

INTERTEXTUALITY AND ARTHURIAN WOMEN IN DAVID LODGE'S *SMALL WORLD* (1984)

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Abstract. The present article analyses intertextual references in David Lodge's *Small World. An Academic Romance* (1984), focusing on allusions to the corpus of medieval and twentieth-century Arthuriana in the representation of women characters. An analysis of Arthurian allusions in the portrayal of women characters shows that Lodge introduces Arthurian women to his academic 'Camelot' in response to medieval and post-medieval literature about King Arthur and the Grail quest. In this respect, his representation of academic women in *Small World* is different from the way they are described in Lodge's other academic novels, *Changing Places* and *Nice Work*. Lodge rarely recasts Arthurian women characters as his heroines with the exception of Prof Fulvia Morgana, who is modelled on the Arthurian sorceress Morgane/Morgause. Nevertheless, in *Small World*, women appear in the traditional roles of being the object of a 'knight's' quest, such as Persse's beloved Angelica and Swallow's lover Joy, and wise advisors (Miss Maiden). Alternatively, women are portrayed as antagonistic or negative characters, the so-called 'whores' or 'demonic temptresses': such are Angelica's twin sister Lily and the lusty Fulvia Morgana.

Key words: David Lodge, academic romance, intertextuality, Arthuriana, Arthurian women, Grail quest

INTRODUCTION

Lodge's women characters in *Small World* are best understood in the context of his reliance on intertextuality and stylistic innovation and experimentation. Thus, it is useful to discuss his fiction in the context of his scholarly work, as his innovative, experimental style of fiction puts into practice the schools of thought, critical approaches and literary movements discussed in his critical studies. As Lodge himself explains in the collection of essays *the Novelist at the Crossroads*, he purposefully aimed at alternatively writing works of literary scholarship and novels (1971: 26). His novels also draw, to a certain extent, on Lodge's own experience for the depiction of settings, events, atmosphere and problems. Thus, his early novels *Out of the Shelter* (1970) and *Ginger, You Are Barmy* (1962) are

inspired by, respectively, his childhood experience in the Blitzkrieg London and his brief service in the army. Another early novel, *the British Museum is Falling Down* (1965), is a pastiche of different literary styles, imitating – or parodying – the works of famous twentieth-century writers, including James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* (1939). The problem addressed in the novel is, however, far from a trifling one, as it explores, in a comic manner, the issues of parenthood and family planning from the perspective of an impoverished doctoral student, who, like Lodge himself, is a Roman Catholic. The controversy over sex and contraception, which were very topical for a practicing Roman Catholic like Lodge, are tackled more seriously in *How Far Can You Go?* (1980), where using the so-called 'safe method' (measuring bodily temperature and following a calendar as a guide when it is safe to have sexual intercourse) leads not only to the arrival of several unplanned children, but also to the birth of a child with the Down syndrome, an episode based on his own experience (Lodge, 2015: 409). Roman Catholicism and its doctrines, particularly the church emphasis on sexual purity and the absence of sex outside marriage, is a theme that recurs in many of Lodge's later novels, including *Paradise News* (1991) and *Small World*.

Small World, often published as the second part of Lodge's 'campus trilogy' (a term problematized by Mews, 1989: 713-6), engages many of the same concerns as his earlier novels and shares with them a number of stylistic similarities, including 'experiments with narrative technique, parody, and stylization of language' (Perkin, 2014: 54). It differs from the first part of the 'campus trilogy', *Changing Places* (1975), which is a story of two university professors changing jobs – and wives – for the duration of their academic exchange programme. *Changing Places* is written using a variety of narrative techniques, including the letter, newspaper cuttings and the film script. The third part of the 'campus trilogy', *Nice Work* (1988), is a workplace romance, which describes a time of political unrest and the challenges of capitalism from the perspective of a female scholar of literature, 'a left-wing feminist academic who lectures in English literature and is thoroughly versed in poststructuralism' (Fokkema, 1991: 13). The three novels of the 'trilogy' are very distinct in terms of forms, themes and characters, yet have the unity of place – a fictionalized version of the University of Birmingham, where Lodge has worked throughout most of his academic career (Lodge, 2015). Also, the major characters of *Changing Places*, Prof Philip Swallow and Prof Morris Zapp, as well as their wives, reappear in the second and third novels of the trilogy, albeit not as the main characters any longer.

What makes *Small World* so unique among Lodge's works is not only his comical depiction of the academic world, but also his engagement with works and motifs of medieval literature, which are otherwise absent from Lodge's criticism and fiction. Lodge manages to highlight the similarities between the academic world and the world of chivalry: both are elite, male-dominated societies (the latter was true at least in Lodge's own time, if not any longer), with highly competitive, socially and geographically mobile members. Both the knights of medieval romance and Lodge's academics travel extensively in search of fame and

glory – as well as academic grants and promotions, in the case of the academics. Indeed, it can be argued that the real medieval knights' peregrinations were motivated by very similar pragmatic objectives, if the case of William Marshal, the famous knight who spent most of his life in tournaments, jousts and on campaigns, is to be taken as indicative (Duby, 1985). As Lodge was a scholar of modern English literature, his interest in the Arthurian romance is all the more curious, but it can be explained by the fact that Arthurian romance made a dramatic reappearance in modern and post-modern fiction and contemporary popular culture.

David Lodge subtitled his campus novel *Small World* (1984) an 'academic romance', thus introducing a certain set of literary allusions and intertextual references his audience can enjoy. One of the common associations that the word 'romance' invokes in the reader is chivalric romance. In his essay 'Fact and Fiction in the Novel', Lodge explains that the subtitle of *Small World*

plays on the recognized genre-term 'academic novel' and also indicates what kind of romance is invoked – not the Mills and Boon kind, but the kind studied and loved by academics: Heliodorus, the stories of King Arthur, the *Faerie Queene*, *Orlando Furioso*, the late plays of Shakespeare, and so on. (Lodge, 1996: 24)

The medieval 'stories of King Arthur', collectively known in scholarship as the Arthuriana, are mostly built around the motif of a chivalric adventure or quest, and this motif is likewise prominent in some of the early modern works, notably the *Faerie Queene* and *Orlando Furioso*. Indeed, Lodge makes a quest, one of the common motifs in chivalric romance, the *leitmotif* of *Small World*. In this novel, literature scholars are likened to Arthurian knights in their relentless, often obsessional pursuit of their own version of the Holy Grail. The meaning and identity of this Holy Grail, however, may vary depending on the quester's agenda. Most academics strive for the Holy Grail of academic career, the UNESCO chair in literature studies. Meanwhile, Persse, a young and romantic Irishman, is pursuing his own private Grail: he does not seek academic prestige and a lucrative position, but a girl, Angelica. Albeit the academics' quest for the lucrative UNESCO chair may appear ephemeral as compared to the medieval Grail quest, which is an essentially spiritual undertaking, the other quest, that for a beautiful girl, is only superficially more chivalric.

Overall, *Small World* is structured on the model of a chivalric quest (the Grail quest), a common form in medieval Arthurian romance. The characters of *Small World* are academics, and they, in particular the university professor Philip Swallow and Morris Zapp, are cast in the roles of medieval knights (Ropa, 2016). In medieval Grail quest romance, particularly the anonymous early-thirteenth-century *Queste del Saint Graal* and Thomas Malory's fifteenth-century adaptation of it in *Le Morte d'Arthur* as the 'Tale of the Sankgreal', the questing knights are urged to leave behind all earthly aspirations and interests, and it is particularly stressed in some of the texts that they should be virgin in thought and body

(Pauphilet, 1923; Malory, 1990). Indeed, the protagonist Persse MacGarrigle in Lodge's novel is presented as a comic naïve young Irishman, who chases a girl, Angelica, who, like him, is a young scholar of romance, on a round-the-world tour of academic conferences, all the while imagining himself to be in love. Initially, he is virgin in body, but, like his namesake Sir Perceval in the *Queste del Saint Graal*, he loses his spiritual purity in the course of the quest. Early on in romance, Angelica invites Persse to a *rendez-vous* in her room: before coming to Angelica's room, he goes to the drugstore to buy condoms. By doing this, he mentally renounces his principle of abstaining from premarital sex, but it turns out Angelica has played a practical joke on him, and the room she indicated was not her room. Thus, Persse stays a virgin in terms of the absence of physical experience, but he is no longer a virgin in mind. By the end of the novel, Persse loses his physical innocence, too, when he has sex with Angelica's twin sister Lily, whom he takes for Angelica. This detail highlights the similarity between Persse and yet another knight of the medieval *Queste del Saint Graal*, Sir Bors, who loses virginity, because he is deceived.

THE GRAIL QUEST FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT DAY

The Grail quest motif made first appeared in Arthurian romance – that is, medieval literature centering on the court of King Arthur – at the end of the twelfth century in the work *Perceval, ou la queste del saint graal* of the French poet Chrétien de Troyes. The poem casts a naïve, uneducated young nobleman, Perceval, as the protagonist of a lengthy series of adventures, including the Grail quest, which would result in Perceval's initiation into the world of courtly chivalry. While the poem was left unfinished by Chrétien, several French authors, giving the origins and meaning of the Grail and Perceval's adventure, wrote continuations and a prequel. The German poet Wolfram von Eschenbach, who worked at around the same time as Chrétien, also wrote a verse romance about the Grail quest, *Parzival*, the early part of which is very similar to Chrétien's narrative. In the British Isles, Perceval was known through two vernacular works, the Welsh *Peredur*, which survives as fourteenth-century versions of the Mabinogion cycle, and the anonymous Middle English *Sir Perceval of Galles*, which was written in the early fourteenth century. Both recount the adventures of an innocent and ignorant young man, yet neither of the two features the Grail quest (Braswell, 1995; Lovecy, 2013).

In the early thirteenth-century France, the stories of King Arthur were developed into a lengthy prose cycle, known as the Vulgate cycle or the Lancelot-Grail cycle. The latter name reflects the subject matter of this sprawling cycle authored by several unknown writers. Indeed, the major part of the cycle is dedicated to the adventures of Arthur's best knight, Sir Lancelot, and to the prehistory of the Holy Grail and its quest. These romances were known

in England and Wales, as references to copies of the French text were found in medieval inventories, and some of the medieval manuscripts produced in England survive to this day (Middleton, 2003: 219). Meanwhile, most of the late-fifteenth century and early-sixteenth century English readers, and English-speaking readers today, know this material from its reworking into Middle English by Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485). It served as the basis for Sydney Lanier's 1880 illustrated adaptation for juvenile audiences, *the Boy's King Arthur*, and it is likely to be this or similar version that Lodge recollects having read as a child (Thompson, 1999: np).

Thomas Malory has often been criticized for his misogyny in portraying women characters in the *Morte*, but, as Kaufman convincingly argues, Malory's representation of women should not be read through modern lenses of gender equality (Kaufman, 2019). Neither should the representation of women in Malory's sources be ignored. For the Grail quest, narrated in the 'Tale of the Sankgreal', Malory followed closely the text of the anonymous French prose romance *La Queste del Saint Graal* (Norris, 2008: 114-118). In turn, the *Queste* has often been described as a very misogynist romance because the participation of women in the quest is prohibited from the very first pages (Ribard, 1982). The *Queste* includes a number of demonic damsels, who are in fact devils disguised as attractive noble women, who hinder the questers, and whose presence adds to the impression that the author of this romance is wary of the sexual attraction that women can exercise over men (Burns, 1998). Horowitz even goes as far as to argue that *Queste* only has two kinds of women: angelic virgins and demonic whores (Horowitz, 1995). Still, there is at least one woman, who is a virgin and sister of one of the three elect knights who succeed in the quest, Sir Perceval. Perceval's sister has been the subject of numerous studies, many of which focus on the fact that she dies before achieving the Grail, which seems to confirm the statement that the *Queste* author is prejudiced against women as questers (Unzeit-Herzog, 1990; Arenstein, 1992; Traxler, 2000).

On the other hand, the body of Perceval's sister does reach the Grail, so, symbolically, this woman achieves the quest, too. Moreover, other women characters in the *Queste* and Malory's *Morte* play an important role in the Grail quest, too, acting as guides and advisors to the questing knights: there are religious women, most notably recluses (Ropa, 2016), who advise the questing knights, as well as the ambiguous wife of King Solomon, an ancestor of one of the questing knights, who likewise acts as a guide (Ropa, 2019). In Lodge's *Small World*, women also often appear in the roles of sexually attractive temptresses (Lily), angelic virgins (Angelica) and wise guides (Miss Maiden), all of whom are essential for Persse McGarrigle's own quest. The categorization of women characters in *Small World* is often less clear than in medieval romance, but Fulvia Morgana is at least one example of an evil and sexually deviant sorceress modelled on the sisters Morgan and Morgause of Arthurian literature.

During the early modern period, chivalric romance went out of fashion, and, with the exception of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590–1596), few notable works of Arthurian literature or art were produced until medieval culture came into fashion again in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century with the Romantic Revival. Works of Arthurian literature were edited, published and studied, and Arthurian romance gave rise to works of literature, art and music.

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century, scholarship focused not only on editing medieval texts, but also on discovering parallels between medieval literature and folklore. Frazer's *Golden Bough* (1890), though it does not examine Arthurian romance or the Grail quest, is critical in this respect, as Frazer's work was one of the defining influences behind Jessy Weston's study of Arthurian romance, *From Ritual to Romance* (1920), which, in turn, left an imprint on the early twentieth-century criticism, literature and art. Thus, the English poet T. W. Rolleston wrote the poem *Parsifal*, which, although it claimed to have been inspired by Celtic literature, seems to have been directly influenced by Wagner's famous opera *Parsifal* and repeated the dichotomy between a pure, virtuous and virgin maiden who is the hero's destined bride and the fallen woman Kundry, both of which were, in Weston's thinking, avatars of the same pre-Christian goddess (Ropa, 2018). Weston believed the main themes of the Grail quest romances to originate in ancient, pre-Christian literature, with emphasis on the union between the god and the goddess, whereas the Grail cup or chalice and the bleeding lance of the Arthurian romance (the lance of Longinus in the Christian tradition) are symbols for the female and male sexual organs. This work was later popularized in the theory of the Triple Goddess motif, which was found not only in romance, but also in folklore: the Triple Goddess is a collective notion for different manifestations of femininity, the virgin, the sexually fertile woman (mother or wife) and the no longer sexually fertile woman (the crone).

Weston's work was cited by T. S. Eliot in *the Wasteland*, where he even referenced Weston's study. Lodge not only knew Eliot's work very well, but even made the protagonist of *Small World*, a young Irish scholar Persse, write his thesis on Shakespeare and Eliot. What is more, one of the characters of *Small World*, Miss Maiden, is a disciple of Weston, who interprets every historical work of literature or art, as well as of popular culture, in terms of phallic and vaginal symbolism, making the virginal Roman Catholic Persse blush. The ideas about the roles, functions and portrayal of women characters in the Grail quest romances, introduced by Weston and creatively reworked by Eliot, have influenced Lodge's characterization of women in *Small World*. While women may be represented in a variety of ways in Arthurian literature, the women characters of *Small World* can be analyzed using pattern of the Triple Goddess: the virgin, the wife/mother (also the whore) and the crone. For the purposes of Persse's own quest, for instance, Angelica is the virgin, Lily is the whore and Miss Maiden is the crone. Other women characters likewise include one or more features of the Triple Goddess, with Joy being the 'wife' for Philip Swallow and Fulvia Morgana the whore for Morris Zapp.

LODGE'S REMAKING OF MEDIEVAL ROMANCE AND MODERN ARTHURIANA

Strange as it may be, the inspiration behind Lodge's idea to frame his 'academic romance' as a quest came not from his knowledge of Middle English literature, although he acknowledges his familiarity with such works as Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, *Havelok the Dane* and *King Horn* (Thompson, 1999: np), but from popular culture. In fact, the twentieth century saw the flourishing of Arthuriana in a new media, the cinema. One of the most famous – if not the most sophisticated – works of Arthurian cinema is Boorman's film, *the Excalibur*. The film is ostensibly based on Malory's romance, though it only uses the names of Malory's characters, treating the plot in a very free manner: Davidson notes that 'Boorman is somewhat dismissive of Malory, even though the film announces itself as based on Sir Thomas Malory's book' (Davidson, 2007: 68). Boorman's interpretation of the rise and death of King Arthur is indirectly inspired by Weston, with her emphasis on the magical powers of the queen (Boorman's Morgause) and her sexuality, with the king's sexual impotence resulting in the land falling into chaos and turning into the wasteland. It would be misleading to assume that Lodge's information about the Grail quest comes from Boorman's *Excalibur*, which is very loosely based on the medieval Arthuriana. Meanwhile, Lodge acknowledges that the inspiration to structure his novel-in-progress along the lines of a chivalric quest came from watching the film:

[i]n spite of the slightly absurd style of the film, I was reminded again what a tremendous story the Arthurian legend is. It's quite powerful. Then it struck me that here was a story which could provide the mythic skeleton or underpinning necessary to give shape to my modern comedy of academic manners. (Thompson, 1999: np)

In *Small World*, David Lodge approaches the Grail quest not only as a novelist but also as a literary critic and academic, though not a medievalist. In drawing his women characters, Lodge includes a variety of literary allusions in the novel, referring to medieval romances – Chrétien de Troyes's, notably *Perceval, ou la Queste del Saint Graal*, and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, for example – as well as non-medieval romances and literature that make use of Arthurian motifs, such as Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Edmund Spenser's *the Faerie Queene* and T. S. Eliot's *the Waste Land* (1922). In an interview with Raymond Thompson, Lodge explains that *the Waste Land* and Jessie Weston's study *From Ritual to Romance*, used by Eliot for his poem, were his primary sources for the Grail quest motif in *Small World*. However, he was also familiar not only with Middle English romances, but also with scholarly studies of romance, including Patricia Parker's *Inescapable Romance* and Northrop Frye's works, when writing *Small World* (Thompson, 1999: np).

Lodge uses the Grail quest as a structural motif to convey his view of the global academic community in the 1980s, which, as Lodge remarks,

represents society in microcosm: '[t]he university is a kind of microcosm of society at large, in which the principles, drives and conflicts that govern collective human life are displayed and may be studied in a clear light and on a manageable scale' (Lodge, 1986: 169). Although Lodge's novel is set in the 1980s, in many respects it anticipates the twenty-first century development in the academe and in popular culture. The novel describes a quest for meaning, which is a hot issue in the twentieth-century literature, questioning the issues of gender and identity, problematizing women's presence in the academia, or, in fictionalized terms, inquiring into whether women can be knights (a question Hilary Swallow actually asks Morris Zapp in the novel (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 63)).

The quest in *Small World* is set in the context of literary studies, where the very idea of meaning is under threat from new literary theories, post-structuralism and deconstruction. This development in literary studies is paralleled by similar tendencies in the world culture: while the world has become a 'global campus', with geographically distant areas being connected by the availability of transatlantic travel, faxing and xeroxing options in Lodge's time – and by the rise of the Internet and social media today – meaning has become increasingly elusive, relative and uncertain, just like the Holy Grail of medieval romance. Likewise, albeit women are officially admitted into the academia, and there are three women academics in *Small World* (Angelica, Fulvia Morgana and Miss Maiden), their position is still precarious. There are fewer women than men professors in Lodge's novel. Only the Italian Fulvia Morgana is a senior academic, as Angelica is a young scholar in search of permanent position, and Miss Maiden is retired. In agreement with the fundamental characteristics of romance as a genre that fosters uncertainty, *Small World* does not resolve the contradictions between different critical theories current in literary studies or the tensions within the academic world. Indeed, Parker describes romance as 'characterized primarily as a form which simultaneously quests for and postpones a particular end, objective, or object' (Parker, 1979: 4).

Lodge's novel presents a variety of quests, many of which remain unfinished or are not achieved in a satisfactory way, but in all of which women are present, if not as questers, then as agents that help or hinder the questing 'knights'. Some quests have global significance, such as the quest for meaning in the post-modern society and the quest for a perfectly applicable theory in literary studies. There are also quests that can be described as 'career' or 'professional' quests, most notably the quest for the UNESCO chair of literary studies. This chair, or 'perilous siege', as Miss Maiden terms it, is similar to the throne of Arthur or the Grail king in Arthurian romance. In Lodge's *Small World*, this chair is eventually taken by a character who is simultaneously King Arthur and the maimed Fisher King, an elderly and distinguished scholar Arthur Kingfisher.

The novel also presents some erotic quests, most notably Persse's quest, briefly outlined above. While his quest for Angelica fails, the novel ends with Persse embarking on a new quest for another girl, Cheryl Summerbee, with whom he

realizes having been in love all the time. But Persse is not the only romantically motivated 'knight' in Lodge's romance. An unlikely knight whose life is changed through a momentous encounter with a 'fair damsel' is Prof Philip Swallow, a middle-aged academic who has grown dissatisfied with family life. Talking to his colleague Prof Morris Zapp, Swallow remembers an episode of nearly escaping an airplane crash while returning from Italy on a trip as a British Council lecturer and being lodged with a beautiful hostess, Joy, to whom he makes love, never to see her again. Swallow thinks Joy to be dead in a later plane crash, and he remembers her nostalgically, saying to Morris Zapp: 'I shall always keep a little shrine to Joy in my heart' (Lodge, 1995: 76). The reference to a 'shrine' takes the reader to the world of medieval romance, where knights would worship their beloved ladies with almost religious fervour. The chivalrously-minded Swallow, however, is about to learn Joy is not dead and, in a typically romantic turn of expectation, is about to appear in his life once again. Swallow's encounter with Joy, a young woman to whom he had once made love, gives him back a taste for life and, for a while, she becomes his muse. Swallow's personal quest, which he terms 'a quest for the intensity of experience' (Lodge, 1995: 212) is intimately associated with women, his lover Joy on the one hand and his wife Hilary on the other hand. Joy seems to be a means to an end in this quest, rather than the aim of his quest, which is in line with the representation of women in medieval romances, because certain scholars consider women to be objects of social exchange in chivalric literature rather than subjects in their own right (Kaufman, 2019).

The two women crucial in Swallow's life, Joy and Hilary, illustrate the polarities of gender relations in the Grail quest literature. In medieval romances, women have a special role in relation to the questers, acting as guides to them. In the *Queste* and the 'Sankgreal', a hermit announces at the beginning of the quest that no woman can enter it, but this prohibition is broken when Perceval's sister, who, like the elect knights, is a pure virgin in body and thought, joins the elect knights. Otherwise, the questing knights rarely encounter women during their adventures, except for devils disguised as attractive damsels. The only two women with whom knights have prolonged conversations are female recluses, who teach Perceval and Lancelot through their 'sermon-commentaries' and personal example. Indeed, the term 'sermon-commentaries' is used by Field to describe the exegesis of knights' adventures delivered by hermits, monks and recluses in the *Queste* and the 'Sankgreal' (Field, 2006: 149). In Lodge's novel, women also guide the questers in their search, teaching them the nature of unselfish love, though naturally their 'lessons' take a very different form from the guidance provided by medieval recluses. Both Hilary and Joy, who, in different ways, are used – and abused – by the pleasure-seeking Swallow, love him unselfishly, and his attachment to these women is manifest. It takes different forms: his attraction to Joy is akin to the medieval concept of *eros* or passion, whereas his relations with Hilary are characterized by caring affection, similar to the medieval *caritas*.

TYOLOGY OF WOMEN IN *SMALL WORLD*: INITIATORS, TEMPTRESSES AND ADVISORS

Lodge's portrayal of women characters in *Small World* has parallels with works of medieval and early modern Arthurian literature as well as with modern works of Arthuriana, most notably Eliot's *the Waste Land*. In *the Waste Land*, women often appear as victims, which to a certain extent is also the case in *Small World*: there is Bernadette, a pretty Irish prostitute who has been seduced and abandoned with a child, but who refuses Persse's help. Likewise, Miss Maiden has been seduced in her youth and gave birth to identical twin girls, whom she abandoned in the airplane toilet. The abandoned twins were adapted, though, and grew up into girls with polar personalities, Angelica and Lily. These early adventures are typical of medieval romance, but it may also be suggested that the eccentricities of the three heroines – Miss Maiden, Angelica and Lily – could be at least partially explained by the traumatic events they have experienced in the past. Indeed, Lodge's characterization of women in *Small World* can be best understood in the context of post-modern writing, which, as Fokkema stresses, is remarkable by its variety in the representation of character: according to Fokkema, in the post-modern novel, 'some characters are explicitly just a voice, others are emphatically body. Some characters are caught up in a game of intertextual reference, others refer to real-world experiences outside the text – and many do a bit of both' (Fokkema, 1991: 181).

Apart from the fanciful romance-like developments in the plot, the names and descriptions of several women characters in *Small World*, notably Miss Maiden, Lily, Angelica and Fulvia Morgana, are symbolic, referring the reader to medieval and early modern romances, such as Spenser's *the Faerie Queene* and *Orlando Furioso* (1516) as well as the modern poem of T. S. Eliot, *the Waste Land*. According to Lodge, the character of Fulvia Morgana was influenced by the demand to create a representative of a national school of literary criticism, so only her name is Arthurian: '[s]he corresponds to Morgan le Fay only in being a seductive witch, I suppose. The analogy there is not very elaborate' (Thompson, 1999: np). On the other hand, Bergonzi identifies Fulvia as 'a latter-day version of Morgan le Fay of the Arthurian cycles, mentioned in Ariosto as Morgana' (Bergonzi, 1995: 21). In fact, Lodge's Morgana may constitute an amalgamation of several Renaissance characters, including the Morgana, who appears as the allegory of wealth in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* (1483–1495), Alcina of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and Acrasia of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

All of these early modern characters fuse the features of a romance enchantress and a witch, who 'drains the vital juices from men, damaging their masculinity by making them too enervated to fight or to resist temptation' (Larrington, 2006: 146). The similarity to these Renaissance seductresses is highlighted by her physical appearance, which is nothing short of queenly, especially after she changes 'into a long, loose flowing robe of fine white wool, which made her look more than ever like a Roman empress' (Lodge, [1984]

1995: 128). In the fashion of Arthurian Morgan le Fay, who makes prisoners of Arthurian knights she wants to become her lover, Fulvia, who turns out to enjoy 'adult' games, takes Zapp prisoner, handcuffing him with the triumphant cry 'Ha, ha! Now you are my prisoner!' (ibid.: 137). After the fateful encounter with Fulvia Morgana, Morris Zapp is kidnapped and, as a result, largely loses all will to fight for the object of his quest, the UNESCO chair of literature studies, or to develop his academic career.

Many of the women, especially the ones associated with Persse, present features of one or several types found in medieval romance: they are virginal saints (Angelica), demonic seductresses (Fulvia Morgana and, at least apparently, Lily), guides (Miss Maiden), fairies or ladies in distress. Persse's cousin Bernadette, Angelica, as well as Lily, might be classified at times as ladies in distress, though they are largely self-sufficient, as Angelica emphatically states to Persse early on that '[she] can look after [herself]' (ibid.: 38). This way, Lodge follows the pattern of medieval and early modern romance in *Small World*, a fact he acknowledges in respect of Angelica, explaining that her 'tendency to disappear at crucial moments derives from the figure of Angelica in *Orlando Furioso*' (Thompson, 1999: np).

While Lodge's men are presented as questers, each of his women characters can perform several of the roles referred to above. Although Zapp argues that women are as numerous as men in academe and, as a consequence, can be viewed as female 'knights' (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 63), it is hardly the case in *Small World*. The only women academics are Angelica, Miss Maiden and Fulvia. Moreover, Fulvia, portrayed from the very beginning as a temptress, is actually the only female competitor for the Chapel Perilous of the UNESCO literary chair. Angelica is a 'young knight' in search of fame and patronage or, in other words, in search of a permanent academic post, but in *Small World* she is seen primarily through Persse's eyes as an object of his love and of other men's desire. Miss Maiden, in turn, is retired, so, strictly speaking, she is not 'in' the academic game: she does not present papers at conferences, and her function in the narrative is mainly that of guiding Persse in his quest. On the other hand, according to Lodge, Miss Maiden and Angelica Pabst are 'the only two characters in the novel who [seem] to know what [is] really happening' (Mullan, 2012b: np). They are not surprised by any of the coincidences occurring in the romance, until Persse reveals their family secret, the fact that Angelica and Lily are the children of Miss Maiden and Arthur Kingfisher. Thus, the women characters in *Small World* are better understood within the framework of female types encountered in medieval Arthurian romances (virgins, sexually promiscuous 'whores', and wise guides) rather than as contemporary 'knights'.

In the novel, the discrepancy between what Zapp says of the academe being full of women and the underrepresentation of women in senior academic positions is telling. For Zapp, women academics appear as dangerous competitors, and, in the case of Fulvia Morgana, they have a somewhat menacing aspect

but Fulvia Morgana is in fact the only tenured academic in *Small World*. Miss Maiden is so eccentric as to be disregarded by Zapp entirely, whereas Angelica's potential as a scholar, is, again, somewhat underrated by Zapp, who, on first seeing Angelica, pays more attention to her prominent breast than to her brains (this, however, is not entirely Zapp's fault – one cannot judge brains by looking at a person, but one can judge a person's physique). It would be dangerous to extend the parallel between Zapp's underestimation of women academics and Lodge's exclusion of female academics from the novel to generalize about Lodge's own views on women in the academe. In other novels by Lodge, such as *Thinks...* (2001), a female writer also appears as a university teacher of creative writing. In *Nice Work*, another female scholar, Robin, is, again, beyond any criticism from the professional standpoint. In this light, it seems that Zapp's underestimation of women can be ascribed, within the world of the novel, to Zapp's own unfortunate experience with his feminist wife Desirée.

To some extent, the women characters in *Small World* and their relations with male characters have continuities with Lodge's other novels; although Lodge's novels abound with sexual adventures, adultery included, the orientation is ultimately towards conventional, Christian morality rather than complete sexual freedom. Peter Widdowson argues that '[i]n Lodge's novels, there is always a crucial return (or *nostos*) for the main characters from the wide-open spaces, the fleshpots, the global campus, to a marriage which has to be remade' (Widdowson, 1984: 22). In fact, Lodge's novels are less morally challenging than they may appear at first sight, because many of them end with the lovers married or planning to marry or with the restitution of a marriage previously threatened by adultery. Restitution of marriage also occurs in one of Lodge's latest novels *Thinks...* Lodge's earlier novel *Therapy* (1985) ends with a puzzling *menage-à-trois*, which brings the protagonist, Tubby, to his first love, a woman he initially planned to marry and, it appears, should have married. In *Ginger*, the protagonist marries the girl he had 'stolen' from his friend and seduced, though he seems to regret his actions at the end.

In another novel from his 'campus trilogy', *Changing Places*, Morris Zapp and Philip Swallow exchange not only universities, but also wives, so that, symbolically, their wives become objects of exchange, like women are in medieval romance, particularly the French *Queste* (Burns, 1998), but also, to an extent, in Malory's *Morte* (Kaufman, 2019). The ending of *Changing Places* is open, though the academics' decision to return home may suggest a return to their traditional households. The expectation is partially confirmed in *Small World*: although Morris and Desirée have divorced, Hilary and Philip continue with what appears to be an unsatisfactory marriage. In the course of *Small World*, Swallow plans to divorce Hilary and marry Joy, but panics and decides to stay with Hilary. Hilary, in turn, seems to become content with her marriage once she finds, somewhat ironically, the job of a marriage counsellor. Moreover, just prior to his meeting Joy again in Turkey, there is a hint that Swallow may be able to rediscover passion with Hilary: the problem in the Swallow marriage may be habit rather than incompatibility.

What the characters of *Small World* say about sexuality is very bold, with Persse, who intends to stay virgin until he marries, making a comical exception. His attitude to sexuality may be described as 'medieval', though it can be equally well described as Victorian. Angelica's insistence on avoiding sexual relations may liken her to the virgin sister of Sir Perceval in the French *Queste* and Malory's *Morte*, yet she is very outspoken in discussing sexuality, which is something female – and male – characters rarely do in medieval romance. The characters of *Small World*, both women and men, are on the whole bolder when speaking about sex than about performing it, with the exception of the comically immoral couple of Fulvia Morgana and her Italian husband Ernesto. Zapp's encounter with the couple employs a common motif of romance, that of a knight's encounter with a seductive lady, to a comic effect. In discussing this episode in a work of literary criticism, *the Practice of Writing*, Lodge explains that, in the passage, 'Morris Zapp is re-enacting the situation of the errant knight lured into an enchanted castle and trapped in the toils of a seductive sorceress' (Lodge, 1996: 24). Zapp, despite his bold lecture on 'Textuality as Striptease' (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 20), leads a life of self-imposed chastity and is scared by Fulvia's bold advances. His theory of sexuality is the reversal of Freud's assumption about the primacy of sex: 'I came to the conclusion that sex is a sublimation of the work instinct. [...] What we really lust for is power, which we achieve by work' (ibid.: 59). Zapp's statement is similar to the position taken by another of *Small World* academics, the chaste Rudyard Parkinson, whose writings reveal close familiarity with the sexual metaphor. However, his knowledge is hardly first-hand, because he is

a bachelor, a celibate, a virgin. Not that you would guess that from the evidence of his innumerable books, articles and reviews, which are full of knowing and sometimes risqué references to the variations and vagaries of human sexual behaviour. But it is all sex in the head – or on the page. Rudyard Parkinson was never in love, nor wished to be, observing with amused disdain the disastrous effects of that condition on the work-rate of his peers and rivals. (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 98)

Persse's belief in 'premarital chastity' is startling in this context, a mark of his being an inexperienced Irish Catholic youth. Such avowals are unfashionable in the general atmosphere of the sexually-liberated academic community, where embracing sexual experimentation and deviance is a sign of supposed maturity.

As has been explained above, the representation of women in *Small World* is influenced not only by the works of medieval Arthuriana, but also by the modern ones, in particular by Eliot's *the Waste Land* and its source of inspiration, Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. Accordingly, Swallow feels 'reconnected to the earth and the life force' when he makes love to Joy for the first time (ibid.: 73). As Joy herself tells him on the Turkish train, she, too, was awakened by the experience. In this way, Joy is similar at once to an Arthurian damsel in distress, because Swallow 'saves' her from the humdrum of everyday life and a fairy, who brings her lover

new life. The description of Joy also makes her akin to the female character of another work of Arthurian literature from which Lodge drew inspiration, Eliot's *Waste Land*. Joy is described by Swallow in terms that liken her to the earth principle, so that she becomes the equivalent of Eliot's 'hyacinth girl' (Eliot, 1971: l. 36, ll. 39-40). Moorman comments that Eliot's 'hyacinth girl, "arms full and hair wet," obviously a symbol of sexual fertility, is greeted by her lover [...], who, neither "living nor dead," cannot in any way partake of her sexuality and is stunned by her vibrant life' (Moorman, 2000: 513). The parallel between Joy and the hyacinth girl is never stated explicitly, and it is Angelica who plays the hyacinth girl in the street-theatre performance.

Although Lodge's novel – like many medieval Arthurian romances – does not have a single hero, focusing instead on the adventures of several knights and their ladies, one character who is most similar to an Arthurian questing knight is Persse. Not only his name reminds the reader of Perceval, who sought the Holy Grail, but he is also similar to his namesake in being young, inexperienced and a virgin. His sexual and worldly initiation is closely related to a trio of women, who embody different aspects of the 'Triple Goddess' – the maiden, the mother and the crone (Weston, 1920) – or, to use the terminology of medieval romance, the virgin, the seductress and the female guide. The Pabst sisters, Angelica and Lily, and their mother, Miss Maiden, assist in Persse's initiation to sexual, moral and social maturity. The culmination takes place at the MLA conference, where Persse gains sexual experience with Lily and understands that his love for Angelica was imagined rather than real.

On the other hand, and in difference from medieval romance, Lodge's women characters can perform multiple roles and can even appear as both 'virgins' and 'whores' at different points in the narrative, as well as performing the narrative function of a 'damsel in distress', which is common in Arthurian romance. For instance, at one point, Persse believes his beloved Angelica to be a prostitute and wants to rescue her from this shameful life, but it turns out that the real prostitute is Angelica's twin sister Lily, who does not want to abandon her lifestyles and thus needs no rescuing. Another 'damsel in distress' is Persse's cousin Bernadette, who becomes a prostitute after giving birth to an illegitimate son. Unlike damsels in medieval romance, Lodge's 'damsels in distress' do not appeal to Persse for help. On the contrary, Bernadette firmly rejects Persse's advice, and Persse eventually discovers that Angelica is not a prostitute. Moreover, Angelica combines saintly and demonic features, as well as retaining likeness to a fairy and a guide. Her success at evading men, a trait for which Lily calls her 'the archetypal pricktease' (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 326), contrasts with the bold sexual metaphor she uses in her speech on romance. Angelica also acts as a guide to Persse: she explains what structuralism is at the beginning of *Small World*. Towards the end of the novel, she instructs Cheryl in the theory of romance, both medieval and contemporary, so that Cheryl surprises Persse with a speech on the history of romance one would hardly expect to hear from a British Airways official:

Real romance is a pre-novelistic kind of narrative. It's full of adventure and coincidence and surprises and marvels, and has lots of characters who are lost or enchanted or wandering about looking for each other, or for the Grail, or something like that. Of course, they're often in love, too. (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 258)

This description of romance is applicable not only to medieval romances, but also to *Small World*, and, more particularly, to Persse's continuous quest for Angelica. Persse, preoccupied as he is with his attempts to catch up with Angelica, who travels from one conference to another, fails to see the similarities between his quest and that of romance heroes and heroines. When Cheryl continues her description of romance using erotic analogies, Persse is shocked, but he recognizes Angelica's influence in Cheryl's monologue: '...in psychoanalytical terms, romance is the quest of a libido or desiring self for a fulfilment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality but will still contain that reality' (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 259). Interestingly, Angelica leaves Cheryl a 'reading list' of source texts, which include *Orlando Furioso* and *the Faerie Queene*. As a result, at the end of the novel, Cheryl becomes Angelica's successor in Persse's affection: having realised he did not love Angelica after all, Persse remembers the girl from the London airport whom he had found, unexpectedly, reading medieval and early modern romances, and understands that he had loved her all the time.

Lily, in turn, appears to Persse as an archetypal whore, and she admits to being 'a slut at heart' (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 326). In medieval Grail quest romances, such as the *Queste* and the 'Sankgreal', this type of woman would have been a demon sent to tempt the hero rather than a real woman. She manages to seduce Persse, but, in effecting his sexual initiation and making him realize he does not love Angelica, Lily plays the beneficial function of a guide. Angelica and Lily echo the twin maidens of *the Faerie Queene*, and they represent two opposites of femininity – absolute chastity and absolute licentiousness. Moreover, given the present discussion, they resemble the contrasting women characters in the *Queste*: Angelica is not unlike Percival's virginal sister, while Lily resembles a demonic temptress, such as the one who nearly seduces Percival in the romance, similar to the other archetypal temptress of *Small World*, Fulvia Morgana. The somewhat unreal, allegoric qualities of Angelica and Lily are emphasised through their physical description, with the birthmarks shaped as quotation marks on their thighs: as Lily put it, '[w]hen we stand together hip to hip in our bikinis, it looks like we're inside quotation marks' (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 325).

Interestingly, Lodge's Persse McGarrigle experiences different kinds of amorous engagement with Angelica, Lily and Cheryl Summerbee, all of whom contribute to the process of his progressive maturity. Persse's attachment to Angelica is still immature and romantic, whereas Persse's seduction by Lily represents a sexual period in his personal history. *Small World* ends with the promise of a new quest, at the end of which the protagonist seems likely to enter a more mature relationship, as Persse realises that he is in love with Cheryl,

who combines the features of Angelica (innocence) and Lily (passion). Moreover, it is possible to view Cheryl as a benevolent fairy, who falls in love with a knight, a figure such as Nimue, who frees Sir Pelleas from his attachment to Etard in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*.

Cheryl's resemblance to a fairy is sustained by her power over the destinies of the British Airways passengers. Her allocation of seats plays an important role in the destinies of the *Small World* characters, though the outcome is not always the one that Cheryl intends. Accordingly, as a result of being seated next to Fulvia Morgana, Morris Zapp not only has a very demanding sexual affair with the Italian professor, but is kidnapped. Likewise, by detaining Rudyard Parkinson, an influential academic and contender for the UNESCO chair of literary criticism, Cheryl changes the course of the MLA conference debates, where Philip Swallow becomes the spokesman of the English school of criticism instead of Parkinson. In playing the trick on Parkinson, however, Cheryl exceeds her powers and is dismissed from her post. Furthermore, despite her quasi-supernatural powers over the passengers' destinies, she is unable to secure for herself the man with whom she falls in love, Persse. In contrast to Angelica, Cheryl appears at first as an unsophisticated reader of popular romances, but, on their second meeting, she surprises Persse by producing from under the counter a copy of *the Faerie Queene*. She impresses Persse not only with her choice of literature, but also with her knowledge of romance theory, stating, for instance, that 'in psychoanalytic terms, romance is the quest of a libido or desiring self for a fulfilment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality but will still contain that reality' (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 259). In elaborating the theory of romance, Cheryl must be repeating Angelica's words, so that she becomes, in a sense, Angelica's pupil. Furthermore, by the end of *Small World*, Cheryl seems to have acquired another fairy-like trait which distinguishes Angelica, the power of disappearance.

Another female character who plays a significant role in Persse's initiation is Miss Maiden, an elegant elderly lady who acts as a guide for Persse. However, unlike a female guide of medieval romance, whose advice would help the hero in finding the way to the Holy Grail, Miss Maiden's advice is more misleading than helpful, because she tells the hero what he wants to hear: in the case of *Small World*, that Persse should continue to woo Angelica and that Angelica wants to marry him. In suggesting that Angelica wants to marry Persse, Miss Maiden is mistaken, because Angelica wants to marry a different young man with the surname McGarrigle. Thus, Lodge presents Miss Sybil Maiden as a guide endowed with visionary powers, making sure to indicate that these powers are limited. Her portrayal is influenced by the Sybil in Eliot's *the Waste Land* and Eliot's source for the Grail motif, Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. In her fallibility, Miss Maiden echoes Eliot's Mme Sosostriis, the 'famous clairvoyante', who gives erroneous advice 'Fear death by water' (Eliot, 1971: ll. 43 and 55). Indeed, Miss Maiden is an academic disciple of Weston's, and her treatment of art invariably includes references to male and female symbolism, which she sees everywhere, from the Christmas pantomime *Puss in Boots*, which she praises

because 'Boots are phallic' (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 36) to Van Gogh's paintings, where 'The cypresses are so wonderfully phallic, the cornfields positively brimming with fertility' (ibid.: 197).

Miss Maiden's obsession with sexual symbolism makes her the opposite of wise advisors in medieval romance, who are religious women and who, in the *Queste* and Malory's 'Sankgreal' insist that the questers should cherish their sexual purity above all things (Field, 2006; Ropa, 2016). The common point between the women recluses of medieval romance and Miss Maiden is the authoritative manner in which they instruct the questors. Persse is incredulous at first, asking jokingly 'So Puss in Boots is equivalent to the Grail?' (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 36). However, he retains much of what Miss Maiden says, and he comments on Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* matter-of-factly, when Morris Zapp introduces 'Freud's idea of primitive society as a tribe in which the sons kill the father when he gets old and impotent and take away his women' (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 42). Judging by Zapp's words, women are simply indicators of one's social role and success, objects of exchange or quest, rather like the Grail. Zapp talks about women collectively, but the idea of women in medieval romance being secondary to knights has been popular in scholarship until recently (Kaufman, 2019). This adds to the overall intertextuality of *Small World* as romance, because as Ammann notes, in this novel, 'Story line, plot construction and characterization belong to the traditional quest-romance with stylized figures in an idealized world, a series of strange adventures and the outward as opposed to the psychological journey' (Ammann, 1991: 107).

Angelica, Lily, Cheryl and Miss Maiden, who all represent different types of Arthurian women, guide Persse in his Grail quest by teaching him in their different ways about sexuality and gender roles. Angelica's elaborate theory of romance, partly voiced by her and partly reported by Cheryl, Lily's casual adaptation of the Andromeda myth into striptease performance and Miss Maiden's explanation of art through sex contribute to Persse's education about gender roles, a development which appears timely, because Persse's Irish Catholic views are not only naïve, but also immature. Very congested here ... His sexual attraction to Angelica approaches religious worship, even fetishism. In Lausanne, he takes the hotel room Angelica has just vacated and adores the traces of her presence, including a bunch of crushed hyacinths (Angelica actually performs the part of Eliot's 'hyacinth girl' in the street theatre), a damp towel and laddered tights: '[h]e swallowed the dregs of water at the bottom of a glass tumbler as reverently as if it were communion wine' (Lodge, [1984] (1995): 268). The initiation Persse receives from Angelica's sister Lily leads to maturity rather than corruption (unlike the intervention of a demonic seductress does in the case of medieval questing knights), because Lily frees the young man from unnatural inhibitions associated with his Irish Catholic upbringing. Whereas in medieval romance Perceval emerges as a more mature man after overcoming his longing for the woman who is actually the devil in disguise, Lodge's Persse, paradoxically, needs to succumb to temptation in order to emerge as a winner in the battle with his flesh.

On the surface, it may appear that the message of sexual liberation communicated to Lodge's Persse is at odds with what the *Queste Perceval* hears from a female guide in this medieval romance, a female recluse (religious woman following an extreme form of enclosed life), who insists that the young knight should preserve his virginity at all costs. Miss Maiden's standpoint seems to be exactly the opposite, when she teaches Persse to see sexual symbolism in literature, art and popular culture. However, she never pushes the young Irishman to promiscuity. Not, we discover, a maiden herself, she apparently had only one affair in her life, like the mother of another medieval questing knight, Galahad's the fair Elaine, and only in order to ensure the continuity of line for a great academic, Arthur Kingfisher. The episode of abandoned children and their restoration years later to a maidenly mother is a direct allusion to Oscar Wilde's *the Importance of Being Ernest* (1895), another work of literature that explores the conventions of romance to a comic effect. As a result, there are similarities between what Perceval's aunt teaches the young knight and what Miss Maiden teaches Persse, because both women speak about divine love: Perceval's aunt teaches her nephew about the transcendent love of God, who can be approached through impeccable performance of chivalric tasks, from which casual love affairs can only detract. Miss Maiden teaches Persse to discern and admire the presence of male and female principles in the world around him, a myth which, in post-Christian society, is the equivalent of the medieval doctrine of divine love.

All these women, Angelica, Lily, Miss Maiden and Cheryl, wield some power over the inexperienced and naïve Persse, so to an extent they all can be viewed as female guides to the quester, a character type frequent in chivalric romance. Their power over Persse seems to derive from their femininity rather than from superior intellectual or spiritual knowledge. The virgin protagonist of *Ginger* emphasizes the influence of this elusive quality, 'femininity', on his life (Lodge, [1962] 1982: 134). In contrast to the saintly or supernatural guides of medieval romances, in a post-religious world, Lodge's female characters are neither omniscient nor omnipotent. By the end of *Small World*, Persse learns the secret of Angelica's and Lily's parentage, which makes him triumph momentarily over the two girls and their mother, Miss Maiden. Persse employs his knowledge to introduce Angelica and Lily to their distinguished father, Arthur Kingfisher.

As Persse's Grail is a wordplay on 'girl', it is unsurprising that women play a paramount role in his quest. These women assume, for Persse, some mythical, fairy-like qualities, retaining, as characters, enough of human limitations on their knowledge and power to appear real. Moreover, Persse's quest seems to be, initially, not for a real girl, Angelica, about whom he knows very little, as her sister Lily aptly proves. He seeks the essential quality of all women, their 'femininity', so that his quest resembles the quests of inexperienced young men in other Lodge's novels, such as *Ginger, You're Barmy* (1962), *the Picturegoers* (1960), *Out of the Shelter* (1970) and *How Far Can You Go?* (1980). It may be a result of his spiritual immaturity and his lack of experience in communicating with women as beings of the opposite gender which initially draws Persse to the beautiful and

enigmatic Angelica and makes him believe he wants to marry her when in fact he merely wants to make love to her.

CONCLUSION

The theme of women characters in the quest for the 'Holy Grail' in Lodge's *Small World* is a problematic one: the first impression is that, to become questers in their own right or at least to be respected by men, women have to act like the male questers. However, because the novel uses the motif of quest that originates in medieval chivalric literature, where women are objects of the quest more often than questers themselves, this involves a change in gender roles. At the beginning of *Small World*, Morris Zapp tells Hilary Swallow that many of the modern 'knights of the Round Table', in other words, academics, are women and that in fact there are more women than men in the academic world (Lodge, [1984] 1995: 63). His words must be vexing for Hilary, who has abandoned her own postgraduate research in order to raise children. However, in *Small World*, male academics are actually more numerous and more prominent than female ones. Moreover, the women academics, with the possible exception of the seductress Fulvia Morgana, are not questers: they are guides, like Miss Maiden, or objects of quest, like Angelica Pabst.

On the other hand, women characters in *Small World* play a number of roles that they share with the maidens, damsels and ladies of medieval Arthurian romances. In both *Small World* and medieval romances about the Grail quest, women appear as angelic virgins, demonic seductresses, wise guides, fairy mistresses or helpers and damsels in distress, as well as any combination of the above. Albeit Lodge's women characters are not explicitly Arthurian – that is, none of them, with the possible exception of Fulvia Morgana, is based on a single, identifiable Arthurian woman character – they are Arthurian in the sense of functions they perform in the novel. Lodge's characterization of women in *Small World* is thus best understood through his use of intertextuality, as his women characters are inspired by various women of medieval (Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*), early modern (*Orlando Furioso*, *the Faerie Queene*) and modern Arthurian fiction (Eliot's poem *the Waste Land*, Boorman's film *Excalibur*).

However, Lodge's intertextuality on characterizing his women as Arthurian characters goes beyond allusions to a single literary source or even a set of sources. His women are characterized in ways that remind the audience of the Grail quest narratives, where women appear as virtuous, angelic maidens, who are often, though not always, virgins (Angelica's name is a cue to her identity, but, to an extent, Philip Swallow's beloved Joy also fits into this category), sexually promiscuous 'whores' or dangerous witches (Lily, Fulvia Morgana) and wise, matronly guides (Miss Maiden). However, it would be a gross oversimplification to assign all women characters in *Small World* to specific types or even a combination of types. As Fokkema argues, 'Most postmodern

characters are both intensely tied up in language, intertext, or discourse *and* reveal simultaneously a mimetic potential which carries them beyond the simple conclusion that representation is neither achieved nor intended' (Fokkema, 1991: 189). According to Fokkema, in most cases, a postmodern character is a 'borderline' entity, 'which is both signified according to some established literary conventions and tied up in intertextual references, linguistic structures, and discourses' and which is 'representational in that it represents a concept about the world of human culture' (ibid.). Lodge's women characters in *Small World* correspond to that definition in that they both refer to a certain cultural concept, that of Arthurian women characters and to certain types of women from the real world. A young woman academic, Angelica, is sexually attractive and aware of the powers she exercises on senior male academics. Like many postmodern characters, she is caught in power relations, in this case, the power relations within the academe. She is wary of being seduced by one of the senior academics, the men in power, realizing that this will not further her career prospects. Thus, she is a virgin both for psychological reasons, as her sister Lily suggests, but also by calculation, which constitutes the mimetic side of her character as Arthurian virgin. By contrast, Lily is sexually available, and she is a typical temptress of romance: her sexuality is likewise routed in power relations, as she is conscious of the power she exercises over men, who are sexually attracted to her. In psychological terms, she is presented as a foil to her sister, who rebels against Angelica's scholarly sophistication and chastity by becoming a prostitute. Miss Maiden, a grotesque figure who sees the world through the prism of phallic and vaginal symbolism, is likewise a character who represents a certain concept:

she is a wise, yet somewhat odd adviser, a grandmotherly type of figure who is well-intentioned but somewhat out of touch with events. To sum up, Lodge's characterization of women is based on intertextuality, alluding to the characters or character types of Arthurian narratives, yet it adapts this intertextuality to the world of the 1980s academe, creating women characters that are recognizable on two levels at once: as Arthurian women and women who live in or near the academic world.

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