

A THEORY OF
PARODY

The Teachings of
Twentieth-Century
Art Forms

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DEFINING PARODY

Let no one parody a poet unless he loves him. *Sir Theodore Martin*

A parody, a parody with a kind of miraculous gift to make it absurder than it was. *Ben Jonson*

The German Romantic predecessors of Thomas Mann, self-conscious about the ontological duality of the work of art, attempted to destroy what they felt to be artistic illusion. This Romantic irony, of course, served less to subvert illusion than to create a new one. For their heirs, modern writers like Mann, this same kind of irony becomes a major means of creating new levels of illusion by activating that extended but not always ridiculing type of parody. We have seen that *Doctor Faustus* is a novel about parody; it is also, like *Felix Krull* and many of Mann's other novels (Eichner 1952), itself a multiple parody (Heller 1958b), in the sense of that broader definition just outlined. Irony and parody become the major means of creating new levels of meaning – and illusion. This type of parody informs both the structure and the thematic content of Mann's work (Heller 1958a). But, as we have seen, Mann is not alone in his use of this particular admixture of irony and parody, and literature does not have a monopoly on self-conscious art today. It does, however, make its teachings most explicit and therefore articulate, and it does so in such a way that it provides the clearest examples: there is less of that need to go to the sleeve notes of records to get the lists of works parodied, as is the case with much modern music.

G rard Genette (1982, 235-6) has pointed out the predilection of modern novelists to turn to earlier forms in their practice of what he chooses to call "hypertextuality." But it is not just a matter of formal borrowing.

Readers know that much has happened, in literary terms, between the eighteenth century and John Barth's *The Sot-Weed Factor* (1960). The essence of the narrative form which has come to be called metafiction (Scholes 1970) lies in the same acknowledging of the double or even duplicitous nature of the work of art that intrigued the German Romantics: the novel today often still claims to be a genre rooted in the realities of historical time and geographical space, yet narrative is presented as only narrative, as its own reality – that is, as artifice. Often overt narratorial comment or an internal self-reflecting mirror (a *mise-en-abyme*) will signal this dual ontological status to the reader. Or – and this is what is of particular interest in the present context – the pointing to the literariness of the text may be achieved by using parody: in the background will stand another text against which the new creation is implicitly to be both measured and understood. The same is true in the other arts. In the background of Mel Ramos's *Leta and the Pelican* stand not just all those mythological paintings of Leda and the swan, but *Playboy's* centerfolds (complete with gatefold marks). What is interesting is that, unlike what is more traditionally regarded as parody, the modern form does not always permit one of the texts to fare any better or worse than the other. It is the fact that they *differ* that this parody emphasizes and, indeed, dramatizes.

Irony appears to be the main rhetorical mechanism for activating the reader's awareness of this dramatization. Irony participates in parodic discourse as a strategy, in Kenneth Burke's sense (1967, 1), which allows the decoder to interpret and evaluate. For instance, in a novel which in many ways is a touchstone for this entire re-evaluation of parody, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, John Fowles juxtaposes the conventions of the Victorian and the modern novel. The theological and cultural assumptions of both ages – as manifest through their literary forms – are ironically compared by the reader through the medium of formal parody. The same signaling of distance and difference can be seen in Iris Murdoch's ironic rehandling of *Hamlet* in *The Black Prince*. In the visual arts, the variety of possible modes is greater than in literature, it seems. For instance, John Clem Clarke poses his friends as Paris, Hermes, and the three goddesses of Rubens's *Judgement of Paris*, and changes the posture to suggest more modern seductive poses. George Segal's plaster sculpture version of Matisse's *Dance* is called *The Dancers*, but his figures, despite the similarity of pose, appear not at all ecstatic; in fact, they seem distinctly self-conscious and ill at ease.

It is the difference between parodic foreground and parodied background that is ironically played upon in works like these. Double-directed

irony seems to have been substituted for the traditional mockery or ridicule of the "target" text. In the previous chapter I argued that there are no transhistorical definitions of parody. The vast literature on parody in different ages and places makes clear that its meaning changes. Twentieth-century art teaches that we have come a long way from the earliest sense of parody as a narrative poem of moderate length using epic meter and language but with a trivial subject (Householder 1944, 3). Most theorists of parody go back to the etymological root of the term in the Greek noun *parodia*, meaning "counter-song," and stop there. A closer look at that root offers more information, however. The textual or discursive nature of parody (as opposed to satire) is clear from the *odos* part of the word, meaning song. The prefix *para* has two meanings, only one of which is usually mentioned – that of "counter" or "against." Thus parody becomes an opposition or contrast between texts. This is presumably the formal starting point for the definition's customary pragmatic component of ridicule: one text is set against another with the intent of mocking it or making it ludicrous. The *Oxford English Dictionary* calls parody:

A composition in prose or verse in which the characteristic turns of thought and phrase in an author or class of authors are imitated in such a way as to make them appear ridiculous, especially by applying them to ludicrously inappropriate subjects; an imitation of a work more or less closely modelled on the original, but so turned as to produce a ridiculous effect.

However, *para* in Greek can also mean "beside," and therefore there is a suggestion of an accord or intimacy instead of a contrast. It is this second, neglected meaning of the prefix that broadens the pragmatic scope of parody in a way most helpful to discussions of modern art forms, as we shall see in the next chapter. But, even in terms of formal structure, the doubleness of the root suggests the need for more neutral terms of discussion. There is nothing in *parodia* that necessitates the inclusion of a concept of ridicule, as there is, for instance, in the joke or *burla* of burlesque. Parody, then, in its ironic "trans-contextualization" and inversion, is repetition with difference. A critical distance is implied between the backgrounded text being parodied and the new incorporating work, a distance usually signaled by irony. But this irony can be playful as well as belittling; it can be critically constructive as well as destructive. The pleasure of parody's irony comes not from humor in particular but from the degree of engagement of the reader in the intertextual "bouncing" (to use E. M. Forster's famous term) between complicity and distance.

It is this same mixture that we find on the level of encoded intent as

well in Picasso's many reworkings of Velázquez's *Las Meninas* or in Augustus John's play with El Greco in *Symphonie Espagnole*. In his novella, "The Ebony Tower," John Fowles thematizes this parodic play in terms relevant to all the art forms of our century. The protagonist, a very "modern" artist, regards the very different work of a master parodist:

As with so much of Breasley's work there was an obvious previous iconography – in this case, Uccello's *Night Hunt* and its spawn down through the centuries; which was in turn a challenged comparison, a deliberate risk . . . just as the Spanish drawings had defied the great shadow of Goya by accepting its presence, even using and parodying it, so the memory of the Ashmolean Uccello somehow deepened and buttressed the painting before which David sat. It gave an essential tension, in fact: behind the mysteriousness and the ambiguity . . . behind the modernity of so many of the surface elements there stood both a homage and a kind of thumbed nose to a very old tradition. (Fowles 1974, 18)

It is this combination of respectful homage and ironically thumbed nose that often characterizes the particular kind of parody we shall be considering here.

When Fowles (1969b, 287-8) compared his *The French Lieutenant's Woman* to Thackeray's *Lovel the Widower* with regard to point of view, use of the present tense, and a certain teasing of the reader mixed with ironic self-mockery, it was to remind us that he did not intend to copy, but to recontextualize, to synthesize, to rework conventions – in a respectful manner. This intent is not unique to modern parody, for there is a similar tradition in earlier centuries, even if it does tend to get lost in most critical generalizations. Its most famous articulation is probably J. K. Stephen's "A Parodist's Apology": "If I've dared to laugh at you, Robert Browning, / 'Tis with eyes that with you have often wept: / You have oftener left me smiling or frowning, / Than any beside, one bard except" (cited in Richardson 1935, 9). While modern parodists often add an ironic dimension to this respect, the irony can cut both ways when two texts meet.

As the next chapter will examine in more detail, irony is a so-called sophisticated form of expression. So, too, parody is a sophisticated genre in the demands it makes on its practitioners and its interpreters. The encoder, then the decoder, must effect a structural superimposition of texts that incorporates the old into the new. Parody is a bitextual synthesis (Golopenția-Eretescu 1969, 171), unlike more monotextual forms like pastiche that stress similarity rather than difference. In some ways, parody might be said to resemble metaphor. Both require that the decoder

construct a second meaning through inferences about surface statements and supplement the foreground with acknowledgement and knowledge of a backgrounded context. Rather than argue, as does Wayne Booth (1974, 177), that, although similar in structure to metaphor (and therefore to parody), irony is "subtractive" in terms of strategy in its directing of the decoder away from the surface meaning, I would say that both levels of meaning must coexist structurally in irony, and that this similarity to parody on the formal level is what makes them so compatible.

It should be clear from the discussion that it is very difficult to separate pragmatic strategies from formal structures when talking of either irony or parody: the one entails the other. In other words, a purely formal analysis of parody as text relations (Genette 1982) will not do justice to the complexity of these phenomena; nor will a purely hermeneutic one which, in its most extreme form, views parody as created by "readers and critics, not by the literary texts themselves" (Dane 1980, 145). While the act and form of parody are those of incorporation, its function is one of separation and contrast. **Unlike imitation, quotation, or even allusion, parody requires that critical ironic distance.** It is true that, if the decoder does not notice, or cannot identify, an intended allusion or quotation, he or she will merely naturalize it, adapting it to the context of the work as a whole. In the more extended form of parody which we have been considering, such naturalization would eliminate a significant part of both the form and content of the text. The structural identity of the text as a parody depends, then, on the coincidence, at the level of strategy, of decoding (recognition and interpretation) and encoding. As we shall see in a later chapter, these are the two parts of the *énonciation* that our post-Romantic formalist age has considered most problematic.

Within a pragmatic frame of reference, however, we can begin to account for the fact that **parody involves more than just textual comparison;** the entire enunciated context is involved in the production and reception of the kind of parody that uses irony as the major means of accentuating, even establishing, parodic contrast. This does not mean, however, that we can afford to ignore those formal elements in our definitions. Both irony and parody operate on two levels – a primary, surface, or foreground; and a secondary, implied, or backgrounded one. But the latter, in both cases, derives its meaning from the context in which it is found. The final meaning of irony or parody rests on the recognition of the superimposition of these levels. It is this doubleness of *both* form and pragmatic effect or ethos that makes parody an important mode of modern self-reflexivity in literature (for Salman Rushdie, Italo Calvino,

Timothy Findley, and others), music (for Bartók, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and those contemporary composers we have considered), architecture (Post-Modern, in particular), film (for Lucas and Bogdanovich, for instance), and the visual arts (for Francis Bacon, Picasso, and many more).

Many of these artists have openly claimed that the ironic distance afforded by parody has made imitation a means of freedom, even in the sense of exorcizing personal ghosts – or, rather, enlisting them in their own cause. Proust certainly seems to have seen his reworkings of Flaubert as purgative antidotes to the "toxins of admiration" (in Painter 1965, 100). But, for the decoder of parody, this creative function for an individual artist is less important than the realization that, for whatever reason, the artist's parodic incorporation and ironic "trans-contextualization" or inversion has brought about something new in its bitextual synthesis. Perhaps parodists only hurry up what is a natural procedure: the changing of aesthetic forms through time. Out of the union of chivalric romance and a new literary concern for everyday realism came *Don Quijote* and the novel as we know it today. Parodic works like this one – works that actually manage to free themselves from the backgrounded text enough to create a new and autonomous form – suggest that the dialectic synthesis that is parody might be a prototype of the pivotal stage in that gradual process of development of literary forms. In fact, this is the view of parody of the Russian formalists.

Their theory of parody is of interest here because they too saw it as a mode of auto-reflexivity, as a way of pointing to the conventionality they felt was central to the definition of art. Consciousness about form, as achieved by writers like Sterne (and Barth, Fowles, and others today) by its deformation (Šklovskij 1965) through parody, is one possible mode of denuding contrast, of defamiliarizing "trans-contextualization," or of deviation from aesthetic norms established by usage. The implied questioning of these norms also provides the basis for the phenomenon of counter-expectation that allows for the structural and pragmatic activation of parody (Tomachevski 1965, 284) by the decoder. In *Gogol' i Dostoevskij. K teorii parodii*, Tynjanov revealed Dostoevsky's inscribed indebtedness to Gogol, but also his use of parody as a mode of emancipation from him (Erlich 1955, 1965, 93, 194). Parody, therefore, is both a personal act of supersession and an inscription of literary-historical continuity. From this came the formalists' theory of parody's role in the evolution or change of literary forms. Parody was seen as a dialectic substitution of formal elements whose functions have become mechanized or automatic. At this point, the elements are "refunctionalized," to use their term. A new form develops out of the old, without really destroying

it; only the function is altered (Ejxenbaum 1965 and 1978b; Tomachevski 1965; Tynjanov 1978a). Parody therefore becomes a constructive principle in literary history (Tynjanov 1978b).

The Russian formalists were not the only ones to stress this historical role of parody. We have already seen Thomas Mann's thematizing of it in his work, and Dürrenmatt wrote of its role in the breaking down of outworn "Ideologie-Konstrukte" (Freund 1981, 7). But much recent theorizing on parody has obviously been influenced by the formalists, either directly or indirectly. Northrop Frye feels that parody is "often a sign that certain vogues in handling conventions are getting worn out" (1970, 103), and Kiremidjian defines parody as "a work which reflects a fundamental aspect of art that is at the same time a symptom of historical processes which invalidate the normal authenticity of primary forms" (1969, 241). Their influence is even seen in Lotman's (1973, 402-3) rejection of a central role for parody in literary evolution. There is little doubt that parody can have a role in change. If a new parodic form does not develop when an old one becomes insufficiently "motivated" (to use the formalists' term) through overuse, that old form might degenerate into pure convention: witness the popular novel, the bestseller of Victorian times or our own. In a more general perspective, however, this view implies a concept of literary evolution as improvement that I find hard to accept. The forms of art *change*, but do they really *evolve* or get better in any way? Again, my definition of parody as imitation with critical difference prevents any endorsement of the ameliorative implications of the formalists' theory, while it obviously allows agreement with the general idea of parody as the inscription of continuity and change.

My attempt to find a more neutral definition that would account for the particular kind of parody displayed by the art forms of this century has an interesting antecedent. In the eighteenth century, when the valuing of wit and the predominance of satire brought parody to the forefront as a major literary mode, one might expect definitions of it to include the element of ridicule that we find even in today's dictionaries. Yet Samuel Johnson defined parody as "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." Although it is true that this defines plagiarism as well, it does have the singular merit of not limiting the ethos of parody. Susan Stewart's much more recent definition shares this advantage: parody consists of "substituting elements within a dimension of a given text in such a way that the resulting text stands in an inverse or incongruous relation to the borrowed text" (1978, 1979, 185), although the mention of incongruity suggests an implied theory of laughter that

may represent the element of ridicule sneaking in by the back door. I prefer to retain my simple definition. I think it expresses certain common denominators of all theories of parody for all ages, but it is also, for me, a particular necessity for dealing with modern parodic art. By this definition, then, parody is repetition, but repetition that includes difference (Deleuze 1968); it is imitation with critical ironic distance, whose irony can cut both ways. Ironic versions of "trans-contextualization" and inversion are its major formal operatives, and the range of pragmatic ethos is from scornful ridicule to reverential homage.

The danger of such a definition is that it might appear to risk confusing the limits of the genre's boundaries even more than is already the case. The rest of the chapter will be devoted to showing that this is, in fact, not necessarily true. In defining parody in both formal and pragmatic terms, however, it might be argued that I have reduced it to intertextuality. Following Kristeva's (1969, 255) lead, some contemporary theorists have tried to make intertextuality into a purely formal category of textual interaction (Genette 1982, 8; Jenny 1976, 257). It is the supreme value of the work of Michael Riffaterre that it acknowledges the fact that only a reader (or, more generally, a decoder) can activate the intertext (1980a, 626). Riffaterre, like Roland Barthes (1975b, 35-6), defines intertextuality as a modality of perception, an act of decoding texts in the light of other texts. For Barthes, however, the reader is free to associate texts more or less at random, limited only by individual idiosyncrasy and personal culture. Riffaterre, on the other hand, argues that the text in its "structured entirety" (1978, 195n.) demands a more conditioned and therefore more limited reading (1974, 278). Parody would obviously be an even more extreme case of this, because its constraints are deliberate and, indeed, necessary to its comprehension. But, in addition to this extra restricting of the intertextual relationship between decoder and text, parody demands that the semiotic competence and intentionality of an inferred encoder be posited. Therefore, 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 codes between producer and receiver are central and will be the subject of Chapter 5.

The framework in which my definition of parody *does* situate itself, unavoidably, is that of other forms of textual imitation and appropriation. The classical and Renaissance belief in the value of imitation as a means of instruction has been passed down through the centuries. Antoine Albalat's *La Formation du style par l'assimilation des auteurs* (1910) is an updated version of those earlier manuals of rhetoric. But imitation

in such contexts often meant pastiche or parody. Which? Well, the distinction proves difficult: Proust used both terms for his ironic imitations of Balzac, Flaubert, Michelet, and others. Is Beerbohm's (1921) "The Mote in the Middle Distance" (*A Christmas Garland* (1921)) a parody or a pastiche of the late style of James, with its broken sentences, italics, double negatives, and vague adjectives? Is pastiche more serious and respectful than parody (Idt 1972-3, 134)? Or would that be true only if the concept of parody that was used insisted on ridicule in its description? Since my definition allows for a wide range of ethos, it would not seem possible for me to distinguish parody from pastiche on those grounds. However, it seems to me that parody does seek differentiation in its relationship to its model; pastiche operates more by similarity and correspondence (Freund 1981, 23). In Genette's (1982, 34) terms, parody is transformational in its relationship to other texts; pastiche is imitative.

Although neither parody nor pastiche, as used by someone like Proust, can be considered as trivial game-playing (Amossy and Rosen 1974), there may be a difference in textual localization that makes pastiche seem more superficial. One critic calls it "form-rendering" (Wells 1919, xxi). Pastiche usually has to remain within the same genre as its model, whereas parody allows for adaptation; Georges Fourest's sonnet on Corneille's play *Le Cid* ("Le palais de Gormaz . . .") would be a parody, rather than a pastiche à la manière de Corneille. Pastiche will often be an imitation not of a single text (Albertsen 1971, 5; Deffoux 1932, 6; Hempel 1965, 175) but of the indefinite possibilities of texts. It involves what Daniel Bilous (1982; 1984) calls the interstyle, not the intertext. But, once again, it is similarity rather than difference that characterizes the relationship between the two styles. Parody is to pastiche, perhaps, as rhetorical trope is to cliché. In pastiche and cliché, difference can be said to be reduced to similarity. This is not to say that a parody cannot contain (or use to parodic ends) a pastiche: Joyce's "Oxen of the Sun" episode, with its wide range of virtuoso stylistic imitations, would be a most obvious example (Levin 1941, 105-7).

Both parody and pastiche not only are formal textual imitations but clearly involve the issue of intent. Both are acknowledged borrowings. Herein lies the most obvious distinction between parody and plagiarism. In imprinting upon its own form that of the text it parodies, a parody can ease the decoder's interpretive task. There would be no need in literature, for example, to resort to "stylometry," the statistical analysis of style to determine authorship (Morton 1978). Although there have been many famous cases of forgery in both art and literature (see Farrer 1907; Whitehead 1973), such hoaxes as the Rimbaud "Chasse spirituelle"

(Morrissette 1956) and the *Spectra* collection (Smith 1961) are fundamentally different from parody in their desire to conceal, rather than engage the decoder in the interpretation of their backgrounded texts. The close relationship between pastiche (which aims at similarity) and plagiarism is articulated in a most amusing fashion in Hubert Monteilhet's novel *Mourir à Francfort* (1975). The protagonist, a professor and secret novelist, decides to revive a little-known novel by the Abbé Prévost and publish it under a pseudonym, as he does all his novels. He views his slight reworking of it as a playful revenge on his publisher, as an elegant if unacknowledged pastiche. Others have different names for it, of course. All of this takes place in a Gidean parody of a double-journal novel superimposed on an inverted detective-story plot (the murder takes place only at the very end), whose moral is that the wages of plagiarism is death.

On a somewhat more serious note, the interaction of parody and plagiarism can be seen in the public response to the publication of D. M. Thomas's *The White Hotel* (1981). Although Thomas acknowledged his borrowing from Dina Pronicheva's eyewitness account as the sole survivor of Babi Yar on the copyright page of the novel, his more or less verbatim borrowing launched an intense but perhaps ultimately fruitless debate on plagiarism in the pages of *The Times Literary Supplement* in March and April of 1982. It is interesting that no one, I believe, attacked Thomas for plagiarizing Freud's work, though he produced a fine, if invented, example of a Freudian case history in the same novel. Perhaps the Author's Note about his fictionalizing of what he calls the discoverer of the great modern myth of psychoanalysis had forestalled the critics. Or perhaps serious parody is a different thing altogether. For his case history is not Freud's, even if parts of it quote from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, which the fictional Freud, like the real one, was writing at the time of the action of the novel. The reader knows that this text is not Freud's, just as he or she knows that the third part of Rochberg's Third String Quartet is not Beethoven's. It is the knowledge of this difference that, quite simply, separates parody and plagiarism. In his novel *Lanark* (1981), Alasdair Gray spoofs the entire debate by providing the reader with a parodic "Index of Plagiarisms" for the novel. We are informed that there are three kinds of literary theft in the book:

BLOCK PLAGIARISM, where someone else's work is printed as a distinct typographical unit, IMBEDDED PLAGIARISM, where stolen words are concealed within the body of the narrative, and DIFFUSE PLAGIARISM, where scenery, characters, actions or novel ideas have been stolen without the original words describing them. (485)

To reinforce his mockery, he adds: "To save space these will be referred

to hereafter as Blockplag, Implag, and Difplag."

The distinction between parody and plagiarism is necessary only because they have indeed been used as synonyms (Paull 1928, 134), and because the issue of intention (to imitate with critical irony or to imitate with intent to deceive) is one that is both complex and hard to verify. This is why I have limited myself to encoded or inferred intention in discussing parody. Can one tell whether Emerson, Lake, and Palmer intended to borrow (parody) or to steal (plagiarize) Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro* in their *The Barbarian*? The title, I feel, suggests the former, but there are others who disagree (Rabinowitz 1980, 246). It is also the issue of intention that is involved in the confusion of parody with burlesque and travesty. If parody is defined in terms of one ethos – that of ridicule – there is bound to be considerable difficulty in distinguishing from among these forms. The history of the terms suggests that this is indeed the case (Bond 1932, 4; Hempel 1965, 164; Karrer 1977, 70-3). Dictionaries do not help much either: the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines both verbs "to burlesque" and "to travesty" identically: "to turn into ridicule by grotesque parody or imitation." More recent theoreticians' attempts at precision have not been much more helpful, hampered as they frequently are by their limited definitions of parody as ridicule. Dwight Macdonald (1960, 557-8) sees travesty as the most primitive of the forms and parody as the broadest. John Jump makes parody into a kind of "high burlesque of a particular work (or author) achieved by applying the style of that work (or author) to a less worthy subject" (1972, 2). Distinctions between high and low forms suggest the categories of another age, of an aesthetic that is much more rigid than ours would appear to be today in its norms. And distinctions that separate style from subject like this (Bond 1932; Davidson 1966; Freund 1981; Householder 1944) suggest a separation of form and content that is, to many theorists, now considered questionable. Both burlesque and travesty do necessarily involve ridicule, however; parody does not. This difference in required ethos is certainly one of the things that distinguish these forms, at least according to what modern art teaches.

It is a difference of intent that also serves to distinguish parody from quotation, probably the most frequently suggested analogue to modern parody. Bakhtin may be responsible for the valorization of this model: when writing of Hellenic literature, he noted that there were varying degrees of assimilation and differentiation in the use of quotations: hidden, overt, half hidden (Bakhtin 1981, 68-9). Although this is true of classical literature in general, it is worth reminding ourselves that the purpose of quoting examples from the works of the greats was to lend their prestige

and authority to one's own text. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, once attributed to Cicero, is quick to warn, however, that citation is not in itself a mark of cultivation. The ancients can at best act as models. This is not quite the use Bakhtin wanted to make of quotations. In fact, a closer look reveals that he saw parody as citation only in a metaphorical sense. The French translation of the passage about the functioning of parody reads: "C'est le genre lui-même, c'est son style, son langage, qui sont *comme insérés entre des guillemets* qui leur donnent un ton moqueur" (1978, 414; my italics). The English retains the metaphoric sense if not the simile: "The genre itself, the style, the language are all put in cheerfully irreverent quotation marks" (1981, 55). Bakhtin wanted to define parody as a form of indirect discourse, as referring to other forms; hence his idea of its being "as if" in quotation marks.

However, when Margaret Rose defines parody as "the critical quotation of preformed literary language with comic effect" (1979, 59), the metaphor has suddenly become literalized. She has, in fact, inverted Michel Butor's (1967) notion that even the most literal quotation is already a kind of parody because of its "trans-contextualization." But is it legitimate to reverse this and claim that all parody is therefore quotation? I think not, despite the fact that there are convincing arguments being mounted these days for making quotation the model for all writing (Compagnon 1979). "Trans-contextualized" repetition is certainly a feature of parody, but the critical distancing that defines parody is not necessarily implicit in the idea of quotation: to refer to a text as a parody is not the same as to refer to it as a quotation, even if parody has been voided of any defining characteristic suggesting ridicule. Both, however, are forms that "trans-contextualize," and one could argue that any change of context necessitates a difference in interpretation (Ejxenbaum 1978b). In both, therefore, there would be that tension between assimilation and dissimilation that Herman Meyer (1968, 6) saw in the use of quotation in the modern German novel. Similarly, both would allow for a wide range of ethos, from the acknowledging of authority to free play, and both would demand certain shared codes to enable comprehension. Quotation, in other words, while itself fundamentally different from parody in some ways, is also structurally and pragmatically close enough that what in fact happens is that quotation becomes a form of parody, especially in modern music and art.

I do not agree with Stefan Morawski that "even the most consummate and versatile connoisseur of the arts would have to rack his memory much harder to recall an example of quotation in painting, theatre or film, than in the case of literature" (1970, 701). And no one who had

seen Thomas Vreeland's quoting of both the Campanile of the Cathedral in Sienna and Adolf Loos's design for the Josephine Baker House in Paris in his own World Savings and Loan Association building in Santa Ana, California, could say that architecture is the art the "least amenable to quotation" (Morawski 1970, 702). What about Michael Graves's quotation of the broken symmetries and the landscape/building interrelations of Raphael's sixteenth-century Villa Madama in his 1977 Placek House?

In the visual arts, semioticians like René Payant (1979, 5) are tempted to postulate that all paintings quote other paintings. This argument would be not unlike the Russian formalist insistence on the conventionality of literature. Both are reactions to a realist aesthetic that values the representational in art. Many of these citational paintings are, as we have seen, parodic. The same is true in music's use of quoting in order to effect contrast. For critics hampered by a ridicule-laden definition of parody, such quotation is often not considered at all parodic (Gruber 1977; Kneif 1973). Nevertheless there is a general agreement that quotation has become of central importance to modern music (Kuhn 1972; Siegmund-Schultze 1977; Sonntag 1977). George Rochberg has traced his development out of serialism and his discovery of the musical traditions of the past in terms that show the difference between simple and parodic quotation. In the sleeve notes to his String Quartet No. 3 (Nonesuch H-71283), he talks of his arriving at the conviction that the past should be a "living present" for composers. He first began by quoting parts of tonal music in the form of assemblages or collages in his *Contra Mortem et Tempus*. But soon commentary was implied in his act of quoting (*Nach Bach*), and in the Third String Quartet the parodic synthesis of the new atonality and the old tonal conventions (nineteenth-century melodic-harmonic language in general, and the styles of Beethoven and Mahler in particular) was possible. Similarly Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia* "trans-contextualizes" fragmented quotations of Bach, Schoenberg, Debussy, Ravel, Strauss, Brahms, Berlioz, and others, within the context of the rhythmic impulses of the third movement of Mahler's Second Symphony. On the record sleeve (CBC Classics 61079) Berio tells us: "The Mahler movement is treated like a container within whose framework a large number of references are proliferated, interrelated and integrated into the flowing structure of the original work itself." This is what the formalists called "refunctioning" or parody, although it does involve "trans-contextualizing" quotation.

Parody has a stronger bitextual determination than does simple quotation or even allusion: it partakes of both the code of a particular text parodied, and also of the parodic generic code in general (Jenny 1976,

258). I include allusion here because it too has been defined in ways that have led to confusion with parody. Allusion is "a device for the simultaneous activation of two texts" (Ben-Porat 1976, 107), but it does so mainly through correspondence - not difference, as is the case with parody. However, ironic allusion would be closer to parody, although allusion in general remains a less constricted or "predetermined" form than parody (Perri 1978, 299), which must signal difference in some way. Parody is also often a more extended form of transtextual reference today.

Parody, then, is related to burlesque, travesty, pastiche, plagiarism, quotation, and allusion, but remains distinct from them. It shares with them a restriction of focus: its repetition is always of another discursive text. The ethos of that act of repetition can vary, but its "target" is always intramural in this sense. How, then, does parody come to be confused with satire, which is extramural (social, moral) in its ameliorative aim to hold up to ridicule the vices and follies of mankind, with an eye to their correction? For the confusion certainly does exist. Parody has been implicitly or explicitly called a form of satire by many theorists (Blackmur 1964; Booth 1974; Feinberg 1967; Macdonald 1960; Paulson 1967; Rose 1979; Stone 1914). For some, this is a way of not limiting parody to an aesthetic context, of opening it up to social and moral dimensions (see Karrer 1977, 29-31). While I sympathize with the attempt, two subsequent chapters (4 and 6) will address the complexity of this issue. Just calling parody satire seems a little too simple as an instant way to give parody a social function.

The grounds upon which other theorists do separate the two genres are sometimes debatable. Winfried Freund (1981, 20) claims that satire aims at the restoration of positive values, while parody can only operate negatively. Since her focus is largely on German nineteenth-century literature, parody is said to lack important metaphysical and moral dimensions that satire can demonstrate. But I would argue that the difference between the two forms lies not so much in their perspective on human behavior, as she believes, but in what is being made into a "target." In other words, parody is not extramural in its aim; satire is. Both Northrop Frye (1970, 233-4, 322) and Tuvia Shlonsky (1966, 798) have argued this clearly and convincingly in the face of remarks such as "No aspect of society has been safe from the parodist's mocking attention" (Feinberg 1967, 188). Yet the obvious reason for the confusion of parody and satire, despite this major difference between them, is the fact that the two genres are often used together. Satire frequently uses parodic art forms for either expository or aggressive purposes (Paulson 1967, 5-6), when it desires textual differentiation as its vehicle. Both satire and

parody imply critical distancing and therefore value judgments, but satire generally uses that distance to make a negative statement about that which is satirized – “to distort, to belittle, to wound” (Highet 1962, 69). In modern parody, however, we have found that no such negative judgment is necessarily suggested in the ironic contrasting of texts. Parodic art both deviates from an aesthetic norm and includes that norm within itself as backgrounded material. Any real attack would be self-destructive.

The interaction of parody and satire in modern art is pervasive, despite the view of one commentator who has decided that satire is now a minor and outdated form (Wilde 1981, 28). (What do we do with Coover, Pynchon, Rushdie and a spate of other contemporary novelists?) The increased cultural homogeneity in the “global village” has increased the range of parodic forms available for use. In earlier centuries, the Bible and the classics were the major backgrounded texts for the educated class; popular songs provided the vehicle for others. While this is a general rule, there are, of course, always exceptions. Rochester ironically inverted the conventions of religious poetry to cynical and sexual ends in his parodies (Treglown 1973), thereby reversing the Lutheran practice of spiritualizing the secular (Grout 1980). Epic traditions, however, provided the ground for many parodies in the eighteenth century, parodies that are very close to some kinds of modern satiric forms of parody. The mock epic did not mock the epic: it satirized the pretensions of the contemporary as set against the ideal norms implied by the parodied text or set of conventions. Its historic antecedent was probably the *silli* or Homeric parodies, which satirized certain people or ways of life without in any way mocking Homer’s work (Householder 1944, 3). There are still other, later examples of the same kind of use of parody and satire as we find in today’s art forms. For example, the predecessor of much recent feminist parodic satire is to be found in Jane Austen’s fiction. In *Love and Friendship*, Austen parodies the popular romance fiction of her day and, through it, satirizes the traditional view of woman’s role as the lover of men. Laura and Sophia live out pre-patterned literary plots and are discredited by Austen’s parody of Richardson’s literary “heroinization” and its presentation of female passivity. As Susan Gubar has shown, “in her parodies of Fanny Burney and Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges in *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen dramatizes [and satirizes] how damaging it has been for women to inhabit a culture created by and for men” (Gilbert and Gubar 1979, 120). Along with Mary Shelley, Emily and Charlotte Brontë, and other women writers, Austen used parody as the disarming but effective literary vehicle for social satire.

I do not mean to suggest, then, that only modern parody plays with

this particular conjunction with the satiric. Most of eighteenth-century literature in England did so too. And Gilbert and Sullivan certainly made almost formulaic use of it: *Iolanthe* parodied the fairy-tale form in order to satirize the peerage. *Princess Ida* was a respectful inversion of Tennyson’s *Princess* that served as the vehicle for a satire of women’s rights. More within our period of interest, Apollinaire used formal parody to satirize Verlaine’s causeless spiritual pain in terms of actual physical discomfort. Rimbaud’s “Il pleut doucement sur la ville” forms the epigraph to Verlaine’s poem, which begins:

Il pleure dans mon cœur
Comme il pleut sur la ville.
Quelle est cette langueur
Qui pénètre mon cœur?

Apollinaire’s parody reads:

Il flotte dans mes bottes
Comme il pleut sur la ville.
Au diable cette flotte
Que pénètre mes bottes!

Neither the parody nor the satire is very subtle in this more traditional kind of parody.

In the more extended version that we have been examining, the interaction with satire is more complex. When Joyce’s *Ulysses* turns to Homer’s *Odyssey*, and Eliot’s *The Waste Land* invokes an even more vast tradition, from Virgil through Dante and on to the symbolists and beyond, what is at issue is more than an allusive echoing either of one text or of the cultural patrimony. The discursive practices active at a particular time and in a particular place are involved (Gomez-Moriana 1980-1, 18). The interdiscursive *énonciation*, as well as the intertextual *énoncé*, is implicated. The *Don Quijote* written by that seventeenth-century Spaniard called Cervantes would be different, Borges (1962, 1964, 42-3) has suggested, from the *Quijote* written by a modern French symbolist – let’s call him Pierre Menard – even if they are verbally identical texts. Menard’s text would be richer because of what has now become deliberate anachronism (and “brazenly pragmatic” historicism). Knowing that Menard would be the contemporary of William James, Borges’s narrator can reread the *Quijote* in the light of this philosophical, social, and cultural (as well as literary) “trans-contextualization.” This parodic use of literature to help in the ironic judgment of society is not new to our century: Eliot’s predecessor in facing the decline of his community and his age through satiric parody is probably Juvenal (Lelièvre 1958). We shall see in the

next chapter the role of irony in the seemingly strong compatibility between parody and satire.

For many, the 1960s marked a new golden age of satire (Dooley 1971), but it was a satire that relied very much on parody and therefore shared its variable ethos. In the work of writers like Pynchon and artists like Robert Colescott, there is less of a sense of aiming at what Swift called "no defect / But what all mortals may correct." The black humor (as it was labeled) of these years has begun to change our concept of satire, just as respectful parody has changed our notion of parody. But that is probably the subject of another book. Nevertheless, the interaction of the two genres remains a constant. Much female writing today, aiming as it does to be both revisionary and revolutionary, is "parodic, duplicitous, extraordinarily sophisticated" (Gilbert and Gubar 1979, 80). Short fiction by writers like Barthelme has proved as provocative as longer works because of its economical use of suggestive parody. Max Apple's "The Oranging of America" (1976, 3-19) uses a parody of, obviously, *The Greening of America* to satirize the acquisitive American ethic epitomized by Howard Johnson and his orange-roofed hotels.

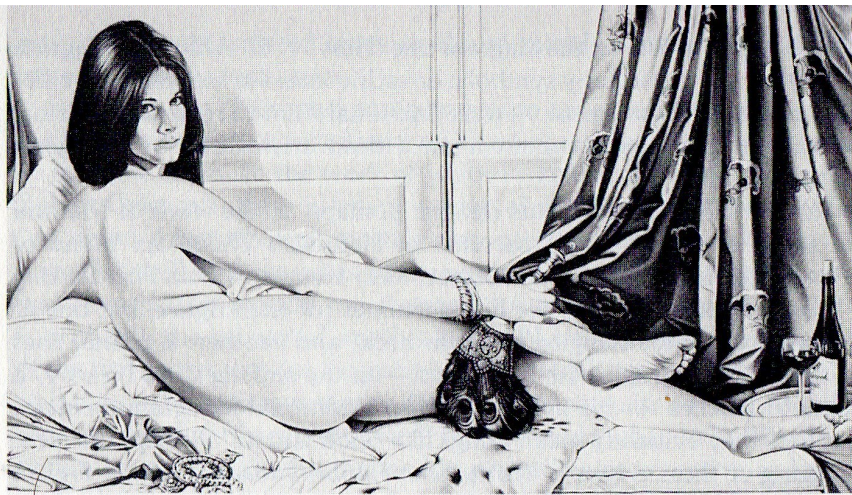
Musical satiric parody also has an honorable history. Mozart's *A Musical Joke* parodies certain modish musical conventions (unnecessary repetition of banalities, incorrect modulation, disjointed melodic ideas) as a vehicle for the satire of inept amateur composing and performing – it is also known as the *Village Musician's Sextet*. In a manner which suggests almost a parody of Mozart, the second movement of Charles Ives's Fourth Symphony parodies other pieces of music and at the same time imitates the playing of incompetent performers. In his *The Fourth of July*, the fictional amateur band performance is meant, I suppose, to take an American listener back to the innocence of childhood and fourth of July picnics. There is an interesting tension set up between this nostalgic recall and the realization that this is something different: the technical errors of that band serve as parodic reminders of difference that function satirically to make the listener consider his or her present state of lost innocence.

In the visual arts, there is a wide range of satiric uses of parodic forms. Ad Reinhardt's overt satires of the art scene of New York in the forties and fifties took the form of comic-style illustration/collage pieces, in order to parody those didactic attempts to comprehend the complexity of developments in art by simplistic textbook diagrams. *How to Look at Modern Art in America* is a parody of those synoptic tables of the modernist movements which were used to teach modern art in universities. It is also a satire of the contemporary art scene, through where he

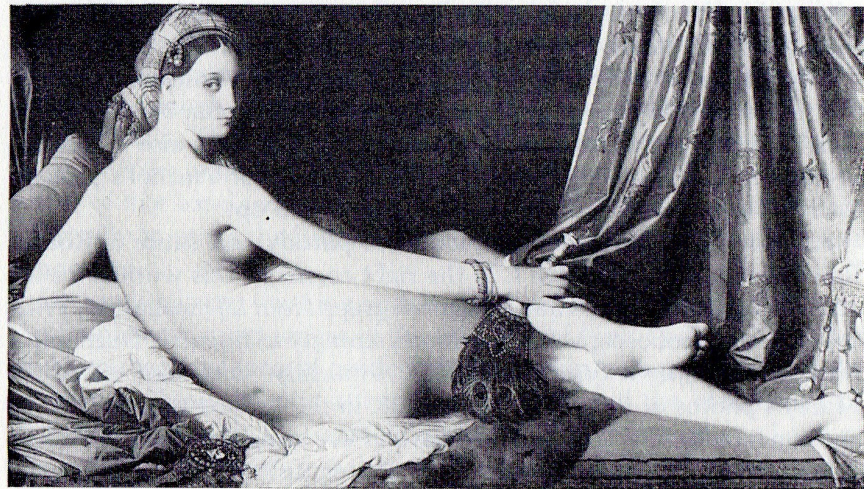
placed which artists on the diagram tree (Hess 1974). Although Magritte (1979) himself denied any symbolic or satiric intent in his coffin parodies of David and Manet, most viewers find it hard not to read in the formal parody an ideological comment on a dead aristocratic or bourgeois culture.

Similar satiric intent seems clearer, perhaps, in the work of Masami Teraoka, especially in his parodies of Hokusai's *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji*. One of these, for instance, *New Views of Mount Fuji: Sinking Pleasure Boat*, maintains the Edo costumes for each figure, but one of them has a camera hanging from his neck, and another, a geisha, tries to take a photograph with her tripod – on the sinking ship. Nearby, a samurai reaches for his golf clubs. The traditional ideograms remain, but here they evidently mean things like "Golf Craze." Perhaps the most amusing of these works is *Thirty-One Flavors Invading Japan: French Vanilla*, with its parody of the Japanese erotic print and its satire of the Americanization of Japan (see Lipman and Marshall 1978, 94-5). A similar ironic juxtaposition of erotic traditions is revealed in the work of Mel Ramos. His *Velázquez Version* is a parody of the master's *Venus and Cupid*, but through a second level of parody (of *Playboy* pinups) the narcissism of modern woman is satirized. Perhaps Ramos is also suggesting, by the parodic juxtaposition, that what we find erotic today may, indeed, not have changed. He reworks Manet's *Olympia* and Ingres's *La Grande Odalisque* in much the same way. Andy Warhol goes one better than Duchamp and his Dadaist *L.H.O.O.Q.* with its moustached *Mona Lisa* when he reproduces the Renaissance masterpiece in silkscreen, repeated thirty times. The pop ironic commentary is clear in his title – *Thirty are Better than One* – implying a satire of a consumer society that loves quantity more than quality and therefore can use a popular icon of highbrow art as a mass-produced product. It is also a society, of course, that is willing to pay highbrow prices for Warhol's parodic satire; the market has an infinite capacity to co-opt.

Another example of the interaction of parody and satire is Robert Rauschenberg's *Retroactive I*. In the right corner of this work is a silk-screen enlargement of a Gjon Mili photograph from *Life* magazine. With the help of a stroboscopic flash, it comes strongly to resemble Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (which, ironically, was itself based on Marey's photos of a moving body). But, in the context of the work, it ends up looking like a Masaccio Adam and Eve being expelled from Eden. The determining context is that of a photograph of John F. Kennedy (already a godlike cult figure when the work was executed in 1964), who becomes a vengeful God-figure with finger pointed.



5 Mel Ramos, *Plenti-Grand Odalisque*, 1973



6 J.A.D. Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*

More popular art forms such as comic strips and television series have also been analyzed to reveal the close interaction of parodic forms and satiric intent. The work of Ziva Ben-Porat (1979) is remarkable among studies of both genres in its lucid study of the conventional nature of both the social referent of the satire and the parodic code used to communicate it. The long definitions of both are worth citing for their precision in making the distinction between the two forms. Parody is defined in basically semiotic terms as an

alleged representation, usually comic, of a literary text or other artistic object – i.e. a representation of a “modelled reality,” which is itself already a particular representation of an original “reality.” The parodic representations expose the model’s conventions and lay bare its devices through the coexistence of the two codes in the same message. (1979, 247)

Satire, in contrast, is a

critical representation, always comic and often caricatural, of “non-modelled reality,” i.e. of the real objects (their reality may be mythical or hypothetical) which the receiver reconstructs as the referents of the message. The satirized original “reality” may include mores, attitudes, types, social structures, prejudices, and the like. (1979, 247-8)

Ben-Porat’s analysis of the interaction of parody and satire in the MAD television series is complex enough not to be reproducible in this context. It is, however, necessary reading for anyone interested in this topic.

There is yet another reason for the confusion between parody and satire in theory and criticism. Parody is not just to be considered as a formal entity, a structure of assimilation or appropriation of other texts. In this confusion, it is not just the intricate textual interaction of parody and satire that is at fault; nor is the ignoring of the difference in the kind of “target” (intra- versus extramural) to blame all the time. The next chapter will address the role of irony in this common mixing of genres, for it is on the pragmatic, as much as the formal, level that parody today differentiates itself, not only from satire, but from those traditional definitions that demand the inclusion of the intent to ridicule.