

## Arab Soecity of English Language Studies

---

From the SelectedWorks of AWEJ for Translation & Literary Studies

---

Spring May 15, 2019

### The Cultural Revolution in David Lodge's Changing Places

Noureddine Friji, *Arab Soecity of English Language Studies*

## **The Cultural Revolution in David Lodge's *Changing Places***

**Noureddine Friji**

English Language Institute

King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

### **Abstract**

Utilizing Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1962) and *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972) as a theoretical backdrop, this article seeks to gauge the extent to which the teachings of the German philosopher and political theorist lay the groundwork for the protests mounted by the university students in David Lodge's campus novel *Changing Places* (1975). Admittedly, the Student Revolution spilled over into numerous fields. However, given space restrictions, only its cultural manifestations will be examined. It will be clear that at the root of Lodge's students' uprising lies an overpowering urge to break with the cultural heritage and with the academics upholding it. It will be equally clear, nonetheless, that these young activists' faith in Marcuse's political doctrine is unwelcome to conservative academics on the ground that it has diverse adverse effects on universities. Not only are politically oriented texts and discourses given precedence over traditional ones but also teachers and administrators are, at times, hindered from doing their duties. The plausible conclusion to draw, in the light of the research's findings, is that although cultural revolutions undeniably pave the way for a number of personal and collective achievements and help us modernize many aspects of life, they should not blind us to the enduring significance of previous cultural traditions and of the aesthetic value of literary works.

**Keywords:** cultural revolution, david lodge, herbert marcuse, the new left, proletarian, radical

**Cites as:** Friji, N. (2019). The Cultural Revolution in David Lodge's *Changing Places*. *Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies*, 3 (2) 22-36.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol3no2.3>

## Introduction

### *General background*

The 1960s witnessed an explosion of changes in Western societies. Gitlin (1993) finds historical precedence for these events in the sixteenth-century Reformation, which took place in Germany, where “the urgent young, disgusted by the corruption of values, beat on the doors of established power in the name of reform” (p. xxii). Chief among these movements is the Student Revolution, which started in 1963 as a “ ‘minor counterrevolt’ ” (Kerr, 2001, p.101) but soon “materialized into a series of cyclones” (p.101). New Left campus activists, disappointed with the political and moral failure of the fifties’ Old Left (Gitlin, 1993) and, inspired by Herbert Marcuse’s ideas (Kellner, 1991; Heineman, 2001), emerged “in the guise of single-issue movements: civil rights, civil liberties, campus reform, peace” (Gitlin, 1993, p. 83). They challenged the dominant ideology; disapproved of the Bomb, which they saw as a threat to the affluent society and to humanity; and discredited mainstream culture, which valorised middle-class norms. Predictably, they collided with “a leftover segment of the moribund social-democratic segment of the Old Left, huddling around its embers” (p. 110).

As the war in Vietnam intensified, the New Left identified with revolutionary movements and heroes abroad and drew inspiration from the Cultural Revolution in China (Gitlin, 1993), the National Liberation Front in Vietnam and revolutionary movements in developing countries. This accounts for the rapid rise of militancy among student activists, as illustrated by the huge May-1968 movement in France and Prague. Militancy grew more prominent as pickets, petitions, sit-ins, marches, and protests escalated among students. Not unexpectedly, violence broke out more frequently. At Columbia University, for example, students occupied a number of buildings; messed up things, including books; had sex; and consumed drugs during the occupation.

It is little marvel that this decade was called the “psychedelic years” (Byatt, 1991, p. 13) and that it saw the contagious spread of the “Three Ds” (divorce, drinking, drugs) (Jones, 1993, p. 11) and the rise of a deracinating counterculture, or rather “encounter culture” (Gitlin, 1993, p. xviii). As a legacy of the beatnik culture of the fifties and a hybrid of “black culture and American Indian tradition, eastern religions and American utopianism” (Fraser, 1988, p. 113), the counterculture had its genesis in San Francisco, where several young people lived together in poverty, had their own style and experimented with LSD and marijuana, and it spread fast thanks to Rock ’n roll music, among other things. Premised on the “idea that the personal was political, that personal liberation was an essential part of creating a new and better society” (Fraser, 1988, p. 121), the counterculture gave an impetus to the transformation of sexual mores. Notwithstanding the wide-scale spread of sexually transmitted diseases (Heineman, 2001), women activists called for more sexual liberation and for the right to unwedded sex and abortion (Kurlansky, 2005).

In view of these all-encompassing changes, students were no longer the “Silent Generation,” the “listeners,” and the “goalkeepers” (Anderson, 1996, p. 19) of the previous decade. Indeed, they strongly objected to parental rules and to universities’ tendency to act *in loco parentis* with respect to their personal lifestyles (Fraser, 1988; Heineman, 2001). The phrase “Don’t trust anyone over thirty” (Heineman, 2001, p. 107), which was coined by a mathematics graduate

student at Berkeley, adumbrates the young generation's distrust of their seniors. Traditional curricula and literary subjects were prime targets for the Student Revolution. American students objected to being taught subjects based on European civilization alone and requested that studies related to Native Americans, African Americans, Jews and women be included in the curriculum (Anderson, 1996). These changes challenged the authority of administrators and teachers. Lionel Trilling, among other conservative American academics, grew increasingly concerned about the fate of departments and of traditional curricula as dissent swept across campuses. He also feared that modernist writers, whose novels allegedly contained and maintained general truths, fell out of favour with the rebelling students on the ground that they were supposedly hostile to civilization and that they engendered a sense of alienation by stressing the primacy of style over ethics (Kernan, 1990).

### **Literature review**

Several critics have investigated Lodge's *Changing Places* from different critical perspectives along with other (academic) novels by Lodge (Ammann, 1991; Bergonzi, 1995; Li, 1998; Martin, 1999; Sant, 2006; Sava, 2006) or along with other (academic) novels by other writers (Ommundsen, 1985; Wiegenstein, 1987; Morace, 1989; Fullerty, 2008). Notwithstanding the useful insights they give into the novel in question, these studies fail to have an in-depth look at its most absorbing themes as they have to allot equal attention to other novels. Arizti (2002), however, stands out in the critical crowd in this regard, as it were, thanks to her comprehensive analysis of the engaging themes of intimacy and sexual liberation in Lodge's *Changing Places* and *Small World* through Herbert Marcuse's combination of Marxism and Freudian psychoanalysis to underline and undermine the repressive nature of capitalism. She holds that Marcuse's theory of "over-repression" (p. 66) reveals the excess of repression in sexual as well as economic areas and the necessity of rejecting heterosexuality and achieving the eroticization of society through polymorphous sexuality as manifested in experimentation with sex, explicit sexual images, premarital sex and pornography. Preoccupation with intimate love relationships and adultery in *Changing Places*, Arizti goes on, is meant to divert attention away from potential social rebellion in that it identifies "emancipation almost exclusively with sexual liberation and thus conforming to Marcuse's theory of the repressive desublimation of genital eros" (p. 165).

It is obvious from the above that Arizti's book somehow treads the same theoretical turf as my present paper. Although it undeniably makes a valuable contribution to the field of study under consideration, it falls short of an analysis of the cultural and intellectual aspects of the Student Revolution because it mainly focuses attention on such issues as comedy, love, marriage, romance, private versus public relationships, gender roles, and intimate mores from the sixties to the eighties. For instance, it traces the radical changes in these mores to the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution, which heralded the birth of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" (Arizti, 2002, p. 61). Postmodernism, Arizti claims, has helped change the moral and cultural scenes by prioritizing the particular over the universal. As the latter was the cornerstone of the Enlightenment and metanarratives, its decline expedited the collapse of all the values and institutions connected with it:

Postmodernity's radical individualism and antiessentialism have challenged the dominant discourse of sexuality, declaring the obsolescence of the institutions based on dated metanarratives. Tradition, the family, the state, society in general, are divested of their normative power. There is no grand narrative of sexuality but a myriad of models of intimacy. Its positive and liberatory politics of desire have questioned the traditional epistemology of sexuality, helping to empower dissident sexual minorities. From queer theory, the well-established hetero/homo divide has been subverted, and the new nomenclature of the sexual points at the existence of gladly assumed identities where before there were only shame-faced attitudes. (pp. 81-82)

Now, given the dearth of research on the Cultural Revolution in Lodge's *Changing Places*, this study, building on Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* and *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, will try to determine the extent to which his call for radical cultural changes finds favour with Lodge's fictional students. It will also argue that the reactions, actions and frictions generated by Marcuse's arguments, one way or another, challenge the venerated literary tradition universities have always boasted and boosted. Another aim of this paper's author is to demonstrate how *Changing Places*, casting a retrospective look at the sixties' Student Revolution and cleaving closely to Lodge's academic experience, ventures into the controversial territory of politics instead of confining itself to well-trodden ground such as the publish or perish dilemma, promotion, tenure, academic power, the ups and downs of academic marriages, teacher-student relationships, and so on.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the article's writer emphasises the need to strike a balance between past and present cultures and the reasonableness of fostering constructive criticism and mutual respect in academic circles.

### **Methodology**

Mounting a scathing attack on capitalism, Marcuse (1972) theorises that it can be combated only through a "Cultural Revolution" (p. 79) and through the subsequent transformation of "the entire traditional culture" (p. 79). Premised on the assumption that arts have an unmistakable "political potential" (p. 79), this radical revolution aspires to create alternative languages, arts and images with a view to helping man's body and mind break free from the "domination, indoctrination, and deception" (p. 79) imposed on them by "the established language and images" (p. 79). The alternative languages, Marcuse hypothesises, exist in arts such as literature and music and in "the folk tradition (black language, argot, slang)" (p. 80). The tradition of protest negates what is taken for granted and subverts it:

The subverting use of the artistic tradition aims from the beginning at a systematic *desublimation* of culture; that is to say, at undoing the aesthetic form. "Aesthetic form" means the total of qualities (harmony, rhythm, contrast) which make an oeuvre a self-contained whole, with an order and a structure of its own (the style). By virtue of these qualities the work of art *transforms* the order prevailing in reality. The transformation is "illusion," but an illusion which gives the contents represented a meaning and a function different from those they have in the prevailing universe of discourse. (p. 81)

Challenging the main features of the aesthetic form, namely the illusion of harmony, “idealistic transfiguration” (Marcuse, 1972, p. 81) and the disconnection between the word and the world necessitates the inauguration of “immediate” (p. 82) art forms which activate a “‘*natural*’ ” sense experience freed from the requirements of an obsolescent exploitative society” (p. 82). Thanks to this “*sensuous culture*” (p. 82), the body and the soul are treated as means of emancipation rather than as victims of labour and as guarantors of productivity. While emphasizing the possibility of achieving the long-awaited deviation from serious and popular bourgeois art forms, Marcuse urges the creation of a “proletarian literature” (p. 123) or a “working class literature” (p. 123) marked by “anti-intellectualism” (p. 126) to maintain “the progressive function of art and develop a revolutionary consciousness” (p. 123) that is of the essence in class struggle.

While society and high culture have always inhabited separate spheres, with the former having its own ideals which only a privileged few enjoyed and boasting the ability to preserve truth through its idiosyncratic sublimations, Marcuse (1991) explains, today's situation has changed drastically:

Today's novel feature is the flattening out of the antagonism between culture and social reality through the obliteration of the oppositional, alien, and transcendent elements in the higher culture by virtue of which it constituted *another dimension* of reality. This liquidation of two-dimensional culture takes place not through the denial and rejection of the ‘cultural values,’ but through their wholesale incorporation into the established order, through their reproduction and display on a massive scale. In fact, they serve as instruments of social cohesion. (p. 57)

Like a number of ideals in society, higher culture, Marcuse (1991) adds, has undergone a process of “materialization” (p. 58) and has, as a result, lost a great deal of its truth. In fact, it is, lamentably, associated with a pre-technological world which cannot be recaptured. Additionally, Marcuse (1972) calls upon educated people to rally behind the cause of the downtrodden and to help them “realize and enjoy their truly human capabilities” (p. 47) by organizing their spontaneous protests. This task can be achieved, among other things, through the establishment of “an intensive counter-education and organization” (p. 47) and through a complete break with the “intensive indoctrination” (p. 47) applied by the system. Radical Left revolutionaries, Marcuse goes on, can use the university to train their “future *counter-cadres*” (p. 54). They also need to set up their own “counterinstitutions” (p. 55) and their own radical media in order to disseminate their ideas.

This is prompted by the fact that mainstream mass media are at one and the same time means of information and entertainment and “agents of manipulation” (Marcuse, 1991, p. 8). Together with political decisions, they enhance one-dimensional thought through a discourse saturated with “self-validating hypotheses which, incessantly and monopolistically repeated, become hypnotic definitions and dictations” (p. 14). Market values are also believed to infiltrate the field of mass media:



If mass communications blend together harmoniously, and often unnoticeably, art, politics, religion, and philosophy with commercials, they bring these realms of culture to their common denominator—the commodity form. The music of the soul is also the music of salesmanship. Exchange value, not truth value counts. On it centers the rationality of the status quo, and all alien rationality is bent to it. (p. 57)

Having mined two books of Marcuse's for arguments that lie within the present paper's scope, the paper's writer now sets out to analyse how the students in Lodge's *Changing Places*, armed with the German philosopher's teachings, embark on a cultural revolution on their campuses by employing a variety of cultural tools such as radical media - newspapers and radio shows, proletarian literature, unconventional literary genres, music and dance.

### Analysis

#### *Radical media*

Aboard the plane bound for the United States, a British student called Charles Boon informs Philip Swallow, his compatriot and former teacher at Rumridge University, that there is an underground paper called *Euphoric Times* at Euphoric State University and that he does a weekly column in it (Lodge, 1992). He also boasts that the students want him to be the main editor and that he is, however, considering starting a rival paper. Of course, Boon is not unused to newspapers of this kind. While still an undergraduate student at Rumridge, he edited a student newspaper called *Rumble* and "involved" it "in an expensive libel suit brought by the mayoress of Rumridge" (p. 36). Taking this student's radical leanings into account, his last name, Boon, may safely be said to evoke the word *bomb* rather than the positive connotations of the word *boon*. The chapter "Reading" (pp. 153-166), featuring extracts from a number of newspapers, among other things, reveals the extent to which students' media can enhance their revolutionary cause. Advertising the People's Garden in Plotinus, *Euphoric Times* refers to it as a "new Eden" (p. 155) and as "the most spontaneous and encouraging event so far in the continuing struggle between the University-Industrial-Military complex and the Alternative Society of Love and Peace" (p. 155). It soon later reiterates the need to guard the Garden and to stand united against police authorities' oppressive policies:

Our land is desecrated, but the spirit of the Garden is alive . . . . The people of Plotinus are united against the pigs and tyrants. The bull-shit barriers are coming down, the barricades of love are going up against the pigs. (p. 162)

Finally, it accuses Chancellor Binde, Sheriff O'Keene and a "nameless pig" (p. 161) of having killed the student John Roberts while he was taking part in a riot. The Charles Boon Show is bathed in the same radical light, in a manner of speaking.

Boon's journey to the States does nothing to excite his interest in study. He confides to Swallow that he is still doing a Master's, a kind of course work, "a little baby dissertation" (Lodge, 1992, p. 49), that he has no time for study and that he is chiefly preoccupied with the Charles Boon

Show, "a late-night phone-in programme" (p. 50) on the radio in which callers discuss a wide range of topics. In addition, the programme is "free from business and political pressures" (p. 74) in that it is publicised by the non-commercial network, QXYZ, "which was supported by listeners' subscriptions and foundation grants" (p. 74). Not unexpectedly, it points an accusing finger at capitalist policies and glorifies revolutions. For example, Swallow hears the Black Pantheress "explaining to a caller the application of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory to the situation of oppressed racial minorities in a later stage of industrial capitalism" (p. 103).

The association between such programmes and youthful enthusiasm is articulated through the fact that when Désirée, Zapp's wife, expresses her aversion to the Charles Boon Show, Boon counters, "If someone your age liked my show, I'd know I had failed" (Lodge, 1992, p. 145). The casual character of the programme finds further illustration in Boon's tendency, at times, to start it by reading a poem of his own composition. It is not insignificant, therefore, that "the death of the novel" (p. 198) is one of the concerns Swallow discusses on the phone with the audience of the Charles Boon Show alongside burning issues like "the Garden, drugs, law and order, nuclear testing, abortion, encounter groups, the Underground press . . . the Sexual Revolution . . ." (p. 198).

The mounting pressure exerted by the spread of such means of communication goes hand in hand with the enthusiastic welcome given to their champions at a time when the representatives of traditional literary culture are receding into the background. To Swallow's "considerable mortification" (Lodge, 1992, p. 73), for instance, his "chief social asset at Euphoric State turned out to be his association with Charles Boon" (p. 73). Worse still, people are eager to be acquainted with him merely "for the sake of some anecdote of Charles Boon's early life" (p. 73). When the British professor arrives at Luke Hogan's house to attend a party, Mrs Hogan asks him if Boon is with him. As soon as Boon shows up, everybody turns to see him. Meanwhile, Swallow, "who had counted on being himself the evening's chief focus of attention, found himself standing neglected on the fringes of this little court" (p. 77). In a letter to his wife, he complains that Mrs Hogan "enlisted my help in coaxing Charles Boon to come and be lionized, an irony I could have done without" (p. 123).

### ***Proletarian literature***

The ghetto novel which the campus militant activist Wily Smith is working on (Lodge, 1992) may be said to fall within the scope of Marcuse's category of proletarian literature in that ghetto inhabitants are, by definition, at the bottom of the social hierarchy. It is both relevant and revealing that when this student bursts into Swallow's office to escape the police, the British professor is reading John Milton's *Lycidas*. Smith's sudden and unbidden appearance may, in other words, be said to symbolise the encroachment of emergent genres like the ghetto novel on traditional literary works like Milton's above-mentioned text; on Jane Austen's works, on which Swallow has written an MA thesis; and on other literary works for which Swallow has "a genuine love" (p. 17), namely those of Beowulf and Virginia Woolf as well as "medieval sermons, Elizabethan sonnet sequences, Restoration heroic tragedy, eighteenth-century broadsides, the novels of William Godwin, the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning . . ." (p. 17).



The surname Smith itself brings to mind the working-class job blacksmith. Smith's insistence that he is black although he is not so (Lodge, 1992) adds more credibility to this conjecture. A name like Black Smith, one may surmise, would be of immense significance in that it brings together racial and working-class aspects and, by so doing, it subverts not only conventional names but also the positive characteristics associated with them. This is consonant with Smith's antagonism to traditional courses and educational policies on the whole. When Swallow first meets him, he is, significantly enough, wearing "some kind of army combat jacket with camouflage markings" (p. 66). As he puts his hand in his jacket's pocket, Swallow fears that he is going to produce a bomb, but it turns out to be only a catalogue of courses. Once again, this opaque analogy is suggestive of the potentially explosive nature of radical ideas. Smith's adoption of confrontational tactics finds its best expression in the fact that when Swallow allows him to enrol in his creative writing course, he urges his fellow students to boycott not only this course but also other classes, by way of supporting the strike.

This occurs at a time when minorities' increasing demands for reform oblige universities to make concessions in matters pertaining to curricula and recruitment (Lodge, 1992). For instance, Luke Hogan, the Head of the English Department, advises Swallow to write a book or two in order to secure a job at Euphoric State and confides to him that if he were a black man or an Indian, he would be offered a job because the University, like a number of other academic institutions across the nation, has made a settlement to employ more Third World faculty as a result of the pressure triggered by strikes. Universities are also aware of the sharp rise in the number of radicals and of the influence they may have exerted on students, several of whom purchase their books from such places as "the Beta Bookshop, a favourite gathering-place for radicals" (p. 193). Strolling across Howle Plaza after taking part in a faculty vigil, Swallow is left in no doubt as to the ballooning fame of political activism in the States. The area is depicted as "a kind of ideological fair" (p. 192) where "you . . . buy the literature of the Black Panthers . . . and express yourself in a hundred other interesting ways" (pp.192-193). Obviously, Smith's novel is not the only instance of proletarian literature. Nor is it the only living witness to the snowballing popularity of emergent radical genres.

While Charles Boon is apprising him of the agitations on the Euphoric State campus, Swallow notices that his former student's lapel buttons carry several slogans adumbrating the situation in question (Lodge, 1992). Interpreting this as irrefutable evidence of the birth of "a new literary medium, the lapel button, something between the classical epigram and the imagist lyric" (p. 49), he presumes that a postgraduate student may one day write a thesis on it and that Boon may already be doing so as part of his MA research. The proletarian orientation of the aforesaid genre is attributable to the working-class background of its adherents, namely Bates and Smith. Swallow recalls that Bates:

belonged to a category of students whom Philip referred to privately (showing his age) as 'the Department's Teddy-Boys'. These were clever young men of plebeian origin who, unlike the traditional scholarship boy (such as Philip himself) showed no deference to the social and cultural values of the institution to which they had been admitted, but maintained until the day they graduated a style of ostentatious uncouthness in dress, behaviour and

speech. They came late to classes, unwashed, unshaven, and wearing clothes they had evidently slept in; slouched in their seats, rolling their own cigarettes and stubbing them out on the furniture . . . answered questions addressed to them in dialect monosyllables, and handed in disconcertingly subtle, largely destructive essays written in the style of F. R. Leavis. (pp. 35-36)

Swallow will soon later note a note reading "KEEP KOOP" (Lodge, 1992, p. 65) printed on a button on Wily Smith's lapel. Soon later, he learns that this subgenre is being publicised in support of Karl Kroop, an Assistant Professor in the English Department who has recently been denied tenure. The intrigued British professor intimates to Luke Hogan that he cannot wait to meet Kroop, having "read so much about him, in buttonholes" (p. 75). Kroop will later continue wearing "a KEEP KROOP BUTTON in his lapel, as a veteran might wear a combat medal" (p. 183). Emphasising the potentially violent nature of radical genres, this analogy brings us back to the disguised resemblance between the catalogue of courses held by Smith and the bomb. Having witnessed the importance of enlisting the help of the students and the academic staff through this so-called genre, Howard Ringbaum, a teacher of Augustan pastoral, fears that no one will support him during his upcoming tenure campaign by wearing "RETAIN RINGBAUM buttons" (p. 76). To be sure, the cultural climate in America, as depicted in the novel, is hospitable to the rise of unconventional genres of this kind. Indeed, American students have "read the most outlandish things and not read the most obvious ones" (p. 123), as Swallow puts it in a letter to his wife. One of his students, for example, has read such unknown writers as Gurdjieff and Arismov but, oddly enough, he is not conversant with E. M. Forster's works.

### ***Music and dancing***

Having got into the habit of watching TV programmes such as *Top of the Pops*, Swallow envies "the Dionysian horde" (Lodge, 1992, p. 28) their infinite enjoyment of the "deliciously mindless, liberating" (p. 27) atmosphere. Later, the narrator zeroes in on the dance in which Melanie Byrd, Morris Zapp's daughter, and her friends engage, paying special attention to the effect music has on their senses and responsive bodies and to their clever way of keeping up with the pace of the "accelerations and slowings" (p. 99) of the rhythm. The liberating character of the dance is articulated through the attendant actions and through the excitement they generate:

Then the tempo became faster, the twanging notes louder, faster and louder, and they moved more violently in response to the music, they writhed and twitched, stamped and lifted their arms and snapped their fingers and clapped their hands. Eyes rolled, sweat glistened, breasts bounced, flesh smacked flesh; cries, shrill and ecstatic, pierced the smoke. (pp. 99-100)

In the light of its reaction to and interaction with music, the body assumes an expressive function. As a student called the Cowboy instructs Swallow, "What you have to do is communicate by rubbing against each other . . . Through your spine, your shoulder-blade" (Lodge, 1992, p. 99). Significantly, when the middle-aged professor joins the group of students in "the free, improvised,

Dionysian dancing he had hankered after" (p. 99) and presses himself against Melanie, she asks him, "Hey, Philip, what are you trying to tell me with those shoulder-blades?" (p. 99).

Rock music, of all the musical subgenres mentioned in the novel, seems to be the most closely connected with revolutions; while students' protests are gathering pace in Plotinus, "the record shops were playing the latest rock-gospel hit *Oh Happy Day* through their external speakers" (Lodge, 1992, p. 193). It is small wonder that "rock bands and topless dancers" (p. 248) take part in the March on Plotinus. It is also not insignificant that the same musical subgenre is a firm favourite with striptease clubs in Soho, where the idiosyncratic treatment of the body betrays an overwhelming desire to break loose from conventional moral constraints. Granted its revolutionary character, rock music is associated with the younger generation. By contrast, the older generation have a liking for other types of music. Désirée, for example, spends her free time reading and listening to classical romantic music. Similarly, invited by Zapp to dinner in a small club called Petronella on the occasion of her birthday, Hilary, Swallow's wife, settles herself into the comfortable grip of "the entertainment . . . provided by a so-so folk-blues group called Morte D'Arthur with a wistful girl singer who sang pastiches of recordings by Joan Baez" (p. 201). This accords with the club's custom of playing "decent music" (p. 201). The celebration would have been spoilt, however, if the entertainment had been provided by "a heavy rock band for instance" (p. 202).

## Discussion

All the aforementioned tools of the Cultural Revolution seem to have had a few dramatic effects on the academic scene. Chief among these is the decline of literature. In actual fact, the course taught by Karl Kroop is entitled "*English 213. The Death of the Book? Communication and Crisis in Contemporary Culture*" (Lodge, 1992, p. 68). Worse still, by ultimately removing the question mark, he seems to announce the death of literature rather than simply posing questions about its imminence. As Swallow resignedly concedes towards the end of the novel, "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" (p. 250). What is more, students' rejection of traditional teaching approaches and traditional genres root and branch explains why they consider Howard Ringbaum "[d]ull, dull, dull" (p. 68) and why Zapp, like Lionel Trilling, finds it difficult to teach. Being sick and tired of "student intimidation" (p. 39), "the Student Revolution, its strikes, its protests, issues, non-negotiable demands . . ." (p. 39), the American professor decides to fly to Rummidge and to "condemn himself to six months' hard labour" (p. 39). When he pleads with the Dean of Faculty at Euphoric State to give him a chance to go somewhere to Europe, the Dean rightly guesses, "Students getting you down?" (p. 43). Indeed, Zapp finds it hard to apply his teaching style and to teach his favourite subject and writer as students are:

openly contemptuous of both the subject and his own qualifications. . . . Jane Austen was certainly not the writer to win the hearts of the new generation. Sometimes Morris woke sweating from nightmares in which students paraded round the campus carrying placards that declared KNIGHTLEY SUCKS and FANNY PRICE IS A FINX. (p. 46)

Naturally, this comes as a shock to the renowned champion of the works of Jane Austen, one of the twenty-six writers the American critic Bloom (1995) greets as the vanguard of an impregnable literary canon whose aesthetic value has stood the test of time.<sup>2</sup> With four books on Austen to his name, Zapp embarks "with great enthusiasm on an ambitious critical project: a series of commentaries on Jane Austen which would work through the whole canon, one novel at a time, saying absolutely everything that could be said about them" (Lodge, 1992, p. 44). He looks forward to exhausting these novels by applying a variety of critical approaches to them with an eye to putting "a definitive stop to the production of any further garbage on the subject" (p. 44).<sup>3</sup> The American scholar's obsession with Austen is common knowledge. In a letter to his wife, for example, Swallow, Zapp's opposite number, reveals that Zapp's twins are called Elizabeth and Darcy because Zapp is "a Jane Austen man, of course – indeed *the* Jane Austen man in the opinion of many" (p. 123).

After learning that Hilary wants to send a book entitled *Let's Write a Novel* by A. J. Beamish to her husband, Swallow, Zapp presumes that this book will not stir the attention of the students in English 305 at Euphoric State, "lazy, pretentious bastards, most of them, who thought they could write the General American Novel by just typing out their confessions and changing the names" (Lodge, 1992, p. 88). As they wage war on the traditional curriculum, British students, too, show disrespect for the individuals associated with it. Hilary stresses the stresses and strains generated by the news of the impending sit-in at Rumbridge, especially as far as the older staff members are concerned. Gordon Masters, the Head of the English Department, is the chief victim in this respect. The students' protests do not only precipitate his resignation but also impair his physical and mental health, hence his being treated at a private psychiatric clinic. Driven to despair, he later leaves Rumbridge "for a period of rest and recuperation" (p. 162).

Given its disruptiveness and its aftermath, the Revolution comes under fire from many circles. The narrator seems to indict the students' behaviour and to caution that by ousting academic leaders like Masters, revolutions are bound to plunge universities into endless chaos (Lodge, 1992). The Rumbridge English Department is thus likened to a sinking ship which cannot be rescued because its captain took the "sealed instructions about the ship's ultimate destination" (p. 214) with him as he fell aboard. Having joined the chorus of protests by taking part in the faculty vigil and by siding with and guiding the students, as per Marcuse's teachings, and having experimented with music and dance, Swallow finds rebelliousness too hard to swallow and sees sense. The change he undergoes towards the end of the novel belies his wife's charge that he seems to have turned into "one of these violent snobs, who think that nothing's important unless people are getting killed" (p. 247). Watching the Plotinus March on TV, he launches into a passionate argument for liberal humanistic ideals. He would not choose to be with the marchers, he insists, because " '[t]hat is no country for old men . . . ' " (p. 249) and because he would simply "be an imposter there" (p. 249).<sup>4</sup> His generation, he adds, observe "the old liberal doctrine of inviolate self" (p. 250) as represented by the realistic novels of Jane Austen, which attach great weight to private life while relegating history to the background and dismissing it as "a distant rumble of gunfire, somewhere offstage" (p. 250). This probably explains why he earlier turns off the radio after hearing the Black Pantheress speaking about the way Marxism can inspire revolutions.

Austen's ahistorical perception of reality is confirmed by Zapp. Having succeeded in ending the sit-in at Rumbridge, in bridging the divide between the students and the staff and in winning his colleagues' respect, he tells his students that Austen:

came down on the side of Eros against Agape – on the side, that is, of the private communion of lovers over against the public communion of social events and gatherings which invariably caused pain and distress (think for instance of the disastrous nature of group expeditions, to Sotherton in *Mansfield Park*, to Box Hill in *Emma*, to Lyme Regis in *Persuasion*). (p. 215)

The implication, one may suggest, is that Austen's novels, like other canonical works, teach and preach discipline and peace, as against the emergent literary genres and the other means of expression connected with radical thinkers, which seem, to conservative academics like Swallow and Zapp, to leave only distraction and destruction in their wake. Indeed, they may be said to challenge the conventional stability of the cultural and literary scenes by bringing political ideologies to bear on time-honoured works of art in the name of righting wrongs and addressing and redressing injustices when they may, if indirectly, encourage suggestible youths to adopt confrontational tactics and violent demeanour.

Predictably, the students' revolt somehow revolts not only academics but also some students. For instance, a student at Rumbridge submits a notice to *Rumble*, indicting students' protests and dismissing the protesters as "big fools" (Lodge, 1992, p. 164) who are wasting the University's as well as policemen's time and pointing out that when they grow up, they will realise that the University was run in a good way. To him, most of these activists are "hippeys" (p. 164) and "stupid" (p. 164) people who have not showered for a long time and "a load of old tramps with their long dirty hair" (p. 164). He winds up by reiterating that he loathes students and that he would hang them if he could.

Additionally, the peacefulness of the long-awaited march is in tune with the novel's opaque call for peace. The TV channel's commentator expresses his surprise at the fact that no violence has erupted by stating, "And it certainly looks as though the great march is going to pass off peacefully after all . . ." (Lodge, 1992, p. 247) and by adding, ". . . a lot of people feared blood would run in the streets of Plotinus today, but so far the vibrations are good . . ." (p. 248). This climate climaxes in the marchers' throwing of flowers instead of rocks at the guardsmen, who merely stand by and wave at the passing crowd.

It is also enlightening that Swallow's abandonment of his revolutionary zeal takes place at a time when he and his wife as well as Zapp and his wife are having a "summit meeting" (Lodge, 1992, p. 236) in New York to resolve their marital conflicts. Given that the novel does not offer any clear clue as to the end of this state of affairs, we can only guess that each couple will reconstruct their marriage and start afresh. In point of fact, in the sequel to his *Changing Places*, Lodge (1984) reveals that the two couples are still married notwithstanding the ups and downs marking their matrimonial relationships. This could be considered further proof of the survival of



the bourgeois family ideals preached by novelists like Austen in the face of the changes and challenges sweeping society.

Be this as it may, it may be better to ply a middle ground between the radical and conservative positions. As the university is an honourable and vulnerable institution which is populated by educated people, it would be more reasonable to have a debate based on mutual respect to settle quarrels and to reach a compromise between the students on the one hand and between the administrative and academic staff on the other. What is more, students should be encouraged to help bring about fruitful social and cultural changes. They should also be allowed to enjoy the fruits of their revolutionary labours, to have a say in the curriculum and assessment and to have their own media of expression and communication. At the same time, they should not assault or insult their teachers. Nor should they reject the cultural heritage and the aesthetic aspects of literary texts offhandedly as they are eternally informative and appealing.

### Conclusion

Investigating the extent to which Marcuse's ideas fire the university students in David Lodge's *Changing Places* with enthusiasm for change and inspire them to a cultural revolution, among other things, the present study has sought to illuminate the clash between canonical and iconoclastic trends of thinking. It has been demonstrated, for instance, that students' impatience of discipline and of established disciplines is frowned upon by conservative scholars on the ground that it expedites the rise of politically oriented discourses and sparks off unwanted and unwonted changes. Once again, however, it is useful to emphasise that student activists should not be demonized. Given the proliferation of global cultural and social changes, they cannot help hitching their wagon to the zeitgeist. They cannot, in other words, keep pace with the modernization of life and academic standards while drawing inspiration from past texts and contexts only. To achieve the desired goals, therefore, it may be useful for them to work towards more cultural innovation without breaking with precedent irrevocably. On the other hand, the literary tradition's enthusiasts had better reconcile themselves to the impossibility of imposing their own lifestyle as well as their presumably unassailable cultural values and ideas on new generations. They should not also lose sight of the fact that several achievements in the fields of civil rights, work, gender, politics and education are generally credited to the struggle of post-war radical activists and political theorists (Gold & Villari, 2000; Ezra, 2009; Hoefflerle, 2013).

It may, at the same time, be helpful for these advocates of the literary canon to give it a new lease of life by organizing conventions like the one held by the literary characters in *Textermination*, a novel by Brooke-Rose (1992). Flocking to the Hilton Hotel in San Francisco on the occasion of the "annual Convention of Prayer for Being" (p. 25), they hope that their prayer for the revival and survival of literature will bear fruit in the face of the all-encompassing rise of television and cinema and of the decline of readership. Although their efforts come to nought, their unflagging enthusiasm should be an inspiration to the fans of traditional literary works.

Lastly, the author of this paper hopes that the foregoing investigation of Lodge's *Changing Places* from Marcuse's angle of vision has helped in cutting across the lines of fact and fiction, or



rather history and story. It is also hoped that this study will stimulate more interest in Lodge's novel, whose rich thematic structure fosters myriad interpretations. It would be useful, for instance, to draw on Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and polyphony to detect and inspect the diverse narrative choices and voices used therein.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See also Bradbury (1981) and Cross (2001) for further fictional handling of the Student Revolution.

<sup>2</sup> The list of canonical writers, Bloom (1995) suggests, includes, among others, Dante, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Chaucer, Cervantes, Goethe, Dickens, Tolstoy and Joyce. What sets them all apart from the less distinguished writers is their authoritativeness, "sublimity" (p. 2), "strangeness," "originality," "uncanniness," and "aesthetic supremacy" (p. 3).

<sup>3</sup> Zapp later boasts that he has written five books about Jane Austen and that he has exhausted her works from all angles, leaving other scholars nothing to say on the subject (Lodge, 1984, p. 24).

<sup>4</sup> Swallow is here quoting from Yeats's poem "Sailing to Byzantium," which opens with the line "That is no country for old men" (Yeats, 1994, p. 163) and glorifies youth while accentuating old people's despatchness

### About the author:

**Noureddine Friji** has a PhD in English language and literature. His research interests include contemporary and old Anglo-American literature, literary theory and criticism, translation, historiography and critical discourse analysis. He is currently an English language instructor at the English Language Institute, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4418-3542>

### References

- Ammann, D. (1991). *David Lodge and the Art-and-Reality Novel*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter.
- Anderson, T. H. (1996). *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Arizti, M. B. (2002). *Textuality as Striptease: The Discourses of Intimacy in David Lodge's "Changing Places" and "Small World."* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Bergonzi, B. (1995). *David Lodge*. Plymouth, Mass: Northcote.
- Bloom, H. (1995). *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*. New York: Riverhead.
- Bradbury, M. (1981). *The History Man*. London: Arrow.
- Brooke-Rose, C. (1992). *Textermination*. New York: New Directions.
- Byatt, A. S. (1991). *Possession: A Romance*. New York: Vintage.
- Cross, A. (2001). *Poetic Justice*. New York: Ballantine.
- Ezra, M. L. (Ed.). (2009). *Civil Rights Movement: People and Perspectives*. Perspectives in American Social History Series. Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO.
- Fraser, R. (Ed.). (1988). *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt: An International Oral History*. New York: Pantheon.

- Fullerty, M. H. G. (2008). *The British and American Academic Novel. The "Professorromane": The Comic Campus, the Tragic Self* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3297121).
- Gitlin, T. (1993). *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. (rev. ed.). New York: Bantam.
- Gold, J & Villari, S. (Eds). (2000). *Just Sex: Students Rewrite the Rules on Sex, Violence, Activism, and Equality*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Heineman, K. J. (2001). *Put Your Bodies upon the Wheels: Student Revolt in the 1960s*. Chicago: Evan R. Dee.
- Hoefflerle, C. M. (2013). *British Student Activism in the Long Sixties*. New York: Routledge.
- Jones, D. J. H. (1993). *Murder at the MLA*. Georgia: University of Georgia Press.
- Kellner, D. (1991). Introduction. In Herbert Marcuse. *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (pp. xi-xxxix). (2nd ed.). Boston: Beacon.
- Kernan, A. (1990). *The Death of Literature*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.
- Kerr, C. (2001). *The Uses of the University*. (5th ed.). Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Kurlansky, M. (2005). *1968: The Year That Rocked the World*. New York: Random.
- Li, W. (1998). *David Lodge's Fiction of Negotiation: Re-mapping the Condition of England* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9818990).
- Lodge, D. (1984). *Small World: An Academic Romance*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- Lodge, D. (1992). *Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses*. New York: Penguin.
- Marcuse, H. (1972). *Counterrevolution and Revolt*. Boston, Mass: Beacon.
- Marcuse, H. (1991). *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. (2nd ed). Boston: Beacon.
- Martin, B. K. (1999). *David Lodge*. New York: Tayne.
- Morace, R. A. (1989). *The Dialogic Novels of Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge*. Carbondale, Ill: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Ommundsen, W. (1985). *Self-Conscious Fiction and Literary Theory: David Lodge, B.S. Johnson, and John Fowles* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia.
- Sant, T. D. (2006). *David Lodge: Narrative Values* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3208388).
- Sava, R. (2006). *Quest and Conquest in the Fiction of David Lodge* (Doctoral dissertation, Würzburg University). Retrieved from [https://opus.bibliothek.uni-wuerzburg.de/opus4wuerzburg/frontdoor/deliver/index/docId/1986/file/quest\\_and\\_conquest.pdf](https://opus.bibliothek.uni-wuerzburg.de/opus4wuerzburg/frontdoor/deliver/index/docId/1986/file/quest_and_conquest.pdf)
- Wiegenstein, S. C. (1987). *The Contemporary Academic Novel: A Study in Genre*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 8818979).
- Yeats, W. B. (1994). Sailing to Byzantium. In William Butler Yeats. *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (p. 163). Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Poetry Library.