

MODERNIST AESTHETICS AND NARRATION IN DAVID LODGE'S *THE BRITISH MUSEUM IS FALLING DOWN*

DAVID LODGE'UN *THE BRITISH MUSEUM IS FALLING DOWN* ESERİNDE MODERNİST ESTETİK VE ANLATIM

Bariş AĞIR¹

Abstract

British author David Lodge's *The British Museum is Falling Down* concentrates on the protagonist Adam Appleby's interior world, which is filled with fear and anxiety. While narrating the protagonist's mental processes over the course of a day, Lodge employs interior monologue and free association, two approaches established by early twentieth-century modernist authors. Like other modernist novels, he employs subjective time to portray interior reality, as opposed to the chronological, objective, or progressive clock time of modern life. Within this context, this study seeks to demonstrate how *The British Museum is Falling Down* breaks from traditional realist literature and establish the novel's conformance to modernist writing. After introducing the characteristics of modernism as a significant literary movement of the twentieth century, this paper will provide a detailed analysis of how Lodge adopts modernist innovations in his depiction of consciousness and time as well as his use of particular writing techniques and forms.

Keywords: Consciousness, Form, Mind, Modernist, Realism, Time.

Öz

İngiliz yazar David Lodge'un *The British Museum is Falling Down* romanı, ana karakter Adam Appleby'nin korku ve endişeyle dolu iç dünyasına odaklanmaktadır. Roman kahramanının tek bir gün içerisindeki zihinsel süreçlerini anlatan yazar, yirminci yüzyılın başlarındaki modernist yazarlar tarafından benimsenen iç monolog ve serbest çağrışım tekniklerini kullanır. Diğer modernist romanlarda olduğu gibi, bu romanda da yazar modern yaşamın kronolojik, nesnel veya düzlemsel olarak ilerleyen zamanının aksine, iç gerçekliği betimleyebilmek için öznel zamanı kullanır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma *The British Museum is Falling Down* romanının geleneksel gerçekçi edebiyattan kopuşunu ve romanın modernist yazın ile kurduğu bağları göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Makale, yirminci yüzyılın önemli bir edebi akımı olan modernizmin özelliklerinden bahsettikten sonra, Lodge'un bilinç ve zamanı betimlerken kullandığı modernist buluşların yanı sıra, belirli yazınsal teknikleri ve biçimleri nasıl kullandığının detaylı bir incelemesini yapacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bilinç, Biçim, Bellek, Modernist, Gerçekçilik, Zaman.

Introduction

David Lodge's numerous critically acclaimed works of fiction have firmly established him as a key modern British author. However, what distinguishes him from his predecessors is his profound obsession with the craft of writing and his deep concern with the place of fiction and literary criticism in the modern world. In forging his own voice as a novelist, he has successfully and creatively experimented with literary modes of the twentieth century. Lodge was influenced by both modernism and postmodernism, finally adopting a style called "antimodernism" that expresses his search for a poetics of

¹Asist. Prof. Dr., Osmaniye Korkut Ata University, Department of English Language and Literature, barisagir@hotmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-7132-5844

fiction that would assure the lasting relevance of literature in the modern period. Lodge's fictions are described as "crossover novels" that combine fabulation, nonfiction, and metafiction, and are always a synthesis of classic realism, modernism, and postmodernism. In addition to oscillating between the forms of metonymic/antimodernist and metaphoric/modernist poles, his works also adopt the postmodernist mode. Therefore, his fiction embodies classic English realistic connotation, experimental modernist characteristics such as binary structure, and postmodernist characteristics. However, in this essay, I claim that in his second novel *The British Museum is Falling Down*, Lodge has a great regard for modernist works and experimentalism, as evidenced by his use of the modernist technique of many perspectives, which transforms the omniscient and impersonal narrative into the focused and personal perspective of the characters.

As a literary movement, modernism spans the majority of the 20th century with its major achievements clustering in the 1920s, the decade immediately following the World War I. This was a time of crisis that gave rise to radical changes in the social order and the value systems of the West, particularly after the World War I, one of the bloodiest conflicts in human history. This decisive historical breach prompted modernists to reject the entire set of values held by the previous generation, which led to the rejection of the "conventions of realistic fiction in a variety of ways by means of radical experiments with subject matter, form, style or temporal sequence" (Petrovic 139). Instead of celebrating the modern experience, modernist writers were more likely to resist than to accept the consequences of the Age of Machine. Modernist inventions and artistic experimentation, by permitting an inner, significant existence to be perceived as the natural state of an individual's life, in imagination if not in actuality, attempted to deflect the new industrial, economic, social, and technological demands of machine age.

This new perspective mainly defines the structural and stylistic evolutions of modernist fiction. In *The Common Reader* (2012), Virginia Woolf states that "we are suggesting that the proper stuff of fiction is a little other than custom would have us believe it. It is, at any rate, in some such fashion as this that we seek to define the quality which distinguishes the work of several young writers [...] from that of their predecessors. (61) Other contemporary critics concur with Woolf. Elizabeth Drew, for instance, says that modern authors found "the older technique too clumsy for their purposes" due to their "engrossing interest in conscious and deliberate psychology" (248). Modernist writing, in general, is no longer content with the observation of life and is resolved to see within instead. Modernists are concerned with aesthetic emotions, meaningful relationships, and subjective states of this nature. David Lodge suggests in *Working with Structuralism* (1981) that in modernist fiction, the attempt to capture reality, "pursued with a certain degree of intensity" (6) pushes the author to "the other side of realism" (6). The modernist prose style is "so highly and lovingly polished that it ceases to be transparent but calls attention to itself by the brilliant reflections glancing

from its surfaces" (6). For modernists, the search for truth extends beyond the realm of objective reality and into the realms of the private and public psyches. They do not follow the norms of story structure, such as chronological sequence and the laws of cause and effect. Poetry, and especially Symbolist poetry, is becoming increasingly important to their work, as seen by their use of literary techniques and methods such as allusions to other works of literature, mythical archetypes, and the repetition of images, symbols, and themes (6).

According to Randall Stevenson, throughout the 1920s, time and space became trendy concepts and conscious themes among artists and intellectuals (152). During the early 20th century, the conceptions of space and time became subjectivized, particularly through the radical compression of time inside narratives. Modernism prioritizes time in the mind over clock time. Modernist literature is characterized by a shift from the objective to the subjective, a profound shift in Western perception and awareness. Modernists frequently demonstrate an interest in the irrational, the unconscious, and the primitive. Philosophers like Bergson, Nietzsche, and William James have suggested the idea that the methods by which we mentally experience reality are becoming increasingly unreliable and ambiguous. Another hallmark of the modern era is the decline of conviction over the veracity of one's mental representations of the world. The stream of consciousness, which was initially developed by Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce and then further refined by William Faulkner, is where it all comes to a head.

British author David Lodge's *The British Museum is Falling Down* (1965) is a modernist story that concentrates on Adam's interior world, which is filled with fear and anxiety. He is a poor doctoral student with three young children, and he is scared that a fourth child may be on the way. An unfinished thesis and a grant that expires at the end of the year add to his concerns. As devout Catholics, he and his wife are limited in their birth control options; they can only use the rhythm technique or safe period, which requires sophisticated calculations including a calendar and temperature chart. The narrative describes a normal day in Adam's life as he conducts dissertation research in the British Museum reading room. On this rainy day in London, his professional and personal circumstances conspire against him. He stumbles through a sequence of misfortunes that provide no relief from his anxiousness.

Within this context, this study will seek to determine how *The British Museum is Falling Down* adheres to the modernist aesthetic by a comprehensive analysis of how Lodge incorporates modernist innovations in his handling of time and consciousness as well as his use of particular techniques and artistic forms. In this work, Lodge's handling of time and consciousness and his experimentation with the method and form best demonstrate the advancements of modernism. Like other modernist novels, he employs subjective or imaginative time, compressible and expanding time to portray interior reality, as opposed to the chronological, objective, or progressive clock time of modern

life. The protagonist, Adam Appleby, exemplifies the author's use of awareness' fluidity to illustrate modern human's helplessness and incapacity to alter his/her fate.

Time and Mind

The animosity of modernist writers toward clock time might be interpreted as a figuration, or symbolic focus, of a new attitude toward time. Modernist literature shares an aversion to clocks and an unwillingness to use chronological order as the foundation for their development. Modernist writing generally abandoned, modified, or shortened the chronological sequence, the vision of life as a series, which had conventionally structured the nineteenth-century novel. Modernist fiction rarely abandons the plot fully or shatters the clock, but it resists as much as possible the arranging of "events in their time sequence" (Stevenson 91) — the mechanical recurrence of day after day.

Lodge's novel is clearly influenced by James Joyce's *Ulysses*, in which time is initially compressed into a single day — a day in which Leopold Bloom perambulates Dublin — and subsequently stretched into multiple dimensions. Every facet of his life is acted out by his ownconsciousness and Stephen Dedalus' consciousness as each looks for form and significance in his life. Similarly, to what Joyce did in *Ulysses*, Lodge's novel encourages temporal autonomy. Time is compressed into a single day while Adam perambulates London and then expanded into other dimensions. Chronological time serves only as a sequence of sequential markers. Adam is meant to be working on a thesis about big sentences in the contemporary English novel at the British Museum's great domed reading room, but in reality, he spends hardly any time reading. He has a pub lunch with his pals, attends a meeting of Catholic society, visits his academic supervisor, and accidentally sets off a fake fire alarm in the museum, only to become lost in the library stacks. At a university sherry party, he obtains and loses employment. It is possible that his search for the manuscripts of a long-dead Catholic author may lead to an academic career. He fights seduction by a precocious schoolgirl, the daughter of the papers' keeper, who demands sexual favors in exchange for the papers. When Adam is asleep that night, his wife's period begins belatedly. These external occurrences just ignite the novel's true sensations, which are the fears and torments of the protagonist's inner reality.

The novel displays the full power of memory by its departure from a chronological narrative sequence, making the past of any character recoverable at any point in the present through conscious or unconscious connection. Lodge employs this technique to illustrate the power and completeness of the relationship between memory and the present. He enables the character's entire day to pass through his imagination. Memory is a fundamental structuring element in the development of time in the mind in this work. Through the randomness of recall, time in the mind advances away from mechanical succession and clock control, toward the consciousness of the characters, and even toward their unconsciousness.

In Lodge's writing, a narrative order governed by recollection and association between events is more potent than one based just on chronological succession. At the beginning of the first chapter, Adam realizes that he is a postgraduate student, twenty-five years old, working on a thesis that he is unlikely to finish in the final year of his scholarship, and that he is married with three very young children. He also realizes that he is in danger of losing his scholarship because of these facts. Suddenly, he is reminded of his wife's overdue period and their frustrated sex liaisons, the child's rash he saw the night before, the pain in his leg now, the fact that his broken scooter would not start the morning before, his poor Middle English paper, the boys' game of "who can pee highest up the wall" at his primary school, his inability to reserve any books at the British Museum for his morning reading, and so on. The reader is made aware of the overwhelming obsession of his waking hours, which is the Catholic Church's ban on artificial contraception, by the continued flow of his thoughts. Adam's fertile moments of thought continuously generate details of his past existence. These fertile moments in the present provide a window through which his former experiences can be illuminated, allowing a whole picture of his earlier life to be presented in an instant of consciousness when he awakens.

Using literary strategies such as stream of consciousness, in which he abandons sequential chronology and focuses on random associations within the mind and memory, Lodge enables the reader to enter Adam's thoughts fully from the beginning. Lodge can convey the obsessiveness of Adam's fear of his wife's possible pregnancy by departing from chronological order. This internal logic, rather than simple temporal progression, governs Lodge's juxtaposition and arrangement of episodes. Concentrating on the myriad perceptions, including memories, that travel through the mind on daily basis, Lodge writes both backward and forward, rejecting life as a series but preserving a complete sense of his characters' lives.

The promise of stream of consciousness to elucidate the past is arguably most fully realized in the epilogue of the novel, in Barbara's mind as it turns over and mixes events on the approach of sleep. This is a moment devoid of time, which is prolonged to include her entire life. Consciousness is a constant flow of memories and impressions, not a series of discrete entities. In Barbara's final interior monologue, which is an excellent illustration of this type of conscious activity, her mind associates the present with her memories and experience. Adam loses his job at the sherry party. She then imagines Adam's happiness upon learning that her menstruation had begun. Then she returns to her concerns about the bogus fire at the British Museum, her curiosity about what he has been doing all afternoon, the scooter catching fire and nearly killing him, and the money the American has given him, prompting her to wonder how they will spend the money.

In the epilogue, Lodge strives to transcend the current plight of a single couple, transforming their tribulations into a greater human experience that transcends specific

or specified periods. Barbara's memories—swimming in their underwear one morning in France, Adam's plans for the future bubbling over this evening, her friend Mary converting her husband to Catholicism (which prohibits the use of contraceptives), Barbara's honeymoon, and the Catholic older generations' opinion on the safe method—are infused with her comprehension of the universal and enduring difficulty men and women face in their sexuality. Through memory and remembrance, Lodge evokes her unique feminine perspectives on sexual life, giving the novel an impact that transcends time and location. Barbara's final "maybe" does not refer to a specific person or time, but rather to all human relationships. In this novel, Lodge develops his methods of slicing and sewing time, just as Woolf recommends in *Orlando*:

Memory is the seamstress, and a capricious one at that. Memory runs her needle in and out, up and down, hither and thither. We know not what comes next, or what follows after. Thus, the most ordinary movement in the world, such as sitting down at a table and pulling the inkstand towards one, may agitate a thousand odd, disconnected fragments, now bright, now dim, hanging and bobbing and dipping and flaunting, like the underlinen of a family of fourteen on a line in a gale of wind. Instead of being a single, downright, bluff piece of work of which no man need feel ashamed, our commonest deeds are set about with a fluttering and flickering of wings, a rising and falling of lights. (46)

Woolf discovers that present-day circumstances vividly and almost randomly evoke memories of the past. Similarly, the campanile of Westminster Cathedral, the most overtly phallic shape in the London skyline, redirects Adam's thoughts to a familiar channel: the mournful memory of Barbara's impending pregnancy. Furthermore, current occurrences stimulate future linkages. After reading a story about a heated discussion inside the Church over its stance on birth control, Adam jokingly imagines what might happen if he were the Pope and published an encyclical authorizing artificial contraception. Adam's frequent retreat from the agonizing present into a dream is an additional temporal dimension of his stream of consciousness. For instance, while preparing his morning tea, he mentally composes a sarcastic piece about Roman Catholic birth control methods for a Martian encyclopedia written after the destruction of the world by nuclear warfare. Fearing a nervous collapse later in the day, he retires once more into an imaginative world in which he lies in a darkened chamber while anxious friends and physicians conduct whispered conversations around his bed. Perhaps his life-threatening sickness would compel the Pope to provide a special dispensation for the use of contraceptives.

Lodge avoids the mechanical organization of events in time as far as possible, yet he does not relinquish the clock. The novel frequently depicts time as a stream—even time that has been transcended or denied—but the clock and its hourly divisions are by no means absent from this work as a whole. Adam is on the verge of emotional collapse due to regrets for the past, anxieties and worries about the future, lack of hope, and

uncertainty. Lodge employs clock time to denote Adam's completely subjective series of wildly fluctuating moods: "He looked at the clock and began to get angry at the way time was slipping away. Time when he should be at work, work, work" (*BMFD* 23). Here, the clock is a shock to his nervous system, reminding him of his concern regarding his academic life, unfinished dissertation, expiring funding, and the potential of having a fourth kid. In the actual world, he does not influence his fate, and he feels powerless. Another clock prompts him to consider the relationship between life and literature: "From nearby Westminster, Mrs. Dalloway's clock boomed out the half hour. It partook, he thought, shifting his weight in the saddle, of metempsychosis, the way his humble life (37). Another clock temporarily alleviates his worries for his academic life: "Adam yawned, and looked at the clock above the entrance to the North Library. There was still a long time to go before his books would arrive" (54). This allows him to see the reading room as a rotating stage, which he sets in action by whisking the desks around in a few thrilling revolutions.

In addition, the following instances demonstrate that the old clock continues to tick within modernism's new chronologies, its temporal autonomy, because the passage of time necessitates decisions and actions that flow the consciousness of the characters: "There was the sherry party at six – that would take care of the early evening - but it was still only three-thirty now" (106). Adam can utilize this time to do something productive to soothe his feelings of guilt for wasting the day at the British Museum. He resolves to travel directly to Mrs. Rottingdean's house in search of Egbert Merrymarsh's unpublished literary works, his final chance for a successful academic career. The mechanical clock time also serves as a reminder that he must confront reality, the source of his immense dread. To succeed, he requires both guts and dexterity, yet the future is unknown. In Mrs. Rottingdean's ostensibly calm and empty home, the ticking clock first emphasizes his tense anticipation and lack of self-assurance and then foreshadows his comical romantic misadventure. Later that evening, the library clock causes unease, anxiety, dislike, and resentment among the patrons. For Adam, however, the jarring bell is a jolt to his nervous system. Unlike the other students, he feels guilty, apprehensive, and upset over his day of inactivity and lack of accomplishment. He feels he has lost control of his life.

Lodge creates a sense of both broken multifacetedness and seamless flow in his handling of time. Throughout a single day, the characters' free-associative thoughts or memories alternate with intrusions that reflect the passage of clock time. Lodge uses memory as a seamstress to cut and reshape out-of-order, non-sequential segments of time. The characters' stream of consciousness continually recovers past events to juxtapose or associate them with current occurrences. His story progresses steadily enough through Adam's day at the British Museum, but he also freely exploits the mind's propensity to wander in imagination or memory far from the real external events transpiring at the time.

Consciousness

Regarding the early twentieth century as an era of destroyed beliefs and dissipated certainties, devoid of authentic contact with the real activity of the outer world, the modernists inevitably examined the contents and consciousness of individual souls as the only remaining "clue to the universe" (Stevenson 71). The major, defining, and noticeable difference between Victorian and modernist fiction is the transfer of the novel's focus from the perceived world to the perceiver's mind in order to study the nature of perception and the psychology of the perceiver in greater depth. Midway through the 1920s, shifts of interest of this nature had become such an obvious characteristic of contemporary fiction that Gerald Bullett could suggest in *Modern English Fiction* (1926) that "the young intellectual who sits down to write his first novel instinctively interposes between us and the events of his story the consciousness of its chief character" (12). In addition, the modernists were influenced by twentieth-century psychology, which viewed consciousness as a series of sequential, related moments, maybe as much an unfolding series of event-quanta as an unbroken flow, but always felt as a flow. The fluidity of consciousness, sometimes known as "stream of consciousness," is one of the primary techniques used to develop characters in modernist literature. In *The Art of Fiction* (1992), Lodge holds a similar viewpoint: "Towards the turn of the century [...] reality was increasingly located in the private, subjective consciousness of individual selves, unable to communicate the fullness of their experience to others" (42).

Reflecting Lodge's deeper concern with subjectivity, his story is structured to illustrate a serious matter through the consciousness, inner dialogue, or state of mind of its principal characters. Lodge employs consciousness to unite the fragments of the external universe or to transcend experience, time-bound reality. Utilizing a stream-of-consciousness style that can seize upon every thought or action of his characters' minds, he achieves remarkable success. The fluidity of awareness that Lodge constructs in his story allows for the orderly progression of events. The order of their manifestations becomes, in reality, the particular order and significance that fully and swiftly demonstrates the protagonist's uneasiness and naturally arouses readers' attention, curiosity, and sympathy toward a controversial matter, Catholic birth control.

The novel devotes the first eight paragraphs to Adam's consciousness. The reader progressively assembles the protagonist's biography from his random musings. Actual and figurative time, present and past, intertwine and interact in the long, meandering sentences, with one thought or memory triggering the next. The reader is thrust immediately and forcefully into the protagonist's mind in the very first paragraph:

IT WAS Adam Appleby's misfortune that at the moment of awakening from sleep his consciousness was immediately flooded with everything he least wanted to think about. Other men, he gathered, met each new dawn with a refreshed mind and heart, full of optimism and resolution; or else they moved sluggishly through the first hour of the day in a state of blessed numbedness, incapable of any

thought at all, pleasant or unpleasant. But, crouched like harpies round his bed, unpleasant thoughts waited to pounce the moment Adam's eyelids flickered apart. At that moment he was forced, like a drowning man, to review his entire life instantaneously, divided between regrets for the past and fears for the future. (*BMFD* 11)

The first sentence is a statement made by an authorial narrator who does not clarify who Adam Appleby is or why his head is filled with awful things. This abrupt immersion of the reader into a continuing life exemplifies the presentation of consciousness as a stream. The next sentence shifts the narrative's emphasis to the character's mind. The third and final sentences of this paragraph continue to focus on the character's thoughts, but they avoid an intrusive authorial tag such as "Adam Appleby reflected" by using a free indirect style.

In the modernist shift from objective to subjective, even single lines of dialogue or action in the real world are frequently separated by paragraphs or even pages describing the characters' exfoliating inner feelings, thoughts, imaginations, recollections, daydreams, fantasies, or even hallucinations. While preparing the morning tea, Adam simultaneously composes a short piece for an imaginary Martian encyclopedia. In a lengthy line, he satirizes the doctrines of the Catholic church as a sophisticated system of sexual taboos and rituals, with negative implications for birth control. As his wife Barbara discusses their child's measles and his limp, Adam slips once more into a vivid fantasy in which he is speeding through the streets of London in his pajamas. Finally, with speed, chest out, arms pumping, mouth swallowing air, eyes glazed over with sleep, he breaks the world record and wins the reward. The fantasy portrays his extreme anxiety and concern with his family life, including a possible fourth kid, an unfinished dissertation, and his dire need for employment. The topic of contraception is a hot button that, when pressed, throws a swarm of sad pictures into his mind. Thus, when Barbara informs Adam that she is likely pregnant again, he becomes more despondent, anticipating a miserable day, his thoughts shifting to menstrual cycles, temperature charts, and financial calculations. Desperate for cash to feed a growing family, he contemplates writing a smart second line about a chair for an advertising contest.

Almost anything—a person, a letter, an object, a scene, or an action—can trigger Adam to retreat into his inner world, so the entire story seems to flow in his mind. Adam's contact with his landlady, Mrs. Green, as he exits his flat jogs his memory of her reproachful remarks concerning Barbara's third pregnancy, an intrusion into their sex life that prompts him to consider the marital difficulties coming from Catholic teachings on birth control. When she informs him that a letter has arrived for him, he immediately begins to fantasize about his bright future. Soon later, as he prepares to confront his scooter, his mind is overwhelmed with memories of how his father-in-law gave him a dilapidated scooter and his humiliating attempts to have it repaired. On his journey to the British Museum, a sign indicating that a bridge is unsafe evokes a vivid mental vision of

his death in the icy Thames. When he tries to renew his expired Reading Room card, he experiences a bizarre dream, bordering on a nightmare, concerning the insanity of bureaucracy. As he enters the Reading Room, he envisions it as a big womb where scholars are "curled, fetus-like over their books" (*BMFD* 40), shielded from the harsh realities of the outside world. Adam daydreams about the health benefits of physical activity if the Reading Room's floor would rotate and the desks would move up and down like horses on a carousel. Adam's frequent escapism into his imagination emphasizes his hopelessness and helplessness at being confined in a terrifying actual world. However, his fantasies are so implausible and ludicrous that they add a touch of gloomy humor into his unsuccessful attempt to solve his situation. Adam, prompted by a newspaper item about a Vatican discussion on birth control, imagines himself to be the English Pope writing an encyclical regarding the acceptance of artificial contraception. His hallucinations cause him to question whether he is on the point of a nervous breakdown, which he would embrace as a way to escape his problems. In this comically implausible fantasy, Adam hopes that such a catastrophe will grant him and Barbara special permission from the Pope to perform artificial contraception. Lodge blurs the border between reality and fiction. After the fake fire alarm, as Adam waits outside the British Museum, he sees Barbara and her children mounting the museum's steps, but he dismisses them as figments of his imagination.

As Barbara's mind floats between consciousness and oblivion, the epilogue demonstrates Lodge's masterful use of stream of consciousness in Barbara's drowsy mental soliloquy. Barbara, who was previously the subject of Adam's thoughts, observations, and recollections, becomes the subject, the center of his consciousness. She reflects drowsily on the events of the day and her past life as she reclines next to him in the dark. With just the occasional foghorn to distract her, her momentum propels her on. Thoughts on the paradoxes of sex and life, her recollections, with one memory prompting another by various means:

there's something about sex perhaps it's original sin I don't know but we'll never get it neatly tied up you think you've got it under control in one place it pops up in another either it's comic or tragic nobody's immune you see some couple going off to the Continent in their new sports car and envy them like hell next thing you find out they're dying to have a baby those who can't have them want them those who have them don't want them or not so many of them everyone has problems if you only knew [...] (*BMFD* 174)

As Lodge explains in the novel's introduction, Barbara's reverie about the ironies and absurdities of married life using the safe method exemplifies the universal and enduring difficulty men and women face in comprehending, organizing, and satiating their sexuality. Punctuation is almost absent from the final five pages of the novel, and its absence suggests a mind that flows freely, associatively, and sometimes arbitrarily between subjects and thoughts, as in the following passage in which Barbara seeks sleep:

the sea was empty it was like a desert island we lay down he took me in his arms shall we come back here when we're married he said perhaps I said he held me low down tight against him we'll make love in this same spot he said my dress was so thin I could feel him hard against me perhaps we'll have children with us I said then we'll come down at night he said perhaps we won't be able to afford to come at all I said you're not very optimistic he said perhaps it's better not to be I said I'm going to be famous and earn lots of money he said perhaps you won't love me then I said I'll always love you he said I'll prove it every night he kissed my throat perhaps you think that now I said but I couldn't keep it up perhaps we will be happy I said of course we will he said we'll have a nanny to look after the children perhaps we will I said by the way how many children are we going to have as many as you like he said it'll be wonderful you'll see perhaps it will I said perhaps it will be wonderful perhaps even though it won't be like you think perhaps that won't matter perhaps. (*BMFD* 175-176)

As demonstrated by the preceding line, the epilogue dispenses not just with punctuation but also with other formal limitations of language and coherence. Lodge's culminating stream of consciousness moves, chases "thoughts deep into the self," and even leads beyond consciousness. Barbara's final phrase is a cautious "perhaps," which Lodge deems "more appropriate to Barbara's character and the mingled notes of optimism and resignation" (*BMFD* XX) with which he desires to conclude the work.

Modernist Techniques

Modernist authors are said to have created stream of consciousness to study the human mind. Stream of consciousness is a common literary element in modernist writing created by William James to describe cognition and feeling in the mind. Later, literary critics used the phrase to describe a form of modern literature that tried to replicate this process, as seen in James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, and Virginia Woolf. There are numerous strategies for developing stream of consciousness. Lodge uses indirect style, inner monologue, and free association in this work.

Modern novelists, such as Virginia Woolf, employed a free indirect style that at least stretches back to Jane Austen, albeit with greater scope and finesse. It employs words relevant to the character and omits phrases such as "she thought," "she wondered," "she asked herself," etc., which a more formal narrative style would require. This offers the sense of intimate access to a character's thoughts without sacrificing total authorial control over the conversation. (Lodge "The Art of Fiction" 43). Characters' thoughts and feelings are presented in their own words, yet the author's voice acts as a mediator. As Gerard Genette describes in *Narrative Discourse* (1986), "the narrator takes on the speech of the character, or, if one prefers, the character speaks through the voice of the narrator, and the two instances are then merged" (174). The following is an example of free indirect style from the novel's epilogue:

PERHAPS SHE ought to wake Adam up and tell him it had started, Barbara

thought, as she came out of the bathroom. The passage was quite dark but, schooled by many night-time alarms and excursions, she negotiated it with confidence. Their bedroom was dimly lit by the street lamps shining through the curtains, and Adam's face had a bluish tint. He was sound sleep [...] I need a new coat, she thought, as she returned to the kitchen with the half-filled glass. My red one is all out of shape from carrying Dominic and Edward. I'll get a fitted one this time [...] And another thing I've forgotten is to say my prayers, she thought, as she reached the bedroom. Perhaps I'll skip them tonight. But I suppose I've got something to be thankful for. Just a Hail Mary then. There's such a draught across this floor. (*BMFD* 167-170)

In the first portion of the quoted passage, the author's constant presence is conveyed through the use of a free indirect style. Through material selection, it is possible to achieve greater coherence and fluidity, as well as greater surface unity, in comparison to the interior monologue. However, the third-person narrator talks with the emotional rhythms of Barbara's thoughts and emotions. The narrator is speaking about Barbara's thinking indirectly by describing the idiosyncrasies of Barbara's psychic processes without the use of quotes or other distinctions. As a result, an omniscient author provides unspoken stuff as if it were directly from Barbara's brain, guiding the reader through it with commentary and description. The second part of the quotation shows consciousness in the first person, as seen through Barbara's eyes. The author occasionally steps between the mind of the character and the reader. Another example of the free indirect style is provided here:

He returned to his desk in the Reading Room, but could not convert his good spirits into industry. The laboriously accumulated notes of his thesis filled him with impatience. That was all behind him now. Let the long sentence trail its way through English fiction as it willed—he would pursue it no longer. He took up Mrs. Rottingdean's letter again, and began to draft a reply, asking if he could come round and see the papers as soon as possible, proposing the following evening. Yet he could scarcely contemplate the suspense of waiting even that long. Why should he not phone now, and propose calling on Mrs. Rottingdean that very day? He looked again at the letter. Yes, a telephone number was given. Adam left his seat, and hurried back to the telephone. (*BMFD* 91)

The technique of free indirect style renders Adam's thoughts as third-person, past-tense reported speech. The initial two sentences constitute an authorial proclamation. The third and fourth sentences are told in the third person, but they appear to provide close access to Adam's thoughts, as if he were speaking directly. The intrusive authorial tag, such as "Adam thought," is omitted because the vocabulary used here is appropriate for the character. The fifth sentence returns to an authorial stance. The sixth and seventh sentences act similarly to the third and fourth. The eighth is again the narration of an authorial narrator. The ninth appears on the surface to be an inward monologue, employing casual, colloquial language. This paragraph concludes with a statement from

the author.

Inner monologue uses "I" and "we" as grammatical subjects, as if we are overhearing the character's thoughts. We hear a person's self-description. In fiction, it's used to represent a character's unsaid psychic content and processes as they occur before purposeful speaking. In the novel's final seven pages, Barbara's direct inward monologue is given with no audience presumed. It represents her mind roaming as she sleeps next to Adam. Barbara's consciousness flows straight to the reader; the author's "she stated" and "she thought" disappear. Barbara isn't communicating in the scene or to the reader:

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb perhaps I should tell Adam now. If he wakes before me in the morning he'll lie there all depressed wondering if I'm pregnant. But perhaps he'll see the box on the dressing-table and guess. Wasn't there some French woman who used to change the flower in her bosom from white to red to tip off her lovers? [...] This is no good, I'm falling asleep. Thank you God for not letting me be pregnant. There, that's short and sweet and from the heart. Let's get into bed. Ah. Ooh. My feet are like blocks of ice [...] Whoooooo there goes another foghorn, they sound so close, such a melancholy sound, reminds me of when he came to see me off at Dover, standing at the quayside with his hands in his pockets trying to shout something, but every time he opened his mouth the hooter went, and of course it had to be a great handsome French boy who was at the rail beside me I never even spoke to him but he couldn't sleep that night for jealousy [...] (*BMFD* 170-176)

In this passage, the aspects of incoherence and fluidity are highlighted by the absence of punctuation, exact syntax, pronoun references, and introductions to the people and events that Barbara is contemplating, as well as by the frequent interruption of one thought by another. As Barbara's mind wanders, the tenses alternate between the past, imperfect, present, and conditional. It is this incoherence and fluidity rather than the exact notion that is meant to be communicated that is intended to be transmitted. As the monologue develops, it recedes to deeper realms of consciousness until Barbara falls asleep, at which point the story concludes with the conclusion of the interior monologue.

The sample below demonstrates how Lodge combines interior monologue with free indirect language and conventional narrative description:

Barbara's words suddenly formed up and came resoundingly to attention in his mind. *Perhaps you do others things in your sleep.* Could you, he wondered, and not remember it? That would be the supreme irony: to conceive another child and not even be conscious enough to enjoy it. There was that night not long ago when they had come back from Camel's place drowsy and amorous from drinking Spanish wine. (*BMFD* 19)

The first sentence is an authorial report that describes Adam's feelings from his perspective but technically implies an impersonal narrator. As early as the second line,

the paragraph begins to depart from an objective standpoint of the authorial report. Adam's inner monologue, "*Perhaps you do other things in your sleep,*" can also be interpreted as Barbara's remarks. The third and fourth sentences belong even more obviously to the character's inner voice, although they do not supplant the author's speech. We hear what sounds like third-person narration, but which appears to be in touch with Adam's emotions and thoughts. The phrase "he wondered" serves as a constant reminder of the author's structure and presentation of ideas. The final sentence, written in free indirect style, can be interpreted as both Adam's consciousness and the author's; however, it maintains Adam's perspective. The passage freely switches between "you" and "he."

To control the flow of stream-of-consciousness writing, the modernists often resort to free association. Content is needed for mental activity, and this comes from the ability of one object to propose another through the connection of features in common or contrast, totally or partially — down to the barest suggestion. A person's memories provide the association's basis, their senses steer it, and their imagination determines its adaptability. Lodge uses free association to guide the story's contents of consciousness and mirror the development of his characters' thoughts:

A ruck in the curtains attracted her notice, and she went over to the window to adjust them. Well, he'd nearly burned himself to death anyway, by all accounts, she thought, looking out of the window and catching sight of crumpled tarpaulin in the garden below. Funny that the scooter had never given any trouble while Dad had it. Perhaps he didn't know how to drive it properly. Who ever heard of a scooter catching fire spontaneously? She wasn't sorry though—he was bound to have killed himself on it one of these days, and the insurance would come in handy. With the money the American had given him, they would be quite rich for a while. (*BMFD* 168)

A ruck in the curtains draws Barbara's attention to the window (sense), and then looking out the window draws her attention to the scooter, which immediately recalls what Adam says about the scooter—nearly burning himself to death; and also recalls that her father drives this scooter without difficulty (memory). Adam's death in the future due to the scooter leads her to believe she will receive insurance money (imagination). The insurance money helps her remember the money Adam receives from the Americans. And the money the American gives Adam causes Barbara to fantasize briefly about their lavish lifestyle. This example demonstrates the significance of the principle of association in the direction and organization of the stream of consciousness. The following is another illustration of how Lodge employs free association to control the consciousness of his characters:

He shivered and turned up the collar of his suit in a futile gesture of self-protection against the raw, damp air. His duffle coat was in the Reading Room, and he dared not returned to recover it. He had a vivid mental image of the duffle

coat draped over the back of his padded chair, its hood drooping forward like the head of a scholar bowed over his books; and he not only coveted it but, in a strange way, almost envied it. It seemed like a ghost of his former self, or, rather, the external shell of the Adam Appleby who had, only a few days ago, been a reasonably contented man, but who now, haunted with the fear of an unwanted addition to his family, divided and distracted about his academic work, and guilty of a hoax he had had no intention of committing, wandered like an outcast through the foggy streets of Bloomsbury. (*BMFD* 104-105)

Adam's shiver reminds him of his coat in the Reading Room, which subsequently reminds him of the fire alarm he accidentally sets off, so he cannot go back to the reading room for his coat. The coat simultaneously reminds him of his old self, his current situation, and his worry. It directs the course of his stream of consciousness. Although the novel has some straightforward, conventional narration and description, the extensive use of free indirect language, interior monologue, and free association gives the work its distinctive quality of appearing to be constantly within the protagonists' minds. These techniques provide a seamless entry not only into the present movement of the mind but also into the depths of past experience, which are revitalized by association with current impressions.

Modernist Forms

Another hallmark of modernism is its devotion to change and invention in form and its drive toward artistic self-consciousness. The modernist novel is marked by its creative treatment of the hero, plot, narrative perspective, and ending and by its attention to the writer's technique.

The employment of the anti-hero, or at least the common man, whose comic misfortunes reveal a serious issue, is a classic modernist shift in form. The modern world seems to require unheroic characters, and even champions them on occasion. Modernist authors demonstrate heroism in the simplest acts of daily survival. They perceive heroism in ordinary thoughts and deeds and make their characters bear the weight of modern nothingness. The transition from epic heroes of myth and legend, who are superior to their environs and destined for victory, to anti-heroes occurred throughout the modernist period. As suggested by Jesse Matz in *The Modern Novel: A Short Introduction* (2004) anti-heroes are typically weak, apathetic, and passive, undone by circumstance, and infrequently picked out for their outstanding qualities. Moreover, they rarely accomplish much; they are less attractive, less accomplished, less bright, and less likely to endure adversity than ordinary individual. This does not imply, however, that an anti-hero figure is unlikeable or dull (45).

Adam is an anti-hero in Lodge's work, notable not for his skills and achievements but for his disappointments and failings. Worried about finishing his thesis and his academic future, he wastes his day at the British Museum; he attends a faculty-student sherry

party where he gets, then loses, a teaching job for the following year; he discovers a valuable literary manuscript, which would make his career, but he would have to sleep with a teenage girl to obtain it; he tries to buy contraceptives but is thwarted by the inconvenient closing of the pharmacy; and he finally acquires the manuscript without sleeping with the girl, but loses it when his scooter explodes and catches fire. His clumsy attempts to deal with life's oddities make him relatable, even admirable. Adam's mishaps seem to imply that there is "real heroism in anti-heroism, in an unheroic world" (Matz 46).

The majority of modernist works lack captivating narratives, ingenious plots, excessive description, and tidy conclusions. Characters are frequently depicted through their subjective, ambiguous views and consciousness, which reveals their relationships with others and their inner selves. Likewise, there are no complicated plots in Lodge's novel. Instead, the protagonist's inner feelings, thoughts, recollections, daydreams, fantasies, and hallucinations swarm into the reader's mind like flowing water. However, Lodge appears to make an effort to demonstrate that the arduous struggle within his anti-subjective hero's consciousness can lead to realizations and truths. Thus, the novel brings attention to the problematic Catholic teaching on birth control and its ramifications for married life.

Not only is Lodge able to move inward to explore interiority—to delve into consciousness—but he is also able to experiment with all possible relationships between inner and outer life due to the novel's flexible narrative structure. The novel combines individual experience with something like the fuller knowledge of omniscience, by portraying the perspectives of its numerous characters. Lodge's opening statement is a clear tactic to gain the reader's attention, nearly dragging us over the boundary. However, the story is quickly infected with a current sense of obscurity, namely, a doubt about the feasibility of truth discovery. The novel begins with the perspective of the omniscient narrator, but immediately from the second sentence on, it becomes clear that the narrator presents the world from Adam's point of view; the narrator migrates into the character's mind. The majority of the work reveals Adam's inner sensations, thoughts, recollections, daydreams, fancies, and even hallucinations via a blend of omniscient narration and Adam's consciousness. And ultimately, the narrative shifts to the perspective of Adam's wife, her feminine consciousness. Barbara presents her final thoughts on marital life in the first person, revealing her uniquely feminine perspective. As the story nears its end, Lodge delivers the reader Barbara's soliloquy, recognizing that Adam's marital issues must be viewed from a different perspective, that of Adam's wife.

The conclusions of modernist novels frequently contrast starkly with those of traditional realist fiction, which sought to resolve uncertainty in social or individual life by conclusively bringing its development to a close, typically through marriage, if the story was to end happily, or death, if the story was to end tragically. Modernism deprives readers of a sense of comforting order or completion due to its seeming pessimism

regarding the very possibility of satisfying conclusions. The novel concludes with the reader uncertain, returning from fiction to reality with a raw sense of incompleteness and perhaps a particular readiness to question what denies order and coherence in contemporary society in general. Faced with this unresolved turmoil in the actual social world, the conclusions of modernist fiction are frequently compelled to transcend it in some way. Instead of conclusively wrapping up the novel's action at the end, Lodge expands it beyond the limitations of place and time. In the final moments of the story, Barbara's period begins, alleviating their immediate tension. However, the problem of birth control persists, and the source of their fear has not been eliminated. Thus, the novel concludes with ambiguity and openness. Uncertainty surrounds the nature and destiny of their marriage, and the novel's greater moral questions remain unsolved.

Conclusion

This study has sought to show how Lodge's novel departs from traditional realist fiction and adopts innovations of modernist writing. Lodge has clearly written a modernist novel that rejects the constraints of traditional narrative chronology and favors the time in the mind by emphasizing the protagonist's interior world and consciousness. Lodge employs such modernist techniques as free indirect style, interior monologue, and free association to explore the minds of his characters. In addition, his protagonist is a modernist anti-hero, a common man tortured by the absurdity of the Catholic Church's ban on birth control. Unlike classic realists, he does not attempt to conceal the distinction between the real and imaginary worlds. His story is also about literary influences and the technique of writing, predicting his lifelong fascination with experimentation with modes of writing.

WORKS CITED

- Bullett, Gerald. *Modern English Fiction: A Personal View*. London: Herbert Jenkins, 1926.
- Drew, Elizabeth. *The Modern English Novel: Some Aspects of Contemporary Fiction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1984.
- Genette, Gerard. *Narrative Discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.
- Lodge, David. *The Art of Fiction*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1992.
- Lodge, David. *Working with Structuralism: Essays and Reviews on Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Literature*. Boston: Routledge, 1981.
- Lodge, David. *The British Museum is Falling Down*. London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1965.
- Matz, Jesse. *The Modern Novel: A Short Introduction*. Malden: Blackwell, 2004.
- Petrovic, Svetlana Milivojevic. "Transforming the Realist Narrative Mode in *The British Museum is Falling Down*: David Lodge's Literature of Exhaustion." *Belgrade English*

Language and Literature Studies, 9 (1), 2017, 145-159.

Randall, Stevenson. *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction*. New York: Harvester, 1992.

Woolf, Virginia. *The Common Reader: First Series*. Greenlight, 2012.

Woolf, Virginia. *Orlando: A Biography*. New York: Rosetta Books, 2002.