**David Lodge, *The Art of* Fiction (Penguin, London, 1992)**

**“The Intrusive Author”**

P10 Around the turn of the century, however, the intrusive authorial voice fell into disfavour, partly because it detracts from realistic illusion and reduces the emotional intensity of the experience being represented, by calling attention to the act of narrating.

**“Suspense”**

P 14 Novels are narratives, and narrative, whatever its medium – words, film, strip-cartoon – holds the interest of an audience by raising questions in their minds, and delaying the answers. The questions are broadly of two kinds, having to do with causality (e.g. whodunit?) and temporality (e.g. what will happen next?) each exhibited in a very pure form by the classic detective story and the adventure story.

**“Teenage *Skaz*”**

P 18 *Skaz* is a rather appealing Russian word (suggesting “jazz” and “scat”, as in “scat-singing”, to the English ear) used to designate a type of first-person narration that has the characteristics of the spoken rather than the written word. In this kind of novel or story, the narrator is a character who refers to himself (or herself) as “I”, and addresses the reader as “you”. He or she uses vocabulary and syntax characteristic of colloquial speech, and appears to be relating the story spontaneously rather than delivery a carefully constructed and polished written account.

P19 There’s a lot of repetition (because elegant variation in vocabulary requires careful thought)…

P19 Sentences are typically short and uncomplicated. Many of them aren’t properly formed, lacking a finite verb.

P 19 The informality of … discourse is the guarantee of …. Spontaneity and authenticity.

**“The Epistolary Novel”**

P22 Novels written in the form of letters were hugely popular in the eighteenth century.

P23 Whereas the story of an autobiography is known to the narrator before he starts, letters chronicle an ongoing process…

P 23 a letter, unlike a journal, is always addressed to a specific addressee, whose anticipated response conditions the discourse, and makes it rhetorically more complex, interesting and obliquely revealing.

P 24 a fictional letter is indistinguishable from a real letter… [they create] a kind of novel originally designed to make fiction look like fact.

**“The Sense of Place”**

P58 *Tom Jones* was published in 1749; *Oliver Twist* in 1838. What intervened was the Romantic movement, which pondered the effect of *milieu* on man, opened people’s eyes to the sublime beauty of landscape and, in due course, to the grim symbolism of cityscapes in the Industrial Age.

**“Time-Shift”**

P 75 Through time-shift, narrative avoids presenting life as just one damn thing after another, and allows us to make connections of causality and irony between widely separated events.

P75 the anticipatory glimpse of what is going to happen in the future of the narrative, known to classical rhetoricians as “prolepsis”. This is because such information implies the existence of a narrator who knows the whole story…

P 77 Time-shift is a very common effect in modern fiction, but usually it is “naturalised” as the operation of memory, either in the representation of a character’s stream of consciousness… or, more formally, as the memoir or reminiscence of a character-narrator…

P 77 … combination of frequent time-shift with authorial third-person narrative is a typical postmodernist strategy, calling attention to the artificial construction of the text…

P 79 Most examples of radical experiment with narrative chronology that comes to mind seem to be concerned with crimes, misdemeanours and sins.

**“The Reader in the Text”**

P81 a narratee, however constituted, is always a rhetorical device, a means of controlling and complicating the responses of the real reader who remains outside the text.

P 82 … modernist and postmodernist novelists have also sought to wean readers from the simple pleasures of story by disrupting and rearranging the chain of temporality and causality on which it traditionally depended.

**“Weather”**

P 85 Apart from the odd storm at sea, weather was given scant attention in prose fiction until the late eighteenth century. In the nineteenth, novelists always seem to be talking about it. This was the consequence partly of the heightened appreciation of Nature engendered by Romantic poetry and painting, partly of a growing literary interest in the individual self, in states of feeling that affect and are affected by our perception of the external world.

**“The Experimental Novel”**

P 105 An experimental novel is one that ostentatiously deviates from the received ways of representing reality – either in narrative organisation or in style, or in both – to heighten or change our perception of that reality.

P 105 Fragmentation, discontinuity, montage, are pervasive in the experimental art of the nineteen-twenties.

**“Staying on the Surface”**

P118 The dialogue is presented flatly, objectively, without introspective interpretation by the characters, without authorial commentary, without any variation of the simple, adverbless speech tags he/she asks/says, without even breaks between the lines of speech.

P119 The past tense of conventional narrative implies that the story is known to and has been assessed by the narrator in its entirety.

**“Showing and Telling”**

P 122 Fictional discourse constantly alternatives between *showing* us what happened and *telling* us what happened. The purest form of showing is the quoted speech of characters, in which language exactly mirrors the event (because the event is linguistic). The purest form of telling is authorial summary, in which the conciseness and abstraction of the narrator’s language effaces the particularity and individuality of the characters and their actions.

**“Telling in Different Voices”**

P 126 The summary narrative method seems to suit our modern taste for irony, pace and pithiness. It’s a particularly effective way of handling a large cast of characters and a story that spreads itself over a long period of time, without getting bogged down in the slow temporal rhythms and dense detail of the classic novel.

P 127 In fact what we have here is not a uniform styles… but a polyphonic medley of styles, or voices, through which [the story] is evoked.

P 128 According to Bakhtin, the language of traditional epic and lyric poetry, or the language of expository prose, is “monologic”, striving to impose a single vision, or interpretation, on the world by means of a single unitary style. The novel in contrast is “dialogic”, incorporating many different styles, or voices, which as it were talk to each other, and to other voic3es outside the text, the discourses of culture and society at large.

P 129 Bakhtin called this kind of writing “doubly-orientated discourse”: the language simultaneously describes an action, and imitates a particular style of speech or writing.

P 129 the language of the novel is not *a*  language, but a medley of styles and voices, and it is this which makes it a supremely democratic, anti-totalitarian literary form, in which no ideological or moral position is immune from challenge and contradiction.

**“Imagining the Future”**

P 135 The past is “natural” for narrative; even the use of the present tense is somewhat paradoxical, since anything that has been written down has by inference already happened.

P 135 He use the narrative past tense to give his picture of the future a novelistic illusion of reality… Science fiction usually tells us how different the material conditions of life will be in the future

P136 imagined the future by invoking, modifying and recombining images of what his readers, consciously or unconsciously, already knew. To some extent, this is always the case. Popular science fiction, for instance, is a curious mixture of invented gadgetry and archetypal narrative motifs very obviously derived from folk tale, fairy tale and Scripture, recycling the myths … for a secular bur still superstitious age.

P 137 … purpose not to reflect contemporary social reality, but to paint a daunting picture of a possible future.

**“Epiphany”**

P 147 In modern fiction an epiphany often has the function performed by a decisive action or episode.

P 148 In epiphanies, prose fiction comes closest to the verbal intensity of lyric poetry (most modern lyrics are in fact nothing but epiphanies)

**“Coincidence”**

P 150 There is always a trade-off in the writing of fiction between the achievement of structure, pattern and closure on the one hand, and the imitation of life’s randomness, inconsequentiality and openness on the other.

**“The Unreliable Narrator”**

P154 Unreliable narrators are invariably invented characters who are part of the stories they tell. An unreliable “omniscient” narrator is almost a contradiction in terms, and could only occur in a very deviant, experimental text.

P 155 The point of using an unreliable narrator is indeed to reveal an interesting way the gap between appearance and reality, and to show how human beings distort or conceal the latter. This need not be a conscious, or mischievous, intention on their part.

P 155 Viewed objectively, the styles has no literary merit whatsoever. It is completely lacking in wit, sensuous and originality. Its effectiveness as a medium for this novel resides precisely in our growing perception of its inadequacy for what it describes.

**“Chapters etc.”**

P 165 The cumulative effect of these quotations from old songs and ballads is to establish the credentials of the authorial narrator as a well-informed and reliable guide to Scottish history, culture and topography.

P165 It also reinforces the impression George Eliot wanted to give of a bookish, learned author who was the intellectual equal of any man.

P 166 Throughout most of the nineteenth century, for instance, novels were commonly published in three volumes, mostly to suit the convenience of the circulating libraries, who were able to lend out one novel to three readers at once, but the practice may also have encouraged authors to see their novels in terms of a kind of three-act structure..

P 167 The chapters of the novels Dickens wrote for weekly serial publication.. are much shorter than those in other novels – originally published in monthly parts.

**“The Telephone”**

P 170 By the same token, the “blindness” of telephonic communication lends itself to deception, and easily generates confusion, misunderstanding and alienation between the participants. It is therefore an instrument full of narrative potential.

**“Motivation”**

P183 Postmodernism and poststructuralism have deconstructed but not demolished the Christian or liberal humanist ideas of the self on which their project is based – the unique, autonomous individual responsible for his or her own acts.

P 183 Motivation in a novel like *Middlemarch* is a code of *causality*. It aims to convince us that the characters act as they do not simply because it suits the interests of the plot…

P 183…any given action is the product of several drives or conflicts derived from more than one level of the personality; whereas in folk-tale or traditional romance a single cause suffices to explain behaviour…

**“Duration”**

P 187 This factor affects narrative tempo, the sense we have that a novel is fast-moving or slow-moving… The stream-of-consciousness novel lingers over every moment, however banal.

**“Implication”**

P 190 But in some cases these gaps and silences are the result of unconscious evasions or suppressions on the writer’s part (and no less interesting for that) while in others they are a conscious artistic strategy, to imply rather than state meaning.

**“The Title”**

P 193 Fiction was modelling itself on, and sometimes disguising itself as, biography and autobiography.

**“Ideas”**

P 198 The term “novel of ideas” usually suggests a book light on narrative interest, in which abnormally articulate characters bat philosophical questions back and forth between themselves, with brief intervals for eating, drinking and flirtation.

P 198 But by “novel of ideas” one means to denote a novel in which ideas seem to be the sources of the work’s energy, originating and shaping and maintaining its narrative momentum…

**“The Uncanny”**

P 212 The French (originally Bulgarian) structuralist critic Tzvetan Todorov has proposed that talks of the supernatural divide into three categories: the marvellous, in which no rational explanation of the supernatural phenomena is possible; the uncanny, in which it is; and the fantastic, in which the narrative hesitates undecidably between a natural and a supernatural explanation.

P 214 Classic tales of the uncanny invariably use “I” narrators, and imitate documentary forms of discourse like confessions, letters and depositions to make the events more credible.

**“Narrative Structure”**

P 217 … direct speech always conveys a stronger sense of the speaker’s presence than reported speech.

**“Aporia”**

P219 Aporia is a Greek word meaning “difficulty, being at a loss”, literally ; “a pathless path”, a track that gives out. In classical rhetoric it denotes real or pretended doubt about an issue, uncertainty as to how to proceed in a discourse.

**“Ending”**

P228 … there is no textual trace of the author’s voice in a filmscript, consisting as it does of dialogue and impersonal, objective descriptions of the characters’ outward behaviour.