in their "meeting" two texts cannot help but influence each other. What becomes important, then, is how this influence interacts. Does one text threaten to overwhelm another? Does one narrative strategy dominate at the expense of another? These are two significant questions to examine when looking into Lodge's narrative strategy.

In *Small World* the interaction of the different texts carries with it "contradiction" or a degree of opposition. The different texts resist each other while also being defined by each other. The ambivalence created sets into motion tension, which then goes on to "relativize" or to influence the development of future narrative choices. The structure of the novel plays with readers' expectations of what a narrative should do.

Intertextuality becomes a narrative structure in the working out of the epigraph of *Small World*. The epigraph which includes quotations from James Joyce, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Horace thematically structures the text. Epigraphs carry heavy interpretive significance because they come to the reader directly from the writer. They are pure bits of information that can be used in the interpretive game of reading. It is important to realize, though, that the epigraph must be interpreted as

the reading process occurs. Its true importance becomes clear as the novel unfolds, and readers begin to bind the bits of information together.

In the beginning of the reading process, perceptive readers will catch onto the epigraph and wonder at its relationship to the novel. Then, as they engage the text, they will be able to understand the relationship that exists between the text and the epigraph. Thus, the delayed aspect of closure that evolves as the reader gains insight into the narrative world being created also becomes a form of intertextuality. It is intertextual and spatial because it is an understanding, on the reader's part, of the relationship of one narrative structure to another and his or her ability to create a space in the mind where all the fragments of narrative emerge into a whole.

In *Small World* there is a gradual decrease in "the temporal (and spatial) interval that...separate[s] the reported action from the narrating act...until it is finally reduced to zero." At that point "the narrative has reached the *here* and the *now*, the story has overtaken the narrating" (Genette 227). David Lodge has accomplished this merging of past and present, of story and telling in *Small World*.

Analyzing the intertextuality of *Small World* enables us to reveal how the time structure of a single story is linked to other discourses both horizontally and vertically: On the one hand there are ‘horizontal’ intertextual relations of a ‘dialogical’ sort between the text and those which precede and follow it in the chain of texts. On the other hand, there are ‘vertical’ intertextual relations between a text and other texts which constitute its more or less immediate or distant contexts: “text is historically linked with various time-scales and along various parameters including texts which are more or less contemporary with it” (Fairclough 103).

Lodge makes brilliant use of intertextuality to explore the boundaries of the narrative structure of the novel. Absorbing different types of texts and fragments of texts from various past periods into syncretic relations empowers the narrative to create more complex temporality than just a chain of events on a time scale.