KINDS OF PARODY
FROM THE MEDIEVAL TO THE POSTMODERN


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**ABSTRACT**


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This study approaches parody as a multifarious literary form that has assumed diverse forms and functions throughout history. The study handles this diversity by classifying parody according to its objects of imitation. Three major parodic kinds are specified: parody directed at texts and personal styles, parody directed at genre, and parody directed at discourse. In the light of this classification, this study argues that different literary-historical periods in Britain have witnessed the prevalence of different kinds of parody – a phenomenon that may be accounted for mainly through the dominant literary, cultural, social, and ideological characteristics of each period. Although all periods from the Middle Ages to the present are considered in this regard, the study attributes a special significance to the postmodern age, where parody has become not only an essential area of inquiry but also a highly popular and widely produced literary form. In line with this emphasis, the study contends further that postmodern parody is primarily discourse parody. It argues, in other words, that discourse is the most essential target of parody during the postmodern age – a phenomenon which can again be explained through the major concerns of postmodernism as a movement. In addition to situating parody and its kinds in a historical context, then, this study engages in a detailed analysis of parody in the postmodern age, preparing the

ground at the same time for making an informed assessment of the direction parody in general and its kinds in particular may take in the near future.

# ÖZ

ORTAÇAĞDAN POSTMODERN DÖNEME
PARODİ VE TÜRLERİ

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Bu çalışma, parodiyi, edebiyat tarihi boyunca hem biçimsel hem de işlevsel açıdan çok çeşitlilik göstermiş olan yazınsal bir tür olarak ele alır ve inceler. Çalışma, bu çeşitliliği anlamlandırabilmek amacıyla, parodiyi, hedef aldığı unsurlara göre sınıflar ve başlıca üç parodi türü belirler. Bunlar, metin ve üslup parodisi, tür parodisi ve söylem parodisi olarak adlandırılır. Bu sınıflandırmanın ışığında, İngiliz Edebiyatı tarihi boyunca, farklı dönemlerde farklı parodi türlerinin önem ve ağırlık kazandığı, bu durumun da, her dönemin baskın edebi, kültürel, sosyal ve ideolojik özellikleri aracılığıyla açıklanabileceği savunulur. Bu bağlamda, Ortaçağdan günümüze tüm dönemler incelenir; fakat çalışma, ağırlıklı olarak, parodinin hem yazınsal bir tür hem de bir inceleme alanı olarak ayrıca önem kazandığı postmodern dönem üzerinde durur. Çalışmanın bu odak noktası ile ilişkili olarak getirilen tez ise, postmodern parodinin öncelikle söylem parodisi olduğudur. Bir başka deyişle, bu çalışma, postmodern dönemde üretilen parodilerin öncelikle ve ağırlıklı olarak muhtelif söylemleri hedef aldığını ve bu durumun da postmodern hareketin konuları, kaygıları ve başlıca özellikleri aracılığıyla açıklanabileceğini savunur. Böyle bir çalışma, parodi ve türlerine tarihsel bağlamda yaklaşmamıza olanak vermenin yanı sıra, postmodern parodiyi derinlemesine incelemekte ve bu incelemeden yola çıkarak parodi ve türlerinin

yakın gelecekte hangi şekilde değişip gelişeceği hakkında nitelikli değerlendirmeler yapmamızı da mümkün kılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Parodi, Postmodernizm, Postmodern Roman, Söylem, Yazın Türleri

*To my parents, İnci and Kamil Korkut,*
*who have made it all possible*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

This study is about parody – a highly ambiguous literary form that has manifested itself throughout history with widely varying features, intentions, and functions. Perhaps the diversity of the form becomes most apparent in the impossibility of specifying a single, fixed target that parody aims to imitate. The object of parody is sometimes an individual work or a personal style and at other times a convention, genre, or discourse. The devices parody employs are also of a highly varying nature. Sometimes irony and sometimes comedy created through exaggeration, understatement, or incongruity may be the devices parody heavily relies on. At other instances the emphasis of parody may be on breaking the illusion created by the target text through the use of metafictional strategies. The relationship between parody and its target is never of a uniform and easily definable nature, either. Parody's attitude towards its target is often ambivalent and may range from degradation and mockery to respectful admiration.

Parody, then, can assume a multiplicity of forms and functions. Taking such diversity as its point of departure, this study aims to account for the various different parodic kinds that have occupied the literary scene in Britain from the Middle Ages to postmodern times. Three major kinds of parody are specified for this purpose. The first kind is parody directed at texts and personal styles; the second is parody directed at genres, and the third is parody directed at discourse. This study contends that while all three kinds have been produced throughout history, different literary-historical periods have witnessed the rise and popularity of different parodic kinds – a phenomenon that can best be explained through the prevailing literary, cultural, social, and ideological characteristics of each period. The study contends further that this argument also applies to the postmodern period, where discourse – rather than texts, personal styles or genres – appears to be the most essential target of parody.

As these arguments also suggest, this study employs primarily a historical approach. It does not, however, place the same amount of emphasis on all literary-historical periods. While those periods that precede postmodernism are treated on a fairly equal basis, a special significance is accorded to the postmodern age. This is justifiable, given the fact that parody in this period has risen to prominence through a proliferation of parodic productions paralleled by an increase in scholarly attention. Dwelling more intensely on parody in the postmodern age also suits the wider aims of this study, which consist in attempting to account for this interesting and significant turn parody has recently taken. In this study, then, it is hoped that the initial survey of parodic kinds from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century will prepare the ground for the in-depth discussion of parody and postmodernism – a discussion aimed primarily at making an informed assessment of postmodern parody by dwelling on discourse parody as the most prevalent kind *and* as the *only* kind that can make full sense within a literary atmosphere characterized by postmodernism.

A study like this definitely requires the formulation of a clear definition of parody. This is especially important, given the fact that parody is a highly ambiguous and multifarious form which has never enjoyed a single unanimously accepted definition. The rest of this chapter will *first* provide a brief survey of various pre-twentieth as well as twentieth-century appraisals and definitions of parody and *then* build on these to define parody in line with the specific requirements of this study. All this will be followed by a discussion of the methodology and limitations of this study.

## 1.1 Parody: Functions, Meanings, and Definitions

*Parodia* is the ancient Greek word which the modern term parody derives from. The word is made up of a prefix (*para*), which may mean either "against" or "beside", and a noun ("ode"), which means "song" (Hutcheon 1991a: 32). The etymology of the word "parody", then, suggests two meanings which seem to oppose each other to a certain extent. Does parody mean a song sung "against"

another or does it mean one sung "beside" another without any intent to oppose or to "counter"?  Both definitions can be equally valid in their own ways, and it can be suggested that this etymological vagueness forms the basis of the ongoing difficulty of providing an exhaustive definition of parody. It is as though the indefinite etymology of the term is reflected in the diversity of the examples which we tend to label as "parody".

All this diversity, however, has not received much scholarly attention in the periods preceding the twentieth century – a consequence probably of the widespread opinion about parody as a "low" and hence "trivial" and "unimportant" form. This may be why British literary criticism before the twentieth century exhibits relatively few attempts to define parody. It should not be surprising that the most systematic pre-twentieth-century definitions have been made by intellectuals of the eighteenth century – a period well-known for its emphasis on mock-forms as well as satire, where parody may be a commonly employed device. The following definition of parody, for example, is from one of Jonathan Swift's earliest satirical works, *A Tale of a Tub* (1704):

> There is one Thing which the judicious Reader cannot but have observed, that some of those Passages in this Discourse, which appear most liable to Objection are what they call Parodies, where the Author personates the Style and Manner of other Writers, whom he has a mind to expose (Swift 1973: 267).

This is a rather narrow definition, regarding parody as a form that targets the style of a writer in order to criticize him. Samuel Johnson's definition of the term in his *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) is quite similar: "A kind of writing, in which the words of an author or his thoughts are taken, and by a slight change adapted to some new purpose" (Johnson 1986: 177). This definition appears a little less narrow since the aim of the parodic act is not fully specified. Nevertheless, it still limits the scope of parody to a great extent by suggesting that parody can target only the "words" or "thoughts" of an author.

Scholars have formulated such narrow definitions of parody in the twentieth century, too. The century, however, has also seen much wider

definitions as well as diverse ways of understanding, appreciating, and interpreting parody. All this, of course, is a consequence of the heightened twentieth-century interest in parody as a literary form. In the early twentieth century parody acquired a new significance mainly through the Russian Formalists, whose major aim was to develop a theory that would enable them to approach and analyze literature "scientifically". For this purpose they singled out the devices that made literary language distinct from ordinary language. This kind of focus led them to coin the term "defamiliarization" – a term which denoted a major characteristic of literary language:

> What was specific to literary language, what distinguished it from other forms of discourse, was that it 'deformed' ordinary language in various ways. Under the pressure of literary devices, ordinary language was intensified, condensed, twisted, telescoped, drawn out, turned on its head. It was language 'made strange'; and because of this estrangement, the everyday world was also suddenly made unfamiliar. In the routines of everyday speech, our perceptions of and responses to reality become stale, blunted, or, as the Formalists would say, 'automatized'. Literature, by forcing us into a dramatic awareness of language, refreshes these habitual responses and renders objects more 'perceptible' (Eagleton 1996: 3).

Literary language, in other words, "lays bare" its techniques and devices and "... modifies the reader's habitual perceptions by drawing attention to the artifice of the text" (Cuddon 1992: 226). It is not very difficult to see how these ideas of the Russian Formalists led them to attribute a special significance to parody. To them, parody often works by "laying bare" the devices its target makes use of, and especially those devices that have become "mechanized or automatic". It then "refunctionalizes" those devices, i.e. attributes new functions to them, thereby developing a new form out of the old, "without really destroying it" (Hutcheon 1991a: 35-36). This kind of process makes a major contribution to "the evolution of literary style" (Dentith 2000: 33). New forms are produced out of old ones, and parody may even "... serve the function of reordering the elements in the [literary] system, allowing previously low-status elements to take on high-status positions"

(Dentith 2000: 33). Parody, then, plays a very significant role in the Formalists' theory of literature. It is not only a form that best exemplifies the concept of "defamiliarization" but also one that greatly enables them to account for literary change and evolution.

Even more important than the role played by the Russian Formalists is the contribution made by Mikhail M. Bakhtin (1895-1975) to the study and appreciation of parody in the twentieth century. Some of Bakhtin's ideas on parody seem to echo those of the Russian Formalists;[1] however, he has developed many of those ideas much further and has provided unique and valuable insights into the significant role played by parody in the cultural/historical context of literature in general and of literary genres in particular. In most of his studies Bakhtin's interest mainly lies in what he calls "dialogism" or "polyphony". Dialogism, as opposed to monologism, is what enables the different "voices" or "languages" in a literary work to co-exist and to interact with each other. Dialogism, to Bakhtin, is a most valuable and essential characteristic and its best examples can be found in the novel, a genre that Bakhtin highly values. Bakhtin's theories on literary change and evolution are also closely related to this concept. To him, literary change is characterized by a process of dialogization, in which the monologic and authoritative nature of old literary forms is gradually subverted through various devices. And this is where parody comes in as a very significant device:

> It is our conviction that there never was a single strictly straightforward genre, no single type of direct discourse – artistic, rhetorical, philosophical, religious, ordinary everyday – that did not have its own parodying and travestying double, its own comic-ironic *contre-partie*. What is more, these parodic doubles and laughing reflections of the direct word were, in some cases, just as sanctioned by tradition ... as their elevated models (Bakhtin 1992: 53).

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[1] "Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist comment in their *Mikhail Bakhtin* of 1984 on how Bakhtin has both taken up ideas from the formalists about the role played by parody in the evolution of the novel and about the 'laying bare of the device' and echoed the formalists' choice of literary works by Sterne, Cervantes and Dickens ..." (Rose 1995: 125-126).

These parodic counterparts, then, paved the way for a kind of "polyphony" or "multivoicedness" by "refracting" the single authoritative voice of the monologic form. This, however, does not mean that the previously authoritative voice is suppressed and subsumed by the new voice introduced through parody. Bakhtin's theory is based on real "polyphony", i.e. the co-existence of all voices on an equal basis:

> [It is essential that] the [parodic] stylization not function as a gross and superficial destruction of the other's language. ... In order to be authentic and productive, parody must ... re-create the parodied language as an authentic whole, giving it its due as a language possessing its own internal logic and one capable of revealing its own world inextricably bound up with the parodied language (Bakhtin 1992: 364).

Bakhtin's theory of "carnivalization" is also closely related to the idea of "polyphony" and hence to parody. To him, "carnival", which does not represent authority but which is legitimized by it to a certain extent, is a means of introducing the language and culture of the folk to the language and culture of authority. It is, therefore, an important means of creating "polyphony". And this is where parody comes in again. As Dentith explains, "parody is ... one of the cultural forms that draws upon the popular energies of the carnival. ... it is mobilized to debunk official seriousness, and to testify to the relativity of all languages, be they the dialects of authority or the jargons of guilds, castes, or priesthoods" (Dentith 2000: 22-23). Bakhtin's theory of "carnival", then, goes even further in placing literary change within a social/cultural context and again emphasizes the value and significance of parody in all these phenomena.

As the above discussion makes clear, first the Russian Formalists' and then, more importantly, Bakhtin's fruitful arguments about the nature and function of parody played a significant role in increasing the interest in parody as a subject of critical analysis and discussion. This, however, cannot be considered the sole reason for the heightened interest in parody in the twentieth century. The century also witnessed a gradual increase in the production of parodic works – an increase

which took such a turn that parody became one of the most widely used devices in postmodern literature. Many critics published on parody, trying to account both for past parodic works and for the proliferation of parody especially in the second half of the twentieth century. The remaining part of this section will look into how these critics have defined parody while the next section will build on these to formulate a definition that best suits the purposes of this study.

It is interesting to observe that when John D. Jump published his *Burlesque* in 1972, previous definitions of and notions about parody were still around. Even the title of Jump's study attests to this. "Burlesque" is the umbrella term he uses to describe the diverse kinds of humorous imitation that can be found in literature. Although Jump does not make any value judgments, his use of the term "burlesque" inevitably brings to mind previous connotations of this literary kind as a "low" or minor form that does not deserve as much critical attention as "higher" forms. Jump's model divides "burlesque" into four kinds, one of which is "parody":

> I. Travesty, the low burlesque of a particular work achieved by treating the subject of that work in an aggressively familiar style: e.g., Byron's *Vision of Judgment*.
> 2. Hudibrastic, the low burlesque of a less confined material: e.g., Butler's *Hudibras*.
> 3. Parody, the high burlesque of a particular work (or author) achieved by applying the style of that work (or author) to a less worthy subject: e.g., Fielding's *Shamela*.
> 4. The Mock-Poem, commonly the mock-epic, the high burlesque of a whole class of literature achieved by lavishing the style characteristic of the class upon a trifling subject: e.g., Pope's *Rape of the Lock*.
>
> (Jump 1972: 2)

Such a model is based essentially on the distinction between "high" and "low" styles and subjects – a distinction that is a legacy of pre-twentieth-century literary theory. Only about a decade later Margaret Rose, Gérard Genette, and Linda Hutcheon published studies on parody. Each study was highly distinct in the way it approached and defined the form. They were, however, largely united by a

concern for describing parody from a modern perspective and foregrounding in their discussion the considerable significance the form had acquired over the past few decades.

In 1982 the French theorist and critic Gérard Genette published a comprehensive study on what he called "hypertextuality" – a term which denotes "any relationship uniting a text B (... the hypertext) to an earlier text A (... the hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary" (Genette 1997: 5). The book is titled *Palimpsests*,[2] a word which serves as a metaphor for all kinds of "hypertextuality" or "re-writing" that Genette wishes to dwell on. Genette, therefore, discusses parody as one form of hypertextuality among many. What is striking about Genette's scheme is that he makes quite precise distinctions between all the forms of hypertextuality he specifies. He sets out by pointing to two kinds of relationships a hypertext can have with its hypotext. The first of these is "transformation", and the second is "imitation" (or "indirect transformation"). According to this scheme parody, travesty, and transposition are forms which directly "transform" the hypotext while pastiche, caricature, and forgery are forms which "imitate" the hypotext. Genette's distinction between "transformation" and "imitation" is not always very easy to understand. To exemplify his distinction, he cites Virgil's *Aeneid* and Joyce's *Ulysses* as hypertexts of Homer's *Odyssey*, the former being an example of "imitation" and the latter of "transformation":

> The transformation that leads from the *Odyssey* to *Ulysses* can be described (very roughly) as a *simple* or *direct* transformation, one which consists in transposing the action of the *Odyssey* to twentieth-century Dublin. The transformation that leads from the same *Odyssey* to the *Aeneid* is more complex and indirect. ... this transformation is less direct because Virgil does not transpose the action of the *Odyssey* from Ogygia to Carthage and from Ithaca to Latium. Instead, he tells an entirely different story: the adventures of Aeneas, not those of Ulysses. He does so by drawing inspiration from the generic – i.e., at once formal and thematic – model

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[2] "By definition, a palimpsest is 'a written document, usually on vellum or parchment, that has been written upon several times, often with remnants of erased writing still visible'" (Genette 1997: back cover).

established by Homer in the *Odyssey* (and in fact also in the *Iliad*): that is, ... by *imitating* Homer. Imitation, too, is no doubt a transformation, but one that involves a more complex process: it requires ... a previously constituted model of generic competence (let us call it an epic model) drawn from that singular performance that is known as the *Odyssey* (and perhaps a few others), one that is capable of generating an indefinite number of mimetic performances. ... In order to transform a text, a simple and mechanical gesture might suffice. ... But in order to imitate a text, it is inevitably necessary to acquire at least a partial mastery of it, a mastery of that specific quality which one has chosen to imitate (Genette 1997: 5-6).

Such a sharp distinction between transformative and imitative forms also points to another distinction between what can be imitated and what can be transformed. Talking about pastiche as an imitative form, for example, Genette explains that "The pastiche in general does not imitate a text ... [because] *it is impossible to imitate a text .... one can imitate only a style: that is to say, a genre*" (Genette 1997: 82-83). He then elaborates on this argument:

To imitate a text directly is ... impossible *because it is too easy, hence insignificant*. It can be imitated only indirectly by using its idiolect to write another text; that idiolect cannot itself be identified except in treating the text as a model – that is, as a genre. That is the reason why there can be only a pastiche [i.e. imitation] of genre, and why imitations of an individual work, a specific author, a school, an era, a genre are structurally identical operations – and why parody and travesty, which do not go through that stage at all, can be defined in no circumstance as imitations but rather as transformations – limited or systematic – imposed upon texts. A parody or a travesty always takes on one (or several) individual text(s), never a genre. The notion, so commonly found, of a 'parody of genre' is a pure chimera. ... One can parody only particular texts; one can imitate only a genre (a corpus, no matter how narrow, that is treated as a genre) ... (Genette 1997: 84-85).

Genette's scheme, then, greatly limits the scope of parody. Only individual texts can be parodied, and in the case of genres, styles, and discourse, one can only talk about pastiche, not parody. Genette limits the definition of parody even further when he makes another distinction – this time between the different "moods"

hypertexts can have. The three major moods he specifies are "playful" (for parody and pastiche), "satirical" (for travesty and caricature), and "serious" (for transposition and forgery). He then provides the following table to summarize his understanding of kinds of hypertextuality:[3]

| mood / relation | playful | satirical | serious |
|---|---|---|---|
| transformation | PARODY | TRAVESTY | TRANSPOSITION |
| imitation | PASTICHE | CARICATURE | FORGERY |

(Genette 1997: 28)

As this table clearly illustrates, Genette defines parody in a highly restrictive manner: a hypertext can be called a parody *only if* it playfully "transforms" its hypotext.

If Genette's limitation of parody to a very narrow scope can be considered extreme, then Linda Hutcheon can be said to go to the opposite extreme in this respect in her book titled, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (1985). As the name also suggests, Hutcheon's study, unlike Genette's, focuses only on examples of parody produced in the twentieth century. Her major concern, then, is to account for modern parodic forms, and she opposes Genette's definition mainly for this reason: "Gérard Genette ... wants to limit parody to such short texts as poems, proverbs, puns, and titles, but modern parody discounts this limitation, as it does Genette's restricted definition of parody as a minimal tranformation of another text ..." (Hutcheon 1991a: 18). The definition Hutcheon proposes instead is one that greatly widens the scope of parody. To her, parody, and especially modern parodic art can be defined as "imitation with critical distance" or as "repetition with difference" (Hutcheon 1991a: 36, 32). This, of course, is a highly inclusive account of parody and runs the risk of embracing all forms of intertextuality. Hutcheon herself is aware of this problem,

[3]The dotted lines separating the three moods indicate that sharp divisions cannot be made and that one mood may overlap with another.

but she explains it away by arguing that her theory of parody involves an important element that differentiates it from theories of intertextuality. This element is the "encoder" (i.e. producer) of the parody, and to Hutcheon, the role of the encoder and the existence of shared codes between the encoder and the "decoder" (i.e. reader) are very essential elements in parody – elements which need not be so essential in general theories of intertextuality.[4] This is, then, how Hutcheon justifies her definition of parody: "... although my theory of parody is intertextual in its inclusion of both the decoder and the text, its enunciative context is even broader: both the encoding and the sharing of the codes between producer and receiver are central [to my theory] ..." (Hutcheon 1991a: 37).

In addition to these Hutcheon contends that parody does not necessarily involve comic elements. She blames the "stubborn retention of the characteristic of ridicule or of the comic in most definitions of parody" and argues that this is "a retention that modern parodic practice contests". She suggests, instead, "a range of pragmatic 'ethos' (ruling intended effects), from the reverential to the playful to the scornful" (Hutcheon 1991a: 26). This, then, is a further indication of the highly inclusive nature of Hutcheon's theory of parody. It is as though her definition allows us to regard all kinds of re-writing as parody.

Hutcheon's disregard of the element of comedy in her definition of parody is highly disapproved of by Margaret A. Rose, whose *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern* (1993) expands and elaborates on her previous study on parody titled, *Parody // Metafiction* (1979). Rose can understand recent attempts like Hutcheon's to eliminate the element of comedy from parody. She contends that Hutcheon's approach represents an attempt to elevate modern parody to a higher status – to the status it deserves – by divorcing it from the comic, which is mostly associated with "lower" forms like ridicule and burlesque: "One of Hutcheon's reasons for her separation of parody from the comic is her laudable, if not novel,

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[4] As an intertextual form parody involves "intentionality" on the part of the encoder, but this need not be the case in all forms of intertextuality. That is why focusing on the relationship between texts and between decoder (reader) and text suffices in theories of intertextuality. Parody, on the other hand, "... demands that the semiotic competence and intentionality of an inferred encoder be posited" (Hutcheon 1991a: 37).

criticism of the reduction of parody to the negative and one-dimensional form of ridicule with which the modern definition of parody as burlesque has been associated" (Rose 1995: 239). Rose argues, however, that elevating parody to a higher status does not necessarily require the elimination of the comic from its definition. Instead, she suggests that parody can and should comprise at the same time both comic elements and intertextual and/or metafictional elements – elements that critics like Hutcheon are so keen on emphasizing. She then defines parody along these lines as "the comic refunctioning of preformed linguistic or artistic material" and explains her terminology:

> The term 'refunctioning' ... [refers] to the new set of functions given to parodied material in the parody and may also entail some criticism of the parodied work. The term 'preformed material' is used in the above definition in order to describe the way in which the materials targetted in a parody have been previously formed into a work or statement of some kind by another, and is used in place of the terms 'form' and 'content' which have been seen to have been used in misleading ways in many modern definitions of parody (Rose 1995: 52).

It should not be forgotten, however, that in this definition the essential and distinguishing characteristic is comedy. The term "refunctioning" can be used to define parody only if it is coupled with the adjective, "comic". In fact, the emphasis on the comic aspect of parody and on the possibility of engaging in discussions of parody as both a comic and a complex[5] form is what characterizes Rose's study from the beginning to the end.

The above discussion illustrates how widely different various definitions and accounts of parody may be. Moving on from such variation, Simon Dentith argues in his recent book, *Parody* (2000) that "disputes over definition" may often prove to be "a fruitless form of argument". To him, parody is such an old and versatile form that formulating a single definition to comprise all examples is often a hopeless endeavour: "... because of the antiquity of the word parody ..., because of the range of different practices to which it alludes, and because of

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[5] "Complex": not one-dimensional; therefore, worthy of critical attention.

differing national usages, no classification [of parody] can ever hope to be securely held in place" (Dentith 2000: 6). What Dentith proposes instead is formulating a definition of parody in line with one's major focus. He argues that this kind of approach may prove much more fruitful and may even make "disputes about definition seem less significant" (Dentith 2000: 10). He then formulates his own definition in line with his study's major concern, which is the cultural politics of parody. Arguing that such a focus requires as wide-ranging an account of parody as possible, he suggests the following definition: "Parody includes any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice" (Dentith 2000: 9). "Cultural" and "polemical" can be regarded as the keywords of this definition, and it should not be so difficult to figure out the importance of such keywords in a study looking into the cultural politics of parody. Dentith, then, formulates his own account of parody in line with his major focus.

Dentith's approach appears rather useful and practical, especially when we consider the fact that it is almost impossible to come up with a fully satisfactory, comprehensive definition of parody. The next section, then, will adopt an approach similar to Dentith's and formulate a definition that will best suit the purposes of this study.

## 1.2 The Meaning and Definition of Parody in This Study

Since this study aims to look at the different kinds and diverse examples of parody that have been produced from the Middle Ages to the present, the definition it provides has to be as inclusive and wide-ranging as possible. In this case, Genette's restrictive definition of parody is highly inappropriate because this study will definitely have to include under the title "parody" works which Genette categorizes as "pastiche", "travesty", and "caricature". Moreover, Genette's fine distinction between parody and pastiche creates a major problem for the purposes of this study. His argument that it is impossible to parody a genre or discourse is highly unsuitable since the study aims at discussing not only parodies of

individual texts but also genre parodies and discourse parodies as different kinds of parody produced since medieval times. Genette's model may prove highly useful for making formal analyses of various hypertexts, but the same cannot be said for his narrow definition of parody.

One may, then, be led towards the other extreme, which is Hutcheon's highly inclusive definition. This, however, is also problematic since it seems to embrace all forms of re-writing. What is required is a definition that is comprehensive enough but that will also limit the scope of parody by distinguishing it from other double-coded or intertextual forms. At this point Rose's emphasis on the comic aspect of parody might appear helpful. It is, after all, commonly contended that parody is a form that usually includes some kind of humour.[6] This may, however, again prove problematic mainly due to the special significance of the comic in Rose's definition. No matter how much Rose argues for the reverse, putting too much emphasis on the comic in a definition of parody may inevitably lead to a misunderstanding of parody as a form that can *only* be associated with simple mockery or ridicule.

The above discussion makes it quite clear that these various definitions, though helpful to some extent in their own ways, are not wholly adequate for the purposes of this study. I propose, therefore, the following definition: "parody is an intentional imitation – of a text, style, genre, or discourse – which includes an element of humour and which has an aim of interpreting its target in one way or another." The phrase – "intentional imitation of a text, style, genre, or discourse" – delineates the scope of this study on the one hand, and on the other, makes this definition comprehensive enough to cover the wide range of parodic examples produced since the Middle Ages. In this definition what helps to distinguish parody from other forms of re-writing is the "element of humour".[7] The word "humour" has the potential to comprise all shades of the comic, from the most

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[6] What kind of humour parody includes, though, is a matter of dispute.

[7] In using the word "humour" to differentiate parody from other forms of re-writing, I follow Rose's lead to some extent. I use, however, the word "humour" instead of the word "comic" mainly to avoid the potential negative connotations – discussed above – of the latter. Furthermore, compared to Rose's, my definition puts less emphasis on this aspect of parody.

subtle and least discernible to the most explicit. The element of humour mentioned in this definition, then, should similarly be regarded as comprising a very wide range of examples. Finally, the last phrase in my definition – "an aim of interpreting its target in one way or another" – is related to the attitude exhibited by the work of parody towards its target. As the phrase also suggests, this attitude may range from denigration, mockery, and ridicule to respectful admiration. Coupled with the element of humour, this attitude identifies the aim and function of each work of parody. To illustrate, a work which uses explicit humour to mock or ridicule its "hypotext" may most probably be aiming at making a harsh criticism of any idea, convention, style, stance, or philosophy represented by that hypotext. On the other hand, if a work exhibits explicit admiration for its hypotext and still includes an element of humour – no matter how subtle – then the aim of this humour may *not* be to criticize whatever is represented by the hypotext *but* to make a witty and/or critical comment about some other phenomenon not directly represented by the hypotext but somehow activated by the re-writing of it. In between these two examples, of course, there may exist all sorts of attitudes, which may not often be so easy to specify – an understandable phenomenon, given the ambivalent nature of parody.

As the definition of parody provided here also suggests, this study is *not* interested in making fine distinctions between parody and related terms. Within the context of this study, then, there is no significant difference between terms like parody, pastiche, burlesque, and travesty – terms which have never enjoyed commonly accepted definitions anyway.

Now that parody has been defined in accordance with the interests of this study, the three kinds of parody this study specifies may also be clarified further. The first of these kinds is "parodies of texts and personal styles". This is quite a broad category, and firstly, it includes any example of parody directed mainly at a particular literary work, such as Henry Fielding's *Shamela*, which clearly has the aim of parodying Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. Secondly, this category includes parodies which are not targeted towards a whole literary work but which imitate and/or distort various lines, phrases, and sentences belonging to a particular

author. John Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe*, for instance, is not directed particularly at any work of Thomas Shadwell, the object of Dryden's satire. Nevertheless, *Mac Flecknoe* still includes text parody since it humorously imitates various lines from Shadwell's plays. Thirdly, this category includes works which parody the style of a particular author without necessarily making a *direct* reference to any particular lines, phrases, sentences, or works by that author. An amusing example can be found in E. O. Parrott's compilation of literary parodies. Here Elaine Morgan, the author, parodies Virginia Woolf's style in a detergent advertisement describing a woman thankful for the changing mood of her husband:

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'Oh, thank you, dear.'
  (*Thinks*) And now I must be kissed, must smile, his scowl, his grumpiness – how strange men are! – utterly vanished. And still one gropes, like a blind man with a stick, for the reason; the late-night malted drink – was that it? – the crispy breakfast cereal – was that it? How could they spirit away that monster, those hooves trampling the pale leaves of my content, that near hatred? This, then: the teeming suds; white sheets flapping (like great swans fighting to be free); Monday, and his dinner not scamped; his wife gracious with leisure. It is to Rinsil, then, my thanks should go! (Parrott 1987: 213).

This piece does not include any *direct* reference to any of Woolf's works, but the style that is parodied is clearly Woolfian.

    The first kind specified by this study – parodies of texts and personal styles – comprises, then, a rather wide variety of examples. This variety, however, should not mislead us into thinking that this parodic kind accommodates totally separate and disconnected subcategories. In fact, the three subcategories discussed above are quite intimately connected and often overlap with each other – hence the need to include them under a single "kind".

    Another point that needs to be made here concerns the use of the word "text" in the name given to this first parodic kind. Modern literary theory has complicated the meaning of "text". Especially poststructuralist theorists like

Roland Barthes have used this word to invalidate the traditional notion of the single, autonomous work originally created by an autonomous individual. It is essential to note that the word "text" in "parodies of texts and personal styles" is used in a completely traditional sense and carries *none* of these poststructuralist connotations. The poststructuralist sense of the word is also discussed in this study in the chapter on postmodern parody, but – as it will be clear in that chapter, too – such a discussion does not oppose or problematize the traditional use of the word in the name given to this parodic kind.

The second parodic kind specified in this study is "genre parody" – a category labelled by some as "general parody" as opposed to "specific parody". This kind includes parodic works that target a particular literary genre characterized by a certain style and by certain formal and thematic conventions. A well-known example is Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, which humorously imitates the conventions of the chivalric romance genre.

The third and final kind of parody specified in this study is "discourse parody". This is a category comprising parodic works directed towards discourse, i.e. towards language that characterizes any philosophical, social, professional, religious, political, ideological, etc. activity or group. A well-known example is Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, where Swift achieves his satirical aim by parodying the discourse of humanitarianism and rational argumentation to propose a solution to the Irish problem. The achieved effect, of course, is doubly shocking since his outrageous proposal is situated within such a seemingly well-intentioned discourse.

## 1.3 Methodology and Limitations

In accordance with its aim of accounting for the prevalence of different kinds of parody during different literary-historical periods in Britain, this study begins with a survey of English parodic literature from the Middle Ages to the first half of the twentieth century. This survey, which constitutes Chapter 2, devotes a separate section to each literary-historical period, and in each section

focuses especially on those kinds that have characterized the parodic literature of the period in question. An attempt is made in each section to relate the prevalence of particular parodic kinds to the literary, cultural, social, and ideological characteristics of the period they belong to.

Chapter 2 is primarily a survey, and like any other survey, it does not make a claim to being exhaustive or comprehensive. The argument about the prevalent parodic kinds in each period is made depending primarily upon anthologized examples that have mostly become a part of the literary canon. Less well-known examples and examples from popular literature are occasionally included, but this does not constitute a general attempt on the part of this study to find out about lesser known examples and formulate an argument accordingly. Such an attempt is way beyond the aim and scope of this study.

Nor is this study in general and Chapter 2 in particular interested in passing value judgments on different kinds and examples of parody produced from medieval times to the present. Chapter 2 is characterized primarily by description, and placing an inferior or superior literary value on some parodic kinds and examples is totally irrelevant to its concerns. As suggested above, the major concern of this chapter is to provide an overview of pervasive parodic kinds at different literary-historical periods, and relate their popularity to these periods' literary, cultural, social, and ideological characteristics.

Chapter 3 also exhibits a similar concern, but this time the whole chapter is devoted to the discussion and analysis of a single literary-historical period, which is the postmodern age. This chapter, therefore, is not a survey but an in-depth analysis of postmodernism as a movement and its implications for literature in general and parody in particular. Chapter 3 builds on the argument developed in the preceding chapter, and similarly attempts to explain which parodic kind is most pervasively employed in postmodern literature. For this purpose it first engages in a theoretical discussion of kinds of parody and postmodernism, formulating the argument that discourse parody is the parodic kind that best characterizes postmodern thought. This theoretical discussion is followed by sections which put theory to practice through an analysis of how discourse parody

often manifests itself in postmodern fiction. Each of these sections is devoted to the discussion of different kinds of discourse parody that can be found in the postmodern novel. The examples chosen for this discussion comprise a total of seven British postmodern novels. These are Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince* (1973), David Lodge's *Changing Places* (1975) and *Small World* (1984), Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983), Julian Barnes' *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor* (1985), and Malcolm Bradbury's *Mensonge* (1987). All these examples are meant to provide a representative sample for the pervasive use of discourse parody in postmodern fiction. And they do turn out to be a fairly adequate representative sample since they exhibit a wide variety of parodies directed towards different kinds of discourse.

The argument about parody formulated in the theoretical discussion of Chapter 3 is meant to apply to postmodern literature as a whole. The sections which put theory to practice, however, provide examples from postmodern fiction only. At first look this may appear problematic. It should not be forgotten, however, that the novel is the genre that best characterizes postmodern literature. "Postmodern fiction" is a widely used and accepted phrase whereas terms like "postmodern drama" and "postmodern poetry" often prove problematic. In fact, how far postmodernism applies to these genres is still an issue of debate. Postmodern concerns – such as a preoccupation with the nature of language and reality – may sometimes be observed in contemporary drama and poetry, too. Unlike fiction, however, these concerns in drama and poetry have often *not* manifested themselves as part of a new and forceful literary movement called postmodernism. This should clarify why this study has chosen examples from postmodern fiction only. The novel, after all, is *the* postmodern genre; therefore, it is only natural that any argument concerning parody and postmodernism should make use of examples primarily from the fiction of the past few decades.

Chapter 4 concludes this study. It first provides a brief summary of the arguments made throughout the preceding chapters, placing a special emphasis once again on the parodic kind that characterizes postmodernism. This is followed by a small projection for the near future, and the study is brought to a close by a

brief discussion of the direction parody may take in forthcoming literary productions.

# CHAPTER 2

## KINDS OF PARODY
## FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

### 2.1 The Middle Ages

The Middle Ages in England may be said to extend over a rather long period of time ranging from the ninth century to the fifteenth. In popular understanding the period is often associated with "… oppressive tyranny, conservative thought, or primitive material conditions" (Bolton 1993a: 2) – a legacy of Renaissance humanists (Jackson 1960: xi) and neoclassical scholars, who firmly believed that the civilization of the Middle Ages was "barren" because it was "devoid of classical taste and learning" (Bolton 1993a: 2). Such an understanding also affects the way medieval literature is evaluated. Humour and parody, for example, are usually regarded as very insignificant aspects of medieval literature since they cannot thrive within a world characterized by the highly authoritarian and oppressive influence of the Church. Scholarly research of the last few decades, however, appears to be bent more on challenging this idea through a closer study of humorous medieval texts:

> In recent years … scholars have begun to pay serious attention to humorous texts, and studies of such works as medieval Latin satire, the Old French fabliaux, and the works of Boccaccio and Chaucer have demonstrated that medieval humor need not be intellectually unsophisticated … . In sum … scholars have come to recognize that medieval culture was neither as monolithically serious nor as unremittingly grim as it has often been portrayed (Bayless 1999: 1).

Recent research, then, has attributed a more essential role to humour in medieval literature. Parody has accordingly received further consideration, and as a result, the Middle Ages have come to be regarded as richer and much more diverse and colourful in literary production.

Not surprisingly, Geoffrey Chaucer provides the earliest examples of parody in English vernacular literature. Most often his objects are the well-known and widely employed literary genres of the time. The romance genre, for example, is targeted in "Sir Thopas", the tale Chaucer himself tells as a pilgrim in *The Canterbury Tales*. Asked by the Host of the Tabard Inn to tell "a tale of myrthe" so that a cheerful atmosphere will replace the seriousness created by the preceding tale of the Prioress, Chaucer begins his story, which, he professes, is "a rym" he "lerned longe agoon" (Chaucer 1989: 213). The tale begins very much like a conventional romance about the exploits of Sir Thopas, "a knight … fair and gent" (Chaucer 1989: 213). Parody, however, is quick to intrude. Sir Thopas has "lippes rede as rose" and "a semely nose" (Chaucer 1989: 213) – a description "… more suitable for a woman than a hero …" (Phillips 2000: 174). Neither are his other characteristics those expected of a proper knight: "Thopas is fair and gentle *on the battlefield*, not exactly appropriate demeanour there, is born in the mercantile center of Flanders, not a noble habitat, and partakes of the unknightly sports of archery and wrestling" (Jost 1996: 233). Similarly, the adventures he engages in are far from being heroic, especially because they are fraught with "humorous anti-climaxes" (Jost 1996: 233). All this, coupled with Chaucer's imitation of "the exaggerated metrics" of the romance genre turn this tale into a powerful parody (Jost 1996: 233).

Though less explicit, genre parody can also be observed in several other works of Chaucer. Mock-heroic scenes, for instance, occasionally appear in "The Nun's Priest's Tale", which is about Chauntecleer, the cockerel, and his wife, Pertelote, the hen. The story is written after the fashion of the beast fable, and naturally, most beast fables are parodic of "regular" narratives where human beings are the major characters. In "The Nun's Priest's Tale", however, the parody is emphasized further through humour stemming mainly from the chivalric style that sometimes characterizes the description of this couple. Mock-heroism becomes apparent especially in those scenes where Chauntecleer is tricked and captured by the fox, and then saves himself through playing a similar trick on the fox:

Chantecleer's vainglory is matched by an overblown style: his capture is presented with rhetorical devices like the apostrophe (address: 'O Destynee …', 'O woful hennes … ' [*sic.*]), repetition ('Allas …', 'Allas …') and the rhetorical question ('Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?'). … Many parallels from the world's great literature create further mock-heroic inflation: the fox is compared to Judas, Ganelon and Sinon (respectively, traitors from the Bible, the Old French epic *Chanson de Roland*, and the *Aeneid*), the hens' cackling [on the capture of Chauntecleer] being compared to lamentations at the destruction of Troy, Carthage and Rome. The cock is presented like an epic hero through allusions to the *Chanson de Roland* …, the Arthurian tradition …, and the *Aeneid* …. His head and feet are visualised in chivalric … terms …. Cock and hen are also described in the literary register of elegant romance: 'Madame Pertelote' is an elegant 'damoysele', described in courtly French terms, 'curteys', 'discreet', 'debonaire', 'compaignable' … (Phillips 2000: 188-189).

Mock-heroic scenes like these, of course, serve especially to parody the epic and the romance – genres that may both be considered central to the Middle Ages.

The love vision is another literary form central to the Middle Ages, and this form, too, becomes an object of parody in Chaucer's work. This time it is not *The Canterbury Tales* but *The House of Fame* – one of Chaucer's lesser known narrative poems – that parodies the conventions of this popular medieval form. At first Chaucer's poem appears very much like a typical love vision: the narrator begins by explaining that on a December night he fell asleep and had a dream. The Temple of Venus is where he finds himself in his dream – yet another detail that leads the reader to assume that he is reading a conventional love vision, where the dream is of such a nature as to enable the narrator to "… make a discovery about love …" (Stone 1988: 11). The narrator, however, does not stay very long in the Temple of Venus. On the wings of a huge golden eagle he is carried off to The House of Fame, and it is especially at this point that the poem starts to play "…havoc with the rules of the highly stereotyped and artificial literary form to which it pretends with great earnestness to belong" (David 1960: 334). The House of Fame and The House of Rumour that the narrator later visits are hardly places where one can receive revelations about love in general and courtly love in particular: "Fame, as Chaucer's audience was well aware, is the deadly enemy of

courtly love. The cardinal rule of the code of love is secrecy, and once the news of an affair has become public property, love is no longer a divine mystery" (David 1960: 336). It is through details like these as well as the light-hearted tone that characterizes the poem in general that *The House of Fame* turns into "a mock dream vision" (David 1960: 339) and hence into a parody of yet another popular medieval genre.[8]

In the light of this discussion it is possible to argue that genre parody is the kind that best characterizes the vernacular parodic literature of medieval England. This is not very surprising, given the significance accorded to form and genre in medieval literary production. Medieval genres are often clearly defined in terms of both form and content, and fluid generic boundaries and genre-mixing are phenomena that usually have no place in the literature of the time. The rigorous "insistence on form" and conventions, for example, is what Jackson emphasizes in his discussion of the medieval lyric (Jackson 1960: 216). Bolton similarly stresses "… the prominence given to genre in medieval works" (Bolton 1993a: 19), and proceeds to explain that "medieval categories" such as "the debate, the dream vision, the letter, the play, the short lyric, the complaint, the epic, [and] the romance …. do not lend themselves … to mixing …" (Bolton 1993a: 20). Bolton's discussion of the generic status of works "of a special kind" like *The Canterbury Tales* emphasizes the significance of genres in medieval literature even further:

> [Even in a] … work … of a special kind, the frame story with many stories incorporated, like the *Canterbury Tales* …. the genres do not mix: they are merely placed together in a fictional container, so to speak, and this sort of organization itself becomes a genre in its own right …. Such a polymorphous work, far from overcoming the categories of literary genre, demonstrates their importance (Bolton 1993a: 20).

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[8] Parody in *The House of Fame* may also be said to target Dante's *Divine Comedy* since Chaucer's poem appears to echo Dante's in various ways. The poem, however, is rather ambiguous in this respect. As Robinson explains, "Chaucer undoubtedly used a number of passages from Dante, and was under his influence at the time of writing. But there is no organic or structural relation between the two works …" (Robinson 1933: 886). It therefore appears more proper to argue that *The House of Fame* is primarily an example of genre, not text, parody.

Genre parody can thrive in such a literary atmosphere. Parody works only if the reader is able to recognize the object of humorous imitation. This fundamental condition is easily satisfied in a literary world significantly characterized by a consensus on generic rules and conventions. The parodist's task of imitation is also rendered easier through the existence of well-defined genres and clearly demarcated generic boundaries.

The use of genre parody in medieval vernacular literature may also be accounted for through the need to expose and satirize "outworn but still powerful" traditions (Macdonald 1960: 563). Chaucer's parody of the romance and love vision traditions in "Sir Thopas" and *The House of Fame* respectively may be said to serve such a purpose. Humorous imitation inevitably exposes the artificial conventions of these genres, drawing the reader's attention at the same time to the exaggerated idealism that often accompanies them. It would be a mistake, however, to argue that such parodies are an indication of Chaucer's contempt for these genres. After all, Chaucer as a writer was also working within the same tradition, and his work includes examples which employ these genres without parodic intent, too. As David suggests, however, "Chaucer's evident affection for his models does not mean that he could not treat them with complete freedom" (David 1960: 334). Parody is definitely one way he treats his models "with complete freedom", and it is an indication on his part of "a high degree of self-consciousness" (Macdonald 1960: 563) as well as a considerable potential for self-mockery and criticism.

Parody in medieval literature is not directed at genre only. Text parody is also employed fairly widely, but these examples are often part of the Latin – not the vernacular – literature of the time. Medieval text parody is usually directed at sacred religious texts, and this is understandable, given the pervasive influence of religion throughout the period. At the same time, however, this is a rather interesting phenomenon because common sense tells us that the Church would never tolerate any direct or indirect challenges to its authority. What is even more interesting is that these parodies, which could well constitute such a challenge, were mostly produced by the clergy themselves. As Bayless explains, "Medieval

Latin parody confounds the polarity between the official and unofficial cultures: these carnivalesque texts, many lampooning religious forms and ideas, were written by and for members of what has been considered the bastion of medieval seriousness, the Church" (Bayless 1999: 2).

Medieval text parody, then, is surrounded by ambiguity, especially in relation to its intent. Was it aiming to challenge religious discourse in some way, or was it simply a form of harmless entertainment? Did it ever express approval or admiration for its object and thus serve the purpose of reinforcing the values represented by it? There are no clear and definite answers to these questions, and it seems that all may be answered in the affirmative as long as it is recognized that no single explanation can adequately resolve the ambiguity surrounding the intent of medieval parodies directed at serious religious texts.

Relief from authority must definitely be one function among the multiple and complex functions served by medieval text parody. In his discussion of humour in the Middle Ages, Don Nilsen quotes from Louis Cazamian[9], relating the latter's argument that "… mirth was … the outbreak of pent-up forces that allowed for the natural man to come forth": " 'The various authorities of religion, chivalry, the feudal system, courtly love were rejected in a mood of rebellion' (Cazamian: 27)" (Nilsen 1997: 2). Mikhail M. Bakhtin's argument about parodic humour that is both "recognized" and "legalized" by the Church (Bakhtin 1992: 72) also follows similar lines. "Legalized" laughter "refracts" the monologic discourse of religion and challenges its authority, though for a short and permitted period of time. It cannot be denied, for instance, that a drinkers' Mass like the following provides considerable relief from authority by becoming a significant source of laughter and entertainment. This drinkers' Mass turns a section of the original Catholic Mass (printed initially below) into a parody where "the Cask" and "King Bacchus" replace the Christian God and Virgin Mary as confessors:[10]

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[9] Cazamian, Louis. 1952. *The Development of English Humor*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

[10] I quote only the English translations provided by Bayless.

'[I confess to almighty God, to blessed Mary ever a virgin, to blessed Michael the archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my grievous fault. Therefore I beseech the blessed Mary, ever a virgin, blessed Michael the archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me.]'

(Bayless 1999: 101)

'[I confess to the Cask, to King Bacchus and to all his cups taken up by us, that I, a drinker, have drunk exceedingly while standing, sitting, watching, waking, gambling, and inclining toward the cup, and in losing my clothes, through my drunkenness, through my drunkenness, though [*sic*.] my extreme drunkenness. Therefore I beseech you, solemn drinkers and diners, to pray devotedly for me.]'

(Bayless 1999: 101)

It is quite apparent that a parody like this entertains and provides relief at the same time from the authoritarian discourse of religion. This, however, need not be its *only* function. The same parody could also serve the purpose of social criticism, exposing the drinker as a ridiculous figure and hence promoting the values represented by religion:

There is … a sizable proportion of religious parody which amuses its audience through the humorous imitation of religious literature without ridiculing religion per se. … In such … parodies as drinkers' Masses, the ludicrous prayers and invocations of the parody contrast with the solemnity of the original, but this does not mean that the parody is actually critical of that solemnity; rather, tavern literature serves to point up the folly of those who have made wine their god (Bayless 1999: 6-7).

Text parodies like these, then, were also tools to improve public (as well as clerical[11]) morals in an entertaining way: "The use of excerpts from sacred texts in contexts anything but holy in itself produced the desired effect of contrast

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[11] Bayless notes that "… illicit clerical drinking seems to have been genuinely prevalent in medieval Europe …" (Bayless 1999: 93).

between the real and ideal, between the state of religious holiness and the state of profane abuse" (Jackson 1960: 230). In line with Jackson's argument it is also possible to regard the drinkers' Mass quoted above as a parody that aims at moral improvement by drawing the reader's attention to the sharp contrast between virtuous behaviour and the vice of excessive drinking.

Medieval parodies directed at religious texts also served the aim of teaching through entertainment. Parodies of stories from the Bible, for example, did not necessarily aim at ridiculing their models. Instead, they often "… served as teaching tools as well as humorous narratives …" (Bayless 1999: 7). A biblical parody like the *Cena Cypriani*, or *Cyprian Feasts*, could have exactly such a purpose. The piece describes the marriage feast of King Johel of Galilee, to which "All kinds of persons from both the Old and the New Testament are invited" (Holquist 1992: 70). The way these characters are described, however, is often ludicrous. The beginning section of the work, for example, gives an account of the seating arrangement at the banquet:

> '[And so first of all sat
>     Adam in the middle, Eve on a leaf,
>     Cain on a plough, Abel on a milk pail,
>     Noah on an ark, Japheth on bricks,
>     Abraham under a tree, Isaac on an altar, ...
>     Jesus on a well, Zachaeus on a tree,
>     Matthew on a bench, Rebecca on a jug ...]'
>
> (Bayless 1999: 20)

The humour here stems mainly from the description of each character as sitting on or under an object that reminds the reader of the biblical story involving that character. Noah, for instance, sits on an ark, and Cain, since he is a farmer, sits on a plough, while Abel, being a shepherd, sits on a milk pail. In some cases, the association of character and object may be commonplace, but "… the notion of the character actually sitting on the object – or eating or drinking it, or employing it in other mundane ways – trivializes the association: the great symbols of the Bible are reduced to vernacular objects in a household" (Bayless 1999: 32). Humorous and entertaining accounts like these often stand a better chance of

being remembered – hence their value as teaching tools especially in religious instruction where learning biblical stories is often a basic requirement.

Medieval text parody, then, can serve a variety of functions. It can teach and entertain at the same time, and its relationship with its model may range from mockery to admiration. Whatever its function, however, its playful and entertaining quality is always in the foreground. It may occasionally aim at teaching or improving morals, but formal didacticism is never its defining characteristic. As Bayless puts it, "… on the whole … medieval parody is not the tool of the reformer, literary or social. It is more often entertainment than polemic" (Bayless 1999: 7). Even when its aim is clearly satirical, parody directed at religious texts "… is full of jokes, puns, and conceits, and it is clear that the satirists are not lampooning vice so earnestly that they fail to enjoy themselves" (Bayless 1999: 128).

Finally, it should be mentioned that whatever its original aim, medieval text parody also shares the most essential characteristic of parody as a literary form, namely double-voicedness. Imitating with a difference, parody inevitably juxtaposes its model with an alternative voice. In Bakhtinian terms, it constitutes a challenge to the authority of its target by "refracting" its target's monologic voice and situating it in a dialogic context. The same challenge may be said to exist in medieval parody directed at sacred texts. The relationship between the parody and its model may be one of admiration. Even this, however, does not change the fact that parody "refracts" the religious discourse represented by its model and undermines its monologic authority. In this sense, medieval text parody can also be regarded as a medium through which the dominant authoritarian discourse of religion is subjected to "refraction" and undermined by being situated in a dialogic context.

## 2.2 The Renaissance

In his study of humour in British Literature Don Nilsen quotes from Louis Cazamian[12], explaining that "During the English Renaissance[13], humor developed mainly along two lines". The first of these – the humour of humanism – was produced and enjoyed more commonly by educated, courtly, and aristocratic circles, and it was "… in close contact not only with the classics, but also with foreign literatures, especially those of Italy and France …" (Nilsen 1997: 38-39). The second line, on the other hand, was popular humour, which was "much more widely diffused" and which usually consisted of "… shrewdness, raciness, … and a down-to-earth reaction to life …" (Nilsen 1997: 39). Both lines of humour made use of parody, of course, but they usually differed in the parodic kinds they employed and the targets they aimed at.

Like medieval humour, Renaissance humour, too, included parodies directed at texts representative of the dominant discourses of religion, politics, and the court. Unlike the Middle Ages, however, this kind of parody in the Renaissance was restricted largely to the domain of popular culture, which was often sharply divided from the courtly and aristocratic culture of the time. Authorities, in other words, were no longer as willing to "legalize" this kind of laughter:

> [In his *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1978)] Peter Burke has argued that, between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries, Europe experienced a set of politico-cultural changes aptly summed up in the phrase 'the reform of popular culture'. Many games, calendar rituals and other popular customs and beliefs were increasingly discountenanced by the ecclesiastical and secular authorities, and measures taken to reform or suppress them. The same period saw a growing divergence between the

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[12] Cazamian, Louis. 1952. *The Development of English Humor*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

[13] Within the context of this study the English Renaissance covers the time span between 1485, the accession of Henry VII, and 1660, the restoration of Charles II to the throne.

culture of élite groups (nobles, gentlemen, clergy, and some middle-class elements in town and country) and that of the mass of the people. The former withdrew from, and to an extent became hostile towards, activities such as carnivals which they had formerly patronized. In so far as they survived repression, many elements of popular culture came to be regarded by members of the élites as merely the vulgar pastimes of the rude, unlettered masses (Ingram 1984: 79).

Censuring by the authorities, however, could not completely eradicate elements of popular culture. Popular humour survived, and so did parodies of texts representative of authoritarian discourses. Parodies of religious rituals, sermons, hymns, and anthems as well as mock proclamations and testaments were significant components of festivities. Often these were anonymous and a part of oral tradition only, and they served a variety of purposes ranging from sheer entertainment to the mockery and ridicule of persons and/or discourses of authority. The example provided by Adam Fox in his article on popular ridicule in Jacobean England gives a good idea as to how such parody usually worked. This is a parody of the Ten Commandments, produced primarily to deride Andrew Abington – a landlord who fell into "... a dispute with his tenants over enclosure of the commons ..." – and fastened to the church gate at Trent, Somerset in August 1616 so that it could be publicly seen (Fox 1994: 78):

*Heere be Andrew Abington's Commandementes*

Thou shalt do no right nor thou shalt take no wronge
Thou shalt catch what thou canst
Thou shalt paie no man
Thou shalt comitt adulterye
Thou shalt beare false wittnes against thy neyghbor
Thou shalt covett thy neighbors wiefe
Thou shalt sell a hundred of sheepe to Henrye Hopkines after
Thou shalt drawe the best of them
Thou shalt sell thy oxen twice
Thou shalt denye thye owne hand

(Fox 1994: 78).

In addition to being a document of personal ridicule, a text parody like this also undermines religious discourse through its irreverent imitation of the Ten Commandments. The piece may even be regarded as an "abuse of biblical authority", which "No Puritan … would have countenanced …" (Jones 2000: 444). No wonder that religious and political authorities disapproved of the parodic productions of popular Renaissance humour, which were often produced in this vein. It seems, then, that popular humour of the Renaissance widely employs parody directed at texts often representative of the dominant discourses of the time. In some respects, therefore, such parodies may also be regarded as discourse parodies aiming to challenge authority.

The humorous productions of the more educated circles – "the humour of humanism", in Cazamian's terms – do not usually include text parodies like these, which verge on challenging the discourses of authority[14]. Text parody is still widely employed, but this time its objects consist mostly of stories from classical mythology. This is perfectly understandable, given the heightened Renaissance interest in the literature and values of ancient Greece and Rome. Learning about the literary and cultural achievements of classical antiquity was a fundamental aspect of humanist education, which every "courtier" or "gentleman" was supposed to receive. Such an emphasis on classical learning inevitably influenced the literary productions of the time, which were significantly "… based on classical … models". Classical mythology was similarly a very "powerful … resource for Renaissance writers" (Campbell 1989: xx). A literary/cultural atmosphere like this, of course, is highly conducive to the production of parodies directed at stories from mythology. These stories, which made up a significant part of the shared culture of Renaissance intellectuals, provided a good source for parody, which normally works best when its object is easily recognized.

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[14] Though not a part of English Renaissance literature, the work of François Rabelais, which may be said to have left its mark on the development of subsequent Western literature, needs to be mentioned as an exception in this respect. His *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* (1532-1564, 1534), which may in some ways be considered prototypical of the novel genre, subvert tradition and the established worldview by assuming "… a parodic attitude toward almost all forms of ideological discourse – philosophical, moral, scholarly, rhetorical, poetic …" (Bakhtin 1992: 309).

A widely popular and hence widely parodied classical story during the Renaissance is "Hero and Leander". Christopher Marlowe's narrative poem, *Hero and Leander* (1598), for instance, may be regarded as a parodic work[15], where the narrator often assumes a rather detached and light-hearted attitude towards his story – an attitude which sometimes amounts to mockery. Marlowe may be said to situate this sad story in a rather playful and light-hearted context, preventing the reader from being seriously moved by the unfortunate plight of the lovers. It is in this way that this classical story formerly told by poets like Ovid and Musaeus turns into a parody.

Marlowe's is not the only parody of "Hero and Leander" produced during the Renaissance. In his *Lenten Stuffe* (1599) Thomas Nashe includes "...a coarse prose version of the story as told by Marlowe and Chapman ... – a version that ... [translates] the tale into a popular idiom" (Raylor 1994: 121). About a decade later Ben Jonson parodies the tale in the puppet show scene in Act V of his *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). The puppets enact the story of Hero and Leander on the stage, but again the tale is translated into a contemporary London setting. In the play Littlewit's description of how he adapted the story to modern times is very revealing of Jonson's parodic intent:

> *Lit.* ... I have only made it [the story] a little easy, and modern for the times, sir, that's all; as, for the Hellespont, I imagine our Thames here; and then Leander I make a dyer's son, about Puddle-wharf; and Hero a wench o' the Bank-side, who going over one morning, to old Fish-street, Leander spies her land at Trig-stairs, and falls in love with her: now do I introduce Cupid, having metamorphos'd himself into a drawer, and he strikes Hero in love with a pint of sherry; and other pretty passages there are, o' the friendship, that will delight you, sir, and please you of judgement (Jonson 1979: 142-143).

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[15] Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* is often considered quite ambiguous in tone, and critics are in disagreement as to Marlowe's attitude towards his subject-matter. Nevertheless, it is still possible to regard the work as a parodic rendering of the ancient Greek tale. A detailed discussion of the highly diverse critical appraisal the poem has received since the 19th century may be found in Tydeman, Williams, and Vivien Thomas. 1989. *State of the Art: Christopher Marlowe, A Guide Through the Critical Maze*. Bristol: The Bristol Press.

Such a "reductive modernization" of the tale definitely creates a parodic effect (Raylor 1994: 120), and the parody is strengthened further by the clumsy and interrupted way the show is put on. James Smith's mock-poem, *The Loves of Hero and Leander* (1651) is yet another parody of this popular story of the time, and it shows traces not only of Smith's own creative fancy but also of the way Smith was inspired by prior parodies of the tale (Raylor 1994: 137-138).

There were, of course, other classical tales that were widely popular and widely parodied. Another mock-poem by James Smith, for example, is titled, *The Innovation of Penelope and Ulysses*, and it is inspired by "... the opening epistle of Ovid's *Heroides*, 'Penelope Ulixi'" (Raylor 1994: 143). Shakespeare also provides one of the best-known examples of parody directed at tales from mythology in the final act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (ca. 1596). This act is almost completely made up of a play performed by Peter Quince and his fellow craftsmen. Again a classical love story – this time, "Pyramus and Thisby" – makes up the plot of the play. The theatrical shortcomings, the clumsiness of the actors, and the continual interruptions by the audience, however, make this performance a parody rather than a faithful and serious rendering of this tragic love story.

In addition to their entertaining quality, these parodies could also have more serious and satirical purposes. Ben Jonson's parody of "Hero and Leander" in *Bartholomew Fair*, for instance, entertained at the same time as it mocked "… the inadequacies of the popular stage" (Horsman 1979: xvii). Similarly, Shakespeare's parody of "Pyramus and Thisby" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* served a variety of purposes ranging from an exposure of "... the shortcomings of all theatrical production and acting" to a mockery of certain melodramatic conventions of Elizabethan tragedy (Clemen 1972: 528). A satiric intent may even be said to characterize the general Renaissance vogue for parodying classical tales. Douglas Bush's account is rather illuminating in this respect:

> … it was not an accident that in Italy, France, Spain, England, a wave of burlesque followed in the wake of the classical revival. Extreme and often wrong-headed veneration for the classics, the

hardening of neoclassic dogmas of imitation, the extravagances of mythological poems, produced the logical reaction. The bolder spirits very early began to ask if nature had expended all its energy in the creation of the ancients, if moderns might not hope for an equal gift of genius, and there was born the quarrel of ancients and moderns which was to last for generations. A few at least of the men who wrote travesties may be regarded as the light cavalry in the army of the moderns (Bush 1932: 287).

This is, then, another way the prevalence of parodies targeting classical tales during the Renaissance may be accounted for. The excessive employment of classical resources as well as the exaggerated emphasis on the classics as aesthetic models to follow may really have led some intellectuals to voice their discontent through parodic means.

During the Renaissance, shared knowledge of the classics also led writers to employ text parody for purposes of personal satire. It was not uncommon that the works and styles of classical authors were parodied mainly to expose the literary inadequacies of contemporary writers. Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* (1601) is a good example in this respect. The characters of the play are mainly made up of Roman writers during the reign of Augustus Caesar, and Jonson parodies the work of these writers throughout. His major aim in doing so is to satirize his own contemporaries like Marston and Dekker, who are represented in the play by Roman poetasters like Crispinus and Demetrius Fannius (Knoll 1964: 58). The work of Horace is yet another object of parody in *Poetaster*, and Jonson's aim is again to attack his own contemporaries by setting a skilled writer like Horace against the poetasters he wishes to mock. In all these cases, of course, Jonson's parody works and his satiric intent is understood owing mainly to the fact that knowledge of these classical writers was a shared characteristic of all who had received education in the humanist vein.

Renaissance aesthetics accorded a great deal of significance to issues of style and rhetoric, and this, too, inevitably affected the parodic productions of the time. Parodying literary styles was a common activity among writers. Again some of these parodies were oriented more towards entertainment while others had more serious critical and/or satirical aims. In *Poetaster*, for example, Jonson

occasionally parodies Marston's style and vocabulary, and his aim – as suggested above – is primarily to satirize Marston's literary skills. Shakespeare parodies "… the general style of [Thomas] Nashe in *Love's Labour's Lost* [(ca. 1595)]" (Cuddon 1992: 683), and in his poetry Sir John Suckling imitates and exaggerates "… the informal, colloquial qualities of [John] Donne" (Abrams 1993: 1704). Among these authors the most widely imitated was perhaps John Lyly, whose highly idiosyncratic prose style inevitably became an object of parody. The distinctive style which Lyly developed especially in his *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578) may again be considered a product of the Renaissance preoccupation with rhetoric. In Lyly's case, however, it was probably an excessive preoccupation since his style – which later on came to be called "euphuism" – is a highly artificial and ornamented way of writing with a very "… elaborate sentence structure based on figures from the ancient rhetorics …" (Abrams 1993: 1003). Lyly's style influenced many prose writers of the Renaissance, but at the same time it became a common target of parody. Francis Beaumont, for example, parodied it in his "Prologue" to *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607). In Act II, Scene IV of *Henry IV, Part 1* (1598) Shakespeare similary employed the style, making his character, Falstaff, speak in the euphuistic manner in his mock-admonishment of Prince Hal – a strategy which enabled Shakespeare to comically satirize "… the highflown style of the court" (Mack 1972: 658).

The prevalence of text parody and of parodies of personal styles during the Renaissance, then, can be explained mainly through the Renaissance interest in classical texts as well as the emphasis Renaissance aesthetics puts on matters of style, eloquence, and rhetoric. Yet another significant characteristic of Renaissance aesthetics is "… the concern with models, with conventions, with the literary tradition as the very vehicle for artistic expression" (Abrams 1993: 405). Observance of genre and decorum, in other words, occupied a central place in Renaissance literature, and Renaissance writers regarded "… the established forms and conventions … [as] the vessels of immediate communication …. [with] the literate community" (Martines 1987: 14). This kind of literary atmosphere was highly conducive to the production of genre parody, too. The strict observance of

genres and conventions "… meant that the readers knew what to expect and quickly noticed any departures from the conventions, a fact which sometimes spurred the poet … to alter or manipulate his forms" (Martines 1987: 45). This manipulation could often appear in the form of genre parody, and in a literary atmosphere where knowledge of generic models, conventions, and divisions was common to almost all members of the reading public, the parodist did not need to fear that his parodic intent would go unrecognized.

The strict observance of generic models and conventions during the Renaissance, however, did not mean that Renaissance literature kept only to given models without introducing originality in any way. In fact, the literary productions of the Renaissance are also significantly characterized by breaking "… new ground by extending the range of antique modes and genres that were made the object of emulation" (Loewenstein 1997: 281). Genre parody again played an essential role in this undertaking. The double-coded nature of parody enabled the parodist to make use of existing conventions at the same time as he undermined them. Generic norms, therefore, were observed and defied simultaneously – a process which contributed greatly to enlarging the scope of Renaissance literature and creating newer forms out of old ones.

The literature of the English Renaissance contains a variety of genre parodies ranging from those directed at chivalric romances – a legacy of medieval literature – to those directed at classical forms such as the epic and the pastoral. Parodies targeting Renaissance forms adopted mainly from Italy are also quite pervasive. All these genres were still widely employed and enjoyed at the time, and satirizing popular tastes and preferences was yet another function of genre parody. The romance genre, for instance, was a common object of parody, owing not only to the need to expose the highly unrealistic conventions of the form but also to the influence of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615), which may be said to have left its mark on all subsequent Western literature. Perhaps the best-known example of romance parody in English Renaissance literature is Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607). The parody here emerges through the subplot of the knight-errant, in which Rafe, one of the characters in

the play, appears "… as a kind of Don Quixote" and goes through a series of comic adventures (Jump 1972: 55), mistaking daily, trivial people and events for the characters and adventures of a chivalric romance "… in truly quixotic style" (Jump 1972: 56)[16].

The Petrarchan sonnet and the love tradition represented by it were other targets of parody during the Renaissance. The most famous example, of course, is Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130" ("My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun"), where the persona endows his beloved with all kinds of characteristics that go against Petrarchan conventions of beauty. Sir Philip Sidney also mocks and inverts "stock Petrarchan descriptions" in "Sonnet 54" of his *Astrophil and Stella* ("Dumbe Swannes, not chatring Pies, do Lovers prove"), and Shakespeare again "… parodies aspects of Petrarchism – the self-absorption of the lover and the catalogue of the beloved's beauties, or *blazon* – in such comedies as *Twelfth Night*" (Carroll 1997: 257). Playful parodies like these entertain at the same time as they make a critical remark on popular taste by exposing the extremely idealistic nature of such a convention.

The pastoral tradition is yet another common target of parody during this period. The highly unrealistic representation of the idyllic life of shepherds and shepherdesses in these poems inevitably turned the genre into an object of humorous imitation. Perhaps the most well-known examples of pastoral parody during the Renaissance are the numerous poems written in reply to Christopher Marlowe's pastoral lyric, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love". In "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd", for example, Sir Walter Ralegh's "nymph" answers Marlowe's "passionate shepherd" in such a playful but at the same time realistic way that the promise of an idyllic life of love made by the shepherd loses almost all its appeal. John Donne similarly parodies Marlowe's poem in "The Bait", and Shakespeare quotes from it, distorting the lines slightly in Act 3, Scene 1 of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (ca. 1600). Even Marlowe himself parodies his

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[16] To what extent Beaumont was influenced by Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is a matter of debate. Jump explains that "Beaumont probably had no first-hand knowledge of Cervantes' great burlesque of the romances of chivalry, which did not appear in English until 1612; but he must have known about it from hearsay" (Jump 1972: 55).

own poem in Act 4, Scene 2 of *The Jew of Malta* (1589) (Robbins 2000: 427). In all these examples, then, Marlowe's poem serves as a typical representation of the pastoral mode, which is successfully exposed and parodied through the many humorous poems written in reply to it.

As suggested above, genre parody during the Renaissance entertained at the same time as it made a critical remark on popular literary tastes and conventions. This latter function is close to being satiric, but genre parody of the time may be said to have an even more explicitly satirical function. It would not be wrong to argue that many of the genres and modes that became objects of parody during the Renaissance were representative of the values of the court. This is not very surprising, given the fact that powerful patrons usually belonged to courtly circles. Lauro Martines' discussion of the sonnet form is highly illuminating in this respect:

> The sonnet belongs to the world of the Court and to those who aspired to it. Meant to exhibit grace, dignity, restraint and good taste, it spun these qualities around the theme of love. And this theme sprang from the actual life of the Tudor Court, where leisure, music, games, and displaying one's finery took up the days, and where love was turned into a mode of play (Martines 1987: 93).

Considered within this context, parodies of the sonnet form may also be regarded as sharp satirical tools directed at courtly ways:

> Shakespeare, Donne, Davies, Drayton, and others all at some point twist or parody the Petrarchan conventions with the aim of puncturing fashion … or deriding courtly pretense. Something about courtly ways is now boldly seen to be false; and poets use the devices of the genre itself to make social observations, to attack it, or to establish an anti-genre (Martines 1987: 93-94).

To Martines, the pastoral mode can also be seen in a similar light. Only ostensibly about shepherds and country life, it is in reality "a rusticized image of Court life" (Martines 1987: 94). This is noticeable especially in the way the life of the shepherd is presented as one of leisure and "the speech of the rural folk" is turned

into "a courtly tongue". The pastoral mode, furthermore, "… has its 'essential trick' in the fusing of rich and poor, achieved by putting 'learned and fashionable' speech into the mouths of poor shepherds"[17] (Martines 1987: 94). Such a "trick" may be considered highly hypocritical of the pastoral mode, reflecting a similar kind of hypocrisy in the values of the court. Considered in this light, the satirical function of parody targeting the pastoral mode becomes quite apparent. In addition to exposing courtly ways, such parody serves to criticize the hypocrisy that complacently unites rich and poor especially when real social conditions do not provide any justification for doing so.

Similar arguments may be made for other genres that became objects of parody during the Renaissance. All this suggests, of course, that the literary-aesthetic understanding of the time was *not* the only cause for the prevalence of genre parody. Discontent with courtly ways was also an essential factor motivating Renaissance writers to engage in humorous and critical imitations of generic modes and conventions, which often represented, explicitly or implicitly, the values and lifestyle of the court.


## 2.3 The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century

The period in English Literature that lasts from around 1660 – the restoration of Charles II to the throne – to the closing decades of the eighteenth century is also known as the "neoclassical" or the "Augustan" age. As these titles also suggest, interest in the classics was a defining characteristic of this period, too. Eighteenth-century intellectuals greatly revered "… the Classical authors, and especially the Romans, who, they believed, had established and perfected the principal literary genres for all time" (Cuddon 1992: 578). Writers "… looked back to the grace and lucidity of classical writing, and tried to recover its virtues in … [their] own work." (Price 1973: 9). Close study "… of the Classical authors

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[17] In making this last argument, Martines quotes from Empson, William. 1966. *Some Versions of Pastoral: A Study of the Pastoral Form in Literature*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

… and careful … imitation of their works", therefore, was a significant literary activity (Cuddon 1992: 578).

Within such a literary atmosphere parody directed at classical texts and writers – a widely produced kind during the Renaissance – became an even more popular form. In this the influence of French literature also played a significant role. In 1648 Paul Scarron published his *Virgile travesti*, a parody which "… retells the *Aeneid* in slang" (Abrams 1993: 1983). The fashion set by his example was quick to spread to England:

> Scarron's travesties soon started a whole vogue in France, which produced many similar works, including travesties of Homer. The fashion had already passed its peak there by the 1660s, which was the time when it struck England. The first famous English travesty was Charles Cotton's free adaptation of Scarron's work: *Scarronides: Or, Virgile Travestie* (1664). This was immediately followed by an adaptation of Scarron's *Typhon* under the title *Typhon, translated from Scarron* (1665) by John Phillips … (Broich 1990: 14).

Many similar parodies were produced. In 1664 James Scudamore published *Homer à la Mode*, a parody of the first book of the *Iliad*. Ovid's *Heroides* was similarly parodied in *Ovidius Exulans* (1673), written by an author who called himself "Naso Scarronnominus" (Bush 1932: 292-293). The vogue continued into the eighteenth century, too, which is evident in such works as *Homerides: or, Homer's First Book Moderniz'd* (1716) by Sir Thomas Burnet and George Duckett, and *Homeros, Homoros* (1722) by Charles Cornwall (Weinbrot 1966: 441-442). Better-esteemed writers, too, employed this kind of text parody. In "Baucis and Philemon" (1709) Jonathan Swift parodied the classical tale of Baucis and Philemon – told by Ovid in the eighth book of *Metamorphoses* – by turning "… the pagan gods into Christian saints and … [locating] the action in Kent" (Jump 1972: 4). And in his play, *Achilles* (1733) John Gay parodied the classical story of Achilles by "making [the great men of Greek legend] … all too human, so that they behave[d] like characters in a comedy of contemporary life" (Lewis 1989: 133).

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Neoclassical understanding also emphasized issues of style, rhetoric, and decorum. Literary production, after all, depended on the observance of rules inherited from the ancients. These rules dictated that "… poets … plan their works in one of the literary 'kinds' or genres … choose a language appropriate to that genre, and … select the right style and tone and rhetorical figures" (Abrams 1993: 1776). Stylistic rules applied to prose writing, too. This time the criteria were derived from the need for simplicity and clarity in "rational discourse". The Royal Society, for example, "… decreed that its members must employ only a plain, concise, and utilitarian prose style suitable to the clear communication of scientific truths" (Abrams 1993: 1778). A constant preoccupation with style, then, characterized all kinds of writing. It is, therefore, not very surprising that this period also witnessed the production of a significant number of parodies directed at individual authors and their styles. *Paradise Lost* and Miltonic blank verse, for example, are the targets of John Philips' parodic poem, "The Splendid Shilling" (1701). The humour here resides mainly in the incongruity created by the way Philips places "Milton's grand manner at the disposal of humble and private concerns …" which consist mainly in not having any "splendid shillings" (Jump 1972: 18). Jonathan Swift's *A Meditation upon a Broom-stick* (1708) similarly parodies a personal style, this time of the physicist Robert Boyle. This work, too, is a highly amusing and playful parody. Swift is said to have composed it for the purpose of playing an innocent trick on Lady Berkeley, his employer's wife, who loved to hear Swift read aloud extracts from "the heavenly meditations" of Robert Boyle, her favourite author (Macdonald 1960: 23). Isaac Hawkins Browne's *A Pipe of Tobacco* (1736) is yet another parodic work targeting individual literary styles. Unlike previous examples, this is "… a collection of parodies of various authors, all supposed to be writing on a single subject" (Jump 1972: 19). The "single subject" is "a pipe of tobacco", of course, and Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, James Thomson, and Edward Young are among the authors who are playfully parodied (Macdonald 1960: 34). Compared to these, Henry Fielding's *Shamela* (1741), which targets Samuel Richardson's literary style in general and his *Pamela* (1740) in particular, may be said to have a more serious intent.

*Shamela* is again highly playful and entertaining, but it is apparent that in parodying Richardson's novel, Fielding is also attacking "the hypocritical morality" the novel appears to be promoting (Carter & McRae 1997: 177).

Genre parody is also commonly employed during this period, and this can again be explained through the neoclassical observance of generic rules and hierarchies set by the authors of ancient Greece and Rome. The highest genre was the epic, of course, and other classical genres such as tragedy, comedy, pastoral, satire, or ode each had their assigned places in the hierarchical order (Abrams 1993: 1776). Furthermore, the rules of decorum dictated that a writer's language, style, and subject-matter be fully appropriate to the genre he was employing. Genre divisions, therefore, were firmly set, and each genre was easily separated from the others through its defining characteristics *and* through the place it occupied in the hierarchical order. Writers often turned to genre parody within such a literary atmosphere. They could, after all, be certain that their parodies would work: readers would have no difficulty recognizing genres, especially classical ones, as objects of humorous imitation.

Among these genres pastoral was a form that eighteenth-century parodists were rather keen on targeting. John Gay's *The Shepherd's Week* (1714) is a well-known example in this respect. Gay places his shepherds and shepherdesses in a humorously realistic context, giving them names and language reminiscent not of the characters of an idealized idyllic haven but of contemporary "English countrypeople". His "pastoral" characters, furthermore, often find themselves in "distinctly ludicrous" situations. The way they are described combines "… pastoral rhetoric with commonplace fact …", and all this contributes significantly to the humour pervading the work (Jump 1972: 48-49).

Perhaps a hidden awareness about the impossibility of re-producing classical forms underlies the tendency of neoclassical writers to engage in genre parody. After all, it is through humorous imitation that "… the pure [classical] form is opposed to the bristling disorder of everyday life" (Price 1973: 10). A parodic work like *The Shepherd's Week*, for instance, draws the reader's attention to "… the affectations and pretences of the pastoral form" (Jump 1972: 50) at the

same time as it points to the sharp discrepancy between the contemporary reader's own world and the world represented by the pastoral mode.

Neoclassical writers probably felt this discrepancy most intensely in relation not to the pastoral but to the epic form. In some this feeling may have been more of an unconscious nature, not occupying the domain of the conscious mind. That it was a feeling almost unanimously experienced, however, may still be argued, owing mainly to the proliferation of mock-epic and mock-heroic forms during this period. This was, indeed, *the* age of the mock-heroic. As Ulrich Broich puts it, "English neoclassicism sought the heroic epic, and found the comic. The quest for the former ultimately entailed a quest for the latter, and the [result was the] … mock-heroic poem …" (Broich 1990: 6-7).

The prevalence of mock-heroic forms during the neoclassical period is also significantly related to the rise of satire at the time. In David Nokes' words, "… the literature of the entire century from the Restoration of Charles II to the accession of George III … is dominated by satire. It would be difficult to find another comparable period of modern literary history whose tone was so firmly established by a single dominant genre" (Nokes 1987: 1). The influence of Roman satirists like Horace and Juvenal is definitely one factor in this. A related but perhaps more significant factor, however, is the general neoclassical emphasis on "order, balance, and correctness":

> The preservation (as well as the establishment) of order, balance, and correctness was dear to them [neoclassical writers]; hence their frequent use of satire … as a corrective. It was a means of controlling excess (which was especially repugnant to them), folly, stupidity and corruption; indeed, any shortcoming in man and society which threatened to be contrary to the maintenance of good moral order and literary discipline (Cuddon 1992: 579).

These ideas – coupled with those of the Enlightenment, which put great faith in man's ability to be rational and hence to advance always for the better – led eighteenth- century writers to employ satire pervasively. The political and religious unease following first the Civil War and then the Restoration of Charles

II to the throne also contributed to endowing the intellectuals of the time with a heightened sense of moral, social, and political responsibility:

> … the writers [of the neoclassical age] … were not for the most part men in retirement from the world …. much of the finest literature of this period owes its strength to this …. the writer is not in retreat, but participating in or actively criticising the public life of his society, whose tensions he dramatises imaginatively; he knows the ways of the world (or that part of it which interests the limited reading public) and embodies them in forms which are publicly accessible. … The great satires of Dryden, Swift and Pope appeal to public scrutiny of public behaviour, whether in religion, politics, 'society', or the arts: it is appropriate that this is the great age of satire, which takes its stand not on the assertion of private emotion, but on the appeal to an argued case and the test of traditional, socially-tempered standards (McGowan 1989: xvii-xviii).

The mock-heroic was especially suited to such satiric aims. It could easily make bitter social and political commentary by alerting the reader to the sharp contrast between the ideal heroic world of the epic and the often corrupt and laughable contemporary world:

> Nowhere did the classical forms survive so well as in satire. Satire had never been so central and powerful a form of literature before in England, nor had it ever shown so great a capacity to absorb the tragic and heroic vision as well. The skeptical impetus that discredited false claims to authority found its form by inventing a ludicrous world of mock-grandeur and self-deception, where men pursued the outward forms of greatness with no sense of their meaning or their true cost. In the finest satires of the age the mantle of greatness is placed upon the fool and falls with an overwhelming weight, as if to crush an insect. The heroic vision is essential to the satiric; the satirist shows his anti-hero falling as far below the norms of decency and intelligence as the true hero rises above them (Price 1973: 10-11).

Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* (1663-1678) is one of the earliest examples of the mock-heroic in this period. Hudibras, "a Puritan knight", is the protagonist of Butler's narrative poem, and the work is mainly an account of his "ridiculous

adventures … not in the lofty idiom suitable to knightly deeds, but in jingling verse and colloquial language" (Pollard 1973: 41). The sharp satire, of course, is directed mainly at "… the religious and political attitudes of the Puritans …" (Jump 1972: 12). Compared to *Hudibras*, John Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* (1682) is bent less on political and more on literary satire. Here the object of Dryden's attack is Thomas Shadwell, a contemporary writer whom Dryden disapproved of not only on literary but also on political grounds. The poem ostensibly uses the language and style of the epic form in order to describe the coronation of Thomas Shadwell as successor to the throne of Flecknoe, "a contemporary poetaster" (Jump 1972: 41). The humorous as well as satirical effect is created mainly through the striking incongruity between form and content: the elevated language of the epic form is employed to describe Shadwell's coronation to become the "… absolute monarch of 'all the Realms of *Non-sense* …'" (Jump 1972: 41). Literary satire is again the major aim in Alexander Pope's mock-epic, *The Dunciad* (1726). His *The Rape of the Lock* (1712-1714) similarly employs the epic style in the service of a trivial subject (a family quarrel caused by a lock of hair), and it is essentially through this strategy that Pope exposes "… the impoverished values of social and literary coteries" (Hammond 1999: 151).

Mock-heroic scenes are also a part of the emerging novel genre of the time. It is especially in novels like Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *Tom Jones* (1749) that mock-heroic strategies are occasionally put to use for the purpose of creating a humorous as well as satirical effect. In some ways, then, such novels may also be considered parodic of the epic form. The generic label – "comic epic poem in prose" – that Fielding gives to his own novels in his "Preface" to *Joseph Andrews* also attests to this (Fielding 1989: 47). The prevalence of mock-epic forms within the novels of the time also becomes quite understandable through the more modern arguments suggesting that the novel evolved out of the epic form by deviating significantly from it.[18]

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[18] See, for example, Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* (1957) and Mikhail M. Bakhtin's "Epic and Novel" included in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (1981) edited by Michael Holquist.

Parody directed at genres other than the epic is also a significant aspect of the novelistic productions of the eighteenth century. This is again understandable, given especially the Bakhtinian argument about the novel's tendency to accommodate as well as parody all genres including its own. In *Tom Jones*, for example, the mock-pastoral is yet another form Fielding employs especially in his descriptions of country life. Such parody again serves a satirical purpose by highlighting "… the contrast between pastoral myth and country reality …" (Mutter 1985:  xxiv). In Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) the contemporary world is again ironically juxtaposed with the heroic world of romances. Apparently written under the influence of Cervantes, the novel parodies the romance genre mainly through the adventures of Arabella, whose acts and decisions are often determined – in a quixotic fashion – by the romances she has been avidly reading since adolescence. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) engages in genre parody, too. The target this time is travel narrative, and the parody emerges mainly through the way Gulliver criticizes contemporary travel accounts while he himself also engages in the creation of one. The way this purely imaginary story is advertised as "a genuine travel account" also adds to the witty humour pervading the piece (Lund 1988: 85).

The eighteenth century novel widely parodies its own forms as well. *Shamela*, for instance, may initially appear as text parody only, but it is at the same time a humorous imitation of the epistolary form as well as the sentimental novel, which were highly popular at the time. Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767), on the other hand, takes novelistic parody to extremes, deliberately frustrating "… all the stock expectations of its readers" (Abrams 1993: 1785) and hence becoming a prototype of the postmodern novel.[19]

As the above discussion also suggests, satire made good use of genre parody, and especially the mock-epic form, throughout the neoclassical period. This, however, was not the only parodic kind at the disposal of eighteenth century satirists. Discourse parody, which humorously as well as critically imitates the

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[19] Because of its metafictional qualities, *Tristram Shandy* may also be regarded as a parody of the discourse of realism in literature. A detailed discussion of this kind of discourse parody can be found in section 3.2.4 of the next chapter.

characteristic language of a certain social, political, or religious group, was an equally effective satiric tool. Jonathan Swift was one of the best practitioners of the form. *Gulliver's Travels*, for instance, parodies the religious quarrels of Roman Catholics and Anglicans through the humorous representation of the land of Lilliput, where the Big Endians and Little Endians go through a similar religious controversy about breaking eggs (Pollard 1973: 36). Discourse parody is also a significant quality of many of Swift's witty critical essays. In *A Modest Proposal* (1729), for example, Swift imitates the discourse of "… the benevolent humanitarian … concerned to correct a social evil by means of a theoretically conceived plan" (Abrams 1993: 2181). The bitter satire is created, of course, through the way this "benevolent humanitarian" rationalizes his "serious" proposal of using Irish babies for culinary purposes.

In the eighteenth century the periodical essay, too, aimed at improving manners and morals through satirical means. Joseph Addison announced in No.10 of *The Spectator* that the purpose of his essays was "to enliven Morality with Wit, and to temper Wit with Morality" (Addison & Steele 1957: 71). Discourse parody suited this purpose quite well. Imitating the discourse of the target social group or practice was simultaneously a source of laughter and witty criticism. A good example of such discourse parody can be found in Sir Richard Steele's critical essay on the traditional practice of duelling in No.25 of *The Tatler*. Steele's parodic representation of the discourse of a challenge to a duel turns out to be a highly effective device for expressing his strong disapproval of this traditional practice:

> SIR
>
> Your extraordinary Behaviour last Night, and the Liberty you were pleased to take with me, makes me this Morning give you this, to tell you, because you are an ill-bred Puppy, I will meet you in HIDE-Park an Hour hence; and because you want both Breeding and Humanity, I desire you would come with a Pistol in your Hand, on Horseback, and endeavour to shoot me through the Head; to teach you more Manners. If you fail of doing me this Pleasure, I shall say, You are a Rascal on every Post in Town: And so, Sir, if you will not injure me more, I shall never forgive what you have

done already. Pray Sir, do not fail of getting every Thing ready, and
you will infinitely oblige,

<div align="center">

SIR,

Your most Obedient,
Humble Servant, &c.

</div>

(Addison & Steele 1957: 16)

Steele's humorous letter, then, is yet another example where parody becomes an effective tool for satire – a form which was widely produced by the writers of the Restoration and the eighteenth century. Satire is indeed a significant factor responsible for the pervasiveness of all parodic kinds during this period. Furthermore, as suggested by the discussion throughout this section, the neoclassical interest in satire was usually accompanied by a related interest in the literary theory and practice of ancient Greece and Rome. This interest, then, is yet another factor in the prevalence during this period of parody targeting text, genre, or discourse – the prevalence, in short, of all kinds of parody specified in this study.

## 2.4. The Nineteenth Century

The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed the popularity of not only sentimental but also Gothic novels – a popularity which emerged through such well-known examples as Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). The turn of the century witnessed the continuation of the same popularity, and it was almost natural that parody should ensue. In 1790 Jane Austen wrote *Love and Friendship*, where she parodied the sentimental novel by describing the adventures of Laura, "… a romantic young lady … good at fainting …" (Macdonald 1960: 42). This was followed by *Northanger Abbey* (ca. 1798), which parodied the Gothic novel, and gently satirized the enthusiasm for it "… by contrasting day-to-day life with the imagined horrors of Ann Radcliffe's work …" (Carter & McRae 1997: 257).

It may be argued that these parodies by Austen are among the few notable examples of genre parody in the nineteenth century. The century, it seems, did not have much taste for this parodic kind. This may be accounted for mainly through the Romantic understanding of art and literature, which emerged as a reaction to neoclassicism in the second half of the eighteenth century. Romantic literary theory and practice no longer adhered to the neoclassical emphasis on generic divisions and hierarchies. What was emphasized instead was the individual poet with his individual style. The natural result, of course, was a considerable decrease in the production of genre parody paralleled by a proliferation of parodies directed at individual texts and styles:

> … the neoclassical view [held] that the various *genres* or kinds of poetry are as distinct from one another as are the biological species, and that an appropriate set of rules can be framed for compositions in each. As long as the kinds were firmly established, mock-kinds could flourish. But the Romantics rejected the doctrine of kinds and the rules associated with it. They held that each true poem evolves, in accordance with organic laws, into its own unique final form. Instead of poems that belong to kinds, they created individual poems. As a result, [text] parody displaced the mock-poem [directed at a genre] … (Jump 1972: 50-51).

Such an atmosphere was also conducive to new experiments in literary style. In a sense, Romantic poetry may be said to have introduced "an avantgarde" whose innovations sometimes appeared rather disagreeable to more traditional minds (Macdonald 1960: 563). Here, then, is another reason for the prevalence of parodies directed at texts and personal styles. In this period, as in all periods, parody was occasionally employed as "… a retentive, conservative force used to ridicule and thus control innovation, perceived excess and aberration …" (Hutcheon 1992: 7). Parodies of literary styles, however, were not produced by those writers who disapproved of Romantic trends only. Equally common were instances where Romantic poets parodied each other:

> The Romantics were by no means a united group, and their reciprocal animosity at times was as intense as anything hurled at

them by the conservative critics alarmed at their innovations. As a young man, Southey parodied Wordsworth, and (under the pseudonym Abel Shufflebottom) he imitated that school of affective love poets known as the Della Cruscans. Coleridge, as Nehemiah Higginbottom (whose comical pseudonym Southey then imitated), parodied Charles Lamb and Charles Lloyd but also himself. A generation later (in 1819), Keats, John Hamilton Reynolds, and Shelley all parodied Wordsworth, while a short time later Byron parodied Southey in *The Vision of Judgment*. Much of Blake's genius also expressed itself through parody, although he was not sufficiently well known to be the actual object of parody until the middle of the nineteenth century (Kent & Ewen 1992: 13).

This discussion makes the prevalence of text parody during the Romantic period rather apparent. It seems that – at one time or another – almost all Romantic poets tried their hands at parody.[20] Dwight Macdonald's anthology of parodies from Chaucer to Beerbohm also attests to this.[21] Nineteenth-century text parodies take up the largest space in his collection, William Wordsworth being the most common target among the examples he provides. This is no coincidence. Wordsworth was indeed "… the most frequently parodied serious poet in the nineteenth century" (Macdonald 1960: 73). Wordsworth's bold innovations in poetic theory and practice probably played a significant role in this. Especially the more conspicuously eccentric qualities of his poetry became objects of parody:

> The many parodies of Wordsworth … help us to appreciate which aspects of his poetic practice and ideology stood out as distinctive, challengingly different, or simply annoying to his contemporaries. Wordsworth's particularities of description, for example, are turned by many of his parodists into a scrupulous triviality about commonplace things, and his low-life characters and poems of encounter are sometimes flippantly mocked. Furthermore, his child-like expressions of faith become either vulgar childishness or immature silliness (Kent & Ewen 1992: 17).

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[20] William Wordsworth appears to be an exception in this respect: "Wordsworth was … apparently the only [Romantic poet] … who never wrote parodies himself" (Kent & Ewen 1992: 17).

[21] Please see "Bibliography" for full bibliographical information.

Perhaps the best-known Wordsworth parody in the Romantic period is John Hamilton Reynolds' *Peter Bell* (1819), which targets Wordsworth's general style as well as his poem of the same name. What is striking about Reynolds' parody is that it was published before Wordsworth's original *Peter Bell* came out (Macdonald 1960: 74):

> The *Literary Gazette* of 10 April 1819 had announced the imminent appearance of a new Wordsworth poem, *Peter Bell*, and Reynolds promptly seized the opportunity of composing this parody, some have said in five hours' time, others say in the course of a day. Reynolds luckily borrowed the rhyme scheme from "The Idiot Boy" and (accidentally hitting the rhyme scheme of Wordsworth's poem) thereby manage [*sic.*] to suggest even more forcefully the utter predictability of Wordsworth's art (Kent & Ewen 1992: 173).

Wordsworth was also a target of parody in James and Horace Smith's *Rejected Addresses* (1812), the well-known parodic collection of the age. Like the earlier century's *A Pipe of Tobacco* (1736), this, too, included "parodic variations" on a single theme. The theme this time was "an address to be recited" at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre, which was rebuilt following its destruction in a fire three years earlier. None of the 112 addresses submitted for the occasion was liked by the committee in charge – an opportunity which James and Horace Smith took to publish *Rejected Addresses*, a parodic "… collection of twenty-one items allegedly by various eminent hands" (Jump 1972: 21). Besides Wordsworth, the collection included parodies directed at other contemporaries such as Coleridge, Scott, and Byron as well parodies targeting earlier writers like Shakespeare and Dr. Johnson (Macdonald 1960: 55). The work was a "… great popular success … and went through sixteen printings in seven years" (Kent & Ewen 1992: 73).

*Rejected Addresses* is a playful collection of parodies aiming primarily at entertainment. Not all Romantic parodies are motivated by such playful purposes. In fact, parody in this period is "… almost always aligned with satire" (Hutcheon 1992: 7). Most Romantic poets, after all, were highly passionate supporters of their own political views – a phenomenon that was perhaps a consequence of the

French Revolution as well as the social and political turmoil that surrounded it. The political unease at home during the first decades of the nineteenth century was an equally significant factor in the pervasive use of satirical parody during this period:

> … Romantic parody reaches its height during the last part of the Regency …. The year 1819 saw a proliferation of parodies …. England was being governed by two parodies of kingship: George III – 'An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying King' (Shelley's 'England in 1819'); and George IV to be – a man devoted to self-gratification who dabbled in numerous styles and modes. The Regency was, as J. B. Priestly observes, an age of extremes and of transition in which 'elegance and refinement' existed beside 'brutality and misery,' wealth beside poverty, licentiousness beside prudery. It had 'no common belief, no accepted code, no general standard of conformity.'[22] Parody is an apt reflection of this age of role-playing and costume, of ostentatious dandies and vulgar improprieties, in some way the expression of political frustration. … Parody conveniently combined many attractive elements for Regency writers, becoming a vehicle for cynical and contemptuous criticism of political, class, and artistic enemies … (Kent & Ewen 1992: 19).

Text parody during the Romantic Period, then, was a "major literary weapon" writers used to engage in political satire by attacking others who represented either general political corruption or opposing political views (Kent & Ewen 1992: 15). Even the Wordsworth parodies, which were usually motivated by the poet's highly idiosyncratic style, were sometimes bent on making political commentary. The *Peter Bell* parody discussed above, for example, criticized Wordsworth's "… distastefully smug tone of moral superiority in both verse and prose …" at the same time as it charged the poet "… with having sold his loyalties to conservative political principles …" (Kent & Ewen 1992: 173). Again written in 1819, another *Peter Bell* parody – *Peter Bell The Third* by Percy Bysshe Shelley – was bent even more on political satire. Shelley's parodic poem aimed especially at condemning "… Wordsworth's Methodist view of humanity as

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[22] Priestly, J. B. 1969. *The Prince of Pleasure*. New York: Harper & Row.

hopelessly depraved and, above all, the social consequence of such a view, political passivity" (Kent & Ewen 1992: 213).

The satirical vein is even more explicit in Romantic parodies directed at Robert Southey. Among the most well known of such parodies are those written by George Canning and John Hookham Frere in *The Anti-Jacobin* (1797-1798), a periodical founded by the two "… to combat the subversive principles in philosophy and politics that were current at the time and that the French Revolutionaries had been putting into effect" (Jump 1972: 19). Conservative MPs themselves, Canning and Frere used parody as a vehicle to attack not only Southey's "republican sympathies in politics" but also his "experimental meters in poetry" (Kent & Ewen 1992: 25). Two decades later Southey again became a major object of satire in Lord Byron's parody, *The Vision of Judgment* (1822). Byron's parody was directed at Southey's *A Vision of Judgement*, published a year earlier. By this time Southey had relinquished his republican sympathies to become an equally ardent conservative in politics. This time, therefore, Byron's satire attacked Southey's "Toryism", which became apparent especially in the way Southey's poem celebrated "… the reception of the [recently] deceased monarch [George III] into celestial bliss …" (Jump 1972: 5). The period witnessed the production of many other Southey parodies. That he was both a republican and a conservative at different periods of his life also contributed to the proliferation of satirical parodies directed at him. As Kent & Ewen nicely explain, "In the example of Southey, we can see parody being used as an ideological weapon of considerable force and influence, a mode lending itself to the service not just of conservatism and tradition but also … to liberalism and reform" (Kent & Ewen 1992: 18).

The Romantic vogue for parodying individual works and styles – of contemporary as well as earlier authors – continued in the Victorian period, too. Robert Browning, for example, was parodied almost as frequently as Wordsworth, and it was again his idiosyncratic and innovative style that easily lent itself to parody (Macdonald 1960: 73-74). Algernon Charles Swinburne was also fairly widely parodied – a phenomenon that may similarly be explained through "… the

hypnotic rhythm and mechanical alliteration characteristic of Swinburne's writing" (Jump 1972: 23). Lewis Carroll also needs to be mentioned in this respect. Most of the "nonsense poems" in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1872) "… aren't nonsense at all but burlesques of poems that were still current in the … [nineteenth] century" (Macdonald 1960: 278). William Wordsworth and Sir Walter Scott are among the authors parodied in the "nonsense poems", but the Alice books most commonly targeted "… those moralizing poems that were once so profusely written for the edification of the young" (Macdonald 1960: 278).

Parodies of Shakespeare, which were widely produced during the Romantic era, continued to be popular during the Victorian period, too. In fact, the nineteenth century as a whole "… saw a great many burlesques of Shakespeare's plays, starting with John Poole's *Hamlet Travestie* in 1810 and reaching a climax and an end, as Stanley Wells puts it,[23] with [W.S.] Gilbert's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* (performed 1891) …" (Davison 1982: 155). These parodies constituted a significant aspect of popular entertainment, and their prevalence may be accounted for not only through the general vogue for text parody in the nineteenth century but also through the fact that popular audiences at the time were still highly familiar with Shakespeare's major plays. Macdonald's general discussion about the popular taste for parody in the nineteenth century throws further light on the prevalence of Shakespeare parodies at the time:

> The nineteenth century marked the transition between the old elite culture and the new mass culture; on the one hand, the audience had enormously expanded with the increase in literacy; on the other, the newcomers were still close enough to the old culture to take it as a natural part of life. The result was a rank effervescence of burlesque in the popular media; one senses a parvenu desire to cut Literature down to size; a few generations earlier, this would have been repressed for reasons of taste; a few later, because the popular audience no longer was sufficiently acquainted with Literature to respond to burlesques. But now they swallowed entire

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[23] Wells, Stanley. 1965. "Shakespearean Burlesques" in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 16(1): 49-61.

plays. Shakespeare, in particular, was treated with the contempt bred by familiarity … (Macdonald 1960: 565).

Such text parodies as those directed at Shakespeare's plays, then, appealed to popular taste. Entertainment was the primary function of these parodic productions. These parodies, in other words, do not usually have the sharply satirical intent that usually characterizes Romantic parodies directed at other authors. Neither is Victorian text parody in general as severely political as its Romantic counterpart. It is often much more genial, and motivated largely by admiration rather than contempt for its object (Kent & Ewen 1992: 20). This also seems to be apparent in the way Victorians have regarded parody "… as a relatively minor, harmless, and self-indulgent literary form, in rather the same [way described] … by Isaac Disraeli in *Curiosities of Literature*[24]: … parody as not 'necessarily a corrosive satire,' but as akin to 'mimicry,' and as a kind of 'agreeable maliciousness.'" (Kent & Ewen 1992: 20).

This, of course, does not mean that serious satiric purposes do not ever exist in Victorian literature. Social satire, for instance, is often a significant component of the Victorian novel, which may utilize a variety of devices to make its critical remarks. Parody is one such device, but this time it is discourse, not text, parody that serves this satiric purpose. This is understandable, given the fact that discourse parody has the potential to ridicule and criticize the characteristic languages of those social groups which deserve satiric treatment. Discourse parody appears to be employed most efficiently by those Victorian novels where comic elements usually occupy a fairly significant place. Mikhail M. Bakhtin's discussion of "heteroglossia" in the novel similarly foregrounds this parodic aspect especially of what he calls "the English comic novel". In Bakhtin this term is a rather comprehensive one referring to both eighteenth and nineteenth century "comic" novelists, among whom are Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, and Laurence Sterne as well as Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray.

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[24] Disraeli, Isaac. 1858. *Curiosities of Literature* (14th ed.). Boston: William Veazie.

Despite its comprehensive nature, Bakhtin's discussion is still very illuminating with respect to discourse parody in the Victorian novel:

> In the English comic novel we find a comic-parodic re-processing of almost all the levels of literary language, both conversational and written, that were current at the time. Almost every novel we mentioned above as being a classic representative of this generic type is an encyclopedia of all strata and forms of literary language: depending on the subject being represented, the story-line parodically reproduces first the forms of parliamentary eloquence, then the eloquence of the court, or particular forms of parliamentary protocol, or court protocol, or forms used by reporters in newspaper articles, or the dry business language of the City, or the dealings of speculators, or the pedantic speech of scholars, or the high epic style, or Biblical style, or the style of the hypocritical moral sermon or finally the way one or another concrete and socially determined personality, the subject of the story, happens to speak (Bakhtin 1992: 301).

Bakhtin's discussion clearly illustrates the wide range of discourses that can be "parodically re-processed" in the comic novel. A novel like Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847-1848), for instance, engages in discourse parody primarily through the humorous and critical imitation of the language of "high society" that it aims to satirize (Carter & McRae 1997: 284). The great ironic distance that the narrator assumes towards his characters and their discourse contributes especially to the success of the parodic effect. Most Dickens novels may also be seen in a similar light. In Dickens, too, discourse parody often serves satirical purposes, and it emerges mainly through his comic characters, who often appear as types representative of certain kinds of discourse. Dickens' characteristic techniques of irony, caricature, and exaggeration are also related devices that turn various memorable scenes in his novels into powerful parodies. Lewis Carroll is yet another writer that may be discussed in this respect. Macdonald argues that "Both *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* are systematic parodies of the grown-up world from the viewpoint of a child, Alice being the norm and the grotesques she meets being exaggerations of adult behavior" (Macdonald 1960: 277). In both novels, then, the absurdity that appears to surround the language of

most characters Alice meets may be regarded as a humorous and subversive imitation of "logical" adult discourse. Even a more playful parody like this may be said to serve a satirical aim. Carroll's parody, after all, becomes an effective tool to expose and criticize adult discourse with all its claim to reason, logic, and authority.

In all these examples, then, "The incorporated languages and socio-ideological belief systems … are unmasked and destroyed as something false, hypocritical, greedy, limited, narrowly rationalistic, [and] inadequate to reality" (Bakhtin 1992: 311-312). Such an effect is achieved primarily through discourse parody – an essential device utilized by a significant number of Victorian novels, which entertain at the same time as they make sharp satiric commentary on the corrupt and hypocritical norms, values, and discourses of Victorian society.

## 2.5 The Twentieth Century, ca. 1900-1950

The nineteenth century vogue for parodying texts and personal styles continued – though less intensely – in the initial decades of the twentieth century, too. Max Beerbohm was probably the best practitioner of the form. His *A Christmas Garland* (1912) may be considered similar to *A Pipe of Tobacco* (1736) and *Rejected Addresses* (1812) in that it, too, includes variations on a single theme. The theme this time is Christmas, and the work "… pretends to be a series of Christmas stories". Each story, however, "… is written in the style of a different author …" (Johnson 1945: 629), and it is in this way that Beerbohm parodies eighteen different authors, including Rudyard Kipling, Henry James, George Meredith, H.G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, Joseph Conrad and Thomas Hardy.

Beerbohm's parodies are known primarily for their playful and entertaining qualities. Beerbohm does not seem to be motivated much, in other words, by more serious critical aims. This, however, does not necessarily mean that he did not find some of these authors' highly idiosyncratic styles especially conducive to parody. Most of these novelists, after all, were writing at the end of

the Victorian age and their style and subject matter often represented a transition to modernism with all its emphasis on new literary forms and styles. No wonder, then, that such writers provided ample material for parodists like Beerbohm, and the popularity of parodies directed at texts and personal styles continued. Especially "… the stylistic extremes of Modernist poetry provoked a series of parodies …. [and] T. S. Eliot [became] … one persistent victim …, given the iconic status of *The Waste Land* (1922) as the quintessential Modernist poem" (Dentith 2000: 118). Perhaps the most famous of such Eliot parodies is Henry Reed's "Chard Whitlow (Mr. Eliot's Sunday Evening Postscript)", which "… reproduces both the literary mannerisms and the modes of thought and feeling characteristic of T. S. Eliot in *Four Quartets*" (Jump 1972: 26). *The Waste Land* is parodied perhaps even more widely by authors like Roger Tagholm and Wendy Cope (Dentith 2000: 120-121). I quote below a section from *The Sweeniad* by Myra Buttle – yet another highly humorous *Waste Land* parody:[25]

> THE VOICE OF SWEENEY
> Sunday is the dullest day, treating
> Laughter as a profane sound, mixing
> Worship and despair, killing
> New thought with dead forms.
> Weekdays give us hope, tempering
> Work with reviving play, promising
> A future life within this one.
> Thirst overtook us, conjured up by Budweisserbrau
> On a neon sign: we counted our dollar bills.
> Then out into the night air, into Maloney's Bar,
> And drank whisky, and yarned by the hour.
> *Das Herz ist gestorben,*[26] swell dame, echt Bronx.
> And when we were out on bail, staying with the Dalai Lama,
> My uncle, he gave me a ride on a yak,
> And I was speechless. He said, Mamie,
> Mamie, grasp your ears. And off we went
> Beyond Yonkers, then I felt safe.
> I drink most of the year and then I have a Vichy.
>
> (Brett 1989: 145)

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[25] *The Sweeniad* also alludes to Eliot's "Sweeney Among the Nightingales", of course.

[26] Schiller, *Das Mädchens Klage* [Buttle's own note].

Buttle's parody continues like this, closely imitating its original and provoking laughter mainly through an incongruity of subject matter. Much of Eliot's characteristic style is humorously foregrounded during the process.

Modernist works like *The Waste Land* often represent "… a sense of belonging to a community and an age that are spent and debased …" (Lelievre 1958: 25). One significant device they employ to express this sense of decadence is to refer to earlier works as well as myths both to contrast "… a prestigious … past with a degraded contemporaneity" (Dentith 2000: 121) and to "seek refuge" in these earlier examples as "'a way … of giving shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history'[27]" (Murphy 1999: 255). This modernist concern, then, has given rise to a proliferation of works which look back to classical examples and "… repeat in contemporary terms the situations and characters occurring in particular classical originals" (Jump 1972: 9). Plays like T. S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion* (1939) and *Cocktail Party* (1949), for instance, may be said to evoke in a modern setting the stories of Aeschylus' Oresteian trilogy and Euripides' *Alcestis* respectively. At first glance one may be led to regard such works, too, as examples of text parody. On more careful consideration, however, one realizes that these are examples not of parody but of "re-writing". A sense of humour and playfulness – even of the subtlest kind – is an essential component of the definition of parody this study makes, and it is exactly this quality that is often non-existent in such works. Rather than engaging in humorous imitation, they borrow plots and characters from their originals and "re-work" them in a way that usually reflects twentieth-century concerns. A sense of decadence and pessimism is evoked in the end, but laughter, even of the slightest kind, does not usually play a role in the evocation of this feeling. This is probably what makes Jump similarly argue that examples like these do not "burlesque" their originals (Jump 1972: 10).

James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), one of the most important representatives of modernist literature, may similarly be regarded as an example of "re-writing". As the title also suggests, Joyce's novel re-produces Homer's *The Odyssey* in

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[27] Here Murphy quotes from T. S. Eliot's essay, "Ulysses, Order, and Myth" (1923).

modern-day Dublin. In doing so, however, it significantly modifies the original story to foreground the sharp discrepancy between the heroic past and the unheroic present. Given the definition of parody made in this study, it is again difficult to argue that Joyce's *Ulysses* is a parody of Homer's *Odyssey*. *Ulysses*, after all, does not imitate Homer's work in a playful or humorous fashion. Furthermore, the parallelism between the plots of the two works is sometimes so subtle that it could easily be overlooked:

> While we read [*Ulysses*], our attention is almost completely absorbed by the immediate affairs of Stephen Dedalus, Leopold and Molly Bloom, and the rest. We are hardly aware of the Homeric parallels. If and when we do notice them, they serve to enrich this modern subject-matter, so that we see the persons and their Dublin in an almost legendary light. Clearly *Ulysses* is no travesty [parody], for we lose sight for long periods of the very material that would be the object of such a burlesque … (Jump 1972: 11).

In re-producing the famous Greek myth, then, *Ulysses* does not engage in text parody. Joyce's novel, however, is a special case in that it accommodates this kind of parody in other ways. It is especially in the "Oxen of the Sun" episode in the novel that Joyce engages in the imitation of a variety of prose styles. The setting in this episode is a maternity hospital, and the way Joyce imitates in "… roughly chronological order a wide variety of English styles from the primitive to the contemporary" nicely parallels "… the theme of growth or development [that] naturally prevails" in this kind of setting (Jump 1972: 32). Joyce's imitations may be considered parodic since a humorous effect is sometimes created not only because of the occasional incongruity between style and subject matter but also because of the way Joyce brings together and uses such highly diverse styles in the communication of a single theme. This episode, then, is a parody of a wide range of authors and styles representative of the literary history of England. In Pollard's words, Joyce "… takes us through the history of English prose style from Old English alliterative 'Before born babe bliss had' … through medieval Mandeville, Restoration Pepys, Augustan Addison, late eighteenth-century Burke

to a mêlée of nineteenth-century styles" (Pollard 1973: 46). Such a parodic survey proves to be a significant modernist tool for looking back to the past *both* to contrast it with the present *and* to feel reassured of its presence so as to find relief from the decadence that characterizes contemporary art, culture, and morals.

Genre parody can also be found among the novelistic productions of the first half of the twentieth century. These are, however, fairly limited in number. The parodic targets in these cases are often the novel's own subgenres – not a very surprising phenomenon, given the novel genre's tendency to parody itself continually.[28] The "Nausicaa" episode in *Ulysses* exhibits one such parodic instance, where the narrator humorously adopts the style of "the cheap sentimental novel" (Macdonald 1960: 522). Another well-known example of genre parody during this period is Stella Gibbons' *Cold Comfort Farm* (1932). Here, unlike *Ulysses*, the *whole* work is a systematic parody of the primitivist novel represented by authors like Mary Webb, John Cowper Powys, Sheila Kaye-Smith, and Thomas Hardy (Macdonald 1960: 405). In both examples the genre that is subjected to parodic treatment is a highly popular one with a fairly wide readership. That is why literary satire as well as satire directed at popular taste may be a significant motive for such parodies.

It is, however, discourse rather than genre parody that usually serves satiric purposes in the novels of especially the first half of the twentieth century. Satire indeed is a significant form during this period, and this is understandable, given not only the social and political turmoil surrounding the two world wars and the rise of extreme ideologies in their aftermath but also the general sense of decadence accompanied by a loss of faith in values that used to endow life with meaning. Evelyn Waugh's comic novels, for instance, are often known for the sharp satiric commentary they make. In his novels discourse parody also acts as a useful device in the service of satire. Political discourse and the discourse of civilization and progress, for instance, become major objects of attack in Waugh's *Black Mischief* (1932), which tells the story of Basil Seal and his encounter with "… Emperor Seth – Chief of Chiefs of the Sakuyu, Lord of Wanda and Tyrant of

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[28] Page 47 also discusses this issue mainly in relation to the eighteenth-century novel.

the Seas, Bachelor of the Arts of Oxford University – who, trying to shake off the jungle that surrounds him, believes in Western Progress: 'I have been to Europe … I have read modern books …. I am the New Age. I am the Future'" (Bradbury 1994: 244). Parody is apparent even in this small illustration of Seth's discourse, which humorously satirizes a number of social and political ills including ignorance, corruption, tyranny, and barbarism. George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945) may be said to employ discourse parody even more explicitly. The novel is "… a classic political allegory in the form of an animal fable, the story of a great revolution of the oppressed and suffering animals on the decaying (and very English) Manor Farm" (Bradbury 1994: 283). The novel's major aim, of course, is political satire, and discourse parody again plays an essential role in creating this satiric effect. The animals in the story often "… correspond to real historical characters …", and parody emerges mainly through the way they voice their social and political opinions. Perhaps the most well-known instance of discourse parody in Orwell's novel is the "commandment" that takes its final shape during the tyrannical rule of the pigs who take over the farm "as the new masters" (Carter & McRae 1997: 497): "All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others" (Orwell 1989: 90). This bitterly humorous representation of a political leader's discourse on social equality is one of the most powerful instances creating the sharp satirical effect that characterizes Orwell's novel throughout. Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim* (1954) may similarly be said to utilize discourse parody for satiric purposes. The satire this time is directed at the academia as well as the lower-middle-class culture that Jim, the novel's protagonist, represents. Jim's adventures and his discontent as "junior lecturer in history at a provincial university" all prepare the ground for comedy serving satirical purposes (Nilsen 2000: 346-347). Academic discourse is occasionally parodied at instances where Jim and his colleagues engage in academic talk, and this serves as yet another device reinforcing the novel's comic and satiric qualities.

In the light of this discussion it may be argued that text and discourse parody dominated the first half of the twentieth century. Probably the modernist

movement with all its emphasis on form, style, and technique was responsible for the prevalence of text parody, which often targeted the highly idiosyncratic styles of various modern authors. And it was probably the popularity of satire in this same period that made writers employ discourse parody pervasively. In the second half of the twentieth century, with the gradual advent of postmodernism, parody became a much more popular and prevalent form, enjoying at the same time a scholarly interest that had never before been so intense. Surely parody plays a highly significant role in postmodern literature – a phenomenon that will be discussed and analyzed in depth in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER 3

## PARODY IN THE POSTMODERN AGE

Postmodernism may be said to challenge the basic premises of liberal humanism which have so far shaped Western ways of perceiving the world. Previously unquestioned notions concerning language, meaning, reality, and the human subject all come under attack in postmodern thought. Postmodernism often goes about this difficult project through a paradoxical process of first accommodating and then undermining its target. This makes postmodernism – in Linda Hutcheon's terms – "... a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges ..." (Hutcheon 1988: 3). It is no wonder, then, that parody, which employs a similar method of simultaneously incorporating and challenging its target, is a form closely allied with postmodernism. Parody is also reconciled to postmodernism through its inherent intertextuality: the idea that every artistic production is a text whose traces can be found in other texts and the questioning of "origin and originality" that naturally follows are among the basic tenets of postmodern thought. Parody, then, may be regarded as a form which agrees favourably with postmodern concerns. It is these qualities of parody that make Hutcheon go even so far as to call it "a perfect postmodern form" (Hutcheon 1988: 11).

It is, therefore, not surprising that postmodern literature abounds in parody. Such abundance may accommodate all kinds of parody ranging from parodies of individual styles and works to those of genre and discourse. The question remains, however, as to which kind of parody best characterizes postmodernism. The rest of this chapter will look into this question, arguing that neither genre parodies nor parodies of texts and personal styles make much sense within the context of postmodern thought. It will naturally follow that discourse parody, the only remaining kind, is the one that best reflects postmodern concerns – hence its pervasive use in postmodern literature.

**3.1 Kinds of Parody and Postmodernism: A Theoretical Framework**

Some of the basic tenets of postmodern thought concerning language, meaning, and literature can be found in poststructuralism, which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a reaction to structuralism. Poststructuralist thought challenged the concept of the sign, which suggested stability of meaning and closure in language. It emphasized instead the "signifier" which can never attach itself to a "signified", but which is caught up instead in a continuous process of "signification" – a process where the attainment of a stable, determinate meaning becomes an impossible goal:

> "Signifier of the signifier" describes ... the movement of language .... There the signified always already functions as a signifier. ... There is not a single signified that escapes ... the play of signifying practices that constitute language. ... This ... amounts to destroying the concept of "sign" and its entire logic (Derrida 1997: 7).

This emphasis on the process of endless signification in language inevitably found its counterpart in literature. The literary work, whose raw material is language, could no longer be regarded as a closed unit directing the reader to stable meaning. It was to be regarded, instead, as "text" – as an open field caught in a continuous process of signification, a field where it no longer made sense to talk about boundaries, closure, and determinacy in meaning. In Roland Barthes' words,

> ... the work itself functions as a general sign and it is normal that it should represent an institutional category of the civilization of the Sign. The Text, on the contrary, practices the infinite deferment of the signified, is dilatory: its field is that of the signifier ... and the signifier must not be conceived of as "the first stage of meaning" ... but, in complete opposition to this, as its *deferred action [après-coup]* .... the Text ... like language ... is structured but decentered, without closure (Barthes 1971: 171).

The notion of the "text", then, is central to poststructuralist thought. The "text" is wherever there is language. "The text works ... language. It deconstructs the language of communication, representation, or expression ... and reconstructs another language, voluminous, having neither bottom nor surface ..." (Barthes 1973: 37). Any linguistic production, therefore, is a text "without closure", with "neither bottom nor surface", and literature is no exception in this respect. As Roland Barthes' distinction between "work" and "text" illustrates, literature in general and the literary work in particular can no longer be regarded as closed systems with well-drawn boundaries. Their textuality makes it only natural that they partake of other texts, entering into endless intertextual relationships with them:

> ... any text is an intertext: other texts are present in it, at varying levels, in more or less recognisable forms: the texts of the previous and surrounding culture. Any text is a new tissue of past citations. Bits of codes, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages, etc. pass into the text and are redistributed within it, for there is always language before and around the text. Intertextuality ... [is] the condition of any text whatsoever ... (Barthes 1973: 39).

Roland Barthes' discussion clearly suggests that intertextuality is a significant defining characteristic of all literature. Each literary production is "a tissue of quotations", "a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (Barthes 1968: 116). The theory of intertextuality, therefore, rules out commonly accepted notions not only about originality in literature but also about the literary work as an autonomous entity with well-drawn boundaries.

All this, of course, has significant implications for postmodern parody. It is, for example, no longer very meaningful to talk about parodies of individual works within a theory of textuality which replaces the notion of the work with that of the text. While parodying an individual work, the parodist naturally assumes that his target is an autonomous entity existing independently of other works. It is exactly such a conception of the work that the theory of the text rejects. The work

can no longer be regarded as a closed, coherent system. It is, instead, a text that reaches out to other texts in an endless process of echoing, quoting, and repetition. It is rather obvious that such a theory does not render meaningful the practice of parodying specific works.

Genre parody, too, suffers from similar implications of poststructuralism. The notion of "genre" depends upon the legitimacy of concepts like "class", "category" and "boundary" – concepts which lose much of their validity in poststructuralist thought. The notion of the text which cannot be contained within boundaries inevitably leads to a questioning of traditional genre divisions. Texts resist closure (within a class, a category, a genre) by continually overflowing into other texts, forming endless intertextual relationships with them. As Barthes argues, "... the Text ... cannot be contained in a hierarchy, even in a simple division of genres. What constitutes the text is ... its subversive force in respect of the old classifications" (Barthes 1971: 170). The theory of the text, then, subverts "old classifications" and dissolves the sharp dividing lines between genres. It, therefore, becomes increasingly difficult to talk about the defining characteristics of a genre – characteristics which "close" the genre and rule out its affinities with other genres.

This theory is corroborated by literary practice, too. Postmodern literature is often characterized by the mixing of genres – a practice which poses significant questions about traditional conceptions of genre division. Such questions preoccupy especially the postmodern novel which frequently introduces problems about its own generic status. This is not very surprising, given the inherent flexibility of the novel genre. By its very nature the novel is capable of accommodating highly diverse elements from different genres. It is, therefore, very conducive to challenging traditional notions about genre. It is precisely this quality of the novel that makes a theorist like Mikhail M. Bakhtin attribute a very special place to it in the historical development of literature. Bakhtin, of course, is not a poststructuralist, but some of his valuable insights about language and literature can be related to various tenets of poststructuralist thought. To Bakhtin, the novel is the only genre which cannot be fully defined, described, and thus

"closed": " ... the novel is the sole genre that continues to develop, that is as yet uncompleted .... The generic skeleton of the novel is far from having hardened, and we cannot foresee all its plastic possibilities" (Bakhtin 1992: 3). As a form that resists closure, the novel questions, examines, and renews itself, and its extraordinary potential to accommodate other genres plays a very significant role in this process. Bakhtin's argument about the novel pertains to literary evolution as well. The novel's increasing dominance among other genres is, to him, a significant indication of literary change and development:

> The novel has become the leading hero in the drama of literary development in our time precisely because it best of all reflects the tendencies of a new world still in the making; it is, after all, the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it. In many respects the novel has anticipated, and continues to anticipate, the future development of literature as a whole. In the process of becoming the dominant genre, the novel sparks the renovation of all other genres, infects them with its spirit of process and inconclusiveness. It draws them ineluctibly to its orbit precisely because this orbit coincides with the basic direction of the development of literature as a whole (Bakhtin 1992: 7).

The increasing prevalence of the novel, then, makes a significant influence on other genres. In the presence of the novel, all genres are forced to become like the novel, i.e. they are forced to break down their strictly drawn boundaries, interact with other genres, and assume much more flexible characteristics. This Bakhtin calls the "novelization" of other genres:

> The novelization of literature does not imply attaching to already completed genres a generic canon that is alien to them, not theirs. The novel, after all, has no canon of its own .... It is a genre that is ever questing [sic.], ever examining itself and subjecting its established forms to review. ... Therefore, the novelization of other genres does not imply their subjection to an alien generic canon; on the contrary, novelization implies their liberation from all that serves as a brake on their unique development, from all that would change them along with the novel into some sort of stylization of forms that have outlived themselves (Bakhtin 1992: 39).

Though very different in other respects, the theory of the text and Bakhtin's theory of "novelization" may be said to coincide with regard to their conception of genre. Both theories imply the dissolution of dividing lines that sharply separate one genre from another. The notion of the text which cannot be confined within limits rules out ideas about sharply distinct literary genres. Similarly, Bakhtin's concept of "novelization" invites a re-assessment of traditional notions about genre. The novel, which is pervasive and which knows no definite generic boundaries, interacts with other genres, "infects them with its spirit of process and inconclusiveness", "inserts into ... [them] an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still evolving contemporary reality (the openended present)" (Bakhtin 1992: 7). In the presence of the novel, then, it is no longer very meaningful to talk about defining characteristics that "close" genres once and for all – characteristics which contain genres within well-drawn boundaries.

The implications of all this for genre parody are quite obvious. Genre parody assumes full meaning when the targeted genre is a clearly demarcated, closed system. The parodist discerns the defining characteristics of this system, and puts them to use often by imitating them with an ironic distance. Once the boundaries that delimit this system are dissolved in the face of theories of textuality or the pervasiveness of novelized genres, then genre parody *per se* becomes a rather pointless activity.[29]

Parodies of individual works and genres, then, cannot be properly reconciled to the tenets of poststructuralism. Similarly, parodies of individual styles, too, are hard to accommodate within poststructuralist thought. An individual style presupposes a unique author who leaves a lasting imprint on his work. Such an author is thought to "nourish" his work, to father and to own it (Barthes 1968: 116). This traditional conception of the author, of course, finds little approval in poststructuralist thought. The theory of the text, which overthrows the notion of the work, similarly rejects the idea of a unique and

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[29] When it is coupled with or subordinated to discourse parody, however, genre parody may still remain meaningful. This is discussed in further detail and exemplified in section 3.2.4 of this chapter.

original author who fathers the work. The author as creator loses all significance. As soon as writing begins, "... the voice [of the author] loses its origin, [and] the author enters into his own death" (Barthes 1968: 114). Within the realm of the text it is only language which speaks, acts, and performs, not the author (Barthes 1968: 115). The body that performs the act of writing is therefore reduced to being a mere "scriptor":

> The Author is thought to *nourish* the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child. In complete contrast, the modern scriptor is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject wth [*sic.*] the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written *here and now*. ... the hand [of the modern scriptor] ... traces a field without origin – or which, at least, has no other origin than language itself, language which ceaselessly calls into question all origins (Barthes 1968: 116).

Barthes' "scriptor", then, can never assume qualities such as autonomy, uniqueness and originality – qualities which would grant him the status of an "individual". He exists in and through language only, and in this sense he is simply a subject, a function in language: "Linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing, just as *I* is nothing other than the instance saying *I*: language knows a 'subject', not a 'person', and this subject [is] empty outside of the very enunciation which defines it ..." (Barthes 1968: 116).

As Barthes' statement also suggests, poststructuralist terminology discards the "individual" to replace it with the "subject" – a replacement which seriously undermines traditional conceptions about identity. Unlike the individual who is traditionally endowed with qualities of uniqueness, autonomy, and stability, the subject is merely a function in language, subordinate to it and determined by it. As a product of language – which is itself unstable and open-ended – the subject can no longer be regarded as a unified and determinate entity. Just like meaning in language, the subject, too, continually finds itself in a process of becoming, de-centering and disintegration. As Julia Kristeva explains,

> We view the subject in language as de-centering the transcendental ego, cutting through it, and opening it up to a dialectic in which its syntactic and categorical understanding is merely the liminary moment of the process ... (Kristeva 1984: 30).

Furthermore, language often works by making the subject believe that he is a stable identity that can be summed up through the pronoun, "I". This, however, is a misconception. The linguistic "I" can never fully define and delimit the fragmented subject who is in a constant process of becoming. In Jacques Lacan's words, the significant question is "... knowing whether I am the same as that of which I speak" (Lacan 1992: 165). This question, of course, cannot get an affirmative answer within the context of poststructuralist thought. It can, instead, be answered by drawing attention to the problematic relationship between language and identity, maybe in a statement like the following: "I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object" (Lacan 1992: 86).

Of course such theories of subjectivity also pertain to the author. It is no longer possible to regard the author as a unified, coherent, and fully definable identity – an approach that would elevate him to the status of an individual. The author, instead, is a de-centered and fragmented subject shaped in and through language, and in this sense he can no longer be said to "father" what he writes by imprinting on it his unique and original style.

This view of the author is also corroborated by poststructuralist theorists who are more socially oriented. Michel Foucault, for example, is interested in charting "... a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (Foucault 1982: 417). This, to him, is an essential task because it sheds light on how discourse and, consequently, power relationships operate in society. Individuals are made into subjects who *appear* to have their independent identity and individuality but who are in fact "subject to" the existing forms of discourse. This is the way power operates:

> ... power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him

which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to (Foucault 1982: 420).

To Foucault, the author is similarly a subject and therefore a function in discourse. In our time the author-function serves to maintain the circulation and continuity of the prevailing forms of discourse. The author, therefore, is subordinate to discourse and to power relationships and should in no way be regarded as an individual with unique creative powers, as "an originating subject". The author needs to "... be stripped of its creative role and analyzed as a complex and variable function of discourse" (Foucault 1969: 148):

We should suspend the typical questions: how does a free subject penetrate the density of things and endow them with meaning; how does it accomplish its design by animating the rules of discourse from within? Rather, we should ask: under what conditions and through what forms can an entity like the subject appear in the order of discourse; what position does it occupy; what functions does it exhibit; and what rules does it follow in each type of discourse? (Foucault 1969: 148).

It is obvious that Foucault's conception of the author, too, undermines traditional ideas about authorship and authority. Only a function in discourse, the author is no longer an autonomous individual in full control of his creation. Nor is he to be esteemed for his unique creative powers which – as traditionally believed – become manifest in his individual style.

Poststructuralist thought, then, renders the notion of an individual author with an individual style rather meaningless. Precisely such a notion, however, is required to render parodies of individual styles meaningful. The parodist who aims at parodying an author has to assume that his target is characterized by a unique, original style that can be imitated humorously and with a difference. Such an assumption cannot be made in poststructuralist thought. Parodies of individual

styles, therefore, cannot be properly reconciled to poststructuralism. It follows naturally that this parodic kind cannot be meaningfully accommodated in postmodern literature.

In the light of the above discussion it can be argued that neither parodies of individual works and styles nor parodies of genre can be smoothly reconciled to the tenets of poststructuralism. None of these parodic kinds, therefore, may be said to describe and characterize postmodern parody. This suggests that discourse parody, the only remaining kind, may be the one that best relates to postmodern concerns.

Discourse, indeed, is a term that occupies a prominent place in poststructuralist thought. It emerges as a significant concept in the presence of poststructuralist theories which emphasize the primacy of language and textuality and which, therefore, reject all kinds of logocentric thought. The belief in a center, an essence, an organizing principle which would point to full meaning and to a single, unquestionable reality no longer holds in poststructuralism. Reality is shaped through language, which is caught up in a continuous process of signification and which, therefore, knows neither origin nor center. Within such a model one can no longer talk about a single reality, a transcendental truth which is at once the source and the center. Instead, one can only talk about "discourse" – an entity shaped and constructed by language, which is an arbitrary system of differences and signification. Jacques Derrida's discussion on the de-centered nature of language and discourse is rather illuminating:

> ... [when the rupture with logocentric thought occurred] it was probably necessary to begin to think that there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a being-present, that the center had no natural locus, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of non-locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play. This moment [of the rupture] was that in which language invaded the universal problematic; that in which, *in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse* ... that is to say, when everything became a system where the central signified, the original and transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences [i.e. outside language]. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the

domain and the interplay of signification *ad infinitum* (Derrida 1972: 249, my emphasis).

Discourse, then, is a construct that exists in and through language. Discourse can never be linked to a transcendental origin, to a center which confirms and guarantees its status as *the* truth. There is no such center anyway, and that is why it is no longer possible to talk about a single reality or truth characterized by a certain kind of discourse. As constructs that belong in language, all discourses can be de-constructed, exposed, and undermined.

All this, of course, is a significant blow to logocentric thought which has so far created the illusion that there is a single, knowable truth which has its source in a *logos*, a center, an essence and which is justified and nurtured through this source. Logocentrism creates the same illusion about existing discourses by treating them as manifestations of this single truth. A significant poststructuralist project, then, is to undermine the authority of these discourses by exposing them as constructs that can be de-constructed. Jean-François Lyotard's argument that postmodernism consists in the dissolution of all grand narratives may be said to participate in the same project. Grand narratives, which are master discourses that have so far shaped western notions about truth and reality, all come under attack in postmodern thought. No discursive realm is immune to this attack: master discourses in areas as diverse as literature, philosophy, religion, science, politics, and ideology are all exposed and undermined. No longer believed to represent the truth, they lose ground and become mere constructs that are always open to de-construction.

Michel Foucault similarly regards discourse as a construct that shapes and organizes human thought by making an illusory claim to truth. Throughout history this quality of discourse has made it a significant agent in the exercise of power. Institutions have sustained their authority through the production and maintenance of dominant discourses whose claim to truth have made them immune to questioning and subversion. Like other poststructuralist theorists, Foucault, too, aims to expose discourse by situating it in language and history and hence demonstrating that one can never talk about "... a sort of ideal discourse that is

both ultimate and timeless ..." (Foucault 1972: 70). Discourse, after all, is a linguistic construct which *appears* invulnerable but which is in fact – by its very nature – open to undermining and subversion:

> Whether it is the philosophy of a founding subject, a philosophy of originating experience or a philosophy of universal mediation, discourse is really only an activity, of writing in the first case, of reading in the second and exchange in the third. This exchange, this writing, this reading never involve anything but signs. Discourse thus nullifies itself, in reality, in placing itself at the disposal of the signifier (Foucault 1972: 228).

Foucault's aim of exposing discourse as "a construction the rules of which must be known" has significant political implications (Foucault 1972: 25). The exercise of power depends upon the continuity of dominant discourses, which maintain authority by making a claim to truth. Any subversive voice or discourse that threatens to undermine this authority is dangerous and needs to be suppressed. This is how the system works:

> What civilization, in appearance, has shown more respect towards discourse than our own? ... Where have men depended more radically, apparently, upon its constraints and its universal character? But, it seems to me, a certain fear hides behind this apparent supremacy accorded, this apparent logophilia. It is as though these taboos, these barriers, thresholds and limits were deliberately disposed in order, at least partly, *to master and control the great proliferation of discourse, in such a way as to relieve its richness of its most dangerous elements; to organize its disorder so as to skate round its most uncontrollable aspects*. It is as though people had wanted to efface all trace of its irruption into the activity of our thought and language. There is undoubtedly in our society ... a sort of dumb fear of these events, of this mass of spoken things, of everything that could possibly be violent, discontinuous, querulous ... of the incessant, disorderly buzzing of discourse (Foucault 1972: 228-229, my emphasis).

Any dissenting and hence dangerous voice or discourse, then, is subject to suppression by the dominant discourse, whose claim to truth guarantees the continuity of its power and authority. Poststructuralist theory undermines this

authority by contending that, being a mere construct in language and history, no discourse can make a claim to truth and superiority. It subverts the power of dominant discourses, allowing greater freedom to previously suppressed voices. It also exposes the way power is maintained and exercised, thereby inviting a reassessment of the status of those dominant discourses which have so far maintained authority by making a claim to truth.

Though much earlier than poststructuralism, Mikhail M. Bakhtin's thought similarly attributes a significance to discourse and its relationship with authority. Often using the terms "language" and "discourse" interchangeably, Bakhtin argues that two opposing forces – centripetal and centrifugal – are at work in every language. Centripetal forces are those that continually make a centralizing influence on language, making it unitary and monologic. Centrifugal forces, on the other hand, work in the opposite direction, making a decentralizing influence. Both forces are intrinsic to language: "Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance ..." (Bakhtin 1992: 272). These forces, however, constantly oppose and compete with each other. Centripetal forces continually try to create a unified and unitary language by suppressing and overcoming any decentralizing influence:

> Unitary language constitutes the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic unification and centralization, an expression of the centripetal forces of language. ... at every moment of its linguistic life ... [a unitary language] is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia [the centrifugal, stratifying forces]. But at the same time it makes its real presence felt as a force for overcoming this heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding and crystalizing into a ... unity – the unity of the reigning conversational (everyday) and literary language, 'correct language' (Bakhtin 1992: 270).

Such a unitary language is exactly what is required for the production and maintenance of a dominant discourse, a centralized worldview:

We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a *maximum* of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life. Thus a unitary language gives expression to forces working toward concrete verbal and ideological unification and centralization, which develop in vital connection with the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization (Bakhtin 1992: 271).

Dominant discourses sustain their authority by constantly excluding other voices, discourses, or languages that might pose a threat to their unity and centrality. This, however, is not so easy because language is characterized by centrifugal forces, too: "Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward" (Bakhtin 1992: 272). And it is these decentralizing forces that Bakhtin considers especially valuable because they undermine the authority of reigning discourses, disrupt their unity, and upset their monologic nature by creating dialogism and polyphony.

It is owing to centrifugal forces, then, that the existence and continuity of less dominant voices and discourses are guaranteed. And it is especially the novel genre that gives these forces adequate freedom. This is a significant reason why Bakhtin attributes a special place to the novel: by its very nature the novel partakes in heteroglossia and becomes a site where centripetal and centrifugal forces meet. The polyphony of the novel continually resists the monologic tendencies of language and discourse, allowing dissenting or non-dominant voices to be heard, too.

In all this parody plays a very significant role. Its double-coded nature guarantees dialogism and polyphony, ruling out the idea of a dominant, unitary discourse. The novel genre is again crucial here because of its unlimited potential to embrace all kinds of "parodic stylization":

... all languages of heteroglossia ... are ... able to enter the unitary plane of the novel, which can unite in itself parodic stylizations of

generic languages, various forms of stylizations and illustrations of professional and period-bound languages, the languages of particular generations, of social dialects and others. ... They may all be drawn in by the novelist for the orchestration of his themes ... (Bakhtin 1992: 291-292).

The novel, then, can accommodate parodies of any language or any discourse, including its own. It is, therefore, the genre most open to polyphony, whose presence makes the idea of a master unitary discourse impossible.

Parody, then, is a significant political tool in Bakhtin's thought. It activates and foregrounds the centrifugal forces in any discursive language. Dominant discourses become subject to parodic exposure and lose much of their authority when they are no longer able to maintain their monologic integrity.

In the light of the significance accorded to discourse both by Mikhail M. Bakhtin and by poststructuralist theorists, it can be argued that postmodern literature is largely characterized by the project of exposing and undermining master discourses which have so far thrived by creating a unitary language and making an illusory claim to truth. And discourse parody evidently plays a very essential role in this project. Owing to its double-coded nature, it partakes of the targeted discourse and subverts it at the same time. The master discourse is thus undermined from within and laid bare as a construct situated in language and history. Such an exposure accompanied by humour with a critical distance severely shakes the authority of the targeted discourse, reducing it to one voice among many.

All this discussion reinforces our earlier argument about discourse parody being the kind that best characterizes postmodern parodic literature. The way other parodic kinds are rendered rather meaningless within the context of poststructuralist and postmodernist theories has already been dwelt on. Add to this the postmodern project of undermining master discourses, and the significance and pervasiveness of discourse parody in postmodern literature become quite clear. Like all parodies, postmodern examples, too, may differ in the intensity of their political intent. Some may appear highly playful and devoid of seriousness while others may exhibit explicit political aims. Within such diversity, however, it

can still be argued that postmodern parody – whether playful or political – is primarily discourse parody because this is the kind that best reflects postmodern concerns.[30] The practical manifestations of all this will be the topic of the following pages.

## 3.2 From Theory to Practice: Discourse Parody in the Postmodern Novel

Discourse is an essential object of parody in the postmodern novel, and this is not very surprising, given the significance postmodernism accords to exposing all discourses as constructs that can always be deconstructed and undermined. Like all novels, the postmodern novel, too, can accommodate many different kinds of discourse. Unlike all novels, however, the postmodern novel often situates these discourses within a parodic context, preventing any single discourse from assuming dominant qualities by suppressing others and making a claim to truth. Robert Phiddian's argument in his article on parody and deconstruction applies very well to the project that often characterizes parody in the postmodern novel: "Parodies *deconstruct* the discourses they invade; they do not blankly *destroy* the discourses on which, parasitically and critically, they live. Instead, both genesis and structure of those discourses appear 'under erasure' (visible but problematized and devalued)" (Phiddian 1997: 682). It is exactly in this way that discourse is treated in most postmodern novels. Any discourse is deconstructed and undermined at the same time as it is represented. The postmodern novel, therefore, creates a non-hierarchical discursive realm where no discourse is immune to parody and where it is constantly implied that all discourses are products of language, which shapes reality and maintains an arbitrary relationship with it. Such a parodic realm, of course, is never conducive to the creation of master discourses believed to embody the truth. Parody, then, curbs the tendency of any discourse to make a claim to truth, continually

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[30] This argument does not rule out the fact that instances of text and genre parody can be found in postmodern literature. It simply suggests that, in postmodern literature, "discourse parody" is the more proper label for what initially appears as text or genre parody. This aspect of this argument is discussed in depth in section 3.2.4 below.

reminding "… us that we are facing words rather than things, rhetoric rather than pure ideas, language rather than phenomena" (Phiddian 1997: 689).

Many different discourses are represented in the examples that follow. They range from the discourse of politics, religion, and science to that of literature, culture, and criticism. What unites these otherwise diverse discourses, of course, is the parodic narrative context that they are situated in. As discursive representations in postmodern novels, they are imitated with humour as well as critical distance. They are thus turned into objects of parody and exposed as mere linguistic constructs whose claim to truth is highly questionable.

### 3.2.1 Parody Directed at Literary-Critical Discourse

Literary-critical discourse is widely parodied in postmodern novels – a phenomenon which may at first appear rather unusual. The question arises as to why the novelist should prefer to parody and hence undermine this kind of discourse, which has, after all, close affinities with the discursive realm he himself is situated in. A relatively satisfactory answer lies in a more careful consideration of the character of postmodern parody, which never chooses its object by differentiating between "more" and "less" privileged discourses. All discourses are equally prone to parody, and literary-critical discourse is no exception in this respect.

The pervasiveness of parody directed at literary-critical discourse can also be explained through the self-conscious and self-critical tendencies that characterize postmodern artistic productions. Parody targeting this kind of discourse inevitably raises questions about art and literature in general and the validity of their study and practice in particular. Self-conscious questions like these, of course, occupy a rather significant place in postmodern art. It is no wonder, then, that this kind of discourse parody is a widely employed device in postmodern fiction.

Self-criticism is also a result of self-conscious tendencies, and the parody of literary-critical discourse serves this purpose, too. A novel that accommodates

this kind of parody often engages in self-criticism, subjecting to scrutiny those discourses closely affiliated with its own.[31] Questions concerning the authority and validity of these discourses are raised in line with the poststructuralist project of exposing all discourses as constructs that can be deconstructed and undermined. The parody of literary-critical discourse, therefore, turns the novel into a site where literature is practiced and criticized at the same time. The boundaries between literature and criticism are dissolved in a way that echoes the rejection of well-defined genre boundaries in poststructuralist theory.

One such novel which parodically merges the practice and criticism of literature is Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince* (1973). The novel abounds in direct and indirect references to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and it is especially the novel's protagonist and first-person narrator, Bradley Pearson, who interprets the play in various ways at various occasions throughout. As a critic and a writer trying to overcome his writer's block, Pearson is well-equipped to engage in literary interpretation, and his long discussions of *Hamlet* stem mainly from the request of Julian, the twenty-year-old daughter of his friend and rival Arnold Baffin, to have a *Hamlet* tutorial with him. Julian's questions during the tutorial are rather well-known questions about *Hamlet*, and there is not much originality in Pearson's answers, either. The discussion takes on parodic overtones, however, when the far-fetched nature of some of Pearson's comments is coupled with the light-hearted context the whole discussion is situated in:

> 'Why did Hamlet delay killing Claudius?'
> 'Because he was a dreamy conscientious young intellectual who wasn't likely to commit a murder out of hand because he had the impression that he had seen a ghost. Next question.'
> 'But, Bradley, you yourself said the ghost was real.'
> 'I know the ghost is real, but Hamlet didn't.'
> 'Oh. But there must have been another deeper reason why he delayed, isn't that the point of the play?'
> 'I didn't say there wasn't another reason.'
> 'What is it?'

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[31] The postmodern novel frequently parodies its own discourse, too. Section 3.2.4 below provides a detailed discussion and illustration of this parodic kind.

'He identifies Claudius with his father.'

'Oh really? So that makes him hesitate because he loves his father and can't touch Claudius?'

'No. He hates his father.'

'Well, wouldn't that make him murder Claudius at once?'

'No. After all he didn't murder his father.'

'Well, I don't see how identifying Claudius with his father makes him not kill Claudius.'

'He doesn't enjoy hating his father. It makes him feel guilty.'

'So he's paralysed with guilt? But he never says so. He's fearfully priggish and censorious. Think how nasty he is to Ophelia.'

'That's part of the same thing.'

'How do you mean?'

'He identifies Ophelia with his mother.'

'But I thought he loved his mother.'

'That's the point.'

'How do you mean that's the point?'

'He condemns his mother for committing adultery with his father.'

'Wait a minute, Bradley, I'm getting mixed.'

'Claudius is just a continuation of his brother on the unconscious level.'

'But you can't commit adultery with your husband, it isn't logical.'

'The unconscious mind knows nothing of logic.'

(Murdoch 1975: 194-195)

Their discussion goes on for a few more pages. Bradley's tendency towards a Freudian interpretation is obvious, and the parody emerges mainly through the overconfident and simplistic but confusing way he puts his argument to the completely baffled Julian. That Bradley offers no textual evidence for his strained interpretation contributes further to the parody. Bradley's argument gets increasingly far-fetched and complicated as the discussion proceeds. There is again no textual evidence to support his contention that "Hamlet is Shakespeare" (Murdoch 1975: 197) or that "*Hamlet* is words, and so is Hamlet" (Murdoch 1975: 199), and neither does he provide sound justification for the many other arguments he makes about Shakespeare and *Hamlet*. At the end of the discussion neither Julian nor the reader has a clear sense of how Bradley interprets *Hamlet* – a situation very much in line with the ambiguity surrounding the *Hamlet* motif that runs through the novel. Bradley's discussion, therefore, parodically exhausts

many interpretations of *Hamlet* as well as many arguments about Shakespeare as an artist.

Bradley and Julian's discussion of *Hamlet* is not the only instance where literary-critical discourse is parodied in *The Black Prince*. This kind of parody is even more conspicuously present in one of the postscripts that follow Bradley Pearson's narrative. Each of these postscripts is written by a different character in Pearson's story, and in its own way each is a subjective refutation of Pearson's first-person account. One of these is by Francis Marloe, Bradley's former brother-in-law, and here Francis attempts to make a Freudian analysis of Pearson's character and of the circumstances he finds himself in. It is, however, impossible for the reader to take Marloe's argument seriously since, throughout the novel, he has been portrayed as a rather comic and insignificant character. The comic aura that surrounds him is also noticeable in the postscript, especially in the way he interprets Pearson's narrative, engaging in highly strained psychological criticism. This, of course, turns Marloe's analysis into a parody targeting the discourse not only of Freudian psychoanalysis but also of literary criticism.

The parodic nature of Marloe's interpretation makes itself felt right at the beginning when Marloe declares that he is writing this "critical epilogue" "… dutifully as a service to the cause of science". The comedy is strengthened further when a couple of lines later, Marloe abruptly argues that "Bradley Pearson presents … the classical symptoms of the Oedipus complex" (Murdoch 1975: 397). At this point the reader is quite unprepared for such an interpretation, but Marloe continues in a very confident manner.  To him, Pearson's inability to overcome his feeling of hatred for his father has led him to an unhealthy attachment to his mother, which has in turn caused in him a dislike for and fear of women in general: "Most men love their mothers and hate their fathers. Many men, because this is so, hate and fear all women in adult life. (Adored mama is never alas forgiven for going to bed with detested papa!)" (Murdoch 1975: 397). Throughout the postscript, Marloe elaborates on this theory, forcefully arguing that Bradley Pearson is a homosexual secretly in love with his friend and rival, Arnold Baffin, and that Pearson's passionate love for Baffin's twenty-year-old

daughter Julian is simply a pretext for this unconscious desire. Marloe goes even further, suggesting that, to Pearson, Baffin is the rival and threatening father figure, the alter ego as well as the desired love object. This is all too strained, of course, and the humour caused by this exaggerated interpretation is strengthened even further when Marloe puts every detail in the narrative – no matter how unlikely – to his own use. In this way he is able to refute even the strongest counter-argument:

> That 'Bradley Pearson's story' is the tale of a man in love with a woman need cause little embarrassment to our theory. Bradley himself gives us all the clues that we are in need of. When he first (in the story) catches sight of his young lady [Julian] he mistakes her for a boy. He falls in love with her when he imagines her as a man. He achieves sexual intercourse with her when she has dressed up as a prince. (And who incidentally is Bradley Pearson's favourite author? The greatest homosexual of them all.[32] What sends Bradley Pearson's fantasy soaring as high as the Post Office Tower? The idea of boys pretending to be girls pretending to be boys!) Further: who in reality is this girl? (Father-fixated of course and taking Bradley as a father-substitute, no mystery there.) The daughter of Bradley's protégé, rival, idol, gadfly, friend, enemy, alter ego, Arnold Baffin. Science proclaims that this cannot be the work of accident. And science is right (Murdoch 1975: 398-399).

Marloe's overconfidence about his theory is rather evident here. And it is mainly this overconfidence together with some of his arguments amounting to absurdity that turn his whole discussion into a parody of psychoanalytic as well as literary-critical discourse. The reader's knowledge about Francis Marloe's professional background adds to the comedy, too. That a failed doctor like him[33] should introduce himself as a "psychological consultant" and even publish a case study on Bradley Pearson is shocking and amusing at the same time. In the end the reader is once again assured of the absurdly comic nature of this postscript when Marloe – in a paranoid manner – suggests that Pearson was also nurturing "an ill-concealed love" for himself (Murdoch 1975: 401). No substantial evidence is

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[32] Francis Marloe is referring to William Shakespeare here.
[33] Francis Marloe is a doctor "struck off the register for some irregularity in the prescription of drugs" (Murdoch 1975: 25).

provided to support this assertion – a condition that contributes further to the discourse parody pervading the piece.

The parody of literary-critical discourse, then, occupies a rather significant place in *The Black Prince*. It is possible to come across novels, however, where this kind of parody plays an even more essential role. One of these is Julian Barnes' *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), which tells the story of Geoffrey Braithwaite – a retired doctor and an amateur researcher – as he travels around France, doing research and collecting information for the biography he is going to write on the famous 19th century novelist, Gustave Flaubert. The novel, however, is not about Braithwaite's researching adventures only. It is, at the same time, an unusual Flaubert biography, an atypical Braithwaite autobiography, and even an interesting piece of highly playful as well as highly serious literary criticism. It is no wonder, then, that parody in this novel targets literary-critical discourse most pervasively.

In *Flaubert's Parrot* this kind of parody manifests itself mainly in the form of biographical criticism, where the critic attempts to account for an author's work by relating it to the author's life as well as to the social/historical circumstances surrounding him. The unifying principle of the novel's plot, for example, is Geoffrey Braithwaite's quest for the stuffed parrot that Flaubert is said to have placed on his desk while writing *Un cœur simple* – a short story about Félicité, "a poor, uneducated servant woman" (Barnes 1985: 16), and the attachment she gradually forms to a parrot called Loulou. Braithwaite's task is not an easy one since two different museums at Rouen and Croisset exhibit two different parrots, claiming that theirs is the original one Flaubert used. Determined to bring the truth to light, Braithwaite visits the two museums twice, writes to several academics and the French Embassy, takes photographs of the two stuffed parrots, and checks their appearance against the description of Loulou in *Un cœur simple*. All to no avail, of course. At the end, the truth seems even further away since he learns that the curators of both museums obtained the parrots from the reserve collection of the Museum of Natural History, where there were fifty stuffed parrots to choose from. What both curators did, therefore, was similar to what Braithwaite tried to

do: choose the parrot that most closely resembled Flaubert's description in *Un cœur simple*. Braithwaite thus realizes the impossibility of finding the original parrot, and the novel ends. This is, of course, a rather humorous plot, given especially Braithwaite's stubborn insistence to find Flaubert's original parrot, the exaggerated significance he attributes to this issue, and the eventual revelation of the ironic truth about the museum exhibits. In this sense the plot may be considered parodic of research conducted for the purpose of writing a literary biography. This humorous plot, however, also forms a good basis for parodying the discourse of biographical criticism, which Braithwaite occasionally engages in. During his quest for Flaubert's parrot, for example, he attempts a rather strained and hence humorous interpretation of *Un cœur simple*, where he looks into how far Félicité, the protagonist, and Loulou, the parrot, are representative of Flaubert himself:

> In one cardinal way, of course, Félicité is the complete opposite of Flaubert: she is virtually inarticulate. But you could argue that this is where Loulou comes in. The parrot, the articulate beast, a rare creature that makes human sounds. Not for nothing does Félicité confuse Loulou with the Holy Ghost, the giver of tongues.
> Félicité + Loulou = Flaubert? Not exactly; but you could claim that he is present in both of them. Félicité encloses his character; Loulou encloses his voice. You could say that the parrot, representing clever vocalisation without much brain power, was Pure Word. If you were a French academic, you might say that he was *un symbole du Logos*. Being English, I hasten back to the corporeal: to that svelte, perky creature I had seen at the Hôtel-Dieu. I imagined Loulou sitting on the other side of Flaubert's desk and staring back at him like some taunting reflection from a funfair mirror. No wonder three weeks of its parodic presence caused irritation [in Flaubert]. Is the writer much more than a sophisticated parrot? (Barnes 1985: 17-18).

Braithwaite's discussion here is clearly a parody of biographical criticism. His insistence to draw a parallel between Flaubert and his characters – one of whom is a parrot – leads to an interpretation which is a little too far-fetched, and the humour becomes even more pronounced when he attempts to reduce his argument to a single formula ("Félicité + Loulou = Flaubert?"). This same discussion,

however, may also be said to raise some more serious and significant questions about writing and authorship, especially at the end when Braithwaite asks, "Is the writer much more than a sophisticated parrot?" – a remark which touches on contemporary theoretical questions about originality, re-writing, and intertextuality. Humorous imitation and serious commentary, then, are intermingled in the same discussion, and this is the way parody often works in *Flaubert's Parrot.*

Other instances of parodic biographical criticism can also be found in the novel. Chapter 4, for example, is titled "The Flaubert Bestiary", and it explores the role and significance of various animals such as bears, camels, sheep, parrots, and dogs in Flaubert's life and work. In a fashion parodic at the same time of the medieval bestiary genre, Braithwaite regards these animals as representative of particular human traits and attempts an analysis of the symbolic significance of animals in Flaubert's life as well as the role of animal imagery in his work. The result, of course, is a highly curious and humorous "study", and again a successful parody of the discourse of biographical criticism.

In another instance, Braithwaite's curiosity about the role of Juliet Herbert – "governess to Flaubert's niece Caroline" – in Flaubert's life leads him to attempt another discussion on the parallelism between the author's life and work – an undertaking which is again rather clumsy and hence humorous and parodic (Barnes 1985: 40):

> Biographers disagree about Juliet Herbert. For some ... she was of small significance in Flaubert's life; others ... assert that the tantalising governess was certainly one of the writer's mistresses, possibly the Great Unknown Passion of his life, and perhaps even his fiancée. Hypothesis is spun directly from the temperament of the biographer. Can we deduce love for Juliet Herbert from the fact that Gustave called his greyhound Julio? Some can. It seems a little tendentious to me. And if we do, what do we then deduce from the fact that in various letters Gustave addresses his niece as 'Loulou', the name he later transfers to Félicité's parrot [in *Un cœur simple*]? Or from the fact that George Sand had a ram called Gustave? (Barnes 1985: 40).

In addition to parodying biographical criticism, this excerpt may also be said to target the discourse of rational argumentation where a given proposition logically leads to another. Braithwaite's final two questions especially, are parodic of such logical deduction. Indeed, the novel abounds in such parodies of rational argumentation, which constitutes the fundamentals of any methodology in academic study. This is, then, another way literary-critical discourse is parodied in *Flaubert's Parrot*. Braithwaite's discussion on modern theories about the dissolution of the all-knowing author and his "logical" reasoning on the relationship between authorship and being godlike are other instances of such parody in the novel:

> 'The author in his book must be like God in his universe, everywhere present and nowhere visible.' Of course, this has been keenly misread in our century. Look at Sartre and Camus. God is dead, they told us, and therefore so is the God-like novelist. Omniscience is impossible, man's knowledge is partial, therefore the novel itself must be partial. That sounds not just splendid, but logical as well. But is it either? The novel, after all, didn't arise when belief in God arose; nor, for that matter, is there much correlation between those novelists who believed most strongly in the omniscient narrator and those who believed most strongly in the omniscient creator. I cite George Eliot alongside Flaubert (Barnes 1985: 88-89).

It seems that Braithwaite's method of argumentation allows room for any seemingly logical reasoning. In this excerpt the way he transfers the idea about the godlikeness of the author from the metaphorical to the factual realm where one can talk about scientific cause-effect and correlative relationships is a clear illustration of this kind of approach. Braithwaite's discussion, then, is a humorous imitation of logical reasoning and refutation – an imitation which undermines a fundamental principle of academic discourse. In the novel still another instance of parodic argumentation and refutation is when Braithwaite tries to defend Flaubert against charges that he has committed suicide. The way he makes his point, approaching the matter all too subjectively and sincerely believing that his own

argument provides a logical refutation of such claims, is again a major source of laughter:

> Ledoux's account of the suicide goes like this: Flaubert *hanged himself in his bath*. I suppose it's more plausible than saying that he electrocuted himself with sleeping pills; but really ... What happened was this. Flaubert got up, took a hot bath, had an apopleptic fit, and stumbled to a sofa in his study; there he was found expiring by the doctor who later issued the death certificate. That's what happened. End of story. Flaubert's earliest biographer talked to the doctor concerned and that's that. Ledoux's version requires the following chain of events: Flaubert got into his hot bath, hanged himself in some as yet unexplained fashion, then climbed out, hid the rope, staggered to his study, collapsed on the sofa and, when the doctor arrived, managed to die while feigning the symptoms of an apoplectic fit. Really, it's too ridiculous (Barnes 1985: 182).

Chapter 14 of *Flaubert's Parrot* also contributes greatly to the parody of literary-critical discourse that characterizes the novel. The chapter is titled, "Examination Paper", and all of it is literally made up of parodic examination questions on Flaubert's life and work. Section A of the exam paper is on literary criticism, and the first part of this section asks examinees to discuss the relationship between art and life by referring to several given situations related to Flaubert's life and to the various implicit or explicit comments he has made on the issue mainly in his letters. In the fashion of complex essay questions in literature exams, the question even provides an introductory explanation:

> It has become clear to the examiners in recent years that candidates are finding it increasingly difficult to distinguish between Art and Life. Everyone claims to understand the difference, but perceptions vary greatly. For some, Life is rich and creamy, made according to an old peasant recipe from nothing but natural products, while Art is a pallid commercial confection, consisting mainly of artificial colourings and flavourings. For others, Art is the truer thing, full, bustling, and emotionally satisfying, while Life is worse than the poorest novel .... Adherents of the latter view tend to cite Logan Pearsall Smith: 'People say

that life is the thing; but I prefer reading.' Candidates are advised not to use this quotation in their answers (Barnes 1985: 171).

Humorously touching on serious questions about life and art, this excerpt is again a good example of how parody often works in this novel. The playful and lighthearted discussion of a significant philosophical question leads the reader to serious contemplation as well as frivolous laughter at the same time. The given quotations and situations that follow this introduction also create a similar effect. The second part of Section A is again an essay question, asking the examinee to "Trace the mellowing of Flaubert's attitude towards critics and criticism as represented by ..." a number of given quotations from Flaubert's works and letters (Barnes 1985: 173). All these quotations, however, exhibit more or less the same kind of contempt for critics, making it impossible to "trace the mellowing of Flaubert's attitude" towards this issue. Humour is created mainly in this way, and the result is again a parody that targets literary-critical discourse, playfully amusing the reader and raising serious questions about the problems of criticism at the same time.

The parody of literary-critical discourse continues in Section B of the examination paper, but the parody here expands even further to target other kinds of discourse, too. This section includes several questions, each of which is of an interdisciplinary nature, connecting literary study with various other scientific and/or scholarly disciplines such as economics, geography, logic, medicine, psychology, philately, phonetics, and history. Each of these questions, therefore, partakes of the discourse of both literary criticism and the specific discipline concerned. In this sense, each question simultaneously parodies multiple discourses: the parody of the discourse of the related discipline co-exists with that of literary-critical discourse, and each question may also be said to parody the discourse of interdisciplinary study. The examination question that follows may illustrate all this more clearly:

a) Achille-Cléophas Flaubert, jousting with his younger son, asked him to explain what literature was for. Gustave, turning the question back on his surgeon father, asked him to explain what the spleen was for: 'You know nothing about it, and neither do I, except that it is as indispensable to our bodily organism as poetry is to our mental organism.' Dr. Flaubert was defeated.

b) The spleen consists of units of *lymphoid tissue* (or *white pulp*) plus the *vascular network* (or *red pulp*). It is important in removing from the blood old or injured red cells. It is active in producing antibodies: splenectomised individuals produce less antibody. There is evidence that a tetrapeptide called *tuftsin* is derived from protein produced in the spleen. Though its removal, especially in childhood, increases the chances of meningitis and septicaemia, the spleen is no longer regarded as an essential organ: it can be removed without significant loss of active behaviour in the individual.

What do you conclude from this?

(Barnes 1985: 175)

This question brings together highly disparate discourses and arranges them into a seemingly reasonable whole, preparing the ground for humour and parody. The objects of humorous imitation are multiple: the discourses of logic and medicine are playfully parodied as well as those of literary criticism and interdisciplinary research. Again a serious question like the validity of literature is raised, only to be undermined by the parodic context of the whole chapter in general and this question in particular.

In another chapter of *Flaubert's Parrot* Braithwaite discusses the various charges made against Flaubert during and after his lifetime. One of these, of course, is the one regarding the censuring of *Madame Bovary* as a novel against moral principles. Parody is again a tool Braithwaite employs to show his mocking and sarcastic attitude towards the whole issue. This time Braithwaite intermingles the parody of literary-critical discourse with that of legal discourse. He evokes a trial scene where an "obscene" book is being defended against possible charges:

Take all the obscenity trials from *Madame Bovary* to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*: there's always some element of games-playing,

of compliance, in the defence. Others might call it tactical hypocricy. (Is this book sexy? No, M'Lud, we hold that it would have an emetic, not a mimetic, effect on any reader. Does the book encourage adultery? No, M'Lud, look how the miserable sinner who gives herself time and time again to riotous pleasure is punished in the end. Does this book attack marriage? No, M'Lud, it portrays a vile and hopeless marriage so that others may learn that only by following Christian instructions will their own marriages be happy. Is this book blasphemous? No, M'Lud, the novelist's thought is chaste.) As a forensic argument, of course, it has been successful; but I sometimes feel a residual bitterness that one of these defence counsel, when speaking for a true work of literature, did not build his act on simple defiance. (Is this book sexy? M'Lud, we bloody well hope so. Does it encourage adultery and attack marriage? Spot on, M'Lud, that's *exactly* what my client is trying to do. Is this book blasphemous? For Christ's sake, M'Lud, the matter's as clear as the loincloth on the Crucifixion. Put it this way, M'Lud: my client thinks that most of the values of the society in which he lives stink, and he hopes with this book to promote fornication, masturbation, adultery, the stoning of priests and, since we've temporarily got your attention, M'Lud, the suspension of corrupt judges by their earlobes. The defence rests its case.) (Barnes 1985: 133).

The parody of legal discourse in parantheses, coupled with Braithwaite's explicit remarks on the issue make this a rather witty and powerful defence of Flaubert and writers like him who have suffered similar charges. It is, however, again the case that the reader is prevented from giving serious consideration to the issue mainly through the humorous and playful tone pervading the whole discussion.

The parody of literary-critical discourse also occupies a very essential place in David Lodge's comic campus novel, *Changing Places* (1975) and its sequel, *Small World* (1984). The plots of both novels revolve around the personal and professional lives of Philip Swallow and Morris Zapp – British and American professors of English literature respectively. It is, therefore, not very surprising that a major target of parody in both is academic discourse. Such parody becomes apparent quite early in *Changing Places* when the reader cannot help sniggering at Professor Morris Zapp's highly ambitious research project, which is to examine Jane Austen's novels "... from every conceivable angle, historical, biographical, rhetorical, mythical, Freudian, Jungian, existentialist, Marxist, structuralist,

Christian-allegorical, ethical, exponential, linguistic, phenomenological, archetypal, you name it ..." (Lodge 1978: 44). That Morris Zapp, who can seriously devise such an improbable and exaggerated research plan, is at the same time "a highly respected scholar with a long and impressive list of publications" (Lodge 1978: 43-44) heightens the parodic humour even further. A similar ironic imitation of the discourse of literary research can also be found in *Small World*, where Professor Philip Swallow prepares his talk for the literature conference he is going to attend as guest speaker in Ankara, Turkey. The title of his paper is "Literature and History, Society, Philosophy, and Psychology" (Lodge 1991: 187) – a topic no less ambitious than Morris Zapp's research project. Swallow has been asked to speak not on a specific author but on a broader topic such as "Literature and History", *or* "Literature and Society", *or* "Literature and Philosophy". A misunderstanding over "the telex transmission", however, has led Swallow to prepare a lecture on literature and *all* these areas (Lodge 1991: 205) – a situation which is doubly humorous considering the fact that Swallow has immediately agreed to write such a paper, finding nothing wrong with the breadth of the topic.

In both novels academic discourse is also parodied through a humorous representation of the literature class. In *Changing Places*, Morris Zapp's lecture on Jane Austen to his tutorial students is one such representation:

> Readers of Jane Austen, he [Morris Zapp] emphasized, ... should not be misled by the absence of overt reference to physical sexuality in her fiction into supposing that she was indifferent or hostile to it. On the contrary, she invariably came down on the side of Eros against Agape – on the side, that is, of the private communion of lovers over against the public communion of social events and gatherings which invariably caused pain and distress .... Getting into his stride, Morris demonstrated that Mr. Elton was obviously implied to be impotent because there was no lead in the pencil that Harriet Smith took from him; and the moment in *Persuasion* when Captain Wentworth lifted the little brat Walter off Anne Elliot's shoulders ... He snatched up the text and read with feeling:
> 		' "... *she found herself in the state of being released from him ... Before she realized that Captain Wentworth had done it ... he was resolutely borne away ... Her sensations on the discovery*

*made her perfectly speechless. She could not even thank him. She could only hang over little Charles with the most disordered feelings.*" How about that?' he concluded reverently. 'If that isn't an *orgasm*, what is it?' He looked up into three flabbergasted faces [of the students] (Lodge 1978: 215).

Such a talk, of course, becomes a major source of laughter, given especially the extremely far-fetched nature of Zapp's comments about sexual symbolism in the novels of Jane Austen. Besides being playful, a parody like this may also be said to make a critical remark on the nature of literary criticism, which may at times appear so flexible as to embrace any approach, interpretation or methodology without considerations of relevance and validity.

*Small World* also includes a parodic representation of a literature class. This time the parody is highly reminiscent of the humorous examination questions in *Flaubert's Parrot*, and it appears in the form of a student's exam paper submitted to Professor Philip Swallow:

> Question 5. By what means did Milton try to "justify the ways of God to man" in "Paradise Lost?"
> ...
> I think Milton succeeded very well in justifying the ways of God to man by making Satan such a horrible person, though Shelley said that Milton was of the Devil's party without knowing it. On the other hand it is probably impossible to justify the ways of God to man because if you believe in God then he can do anything he likes anyway, and if you don't there is no point trying to justify Him. "Paradise Lost" is an epic poem in blank verse, which is another clever way of justifying the ways of God to man because if it rhymed it would seem too pat. My tutor Professor Swallow seduced me in his office last February, if I don't pass this exam I will tell everybody. John Milton was the greatest English poet after Shakespeare. He knew many languages and nearly wrote "Paradise Lost" in Latin in which case nobody would be able to read it today. He locked the door and made me lie on the floor so nobody could see us through the window. I banged my head on the wastepaper bin. He also considered writing his epic poem about King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, which is a pity he didn't as it would have made a more exciting story (Lodge 1991: 68-69).

Apparently Philip Swallow's student has cunningly devised her answer to guarantee a passing grade in her "resit". This, however, is not the only element of humour in the answer. The student's uneducated remarks as well as her seemingly relevant but in fact utterly irrelevant comments all contribute to making this piece an amusing parody of the discourse of a literature examination.

The humorous imitation of the discourse of modern literary theory is another device both novels employ to parody academic discourse. In a manner that echoes Francis Marloe's absurdly humorous postscript in *The Black Prince*, Freudian psychoanalysis becomes a parodic target in *Changing Places*, too. Philip Swallow writes to his wife, Hilary, from the States, explaining that he does not approve of Hilary's decision to allow Mary Makepeace, "an unmarried mother", to live with her and the children. Philip is especially worried that Mary Makepeace and her friend, Professor Morris Zapp will set a bad example to his daughter, Amanda, who, according to him, is "... at a very sensitive and impressionable age ..." (Lodge 1978: 140). Hilary, however, does not take this warning seriously, especially after having learnt that Philip has deceived her with Morris Zapp's daughter, Melanie. Her witty answer to Philip is devised in such a way as to suggest that, as an unfaithful husband, Philip no longer has a right to comment on the moral standards he expects his daughter to adopt:

> I [Hilary] must say it was unfortunate that of all the girls in Euphoria, you [Philip] had to pick on Mr. Zapp's daughter. Also somewhat ironic, not to say hypocritical, that you should have been so exercised about *his* bad influence on *your* daughter. I showed Mary [Makepeace] your letters and she says your obsessive concern to protect Amanda's innocence indicates that you are really in love with her yourself, and that your affair with Melanie was a substitute gratification for the incestuous desire. An interesting theory, you must admit. Does Melanie look anything like Amanda? (Lodge 1978: 149).

To make her attitude clear, then, Hilary relates to Philip Mary Makepeace's psychoanalytic reading of the situation Philip finds himself in. Mary's interpretation, however, is too far-fetched to be taken seriously. It turns, then, into

a parody of Freudian psychoanalysis, and the humour becomes more intense given Hilary's credulity in relating this theory to Philip.

Saussurean linguistics and structuralism similarly become parodic targets in *Small World*. The conference setting which the novel opens with is very appropriate for this kind of parody. Discussions about the latest trends in literary research abound,[34] and it is not long before Persse McGarrigle, a young instructor who has recently completed his Master's thesis, feels that he urgently needs to understand what is meant by the term "structuralism", which he continually keeps hearing. He first directs his inquiry to Angelica Pabst, a young doctoral student, and Robin Dempsey, a professor "... from one of the new universities in the north of England" (Lodge 1991: 6), and this is how the parody gradually emerges:

> ... "Hallo, how was the lecture?' he [Persse] greeted her [Angelica].
> "Boring. But there was an interesting discussion of structuralism afterwards."
> "Again? You've really got to tell me what structuralism is all about. It's a matter of urgency".
> "Structuralism?" said Dempsey, coming up with a sherry for Angelica just in time to hear Persse's plea, and all too eager to show his expertise. "It all goes back to Saussure's linguistics. The arbitrariness of the signifier. Language as a system of differences with no positive terms."
> "Give me an example," said Persse. "I can't follow an argument without an example."
> "Well, take the words *dog* and *cat*. There's no absolute reason why the combined phonemes *d-o-g* should signify a quadruped that goes 'woof woof' rather one [*sic.*] that goes 'miaou'. It's a purely arbitrary relationship, and there's no reason why English speakers shouldn't decide that from tomorrow, *d-o-g* would signify 'cat' and *c-a-t*, 'dog'."
> "Wouldn't it confuse the animals?" said Persse.
> "The animals would adjust in time, like everyone else," said Dempsey (Lodge 1991: 25-26).

Dempsey's light-hearted explanation of the concept of arbitrariness in language and the way he seriously responds to Persse's uneducated question ("Wouldn't it confuse the animals?") turns this discussion into a parody. In the novel Persse

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[34] The novel is set in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

makes several other attempts to learn about structuralism, all of which result in failure. Each time either another character or another event abruptly intrudes, changing the topic and leaving Persse with a greater number of unanswered questions – a situation which contributes further to the parodic effect.

Still another target of parody in *Small World* is the discourse of poststructuralism, which is adopted especially by Professor Morris Zapp, who ardently argues that structuralism no longer makes sense in a world where we have learned that language is characterized by a constant deferral of meaning. Zapp's conference lecture, which humorously develops various poststructuralist theories ranging from the pleasure of the text to psychoanalysis and desire in language, is a good instance of such parody. The quotation that follows is a section from this lecture, where Zapp draws an analogy between the activities of reading and watching a striptease:

> The dancer teases the audience, as the text teases its readers, with the promise of an ultimate revelation that is infinitely postponed. Veil after veil, garment after garment, is removed, but it is the *delay* in the stripping that makes it exciting, not the stripping itself; because no sooner has one secret been revealed than we lose interest in it and crave another. When we have seen the girl's underwear we want to see her body, when we have seen her breasts we want to see her buttocks, and when we have seen her buttocks we want to see her pubis, and when we see her pubis, the dance ends – but is our curiosity and desire satisfied? Of course not. The vagina remains hidden within the girl's body, shaded by her pubic hair, and even if she were to spread her legs before us [at this point several ladies in the audience noisily departed] it would still not satisfy the curiosity and desire set in motion by the stripping. Staring into that orifice we find that we have somehow overshot the goal of our quest, gone beyond pleasure in contemplated beauty; gazing into the womb we are returned to the mystery of our own origins. Just so in reading. The attempt to peer into the very core of a text, to possess once and for all its meaning, is vain – it is only ourselves that we find there, not the work itself. Freud said that obsessive reading (and I suppose that most of us in this room must be regarded as compulsive readers) – that obsessive reading is the displaced expression of a desire to see the mother's genitals [here a young man in the audience fainted and was carried out] but the point of the remark, which may not have been entirely appreciated

by Freud himself, lies precisely in the concept of displacement. To read is to surrender oneself to an endless displacement of curiosity and desire from one sentence to another ... (Lodge 1991: 31).

Clearly Morris Zapp's lecture often translates the rather abstract and philosophical language of poststructuralist theory into daily, ordinary language with highly straightforward examples sometimes verging on vulgarity. This, together with the abrupt narratorial remarks in parantheses, turn Zapp's lecture into a rather humorous imitation of poststructuralist discourse. The discussion session that succeeds the talk is similarly parodic, and all this contributes further to the parody of academic discourse, which characterizes the novel.

As a whole Malcolm Bradbury's *Mensonge* (1987) is even a more powerful parody of the discourse of modern literary theory. The work[35] is purportedly a scholarly book written by *a* Malcolm Bradbury, a fairly well-known scholar interested in bringing to light the life and work of Henri Mensonge, who, he argues, is the hidden figure behind modern literary theory. The task this fictional Bradbury has set himself, however, is not an easy one since Henri Mensonge is a philosopher interested in putting theory fully to practice. Therefore, in keeping with the latest theories on the disappearance of the subject, the death of the author, and the impossibility of attaining meaning in language, Mensonge has completely absented himself from the academic scene. Not many scholars have heard his name, and getting hold of his several essays and the only book he has supposedly written - *La fornication comme acte culturel*[36] - is a very difficult task indeed.

Bradbury first sets the scene for his argument by providing a brief survey of recent developments in literary theory. He starts off with Saussure and his theory of signs and arbitrariness in language – a discussion which is clearly

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[35] *Mensonge* is a work of fiction, but its status as narrative is debatable. Most of the book is in the form of a scholarly essay on a significant philosopher, and this is definitely a non-narrative quality. It may, however, be argued that the "writer" of this essay occasionally turns into a first-person narrator telling the reader about the events he came across during his research for this essay. It is owing to this narrative aspect of the work that I include it as an example among other postmodern novels.

[36] *Fornication as a Cultural Act*  (my translation).

parodic: "... what Saussure proved – or so his students seemed to think – was that words were arbitrary, and hence that in effect everything had been given the wrong name, so that horses were really fish and fish onions" (Bradbury 1993: 9). There follows a discussion of the ideas of other theorists such as Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault, and among these he dwells especially on Barthes' seminal essay, "The Death of the Author" since this is *the* essay to which Mensonge's disappearance as an author can be directly related:

> ... what Barthes asserted was indeed that they [works] were not by anyone at all, or certainly not by their authors; for writers do not write but get written, and by *something outside themselves*. Of course we know this from experience; often it is a wife, an old aunt, the bank-manager, one's literary agent, or some new girl at the publishers who, unable to make head or tail of the stuff, sits down and rewrites it all completely for clarity. Barthes, however, argues more daringly that the responsible party is not another person at all, not being in favour of the concept. What writes books is in fact nothing other than history, culture, or to be more precise *language itself*. Indeed, so effective is language that it has frequently arrived early in the morning, sat down at the typewriter, and as good as completed half a day's work before the average so-called author has even showered, dressed, and got through his breakfast *croissant* (Bradbury 1993: 21-22).

Mensonge's dissatisfaction rests on the fact that all such theories which talk about the "absence" of the author still suggest some kind of "presence" – the presence, for example, of the theorist who makes these arguments. Mensonge's aim, therefore, is to be "a totally *absent absence*", hence putting theory fully to practice (Bradbury 1993: 26). This, to Bradbury, is what constitutes Mensonge's superiority. To make his point clearer, Bradbury quotes from an essay allegedly by Mensonge (for one can never be absolutely certain):

> 'You must understand that the "fact" of my existence would negate what my text *as* text is saying. For this reason I ask you never to think of me, except perhaps at Christmas. For has it not been inevitable that, having written as "I" have "written", having thought as "I" have "thought", I should then refuse to be "here", or "there", or "anywhere else" for that matter?' ... 'Let it be enough

that you have the good fortune to have a text to read. Do not ask that there be an "I" who wrote it ...' (Bradbury 1993: 24).

As these examples suggest, the major target of parody in *Mensonge* is poststructuralist discourse, and the witty humour emerges not only through the creation of an "extreme" character like Mensonge but also through the fictional Bradbury's explication of the topic in a way that juxtaposes the complex discourse of theory with an often surprisingly naive and uneducated commentary. This kind of humour pervades the whole work and gets more and more intense as Bradbury, in his own "scholarly" way, sets out to explain the main argument of Mensonge's only book, *La Fornication comme acte culturel*:

> So, briefly, what Mensonge appears in the first instance to be telling us in *La Fornication* is that, in the great era of suspicion, when almost everything else has been demystified, deconstructed, demythologized and designified, sex has not, has been somehow 'left up there, secure on its pinnacle, just as if it were *the sum of itself*, and *this is significant*. In another passage he puts the point even more lucidly: 'In a time when nothing is sacred, and everything is discounted, we have somehow succeeded in preserving sex as the sacred heart (*sacré cœur*) of our existence – which can only mean as a false heart, a heartless heart at the heart of our universal heartlessness.' … For this logical absurdity there must be an explanation. In a passage worth underlining by anyone who is not using the library copy he offers one: 'Is it not clear then that the act of fornication is being used to sustain the unwarranted delusion of the realized subject – even though all our theory on every other matter tells us that there is no subject for us to realize, that all such passports to essence are forged?' (Bradbury 1993: 72).

The persistent use of such a style throughout *Mensonge* turns the entire work into a parody targeting academic discourse in general and the discourse of modern literary theory in particular. *Mensonge* imitates scholarly discourse even so faithfully as to include a "Foreword/Afterword", a bibliography, and an index, all of which are highly parodic. Of course, the "Foreword/Afterword" is characterized by a comic content, and the comedy is reinforced further through the following information in the title:

By Michel Tardieu
*Professor of Structuralist Narratology*
*at the University of Paris*

Translated by David Lodge

(Bradbury 1993: 88)

The inclusion of a real author like David Lodge within the fictional world of this work is an essential source of humour here. Furthermore, this title becomes doubly humorous when we realize that Michel Tardieu, supposedly the author of this section, is also a character in David Lodge's comic novel, *Small World*. A similar sense of humour pervades the bibliography, where fact and fiction are again intermingled. Here, too, it is possible to come across real bibliographic references as well as imaginary ones. In the same list with authors such as Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Jonathan Culler, and Ihab Hassan, one can find Mstislav Bogdanovich (apparently a made-up Eastern European name) and Howard Kirk (the name of the extraordinary professor in Malcolm Bradbury's comic campus novel, *The History Man* [1975]). The index is similarly a humorous and parodic imitation, where most often the page numbers provided do not direct the reader to the right place in the text and where it is also possible to come across useless information like the following:

> Angoisse, see Angst.
> Angst, see Anguish.
> Anguish, see Angoisse.

(Bradbury 1993: 100)

It is, of course, such details that contribute further to making *Mensonge* not only a powerful comedy but also a cunningly playful imitation and hence a cleverly conceived parody of scholarly discourse.

Literary theory and criticism also become objects of parody in Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor* (1985). This time, however, the humorously imitated discourse is that of an eighteenth-century literary-critical debate. The parody

emerges in a tavern scene in the novel, where Nicholas Dyer – architect as well as first-person narrator of those parts of the novel set in the eighteenth century – engages in a literary conversation with Vannbrugghe, another eminent architect of the time. Their discussion soon takes the form of literary criticism, and it becomes apparent that they hold widely differing views on the course contemporary literature should take. The extraordinary way in which this discussion is presented, however, prevents the reader from taking the opinion of either party seriously. In order to show this tavern scene to the reader, Dyer unexpectedly interrupts his first-person narration and shifts from the narrative to the dramatic medium. He first presents the *Dramatis Personae*, turning himself, too, into a character in the play, and it is in this way that he relates his conversation with Vannbrugghe:

> DYER. ... Was I not saying that Poetry is now sunk and miserably debas'd? It is as low a Thing now as the music of Italian Opera .... For the best Authors, like the greatest Buildings, are the most ancient: this is but a cold Age of the World, filled with a generall Imperfection.
>
> VANNBRUGGHE. No, no, the Fables and Religions of the Ancient World are well nigh consum'd: they have served the Poet and the Architect long enough, and it is now high time to dismiss them. We must copy the present Age ....
>
> DYER. (*Aside*) His Eyes and Countenance show a great Alteration, for this Matter touches him keenly. (*To Vannbrugghe*) If we copy the present Age, as you put it, we will be like those people who judge only by Resemblance and are therefore most delighted with Pictures of their Acquaintance. ... so your Playwrights catch the Audience as Woodcocks and Widgeons are caught, by a lowd Bell and a greasie Light.
>
> VANNBRUGGHE. (*Aside*) He has a solemn Air, but still he mocks me. (*To Dyer*) Well said, sir, you have brought yourself off cleverly. And so you would lugg down old Aristotle, Scaliger and all their Commentators from the high Shelf, and let the Moths flutter round your Gabardeen, so that you can furnish Prose with Episodes, Narrations, Deliberations, Didacticks, Pathetics, Monologues, Figures, Intervals and Catastrophes?
>
> DYER. (*Aside*) Methinks he strives to shine in his Talk the more to Insult my own. (*To Vannbrugghe*) I will say this only: that there is scarcely any Art or Faculty wherein we do not come short of the Ancients.

> VANNBRUGGHE. (*Spitting upon the floor*) But the bounds of the Mind are yet unknown: we form our Judgments too much on what has been done without knowing what might be done. Originals must soar into the region of Liberty.
>
> DYER. And then fall down, since they have Wings made only of Wax. Why prostrate your Reason to meer Nature? We live off the Past: it is in our Words and our Syllables ... It is the dark of Time from which we come and to which we will return.
>
> VANNBRUGGHE. (*Aside*) What is this Stuff about Time? (*To Dyer*) This is well said, but this Age of ours is quite new. The World was never more active or youthful than it is now ....You cannot learn how to build from the Instructions of a Vitruvius ... in the same Fashion, that which truly pleases in Writing is always the result of a Man's own Force. It is his proper Wealth, and he draws it out of himself as the Silk-worm spins out of her own Bowel. And speaking of Bowels –
>
> *They break off for a Minute as Vannbrugghe repairs to the Jakes …*
>
> (Ackroyd 1993: 177-178)

This lengthy dialogue between Dyer and Vannbrugghe may be said to represent a significant literary debate of the time: are the ancients or the moderns superior, and to what extent should modern writers follow the example of their classical ancestors?[37] For several reasons, however, the reader cannot take this representation seriously. As suggested earlier, the reader is baffled by the abrupt change in the medium of presentation – a change which increases his distance from Dyer and his account. The tavern setting and the light-hearted tone achieved through humour create a similar effect. Humour reaches its peak point when, in the middle of the heated discussion, the metaphor of a silk-worm's bowel reminds Vannbrugghe of his need to go to the toilet. It is in this way that the parodic atmosphere is fully established and the discourse of both parties undermined. The debate between these two characters, then, presents yet another example of literary-critical discourse turning into a striking parody through the craft of the postmodern novelist.

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[37] Jonathan Swift's *The Battle of the Books* (1704), for example, is a humorous, mock-heroic rendering of the same debate, inspired especially by Sir William Temple's earlier "... essay on the comparative merits of 'Ancient and Modern Learning'..." (Eagle 1979: 39).

**3.2.2 Parody Directed at Political, Religious, and Other Discourse**

Naturally, political discourse is represented especially in those novels which touch upon politics and related themes in one way or another. Postmodern novels often turn these representations into clever parodies, which significantly contribute to the dissolution of grand narratives, master discourses, and ideologies that many people live by. In such novels political discourse is sometimes parodied individually. By its very nature, however, politics can easily extend to other discursive realms, mingling itself with various different but related discourses ranging from religion and culture to journalism and patriotism. In such cases, then, the representation of political discourse is intermingled with that of other discourses, and parody accordingly targets several discourses at the same time.

Politics occupies a fairly significant place in David Lodge's comic campus novel, *Changing Places* (1975) and it sequel, *Small World* (1984). Political discourse, therefore, becomes a common object of parody in both novels. *Small World*, for instance, parodies Marxist discourse through a conversation between Morris Zapp, an American professor, and Fulvia Morgana, a rich Italian professor who is, at the same time, a devoted Marxist. When Zapp asks her how she and her husband "... manage to reconcile living like a millionaire with being a Marxist" (Lodge 1991: 145), the answer she gives presents a parody of the discourse of Marxism:

> "... Of course I recognize the contradictions in our way of life, but those are the very contradictions characteristic of the last phase of bourgeois capitalism, which will eventually cause it to collapse. By renouncing our own little bit of privilege ... we should not accelerate by one minute the consummation of the process, which has its own inexorable rhythm and momentum, and is determined by the pressure of mass movements, not by the puny actions of individuals. Since in terms of dialectical materialism it makes no difference to the 'istorical process whether Ernesto and I, as individuals, are rich or poor, we might as well be rich, because it is a role that we know 'ow to perform with a certain dignity. Whereas to be poor with dignity, poor as our Italian peasants are poor, is

something not easily learned, something bred in the bone, through generations" (Lodge 1991: 146).

Fulvia Morgana apparently believes in the logicality of her argument. The reader, however, quickly notices the inherent contradictions in her explanation, which often appears ludicrous and hypocritical and hence parodic of serious Marxist discourse.

Set in 1969, the time of student movements, *Changing Places* employs parody of political discourse much more pervasively. In the novel the political background is described mainly through a chapter which is largely made up of a collection of different news items quoted from local newspapers. These news items are often parodic of various kinds of political discourse, and the discourse of student movements is a significant one of these. Below is one such news item which parodically targets the leftist tendencies of the students and their supporters:

PEOPLE'S GARDEN FOR PLOTINUS

Students and street people moved on to a vacant lot on Poplar Ave, between Clifton and King Streets, at the weekend, to construct what they declared a People's Garden. The land was acquired by the University two years ago, but has been used as an unofficial parking lot since then.
  A spokesman for the gardeners said: 'This land does not belong to the University. If it belongs to anyone, it's the Costanoan Indians, from whom it was stolen by force two hundred years ago. If any Costanoans show, we'll gladly move out. Meanwhile, we're providing an open space for the people of Plotinus. The University has shown itself indifferent to the needs of the community.'...
*- Plotinus Gazette*
(Lodge 1978: 154)

The comic and parodic atmosphere, of course, is mainly created through the incongruous reference to the Costanoan Indians and the promise to vacate the garden if any of them show up. Another parodic news item is similarly about student protests, and here it is especially the highly strained analogy drawn

between the students' and Hitler's strategies early in the Second World War that creates the parodic effect:

> UNIVERSITY AT WAR,
> RUMMIDGE PROFESSOR WARNS
>
> Gordon Masters, Professor of English Literature at the University of Rummidge, has condemned the present sit-in by students in strong terms.
>  'The situation closely resembles that of Europe in 1940,' he said yesterday. 'The unacceptable ultimatum, followed by a *Blitzkrieg* and occupation of neighbouring territory, was Hitler's basic strategy. But we did not yield then and we shall not yield now.'
>  On the wall of his office, Professor Masters has a large map showing the plan of the University's central heating system. 'The heating pipes are conveyed through a maze of tunnels,' he explained, 'which would make an excellent base for resistance activity should Senate and the Administration have to go underground. I don't doubt that the Vice-Chancellor has a secret bunker to which he can retreat at short notice.'
>  The Vice-Chancellor's Office declined to comment.
> *- Rummidge Morning Post*
> (Lodge 1978: 161)

It is essential to observe that these parodies are not directed towards a single political view. They do not aim, in other words, to promote one political perspective by satirizing and hence undermining its opposite. If this were the case, the novel would not present parodies of the discourse of opposing factions. As the above examples suggest, however, all kinds of discourse, even those that directly oppose each other, are subject to parody in the world of the novel. This is most clear in two other news items from the same chapter in *Changing Places*. Purportedly written by younger school children, the two items voice two different discourses which run counter to each other. Neither, however, is immune to parody:

AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD'S VIEW OF THE CRISIS

I didn't get to see the People's Garden really, but I could feel that it was beautiful. In the Garden it was made of people's feelings, not just their hands, they made it with their heart ….
   The police are just ruining their lives by being police, they're also keeping themselves from being a person. They act like they are some kind of nervous creatures.

<div align="right">

- Submitted by Plotinus schoolteacher
to *Euphoric State Daily*
(Lodge 1978: 163)

</div>

RUMMIDGE SCHOOLKIDS ON STUDENTS

most students don,t like the way colleges and universitys are run tats why they have protested and sit-in. When students are older they will find it was ran in a good way. Students waste people and police-mens time, i think just for a laff. Most of them are hippeys and act like big fools and waste thier brain when someone else would be proud to be brainy.
...
I don,t like students cos they all follow each other in what they do they all wear the same clothes and they all talk like americans, and they smoke drugs and have injections to make themselves happy and they talk about love and peace when their unhappy.

if i was the police i would hang them.

<div align="right">

- Submitted to *Rumble* by Education student
(Lodge 1978: 164)

</div>

In both news items it is quite apparent that the children are reproducing the discourses taught them by their elders. The first, of course, is for, while the second is against student movements. Both, however, become parodic targets in the same way. A major source of humour is the obviousness of the fact that the children are serving as effective tools for the promotion of the discourses of their elders. This, coupled with the incorrect language and spelling in which these ideas are voiced, turn both discourses into highly comic parodies.

        In *Changing Places*, then, political discourse is parodied mainly through the chapter which is almost completely made up of news items from local newspapers. It is interesting to observe that these parodic news items also turn this

chapter into a parody of journalistic discourse. *Changing Places*, then, may be said to parody the discourse of politics *through* the parody of journalistic discourse and vice versa. In all these cases, of course, the novel makes sure that no discourse gains precedence over another. All remain equally prone to parody – a position pretty much in line with the postmodern tendency to expose all discourses as constructs that can be questioned and undermined.

Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) is yet another novel where political discourse is largely parodied. Here, too, the discourse of politics is widely intermingled with other discourses, and among these especially religious and cultural discourse occupy a significant place. It is, therefore, often the case that the novel parodies all these discourses simultaneously.

Covering a time span ranging from the early to the late twentieth century, *Shame* tells the story of several upper-class Pakistani families against a partly factual and partly fictionalized political background. The novel's first-person narrator – a Londoner of Pakistani origin – often assumes a humorous and light-hearted tone as he traces the fortunes and misfortunes of these families, whose members come to occupy significant political and military positions in government. This light-hearted tone is coupled with the narrator's insistent claim throughout that his account is nothing but fiction and fairy-tale – hence not to be taken too seriously. As the novel proceeds, however, the reader gradually realizes that this purported fairy-tale touches on reality in a way that cannot be ignored. The ostensibly carefree tone adopted throughout draws the reader's attention even more forcefully to grave issues concerning politics, culture, and society. In all this discourse parody plays a significant role, creating a comic atmosphere at the same time as it exposes the seriousness underneath. It is in this way that the reader is invited to consider the narrator's subtly serious account, which sometimes takes on satiric overtones.

The intensely political atmosphere of *Shame* makes it only natural that political discourse should be a significant target of parody in the novel. This kind of parody becomes most pervasive especially when the narrator describes the emergence of new political leaders, who often come to power by making good use

of circumstances and toppling former ones. One such leader is Iskander Harappa, who cunningly turns the civil war defeat of the "West Wing"[38] to his own profit, accusing the existing president of incompetence, having him arrested on the charge of war crimes, and eventually replacing him. Of course, Iskander Harappa's discourse is highly representative of the discourse of corrupt politicians in general, and the narrator is quick to put this to use. Parody emerges as Iskander Harappa, the new leader, answers charges that he has been "... the principal beneficiary of the civil war that ripped his country in half ..." (Rushdie 1995: 180):

> At a rally attended by two million people, Iskander Harappa unbuttoned his shirt. 'What have I to hide?' he shouted. 'They say I have benefited; but I have lost fully half my beloved country. Then tell me, is this gain? Is this advantage? Is this luck? My people, your hearts are scarred by grief; behold, my heart bears the same wounds as yours.' Iskander Harappa tore off his shirt and ripped it in half; he bared his hairless breast to the cheering, weeping crowd. (The young Richard Burton once did the same thing, in the film *Alexander the Great*. The soldiers loved Alexander because he showed them his battle scars.) (Rushdie 1995: 180).

Harappa's words may make the crowd cheer, but to the reader, who maintains a critical distance together with the narrator, they are beyond credibility. The reader, therefore, can only smile knowingly at the exaggerated sentimentality of Harappa's talk. The narrator's remark in parantheses contributes further to the critical humour pervading the piece. The comparison with Alexander the Great, whom Iskander is named after, may at first seem pertinent, but the narrator's reference to Richard Burton playing the role of Alexander the Great seriously undermines this comparison and suggests that Iskander Harappa's talk is merely an instance of play-acting, just like Richard Burton's. The parody is thus fully established, and it also becomes a powerful satiric device serving to criticise political corruption.

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[38] Though not explicitly mentioned in the novel, the civil war defeat of the "West Wing" is probably a reference to the 1971 separation of the "East Wing" – Bangladesh – from Pakistan to become an independent country.

Before long Iskander Harappa is also toppled by a military coup that brings General Raza Hyder to power. The parodic as well as satiric atmosphere still reigns as Raza Hyder, in various public addresses, justifies the coup, declaring his honesty and sincerity:

It is said that General Hyder was at first reluctant to move [take military action], doing so only when his colleagues gave him the choice of deposing Harappa or falling with him. But President Hyder denied this: 'I'm the type,' he said, 'who sees a mess and can't help cleaning it up.'
On the morning after the coup Raza Hyder appeared on national television. He was kneeling on a prayer-mat, holding his ears and reciting Quranic verses; then he rose from his devotions to address the nation. This was the speech in which the famous term, 'Operation Umpire' was first heard by the people. 'Understand,' Raza said briskly, 'the Army seeks to be no more than an honest ref or ump' (Rushdie 1995: 223).

Here again the narratorial information provided at the beginning seriously undermines Hyder's claim to sincerity ("I'm the type ... who sees a mess and can't help cleaning it up"), placing his words in a parodic and satiric context. The parodic humour is strengthened even further through the description of Hyder's appearance on national television. The sense of incongruity created through the juxtaposition of a private activity like praying and a public activity like addressing the nation is a major source of humour, and the parody becomes even more obvious as Raza Hyder compares the affairs of the country to a sporting game, likening the military intervention to the behaviour of an honest referee or umpire. Furthermore, Hyder's preference to use the abbreviations, "ref or ump" instead of "referee or umpire" appears rather strange in a formal public address, and this, too, serves to enhance the parodic humour characterizing the piece.

Raza Hyder does not keep his initial promise of running "fresh-elections-within-ninety-days" (Rushdie 1995: 223), of course, and he becomes a dictator governing the country through Islamic rule. The interview he gives to British television about his governmental policy is again a good instance of parody directed towards political discourse:

'General Hyder,' the Angrez television interviewer asks Raza, 'informed sources opine, close observers claim, many of our viewers in the West would say, how would you refute the argument, have you a point of view about the allegation that your institution of such Islamic punishments as flogging and cutting off of hands might be seen in certain quarters as being, arguably, according to certain definitions, so to speak, barbaric?'

Raza Hyder smiles at the camera, a courteous smile, the smile of a man of true good manners and no little decorum. 'It is not barbaric,' he replies. 'Why? For three reasons.' He raises a finger for each reason and counts them off. 'Number one,' he explains, 'is that, kindly understand, a law in itself is neither barbaric nor not barbaric. What matters is the man who is applying the law. And in this case it is I, Raza Hyder, who am doing it, so of course it will not be barbaric.

'Number two, let me say, sir, that we are not some savages down from the trees, you see? We will not simply order people to stick out their hands, like this, and go fataakh! with a butcher's knife. No, sir. All will be done under the most hygienic conditions, with proper medical supervision, use of anaesthetic etcetera.

'But the third reason is that these are not laws, my dear fellow, which we have plucked out of the wind. These are the holy words of God, as revealed in sacred texts. Now if they are holy words of God, they cannot also be barbaric. It is not possible. They must be some other thing' (Rushdie 1995: 245).

The interviewer's exaggerated hesitation to put his question – a hesitation humorously suggestive of Hyder's fearful dictatorship – creates the comic atmosphere right from the beginning. And Hyder's answer takes the comedy further, parodying several discourses at the same time. His "logical" refutation of charges of barbarity against his government may be considered parodic not only of the discourse of rational argumentation but also of religious discourse. And all this, of course, is closely intertwined with the parody of political discourse.

In fact, this is how parody often functions in the novel. The intermingling of various discourses is a common phenomenon, and that is why discourse parody often targets several related discourses at the same time. Especially religious discourse widely associates itself with other discourses, and this is not very surprising, given the pervasive significance of religion in the society Rushdie's characters belong to. The following account, which is about the war between India

and Pakistan over the Kashmiri region, is yet another example of parody targeting several discourses simultaneously:

> In that hot season, the two newly-partitioned nations announced the commencement of hostilities on the Kashmiri frontier .... There were, inevitably, deaths; but the organizers of the war had catered for these as well. Those who fell in battle were flown directly, first-class, to the perfumed gardens of Paradise, to be waited on for all eternity by four gorgeous Houris, untouched by man or djinn. 'Which of your Lord's blessings,' the Quran inquires, 'would you deny?' (Rushdie 1995: 77).

Situated within the larger context of politics, the narrator's account here humorously touches on patriotic as well as religious discourse. The sarcastic tone he adopts in coupling martyrdom with religious gratification serves not only to parody all these discourses but also to make a critical comment on political decision-makers who "organize" wars.

In *Shame* politics is not the only discursive realm pervaded by religion. Naturally, culture, tradition, and religion are also inextricably intertwined, creating further material for discourse parody. In the novel such cultural, traditional, and religious elements are perhaps best reflected in the circumstances surrounding the marriage of General Raza Hyder's retarded daughter, Sufiya Zinobia to Omar Khayyam Shakil, one of the interesting and eccentric heroes of the "fairy-tale" the narrator claims to be telling. Discourse parody inevitably emerges as Raza Hyder, his wife Bilquìs, and his religious mentor, Maulana Dawood discuss the fifty-year-old Khayyam Shakil's wish to marry the young and retarded Sufiya Zinobia:

> ... [Bilquìs] said, 'Where are we going to find the girl a better match?'
> …
> 'She [Sufiya] is not so stupid now,' Bilquìs argued, 'she can dress herself, go to the pot, and she does not wet her bed.'
> 'For God's sake,' Raza shouted, 'does that qualify her to be a wife?'

'That frogspawn slime,' Dawood exclaimed, 'that messenger of Shaitan. He [Khayyam Shakil] has come here with his proposal to divide this holy house.'

'Her vocabulary is improving,' Bilquìs added, 'she sits with Shahbanou [the nurse] and tells the dhobi what to wash. She can count the garments and handle money.'

'But she is a child,' Raza said hopelessly.

Bilquìs grew stronger as he weakened. 'In a woman's body,' she replied, 'the child is nowhere to be seen. A woman does not have to be a brainbox. In many opinions brains are a positive disadvantage to women in marriage. She likes to go to the kitchen and help the khansama with his work. At the bazaar she can tell good vegetables from bad .... She can tell when the servants have not polished the furniture properly. She wears a brassière and in other ways also her body has become that of an adult woman ...' (Rushdie 1995: 161).

The bitter humour here is created mainly through Bilquìs' stubborn insistence to marry her daughter off, no matter what the circumstances. The arguments she makes in favour of her daughter's suitability for marriage may all be considered parodic of the cultural/traditional discourse on the role of women in society. Maulana Dawood's extravagant remark about Khayyam Shakil as a "messenger of Shaitan" also adds a religious dimension to this conversation, turning it into a parody simultaneously directed at culture, tradition, and religion.

In *Shame* it is possible to come across lots of instances where Pakistani characters comment – often negatively – on Western beliefs and lifestyles. Presented through the narrator's ironic perspective, such instances, which may be said to represent intercultural discourse, also become parodic. The existence of a Westerner in the neighbourhood inevitably generates such discourse, and this is also the case for Eduardo Rodrigues, the schoolmaster, who is rumoured to have an affair with his student – a schoolgirl named Farah Zoroaster:

Gossip is like water. It probes surfaces for their weak places, until it finds the breakthrough point; so it was only a matter of time before the good people of  Q. hit upon the most shameful, scandalous explanation of all. 'O God, a grown man in love with a little child. Eduardo and Farah – what do you mean it can't happen, happens every day, only a few years back there was that other – yes, that must be it, these Christians are big perverts, God preserve

us, he [Eduardo] follows his little floozy up here to the backyard of the universe, and who knows what encouragement she [Farah] gives, because a woman knows how to tell a man if he is wanted or not wanted, of course, even at eight years old, these things are in the blood' (Rushdie 1995: 48).

Here, too, religious discourse is intermingled with intercultural discourse, and both are parodied through the narrator's ironic presentation. Yet another target of parody is the traditional discourse on women, which turns out to be so shocking as to label even an eight-year-old girl as a temptress.

In *Shame* the parody of intercultural discourse can also be found within the context of politics. The following is one such example, where Maulana Dawood, the religious mentor, complains to Raza Hyder about State Chief Minister Gichki, who dangerously appears to promote a Western lifestyle:

> [Maulana Dawood:]  '... You know about this Gichki of course. Not to be trusted.'
> [Raza Hyder:] 'Not?'
> 'Completely not. Most corrupt individual. But your files will show this.'
> 'Allow me to benefit from the knowledge of the man on the spot ...'
> 'Like all our politicos these days. No fear of God and big smuggling rackets. ...'
> 'Please proceed.'
> 'Foreign devilments, sir. Nothing less. Devil things from abroad.'
> What Gichki was accused of bringing illicitly into God's pure land: iceboxes, foot-operated sewing machines, American popular music recorded at 78 revolutions per minute, love-story picture-books that inflamed the passions of the local virgins, domestic air-conditioning units, coffee percolators, bone china, skirts, German sunglasses, cola concentrates, plastic toys, French cigarettes, contraceptive devices, untaxed motor vehicles, big ends, Axminster carpets, repeating rifles, sinful fragrances, brassières, rayon pants, farm machinery, books, eraser-tipped pencils and tubeless bicycle tyres (Rushdie 1995: 98-99).

The dialogue between Dawood and Hyder is a clear representation of intercultural discourse. The implicit humour in this dialogue becomes much more obvious through the interference of the narrator, who ironically adopts Dawood's

perspective and makes a detailed list of the "foreign devilments" entering the country. That most of these "foreign devilments" are in fact trivial daily items situates Dawood's argument within a parodic context, making a humorous as well as critical remark about this kind of political-intercultural discourse.

In *Shame* the narrator does not parody intercultural discourse in relation to his characters' lives only. The occasional commentary he makes about the story he is telling also includes such parody. At one instance he considers the negative reactions he may receive as a "Westernized" narrator attempting to tell an Eastern story charged with politics and history. The way he adopts an Eastern voice, outlining possible accusations against himself may again be considered parodic of intercultural discourse:

> *Outsider! Tresspasser! You have no right to this subject! ...* I know: nobody ever arrested me. Nor are they ever likely to.[39] *Poacher! Pirate! We reject your authority. We know you, with your foreign language wrapped around you like a flag: speaking about us in your forked tongue, what can you tell but lies?* I reply with more questions: is history to be considered the property of the participants solely? In what courts are such claims staked, what boundary commissions map out the territories? (Rushdie 1995: 28).

The narrator makes sure that none of these accusations is left unanswered. Setting his own voice against the Eastern discourse he critically imitates, he justifies his story and hints at significant questions about fact, fiction, and history – questions which the novel raises throughout. The parody here, then, serves not only to undermine intercultural discourse but also to draw attention to significant issues which constitute the underlying concerns of the whole novel.

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[39] Here the narrator suggests that he is not an Eastern writer who can get arrested for writing offensively against the existing regime.

**3.2.3 Parody Directed at Scientific, Religious, and Other Discourse**

Besides parodying political, religious, and other kinds of discourse, Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) also represents scientific discourse parodically. The representation here is similar to that in *Flaubert's Parrot*, where the discourse of medicine is targeted within the larger parody of literary-critical discourse.[40] Medicine is again the object of parody in *Shame*, and Rushdie wittily employs it in order to imply his own critical-ironic stance regarding the characters and events in his novel. As the title also suggests, "blushing" owing to a feeling of shame is a significant motif throughout the novel. The motif surrounds many events and characters in the narrator's story, but it is emphasized especially in relation to Sufiya Zinobia, Raza Hyder's retarded daughter. Describing Sufiya's physical problem of reddening and burning all over at unexpected times, the narrator refers to medicine and provides the reader with a scientific and informative quotation on "blushing":

> Blushing is slow burning. But it is also another thing: it is a *psychosomatic event*. I quote: 'A sudden shut-down of the arterio-venous anastomores of the face floods the capillaries within the blood that produces the characteristically heightened colour. People who do not believe in psychosomatic events and do not believe that the mind can influence the body by direct nervous pathways should reflect upon blushing, which in people of heightened sensibility can be brought on even by the recollection of an embarrassment of which they have been the subject – as clear an example of mind over matter as one could wish for' (Rushdie 1995: 123).[41]

This quotation, which is not a parody in itself, takes on parodic overtones mainly because of the narrator's abrupt interruption of the story to introduce it. At first, the reader is baffled and does not know how to react, but as he reads further, the difficult scientific jargon together with the unexpected interruption of the

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[40] Pages 91-92 may be referred to for a detailed discussion of *Flaubert's Parrot* in this respect.

[41] Salman Rushdie informs the reader in the "Acknowledgements" section following the novel that he took this quotation from *The Life Science* by P. B. and J. S. Medawar (Wildwood House, 1977).

narrative lead him to approach the quotation in a lighthearted manner. The quotation becomes even more of a parody as the reader gets to realize that "blushing" may not, after all, be the right term to describe Sufiya's physical problem of reddening. It gradually becomes clear that the girl has some kind of allergic disease triggered either psychologically or by outside influence. Although he is probably aware of this, the narrator ironically continues to refer to the girl's predicament as "blushing", in exactly the same way as her family and relatives do. The narrator, then, may be said to have an ironic and hence parodic intention in providing this scientific quotation on blushing. As the novel proceeds, the narrator's ironic attitude towards this issue becomes clearer. Sufiya Zinobia, the retarded and – in a way – victimized daughter of Raza Hyder gradually turns into a symbol, an embodiment of "shame" even though she is mentally unequipped to experience and understand this feeling fully. It is in this way that Sufiya becomes a powerful tool for the narrator to comment critically on the characters and events he is describing. It is as though Sufiya vicariously feels all the shame ensuing from all kinds of personal, social, and political corruption hinted at in the novel. As the narrator nicely puts it, "... Sufiya Zinobia Hyder blushed uncontrollably whenever her presence in the world was noticed by others. But she also, I believe, blushed for the world" (Rushdie 1995: 122).

The parody of scientific discourse can also be observed in Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor* (1985). The specific target this time, however, is Enlightenment discourse with all its emphasis on science and reason, and its unshakable faith in the human potential for improvement in a perfectly ordered universe created by a perfectly rational and benevolent God. The harmonious relationship Enlightenment philosophy often establishes between science and religion is also represented in *Hawksmoor*, and the novel usually parodies both discourses simultaneously.

Set partly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth and partly in the twentieth centuries, *Hawksmoor* juxtaposes the different languages and discourses of these two periods, creating an atmosphere highly conducive to parody. The discourse of the early Enlightenment is parodied mainly through the first-person

accounts of a late seventeenth and early eighteenth century architect, Nicholas Dyer, who holds a commission to build and design a number of new churches in London. Though Dyer is an assistant to Sir Christopher Wren – scientist, architect, and a prominent member of the Royal Society – he is secretly in strong opposition to the newly emerging Enlightenment ideas upheld by many of the intellectuals of the time. Throughout his narration Dyer often states his disapproval and criticism of these ideas explicitly, voicing his own contrary beliefs at the same time. Parody is also a device he occasionally makes use of to undermine early Enlightenment discourse. While waiting to see Sir Christopher Wren in the Royal Society, for example, he is particularly disturbed by the conversation of an old man who is highly keen on the latest trends in scientific research. To show his disturbance, his first attempt is to change the course of the conversation, but he fails:

> And you are acquainted with the Science of Opticks? *he* [the old man] *asks* putting his Face close up to mine [Dyer's].
> Do I see Visions, sir? [Dyer answers] This Answer pull'd him up short and he made no Reply, for those who are not engaged in what is call'd Practical or Useful learning are now dismissed as meer Verbalists and students of Umbratick Things. But if Usefulnesse be their Rule, I do not know that a Baker or a skilful Horse-leech may not contest with them (Ackroyd 1993: 139).

Dyer, then, cannot change the course of the conversation in this way. Preoccupied solely with empirical science, the old man is unable to understand the implications of Dyer's answer ("Do I see Visions, sir?"). Dyer, however, is determined to criticize the exaggerated utilitarianism of the science of his time. As a second attempt, therefore, he resorts to parody, and his conversation with the old man continues in the following way:

> I do indeed have some Observations of my own, *I now replied*, as he [the old man] was about to take his leave of me, which in due Course I shall publish.
> Oh sir, *says he* pricking up his Ears, and what may these be?

> They will be my Observations, *I told him*, on Toasting Cheese By a Candle Without Burning Fingers. And the old man looked at me astonished as I left the Repository and stepped quietly down the Stairs (Ackroyd 1993: 139).

It is questionable how far the old man understands Dyer's critical stance. Nevertheless, Dyer communicates his dissatisfaction – at least to the reader – through his made-up parodic title of a scientific project.

Dyer parodies early Enlightenment discourse in several other ways, too. A common device he employs is the juxtaposition of his own critical and ironic discourse with early Enlightenment discourse in general and the scientific discourse of the Royal Society in particular. His account of Sir Christopher Wren's talk to the members of the Royal Society provides a clear example. Dyer relates Sir Wren's words as Wren himself utters them, but he simultaneously maintains a critical distance by interrupting the flow of the talk through his ironic remarks in parantheses:

> ... Sir Chris. thus began: Mr. Bacon, Mr. Boyle and Mr. Lock moved the first Springs of this illustrious Society, which is call'd the Royal Society. They are reason enough why we should be gathered here, for it is by their Example that we have learned that the Experimentall Philosophy is an Instrument for Mankind's domination of Darknesse and Superstition (and I [Dyer] crie out inwardly as he speaks: *but look behind you*), and that through the Sciences of Mechanicks, Opticks, Hydrostaticks, Pneumaticks as well as Chymistry, Anatomy and the Mathematicall Arts we have begun to understand the works of Nature (*but not your own corrupcion*). This has not been the work of one enlightened Generation only: in the Air, the more accurate history of Winds and Meteors has been achiev'd by the Lord Bacon, Des Cartes, Mr. Boyle and others. In the earth, new lands by Columbus, Magellan and the rest of the Discoverers, and the whole Subterranean world has been described by the universally learned Kircher (*listen to a few sighes from Hell*). ... We proceed by Rationall Experiment and the Observation of Cause and Effect: the Ancients pierced meerly in the Bark and Outside of Matter, but the only things that can stick into the Mind of Man are built upon impregnable Foundations of Geometry and Arithmetick: the rest is indigested Heaps and Labyrinths (*this is a plain lie*). Thus there are many secret Truths which the Ancients have passed over for us to uncover: we have

120

seen the spots of the Sunne, and its conversion about its own Axis; we have seen the laterall Guardians of Saturn and Jupiter, the various Phases of Mars, the Horns of Venus and Mercury (*and does not your Heart stop at the Immensity of the Void that surrounds them?*) ... (Ackroyd 1993: 140).

The parodic effect created through the juxtaposition of these two conflicting discourses is quite apparent. Dyer's clever device prevents the reader from getting carried away by Sir Christopher Wren's talk, which is highly representative of the scientific discourse of the Royal Society and hence of the early Enlightenment. In a sense, Dyer's discourse undermines Sir Wren's talk from within, making it impossible for the reader to take it seriously. At the end, when Sir Wren argues that

> This is a learned and inquisitive Age ... a prying and laborious Age, an Age of Industry: it will be as a Beacon for the Generations to come, who will examine our Works and say, It was then that the World began anew (Ackroyd 1993: 141),

the reader can only smile at the complacency of early Enlightenment discourse in general and of Sir Wren's words in particular.

Naturally, Dyer attacks not only the scientific but also the religious discourse of the early Enlightenment. Often he explicitly criticizes the belief in a perfectly ordered universe created by a perfectly rational God. There are also times when he, as narrator, relates conversations highly representative of this discourse. Such accounts, however, are never given without an ironic distance or a humorous remark, which seriously undermines their authority. His account of his conversation with Parson Priddon is a good example of such parodic rendering:

> [Parson Priddon:] ... all this Darknesse is past, Mr. Dyer, and it has been revealed to us that we have a Rationall God. We [Priddon and Dyer] walked a little away from the Pitte, for the Dust was falling upon our Cloathes, and I held my peace. Then he [Priddon] goes on: What is this DU [a sign for nocturnal pagan sacrifices] but the Language of Infants, Mr Dyer? I [Dyer] told him that I agreed with him upon that, but he had already struck into his Theme *as if he*

*were mounting the Pulpit as he spoke*: What is this DU when we see how God guides the whole of his Creation in the wonted course of Cause and Effect which we may prove, Mr Dyer, by considering the unaffected Simplicity of Nature. *And at this point the venerable Priddon raised his Arm around him, tho' I could see only the courts and alleys of Cheap-side* (Ackroyd 1993: 134, my emphasis).

As the italicized sections especially suggest, Dyer's manipulation turns Parson Priddon's conversation into a parody of a sermon voicing the religious discourse of the early Enlightenment. The comedy becomes most explicit, of course, when the Parson's fervent argument about the "Simplicity of Nature" is juxtaposed with Dyer's ironic reference to "the courts and alleys of Cheap-side".

*Hawksmoor*'s way of parodying the scientific and religious discourse of the early Enlightenment seems especially pertinent to postmodern concerns. Both modernism and postmodernism, after all, may be characterized by a major scepticism concerning beliefs rooted in Enlightenment philosophy, especially those concerning the boundless human potential for progress and happiness. Parody in *Hawksmoor* definitely serves to deconstruct and undermine this "grand narrative". It should be remembered, however, that undermining a master discourse only to replace it with another is against the basic tenets of postmodernism. All discourses are equally subject to questioning and deconstruction. That is probably why *Hawksmoor* does not include parodies of Enlightenment discourse only. It is interesting to observe, for example, how the above scene where Dyer parodies the early Enlightenment discourse of Parson Priddon gradually turns into a parody of Dyer's own anti-Enlightenment discourse. As the two are having dinner together, Dyer voices his own ideas about the absurdity of believing that reason is the defining characteristic of man. Parson Priddon, however, is so much engrossed in eating that Dyer's argument appears to fall on deaf ears:

The wine was heating my [Dyer's] own Blood as *I replied*: Who then can talk of the Good of Mankind and the publicke Benefit when there is nothing but Rage and Folly on the Streets? Here the

122

> Parson belched again. Men are not rational Creatures, *I continu'd*, they are sunk into Flesh, blinded by Passion, besotted by Folly and hardened by Vice.
>     Will you take some Pudding, Mr. Dyer?
>     They are like Insects, who, having their Birth in Excrement, from thence borrow their Colour and their Smell.
>     Parson Priddon was blowing upon his Dish of Broth as I spoke. Yes it is a filthy Crowd, *says he*, and so we must thank God for civil Government; for although the Grave will equal all Men, ... it is necessary for the Order and Oeconomy of the Universe that there should be differences of Breeding and Dignity. Will you send me that Tooth-pick case by you?
>     And I [Dyer] put down my Knife to speak: The Mobb will bait Cripples as well as Bears, and they will turn a wild Bull loose upon the Streets for Sport. When the Hangman leaves the Wretch kicking in the Air at Tyburn, the women and children fight to pull him down by the Legs. Then they take a peece of his Cloathes, kiss it, and spit upon it.
>     Ah, these are sad Times. Will you pass me that Tooth-pick case, Mr. Dyer? (Ackroyd 1993: 136, my emphasis)[42]

It is especially through the underlined sentences that Dyer's words are undermined. His great enthusiasm for communicating his thoughts can be matched only by Parson Priddon's great enthusiasm for eating. The sharp incongruity that results turns Dyer's discourse into a parody.

In the novel the continual juxtaposition of the language of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with that of the twentieth century is also indicative of the project of undermining all kinds of discourse. As the above quotations illustrate, Dyer's narrative represents late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century English with its different spelling and vocabulary. This, however, is interrupted by each following chapter, which shifts to a twentieth-century setting and language. Similarly, each chapter presented through twentieth-century English is also interrupted in the following chapter by Dyer's archaic language. These regular interruptions prevent the reader from getting carried away by the language and discourse of either period. Instead, Ackroyd creates the impression that he is

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[42] The underlined sentences are my emphasis while the italics are original to the novel.

playfully imitating both languages, undermining them simultaneously, and regarding neither one as superior to the other.

### 3.2.4 Parody Directed at Literary-Fictional Discourse: Genre and/or Text Parody Subordinated to Metafiction

A major characteristic of postmodern fiction is its discontent with classical modes of representation, which often go by the name of literary realism. This is understandable, given the sharp discrepancy between the postmodern experience and the worldview represented by the discourse of realism in literature. Realistic representation no longer holds in a world where the sense of a single, knowable reality is replaced by the conviction that everything is a construct shaped by language and discourse. Patricia Waugh's discussion of changing novelistic trends in the face of the "… uncertain, insecure, self-questioning and culturally pluralistic" period we are living in is rather illuminating in this respect (Waugh 1984: 6):

> Contemporary … writing is both a response and a contribution to … [a] thoroughgoing sense that reality or history are [*sic.*] provisional: no longer a world of eternal verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures. The materialist, positivist and empiricist world-view on which realistic fiction is premised no longer exists. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that more and more novelists have come to question and reject the forms that correspond to this ordered reality (the well-made plot, chronological sequence, the authoritative omniscient author, the rational connection between what characters 'do' and what they 'are', the causal connection between 'surface' details and the 'deep', 'scientific laws' of existence) (Waugh 1984: 7).

The postmodern novel, then, is significantly characterized by the need to challenge this idea of an "ordered reality" and of a one-to-one correspondence between art and life. And metafiction appears to be the form that most effectively serves this purpose. Mark Currie labels metafiction as a most distant antonym of realism, emphasizing the form's potential to constitute a serious challenge to

realistic discourse (Currie 1995a: 15). Patricia Waugh's explanation of the term similarly suggests its subversive potential:

> *Metafiction* is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text (Waugh 1984: 2).

The discourse of realism is so deeply rooted in literature that challenging it is definitely not an easy task. Parody, which works by simultaneously accommodating and undermining its target, serves as a very effective metafictional tool. Parody situates itself within the discourse of realism, and goes about the task of challenging this discursive realm from within. Realism is thus exposed as yet another discursive construct open to deconstruction and undermining.

In postmodern novels, then, conventional literary-fictional discourse is often targeted through metafiction, which is almost always coupled with parody. The parodic kinds that appear to pervade such examples are genre parody and, to a lesser extent, text parody. Caution should be taken, however, in suggesting that such an observation runs counter to the argument that postmodern parody is primarily discourse parody. It should be remembered that the conventions of literary-fictional discourse are best exposed and undermined through parody directed at genres or texts which are typical representatives of this discursive realm. It would be more proper, then, to argue that in such examples genre and text parody contribute significantly to the larger metafictional parody targeting literary-fictional discourse. To put it in another way, postmodern fiction often employs genre or text parody *not* to parody a specific genre or text *but* to parody traditional literary-fictional discourse through metafictional devices. Any instance of genre or text parody is thus subordinated to larger metafictional concerns

aiming to challenge literary-fictional discourse, which often manifests itself in the conventions of realism.

This argument is also corroborated by Patricia Waugh's suggestion that metafiction often targets "the 'language' of the literary system itself, including the conventions of the novel as a whole or particular forms of that genre". Such targeting, of course, often takes the form of parody commenting "… on a specific work or fictional mode …" and exposing novelistic conventions by drawing attention to the processes of construction (Waugh 1984: 4). Mikhail M. Bakhtin's argument about the "auto-criticism of discourse" in the novel is similarly pertinent. To him, "one of the primary distinguishing features of the novel as a genre" is its potential to "foreground a critique of literary discourse" in general and "novelistic discourse" in particular. It is as though Bakhtin's argument made in the 1930s anticipates postmodern concerns about reality, fiction, and the discourse of literature:[43] "[In the novel] Discourse is criticized in its relationship to reality: its attempt to faithfully reflect reality, to manage reality and to transpose it (the utopian pretenses of discourse), even to replace reality as a surrogate for it …" (Bakhtin 1992: 412). And parody is again the indispensable tool in the novel's "auto-criticism": "As a rule, the testing of discourse is coupled with its being parodied …" (Bakhtin 1992: 413). What is more, Bakhtin's argument about the way the novel "lays bare" its own devices sounds very much like a definition of metafiction as we know it today:

> [To test literary discourse, the work] … introduces an author who is in the process of writing the novel (a 'laying bare of the device,' in the terminology of the Formalists), not however in the capacity of a character, but rather as the real author of the given work. Alongside the apparent novel there are fragments of a 'novel about the novel' (the classic exemplar is, of course, *Tristram Shandy*) (Bakhtin 1992: 413).

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[43] Of course, these are also modernist concerns, but to a lesser extent. In formulating his argument Bakhtin was probably inspired by modernist texts as well as earlier examples such as *Don Quixote* and *Tristram Shandy*, which may, in some ways, be regarded as prototypes of the postmodern novel.

Most of the time, of course, the "laying bare of the device" is achieved through genre parody, which exposes generic conventions and draws attention to the writing process. The illusion of reality is broken, and genre parody again serves the larger parodic aim of targeting literary-fictional discourse.

Literary-fictional discourse is also a significant object of parody in most of the novels analyzed in the preceding sections of this chapter. In all these novels, then, genre and/or text parody are employed as major metafictional devices challenging the discourse of realism. In other words, all may be said to parody literary-fictional discourse by subordinating genre and/or text parody to their wider metafictional concerns.

One such novel is Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince* (1973), which may be said to parody the genre of the cheap romance novel, especially through the way its plot develops. The novel is mainly made up of the first-person narrative of Bradley Pearson, a fifty-eight-year-old man who has recently retired from his job as tax inspector in order to concentrate solely on writing – the profession he defines himself by. Pearson's narrative begins with his decision to spend the summer outside London in a quiet seaside cottage, where, he hopes, he will overcome his writer's block, which has been bothering him for quite a long time. A couple of seemingly insignificant events, however, prevent his departure and these lead to other events, which Pearson finds himself inextricably entangled in. It is mainly these events that constitute the intricate plot of the novel where Pearson has to deal with the sudden arrival of his sister, his former wife, and brother-in-law, as well as with the problems his friend and rival Arnold Baffin is experiencing with his wife, Rachel. All these events take on an added significance as Pearson finds himself in an emotional relationship first with Rachel and then with her twenty-year-old daughter, Julian. In the meantime the lives of the lesser characters, too, get more and more complicated. Arnold Baffin starts a love affair with Pearson's ex-wife, Christian, and Pearson's sister, Priscilla, commits suicide, unable to bear the depression following the break-up of her marriage. The plot gets all the more intricate as the events reach a climax when, during a fight, Rachel hits her husband, Arnold Baffin, with a poker, causing him to die. Her call

for help is answered by Pearson, who ends up being accused of the crime, is arrested, and spends his remaining days in prison.

These events, of course, are reminiscent of the plot of any romance novel where the characters, who are rather superficially presented, often find themselves in melodramatic and seemingly intricate situations. What is special about *The Black Prince*, however, is the way the novel simultaneously employs and subverts the conventional romance novel plot. For one thing a number of forewords and postscripts frame the melodramatic plot of the novel, preventing the reader from getting completely carried away by the story. Bradley Pearson's autobiographical narrative, which is titled, "The Black Prince: A Celebration of Love", is preceded first by a foreword written by P. A. Loxias, the fictional editor of the piece, and then by another foreword written by Pearson himself. These forewords, together with the editor's postscript at the end reveal that Pearson has eventually been able to overcome his writer's block in prison, writing this autobiographical work, which his fellow prisoner and friend, P. A. Loxias, has edited and published following Pearson's death in prison. Such a frame, of course, introduces a metafictional dimension to the romance-novel-like plot of Pearson's narrative, breaking the illusion of reality and turning the piece into a parody. Pearson's own foreword, for instance, directly begins with metafictional remarks serving to remind the reader of the constructed nature of the story that will follow:

> Although several years have now passed since the events recorded in this fable, I shall in telling it adopt the modern technique of narration, allowing the narrating consciousness to pass like a light along its series of present moments, aware of the past, unaware of what is to come. I shall, that is, inhabit my past self and, for the ordinary purposes of story-telling, speak only with the apprehensions of that time, a time in many ways so different from the present. So for example I shall say, 'I am fifty-eight years old', as I then was. And I shall judge people inadequately, perhaps even unjustly, as I then judged them, and not in the light of any later wisdom. That wisdom however, as I trust that I truly think it to be, will not be absent from the story (Murdoch 1975: 11).

This is one way, then, that Pearson draws attention to his own writing process, preventing the reader from treating what will follow only as a thrilling story where, engrossed in the narrative, one continually wonders what will happen next. Devices serving similar functions exist *within* Pearson's narrative, too. Throughout his narration Pearson fairly regularly interrupts the story-line in order to engage not only in lengthy evaluations of his own narrative but also in highly sophisticated philosophical commentary on concepts like art, life, truth, beauty, and love. Of course, such interruptions may be said to parody the romance novel plot by breaking the illusion of reality, but this is not their only parodic function. The highly explicit incongruity resulting from the juxtaposition of such sophisticated commentary with the relatively simple and superficial story-line makes an even more significant contribution to the parodic nature of Pearson's story.

Bradley Pearson's narrative is not followed by the editor's postscript only. All the essential characters in the narrative also provide postscripts, evaluating Pearson's account and voicing their own views on the course of events. Interestingly all these postscripts refute Pearson's account in one way or another, representing each writer's subjective point of view. The reader, of course, is baffled and no longer knows where the truth lies. Most disturbing, perhaps, is the powerful implication that Pearson's own account, too, is nothing but a subjective evaluation of events. These postscripts, then, raise significant questions about truth in general and the truth of Pearson's narrative in particular. Such questioning, which again verges on metafiction, inevitably subverts and parodies the romance novel convention where there is normally no room for questioning the reliability of the way events are presented to the reader.

*The Black Prince*, then, may be labelled as a parody of the romance novel genre. It would be incorrect, however, to suggest that the genre of the romance novel is the major target of this kind of parody in the novel. As the above discussion suggests, the parody here is inextricably intertwined with a strong vein of metafiction running through the novel. "Metafictional parody", therefore, may be a more suitable label for the kind of parody that pervades the novel. *The Black*

*Prince*, then, may be said to subordinate genre parody to its larger metafictional concerns, using it mainly as a tool to parody the discourse of realism in literature.

David Lodge's *Changing Places* (1975) is yet another novel that parodies literary-fictional discourse by employing genre parody closely intertwined with metafiction. The third chapter of *Changing Places* is titled, "Corresponding", and in keeping with this title, the novel suddenly changes form and remains epistolary for a whole chapter. Such an abrupt shift in form coupled with the often comic content of the letters that keep going back and forth between the characters turn this chapter into a parody of the epistolary novel genre. It is, however, essential to note that genre parody here is primarily a tool to serve the larger metafictional concerns of the novel. In his book, *The Art of Fiction*, David Lodge himself explains that in *Changing Places* he "... felt the need to provide some variety and surprise for the reader ... and accordingly wrote each chapter in a different style or format" (Lodge 1992: 227). Such a strategy, of course, breaks the illusion of reality for the reader, continually reminding him of the fictional and constructed nature of what he is reading. The more explicitly metafictional instances in the novel emphasize this point even further. In one of the letters Hilary sends to her husband Philip Swallow, who is away as visiting professor in an American university, she makes a reference to the book her husband has asked her to send to the States. The book is titled, *Let's Write a Novel*, and Philip needs it for the course he is expected to teach "in the writing of extended narrative" (Lodge 1978: 66). In the letter Hilary informs Philip that she has found the book he is asking for and comments on it at the same time: "Do you still want me to send on *Let's Write a Novel*? What a funny little book it is. There's a whole chapter on how to write an epistolary novel, but surely nobody's done that since the eighteenth century?" (Lodge 1978: 130). Laughter inevitably ensues, given especially that Hilary makes this remark in the epistolary chapter of the novel. Also the book in question (*Let's Write a Novel*) is itself an instance of self-reflexivity, and all these combine to create a very strong vein of comic and parodic metafiction in the novel.

Just like the epistolary chapter, the last chapter of *Changing Places*, too, presents an abrupt shift in the medium of presentation. This time the dramatic mode replaces the narrative, and the chapter turns into a screenplay where the major characters – Philip, Hilary, Morris, and Désirée – come together to decide about the future of their marriages. Of course, this chapter may again be regarded as a parody targeting the dramatic mode. The parody, however, is again subordinated to metafiction, in which this chapter abounds. Even the title is clearly metafictional: "Ending" – for a chapter which literally "ends" the novel. The conversation between the four characters also includes lots of metafictional instances. The conversation prompted by Hilary's question regarding what to do about the future is one such instance:

> HILARY: Shouldn't we have a serious talk? I mean, that's what we've come all this way for. What are we going to do? About the future.
> MORRIS: Let's consider the options. Coolly. (*prepares to light cigar*) First: we could return to our respective homes with our respective spouses.
> ...
> DESIREE: Next option.
> MORRIS: We could all get divorced and remarry each other. If you follow me.
> PHILIP: Where would we live ?
> MORRIS: I could take the Chair at Rummidge, settle down there. I guess you could get a job in Euphoria ...
> PHILIP: I'm not so sure.
> MORRIS: Or you could take Désirée to Rummidge, and I'd go back to Euphoria with Hilary.
>     HILARY rises to her feet.
>   Where are you going ?
> HILARY: I don't wish to listen to this childish conversation.
> PHILIP: What's wrong? You started it.
> HILARY: This is not what I meant by a serious talk. You sound like a couple of scriptwriters discussing how to wind up a play.
>                                                                     (Lodge 1978: 244-245)

And the chapter they are having this conversation in is indeed a "play" which needs to be wound up. It is, then, possible to regard this remark together with the characters' preceding conversation about possible "endings" as a reflection of the

author's own writing process – a process where he, too, is experiencing similar problems about "winding up" the plot. Indeed, this is such a difficult problem to solve for the author that he evades it through what he himself calls a "metafictional joke" (Lodge 1992: 229). The four characters' conversation is somehow directed towards the question of "endings", and especially Philip and Morris start a heated (and metafictional) discussion about how novels and films end. This discussion is stopped abruptly, *in medias res*, and this is the point where *Changing Places* ends, too:

> PHILIP: You remember that passage in *Northanger Abbey* where Jane Austen says she's afraid that her readers will have guessed that a happy ending is coming up at any moment.
> MORRIS: (*nods*) Quote, 'Seeing in the tell-tale compression of the pages before them that we are all hastening together to perfect felicity.' Unquote.
> PHILIP: That's it. Well, that's something the novelist can't help giving away, isn't it, that his book is shortly coming to an end? It may not be a happy ending, nowadays, but he can't disguise the tell-tale compression of the pages.
>     HILARY and DESIREE begin to listen to what PHILIP is saying, and he becomes the focal point of attention.
> I mean, mentally you brace yourself for the ending of a novel. As you're reading, you're aware of the fact that there's only a page or two left in the book, and you get ready to close it. But with a film there's no way of telling, especially nowadays, when films are much more loosely structured, much more ambivalent than they used to be. There's no way of telling which frame is going to be the last. The film is going along, just as life goes along, people are behaving, doing things, drinking, talking, and we're watching them, and at any point the director chooses, without any warning, without anything being resolved, or explained, or wound up, it can just ... end.
>     PHILIP shrugs. The camera stops, freezing him in mid-gesture.
>
> THE END
>
> (Lodge 1978: 251)

This, perhaps, is the most conspicuously metafictional instance in the novel. David Lodge cleverly ends the novel and the film script which makes up the last chapter through Philip's discussion of "endings" in novels and films. And this is

indeed a "metafictional joke" for the reader since, in keeping with his own argument about films, Philip's own talk ends abruptly at a point "... the director chooses, without any warning, without anything being resolved, or explained, or wound up ...".

This and all other metafictional devices in *Changing Places* may be said to comment both humorously and critically on the discourse of realism, which often works by making the reader forget about the constructed nature of the work he is reading. And genre parody is a significant tool the novel uses for this purpose. It may, then, be argued that genre parody in *Changing Places* does not consist solely in targeting a genre and making a critical comment about it. On the contrary, genre parody in this novel may be regarded as an essential component of a much larger project – the project of exposing and parodying traditional literary-fictional discourse which is firmly rooted in the conventions of realism.

Compared to *The Black Prince* and *Changing Places*, genre parody is even more conspicuously present in Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983). The novel as a whole is a parody of the fairy-tale genre. The first-person narrator sets the fairy-tale atmosphere right at the beginning where he introduces the story he is going to tell: "In the remote border town of Q. ... there once lived three lovely, and loving, sisters" (Rushdie 1995: 11). This atmosphere is reinforced throughout as the narrator insists on being non-specific about time and place. "Once upon a time" is a phrase he employs fairly regularly, and his occasional references to the time-span covered by his story are made using the Hegiran rather than the Gregorian calendar – a practice which disorientates especially the Western reader, who clearly represents the majority of the novel's reading public. Furthermore, the magical and intriguing atmosphere that often characterizes a fairy-tale also sets the tone of most parts of the story the narrator is engaged in telling. This kind of atmosphere is especially prevalent earlier in the story, where the narrator describes the events surrounding the birth of his "hero", Omar Khayyam Shakil. The story begins with the introduction of three sisters, who, in their secluded lives at home, have established a highly intimate relationship verging on eccentricity. Upon the death of their father, they make their only public appearance in many

years to come by giving a big party to which they invite especially the rich British population of the town. It is rumoured later on that Omar Khayyam has been conceived during this party, following which the sisters permanently shut themselves up in their mansion, having the "finest handyman" of town build for them a dumb-waiter containing "many terrible secrets" (Rushdie 1995: 17). This dumb-waiter constitutes their only link with the outside world and serves mainly as a shopping tray which – in accordance with written orders given in advance – regularly supplies any "goods and services" necessary for daily life (Rushdie 1995: 18). It is in this strangely secluded house that one of the sisters gives birth to Omar Khayyam. Right from the beginning, however, all three sisters act as his biological mother, making the identity of the father as well as the real mother their biggest secret. Khayyam is raised in such a secretive and eccentric house, whose aura of mystery pervades the whole story, hence contributing greatly to the fairy-tale convention of creating a magical atmosphere.

In the story yet another event that appears endowed with mystery and magic is the continual pregnancy of Raza Hyder's younger daughter, Begum Naveed. Nothing appears extraordinary when Naveed gives birth to twins in the first year of her marriage. Her giving birth to triplets in the second year challenges the boundaries of credibility to a certain extent. The birth of "a beautiful quartet of baby girls" in the third year, however, clearly introduces a supernatural element to the story (Rushdie 1995: 206). Naveed continues giving birth annually to an increasing number of babies – a situation which goes on until her seventh pregnancy, during which she commits suicide, unable to bear "... the arithmetical progression of babies marching out of her womb" (Rushdie 1995: 228). This magical atmosphere surrounding Naveed's continual pregnancy may be said to reinforce the fairy-tale aspect of the narrator's story. The same event, however, may also be said to subvert the conventions of the fairy-tale genre. Naveed's bitterly disturbing suicide is definitely not the kind of "happy-ending" that is expected of a classical fairy-tale, and it is mainly this aspect of Naveed's story that makes it a parody rather than a seriously faithful imitation of a fairy-tale.

In *Shame* the narrator's use of phrases like "once" or "once upon a time" creates a similar effect of simultaneously reinforcing and parodying fairy-tale conventions. Throughout, the fairly regular repetition of such phrases continually reminds the reader of the fairy-tale quality of the story he is reading. The use of these phrases in sentences like the following, however, reminds the reader at the same time that this is no regular fairy-tale:

> And once upon a time there was a retarded daughter, who for twelve years had been given to understand that she embodied her mother's shame (Rushdie 1995: 135).
>
> There was once a wife, whose husband injected her with knock-out drugs twice daily (Rushdie 1995: 242).

The disturbing atmosphere created through sentences like these is, of course, highly contradictory to the sanguine spirit that often accompanies fairy-tales. No beautiful princess is introduced following the well-known "once upon a time" phrase. The narrator, therefore, subverts a fundamental fairy-tale convention, making yet another contribution to the parody that pervades the whole of his story.

The characters and plot of this story are still other factors serving to parody the fairy-tale genre. Although the narrator claims to have a hero (Omar Khayyam Shakil) for his story, the events do not always revolve around this single character, whose personality and achievements, after all, appear to be mostly those of an "anti-hero". The "heroine" – Sufiya Zinobia – that the "hero" – Omar Khayyam – gets married to is not much different, either. She is a retarded and disliked daughter, an embodiment of shame, aggression, and beastliness, and underlying all this, a victimized girl whose life-story does not have a happy ending. The plot that surrounds these as well as many other characters in the story also deviates significantly from the conventional plot-pattern of the fairy-tale genre. For one thing, the misfortunes and adventures of none of the characters culminate in happy endings. Moreover, the complex and intricate plot of *Shame*

goes far beyond that of a fairy-tale, touching widely on social, political, and religious issues, which would normally have no place in a classical fairy-tale plot.

These aspects of the novel all play a significant role in parodying the fairy-tale genre. It should be remembered, however, that all these devices are employed within the novel's highly metafictional context, which probably makes the biggest contribution to the parodic atmosphere pervading the novel. The dominant metafictional qualities of *Shame* are revealed quite early in the narrative where the first-person narrator uses various strategies to remind the reader continually of the fictional and constructed nature of the story he is telling. While commenting on the setting he has chosen, for example, he explicitly refers to the fictionality not only of his story but also of himself as narrator in this novel: "The country in this story is not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same space. My story, my fictional country exist [*sic.*], like myself, at a slight angle to reality" (Rushdie 1995: 29). And at several instances he even makes metafictional references to the generic status of the story he is telling. His ironic argument about the impossibility of offending anybody through a fairy-tale is one such instance:

> ... if I had been writing [a realistic novel] ... it would have done me no good to protest that I was writing universally, not only about Pakistan. The book would have been banned, dumped in the rubbish bin, burned. All that effort for nothing! Realism can break a writer's heart.
> Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairy-tale, so that's all right; nobody need get upset, or take anything I say too seriously. No drastic action need be taken, either.
> What a relief! (Rushdie 1995: 70).

Unlike classical fairy-tales, however, the narrator of this one lacks full omniscience, admitting that he is "... obliged to leave many questions [in the story] in a state of unanswered ambiguity ..." (Rushdie 1995: 18). He is even uncertain about his ability to fully understand and evaluate his hero, Omar Khayyam Shakil. The way he ends the first chapter, where he has newly introduced his hero, is indicative of this: "Dizzy, peripheral, inverted, infatuated,

insomniac, stargazing, fat: what manner of hero is this?" (Rushdie 1995: 25). Much later in the novel the narrator asks the same question once again, telling the reader at the same time how much he is disturbed by his own lack of omniscience. He is, this time, unable to evaluate the motives of his hero in wanting to marry Raza Hyder's retarded daughter, Sufiya Zinobia:

> You can imagine how depressed I am by the behaviour of Omar Khayyam Shakil. I ask for the second time: what kind of hero is this? Last seen slipping into unconsciousness, stinking of vomit and swearing revenge; and now, going crazy for Hyder's daughter. How is one to account for such a character? Is consistency too much to ask? I accuse this so-called hero of giving me the most Godawful headache (Rushdie 1995: 142).

This self-conscious narrator's lack of omniscience concerning especially the hero he himself has created clearly contributes to parodying the fairy-tale genre, where the story-teller should normally appear all-knowing and in full control of his plot and characters. More importantly, however, such a metafictional device serves to parody conventional literary-fictional discourse, where the humorous foregrounding of the process and problems of narration is not a commonly admissible activity.

In *Shame* the narrator's insistent reference to the fictional status of his story and to his own lack of omniscience is not the only way this kind of foregrounding is achieved. A similar function is also served by the narrator's often humorous and sometimes ironic commentary about the rules of writing in general and his own writing process in particular. His description of how Omar Khayyam becomes an insomniac very early in life provides a good example:

> So it was in those half-formed years that Omar Khayyam took the never-to-be-reversed decision to cut down on his sleeping time, a lifelong endeavour which had brought him, by the end, by the time his wife went up in smoke – but no, ends must not be permitted to precede beginnings and middles, even if recent scientific experiments have shown us that within certain types of closed system, under intense pressure, time can be persuaded to run backwards, so that effects precede their causes. This is precisely

137

the sort of unhelpful advance of which story-tellers must take no notice whatsoever; that way madness lies! – to the point at which a mere forty minutes a night, the famous forty winks, sufficed to refresh him (Rushdie 1995: 22).

It is at the expense of deviating and confusing the reader that the narrator inserts this long metafictional remark in the middle of his sentence. The remark, however, turns into an instance of irony since the narrator contradicts his argument for writing in chronological order even in this sentence where he formulates it for the first time. The rest of his narrative is also characterized by constant shifts back and forth in time – shifts which he sometimes signals self-consciously in sentences like, "Back goes the clock once again" (Rushdie 1995: 231), hence contributing to the metafictional parody pervading the whole novel.

In *Shame* the explicit allusions the narrator occasionally makes to well-known fairy-tales constitute yet another instance of metafictionality closely intertwined with the parody of the fairy-tale genre. The first of these allusions is to "Beauty and the Beast", which the narrator cites in relation to the retarded Sufiya Zinobia's split personality. This aspect of the girl becomes clear for the first time when, one night, she commits a most violent act of tearing off the heads of the two hundred and eighteen turkeys that Pinkie Aurangzeb, the widow of the late Marshal Aurangzeb, is raising in the neighbourhood. Everybody is shocked, unable to understand how such strength and violence can issue from an otherwise harmless twelve-year-old girl. It is here that the narrator interferes and accounts for Sufiya's personality by alluding to the well-known fairy-tale: "The beast inside the beauty. Opposing elements of a fairy-tale combined in a single character" (Rushdie 1995: 139). Such a remark, which verges on literary criticism, again draws attention to the narrator's self-conscious way of telling his tale. This tendency of the narrator to analyze and interpret his own story, trying to relate it to other fairy-tales continues as he traces Sufiya Zinobia to adulthood. Sufiya retains her split personality, getting more and more dangerous in time, and directing her violence no longer to animals but to human beings. Upon realizing that his daughter is responsible for the serial murders happening in town, Raza

Hyder asks Omar Khayyam, Sufiya's husband, to inject her with a deadly drug. Khayyam is unable to carry out this request, but he makes sure that Sufiya sleeps permanently by administering daily injections to her. The narrator again interferes here, alluding this time to another well-known fairy-tale:

> ... twice in every twenty-four hours, Omar Khayyam would go unobserved into that darkened room, that echo of other death cells, to inject into the tiny body lying on its thin carpet the fluids of nourishment and of unconsciousness, to administer the drugs that turned her [Sufiya] from one fairy-tale into another, into sleeping-beauty instead of beauty-and-beast (Rushdie 1995: 237).

The allusion this time is to "Sleeping Beauty". And once more the narrator engages in a parodic evaluation of his own story at the same time as he is writing it – an activity which again emphasizes the metafictional qualities of *Shame*.

Text parody is also a part of this kind of allusive commentary in the novel. Fairy-tales like "Beauty and the Beast" and "Sleeping Beauty" are parodied through the narrator's ironic comparison of these with his own story. As the above discussion suggests, however, this kind of parody, too, is primarily metafictional. It is, therefore, initially directed *not* at these fairy-tales themselves *but* at conventional literary discourse, which normally does not expose the intertextual and constructed nature of a work of literature. The parodic allusions in *Shame*, however, serve exactly this purpose, exposing the fictional and intertextual nature of not only the narrator's story but also the fairy-tales alluded to.

Other instances of text parody can also be found in the novel, especially in that part of the story where the narrator describes the life of Rani, Iskander Harappa's wife, under house-arrest following the military coup that ends Harappa's rule and puts him in prison. Embroidering shawls becomes a major pastime of Rani during this six-year-long period, the first two of which are spent waiting for her husband, Iskander, to come out of prison. This, of course, is rather reminiscent of the mythological story of Penelope, who faithfully waits for her husband, Odysseus to come back from Troy, weaving a shroud in the meantime and keeping her suitors away by arguing that she cannot marry until the shroud is

complete. Rani's case, however, seriously subverts and therefore parodies the myth. She is no faithful and loving wife, and neither are the shawls she embroiders a sign of her wish and determination to be reunited with her husband. They become, instead, a sign of her hatred as she embroiders them with scenes depicting all the negative sides of Iskander Harappa ranging from cheating and adultery to torture and tyranny. And their story does not end happily, either. Iskander, who is far from being a faithful husband like Odysseus, cannot come back home, but is executed following his two years in prison.

Rani's story may also be considered parodic of "Minerva and Arachne" – yet another mythological story told by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*. The narrator's long and detailed description of Rani's embroidery inevitably brings to mind Ovid's similar description of Arachne's tapestry, which she weaves during the weaving contest that Minerva, the weaver goddess, challenges her to. On her tapestry Arachne prefers to depict mainly the amorous trickery of the gods – a preference not unlike Rani's choice of depicting the negative qualities of her husband, the once-godlike dictator, Iskander Harappa. Arachne's story is also subtly echoed in the way Rani persuades her chief warder, Captain Ijazz, to supply her with needles and thread for embroidery. She counters Ijazz's tendency to "deny her needles and thread" by sarcastically reminding him that she has no intention of committing suicide: "'Don't think I'm going to stab myself on account of you, boy …. Or what do you suppose? Will I hang myself, perhaps, by a noose of embroidery wool?'" (Rushdie 1995: 191). Of course, the implicit allusion here is to the ending of the mythological story, where Arache, indignant at the jealous Minerva for tearing her faultlessly weaved tapestry to pieces, makes a noose and hangs herself before the goddess' very eyes.

In the novel the narrator ends his meticulous description of Rani's embroidery, which is clearly parodic of Arachne's story, with the following remark:

> ... but now that all eighteen shawls have been spread out and admired, it is time to turn away from Harappas, from Rani and Arjumand [the daughter] sequestered in that house whose decay

had reached the point at which the water trickled blood-red from rust-corroded taps. Time to turn back the clock, so that Iskander rises from the grave, but recedes, as well, into the background of the tale. Other people have been living lives while Harappas rose and fell (Rushdie 1995: 196).

This metafictional remark serves primarily to draw the reader's attention away from the highly engaging description of Rani's shawls and remind him once again of the constructed nature of the story he is reading. The writing process is foregrounded as the narrator self-consciously signals the time-shift that will follow. Especially the reference to the executed Iskander's resurrection through the shift back in time serves to break the illusion of reality, emphasizing once again that Iskander and all others are merely fictional characters at the narrator's beck and call. Through these words of the narrator, then, text parody, which is already situated within the self-reflexive context of the novel, is even further subordinated to metafiction. Once more text parody emerges as a useful device reinforcing the metafictional parody that runs through the novel.

In *Shame* the events surrounding the adult years of Sufiya Zinobia, Raza Hyder's retarded daughter, constitute yet another instance of text parody. This time the implicit allusion is to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, and a parodic parallel is subtly drawn between Sufiya Zinobia and Mr. Rochester's mad wife, Bertha. The well-known motif of "the madwoman in the attic" is successfully evoked through the narrator's description of the way Raza Hyder and Omar Khayyam keep Sufiya Zinobia from committing any more violent murders. Secretly kept in an attic room and injected daily with sleeping drugs by her husband, Sufiya's case definitely echoes that of Bertha in *Jane Eyre*. The narrator also appears keen on drawing the reader's attention to this similarity. This becomes obvious especially in the way he describes how Hyder and Khayyam first carry Sufiya to the attic:

> There was an attic room. (It was a house designed by Angrez [British] architects.) At night, when the servants were asleep, Raza Hyder and Omar Khayyam carried the drugged form of Sufiya Zinobia up attic stairs. It is even possible (difficult to see in the dark) that they wrapped her in a carpet (Rushdie 1995: 236).

141

The emphasis here on the "attic room" and the "Angrez architects" is probably not a coincidence. The parody is established thus, and it is strengthened further through the later beastly portrayal of Sufiya ("on all fours, naked, coated in mud and blood and shit" [Rushdie 1995: 286]), which again echoes the way Bertha is depicted in *Jane Eyre*. It should be noticed here, too, that the narrator's description carries metafictional traces, especially in the way he refers to his own lack of omniscience ("difficult to see in the dark"). A paragraph later the way he self-consciously compares Sufiya's story with well-known fairy tales reinforces the metafictionality of the piece.[44] Once again text parody in the novel serves larger metafictional purposes and contributes to the larger parody targeting literary-fictional discourse.

In a fashion similar to *Shame*, Julian Barnes' *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984) also employs genre parody together with the parody of specific works and authors, and uses these primarily for metafictional purposes. The whole novel is a rather humorous and unconventional biography of the well-known 19th century novelist, Gustave Flaubert. Of course this larger parody abounds in references to and excerpts from the works and letters of Flaubert as well as those of his friends and acquaintances. Situated within the parodic context of the novel, these excerpts, too, assume parodic qualities. This is the way the novel accommodates genre parody together with parodies of specific works and authors.

In defining biography Cuddon explains that "Almost any form of material is germane to the biographer's purpose: the subject's own writings (especially diaries and letters), his laundry bills, official archives, memoirs of contemporaries, the memoirs of living witnesses, personal knowledge, other books on the subject, photographs and paintings" (Cuddon 1992: 89-90). In *Flaubert's Parrot* Geoffrey Braithwaite also makes use of many of these resources while presenting his account of the life and work of Gustave Flaubert. At the outset, therefore, Braithwaite's version may look like any conventional biography. It does not take long, however, to realize that Braithwaite's way of presenting his topic deviates

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[44] Pages 138-139 may be referred to for further discussion of these self-conscious comparisons.

significantly from the norms of the biography genre. For one thing Braithwaite quotes widely from Flaubert and his contemporaries, but he does not appear concerned about validating these quotations by making sure that they are always accompanied by accurate bibliographical information. The result, of course, is a notable number of excerpts whose original sources are impossible to know and whose authenticity are therefore questionable. No wonder, then, that full credulity is impossible to achieve while reading Braithwaite's biography of Flaubert. On the contrary, the reader constantly feels the need to be on the lookout for any inaccurate information or misrepresentation – an attitude that sharply differentiates him from the reader of a conventional biography.

In the novel Braithwaite's Flaubert chronology especially abounds in such quotations without bibliographical references. Indeed, this section is another significant manifestation of the way the novel subverts the conventions of the biography genre. Perhaps the most striking aspect of this chronology is that it is made up of three different versions. The first one appears the most regular, beginning with Flaubert's birth, ending with his death, and listing significant events in between. Even this, however, cannot be considered a conventional chronology mainly because of Braithwaite's subjective and often humorous interference throughout. The entry below informing the reader of the year Flaubert made the acquaintance of Louise Colet is one such example among many:

> 1846   Meets Louise Colet, 'the Muse', and begins his most celebrated affair: a prolonged, passionate, fighting two-parter (1846-8, 1851-4). Though ill-matched in temperament and incompatible in aesthetics, Gustave and Louise nevertheless last together far longer than most would have predicted. Should we regret the end of the affair? Only because it means the end of Gustave's resplendent letters to her.
>
> (Barnes 1985: 25)

The second version of the chronology again lists events roughly from the beginning of Flaubert's life to the end, but this time the events included are those related only to deaths, diseases, and failures. Of course, this kind of selection is

143

arbitrary on Braithwaite's part, and it is again a significant deviation from the way events are normally arranged in a chronology. The third version is even more subversive, listing a number of statements supposedly made by Flaubert on a variety of issues. Their authenticity can never be verified, of course, given the complete absence of bibliographical information. Braithwaite's three-version chronology, then, is another reflection of the unconventional style he adopts in writing his account of Flaubert's life and work. The subversive elements coupled with the playful atmosphere created throughout contribute greatly to turning this piece into a parody of the biography genre.

Braithwaite's biography of Flaubert is parodic in several other aspects, too. In a chapter titled, "The Flaubert Apocrypha" Braithwaite attempts to give an account of the books Flaubert could have written, but did not write, and also of the different lives he could have led, but did not lead. To him this is a very significant undertaking, and in a way that defies the convention of writing *only* about what has been lived, he argues: "It is not just the life that we know. It is not just the life that has been successfully hidden. It is not just the lies about the life, some of which cannot now be disbelieved. It is also the life that was not led" (Barnes 1985: 121). Having provided this justification, he goes on to list the lives Flaubert did not lead in the playful manner that characterizes his whole account:

> At seventeen, he [Flaubert] announces that he wants to spend his whole life in a ruined castle by the sea.
> At eighteen, he decides that some freakish wind must have mistakenly transplanted him to France: he was born, he declares, to be Emperor of Cochin-China, to smoke 36-fathom pipes, to have 6,000 wives and 1,400 catamites ....
> At nineteen, he thinks that after he's finished his legal studies he'll go off and become a Turk in Turkey, or a muleteer in Spain, or a cameleer in Egypt.
> At twenty, he still wants to become muleteer, though by now the Spanish location has been narrowed to that of Andalusia ....
>
> (Barnes 1985: 122)

144

And the list goes on for several pages, again serving to parody the genre of biography where naturally the biographer is interested solely in the life his subject has lived.

Braithwaite's biography includes frequent shifts in the medium of presentation, and this is yet another element serving to parody the genre of biography. Braithwaite's relatively conventional first person account in Chapter 1 suddenly turns into an odd chronology in Chapter 2. The conventional narrative is resumed in Chapter 3, only to be interrupted by Chapter 4 titled, "The Flaubert Bestiary" – a chapter inspired by and parodic of the medieval bestiary genre, "... in which the behaviour of animals (used as symbolic types) points a moral" (Cuddon 1992: 86).[45] Later on another chapter appears in an examination paper format while yet another is in the form of a dictionary, also parodying Flaubert's work of satire, *Le dictionnaire des idées reçues*. Still another chapter abruptly shifts the narrative perspective, providing an account of events from the point of view of Louise Colet, the poetess who had a rather long relationship with Flaubert. All these, of course, turn the novel (and Braithwaite's biography) into a pot-pourri of different forms and styles. Encountering a different medium of presentation almost in every chapter, the reader is prevented from taking the story of Flaubert's life seriously and getting carried away by it. In other words, the reader too, learns to approach Braithwaite's account *not* as a serious biography *but* as a playful parody.

Among the devices that serve to parody the biography genre in *Flaubert's Parrot* perhaps the most effective is the way Braithwaite frequently tends to turn his Flaubert biography into an autobiography. He never hesitates to interrupt his account of Flaubert's life in order to squeeze in some detail about his own life. In fact, as the novel progresses, the reader gets to realize that a significant motive of Braithwaite in writing a Flaubert biography is his urgent need to come to terms with his own life story and especially with his wife's suicide. In a way, his preoccupation with Flaubert's biography allows him to delay confrontation with

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[45] Page 88 may be referred to for further discussion of how this genre is put to use and parodied in the novel.

the troubling facts of his own life. Once he even hints at this himself: "Books are not life, however much we might prefer it if they were. Ellen's [my wife's] is a true story; perhaps it is even the reason why I am telling you Flaubert's story instead" (Barnes 1985: 86). Braithwaite's account, then, is an interesting combination of biography and autobiography, and it may be said to parody both genres at the same time.

It is essential to note that there runs a strong vein of self-reflexivity in *Flaubert's Parrot*, and all these instances of text or genre parody in the novel contribute significantly to this. Right from the beginning Braithwaite's parodic biography is endowed with metafictional characteristics. References not only to Braithwaite's research and writing process but also to his own life abound, preventing the reader from getting carried away by Flaubert's life story. Moreover, it is Braithwaite himself who continually reminds the reader of the constructed nature of his account. Addressing the reader through metafictional remarks like the following is not an uncommon strategy Braithwaite employs: "Do you know the colour of Flaubert's eyes? No, you don't: for the simple reason that I suppressed it a few pages ago" (Barnes 1985: 95). The account he gives of his own life is similarly laden with metafictional qualities. Sadly admitting, for example, that he will never be able to understand his wife's motives for suicide, he says: "I have to hypothesise a little. I have to fictionalize .… We [my wife and I] never talked about her secret life. So I have to invent my way to the truth" (Barnes 1985: 165).

The continual shifts in the medium of presentation discussed above are also significant tools serving the metafictional concerns of the novel. A different form or style encountered almost in every chapter inevitably and insistently draws the reader's attention to the constructed nature of the novel in general and of each chapter in particular. Braithwaite's common habit of signalling this shift in medium strengthens the metafiction even further. Commenting on Flaubert's *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, for instance, he expresses his idea of writing a similar dictionary himself: "Flaubert's Dictionary offers a course in irony: from entry to entry, you can see him applying it in various thicknesses .… It tempts me

to write a Dictionary of Accepted Ideas about Gustave himself" (Barnes 1985: 87). And a few chapters later the reader sees that this project has come to life: Chapter 12 is titled, "Braithwaite's Dictionary of Accepted Ideas", and all of it is a parodic dictionary written by Braithwaite himself in a manner that humorously imitates Flaubert's *Dictionnaire*. In a similar vein, while discussing Flaubert's relationship with Louise Colet, Braithwaite is struck by the idea of presenting her side of this love affair: "I think she [Louise Colet] was a pest; she sounds like a pest; though admittedly we hear only Gustave's side of the story. Perhaps someone should write her account: yes, why not reconstruct Louise Colet's Version ? I might do that. Yes, I will ... (Barnes 1985: 135). And as expected, the following chapter titled, "Louise Colet's Version" provides a first-person account of events told from Colet's perspective.

All such metafictional devices, then, are closely intertwined with the parodic vein that runs through *Flaubert's Parrot*. It is, therefore, possible to argue that the larger parody of the biography genre together with the smaller genre and text parodies (such as those targeting the bestiary genre and the writings of Flaubert and his contemporaries) are primarily there *not* to make a critical remark about their immediate targets *but* to further emphasize the metafictional concerns of the novel. And these are concerns that occupy a very significant place in *Flaubert's Parrot*, which continually raises serious questions about art and representation after the fashion of many other postmodern novels. All this further suggests that in the novel what initially appears as parody directed solely at genres or texts is actually metafictional parody, i.e. parody targeting the discourse of literary realism, which constitutes the basis of most conventional literature by creating the complacent illusion of a one-to-one correspondence between art and life.

A widely parodied genre in postmodern fiction is the detective novel, and Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor* (1985) is an apt representation of this kind. Here, too, of course, genre parody is subordinated to the larger metafictional aims of the novel. A significant part of the plot concerns detective Nicholas Hawksmoor's investigations of a series of mysterious murders happening around a number of

London churches built during the eighteenth century. Hawksmoor initially appears as quite a typical detective reminiscent of earlier well-known examples such as Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, or Nat Pinkerton. He is "... a tall man wearing a dark coat, despite the summer heat ..." (Ackroyd 1993: 119), and his experience accumulated over the years has made him quite an expert in his subject:

> Hawksmoor could have produced a survey of the area between the two churches of Wapping and Limehouse, and given at the same time a precise account of the crimes which each quarter harboured. This had been the district of the CID to which he had been attached for some years, before he was assigned to the Murder Squad, and he had come to know it well: he knew where the thieves lived, where the prostitutes gathered, and where the vagrants came. He grew to understand that most criminals tend to remain in the same districts, continuing with their activities until they were arrested ... even murderers, who rapidly became Hawksmoor's speciality, rarely moved from the same spot but killed again and again until they were discovered (Ackroyd 1993: 115-116).

It does not take long, however, to realize that Hawksmoor is not as typical a detective as he initially appears. Metafictional devices are quick to intrude, turning Hawksmoor and his investigation into a parody. The following scene where Hawksmoor enters his flat and surveys the room, suspecting imminent danger provides a good example:

> He turned round with a start, thinking he had seen a sudden movement in a corner of the room. There was a convex mirror propped there (it was of the type generally used in shops to deter thieves), and he lifted it up to see if anything had crawled behind it; but there was nothing. He carried the mirror into the centre of the room, and the dust from its edges came off on his fingers; then he held it up against the light of the window and, although he tried to gaze calmly at the reflection, *his calmness was broken by the sight of his face staring distended out of the frame with the world itself curved around it. And he could see the same person he had always been – the character which does not age but which remains cautious and watchful, and which stares out with the same intensity* (Ackroyd 1993: 119-120, my emphasis).

As the italicized sections suggest, an unexpected anticlimax follows the suspense created through Hawksmoor's suspicion of "a sudden movement in a corner of the room." Seeing his image in the mirror, Hawksmoor forgets about the possibility of danger and engages instead in a metafictional contemplation of his face. His self-conscious remark that he is "the character which does not age, but remains cautious and watchful" breaks the illusion of reality by laying bare a fundamental convention of the detective novel genre. Having been forcefully reminded that Hawksmoor and his story are mere fictional constructs, the reader can no longer take them as seriously as before. Hawksmoor occasionally makes similar self-conscious remarks as he proceeds in his investigation, preventing the reader from getting too much carried away by the story. Reader expectations are upset even further when, towards the end, the novel takes a rather different turn and Hawksmoor fails to solve the mysterious murders that he set out so confidently to investigate. All these gradually make it clear that this is not a classical detective story but a parody of one.

Detective fiction is not the only object of genre parody in *Hawksmoor*. The novel may also be said to include a parody of Restoration comedy. In the novel, architect Nicholas Dyer is the first-person narrator of the chapters set in the eighteenth century. Dyer's narration continues in quite a normal fashion until, in order to describe a scene in the tavern, he abruptly changes the medium of presentation from narrative to drama. He even provides a list of the *Dramatis Personae*, turning himself, too, into a character in the play:

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

John Vannbrugghe: An Architect in Fashion
Nicholas Dyer: A Nothing, a Neighbour
Sir Philip Bareface: A Courtier
Moneytrap: A Jobber
Various Gentlemen of the Town, Rakes, Bullies and Servants

(Ackroyd 1993: 174-175)

The several pages that follow take the form of a play enacted by these characters. And this play is devised in the fashion of a Restoration comedy, where the characters are often "… gallants, ladies and gentlemen of fashion and rank, fops, rakes, social climbers and country bumpkins" (Cuddon 1992: 789). Dyer's *Dramatis Personae* also includes this kind of social representation, and his use of names like "Bareface" and "Moneytrap" – names which give away personal qualities – reinforces the resemblance of his play to a Restoration comedy. Witty language and jokes amounting to licentiousness can also be found, especially in the conversation that the rakes and gentlemen engage in in the tavern.

The abrupt shift in the medium of presentation and the incongruous positioning of this "play" within Dyer's narrative have a significant role in turning this section into a parody of Restoration comedy. Various other metafictional devices contribute to the parody, too. Most of the "play" is made up of Dyer's literary-critical discussion with Vannbrugghe[46] – a discussion which self-consciously touches on the state of contemporary drama. Furthermore, the transformation of the real historical figure, Sir John Vanbrugh – well-known Restoration dramatist and architect – into a fictional character in a play he himself could have written strengthens the parodic metafictionality of the whole piece. The ending of the play is similarly self-reflexive. As Dyer exits, only the cleaning-boy of the tavern is left on stage, and he calls out after Dyer: "What, no Epilogue?" (Ackroyd 1993: 181). This is where the play ends and Dyer shifts back to the narrative medium. His answer to the boy, therefore, becomes part of his resumed first-person narrative: "No, and there will be none, for this play is follow'd by a Masquerade" (Ackroyd 1993: 181). It is, then, mainly through such metafictional devices that Restoration comedy is parodied in the novel.

This discussion clearly illustrates that genre parody is rather frequently employed throughout *Hawksmoor*. The novel, however, appears to accommodate this parodic kind *not* to make a critical comment on a specific genre (such as detective fiction or Restoration comedy) *but* to expose and undermine the literary

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[46] Pages 102-104 may be referred to for an illustration and further discussion of this section in the novel.

discourse that such genres depend upon for their existence. Often this is the discourse of realism, which can best be parodied and undermined through metafictional devices. One such device is genre parody, which can easily break the illusion of reality by exposing the conventions through which a work of literature is constructed. The scenes in *Hawksmoor* which are clearly parodic of the detective novel genre, then, often serve larger metafictional purposes, preventing the reader from getting too much engrossed in the illusory reality of the story. The parody of Restoration drama, too, creates a similar effect, baffling the reader by interrupting the regular flow of the narrative and exposing the whole story as a fictional construct.

By serving larger metafictional purposes, genre parodies like these also serve a larger aim of parodying traditional literary discourse. Through the parody of detective fiction, *Hawksmoor* may be said to engage in a critical imitation of a basic convention of literary-fictional discourse – that of creating an illusion of reality for the reader. Similarly, the parody of Restoration drama may be said to imitate with a distance another significant literary convention – the convention which dictates that a literary work should consistently employ a single medium of presentation. Genre parody in *Hawksmoor*, then, may be considered a significant tool through which the essentials of literary-fictional discourse are parodied and undermined.

All the novels analyzed above, then, parody conventional literary-fictional discourse by employing metafictional devices mostly appearing in the form of genre and/or text parody. In this sense, all these novels may be considered representative of the postmodern discontent with traditional modes of representation, which remain inadequate in the face of contemporary ways of perceiving the world. Parody challenges "… the seamless quality of the history/fiction (or world/art) join implied by realist narrative …" (Hutcheon 1991b: 53), and exposes literary-fictional discourse as yet another construct that can be undermined through "metafictional deconstruction" (Waugh 1984: 9). Of course, this process never fully eliminates the discourse of realism in literature. Like all other discourses, realistic discourse, too, remains as a well-known mode

of representation. The reader, however, can no longer approach this representational mode with the naïve complacency that characterized his earlier readings. Through parodic undermining the reader is now aware that he is faced with yet another discursive construct whose relationship to "truth" and "reality" is highly questionable.

# CHAPTER 4

## CONCLUSION

Parody is as old as antiquity. It has emerged almost simultaneously with the appearance of "serious" literature, and has continued its existence since then. English Literature, too, has seen the production of parody since very early times. From the Middle Ages on, parody has occupied a place in the literature of Britain – a place which has sometimes been more and sometimes less pronounced and significant. And throughout its long historical existence parody has shown its potential to be so diverse as to elude not only definition but also a comprehensive account of its aims and functions.

This study has attempted to describe this diversity by classifying parody under three major kinds and looking into the literary, cultural, social, and ideological factors that have determined the prevalence of different kinds of parody at different literary-historical periods in Britain. It has been argued, for instance, that it was especially parody directed at sacred texts that characterized the Latin parodic literature of the Middle Ages – a phenomenon that can best be explained through the emphasis on religion and the pervasiveness of religious texts during the time. Similarly, the prevalence of parody directed especially at classical texts during the Renaissance has been accounted for through the heightened Renaissance interest in the art and culture of antiquity. Moreover, the fairly widespread use of genre parody during the period has been linked both to the Renaissance concern with models and conventions and to the Renaissance spirit of creating a new literature out of the old. Similar to the Renaissance, the neoclassical interest in the literature of ancient Greece and Rome has been suggested as a reason for the proliferation of parodies directed at classical texts during this period. Furthermore, the pervasive use of all kinds of parody during the neoclassical period has been linked to the period's preoccupation with satire – a consequence not only of the neoclassical emphasis on the strict observance of

rules in all realms of life but also of the social and political turmoil surrounding the Restoration and its aftermath. Parody in the nineteenth century has similarly been analyzed. The heightened Romantic interest in the individuality of the author, for example, has been held responsible for the proliferation of text parody directed at the work especially of those poets well-known for their idiosyncratic styles. The widespread use of text parody in this period has also been linked to the Romantic tendency towards social and political satire – probably a consequence of both the French Revolution and the political unease of the Regency period. The need to satirize has again been considered the primary factor in the pervasive use of discourse parody in the Victorian comic novel. The comic and satiric novels of the first half of the twentieth century have received similar treatment, their use of discourse parody being related to the intention to criticize not only social and moral decadence but also extreme political commitments. During this period the prevalence of text parody, too, has been accounted for mainly through the literary avant-garde introduced by modernist writers.

All these different cases have demonstrated once again that parody as a literary form is impossible to contain in a single comprehensive definition. This is perhaps most evident in the fact that even the same parodic kinds employed throughout history exhibit widely differing aims, intentions, functions, and attitudes. The same diversity also applies to parody in the postmodern age. Here, too, parody, which is much more pervasively and conspicuously employed compared to earlier periods, may exhibit a wide variety of aims, functions, and attitudes. Examples of postmodern parody, however, are united in one significant respect. As this study contends, they are all different manifestations of the same parodic kind, which is discourse parody. To put it in other words, this study has attempted to demonstrate that postmodern parody is primarily discourse parody – a phenomenon that can be accounted for through the characteristics of postmodernism in general and poststructuralism in particular.

As this study argues, parodies directed neither at texts and personal styles nor at genres make much sense within the context of postmodern thought. A major poststructuralist tenet which invalidates the significance of these parodic

kinds is the theory of the text, which rejects the notion of a single, autonomous work defined by well-drawn boundaries. It proposes instead that each work is a "text" that "overflows" into other texts and enters into endless intertextual relations with them. Such a theory also plays a significant role in blurring the boundaries between literary genres – a phenomenon that can also be observed in postmodern fiction where genre-mixing is a fairly common activity. Mikhail M. Bakhtin's theory about the novelization of genres also has similar implications. To him, the novel's increased prevalence as well as its extraordinary potential to accommodate other genres create a literary atmosphere where these other genres, too, are forced to become like the novel, becoming much more flexible forms open to interaction with others.

These theories make it quite clear that parody directed at individual works and genres cannot be meaningful within a literary atmosphere characterized by postmodernism. The parody of a work makes sense only if the work is an autonomous, clearly demarcated whole. Similarly, genre parody assumes full meaning when the targeted genre is a closed system with well-defined boundaries. When these boundaries are dissolved, parodying that genre becomes a rather futile and pointless activity.

Similar implications also exist for parodies of personal styles. The theory of the text rules out the idea of an autonomous author with a unique, peculiar, and original style. This is also reinforced by poststructuralist theories of subjectivity, where the notion of the individual is replaced by the "subject" – an often de-centred and disintegrated entity no longer endowed with qualities like uniqueness, stability, and originality. Such a conception of the author does not leave much room for parodying personal styles. This kind of parody makes sense only if the author is regarded as an autonomous individual whose unique and original style always leaves a lasting imprint on the work of art. Within the context of postmodern thought, where such notions are strongly challenged, parody directed at personal styles also becomes a meaningless activity.

Discourse, then, remains as the only target postmodern parody may direct itself towards. And this is not very surprising, considering the postmodern project

155

of exposing all discourses as linguistic constructs open to questioning and undermining. This argument is also attested to by the practice of postmodern novelists themselves. Discourse is almost always the object of parody in postmodern fiction, where, it seems, all discourses are equally subject to undermining.

Building on this argument, this study has looked at the practical manifestations of discourse parody in the postmodern novel. In doing so, it has also contended that other kinds of parody postmodern fiction appears to accommodate can often be characterized as discourse parody, too. In other words, this study has argued that "discourse parody" is the more proper label for what sometimes appears as genre or text parody in the postmodern novel. This is because postmodern fiction often subordinates such parodic kinds to its wider metafictional concerns. It has been argued, in other words, that genre or text parody in postmodern fiction are usually examples of metafictional parody, which is directed *not* at a particular genre or text *but* at the nature of literary-fictional discourse itself. Discourse parody, then, again characterizes such novels, where other parodic kinds are simply tools to serve the much wider aim of parodying and hence undermining the nature of literary-fictional discourse.

The historical approach adopted in this study demonstrates that different parodic kinds are widely employed at different literary-historical periods – a phenomenon usually determined by the literary, cultural, social, and ideological characteristics of each period. This applies to parody in the postmodern age, too, where the general characteristics of postmodernism as a movement have determined the kind of parody most pervasively produced at the time. Such an argument suggests that parody in general and the prevalent parodic kinds in particular will go on changing as one literary-historical period replaces another – a line of reasoning which may allow us to make projections about parody and its kinds in the near future.

Perhaps it would not be wrong to argue that we are at the time living through a period of transition where postmodern premises – though still very powerful – are going through a re-assessment, which may result in a theoretical as

well as practical challenge to certain tendencies of this movement. This is understandable, given the fact that each new literary-historical period constitutes a kind of reaction to the preceding one. A major source of discontent regarding postmodernism, for example, is its utter rejection of humanistic values, which used to occupy so significant a place in many earlier philosophies. In his 1992 study – subtitled *Toward a Postmodern Humanism* – Stephen R. Yarbrough appears preoccupied especially with this aspect of postmodernism, recognizing that there can never be a complete return to the humanism of the past, but arguing nevertheless that a synthesis between postmodernism and earlier humanistic trends may be possible:

> … humanism cannot blithely reject postmodernism outright or ignore the multitude of 'positions' marketed today. To the contrary, the *humanitas* is necessarily articulated within the 'inflationary' discourse of postmodernism, even as that discourse denies its possibility. … Humanism cannot offer the luxury of abandoning the past and beginning again upon first principles …. It has to begin wherever it happens to be, believing that in every present the middle way lies waiting to be found as it has always been found in the past, and in the same manner although never in the same form (Yarbrough 1992: 38-39).

Yarbrough's discussion here appears highly useful to shed light on how postmodernism may give way to other movements, which react against postmodernism, but which inevitably partake of its influence at the same time. This is indeed how history seems to progress. In an article titled, "From Text to Work" Paisley Livingston makes a similar criticism of the poststructuralist rejection of the autonomy of the work, again acknowledging the fact, however, that there can never be a complete return to past practices:

> My central claim will be that the kind of shift [from 'work' to 'text'] Barthes evoked is by no means as practicable or as desirable as many critics seem to think. I support this claim by describing aspects of the notion of the 'work' that it would be very difficult and costly to do without. Yet what I am advocating is not a complete return to the kind of literary scholarship Barthes and

others wished to replace, and I shall propose ways in which some of the textualist's intuitions may be reframed in a reasonable and constructive manner (Livingston 1993: 91).

This argument again suggests that, like all other movements, postmodernism and poststructuralism, too, are subject to being surpassed and replaced by new approaches and ways of perceiving the world. Just like their previous counterparts, however, these new approaches will inevitably retain traces of the preceding movement against which they constitute an attack.

It may not be wrong to argue, then, that no artistic/literary theory or practice will remain the same after postmodernism. What follows will perhaps show affinities with earlier theories and ways of understanding, but it will always contain the marks of postmodernism and its influence. In accordance with the argument proposed by this study parody and its kinds will also be affected by such a change. Perhaps a renewed interest in the author and the work will make text parody *per se* meaningful once again. Or perhaps a new emphasis on values and value systems – not as discursive constructs open to undermining but as entities human beings need to live by – will decrease the significance of discourse parody where the aim is to expose the shaky ground the discourse in question is built upon. Or perhaps parody as a literary form will no longer have the significance and popularity it has been enjoying as a fundamental practical tool to exhibit postmodern concerns. No matter which direction change takes, however, one thing is certain: parody in the near future will always retain postmodern traces, not only because the new movement will exhibit a synthesis between itself and postmodernism but also – and more importantly – because it is the postmodern age that has endowed parody with entirely new meanings and functions together with an unprecedented significance. In what ways parodies of the future will retain postmodern traces, however, only time will show.

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166

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# ORTAÇAĞDAN POSTMODERN DÖNEME PARODİ VE TÜRLERİ

## Giriş

Parodi, kökleri eski Yunan'a kadar uzanan ve var olduğu bu uzun zaman süreci içerisinde hem biçimsel hem de işlevsel açıdan büyük çeşitlilik göstermiş olan bir yazın türüdür. Bu çalışma, parodiyi bu özellikleri içerisinde değerlendirir ve başlıca üç parodi türü belirler. Parodinin hedef aldığı unsurlara göre yapılan bu sınıflamaya göre, edebiyat tarihi boyunca üretilmiş olan tüm parodi örnekleri, ya metin ve üslup parodisi, ya tür parodisi, ya da söylem parodisi olarak adlandırılır. Çalışma, İngiliz Edebiyatı tarihi boyunca, bu üç tür parodinin de yaygın olarak üretildiğini, fakat farklı dönemlerde farklı türlerin önem ve ağırlık kazandığını, bu durumun da her dönemin baskın edebi, kültürel, sosyal ve ideolojik özellikleri aracılığıyla açıklanabileceğini savunur. Bu bağlamda, Ortaçağdan günümüze tüm dönemler incelenir; fakat postmodern dönem, çalışmanın odak noktasını oluşturur. Postmodern parodi de yukarıda belirtilen sav ışığında incelenir ve postmodern çağda üretilen parodilerin öncelikle söylem parodisi olduğu, bu durumun da postmodern hareketin konuları, kaygıları ve başlıca özellikleri aracılığıyla açıklanabileceği savunulur.

Böyle bir çalışma, parodiyi, bir yazın türü olarak net bir şekilde tanımlamayı gerektirir; fakat bu pek de kolay değildir; çünkü tarih boyunca parodi oldukça değişik şekillerde tanımlanmıştır. Yirminci yüzyılda parodinin bir inceleme alanı olarak ayrıca önem kazanması ile bu sorun daha da ciddi bir hal almıştır. Var olan tanım ve kavram kargaşası, özellikle yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısında parodi hakkında yapılan kuramsal ve uygulamalı çalışmalarda gözlemlenebilir. Örneğin, Fransız kuramcı Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests* başlıklı

çalışmasında, parodiyi çok dar bir çerçeve içerisinde tanımlamış ve parodinin kesinlikle bir tür veya söylemi hedef alamayacağını, sadece belli bir yapıta yönelik olabileceğini savunmuştur. Linda Hutcheon ise, parodi türünü çok daha geniş bir çerçeve içerisinde değerlendirmiş ve neredeyse her tür metinler arası göndermeyi parodi olarak adlandırmakta sakınca görmemiştir. Margaret Rose, parodi türüne, bu iki kuramcıdan da farklı bir şekilde yaklaşmış ve komedi unsurunu, parodinin en temel ve belirleyici özelliklerinden biri olarak ön plana çıkarmıştır.

Yukarıda kısaca değinilen tanım ve yaklaşımların hiçbiri, bu çalışmanın amaçları ile tamamen uyumlu bulunamamıştır. Bu sebeple, parodi türü, çalışmanın amaçları doğrultusunda yeniden tanımlanmıştır. Bu çalışmaya göre parodi, bir metni, üslubu, türü veya söylemi bilinçli bir şekilde taklit eden, içinde mizahi öğeler barındıran ve taklit ettiği unsurları muhtelif şekillerde yorumlama ve değerlendirme amacını güden bir yazın türüdür. Bu tanım doğrultusunda, bu çalışma, öncelikle Ortaçağdan yirminci yüzyılın ilk yarısına kadarki dönemleri gözden geçirir ve farklı dönemlerde farklı parodi türlerinin yaygın olarak üretilmesinin, her dönemin kendine özgü edebi, kültürel, sosyal ve ideolojik özellikleri ile açıklanabileceğini savunur. Postmodern dönem için de benzer bir tez getirilir; fakat bu kez parodi ve türleri, postmodern kuramlar ışığında derinlemesine incelenir ve postmodern parodinin öncelikle söylem parodisi olduğu sonucuna varılır. Çalışmanın bir sonraki bölümünde ise, kuramsal düzlemde oluşturulan bu savın, uygulamada nasıl görüldüğüne bakılır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, postmodern İngiliz romanından örnekler seçilir ve bu eserlerin söylem parodisini nasıl kullandıkları incelenir. Örnekleme, toplam yedi romandan oluşur: *The Black Prince* (Iris Murdoch), *Changing Places* ve *Small World* (David Lodge), *Shame* (Salman Rushdie), *Flaubert's Parrot* (Julian Barnes), *Hawksmoor* (Peter Ackroyd) ve *Mensonge* (Malcolm Bradbury). Çalışmanın sonuç bölümü ise, çalışma boyunca getirilen tüm tezleri kısaca özetler ve bu tezlerin ışığında, parodi türünün gelecekte nasıl bir yön alabileceği hakkında bir değerlendirme yapar.

**Ortaçağdan Yirminci Yüzyıla Parodi ve Türleri**

Genel inanışın aksine, parodi, Ortaçağda oldukça yaygın bir tür olmuş ve özellikle de dönemin Latince yazılan edebiyatında sıklıkla kullanılmıştır. Latince edebiyatta en çok üretilen parodi türü ise metin parodisi olmuştur. Dönem boyunca, dine ve dini metinlere verilen önem doğrultusunda, bu tarz metinleri hedef alan parodiler de yaygın olarak üretilmiştir. Zaman zaman dini metinleri ve bunların temsil ettiği söylemleri eleştirmeye yönelik olan bu parodiler, zaman zaman da bunun tam tersi bir işlev edinerek, taklit ettikleri metinleri ve bunların arkasında yatan söylemleri yüceltmişlerdir.

Parodi türü, dönemin İngilizce yazılan edebiyatında da görülür; fakat İngilizce edebiyatta üretilen parodiler, ağırlıklı olarak, metinleri değil de, yazın türlerini hedef alır. Bu dönemde tür parodisinin yaygın olarak üretilmesi, Ortaçağ edebiyatının tür ve biçim konularına verdiği öneme bağlanabilir. Tür parodisini anlamlı kılan en önemli etken, türlerin kesin kurallarla tanımlanması ve türler arasında kesin ayrımlar olmasıdır. Yazın türlerine verilen önem, Ortaçağın en önemli yazarlarından biri olan Geoffrey Chaucer'ı da tür parodisi üretmeye itmiştir. Chaucer'ın parodileri, dönemin popüler türlerinin mizahi taklidini yapmış ve bu türleri hem yermiş hem de yüceltmiştir.

Tür parodisi Rönesans boyunca da yaygın olarak üretilmiştir. Rönesans, bir yandan türlere dair kesin kuralların geçerliliğini sürdürdüğü, diğer yandan da yazın türlerinde yeni açılım ve denemelerin sıkça yapıldığı bir dönem olmuştur. Dönemin tür parodileri de, çoğu zaman birbirine oldukça zıt görünen bu iki amaca hizmet etmiştir. Rönesans çağında yaygın olarak üretilen bir başka parodi türü de metin parodisidir. Rönesans aydınlarının eski Yunan ve Roma'ya ve bu dönemin sanat ve edebiyatına duydukları büyük ilgi, dönem boyunca yazılan parodilerin de çoğunlukla klasik edebiyat ve mitolojiye ait metinlere yönelik olması sonucunu doğurmuştur. Dönemin Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare ve Ben Jonson gibi tanınmış yazarları da, eserlerinde but tür parodilere sıkça yer vermişlerdir.

Eski Yunan ve Roma medeniyetine duyulan ilgi, Neoklasik dönem diye de adlandırılan ve on yedinci yüzyılın ikinci yarısından on sekizinci yüzyılın sonlarına kadar uzanan zaman dilimi boyunca da aynı yoğunlukla devam etmiştir. Klasik edebiyatı ve mitolojik hikayeleri hedef alan metin parodileri, bu dönemde de sıklıkla üretilmeye devam etmiş ve Fransız yazar Paul Scarron'un da etkisiyle, İngiltere'de oldukça popüler bir tür haline gelmiştir.

Bu dönemde tür parodileri de yaygın bir şekilde üretilmiştir. Bunda, yazın türleri ve aralarındaki ayrımlara dair oldukça katı kurallar belirleyen neoklasik edebiyat anlayışının rolü büyüktür. Fakat dönemin tür parodilerini sadece bu bağlamda görmek pek doğru olmaz. Neoklasik dönemin en çarpıcı özelliklerinden biri de hayatın her alanında, özellikle de sosyal ve ahlaki konularda iyileşme hareketlerine verilen önemdir. Bu konulardaki hata ve eksiklikleri yermek ve gidermek amacıyla üretilen satirik yapıtlar, neoklasik edebiyatın önemli bir parçası olmuştur ve bunlar, parodi türünü de, kendi amaçları doğrultusunda ustalıkla kullanmışlardır. Bu dönemde özellikle yaygın olan destan parodileri, çoğunlukla böyle bir satirik amaca hizmet etmişlerdir. Örneğin, çağın önemli yazarlarından olan Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* ve *The Dunciad* gibi yapıtlarında, toplumsal ve kültürel konularda oldukça ağır ima ve eleştirilerde bulunmuş, bunları yaparken de destan parodisini en temel yergi aracı olarak kullanmayı uygun görmüştür.

Satirik öğeler, neoklasik çağda yavaş yavaş oluşmakta olan roman türünde de önemli bir yer edinmiştir. Destan ve romans parodileri, burada da toplumsal eleştiriye hizmet etmişlerdir. Ancak dönemin romanları, parodiyi sadece bir toplumsal yergi aracı olarak kullanmamışlardır. Bu romanlarda parodi, roman türünün, kendi alt türlerini de yermesine ve eleştirmesine olanak sağlayan bir unsur olmuş ve bu amaç doğrultusunda yaygınlıkla kullanılmıştır.

Neoklasik çağda satirik amaçlara hizmet eden bir başka parodi türü de söylem parodisi olmuştur. Bu tür, daha çok dönemin deneme ve düşünce yazılarında kullanılmış ve özellikle Jonathan Swift gibi yergi ustalarının elinde, çok etkili bir eleştiri aracına dönüşmüştür.

Parodi türü, Romantik şairler tarafından da toplumsal ve siyasi olgu ve olayları hicvetmek amacıyla kullanılmıştır. Fakat bu dönemde sıklıkla üretilen parodi türü, tür veya söylem parodisinden çok, metin ve üslup parodisi olmuştur. Bu durum, Romantik şairlerin edebiyat anlayışı ile de yakından ilgilidir. Neoklasik edebiyat kuramlarına şiddetle karşı çıkan Romantik şairler, yazın türleri hakkında kesin ve katı kurallar getirmekten çok, yazarın bireyselliğini ön plana çıkarmış ve edebiyatı, kişisel ve özgün yaratıcılık anlayışı doğrultusunda tanımlamışlardır. Böyle bir yaklaşım içerisinde, yazarın bireysel üretimi ve üslubu, diğer tüm unsurların önüne geçmiş ve buna koşut olarak, yaygın parodi türü de, metin ve üslup parodisi olmuştur. Romantik şairlerin, edebiyatta yeni konular ve üsluplar arayarak yeni açılımlar yapmaya çalışmaları da, yukarıda bahsedilen edebiyat anlayışı ile yakından ilgilidir. Romantik dönemde üretilen metin ve üslup parodileri, zaman zaman bu yeni deneme ve açılımları hedef almış ve yermiştir. Fakat dönemin parodilerinde toplumsal ve siyasi eleştiri de aynı derecede önemsenmiş ve özellikle metin ve üslup parodisi aracılığıyla, kişiler ve temsil ettikleri duruş ve söylemler yerilmiş ve tenkit edilmiştir.

Sosyal eleştiri, on dokuzuncu yüzyılın Viktorya dönemi romanlarında da önemli bir yer tutmuştur. Parodi ve özellikle de söylem parodisi, burada da önemli bir yergi aracı olmuş ve sıklıkla kullanılmıştır. William Makepeace Thackeray ve Charles Dickens gibi romancılar, eserlerinde, eleştirmek istedikleri söylemleri temsil eden gülünç karakterler yaratmışlar ve söylem parodisini, satirik amaçları doğrultusunda kullanmışlardır.

On dokuzuncu yüzyılda oldukça popüler olan metin ve üslup parodisi, yirminci yüzyılın ilk yarısında da sıklıkla üretilmeye devam etmiştir. Bu durum, modernist yazar ve şairlerin edebiyatta yeni açılımlar aramaları ve buna paralel olarak yapıtlarında deneysel ve sıra dışı üsluplar kullanmaları ile yakından ilgilidir. Örneğin, T. S. Eliot gibi bir şair, kendine özgü ve alışılanın oldukça dışında kalan üslubuyla birçok parodi yazarı için iyi bir hedef olmuştur. Modernist dönemin konu ve kaygıları da bazı yazarları parodi üretmeye itmiştir. Parodi, var olan parçalanmışlık duygusunun üstesinden gelebilme ve yaşamı tekrar anlamlı bir değerler bütünü haline getirebilme uğraşında birçok modernist yazarın

179

kullandığı bir tür olmuştur. Buna belki de en iyi örnek, James Joyce'un *Ulysses* isimli başyapıtıdır. Eserin bütününe yayılan parodik öğeler ve özellikle de "*Oxen of the Sun*" bölümünde, Eski İngilizce edebiyattan on dokuzuncu yüzyıl edebiyatına kadar uzanan zaman dilimindeki birçok yazar ve üslubun parodisinin bulunması, Joyce'un, hem geçmiş ile bugün arasındaki uçuruma dikkat çekmek istemesi hem de geçmişin varlığından kuvvet alarak bugünkü parçalanmışlık hissini yenmeye çalışması olarak yorumlanabilir.

Yirminci yüzyılın ilk yarısında parodi türü, sadece modernist edebiyatla ilişkili olmamıştır. 1930'lardan sonra yazılan romanlarda da parodi sıklıkla kullanılmış ve özellikle de toplumsal ve siyasi eleştiri amacına hizmet etmiştir. Bu doğrultuda en çok üretilen parodi türü de söylem parodisi olmuştur. Örneğin, George Orwell, *Animal Farm* isimli romanında, yarattığı hayvan karakterler aracılığıyla ideolojik söylemlerin parodisini yapmış ve böylece vermek istediği siyasi mesajı çok daha çarpıcı hale getirmiştir.

## Postmodern Çağda Parodi

Postmodern dönemde parodi, edebiyatın çok temel bir parçası olmuş ve buna koşut olarak da hem bir yazın türü hem de bir inceleme alanı olarak ayrıca önem kazanmıştır. Parodinin bu kadar popüler olduğu bir dönemde, neredeyse her tür parodinin sıklıkla üretildiği düşünülebilir; fakat daha ciddi bir irdeleme, postmodern parodinin öncelikle söylem parodisi olduğunu gösterir. Bu çalışma, bu savı öncelikle kuramsal düzlemde oluşturur ve daha sonra, seçilen postmodern romanları bu sav doğrultusunda inceler.

Postmodern felsefenin dil, anlam ve edebiyata dair söylemlerinin temelini, 1960 ve 70'lerde, dil ve edebiyatta yapısalcı yaklaşımları eleştirmek üzere doğan yapısalcılık sonrası akım oluşturur. Bu akıma göre dil, hiçbir zaman kalıcı ve sürekli bir anlam arz etmez. Aksine, dilde anlam, kaygan, değişken ve sürekli ertelenen bir olgudur. Ana malzemesi dil olan edebiyat da bu anlayıştan nasibini alır. Bir edebiyat yapıtında anlam, herkesin üzerinde anlaşabileceği durağan bir unsur olmaktan çok uzaktır. Bu bağlamda, "edebiyat eseri" kavramı da sorgulanır.

Roland Barthes ve Jacques Derrida gibi kuramcılara göre, "eser" veya "yapıt" gibi terimler, özellikle, çağrıştırdıkları "bütünlük", "belirginlik" ve "anlamlılık" gibi kavramlardan ötürü geçerliliklerini yitirmişlerdir. "Eser" veya "yapıt" yerine önerilen "metin" kavramı, bu tarz çağrışımlar içermediği gibi, dilin ve edebiyatın "bütünlük" ve "belirginlik" gibi sıfatlarla nitelenemeyeceğini de vurgular. Postmodern edebiyat anlayışına göre hiçbir metin, belirli çerçeveler içerisinde, dışa kapalı şekilde var olamaz; her metin, kendisinden önceki ve sonraki metinlerle ilişkili ve bunlarla daimi bir alış-veriş içerisindedir. Bir başka deyişle, hiçbir metin, diğer metinlerden bağımsız değildir ve onlardan ayrı düşünülemez.

"Eser" kavramının geçerliliğini yitirmesi, "eser parodisi" kavramının da anlamsızlaşması sonucunu doğurur. Parodi yazarının, bir eseri anlamlı bir şekilde taklit edebilmesi için, o eseri, diğer eserlerden bağımsız, belirli bir çerçeve içerisinde tanımlanabilen ve kendi bütünlüğü olan bir yazın ürünü olarak görebilmesi gerekir. Fakat bu, yukarıda açıklanan kuramlar ışığında pek de mümkün değildir. O halde, her eserin öncelikle "metin" olarak algılandığı ve metinselliğin ön plana çıktığı postmodern düşünce ortamında, "eser parodisi", bir parodi türü olarak pek bir anlam ifade etmez.

Dil ve metinselliğe dair postmodern kuramlar, tür parodisini de, eser parodisine benzer bir şekilde anlamsız kılarlar. Edebiyat ürünlerinin öncelikle "metin" olarak algılanması, yazın türleri arasındaki kesin ayrımların da geçersizleşmesi sonucunu doğurur. Metinselliği ve buna bağlı olarak, metinler arası etkileşimleri özellikle vurgulayan dil ve edebiyat anlayışına göre, yazın türleri, katı kurallarla oluşturulan sınır ve çerçeveler içine hapsedilemez; bu, dilin ve edebiyatın doğasına aykırıdır. Anlam ve geçerliliği, türler arasında kesin ayrımlar bulunması ile doğrudan ilişkili olan tür parodisi, bu tarz postmodern kuramlar ışığında önemini yitirir ve anlamlı bir yazın ürünü olmaktan uzaklaşır.

Benzer sorunlar, üslup parodisi için de geçerlidir. "Eser" kavramının anlamını yitirdiği bir düşünce ortamında, esere hayat veren "yazar" kavramı da sorgulanır. Postmodern düşünce, yazarı, eskisinden çok farklı bir şekilde tanımlar. Artık yazar, varlığı daimi olarak eserin arkasında hissedilen ve esere, özgün yaratıcılık damgasını vuran bir unsur değildir. Dil, her şeyi belirlediği gibi, yazarı

ve kimliğini de belirler. Yazar da dilin bir ürünüdür ve bu sebeple, yazdığı metnin tek sahibi, özgün yaratıcısı veya "baba"sı olarak kabul edilemez. Fransız kuramcı Roland Barthes'ın da dediği gibi, yazma sürecinin başlamasıyla, yazarın ölmeye – yani geleneksel anlamdaki "yazar" kimliğini kaybetmeye – başlaması eş zamanlıdır. O halde postmodern kuramlar ışığında, yazarı, bağımsız ve kendine özgü üslubu ile yetkin bir birey olarak görmek mümkün değildir. Bu tez, postmodern kişilik kuramları ile de desteklenir. Postmodern düşünce, "birey" kavramını sorgularken, bireye yakıştırılan yetkinlik, bağımsızlık, süreklilik, tutarlılık ve bütünlük gibi nitelikleri de reddeder. Birey, daimi bir oluşum aşamasındadır, değişkendir ve hiçbir zaman bir bütünlük arz etmez. Yazar da böyledir ve yazarın yetkin bir yaratıcı olarak görülememesinin bir nedeni de budur. Yine bu sebepledir ki, "yazarın kişisel üslubu", postmodern düşüncede oldukça anlamsız bir kavrama dönüşür. Yazar, bütünlük ve tutarlılık nitelikleriyle donanımlı, yetkin bir birey olmadığına göre, tamamen kendine özgü, onu her yönüyle diğerlerinden ayıran bir üsluba da sahip olamaz.

Postmodern düşüncenin "yazar" ve "üslup" kavramlarına dair getirdiği bu tezlerin, üslup parodisi için nasıl bir anlam ifade ettiğini görmek pek de zor değildir. "Kişisel üslup" kavramının derinden sorgulandığı bir düşünce ortamında üslup parodisi de aynı şekilde sorgulanabilir. Bu bağlamda, herhangi bir yazarın üslubunu hedef alan parodiler yazmak, oldukça anlamsız bir uğraş olarak görülebilir.

Tüm bu açıklamalardan da anlaşılacağı üzere, postmodern düşünce, bu çalışmada belirlenen üç parodi türünden ikisini anlamsız hale getirmektedir. Bir yandan "metin ve üslup parodisi" olarak adlandırdığımız ve bir yazarı, eseri veya üslubu hedef alan parodiler, diğer yandan da yazın türlerini hedef alan tür parodileri, postmodern edebiyat kuramları içerisinde hayat bulamamakta ve karşımıza geçerli türler olarak çıkmamaktadırlar. Geriye kalan tek parodi türü söylem parodisidir ve buradan da postmodern dönemde yaygın olarak üretilen parodi türünün söylem parodisi olduğu sonucuna varılabilir. Bu sav, postmodern düşüncenin "söylem" kavramına verdiği önem düşünüldüğünde, daha da kuvvetli bir hale gelir.

Postmodern felsefenin en temel özelliklerinden biri, "öz" veya "tek gerçeklik" gibi kavramları reddetmesidir. Bu anlayışa göre, tüm gerçekliğimizi belirleyen dildir. Dilden önce var olan değişmez ve tutarlı bir gerçeklikten, bir "öz"den bahsetmek kesinlikle mümkün değildir. Ayrıca dil, kendisi de değişken olan, güvenilirliği şüpheli ve çok anlamlılığa son derece açık bir olgudur. Tüm gerçekliğimizi dilin belirlediği, fakat dilin kendisinin de hiçbir zaman tek anlamlılık arz etmediği bir ortamda, tek bir gerçeklikten, tek bir doğru ve değerler bütününden bahsetmek de mümkün değildir. Söylem de dilin bir ürünüdür ve hiçbir zaman tek ve doğru gerçekliği yansıtamaz. Çevremizde varlığını hissettiğimiz ve çoğunlukla doğrularımızı ve değerlerimizi belirleyen egemen söylemler, var olan tek "gerçek" veya tek "doğru"yu yansıttıklarını savunurlar ve hakimiyetlerini – yani diğer söylemlerden üstün konumda olmalarını – bu şekilde meşru kılarlar. Aslında bu, çok ciddi bir yanılsamadır. Hiçbir söylem, kaynağını "öz"den aldığını iddia edemez çünkü böyle bir öz yoktur; her tür "gerçeklik", dilin ürünüdür. Postmodern edebiyat, sürekli olarak, işte bu savı kanıtlamaya çalışır ve söylem parodisi, bu amaca çok iyi hizmet eden bir yazın aracıdır. Belirli bir söylemi taklit eden parodi, o söylemi kendi alaycı sesi ile karıştırarak, söylemin yarattığı bütünlük, tutarlılık ve gerçeklik yanılsamasını açığa çıkarır. Söylem parodisi sayesinde okuyucu, söylemin de bir dil ürünü olduğunu ve bu sebeple de hiçbir zaman "tek doğru" veya "tek gerçek" gibi kavramlarla bağdaşamayacağını fark eder.

O halde söylem parodisi, postmodern edebiyatta çok önemli yeri olan bir türdür ve postmodern parodinin öncelikle söylem parodisi olduğunu savunmak da yanlış olmaz. Kuramsal düzlemde yapılan bu çıkarımlar, uygulamada da gözlemlenebilir. Bu çalışmada incelenen postmodern romanlarda da görülebileceği gibi, postmodern edebiyat, söylem parodisini sıklıkla kullanır ve neredeyse her söylem, parodinin hedefi haline gelebilir. Bu da, postmodern edebiyatın, hiçbir söylemi imtiyazlı kılmamak ve her söylemin, geçerliliği kolayca sarsılabilecek bir dil ürünü olduğunu göstermek gibi amaçları ile yakından ilgilidir. Bu çalışmada incelenen romanlar, parodinin, felsefi ve bilimsel söylemlerden üniversite camiası söylemlerine, politik söylemlerden dini

söylemlere kadar her tür söylemi hedef alabildiğini ve taklitçi, oyuncu ve alaycı tavrıyla, tüm bu söylemlerin "gerçeklik" iddiasını rahatlıkla çürütebildiğini gösterir.

Bu çalışmada yapılan roman incelemesinde, postmodern romanlarda sıklıkla kullanılan bir başka parodi çeşidinin de tür parodisi olduğu görülebilir. Bu durum, ilk bakışta, postmodern parodinin öncelikle söylem parodisi olduğu savını zayıflatıyormuş gibi görünebilir. Fakat böyle bir tespitin pek de doğru olmadığı, incelenen romanlardaki tür parodisi örneklerine daha yakından bakıldığında anlaşılır. Julian Barnes'ın *Flaubert's Parrot* isimli romanı, biyografi türünün parodisini içerir; Peter Ackroyd'un romanı *Hawksmoor*'un baştan sona bir dedektif romanı parodisi olduğu söylenebilir ve Salman Rushdie'nin *Shame*'inde parodi, masal türünü oyunbaz bir eda ile taklit eder. Evet, bunların hepsi tür parodisi örnekleridir; fakat dikkat edilmesi gereken husus, bu romanlardaki tür parodilerinin, neredeyse her durumda, daha büyük bir amaca, yani söylem parodisine hizmet ettikleridir. Bu romanlardaki sözde tür parodilerinin hedeflediği söylem ise, geleneksel yazın söyleminin ta kendisidir. Çoğunlukla "edebiyatta gerçekçilik" olarak karşımıza çıkan bu söylemin parodisi, ancak bu söylemi en iyi şekilde temsil eden yazın türlerinin parodisi aracılığıyla yapılabilir. Bu romanlardaki tür parodisinin en önemli işlevinin, romanı yazma sürecine ve romanın kurgusallığına dikkat çekmek olması da bu yüzdendir. Ancak böyle tür parodileri sayesinde okuyucu, eseri okurken yaşadığı "gerçeklik yanılsaması"ndan sıyrılacak, okuduğunun sadece bir kurgu olduğunu fark edecek ve daima hatırlayacaktır. Tüm bunların ışığında, birçok postmodern romanda görülen tür parodisinin, öncelikli olarak söylem parodisi olduğu ve çoğunlukla "gerçekçilik" olarak karşımıza çıkan egemen yazın söylemini hedef aldığı söylenebilir. Postmodernizmin konuları ve kaygıları doğrultusunda getirilen bu tez de, postmodern parodinin öncelikli olarak söylem parodisi olduğu savını bir kez daha doğrular niteliktedir.

**Sonuç**

Yukarıda kısa bir özeti sunulan bu çalışma, İngiliz Edebiyatı'nda Ortaçağdan postmodern döneme parodi ve türlerini incelemiştir. Varılan sonuç, farklı parodi türlerinin farklı dönemlerde önem ve ağırlık kazandığı, bu durumun da, her dönemin baskın edebi, kültürel, sosyal ve ideolojik özellikleri ile yakından ilişkili olduğudur. Çalışmada özellikle üzerinde durulan postmodern dönem parodileri de bu bağlamda incelenmiş ve postmodern edebiyatta metin, üslup ve tür parodisinin pek anlam ifade etmediği, postmodern yazın ve düşünce içerisinde hayat bulabilen tek parodi türünün söylem parodisi olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

Bu çalışma, hem bir yazın türü olarak parodinin hem de tarih boyunca ağırlık kazanan parodi türlerinin sürekli bir değişim içerisinde olduğunu göstermiştir. Parodinin, postmodern çağ sonrasında da böyle bir değişim sergilemesi oldukça muhtemeldir. Hangi parodi türlerinin daha yaygın olarak üretileceği, postmodern düşüncenin yerini nasıl bir anlayışa bırakacağı ile yakından ilgili olacaktır. Parodinin postmodern dönem sonrasında da değişkenlik arz edeceğine kesin gözüyle bakılabilir; fakat bu değişimin ne yönde olacağını ancak zaman gösterecektir.