

**Motion, Change and Discontinuity in David Lodge's
Changing Places (1975)**

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Abstract

This paper aims to show that the suitability of the title of Lodge's novel, *Changing Places*, transcends the surface level meaning of the story it purports to reflect. In its referentiality, this title is far from restrictive. The concept of motion it suggests can be found in the interactions between characters, but also at an emotional and textual level. I argue that movement and change prevail in the novel. The analeptic references, and peripatetic nature of the story, as well as the shifts of identity noticed in the protagonists, among others, are very telling as to the place devoted to movement and change. Also, Lodge's different narrative techniques disrupt the narrative linear progression of the novel, thus underscoring both its lack of uniformity and its unpredictable nature.

Keywords: *Changing Places*, David Lodge, irony, intertextuality, movement, postmodern novel

Introduction

David Lodge's *Changing Places* has been subject to many studies, most of them focusing on its humor, on its treatment of academe or on the influence it bears from such writers as James Joyce, Kingsley Amis and Malcolm Bradbury.¹ Others have emphasized David Lodge's tendency to use theory in *Changing Places* and in his writings in general.² Many of these studies have proved insightful in their examination of its subject matter about exchange as well. Seldom, however, have they tapped the implications of its title – when unshackled from the subtitle – beyond the ironic trading the main characters are engaged in. In this paper, I argue that the suitability of the title of Lodge's novel, *Changing Places*, transcends the surface level meaning of the story it purports to reflect. In its referentiality, I believe, this title is far from restrictive. The concept of motion it suggests can be felt in the interactions between characters; but it also appears at an emotional and textual level.

Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses is the first of a trilogy, its sequels being *A Small World* and *Nice Work*. It is a campus novel about two university teachers who, through an exchange program, find themselves trapped in an ironic and comic logic of mobility.³ As a result, they unintentionally intrude into one another's personal life. Philip Swallow, an English lecturer, and Morris Zapp, an American Professor, exchange universities, offices, and eventually houses and wives; but more importantly, they "exchange" countries. *Changing Places*, therefore, is suggestive of migration. It foregrounds, as we shall see, migration-related phenomena such as homesickness, farsickness, and what Paul White calls shifts of identity (1995, p. 2). Migration, states Paul White, "is about change [and] about identity. It is about movement" (1995, p. 6). In its various treatments of movement and the comic trading it presents, *Changing Places* is dynamic. It reflects both thematically and structurally a poetics of mobility. In this article, to bear out the far-reaching suitability of Lodge's title, I set out to show first the central place of movement and change in the story; subsequently, I will analyse the construction of the narrative in order to point out how it is, in large part, premised on the notion of movement.

Shifting Ironies

From a chronological point of view, nostalgia determines to a great extent Lodge's *Changing Places*. Shifts from the present to the past, and the past to the present, are signalled frequently in the story, thus giving birth to an interplay between reminiscences and present experience. The virtually constant resort to anachrony is one of the most striking features of Lodge's novel. Analepses are intermittently used in it as one of the main characters, Philip, remembers the/his

¹ See Bernard Bergonzi, *David Lodge* (1995); Bruce K. Martin, *David Lodge* (1999); and J. Russell Perkin, *David Lodge and the Tradition of the Modern Novel* (2014).

² "Over the course of his career, Lodge has proved himself the most conspicuously 'ambidextrous' of the contemporary generation of novelist-critics. In what looks like a calculated reproach to the traditional division of labour between authors and critics, his major campus fictions, *Changing Places* (1975), *How Far Can You Go?* (1980), *Small World* (1984), *Nice Work* (1988), were produced in systematic alternation with his works of theoretical criticism, *The Modes of Modern Writing* (1977), *Working with Structuralism* (1981), *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader* (1988), *After Bakhtin* (1990). Fiction and theory are, for Lodge, complementary, even symbiotic modes of writing that speak productively to one another in an ongoing two-way exchange" (Greaney, 2006, p. 24).

³ As Jason Finch (2017) suggests in his article *Comic Novel, Comic Cities*, and as we shall see in the following pages, *Changing Places* is a novel which arouses much laughter in the reader.

past.⁴ He happens, for instance, to oppose his youth, spent in a society with rigid social conventions, to the sexual-revolution period of the mid-sixties; or to remember his honeymoon celebrated during his previous stay in the US. In the past, indeed, Philip and his wife, Hilary, had stayed in Boston on a fellowship of which one of the conditions was to “travel widely in the United States” (Lodge, 1978, p. 19).

By way of honeymoon, and to escape the severity of the New England winter, the young couple decided to start their tour immediately. With Hilary at the wheel of a gigantic brand-new Impala, they headed south to Florida, sometimes pulling off the highway to make fervent love on the amazingly wide back seat. From Florida they crossed the southern states in very easy stages until they reached Euphoria and settled for the summer in an attic apartment on the top of a hill in the city of Esseph [...] They sailed back to England in September (Lodge, 1978, p. 20).

Just as the shifts from present to past and past to present, this rendering of the peripatetic experience of Philip and Hilary is indicative of the concept of motion underlying the story. By the way, travels, highlighting the centrality of movement in Lodge's novel, frame the narrative: the novel starts by, and ends after, a travel.⁵

From the onset, in fact, the reader is made aware that the subject matter of the novel is grounded in movement: Philip and Morris are flying in the opening scene, respectively to the US and England (Lodge, 1978, p. 7). They travel on the same day and roughly same time, though “the crossing of their paths at the still point of the turning world passed unremarked by anyone other than the narrator” (Lodge, 1978, p. 7). Likewise, before the ending, both characters travel, by plane anew, and again the move is simultaneous, synchronic. Nonetheless, this time Morris Zapp is flying to New York from Rummidge and Philip Swallow, on the other hand, is flying from the state of Euphoria to the same destination as Morris's. Both, furthermore, are accompanied by the other's wife. They are supposed to meet in New York and find a way out of the relationship problems they are facing since, by the end of the novel, as Robert Morace notes, “the academic exchange has become a sexual exchange as well” (1989, p. 159). The two scholars have ended up thoroughly involved in an exchange logic (Lodge, 1978, p. 240).

Of course, this wife-swapping results from movement. Philip, because of the landslide at Pythagoras Drive, has moved to the Zapp's house at the invitation – “a purely act of charity” – of Désirée, Morris's wife (p.179). Previous to that move, changing places being, it would seem, the lot of the characters in the novel, Philip sheltered Charles Boon, a former student of his in Rummidge. In the same way, and on the recommendation of Morris, Mary Makepeace, another character whom Morris had met during the “annual migration” (Lodge, 1978, p. 39), moves in with the Swallows. Afterwards, Morris leaves the flat he rented at Oshea's to settle with Hilary, Philip's wife. These movements from one house to another agree, semantically, with the title of the novel. So does, besides, the hilarious scene in the hotel in New York where, sharing with Philip the same room, while their respective wives are spending the night together in the

⁴ An analepsis, in Barthes's terminology, is “any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at a given moment” (1980, p. 40). The opposite move in narration is called a prolepsis.

⁵ As Erbayraktar remarks, “to underline the issue of mobility, the opening chapter of *Changing Places*, which is about Philip Swallow and Morris Zapp up in the sky crossing each other's paths, contains a set of aviation terminology, such as ‘Boeing 707, cabin, corridor, risk of collision, altitude, criss-crossing, soaring, looping’” (2018, p. 149).

opposite room across the corridor, Morris phones Désirée to ask for “some more comfortable arrangement”:

Morris: Hallo, sweetheart.

Désirée: (annoyed) What do you want? I was asleep.

Morris: Uh...Philip and I were wondering (looks across at Philip) if we couldn't come to some more comfortable arrangement...

Désirée: Like what?

Morris: Like if one of you girls would like to change places with one of us...

Désirée: You mean either of us? With either of you? You don't have any preference?

Morris: (laughs uneasily) We leave it to you.

Désirée: You're despicable. (Puts down receiver) (Lodge, 1978, pp. 242–243).

Against all odds, the “exchange” takes place, thus allowing temporary reunion for husband and wife:

Hilary, in dressing-gown, emerges from door on left, leaving it ajar, crosses corridor and knocks on door to right. It opens. Hilary goes in, door shuts. After a short interval, door on right opens and Morris, in dressing-gown, comes out, closes door behind him, crosses corridor, enters door left, closes it behind him (Lodge, 1978, p. 243).

Evoking screenwriting, this passage relates movements in opposite directions which, somehow, duplicate the primary movement around which the novel revolves, that is to say, the transplantation of both scholars in a reverse dynamic. However, the movements here undermine, and even nullify the exchange logic the characters were involved in because they restore, provisionally (the outcome of their meeting in New York is not told), the relationship between the two couples; couples who, as Morris observes, “hold the world record for long-distance wife-swapping” (Lodge, 1978, p. 245).

As already suggested, Morris Zapp and Philip Swallow, both English teachers, respectively in Euphoria and Rummidge – fictionalized versions of the University of California Berkley and Birmingham University – engage in a six-month exchange program. Unsurprisingly, each of them occupies the other's room at the hosting university; but, unexpectedly, each meets the other's relatives as well. Mrs Swallow first meets Morris at Rummidge University, while searching for *Let's Write a Novel*, one of her husband's books. Earlier, Mrs Zapp meets Philip at a cocktail party soon after the latter's arrival in Euphoria. Philip, moreover, has sex with Morris's daughter, though unknowingly; and, above all, as told earlier, he ends up living in Morris's house with the latter's wife. Similarly, Morris, by happenstance – he ignores that Philip is having sexual relations with Désirée ends up having an affair with Philip's wife.⁶

This ironic and dizzying logic of exchange has been prompted by a shift of identity in both characters. As Bruce Martin puts it: “the introductory comparison of the personal and professional backgrounds of the two flying academics gives way to an ongoing description of how each fares with a particular aspect of his new location, especially compared with how the other is faring at the same time with the same aspect” (1999, p. 32). The novel puts much

⁶ This recalls Bergonzi's description of university as a microcosm where academics “may be struggling with each other for power and promotion; or having affairs with their colleagues or colleagues' spouses, or their students” (1995, p. 14).

emphasis on the cultural integration of Philip and Morris in their new environment. An adaptation so well managed in Philip that he considers acquiring permanent residence. He is so much integrated that he no longer feels British: “I don’t feel British any more” (p. 174), says he. He is even considering staying in the US lest he should be unrecognizable once back in England: “If only he could send home, when time came, some zombie replica of himself, a robot Swallow [...] if he went back in person, in his present state of mind, they would say he was an impostor” (Lodge, 1978, p. 178). Philip, despite some hesitations in the beginning, has fitted into the American way of life. In England, he was the Victorian type of puritan and has succeeded, for a while, to stand his ground in the US. However, influenced by his new environment, he ends up “breaking bad”. His remorse is fleeting, after his sexual intercourse with Morris’s daughter. In his book *Postwar Academic Fiction*, in which he discusses the ethics of romance in Lodge’s academic trilogy, Womack writes that “Swallow’s guilt eventually subsides [...] when he realizes ‘how needlessly he had complicated it with emotion and ethics’”. And “by choosing to divest himself of the emotional and moral obligations of his previous life in England”, writes on Womack, “Swallow avails himself of a radically different system of ethical values, opting for the erotic possibilities of adultery over the quiet stability of his marital commitment to Hilary (2002, p. 83). These changes in (e)motion, making him slide into bad habits, Philip warrants with reference to Providence: “Not for nothing had he taken up residence in a Slide Area”(Lodge, 1978, p. 107).

Changing Patterns

Actually, Philip has changed quite a bit. Emancipated, temporarily, from the rigid boundaries of his marriage and the institutional requirements of his lectureship in Rummidge, he has transcended his ineffectual persona through the personal freedom of his new adulterous lifestyle (Womack, 2002, p. 83). This is what Martin echoes when he contends that Philip – who manages to engage in party games, patronize a strip club and have an affair with Mrs Zapp, within a few weeks after his arrival in the US – succeeds in his cultural integration because, on the one hand, he is no longer constrained by the obligations and inhibitions of his ordinary identity and, on the other hand, he is inspired by the hedonism of his new environment (1999, p. 28).⁷ Philip, in a word, epitomizes the migrant who, on leaving, “expects to change and to run away from stability and an order which is felt to be unchanging” (White, 1995, p. 8).

To this wanderlust of Philip’s is opposed Morris’s homesickness. Morris Zapp adapts otherwise to his new environment. He is adapting, in spite of himself, to a reverse version of life in the US at that time.⁸ When, for example, in order to overcome boredom, he visits Soho (a mirror effect of Philip in Cortez Avenue, in *Euphoria*) he is, contrary to Philip, “disappointed, cheated, frustrated and finally bored” (Lodge, 1978, p. 113). As the narrator observes: “Morris paid his pound and pushed through a baize curtain and a swing door [...] the room was very cold and, except for Morris, entirely empty” (Lodge, 1978, pp. 112–114). This type of frustration has much deferred Morris’s cultural integration which, besides, was impeded from the start. For one thing, Morris found it in the beginning difficult to adjust to British culture and to adapt to

⁷ For Martin, “Swallow begins to seek out pleasures and experiences he has shunned in his role as husband, father, and British Academic and in the process becomes at least somewhat ‘Americanized’” (1999, p. 28).

⁸ It would be interesting to recall that Life in the US was marked at that period by enjoyment of individual freedom, sexual liberation and deviation from social norms embodied by such countercultural movements as the beat generation in the 1950s and the hippies in the 1960s.

the weather. For another, he had a biased opinion about England and English people in general.⁹ For him, England is a “lousy country” (Lodge, 1978, p. 115) and in Rummidge, “the tolerance of people is enough to turn your stomach” (p. 126).¹⁰ But like Philip, he eventually changes. As Womack states, “Zapp discovers a previously unrealized ethical component of his persona during his stay in England” (2002, p. 84). This is notably evoked in his brooding about a seeming shift of identity in him: “he cast his mind back over the day – helping Mrs Swallow look for her husband’s book, letting the Irish kid watch his TV, driving O’Shea around to his patients – and wondered what had come over him. Some creeping English disease of being nice, was it?” (Lodge, 1978, p. 93). Cultural integration is at work: Morris who was described, previous to his stay in England, as a conceited and contemptuous scholar, quick to look down on people, is now imbued with “a sense of ethical renewal and selfless propensity for acting favorably on behalf of his community” (Womack, 2002, p. 86).¹¹ Morris has in reality so much changed within the course of his short stay in the UK that, just as Philip wants to become a permanent immigrant in the US, he considers staying in Rummidge for good. He ponders, as it were, the prospect of becoming the Chair of English at Rummidge.

The pervasive logic of movement in *Changing Places* can account for Philip Swallow’s and Morris Zapp’s shifts of identity. No temporary standstill neutralizes the changing-place dynamic. Protagonists, mainly, move from one place, one partner, and one psychological state to another. The English Department in Euphoria partakes in the dynamic of motion too. In fact, the reader is told that the English Department has been moved to the ‘newly built hexagonal block’ (Lodge, 1978, p. 211). But the horizontality of this move is soon supplanted by the idea of “fall” expressed through the “falling tiles”:

The English Department [...] was now situated on the eighth floor of a newly built hexagonal block [...] the changeover had taken place [...] Exodus was nothing in comparison [...] a tile fell in fragments at Morris’s feet just as he mounted the steps at the entrance [...] (Lodge, 1978, pp. 211–212).

The presence of vertical motion in this passage obviously redefines the logic of mobility: up-and-down movements are now criss-crossing with horizontal moves. Furthermore, the entailed feeling of dizziness is heightened when Morris decides, to please Hilary, and at the expense of Dempsey – a younger and more deserving colleague – to help promote Philip in his academic career. One is made to believe, therefore, that for this “intrusion” in internal affairs, Morris gets his comeuppance. After advising the Vice Chancellor on the promotion issue, he becomes the target of Professor Masters, the former Head of the English Department; and for that matter, a “crack shot” (Lodge, 1978, p. 224). When he is informed that Professor Masters had escaped from the psychiatric facility where he was committed and that he might be intending violence to him (Lodge, 1978, p. 223), Morris realizes that the tiles that had dropped on him earlier were, in reality, purposely shot. Masters had been sniping at him. Shortly after, they meet on the eighth floor of the hexagonal block and engage in a chase; pursuer and pursued sketching criss-crossing vertical lines:

⁹ It is noteworthy that Morris was reluctant to engage in the exchange program. “His dislike of the country, later on, is supported with the information that Morris has never been in England before this exchange program despite his mobile lifestyle (Erbayraktar, 2018, p. 150).

¹⁰ He also expresses his homesickness to Désirée in these terms: “I am lonely here these long English nights. Just to give you an idea how lonely I am, this evening I’m going to the English Department’s Staff Seminar to listen to a paper on linguistics and literary criticism” (Lodge, 1978, p. 134).

¹¹ “[...] Zapp proves an unexpected humanitarian side by asking Hilary to shelter his ex-student, the pregnant Mary Makepeace” (Nicolau, 2013, p. 79).

[M]orris boarded the paternoster [...] As he stepped out on the landing, the first thing he saw was Gordon Masters [...] Morris retreated rapidly into the paternoster and was borne upwards. He could hear Masters galloping up the staircase [...]. Each time Masters arrived on a landing, Morris was just moving out of sight. On the eleventh floor, Morris thinking to trick his pursuer, jumped out of the elevator and boarded a downward-moving compartment [...] on the fifth-floor Morris hopped out and boarded a rising compartment. [...] and continued his upwards journey [...] Morris went up to the ninth floor, across and down to the sixth, up to the tenth, down to the ninth, up to the eleventh, down to the eighth, up to the eleventh, down to the tenth, up and over the top, got out on the twelfth, going down (Lodge, 1978, pp. 225–226).

When the reader is caught in this tension between horizontality and verticality, he or she becomes fully aware of the centrality of motion in *Changing Places*. The scene in the aforementioned passage – Martin terms it a “Chaplinesque chase scene” (1999, p. 36) – is one of the most hilarious and illustrative instances of mobility in the novel.¹² Verticality in this scene is opposed to the horizontal motion in the preceding pages (Zapp driving Mary Makepeace to the railway station and then heading to Rumridge university, the English department being relocated to the ‘hexagonal block’, etc.), and thus evokes a changing pattern. The binary opposition vertical-horizontal is, incidentally, suggestive of the dichotomy of selection and combination, the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes. It also recalls Jakobson’s distinction between metaphor and metonymy in which Lodge took a keen interest in the 1970s. An interest that could be explained by his concerns, as a literary critic, about the realistic novel in the face of a growing number of experimental novels, most of which resorted to metafiction as a narrative technique, at the same time using and abusing the conventions of realism. As Martin points out, Jakobson’s distinction between metaphor and metonymy symbolizes somewhat the difference between the realistic novel and metafiction (1999, p. 32), the latter precluding the former when it is self-conscious.

Texts in Motion

According to Bergonzi, “*Changing Places* is deliberately self-conscious, a critical reflection on the art of fiction as well as an enjoyable example of it” (1995, p. 18). And what’s interesting is that the metafictional aspect of *Changing Places* is closely related to the logic of motion intrinsic to the novel. Philip’s book, *Let’s Write a Novel*, foregrounds the self-reflexivity in *Changing Places*. It is a book which ‘migrates’ from Rumridge to Euphoria, for the purposes of Philip’s novel-writing class:

The package from Hilary evidently contained a book, and was marked ‘DAMAGED BY SEA WATER’ which explained its strange, almost sinister shape. He peeled the wrapping paper off to reveal a warped, faded, wrinkled volume which he could not immediately identify. The spine was missing and the pages were stuck together. He managed to prise it open in the middle, however, and read: “Flashbacks should be used sparingly, if at all. They slow down the progress of the story and confuse the reader. Life, after all, goes forward, not backwards (Lodge, 1978, p. 186).

¹² The scene is, for Robert Morace, “reminiscent of silent film comedies” (1989, p. 162).

In addition to pointing out the metafictional essence of the novel, the shipped book subtly signals a self-conscious narrative, as in most postmodern novels. After the above mentioned passage deprecating flashbacks in novels, for instance, and as if to invalidate it, the narrative line breaks to give way to a flashback from Philip's memory about his arrest and the beginning of his affair with Désirée; a moment of erotic recollection interrupted by Sy Gootblatt whispering to him: "I think you're having an erection and it doesn't look nice at a vigil" (Lodge, 1978, p. 192).

The self-reflexive function of *Let's Write a Novel* shows in the epistolary section as well. Hilary observes, in one of her letters to Philip: "*Let's Write a Novel?* What a little book it is. There is a whole chapter on how to write an epistolary novel, but surely nobody's done that since the eighteenth century?" (Lodge, 1978, p. 130). While in the first case it was a harbinger of flashbacks, here *Let's Write a Novel* has a parodic and self-reflexive function.

As a matter of fact, the passage is quoted in the third part of the novel, where the epistolary form is used and which is accordingly entitled "Corresponding". This section of the novel is altogether composed of letters in a criss-cross pattern: Hilary and Philip are writing to one another and, by the same token, Désirée and Morris are corresponding. Texts are consequently crossing borders, epistles being sent from England to the US and vice versa. The epistolary narrative is always a signifier of distance; it would otherwise be superfluous. It supposes that writing a text is bound to a 'journey,' the letter moving from one place to another, and this text migration is inseparable from the concept of motion that determines the novel.

Additionally – and this further confirms the centrality of movement in Lodge's novel – other narrative techniques are concatenated to produce the variable structure of *Changing Places*, as is often the case in postmodern fiction. Homogeneity is only transient. The perspective and narrative method in the linear progression of the fiction change as one chapter ends and the other starts. At least five narrative shifts operate from the first part to the ending. The first and second parts, respectively entitled "Flying" and "Settling", are presented in the guise of traditional realistic narratives with an omniscient narrator describing, through a double perspective – a "duplex chronicle" (Lodge, 1978, p. 7) – the protagonists' arrival and their struggle for adaptation. The third part, as already mentioned, is epistolary. In the fourth part ("Reading"), the narrative line shifts to a collage of newspapers clippings. Characterized with non-linearity and discontinuity due to the numerous flashbacks it comprises, the fifth part is evocative of other postmodern narratives. The sixth part, entitled "Ending", is written as a film script, as noted earlier.

In this final part, the reader must cope with visual images and, as cinematic writing supersedes novelistic writing, is invited to reflect on the likelihood of an unpromising future for the novel as a literary genre:

Our generation—we subscribe to the old liberal doctrine of the inviolate self. It's the great tradition of realistic fiction, it's what novels are about. The private life in the foreground, history a distant rumble of gunfire, somewhere offstage. In Jane Austen not even a rumble. Well, the novel is dying and us with it. No wonder I could never get anything out of my novel-writing class at Euphoric State. It's an unnatural medium for their experience. Those kids (gestures at screen) are living a film, not a novel (Lodge, 1978, p. 250).

Philip's allusion in this passage to Jane Austen – both Philip and Morris are Jane Austen scholars¹³ – reminds readers that intertextuality too, with its basic system of transfer and influences, implies movement. Unarguably, intertextuality suggests a metaphysics of motion; the presence or suggestion of previously published texts in a work presupposes an abstract movement of those texts – literally cited or just alluded to – moving from their original narrative space to the parodying text. To paraphrase Edward Said: like people, texts travel from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another (1983, p. 226). In a way, *Changing Places* is extremely intertextual; so much so that it encompasses a passage which alludes, as notes Bergonzi, “within a few lines to Swift, T. S. Eliot, Nietzsche, Mark Twain and Blake” (1995, p. 16).

The wide range of literary allusions in *Changing Places* also includes such novelists and writers as Charles Dickens, Jean-Paul Sartre, T. S. Eliot, E. M. Forster, Jack Kerouac, James Joyce, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Milton, Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, Henry James, as well as Camus and D. H. Lawrence. William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* arguably draws even more attention from the reader (it functions as a foregrounding). It is mentioned in one of Philip's game performances. The game, recalling what Bakhtin calls “the peculiar logic of the inside out” (1984, p. 11), is called “humiliation”. And as its name implies, it consists of humiliating oneself by naming a book one has not read. When Philip plays the game with his fellow colleagues of the English Department in Euphoria, much to everyone's surprise, *Hamlet* is named:

This was a game you won by humiliating *yourself*. The essence of the matter is that each person names a book which he hasn't read but assumes the others have read, and scores a point for every person who has read it. [...] Howard slammed his fist on the table, jutted his jaw about six feet over the table and said: ‘*Hamlet*’. [...] Howard Ringbaum unexpectedly flunked his review three days later and it's generally supposed that this was because the English Department dared not give tenure to a man who publicly admitted to not having read *Hamlet* (Lodge, 1978, p. 136).

Obviously, Philip's humiliation game is not so much derisive as it is referential; but the backdrop of the referential function it is granted is clearly sarcastic.¹⁴ The game, whatever the case, contributes to foregrounding the place of intertextuality in the novel; and the comic effect it gives increases the pleasure of reading. To fully enjoy that pleasure, however, “the reader must be ready to change places much more frequently than the two characters do” (Martin, 1999, p. 31).

On this text movability depend the production of meaning and its manifestation in the reader.¹⁵ The satirical essence of the novel makes it compulsory for the reader to become involved in

¹³ In fact, Morris is an eminent Jane Austen scholar; he has published extensively on her work. Philip, however, has just written a Master's dissertation on Austen.

¹⁴ This sarcasm about academic staff is felt again later on when Hilary says to Philip: “Incidentally, Bob told me that Robin took rather a pasting from Morris Zapp at the last Staff Seminar. It seems that Mr Zapp, despite his somewhat Neanderthal appearance and loutish manners, is really quite clever and knows all about those fashionable people like Chomsky and Saussure and Levi-Strauss that Robin has been brow-beating the rest of you with, or at least enough about them to make Robin look fairly silly” (p. 138).

¹⁵ The notion of “text movability”, used of late in reception theories in Scandinavian countries, namely in foreign language teaching has been inspired, in part, by the work of Judith Langer. The notion owes much to her concept of envisionment-building used in her theory of literary envisionment. Text movability refers to the fact that in reading process, it is the reader who is moving, not the text (Langer, 1990).

achieving effects (causing laughter and fostering critical thinking) by “stepping in, and stepping out” of the text (Langer, 1990, p. 813), in order to objectify it, reacting to it through his or her experience. In truth, because the comic novel is dynamic and relational, the act of reading is inherently disruptive inasmuch as the story demands the reader’s emotional participation in the form of laughter. Relaxing, no doubt, and definitely cathartic extradiegetic moments of laughter necessarily punctuate the narrative, making of the reader an incentive mechanism, at the same time breaking and binding the structural components of the narrative. These intermittent changes in the mood of the reader fill the feedback gaps deliberately left open for the sake of co-construction of the comic effect. They function as the reader’s “lols,” reacting to the comic elements, generating in the process an interplay between reading and laughing, seriousness and hilarity; in short, a dialog between *homo poetica* and *homo ridens*.

Conclusion

The suitability of Lodge’s title, “*Changing Places*”, is by no means self-evident. “*Changing Places*” as a title does not so much refer to the two protagonists and the exchange program they engage in as it reflects a well-designed, entirely ironic and radical logic of motion throughout the novel; a dynamic which is rendered thematically, psychologically as well as textually. Lodge has remarked, as Bergonzi reports, “I write layered fiction, so that it will make sense and give satisfaction even on the surface level, while there are other levels of implications and reference that are there to be discovered by those who have the interest or motivation to do so” (1995, pp. 16–17). His title, no doubt, was devised in that vein.

We have seen how movement and change prevail in the novel. The analeptic references, and peripatetic nature of the story, but also the shifts of identity noticed in the protagonists, among others, are very telling as to the place devoted to movement and change. What’s more, the different narrative techniques, as discussed above, disrupt the narrative linear progression of the novel, thus underscoring both its lack of uniformity and its unpredictable nature. I have also shown that this instability and changes in the narrative are mirrored and reinforced in the textuality the novel signals. Dramatizing movement in writing, Lodge makes texts travel. The shipped book and the epistolary form adopted in the third part testify to it. So do the imported ideas which in changing places, and spaces, become constituents in an intertextual frolic.

Abounding with kinaesthetic images, Lodge’s fiction about change, mobility and motion at large, is both satirical and farcical. The metonymic aspect of irony and the metaphoric nature of parody are woven together in it. Carnavalesque in spirit, and like the Mennipean satire defined by Blanchard (Womack, 2005, p. 328), *Changing Places* is basically parodic and replete with ironies. As a university teacher, Lodge viewed academic life and academic institutions with some scepticism (Martin, 1999, p. 24). He uses, regardless, “the contrast between Zapp and Swallow [...] to exploit to fine comic effect a whole series of oppositions: English and American academia; the Midlands and the Bay Area; clashing cultures in general” (Bergonzi, 1995, p. 16). Morris Zapp and Philip Swallow have experienced change and exchange to the highest degree. Through their portrayal, and as they move in various opposite directions only converging towards the end of the novel, Lodge seems to suggest that to enjoy the pleasures of a nice work, in a small world, changing places, at times, is mandatory.

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