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Comic features in some of David Lodge's novels

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Brno 2005

I declare that I have worked on my thesis independently, using the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.

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Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank doc. Mgr. Milada Franková, CSc., M.A. for her kind help and valuable advice.

Contents:

1. Introduction.....	5
2. David Lodge – his life and work.....	7
3. The Campus novel.....	11
4. British Museum is Falling Down.....	15
5. Changing Places.....	24
6. Paradise News.....	30
7. Conclusion.....	34
8. Bibliography.....	35

1. Introduction

David Lodge, the contemporary British writer is one of the most productive and successful British authors of the second half of the 20th century. His great success lies in the fact that he has become popular not only in his country, but people all around the world enjoy his parodies and satirical novels and get to know a great deal of information especially about the British and American university life. He is one of the founders of the new genre of the 'campus novel'. He has introduced this new kind of writing into literature together with his colleague, university teacher and literary author Malcolm Bradbury, but Lodge himself remained undoubtedly the typical and most popular representative of this genre.

The main aim of my thesis is to concentrate on the comic features in David Lodge's work, how he uses the comic element in his novels, in what connections and situations. As it is impossible to explore the whole of Lodge's work, I focused on three novels with an apparent comic subtext: *The British Museum Is Falling Down* (1964), *Changing Places* (1975), and *Paradise News* (1991).

In the introductory part of this thesis I would like to mention the most important aspects of David Lodge's life, list his most significant works and briefly comment on them. Then I will focus on some theory concerning the 'campus novel', its description and various forms. I will trace the main works connected with the 'campus novel' of the predecessors and founders of this genre and in the end I will add some definitions concerning relevant terms which are the most crucial elements of Lodge's comic work.

The first novel of which I shall analyse is one of the earliest of Lodge's novels *The British Museum Is Falling Down* (1964). The strongest aspect which makes this novel unique is the use of pastiche in it.

The next part of the thesis is formed by the analysis of one of the Lodge's most popular and if not even best-known novel *Changing Places* (1975). This initial piece of the 'campus

trilogy' is followed by two no less outstanding sequels *Small World* (1984) and *Nice Work* (1988).

The last novel chosen to be discussed is one of Lodge's more recent – *Paradise News* (1991). This work differs from the other two in that it does not deal with the university life or academic themes which are the most common sources of comedy and satire by Lodge but despite of this fact it contains a great deal of humour.

2. David Lodge – his life and work

David Lodge was born in South London on 28 January 1935. He now lives in Birmingham and is Emeritus Professor of English Literature at the University of Birmingham, where he taught from 1960 until 1987, when he retired to write full-time. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and was Chairman of the Judges for the Booker Prize for Fiction in 1989. He ranks among the best modern literary critics, is the author of numerous works of literary criticism, mainly about the English and American novel, and literary theory.

Ladislav Nagy in his article about David Lodge and his writing claims that ‘Lodge managed to join accessibility with high proficiency and that he introduced the continental thinking to the British scholarly scene, which is quite conservative (Mikhail Bakhtin, heritage of Prague structuralism, and partly Barthes and French poststructuralists as well) and in his biographical writings he elaborated many fascinating portraits of the classics’ such as Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy or Graham Greene. (Nagy)

Lodge in an interview with Lidia Vianu said: ‘I think criticism should be a pleasure to read by those who have an interest in it. [...] A good critical essay has a kind of plot – it has satisfying surprises in it.’

His most significant theoretical works includes *Language of Fiction: Essays in Criticism and Verbal Analysis of the English Novel* (1966) and *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy and the Typology of Modern Literature* (1977).

Lodge’s novels are always based upon subject material he knows well. None of them is apparently autobiographical, but most of them are based on his personal experience.

His suburban upbringing in a traditional Catholic family in post-war England is reflected in his early fiction. His first novel, *The Picturegoers* (1960), is a portrait of a Catholic family living in South London and their daughter who has attracted the attentions of their

undergraduate lodger. The realistic style of writing is mixed with the stream-of-consciousness in this novel. All the characters regularly go to the cinema during the weekend to project their thoughts and opinions on the screen. *Ginger, You're Barmy* (1962), his second novel, is influenced by his own experience in the National Service and also by Graham Green, whose work he studied during his postgraduate years, while the comic novel *The British Museum is Falling Down* (1965) is the story of a poor Catholic graduate student working on his thesis in the Reading Room of the British Museum. He is very worried that his wife may be pregnant again, so he becomes involved in a series of adventures that parody the style of the authors of the modern novels he is studying.

David Lodge is undoubtedly one of the most successful writers in the campus genre today. *Changing Places* (1975) was Lodge's first book in a trilogy of campus novels. The novel is inspired by his experience of teaching in California; the main characters are two university teachers: Philip Swallow, a humble lecturer of English literature at the University of Rummidge, and an American academic Morris Zapp. The two exchange not only their jobs but also their wives and to some extent their characters as well. Swallow represents the traditional British system of education and old values. He is confronted with new approaches in American universities. By means of humour and satirical elements Lodge criticizes both old and new approaches and values.

Small World (1984), the second book in the trilogy, develops Zapp and Swallow's story. Philip Swallow and Morris Zapp reappear in this novel. However, the real hero is a young Catholic scholar, Persse McGarrigle. He takes part at a conference at Rummidge University, where Swallow is head of Department and Zapp is a conference speaker. He also meets the beautiful Angelica Pabst, falls in love with her and spends the rest of the novel flying from conference to conference, trying to find her.

While in *Changing Places* Lodge compared British and American university life, *Small World* considerably extends the image of it. The novel is set either ten thousand metres above the sea during the flight to various conferences or at universities in cities all around the world, which portrays the illusion of a 'big world', but 'Lodge's world is really small, as the title of the book states. There are several reasons for this: first and foremost because Lodge's world appears as a one big English department, and because the travelling by air makes it substantially smaller (university teachers of literature are described here as human beings constantly travelling by plane). The concluding sentence of the novel indicates the fact that in this small world we meet our friends at the least probable and the most remote places, but at the same time we are not able to find those we are really looking for.' (Hilský, 117)

The subtitle of *Small World* is 'An Academic Romance' and Perse's endless pursuit of Angelica is supposed to question and parody the romance genre: Lodge formed his novel as a parody of the legends of King Arthur, 'in which brave knights are looking for the Holy Grail and serve the ladies of their hearts. In *Small World* the knights are representative images of the university teachers, the purpose of their "quest" are the literary-critical conferences, their "steeds" are the supersonic planes, the Holy Grail is an intellectual knowledge of post-structural critique for them, and the ladies of their hearts are mostly replaced by the ladies of their beds.' (Hilský, 119)

Nice Work (1988) completes the trilogy with the story of industrialist Vic Wilcox and his unlikely relationship with Marxist, feminist and post-structuralist academic Dr Robyn Penrose. *Small World* and *Nice Work* were both shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction.

Lodge's special creation in this trilogy is Rummidge; as the author's note to *Nice Work* explains, it is 'an imaginary city, with imaginary universities and imaginary factories...which occupies, for the purposes of fiction, the space where Birmingham is to be found on maps'. (Vianu)

The years following the Second World War saw a remarkable revival of the novel-sequence, which follows through the experiences of the range of characters, sometimes in one setting and period, sometimes in a wide variety of settings and periods, in a number of different, but interconnected novels, as in exercise of world-making. (Connor, 136)

How Far Can You Go? (1980) and *Paradise News* (1991) both deal with the doctrinal change in the post-war period and the 60s in particular. *How Far Can You Go?* is an attempt to explore the reactions of contemporary Catholics to the radical changes within their church since the second Vatican Council. In *Therapy* (1995) the main character Laurence Passmore is a sitcom writer who is experiencing a mid-life crisis. To cure himself, he tries a wide range of alternative therapies, from acupuncture to aromatherapy, but eventually returns back to Catholicism, and a woman he left forty years ago.

Ralph Messenger, the central character of Lodge's recent novel, *Thinks ...* (2001), is a cognitive scientist at the fictitious University of Gloucester. He attempts to seduce a new staff member, Helen Reed, a young novelist who has been recently widowed.

David Lodge is a successful playwright and screenwriter, and has adapted both his own work and other writers' novels for television. For example *Small World* was adapted as a television serial, produced by Granada TV in 1988, and Lodge adapted *Nice Work* as a four-part TV serial for the BBC, broadcast in 1989. It won the Royal Television Society Award (Best Drama Serial) and the author was awarded a Silver Nymph for his screenplay at the International Television Festival in Monte Carlo in 1990. Among his stage plays are *The Writing Game* (1990) or *Home Truths* (1998).

3. The Campus novel

David Lodge is often associated with his friend, Malcolm Bradbury, because the two men started writing about the same time, they have both decided to combine academic and literary careers, were the colleagues at the Birmingham university and above all are the founders of an innovative form of the 'campus novels'.

Martin Hilský in *Současný britský román* wrote about the 'campus novel' that 'its existence as an independent genre is in contemporary Anglo-American literature influenced by the ever growing importance of the universities [...] and by the fact that more and more British and American authors are teachers of English literature or creative writing at the universities and for most of them the university is the only social setting which they know in detail. The 'campus novel' develops in a more or less specialized community and addresses a more or less specialized public which is able and willing to appreciate the numerous elements of literary parody. The 'campus novel' is thus defined as a satirical comedy with strong elements of parody. Most of these novels take place in a provincial town and at a small provincial university, mostly right in the English department. [...] The main character is always a teacher of humanities (mostly of English literature of course, sometimes of history or sociology) and mostly without exception makes some scandal. Either he gives an inflammatory public lecture in which he more or less accidentally tells what he really thinks thus leading to conflict with the head of department or, more recently, often has some kind of disagreement with his students. An accompanying feature of his academic life is his inordinate and adventurous erotic life (a relationship with the wife of the department head or some of his colleagues is almost an obligate motif) and the whole range of embarrassing social situations loosely connected with the teachers' job.' (Hilský, 104)

We can find other definitions of the 'campus novel' as well. For example in *The Routledge History of Literature in English*:

In Britain, the academic as novelist tends towards comedy. [...] The setting is often a university or college, the characters often academics or writers. The problems, however, remain the standard concerns of love and money, religion (especially in Lodge, who is arguably the most significant Catholic novelist of his generation), and success or failure. Where, in earlier writing, success was seen in social terms, here the scope is often reduced to academic success, with the result that there is a profoundly comic questioning of the whole ethos of success, failure, career, and private life, extending well beyond the English university system. Both writers (David Lodge and Malcolm Bradbury) use their experience of travel and other cultures to examine the ambivalence of the attitudes of the newly educated mass readership which has benefited from the worldwide expansion in education and social awareness. Both are also highly aware literary critics, particularly strong on Modernism and modern critical theory. (Carter and McRae, 513)

Or according to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*:

Campus novel is a novel, usually comic or satirical, in which the action is set within Enclosed world of university (or similar set of learning) and highlights the follies of academic life. Many novels have presented nostalgic evocations of college days, but the campus novel in the usual modern sense dates from the 1950s: Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe* (1952) and Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1954) began a significant tradition in modern fiction including John Barth's *Giles Goat-Boy* (1966), David Lodge's *Changing Places* (1975), and Robertson Davis's *The Rebel Angels* (1982). (Baldick, 30)

It is significant that the campus is still considered so remote from most people's lives that the label 'pastoral' is considered appropriate, portraying an isolated society remote from the lives of ordinary people.

This is an older tradition, again. 'I compare it to pastoral,' says Lodge. 'If you think of a comedy such as *As You Like It*, you get all these eccentric characters, all in one pastoral place, interacting in ways they wouldn't be able to do if they were part of a larger, more complex social scene. There's often an element of entertaining artifice, of escape from the everyday world, in the campus novel. Quite interesting issues are discussed, but not in a way which is terribly solemn or portentous.' (Edemariam)

It is certainly true that the university teachers enjoy reading about the world they are familiar with and perhaps even recognize some people from academic circles, but the fact that Lodge's books are hugely popular among the wider public as well must offer other reasons why it is so. He believes in being accessible, in reaching the 'general public', and in not excluding the non-academic reader from his academic novels. As Steven Connor in his book *The English novel in history 1950-1995* put it:

The campus novel appears to be addressed to an ideal audience constituted by the more generalised experience of higher education, an audience who can be flattered, entertained and reassured by recognition of a familiar world [...] But it is also addressed to the outsider or non-participant in university life. (Connor , 73)

The ‘campus novel’ as a literary genre was introduced into English literature by David Lodge and Malcolm Bradbury. Their novels *Changing Places* (1975) and *The History Man* (1975) are both situated at fictitious universities and they both caricature common drawbacks of British university education.

Malcolm Bradbury linked *The History Man* to his previous novel *Eating People Is Wrong* (1959) and *Stepping Westward* (1965); both are regarded as ‘campus novels’. He proceeded with the academic issues also in his novel *Rates of Exchange* (1983). Howard Kirk in *The History Man* is a representative of new trends at British universities. In his comparison of the new and the old at universities Bradbury prefers the old.

The main predecessors of this genre in the first half of the 20th century were for example Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966) and his first novel *Decline and Fall* (1928) which is influenced by his short personal experience of teaching in a private school. The issue of education appears in his other novel *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) as well which draws on his studies in Oxford.

One of the most celebrated comic post-war books in Britain is *Lucky Jim* (1954) by Kingsley Amis (1922). Amis is considered the greatest ancestor of the ‘campus novel’. Jim Dixon is a sort of anti-hero who solves his discontent with conditions in education by his escape from it. The humour and satire of the novel greatly influenced the coming generation of writers.

The prime reason why Lodge’s novels are so popular with the wide reading public is the use of humour and comic elements in all of them. He uses satire and irony to ridicule the academic world with all its peculiar habits. Baldick in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of*

Literary Terms describes satire as ‘a mode of writing which exposes the failings of individuals, institutions, or societies to ridicule and scorn’. (Baldick, 198)

There are other definitions of satire:

Satirical writing conveys censorious criticism of human frailty. Its prime purpose is ethically or aesthetically corrective. From other ways of expressing disapproval satire differs in tone and technique. [...] Not all of satire is sarcasm or invective; the satirist often achieves victory over an objectionable ideology or a contemptible individual by contrasting an ideal or a hero with the object of his attack. (Shipley, 359)

Satire is a literary work ridiculing aspects of human behaviour and seeking to arouse in the reader contempt for its object. [...] Satire is sometimes distinguished from comedy on the grounds that satire aims to correct by ridiculing, while comedy aims simply to evoke amusement, sometimes even at the speaker’s own expense. (Barnet, Berman and Burto, 126)

Another element crucial for the Lodge’s comic work is parody:

Parody is a mocking imitation of the style of a literary work or works, ridiculing the stylistic habits of an author or school by exaggerated mimicry. Parody is related to burlesque in its application of serious styles to ridiculous subjects, to satire in its punishment of eccentricities, and even to criticism in its analysis of style (Baldick, 161)

4. The British Museum Is Falling Down

David Lodge's third novel, and at the same time the first campus novel, concentrates on the situation of the Catholic Church, reflects the reaction of ordinary Catholics embodied in the ordinary Catholic couples and their problematic sexual life troubled with the catholic ban on artificial contraception and with the only permitted contraceptive practice, the so-called 'Safe Method'.

In the novel everything happens in one day in the life of one rather unlucky British post-graduate student named Adam Appleby, twenty-five years old and father of three children, who is terrified that his wife, Barbara, is pregnant again. Much to his own regret, Appleby awakes every morning with thoughts of all the unpleasant and stressful aspects of his life:

...crouched like harpies round his bed...that he was 25 years of age, and would soon be 26, that he was a post-graduate student preparing a thesis which he was unlikely to complete in this the third and final year of his scholarship, that the latter was hugely overdrawn, that he was married with three very young children, that one of them had manifested an alarming rash the previous evening, that his name was ridiculous, that his leg hurt...that he had forgotten to reserve any books at the British Museum for this morning's reading, that his leg hurt, that his wife's period was three days overdue, and that his leg hurt. (7-8)

He loves his wife and is faithful to her, but their commitment to Catholicism makes their private sex life a secret obsession, burdened with calendars, thermometers, and first and foremost with guilt. Adam is a Catholic in the early 1960's and his greatest problem is the Catholic teaching on artificial contraception.

While he has hoped that the Church might change this teaching, it certainly never occurs to either him or his wife Barbara to do anything but live within its constraints. There are many situations which prove that it is very stressful for them: 'we Catholics expend most of our moral energy on keeping or breaking the Church's teaching on birth control, when there are a lot of much more important moral issues in life.' (63)

He spends this day, like all others in his life, in the British Museum, researching an endless thesis on 'the long sentence'. But Adam cannot concentrate because of the frustration, anxiety over Barbara's delayed period, and financial despair. It is always on his mind while he tries to work on his thesis at the British Museum. The final year of his scholarship is quickly approaching its end. His life is like a vicious circle with no way out. 'While religion controls Adam's domestic life, his professional life is totally independent of his family concerns.' (Lambertsson Björk, 79)

He tries to solve his desperate financial situation through the edition of unpublished writings of Egbert Merryman, a Catholic writer and hopes to get some materials needed for this work from his descendant Mrs Rottingdean - the writer's niece. When her daughter tries to seduce him in exchange for a manuscript that could easily make his career, Adam discovers a shocking willingness to agree on this but in the end his love to Barbara, his commitment to the catholic faith and above all the great fear of another unwanted pregnancy did not allow him to do it.

The official world of academic life and literary criticism is omnipresent as well as the world of the Catholic Church.

Within this contemporary British Roman Catholic/academic framework Adam lives a relatively common, everyday life, although some aspects are exaggerated in the interest of comedy ... This vague character's relationship to the two powerful authoritative discourses that he faces is very problematic, and succeeds in making him guilt-ridden, frustrated, and anxious. (75)

The issue debated in the novel – unsatisfying sexual life of the Catholics and their protest against the authority of the Catholic teaching – is closely connected to the cultural change of the 1960s and 1970s known as sexual revolution. The question of the Birth Control, sexuality and its place in the life of ordinary Catholic couples were some of the most controversial and polemical aspects of Catholicism in the second half of the 20th century. The sexual revolution,

which introduced an idea of sexual freedom and hope that the Church might change its views on these issues, spread quickly and widely throughout Europe and America.

What makes this novel unique from the others is its experimental style of parodying the writing style of popular modern authors. Lodge said that ‘the main source of parody in this novel is the fact that its main protagonist experiences literature so strongly that he is unable to go through a situation that would not be described in some masterpiece of modern prose. It corresponds with the situation of a young writer who is fascinated and sometimes even distempered by the fact that everything was already said, and mostly done better than he is able to do it himself’. (Hilský, 115)

The whole book is full of comic and mostly absurd situations which are all connected to Adam’s hopeless situation.

Right at the beginning of the book Adam ridicules the sexual behaviour of the Catholics restricted by the ban of using the contraception. He makes up in his mind a short article about Roman Catholics for a Martian encyclopaedia compiled after the human life on earth was destroyed by atomic catastrophe.

Intercourse between married partners was restricted to certain limited periods determined by the calendar and the body-temperature of the female. Martian archaeologists have learned to identify the domiciles of Roman Catholics by the presence of large numbers of complicated graphs, calendars, small booklets full of figures, and quantities of broken thermometers...Some scholars have argued that it was merely a method of limiting the number of offspring, but as it has been conclusively proved that the Roman Catholics produced more children on average than any other section of the community, this seems untenable. (7-8)

In fact the whole first chapter of the book deals very comically with everyday troubled morning of young inexperienced parents of many children living in a small flat in the same house with their curious landlady. Whereas Adam needs to get ready as quickly as possible and go to study to the British Museum, his wife Barbara is worried about her delayed period

and each of their three children demand attention. When he manages to go he wants to kiss them good bye:

Adam's family lined up in alphabetical order to be kissed good-bye: Barbara, Clare, Dominic and Edward (seated). When the principle behind this nomenclature dawned on their friends they were likely to ask humorously whether Adam and Barbara intended working through the whole alphabet [...] (20)

The wit of these situations often lies in an image of a young man as an impractical scholar who can't still find a proper place in his field and as a father of three children which he can't support from his poor income and for which he doesn't even have time. These two images don't fit together much.

Even their landlady Mrs Green realized it:

To Mrs Green, herself a widow with an only son, Adam's paternity of three young children, whom he could patently not afford to support, indicated an ungovernable sexual appetite of which Barbara was the innocent victim. 'Ooh, isn't Mr Appleby naughty?' had been her first response to Barbara's nervous announcement of her third pregnancy; and subsequently Adam had had to endure from his landlady the kind of half-fascinated, half-fearful appraisal usually reserved for prize-bulls. (23)

But Adam can't be viewed as a cause of all their family problems. The real cause is the Catholicism which restricts their contented marital life and which seems to be the main problem of his life; he thinks that everything would be better and that he could live happily without its strict teaching.

What's more there are other problems which form Adam's morning routine – his father-in-law gave him an old scooter and Adam uses it daily instead of bus as he thinks that he'll save on fares. After few days with this vehicle Adam was convinced that this gift was 'an act of the purest malice, designed either to maim him or ruin him, or both'. (25-26).

Just as he had abandoned hope, the engine fired and the scooter leapt forward at full throttle, dragging Adam with it. With feet flying and duffle-coat flapping, Adam careered past interested housewives and cheering children for some fifty yards before he recovered sufficient balance to scramble on to the seat. (27)

There are many places in the novel illustrating Adam's personal problem with the ban on the artificial contraception and hope that this Catholic teaching will change. Some of them are pictured in his encounters with Father Finbar. Once on his daily way to the British Museum Adam happens to meet him and asks whether the Church will change its attitude to artificial birth control. But Father Finbar's answer is inevitably negative: 'The Church's teaching never changes ... On that or any other matter'(30). Adam suggests arguments about new contraceptive methods, but everything in vain. The only advice that Father Finbar can offer to him is to practice self-restraint, which is what he does himself. The image of the clergyman riding a motorbike and his clumsiness are really serene.

Adam heeled over the scooter to turn right, and his passenger tried to compensate by leaning in the opposite direction, yachtsman-style. The machine wobbled perilously, and Adam found himself clasped in a painful embrace by the alarmed priest who, he observed in the wing-mirror, had pulled his black Hombug down over his ears to leave his hands free. 'It's easier if you lean over with me,' observed Adam. 'Don't you worry Mr. Appleby. I have my Saint Christopher medal with me, thanks be to God.' (28-29)

Adam's problem is so stressful that he tries to find support of his friends, but their advice to abandon the Catholic faith - until Barbara reaches her menopause - to satisfy their sexual life seems to be absurd and ridiculous.

'You know,' said Camel to Adam, 'I think you ought to apostatize. You can't go on like this.' 'What d'you mean?' 'Well, leave the Church – temporarily I mean. You can go back to it later.' 'Death-bed repentance, you mean?' 'Well, more of a menopause repentance. It's not such a risk is it? You and Barbara have a good expectation of living past forty or so.' (57)

This risk means the unexpected accident and subsequent death which Adam as a Catholic must always have in his mind. The way Adam mentions this is quite witty:

“‘Yes, there's always the bus,’ Adam agreed. ‘Bus? What bus?’ asked Camel in bewilderment. ‘The bus that runs you down ... Catholics are brought up to expect sudden extinction round every corner and to keep their souls highly polished at all times.’” (57-58) It

seems that Adam would preferably choose from the Catholic teaching only what suits him and avoid the unpleasant aspects which overmuch interfere in his private life.

It becomes increasingly evident that it is impossible for a practicing Catholic to accept part of the religious discourse while at the same time discarding the too demanding part through a manipulation of its already-established framework ... one must either totally affirm it, or totally reject it. (Lambertsson Björk, 77)

He is burdened so much by his problems that he suffers from hallucinations as a consequence of the ever-present stressful thoughts. These hallucinations and daydreams form an important part of the novel's comic aspect. For example the scene at the beginning of the Chapter Three when Adam is asked to show his Reading Room Ticket because of an annual check and this leads to the nervous breakdown and hallucination:

'I want to renew my reading room ticket,' gabbled A. 'Over there.' 'But I've just been over there. He sent me to you. ... 'What do you want exactly?' he asked. 'I want to renew my Reading Room Ticket,' said A patiently. 'Do you want to *renew* it? You mean you have a ticket already?' ... 'May I see it?' ... 'It's out of date,' observed the man. 'That's why I want to renew it!' A exclaimed. ... 'Could I have my reading ticket now?' said A, after some minutes had passed. 'Over there.' 'But you just said you were responsible for renewing annual tickets!' protested A. 'Ah, but that was when I was sitting over there,' said the first man. 'We've changed places now. We do that from time to time.' (36-37)

Adam couldn't believe it and is not sure whether he dreamed or whether he experienced this horrifying nightmarish trouble. 'He has, of course, *read* it before, studying Kafka.' (Lambertsson Björk, 80) This passage of Adam's daydream is another example of pastiche described above. His friend Camel explains: "'It's a special form of scholarly neurosis,' said Camel. 'He's no longer able to distinguish between life and literature.' 'Oh yes I can,' said Adam. 'Literature is mostly about having sex and not much about having children. Life is the other way round.'" (56). Adam lives the life of heroes of the books he has studied during the preparation of his thesis. "'So all of us, you see, are really enacting events that have already been written about in some novel or other. Of course, most people don't realize this – they

fondly imagine that their little lives are unique ... Just as well, too, because when you do tumble to it, the effect is very disturbing.” (118-119)

Another example of the comic situations is his frequent anxious telephone calls monitoring his wife's condition which he makes throughout the whole day. He is afraid of his wife's next unwanted pregnancy. It starts in the morning when Barbara announces him that her menstruation is delayed and she is afraid that she is pregnant as a result of the passionate night they spent together after the party at their friend Camel. Adam thinks about that night all the way to the British Museum, recalling what day it was, whether it was one of the 'safe' ones or not. These phone calls sound quite comic:

‘I’m getting bored with the subject. Shouldn’t you be working.’ ‘I can’t work while I’m trying to think what we did that night.’ ‘Well, I can’t help you, Adam. Look, I can’t stay any longer. Mary Flynn is bringing her brood round for lunch.’ ‘How many has she got now?’ ‘Four.’ ‘Well, there’s always someone else worse off than yourself.’ (51-52)

When he was phoning his wife from the museum again the telephone started to ring and he lifted the receiver and another comic situation full of various misunderstandings begins. He had to deliver an important message to a fat American he had met few hours before. When he wanted to report it to the operator of the museum it accidentally came to a connection not only with the operator but with another man who wanted to announce to the police that his car was stolen. The operator did not understand the name of the American properly and thought that instead of Bernie, which was the name of the American, he says ‘burning’ which caused a great panic in the whole British Museum:

‘No, no! My name is Appleby. Brooks is the man whose car was stolen.’ ‘You’ve had some books stolen, from the British Museum, is that it?’ said the operator, as if all was clear at last. ‘I’ve enough of this foolery,’ said Brooks angrily. ... He slammed down his receiver. Adam registered his departure with relief. ‘Look,’ he said to the operator, ‘are you the one who put through a call just now from Colorado for a man called Bernie?’ ‘Burning?’ said the operator. ‘You don’t want the police, you need the fire service.’ (85)

In the epilogue to the novel Lodge explains that he wrote the book in a comic mode deliberately, because he had hoped that it would also excite the sympathies of non-Catholic and non-Christian readers, because of the ironies and absurdities of marital life burdened with the 'Safe Method' 'as one instance of the universal and perennial difficulty men and women experience in understanding, ordering and satisfying their sexuality.' (166). Barbara specifies this issue in her monologue in the last chapter:

...there's something about sex perhaps it's original sin I don't know but we'll never get it neatly tied up you think you've got it under control in one place it pops up in another either it's comic or tragic nobody's immune you see some couple going off to the Continent in their new sports car and envy them like hell next thing you find out they're dying to have a baby those who can't have them want them those who have them don't want them or not so many of them everyone has problems if you only knew ... (160)

Barbara's final monologue is an homage to Molly Bloom's final interior monologue in *Ulysses*, but now it's Barbara Appleby who is meditating in the dark beside her exhausted husband, and thinking about whether she is pregnant or not. The whole passage consists of four pages and in fact it is one undivided sentence even without any commas imitating Joyce's style. This is one instance of many pastiches of famous authors present in the novel. There are passages containing pastiches of for example Graham Greene, Ernest Hemingway, Franz Kafka, D. H. Lawrence, C. P. Snow or Virginia Woolf. It's up to the readers and their reading experience whether they are able to recognize the style of a particular author.

Dictionary of World Literary Terms gives the following definition of pastiche: 'Pastiche is a work patched together from various sources as a parody. Hence, an imitation of another's work.' (Shipley, 299) According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*:

The term can be used in a derogatory sense to indicate lack of originality, or more neutrally to refer to works that involve a deliberate and playfully imitative tribute to other writers. Pastiche differs from parody in using imitation as a form of flattery rather than mockery, and from plagiarism in its lack of deceptive intent. A well-known modern example is John Fowles's novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), which is partly a pastiche of the great Victorian novelists. The frequent resort to pastiche has been cited as a characteristic feature of postmodernism (Baldick, 162)

Lodge wrote that for his idea of 'a comic novel about a postgraduate student of English literature working in the British Museum Reading Room, whose life keeps taking on the stylistic and thematic colouring of the fictional texts he is studying' (167) he used not only his own experience of writing a thesis, but also the research he was doing for his theoretical study *Language of Fiction* (1966). (167)

5. Changing Places

The second novel which I want to discuss in my work is probably the most popular and best known of David Lodge's novels. *Changing Places* (1975) is the first part of the famous trilogy of 'campus novels' and is followed by not much less accomplished books *Small World* (1984) and *Nice Work* (1988).

This novel is such a famous one not only for its satirical point of view on the British and American educational systems and their comparison, but especially for its excellent wit and comic situations as well as for its changing narrative techniques (letters, newspaper extracts, film-script technique) which are characteristic particularly of this book. We can also learn quite a lot of information about the 60s – the time of the students' demonstrations at the universities and the sexual revolution which is reflected in the life of one of the main characters as follows:

The sudden eruption of the Sexual Revolution in the midsixties had, it is true, unsettled him a little. The Sunday paper he had taken since first going up to the University, an earnest, closely printed journal bursting with book reviews and excerpts from statement's memoirs, broke out abruptly in a rash of nipples and coloured photographs of après-sex leisurewear; his girl tutees suddenly began to dress like prostitutes, with skirts so short that he was able to distinguish them, when their names escaped him, by the colour of their knickers; it became uncomfortable to read contemporary novels at home in case one of the children should glance over his shoulder. Films and television conveyed the same message: that other people were having sex more often and more variously than he was. (26-27)

Lodge begins his novel with the situation when the two planes with two professors of English literature meet high above the North Pole. Even these very first few lines of the novel indicate that it will not be a very serious one, but a work full of humour and satire typical of the author. These two professors are Philip Swallow and Morris Zapp who exchange places for one semester.

Morris Zapp works at prestigious American University in the sunny state of Euphora (modelled on the Californian Berkeley, where Lodge really taught for a while), and is a highly

respected and distinguished scholar, who has published a lot of remarkable works on Jane Austen and actually never wanted to leave his post at the Euphoric university, especially for the place of a visiting professor in a minor remote university somewhere in England. But now his personal problems lead him to do so – his wife wants to get divorced and he thinks that their temporary separation will help them to make their marital life better.

Philip Swallow works at Rummidge University (loosely based on University of Birmingham) and is an old-fashioned scholar who rarely publishes and who distances himself from literary theory. He is intelligent, but not very ambitious, and in fact the faculty wants to get rid of him as they want to promote someone else and don't want him to know it. His appearance corresponds with the image of a typical conservative Englishman – he is tall and skinny, his hair is deeply receding at the temples and he smokes a pipe quite often. But concerning his university teaching, he is regarded among his colleagues and students as a quite dreaded professor:

There was one respect alone in which Philip was recognized as a man of distinction, though only within the confines of his own Department. He was a superlative examiner of undergraduates: scrupulous, painstaking, stern, yet just. No one could award a delicate mark like B+/B+?+ with such confident aim, or justify it with such cogency and conviction. In the Department meetings that discussed draft question papers he was much feared by his colleagues because of his keen eye for the ambiguous rubric, the repetition of questions from previous years' papers, the careless oversight that would allow candidates to duplicate material in two answers. His own papers were works of art on which he laboured with loving care for many hours, tinkering and polishing, weighing every word, [...] (17)

The book gives us also a great deal of information about the educational systems in both countries and teaching attitudes. In comparison to the strict British testing and marking the American attitude is considerably freer: “In America, it is not too difficult to obtain a bachelor's degree. The student is left very much to his own devices, he accumulates the necessary credits at his leisure, cheating is easy, and there is not much suspense or anxiety about the eventual outcome.”(15)

The whole book is based primarily on the comparisons made between the two absolutely different characters that temporarily live in a country which does not suit them at all, but in which they finally get used to living and find their own personal way of life. Both of them seem to benefit from the experience of switching their jobs: Zapp gains humanity and tolerance and Swallow gains experience needed to become a recognized teacher. Zapp and Swallow also get to know each other's wives and they both develop a very close relationship with them. This plot enables Lodge to investigate the differences between Britain and America, particularly the differences between the British and American values and attitudes and the conflicting approaches to academic study. For example the Englishman Philip Swallow is not used to the permissiveness of the American way of life and what's more he also has to deal with rebellious students who are much more interested in politics than in their studies.

The stories of Philip Swallow and Morris Zapp both parallel and parody each other. A great part of the comedy in this novel comes from the descriptions of behaviour of characters in similar situations but in entirely different geographical places. For the readers it is quite attractive to follow various aspects of academic life seen from two different perspectives. The plot of the novel is symmetrical, it is formed by alternating chapters and the reader can mostly anticipate what is going to happen next.

It is not by accident that both Philip and Morris visit the universities on the same day for the first time, meet each others' wives, begin to live in their houses as a consequence of the fact that their original lodgings became uninhabitable or that they became the centre of attention during the students' rebellions and get a great deal of popularity among students.

Let me compare for example the situation right at the beginning of the book, during the flight. Swallow travels west to sunny Euphoria, Zapp travels east to gloomy Rummidge in Northern England. Morris Zapp is quite sure on the plane because he is used to going by air

very often to various academic conferences but the only thing which strikes him this time is that the plane is full of women and he is the only man on board. After a talk with his neighbour he realizes that all these women are flying to Britain to obtain a legal abortion:

BOINNNNNNNNGGGGGGGGGG! The penny drops thunderously inside Morris Zapp's head. He steals a glance over the back of his seat. A hundred and fifty-five women ranked in various attitudes – some sleeping, some knitting, some staring out of the windows, all (it strikes him now) unnaturally silent, self-absorbed, depressed. [...] 'Holy mackerel!' (Zapp, his stock of blasphemy and obscenity threadbare from everyday use, tends to fall back on such quaintly genteel oaths in moments of great stress.) 'Pardon my asking,' says the blonde, 'but I'm curious. Did you buy the whole package – round trip, surgeon's fee, five days' nursing with private room and excursion to Stratford-upon-Avon?' 'What has Stratford-upon-Avon got to do with it, for Chrissake?' 'It's supposed to give you a lift afterwards. You get to see a play.' 'All's Well That Ends Well?' he snaps back, quick as a flash. (30-31)

On the other hand, Philip Swallow is suffering a trauma because he flies very seldom and so he doesn't feel very sure on the plane, but soon he starts to enjoy the flight as he realized that now he is free from everyday duties, boring weekends with his family and that he can do everything he can think about:

He is not required to cut up anyone else's chicken, or to guarantee the edibility of smoked salmon; no neighbouring trays spring suddenly into the air or slide resonantly the floor; his coffee-cup is not dashed from his lips, to deposit its scalding contents in his crotch; his suit collects no souvenirs of the meal by way of buttered biscuit crumbs, smears of peach parfait and dribbles of mayonnaise. (23)

During the flight Philip thinks about the relationship with his wife, regrets that their sexual life is not as spontaneous as before and envies the young people their unrestrained behaviour:

There was sex, of course, but in recent years this had played a steadily diminishing role in the Swallow marriage. It had never been quite the same (had anything?) after their extended American honeymoon. (26)

They don't know yet that they will not only exchange their jobs but also their wives and will suffer a huge culture shock. For example Philip writes in a letter to Hillary:

The tempo of a Plotinus dinner party takes some getting used to. To begin with, the invitation for eight really means eight-thirty to nine, as I realized from the consternation on my host's face when I appeared on his doorstep one minute after the appointed hour; and even when all the guests are assembled there are several hours' hard drinking to be good through before you actually sit down to eat. (131)

Or as another illustration of great differences in the way of living I could adduce Zapp's troubles with finding some appropriate accommodation:

Morris took the flat because it was centrally heated – the first he had seen thus blessed. But the heating system turned out to be one of electric radiators perversely and unalterably programmed to come on at full blast when you were asleep and to turn themselves off as soon as you got up, from which time they leaked a diminishing current of lukewarm air into the frigid atmosphere until you were ready to go to bed again. This system, Dr O'Shea explained, was extremely economical because it ran on half-price electricity, but it still seemed to Morris an expensive way to work up a sweat in bed. (57-58)

After a short relationship with the others' wives they are both satisfied and think that they have solved their problematic situation. Philip enjoys spontaneous sex and living with Zapp's wife Désirée and their children. Zapp on the other hand finds affection in the harmonious relationship with Swallow's wife Hilary.

Adultery is one of the main themes in the novel. 'Desire and fear, temptation and threat, are facets that are repeated over and over again in Lodge's novels. A desired and at the same time feared other existence is constructed outside the realm of every day life. Adultery is portrayed as a tempting option for academic men in mid-life crises.' (Lambertsson Björk, 95)

Not only have their personal problems troubled them and thus make us laugh during their exchange stay. They both have to adapt to the local cultural conventions and first of all to the different ways of teaching. Morris Zapp comes from one of the best universities in the States and now he has to 'waste' his time and abilities in an institution of poor prestige. We can learn much about their opinions in their letters to their wives. For example Zapp complains to Désirée:

I swear the system here will be the death of me. Did I say system? A slip of the tongue. There is no system. They have something called tutorials, instead. Three students and me, for an hour at a time. We're supposed to discuss some text I've assigned. [...] One of them writes a paper and reads it out to the rest of us. After about three minutes the eyes of the other two glaze over and they begin to sag in their chairs. It's clear they have stopped listening. I'm listening like hell but can't understand a word because of the guy's limey accent. All too soon, he stops. 'Thank you,' I say, flashing him an appreciative smile. He looks at me reproachfully as he blows his nose, then carries from where he paused, in mid-sentence. The other two students wake up

briefly, exchange glances and snigger. That's the most animation they ever show. When the guy reading the paper finally winds it up, I ask for comments. Silence. They avoid my eye. I volunteer a comment myself. Silence falls again. It's so quiet that you can hear the guy's beard growing. Desperately I ask one of them a direct question. 'And what did *you* think of the text, Miss Archer?' Miss Archer falls off her chair in a swoon. (125)

Even Philip Swallow is not really satisfied with his teaching at the prestigious Euphoric university. He is supposed to teach a course on 'How to write a novel' but feels quite desperate because he doesn't have any experience with it. He writes to his wife Hillary to send him a guide on his theme which he has in his office in Rummidge. This time Hillary meets Morris Zapp for the first time:

'Go ahead. Let me help you. What's the name of the book?' She coloured slightly. 'He said it's called *Let's Write a Novel*. I can't imagine what he wants it for.' Morris grinned, then frowned. 'Perhaps, he's going to write one,' he said, while he thought to himself, 'God help the students in English 305.' (85)
He found *Let's Write a Novel* five minutes later. The cover had come away from the spine, which was why they hadn't spotted it earlier. It had been published in 1927, as part of a series that included *Let's Weave a Rug*, *Let's Go Fishing* and *Let's Have Fun With Photography*. 'Every novel must tell a story,' it began. 'Oh, dear, yes,' Morris commented sardonically. (87)

In spite of all the troubles both men had to go through, they both settle into their situation and discover that life in a foreign country can bring them also some advantages.

Changing Places doesn't only describe the problems of people living in a foreign country with unfamiliar customs but is also full of revelations about the academic world that often make us laugh. The reader doesn't have to know a lot about how a university works because the kind of humour present in the novel is surely close to most of us.

6. Paradise News

The third and at the same time the last novel which I want to look closely at is one of the more recent of Lodge's novels *Paradise News* (1991), which was published three years after *Nice Work*, the last sequel of Lodge's campus trilogy. *Paradise News* does not deal with academia any more, the world of academia is this time replaced by the world of leisure, vacation and consumer society and at the same time the strong element of Catholicism is present as in most of Lodge's novels.

The strong comic element in David Lodge's campus novels is typically employed in this novel, although it does not deal with the academic theme. We can find it for example in the behaviour of the minor characters of package-tourists, who want to take advantage of their holiday at all costs and sometimes behave comically or even absurdly, but the main reason for the comic atmosphere of the novel is the contrast between these figures representing the shallow consumer society and Mr Walsh and his son Bernard who at the other hand represent the spiritual side of life. Due to the totally different purposes of their visit to Hawaii it comes to many humorous situations caused by these differences.

The plot is quite simple: Bernard Walsh, a former priest who has given up his faith in God but still teaches theology goes to Hawaii with his senile father to visit his aunt Ursula who is dying of cancer and seeks peace of mind before dying. Old Mr Walsh does not want to go, because he hates travelling and can't forgive his sister that she left her family and ran off with an American. However, Bernard persuades his father to visit her once before she dies. To save on costs, he books himself and his father a cheap package holiday and they participate in a charter tour which joins them with a diverse group of travellers. These minor characters are important for the unique atmosphere of the novel, but in comparison with Bernard they are only ordinary shallow holiday-makers totally different from the main character, who came to Honolulu not to spend an unforgettable 'paradisiacal' holiday but to make his dying aunt not

feel lonely. Not only is his aim for the trip what makes him different from the fellow package-tourists, but it is also his views on what is happening around him which are mainly influenced by his professional attitudes.

At the airport Bernard is fully-occupied with his stubborn old-fashioned father, who fools about and refuses to board the plane, because he is afraid of flying, which in effect produces many comic situations:

He has been a source of distraction and disturbance ever since they began boarding the aircraft at Heathrow. First, he caused a blockage in the gangway leading to the aircraft by refusing to board at all in a sudden last-minute panic at the prospect of flying, clinging obstinately to the handrail at the end of the ramp, while his son and various airline officials cajoled and scolded him. Then, finally persuaded to board, and strapped him into seat, he groaned and whimpered and muttered prayers under his breath [...] (54)

Unfortunately, the day after they arrive in Hawaii, Mr Walsh is hit by a car and as a result has to stay in hospital. His sister Ursula is staying in a house in the Waikiki suburbs, slowly dying of cancer. And it all seems to be Bernard's fault. All become more complicated when Bernard falls in love with the driver of the car that knocked down his father.

Ursula, who was always portrayed as the selfish black sheep of the family, has a secret – she had been sexually abused as a child by her oldest brother Sean and her other brother Jack (Mr Walsh) knew it but didn't tell anyone. Ursula explains to Bernard that the experience ruined her marriage and her life and before she dies she needs Jack's apology. By the end of the novel, Bernard manages to put most things right, organising an encounter of Ursula and Mr Walsh. In the process, a number of frightful family secrets are revealed.

The whole book is interwoven with a concept of 'Paradise' which is represented by one particular place in the world – Hawaii. It is also a study of tourism, and through the academic character, lecturer Professor Sheldrake, who deconstructs tourism as a contemporary phenomenon, Lodge speculates on why people go on holiday, what they are looking for, and what they find when they get there. He is convinced that in fact people don't enjoy going on

holiday that it is for them a kind of ritual, such as going to church. Unsurprisingly, Lodge compares tourism to medieval pilgrimages. Holiday-makers are, partly, looking for Paradise. They need redemption and forgiveness. This debate can be considered a representation of Catholic and at the same time academic elements which are typical of Lodge's work.

Roger Sheldrake writes an academic study about the behaviour of the tourists. For example he is observing the daily process around the swimming pool in the big hotel from his balcony and compares swimming or rather using the pool with the ritual of baptism:

The pool, as Roger Sheldrake knows from his researches, is not really designed for swimming. It is small, and irregularly shaped, discouraging the swimming of orderly lengths; in fact it is impossible to swim more than a few strokes without bumping into the sides of the pool or into another bather. The pool is really designed for sitting or lying round, and ordering drinks at. Since the patrons are deterred for swimming for long, they get extremely hot and thirsty, and order a lot of drinks, which come with complimentary salted nuts designed to make them even thirstier and therefore order more drinks. But the pool, however minimal, is a *sine qua non*, the heart of the ritual. Most of the sunbathers take at least a perfunctory dip. It is not so much swimming as immersion. A kind of baptism. (112)

All the tourists described in the novel go for such an exotic and expensive holiday to experience something else than at the seaside resorts in Europe, with the image of the real paradise on earth which is promised by the travel agency brochures. But Oahu is in fact one of the densest inhabited places in the world and they soon realize that its commercially spoilt tourist centres are remote from the promised ideal holiday and are not exceptional at all. It is quite amusing to follow their reactions. “‘This is our hotel. The Waikiki Coconut Grove.’ Bernard stared up at the façade of a white concrete tower, honeycombed with a thousand identical windows. ‘Where’s the grove?’ he wondered aloud. ‘I dunno. Dee says they must’ve built the hotel on top of it.’” (136-137)

Some of the superficial characters are satisfied and want to take advantage of their holiday at all costs and spend time shooting idyllic film shots to have something to boast with. But the absurdity and trashiness is ever-present:

When the ambulance passes Brian and Beryl Everthorpe's hotel they are in the middle of shooting 'Waking Up in Waikiki – Day One'. Beryl has in fact been awake for over an hour, has washed and dressed and had her breakfast in the buffet restaurant on the ground floor, leaving Brian still asleep, but when she returned to their room he made her undress again, put on her nightie, and get back into bed. Now Brian is standing on the balcony with his camera focused on the pillow. On his cue Beryl is to sit up, open her eyes, yawn and stretch, get out of the bed, shrug on her negligée, and walk slowly out on to their balcony, where she is to gaze ecstatically at the view. (110-111)

Paradise News is Lodge's sunny novel, a light-hearted study of manners on vacation of Englishmen abroad and the strong need of personal salvation. Through the group of tourists the readers get a picture of contemporary attitudes concerning travelling, especially package-tours. Most critics thought the novel was enjoyable and effective. The Sunday Times called it 'an appealing addition to the line-up of accomplished novels in which Lodge puts humour to humane purposes and intelligence to instructive ends' or The Evening Standard wrote about *Paradise News* 'Extremely funny and sharply perceptive about the way we live now'. (cover of the book)

7. Conclusion

David Lodge's world of his comic fiction is full of fabricated unlikely situations and crazy characters; his style is also innovative, he makes the reading surprising and entertaining using abstracts from letters, newspapers or a film-script technique. He likes to write about subjects and places which he knows best and which are familiar to him.

He writes in a realistic style, rarely using fantastic or experimental prose. Even when his characters have breakdowns or psychological crises, the controlled, realistic prose is ever-present.

Lodge's novels have also been admired for their dealing with complex intellectual themes. In particular, most of his books contain a theme of Catholic theology. Lodge is a Catholic, and most of his heroes are Catholics too. They try to join together their religious beliefs with their personal desires and problems. It is not easy to be an obedient Catholic in post-war Britain, especially in the sexually free 1960s and 1970s. His novels portray these problems with a comic tinge and make them thus attractive to read for everyone. They also examine the differences between Britain and America, particularly in their attitudes to academic life, but again do this in with a great deal of humour and a bird's eye view so as not to restrict them for a limited group of readers only.

What's more his work has always received very positive reviews from literary critics; his novels have been translated into more than twenty languages, are regularly discussed in literary magazines and university courses.

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A description of tropes appearing in *Small World* (David Lodge novel). It's the only thing that keeps me going these days, travelling. Changes of scene – Much of the novel follows Persse on his travels in pursuit of Angelica. Swallow and Zapp, who haven't seen each other in the ten years since the events of *Changing Places*, take the opportunity to catch up. Zapp tells of how he has turned from being a Jane Austen specialist to being a Deconstructionist in the footsteps of Jacques Derrida. David Lodge, English novelist, literary critic, playwright, and editor known chiefly for his satiric novels about academic life, especially *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses* (1975), *Small World: An Academic Romance* (1984), and *Nice Work* (1988). Learn more about Lodge's life and career. David Lodge. British author, editor, and critic. Print. Our latest episode for parents features the topic of empathy. View David Lodge Research Papers on Academia.edu for free. The chapter also explores the notions of irony, humour, comic elements, but also deep critique especially when the enclosed world of Academia is taken into account. Similar enough is the final chapter, which appropriates the examples from the novel which paved the way for the British academic fiction - K. Amis's "Lucky Jim". David Lodge's campus novel *Changing Places* (1975) was translated into Czech by Antonín Páral (under the name of Mirek Čejka) as early as 1980. The novel includes numerous references to anglophone literary texts, many of which the general more. Some features of the site may not work correctly. Corpus ID: 51034790. The NeoRealism : On Parody in David Lodge's Campus Novel *Small World* Dr . @inproceedings{Parab2015TheN, title={The NeoRealism : On Parody in David Lodge's Campus Novel *Small World* Dr .}, author={Vitthal V. Parab}, year={2015} }. Vitthal V. Parab. Published 2015. Parody in *Small World* , working in both comic and meta-fictional ways, embodies the liberal humanist spirit of traditional realist novel and critical consciousness of the anti-humanist post-theories though it looks like a technique of postmodern novel su Until the age of 52, David Lodge maintained his academic career alongside his burgeoning success as a comic novelist. He was an enthusiastic participant in the international conference circuit, not least because it provided him with material for books such as *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses* (1975) and *Small World: An Academic Romance* (1984). But, despite the globetrotting, he remained prolific in both spheres. I interviewed Lodge when the first volume of his memoirs, *Quite a Good Time to Be Born*, was published in 2015. Now *Writer's Luck: A Memoir 1976-1991* (Harvill Secker) offers some ... When his satirical novel about Catholicism, *How Far Can You Go?*