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## More echoes<sup>1</sup> from David Lodge's Small World

### Abstract

*David Lodge's Small World avoids closure, and further contains a seemingly endless number of references to prior texts. It thus encourages the reader to make his own interpretation of the book, based on his personal literary experiences. This study explores one possible interpretation, and draws an analogy between Lodge's book and the great Baroque novels of seventeenth-century France.*

### 1. Analogies

David Lodge himself associates *Small World* with the literature known as the romance, by his choice of subtitle, "An academic romance" and by the choice of one of his epigraphs (1985:n.p.). The present study does not seek to undermine that analogy. The intention is to explore a second analogy, provoked by similarities noticed while reading, associating Lodge's book with the great Baroque novels that proliferated in France between 1620 and 1660. These range from global structure to the use of theme and motif, with, even more importantly, evidence of a preoccupation with certain literary questions posed at that time.

It would not be possible to declare one analogy 'more' valid than the other, since there is a significant overlap between the romance – called the *roman de chevalerie* in France – and the Baroque modes.<sup>2</sup> This phenomenon cannot be taken into account within the limits of the present study. In France, in any case, the two were considered to be distinct genres. No *romans de chevalerie* were written after around 1607 when D'Urfé began his great work

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<sup>1</sup> One of three epigraphs chosen by Lodge himself for his work (1984:n.p.) is the line from Joyce: "Hush! Caution! Echoland!"

<sup>2</sup> This study will not take a strict definition of form or genre as its starting point, since those would require lengthy justifications and illustrations in the case of Baroque fiction, which, far from being homogenous, manifests numerous subgenres - the adventure novel, the heroic novel, the galant novel, the comic novel ... The approach here will be that of *mode*, which is, according to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, "An unspecific term usually designating a broad but identifiable kind of literary method, mood, or manner that is not tied exclusively to a particular 'form' or 'genre'" (1990:139-40). Such a perspective, as Ulrich Wicks has observed, "allows us to group a particular work with other works from our total experience that function in a similar way" (1974:42).

*L'Astrée*, a 'pastoral' novel and which had no immediate successors in fiction. Subsequent works, for some 50 years, were called simply *romans*, novels. Charles Sorel, who described existing written literature in his *Bibliothèque française* (1970 [1664]:157 ff), claims that the novel is distinguished from the romance by the noteworthy suppression of *le merveilleux*, the supernatural.

That distinction recognised by the French themselves is the first reason for believing the pursuit of the Baroque analogy to be justified, while the absence of the supernatural could be considered to bring Lodge's work nearer to the Baroque novel than to the romance.

A second reason lies in the fact that Lodge seems to incite the reader to play an active, rather than passive role in interpreting the work. Frederick Holmes (1990) looking at questions of readership and reception in *Small World*, finds "an equivalence between [the hero Persse] and the reader" (49-50) and one could say that there is an unusual interpenetration of the functions of the two. On the one hand, the hero plays a role more usually associated with the reader: a student of literature, Persse can be said "not so much to enact the quest as read it"<sup>3</sup> (Holmes, 1990:49). The reader, in his turn, is "confronted with the same task of interpretation [as Persse]", he is "entrap[ped] like Persse] in the literary labyrinth" (*ibid*:48), and faces his own quest, a literary quest.

In the third place, the book is indeed a labyrinth<sup>4</sup> without a key. Lodge calls for "caution" in his epigraph (see n.1 *infra*) seemingly to warn the reader against hasty judgements, while Holmes reaches the conclusion that the text "supplies no epiphany beyond the veils of fabrication" (48). There is no closure, and little certainty anywhere in the book. The principal quest, that of Persse for Angelica, is unsuccessful and gives way to a new quest. Critical literary approaches are a primary preoccupation in the book, but they are diverse and frequently contradictory, as Persse's question reminds us: "What follows if everybody agrees with you?" (1985:319). Lodge is not endorsing any particular literary cause, but is rather exploring, illustrating and questioning several at once, as will be shown. It seems that each reader is free to identify, in Lodge's "Echoland", those elements that relate to his personal intellectual storehouse.

The position occupied by Baroque fiction on both sides of the Channel in the evolution of the novel, constitutes a fourth reason for believing the analogy is worth pursuing. The novel flourished in France between 1620 and 1660, and as Maurice Lever's bibliography (1976) shows, the number published during that period is impressive: the decade 1610 to 1620 saw an average of thirteen novels per year and that figure increased for each subsequent year except for a falling off during the *Fronde* (1648-1652). It was also a period of important experimentation with problems of fiction-writing.<sup>5</sup> Yet this production suffered from critical neglect in France from around the French Revolution until 1950,

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<sup>3</sup> Proofs advanced by Holmes (1990) range from the fact that Persse's behaviour is "guided by his past experiences with books" to the fact that the birthmarks, one a 6 and the other a 9, on the thighs of the twin heroines, serve as "inverted commas" enclosing the episode like a quotation.

<sup>4</sup> Holmes' choice of metaphor is particularly felicitous, for according to Cooper (1992 [1978]:93) a labyrinth "implies a paradoxical answer to an apparently hopeless question, both of which arise out of the labyrinth's symbolism: once you have made the difficult and complicated journey, what is at the centre? - You are."

<sup>5</sup> See Godwin, 1983; 1985.

when the concept of the Baroque as an autonomous manifestation was recognised. This led Raymond Picard to speak of an "Atlantis, engulfed by the oceans of time"<sup>6</sup> (1977), and it is possible that England possesses an equivalent 'lost continent' of fiction, that is merely suffering from critical neglect. Certainly, to judge from writings like those of Vivienne Mylne (1965), Ian Watt (1967) or Alex Potter (1987), little fiction was published in England during that period and the novel, as opposed to the romance, was born in England at the beginning of the eighteenth century with Defoe, Richardson and Fielding. The 'modern' novel can equally be said to have been born in France at that time, with writers like Challe, Prévost and Marivaux, but novelists both in France and in England had the advantage of technical progress made by French writers of the previous century, born in Baroque writing or provoked by its weaker aspects.<sup>7</sup> Their influence on English writers like Defoe and Fielding has been demonstrated in studies such as that of Laroche (1977). The Baroque novel thus provides, in the evolution of fiction, an intermediate stage separating the romance and the 'modern' novel.

## 2. French seventeenth-century Baroque

### 2.1 Baroque as concept

Before a comparison can be undertaken, the concept of the *Baroque* as it is understood in this study needs to be delineated. It was given credence as an autonomous manifestation, rather than as an aberrant version of other styles, only from around 1950.<sup>8</sup> It has been the source of much debate, because its traits vary from culture to culture, and the dates that demarcate its manifestation are the subject of continuing uncertainty in France due to the presence of similar characteristics in sixteenth-century mannerism and in eighteenth-century Rococo styles.

The *Baroque* can be defined for the arts in general as intending to make a strong impression on the audience, by means of surprise, ostentation and instability (or in more precise terms, an abundance of ornament, a refusal of constraints and closure, and a predilection for *trompe-l'oeil* and *chiaroscuro*). *Mutatis mutandis*, these traits vary little across the arts, as a few illustrations can show.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> All translations in this study are mine (DG).

<sup>7</sup> There is some insistence, in this study, on the weaknesses of Baroque fiction. This is not a reflection on Lodge's selection of material, nor is it meant to be pejorative with regard to Baroque fiction. It must be remembered that the conservative society of the time encouraged conformity, discouraged change, and valued the pleasures of their contemporary readings very highly. The fact remains that this was in a way a primitive form of fiction, and it was the critical perception of its faults that provoked the innovations that brought fiction closer to the forms approved by the modern world.

<sup>8</sup> An excellent survey of the initial studies, and synthesis of current views can be found in Floeck (1989). Rousset (1953) remains indispensable for a comprehension of the Baroque in literature. Problems of chronological delimitation and overlapping esthetics can be explored in Beaussant (1981).

<sup>9</sup> The refusal of constraint is illustrated by a limb protruding beyond the frame of a bas-relief such as can be seen on almost every seventeenth-century ceiling in the Louvre and Versailles, and also in the mixture of genres and tones of tragi-comedies. The play of light and shadow is seen over an altar (Bernini's *Sainte Thérèse*), or in a picture by, for example, Georges de La Tour, and again in

## 2.2 Baroque fiction

The Baroque novel is nowhere better nor more succinctly defined than in Maurice Lever's brief history of seventeenth-century fiction. He expresses in less general and more 'novelistic' terms the characteristics we have listed above: such a novel "favours luxuriance and dispersion", is "spectacle", reveals "mobility in time, in space and in its forms", and is "dominated by deliberately ornamental discourse" (Lever, 1981:31-33). A reading of the detailed criticism by Charles Sorel (1981 [1671]) also helps to comprehend the nature of the Baroque novel. Sorel lists the weaknesses recognised at the time (322 ff): lack of realism (called at the time *vraisemblance*), overuse of certain *topoi*, lack of variety, repetition<sup>10</sup> and above all a complexity of structure that often led the reader to lose track of the various destinies. These weaknesses were summed up overall as 'absurdities', a lack of 'reason'.

## 3. Baroque elements in *Small World*

### 3.1 Profusion

Lodge's *Small World* reveals a global structure that is almost more luxuriant and dispersed than the Baroque, as a representation of plot distribution based on an alphabetic series will show. *La Carité ou la Cyprienne amoureuse* (1980), first published in 1621 by Pierre de Caseneuve, will serve as a concrete point of comparison. Chosen because it is available in a modern facsimile edition and because its unusually modest dimensions will help limit the scope of the demonstration, it has 71 000 words where the ten volumes of Madeleine de Scudéry's more typical *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus* (1649) uses 1 900 000 words. Lodge's *Small World*, perhaps slightly longer than the average modern paperback, counts some 160 000 words. A scheme drawn for *La Carité*, which has six stories, is as follows, with / indicating that a resolution has occurred for the plot in question:

A B C D / B / E / A A C / F / A /.

If one includes adventures like that of Dempsey, Lodge's work contains some twenty different plots. A scheme of character and plot distribution taking into account only the 33 pages of the first chapter of the second part of *Small World* (in which no resolutions occur), is as follows:

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Baroque poetry's typical imagery of fire and shadow (Du Bois Hus' *Feux d'artifice* is a convincing example). Instability is seen in poetry as metaphors of mirror, waves and water, and even in the rhythms of a poem like *Tout s'enfle contre moi* by Sponde, where theme, sound, rhythm and imagery converge to convey the most fundamental of all Baroque messages, expressed by Pascal as a terrifying "vertigo" provoked by the discovery of the infinity of the cosmos that displaced man from his secure position at the centre of the universe. Instability in combination with a predilection for metamorphosis and the refusal of constraints can be found in fountains, and in theatre where it takes the form of disguise and revelation, as well as the *mise-en-abyeme* epitomised by Corneille's *Illusion comique*.

<sup>10</sup> He says readers would compare notes with a friend by claiming to have reached not such and such a page or volume, but "the third kidnapping".

ABACADEAFAGFHAIJKALAMDEA  
BCGFHIKL(ABCDFHEIJKLMG)N.

The bracketing of 13 of the last 14 letters indicates a listing, not a serious advancing of plot; Lodge seems to be counting heads but, once the reader is lulled into believing that, he is startled by the resurgence of a character believed dead – Joy Simpson. This schematic representation gives a rather false impression of the overall rhythm of shifts between episodes, which is not maintained at the same precipitous pace throughout the book, but it is a faithful indication of the Baroque profusion and exploded nature of the plots in *Small World*.

### 3.2 Visual aspects

In considering the aspect Lever calls "spectacle", one needs to remember that the Baroque esthetic has its starting point in the notion of *appearance* and had a predilection for antithetical confrontations of being and seeming (*être et paraître*). The notion undoubtedly plays a role in Lodge's story, for the perception of the academic by his peers counts more than his real abilities. Lodge's work does not contain anything to equal the visual items like battles, royal *entrées* and ceremonies that proliferate in Baroque novels, but the initial encounter between Angelica and Persse – "Over the rim of the glass she looked with eyes dark as peat pools straight into Persse's own, and seemed to smile faintly in greeting" (Lodge, 1985:8) – is a reprise of what was perhaps the predominant cliché of seventeenth-century fiction: reciprocal love born at a first glance (see Rousset's *Leurs yeux se rencontrent*:1981). Apart from this, the poem Persse writes for Angelica, consisting of her name traced in snow, to be viewed from an upper-story window, is a visual poem entirely in keeping with the taste for adornment and the mode of *galanterie précieuse* that characterise the later Baroque novels. A reader feels almost surprised, in retrospect, that Madeleine de Scudéry did not think of it first.

### 3.3 Mobility and instability

The various forms of mobility and instability in Lodge's novel range from the epic displacements of his characters through the elusiveness of meaning and focalisation, to the rapid succession of tones and moods.

The characters' travels take them from England, to the Continent, the Middle East and America, and the way Lodge shifts the reader from one character to another and one place to another accentuates the impression that there is no stable base. A study of point of view or focalisation would be rewarding, for these are both multiple, and elusive, due to the unexpected combinations, juxtapositions and digressions. An example of this is Siegfried Turpitz dialling Michel Tardieu in Paris instead of the Jacques he intended to call (97-98). The global structure of the book is an exploded one, and a restless shifting between the various characters, plots and places constantly thwarts, or at least defers, fulfilment of the reader's expectations.

Zapp remarks that "(t)here should be nothing irrelevant in a good story" (67) and on the whole, both details and characters recur in Lodge's book despite the initial appearance of

gratuitousness of some of them, as is evident in the reappearance of the second McGarrigle in whose place Persse was engaged at Limerick, and also of Zapp's deerstalker hat. One must recognise Persse and his quest as constituting a principal plot, but as Holmes points out, "the novel actually contains two (. . .) quests" (1990:53), Persse's search for Angelica and the competition for the UNESCO chair of literature. A reader familiar with Baroque structures will also accord their due importance to the innumerable sub-plots, and admire the skill that keeps him interested in the problems and destinies of numerous other characters, all of which find a resolution: Bernadette will receive maintenance for her illegitimate baby, Hilary Swallow will not lose her husband through divorce, Arthur Kingfisher is inspired to write again, Miss Maiden finds her lost children ... There is nevertheless also some subtle misdirecting of the reader. The first chapter presents Persse, Sutcliffe, Swallow, Busby, and Dempsey, with an apparently equal weight of pending significance, but Sutcliffe and Busby will play no further role in the development of the protagonist's destinies, and Dempsey's adventure is not as important as Persse's.

The notion of 'thesis' for the book is equally elusive, and is well illustrated by the variety of literary theories embraced by the characters. At a more profound level, Persse, and the reader with him, seem subject to the kind of urgent search for new meaning that became necessary to Pascal and his contemporaries when the old anthropocentric vision of the universe was invalidated by the astronomers. Holmes (1990:5), who speaks at length about the problem of meaning in Lodge's text, seems to be saying much the same thing, in modern terms:

... the book explores the extent to which it is possible to fulfil the human urge to find in life a stabilizing centre or ground of significance in order to unify the potentially endless flow of meanings that traverse a world made small by modern innovations.

Shifts in tone and mood in Lodge's book, comparable to the mixed genres of Baroque works like the tragi-comedy, are evident, for example, in the juxtaposition of the lyrical romanticism of the passage presenting the snow poem with the farcical discordance of the Durex/Farex muddle followed by the Molieresque imbroglio that finds Persse in Dempsey's cupboard watching Dempsey disrobe.

### 3.4 Motif

Lodge's reappropriation of Baroque *topos* and motif could be demonstrated in fairly abstract terms since all Baroque novels appear as a recombination of a certain number of possible episodes. It seems more useful to furnish at least one specific example and *La Carité*, already described, will serve. One of its six stories, labelled B above, is a combination of comedy and chivalry and contains an imbroglio depending on confused identities. Another four stories tell of lovers who are separated, and undergo various tribulations in the course of their quest for their lost love. All except one (F) end happily.

The story labelled C above is particularly useful, since it presents a great number of the motifs Lodge uses. Briefly, it is the tale of an orphan, Rodolphe, who in the course of his travels, falls in love at first glance. The town they are in is attacked, he is imprisoned, and he hears the girl he loves lamenting in the cell next door. They communicate, escape

together using as financial resource some jewels she had providentially kept hidden, marry, and during their journey to his home she gives birth to twins – a boy and a girl. The mother dies, and bandits kidnap the twins that very night. Rodolphe sets out in search of them. During further travels, he visits a hermit who pronounces an oracle describing in veiled terms how he will recognise his children. He arrives at Cypress, home of the eponymous heroine Caritée, and recognises his daughter in Caritée's lady-in-waiting because, as the oracle had predicted, she "carries the daughters of Spring" (a garland of flowers), an identification further confirmed by a physical sign (she has six toes like her father) and the affirmation by an eye-witness that she had been found near the place of her abduction. Rodolphe and his daughter are reunited with the boy twin when the principal hero, Liriandre, returns bringing the young man in his retinue. Similar signs apply to the recognition process.

*Small World*, it is hardly necessary to insist, contains similar motifs: twins; physical signs for recognition; the reunion of 'lost' children with their parent; a kidnapping; a character who is alive after being believed dead; imbroglios caused by hidden identity ... Most noteworthy, perhaps, is the skill with which Lodge transposes his motifs and *topoi* from the ancient to the modern world. An oracle, Delphic, or vestal, or sybilline, often fills the role of the hermit in Baroque novels, and Lodge offers an encounter with Miss Sybil Maiden at Delphi. Where well-disposed acquaintances furnish the boats or horses needed for travel in Baroque stories, Lodge's hero learns how to hitch-hike by plane. A timely prize, and a fortuitous spare moment that encourage him to apply for a credit card furnish Persse with the financial resources that Sorel lists among the distressingly unrealistic elements of seventeenth-century writing. Lodge's wit and inventiveness in this regard could be studied at much greater length.

### 3.5 Ornamental discourse

Passing instead to the question of literary ornamentation, it should be stated at the outset that one of the most pervasive techniques used by Baroque writers was the literary allusion. In 1626, Miss de Gournay declared that literary allusions "are an important part of the writing of [Baroque] fiction", and "constitute both ornament and authority" (Coulet, 1968, II:26-28). *La Caritée* will again furnish a concrete example. The author, Caseneuve, declares in his letter to the reader (n.p.) that his global structure imitates that of Herodotus, and he re-adopts elements of several conventional literary modes, of which the most noteworthy is the pastoral. At the start of the book, as dawn breaks, the heroine goes into the garden which is transformed into a *locus amoenus* by the enumeration of the traditional elements of greenery, shade, water, birds and so on, and she is confronted by two young men wanting her to choose the winner of a debate they undertake, after which the winner is rewarded with a set of rich armour.<sup>11</sup> Caseneuve's story, labelled F above, sees a long discourse concerning beauty in nature and refers to a multiplicity of written authorities including the Bible (345-50).

*Small World* begins with a well developed pastiche of the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* which sets a precedent for the intertextual network that will follow. Identification of the

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<sup>11</sup> Conventional elements associated with the pastoral can be explored in Curtius (1953).

various allusions in this work is another task that could fill an inordinate number of pages, since as well as the obvious ones like Eliot and Spenser, there are others to which the reader's attention is not explicitly drawn. What is more, the function served by at least one allusion, Spenser's "Bower of Bliss", resembles that of citations in Baroque literature. In the latter, quotations frequently serve to communicate information, albeit obliquely, either between one character and another, or between author and reader. In Lodge's work, the allusion to Spenser helps Persse to comprehend that Angela has a twin, or at least a double.

Other important types of literary ornament are the inserted poems and letters that fill Baroque works. Lodge offers the snow-poem and the prayers pinned to a board in the chapel at Heathrow. These, read by characters not expected to read them, have a similar function to that of the letter in seventeenth-century fiction. Yet another ornament favoured at the time is the long conversation, sometimes presented as a debate. In the hands of the best authors these tended to be thematically linked to the rest of the book, but they could also be irrelevant excrescences. In Lodge's work, they take the form of extracts from academic papers and debate, and frequently provide a theoretical underpinning for the techniques endorsed or overturned in the deployment of the story.

### 3.6 *Vraisemblance* and narrative techniques

Perhaps the most important analogy between *Small World* and the Baroque writings is to be found in evidence of an esthetical preoccupation, which cannot be exhaustively demonstrated here. No systematic poetics of the novel was written during the seventeenth century, and existing discussions tend to be dispersed throughout prefaces, 'notices to the reader', conversations inside the novels and the like. From 1633 a cumulative critical backlash called for an improvement to the quality and the reputation of the novel (there was even an attempt to give it status, by associating it with the poetics of the epic). Technical reflection coheres around a single problem: *vraisemblance* (which is 'believability' rather than realism in the modern sense). The overriding aim was to bring the novel within the bounds of a contemporary reader's real experience, and this drew attention to the role of the narrator as well as to the social and spatial distance separating the hero from the reader, and to the number and scope of his adventures.

There was also a perceived need, by the second half of the seventeenth century, to eliminate coincidence and to present persuasive combinations of cause and effect, in order to make the stories plausible. Lodge carefully plants small details that will prove to be significant later (the idle moment filled by applying for a credit card is a case in point). He also combines cause and effect in a convincing way. Because Persse's visit to a pornographic film has already shown that he is fallible, the free rein given to his libidinous urges with the girl he believes to be Angelica is credible even though he is a 'good' catholic boy, filled with idealism and purity of intention towards her (he prays for her to be rescued from the life of prostitution he believes her to lead). But Lodge does not spurn pure, Baroque coincidence either, as is proved by Persse's encounter with Cheryl Summerbee en route to post, to him, Zapp's deerstalker. One also has the feeling that Lodge thoroughly enjoyed the creation of the typically Baroque surprises that confront both characters and reader – the father of Bernadette's illegitimate baby revealing himself in the course of a near-drowning,





burlesque writing come into being only once the style or motif targeted are established enough to have the status of clichés. Scarron, in his *Roman Comique* (1973 [1651]), mocks the epic style of *incipit* just seen in *La Carité*, and also pokes fun at the various problems caused by the need to show time passing, or to justify the knowledge possessed by narrators who recite, verbatim, the contents of letters they cannot have read, or describe in minute detail the secret thoughts of some protagonist.<sup>12</sup> Scarron is best compared with Fielding in England, despite their respective dates, and he exerted an important influence on his contemporaries with this novel that simultaneously illustrates the best and the worst of the Baroque structure and applies significant metatextual commentary.

#### 4. Difference

A demonstration of similarities could continue, but we will end by signalling an important difference between Lodge's work and the seventeenth-century Baroque fiction of the idealist current represented by Caseneuve, Scudéry, etc. The progressive imposition of the *bienséances* and a prevailing neo-platonic influence on social and artistic mores eliminated explicit sexuality from approved fiction by the 1620's. Even the comico-satirical stream of writing, represented by Scarron, and which is designated by Lever (1981) amongst others as having only 'marginal' status in polite society, tends to avoid descriptions of sexual activity although it abounds in broad humour centred around naked buttocks, chamber pots and the like. In idealist novels, the hero expects no reward before marriage beyond permission to declare his love, with, perhaps, an admission of reciprocal love on the part of his lady. Even chaste kisses are rare. The energetic and explicit couplings described by Lodge, like those of Fulvia Morgana and Zapp, of Persse and the girl he believes to be Angelica, serve to remind us that the analogy drawn between *Small World* and the Baroque novels does not exclude reference to other literary modes.

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<sup>12</sup> Scarron's *incipit* is:

The Sun had completed more than half his course and his chariot, having passed the zenith, rolled quicker than he would have liked. If his horses had wanted to profit from the steepness of the slope, they could have completed what remained of the day in a quarter of an hour (...) To speak like an ordinary man, and more intelligibly, it was between five and six o'clock when a cart entered the market of Le Mans (1985:37).

Transitions, as varied as those of Lodge, include "While his beasts ate, the author rested awhile and gave some thought to what he would say in the second chapter" (39) and "We'll leave [the hero] to sleep in his bedroom, and see in the following chapter what was happening in the bedroom of the rest of the troupe" (57). At another stage, the narrator declares of the hero "I never did find out whether that worried him much" (62). Further on, he states:

I won't specify whether he had dined or gone to bed without eating, like some novelists who control all the hours of a hero's day, making him rise early, narrate until lunch (...) Getting back to my story ... (64).

Our ellipsis contains a long digression detailing the clichés of a hero's behaviour, including the habit of wandering alone in nature to muse on the loved one, transposed in Lodge's case to a more urban motif of prowling through the streets.

## 5. Conclusion

Holmes believes that "the reader's search for a unifying principle of significance in [*Small World*] is futile" (1990: 47). We would agree, if the reader is in search of a definitive analogy or a single meaning. Lodge's primary intention with this novel appears to be that expressed by Angelica as the "pleasure" furnished by a "striptease", by the "repeated postponement of an ultimate revelation that never comes" (29, cf. 26). The novel does 'tease' the reader, for Persse's quest is not completed, each re-reading finds literary echoes unremarked during the previous reading, and the world view represented by a distribution of reward and punishment reveals no overriding moral or philosophical stance. Paradoxically, it is the mobility that first associates Lodge's writing with the Baroque novels that also prevents any claim that such an analogy is definitive. Nevertheless, for a French student, the Baroque novel offers an interesting alternative to the romance – the logical analogy available to the English scholar – as a point of comparison for Lodge's *Small World*.

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