

## Englisch-Sprachklausuren

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### 10. Oktober 2001 – [Bernd Blaschke](#)

**David Lodge:** *Changing Places*. (Auszug).

In Morris Zapp's view, the root of all critical error was a naïve confusion of literature with life. Life was transparent, literature opaque. Life was an open, literature a closed system. Life was composed of things, literature of words. Life was what it appeared to be about: if you were afraid your plane would crash it was about death, if you were trying to get a girl into bed it was about sex. Literature was never about what it appeared to be about, though in the case of the novel considerable ingenuity and perception were needed to crack the code of the realistic illusion, which was why he had been professionally attracted to the genre (even the dumbest critic understood that *Hamlet* wasn't about how the guy could kill his uncle, or the *Ancient Mariner* about cruelty to animals, but it was surprising how many people thought that Jane Austen's novels were about finding Mr Right). The failure to keep the categories of life and literature distinct led to all kinds of heresy and nonsense: to 'liking' and 'not liking' books for instance, preferring some authors to others and suchlike whimsicalities which, he had constantly to remind his students, were of no conceivable interest to anyone except themselves.

[...]

He felt a particularly pressing need to castigate naïve theories of realism because they threatened his master-work: obviously, if you applied an open-ended system (life) to a closed one (literature) the possible permutations were endless and the definitive commentary became an impossibility. Everything he knew about England warned him that the heresy flourished there with peculiar virulence, no doubt encouraged by the many concrete reminders of the actual historic existence of great authors that littered the country – baptismal registers, houses with plaques, reconstructed studies, engraved tombstones and suchlike trash. Well, one thing he was *not* going to do while he was in England was to visit Jane Austen's grave.