

MUSICAL FORM

IN THE DISTORTING MIRROR OF MUSICAL PARODY

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Annotation. *The work purpose — analysis of the organizing principles underlying the musical parody. The main question — to consider the general mechanisms of the parody, the concrete musical means leading to its formation, and also its general functions in musical art. The basic principle of the parody consists in the structural-semantic inversion of the initial text forming its image overturned in the semantic relation. Parody reconsideration of the original usually occurs at the expense of parallel action of the intra text and intertext relations: a certain mutual coordination of the parody text elements, and also «comparison» of this text with the parodied original. Thus the concrete embodiment of inversion can be connected, first, with a certain immanent organization of the musical text structure, secondly — with its extra musical semantic sphere (in musical and theatrical works, vocal music). On concrete examples the main receptions of the parody in music — deformation and agglutination — are considered. At last, functions of the musical parody in a historical and cultural context are separately shown. In particular, the principle of parody inversion is opposed to the idealization and mythologization phenomena accompanying each other in development of culture. Work can be interesting to culturologists, critics, and also everything who is interested in problems of a musical art theory and history.*

Keywords: *parody, music, inversion, agglutination, deformation, hyperbole, semantics, text, art science, culture.*

In the art of music, parody was used and continues to be used in different situations and contexts. It is used by composers, who sometimes have very disparate aesthetic positions and style guidelines. Nevertheless, in musicology, parody forms of music have been studied quite rarely¹; at least, almost nobody has studied it *specifically*. In general, the research of parody as a special artistic phenomenon is mainly associated with literary genres. Indeed, it is in that area where the phenomenon of parody acquired a fairly wide range of incarnations — it is no wonder that many researchers turned to them². At the same time, the study of parody in the art of music is extremely important. This is evidenced by the scale of phenomena associated with parody. Moreover — by its essence that, by its very nature it manifests itself in different historical periods, as we shall see below.

If you try to define the phenomenon of parody in the most general terms, you will be inevitably faced with the fact that it may reveal itself in very diverse forms. It is a well-known fact that parody is a genre

that has a specific orientation³; parody almost always refers to comic or satirical features⁴.

At the same time, it seems that parody may be related not only to specific genres or stylistic features. It forms a kind of *a common artistic principle that shows itself in the semantic and structural reinterpretation of the original that has been parodied*. Parody is always perceived and evaluated against the background of the original, and presents a kind of reflection of it. As for various specific versions of parody, they appear depending on *what is exactly reflected and from what point of view*. And it is natural that the 'original — parody' relationship is always bilateral. The original gives life to the parody, and

³ Here is one such definition: Parody is 'a kind of a satirical work that mocks literary trends, genres, styles, writer's manners, outdated poetic techniques, and vulgar phenomena of reality that are unworthy of poetry' (I. Yeliseyev, L. Polyakova. Dictionary of Literary Terms. Rostov-on-Don, 2002. P. 135–136). V. Zhirmunskiy defines parody as a 'conscious stylization, conscious reproduction of a style in an intentionally caricatured manner for polemical purposes' (Zhirmunskiy V. 'Introduction to Literary Studies' M., 2009. P. 179).

⁴ For example, see Grellman H. Parodie//Merker P., Stammer W. 'Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte' — Berlin, 1926–27, Bd.2. Sheinberg E. 'Irony, satire, parody and the grotesque in the music of Shostakovich: a theory of musical incongruities' - 2000.

¹ For example, see papers by M. Bonfeld, M. Fedorinova, N. Yenukidze, A. Korobova. Among the studies on parody, you can always refer to papers by V. Steineke, C. Borren, T. Rooney, and others.

² See papers by O. Freidenberg, M. Bakhtin, Y. Tynyanov, as well as studies by V. Novikov and G. Lushnikova.

at the same time is perceived in new perspective because of it¹.

Thus, it is obvious that parody can either apply to a particular style as a whole or manifest itself selectively — in these cases you can talk about parody of, for instance, genre or plot only. On the other hand, the effect of parody is sometimes associated with a satirical or grotesque perspective on the original, and sometimes it is not an aim of parody at all. In general, the variety of parody forms emphasizes the versatility of its mechanisms that have, as you shall see below, particular viability in the culture development process.

The methods of research into parody are quite diverse. They can be roughly divided into three groups. First — the research of the structural and semantic organization of parody, i.e. identification of its organizing principles and laws. Second — determination of historically formed types of parody — how its general principles were implemented in specific historical forms. Finally, the third — research of the parody functions in culture itself, and the essence of the position it occupies in it. One way or the other, this paper addresses all three aspects because of their interconnectedness. However, first of all, we will try to use random examples to show the *unity* of specific manifestations of parody and their extreme *outward* diversity.

In the first place, this brings up a question of what are the *methods* that create the parodic reinterpretation in parody compared to the original. They are based on a parallel action of *intratextual* and *intertextual* relations in parody, i.e. on certain mutual coordination of the parody text elements and the «comparison» of the parody text and the original text that has been parodied. As you shall see below, usually these relations show themselves together, but most often one of them prevails over the other.

When considering the general principles of parody, it is correct to speak of the existence of techniques holding what might be considered a leading position². First, these are the techniques associated with a particular intrinsic organization of the musical text intonation structure. Second, the techniques that appeal to *extra-musical semantic field* related to the

¹ 'In the case of parody, stylization and allusions a reader inevitably becomes a participant in a text game. Parody assumes that the parodied text will be recognized, and the stake is put on maintaining a constant tension between the sense of identity of two texts and simultaneous realization of the fact that they are different. It is this tension that gives pleasure from the text.' (Piégay-Gros N. 'Introduction to the Theory of Intertextuality' M., 2008. P. 145).

² Here and below we will talk about the techniques of musical parody; the issue of its relationship with parody in the field of the written word will be left aside.

text — if it has one. For analytical convenience, these techniques will be discussed separately (although they often act simultaneously).

The first group consists of 'deformation' and 'agglutination' methods. In the case of *deformation*, the intonation texture of a text compared to the initial material is subjected to various kinds of modifications that usually distort and even destroy it. The example of this is the use of dissonant horn harmonies in the minuet from Mozart's '*The Village Musicians Sextet*' imitating false playing³, dissonance sounding chords in the accompaniment of the polonaise by O. Kozlovskiy '*Thunder of Victory*' in '*The Nose*' by D. Shostakovich (Example 1) or transformation of the '*Marseillaise*' theme into a dance in '*Carnival Scenes from Vienna*' by R. Schumann because of a new metro-rhythmic pattern (Example 2).

In D. Milhaud's mini-opera '*The Abduction of Europa*' a duet of Jupiter and Europa was written in 5/8 — together with 'halting' metro-rhythmic mismatching it turns into a parody of the love duet (Example 3). A wide range of deformation techniques can be found in '*Five grimaces to «A Midsummer Night's Sleep»*' by E. Satie (techniques of polytonal combinations, transformation of verticals, etc.— Example 4 represents the deformation of the genre of galop). Sometimes the change in tone, tempo, dynamics and articulation alone is enough to create the effect of parody. Thus, it appears in the theme of the main part from the overture to '*The Magic Flute*' by Mozart, based on the theme of the first part of M. Clementi's B-flat major sonata, but with distinctive accents on the last beats (see Examples 5 and 6).

One of the typical musical techniques leading to deformation is *polarization* of one or more bars of the intonation material. It is the use of diametrically opposed means as compared to the original — low pitch instead of high (see Example 7), fast tempo instead of slow, loud dynamics instead of quiet (and vice versa). As a result, initial means in parody get a negative sign. This effect can occur simply due to the severe disruption of stereotypes in perception. Thus, a variety of characteristic examples is represented by *timbre travesty*. If the performance of a male part by women that has a goal to emphasize the young age of a hero is generally perceived as a quite natural phenomenon, then situations where a female role is given to a male voice are usually aimed at if not parodic caricature, then, at least, at grotesque and comic effect — parts of Arnalta from '*The Coronation of Poppea*' by C. Monteverdi,

³ A similar example is a work by Hindemith with a frankly shocking title 'Overture to «The Flying Dutchman» as Played at Sight by a Second-Rate Concert Orchestra at the Village Well at 7 o'clock in the Morning'.

Platée from the eponymously-named lyrical comedy by J. Rameau, the Generala (a woman-general) *'The Inverted World'* by A. Salieri, Donna Agata from *'Conventions and Inconveniences of the Stage'* by G. Donizetti, and the Cook from Prokofiev's opera *'The Love for Three Oranges'* (all three last parts are intended for deep male voices —!)

Hyperbole (Greek: *'hyperbole'* = exaggeration) can be regarded as a special and quite common case of deformation. Hyperbole emphasizes certain signs or the whole system of signs in the original that has been parodied. They appear in the pronouncedly sharpened form — things that are balanced and harmonized in the original are mismatched in parody. Compared to the original, these signs really reveal themselves in the exaggerated grotesque form.

Examples of hyperbole are quite numerous. One of its classic examples is *'The Song of the Roasted Swan'* from C. Orff's *'Carmina Burana'* (with the parodic imitation of lamentation — the highest register of bassoon, and then the tenor's voice part, with unexpected leaps, and the grotesque timbre settings of the background music). Another example is the third part of the *First Symphony* by G. Mahler (with its parody of a funeral march — the highest register of contrabass in the beginning, gradually condensing polyphonic textures and low timbres).

Finally, another technique is agglutination (Latin: *'agglutinare'* = to stick) — a clash of totally disparate elements. Thus, agglutination may occur in the collision of elements from various styles, or when an element does not correspond to its position in the text. Cases of agglutination are also well known — for example, *'The Kreutzer Sonata'* from D. Shostakovich's *'Satyrs to Verse by Sasha Chyorny'*, in which the quotation from the Ninth Sonata for Violin and Piano by Beethoven is being gradually deformed, and then after a failed quotation of Lensky's aria from Tchaikovsky's *'Eugene Onegin'* a new theme suddenly appears in the manner of a frivolous waltz (Example 8).

Another example is *'The Elephant'* from *'The Carnival of the Animals'* by C. Saint-Saens — theme quotations of the sylphs' dance from *'The Damnation of Faust'* by H. Berlioz, and the Scherzo from the music to Shakespeare's *'Midsummer Night's Dream'* by F. Mendelssohn played by contrabass are combined without any interruption¹ (Example 7). In all these cases, new qualities of the colliding elements are activated — the unusual co-arrangement and unpredictable logic of their sequence are in the foreground here.

There can be a situation in which the text style elements are combined in the original and deformed forms. Thus, in the finale of the first act of D. Cimarosa's *'The Imaginary Armida'* (beginning with the words

'Farabutto tiranno') the *opera seria* style at first appears in its pure form, and then gets immediately destroyed — (especially comical are repeated octave leaps in the voice part) — passing into a buffoonish scene.

Both deformation and agglutination upset the inertia of perception — but if in the first case it is due to the 'comparison' of parody and the original, i.e. pre-emptive action of intertextual relations, then in the second case it is because of the predominance of intratextual relations.

However, it is not only these relations that can take part in the formation of parody. In the above examples, parody is generated primarily through transformations in the very intonation texture of the text. At the same time, the text may be perceived as parody due to certain *extra-musical semantics*. Thus, the effect of parody often occurs due to the general *context* — for example, the choir *Amen* from the second part of *'The Damnation of Faust'* by H. Berlioz is perceived as a parody of a church hymn just because of the story line (the whole scene with this choir is a parody of the funeral).

Another example is the trio *'Italia la belle'* from J. Offenbach's operetta *'Mr. Choufleuri'*. It starts with a pompous accompanied recitative followed by the trio itself, which is unequivocally reminiscent of G. Rossini's and V. Bellini's style. As for the scene situation, it is of a frankly comical nature — Choufleuri, his daughter Ernestine and her lover Babylas try to perform the *'Italian Trio'*. (Choufleuri wanted to hold a reception, but opera singers that were invited by him refused to come). In the beginning, the recitative and the trio fully keep the high style of Italian opera, and then the musical material itself also begins to undergo frankly grotesque transformation.

A more complicated situation arises when parodying the material that *initially* has some extra-musical semantics. Its discrepancy with extra-musical meanings in the context of parody itself can give rise to the powerful effect of parody dissonance — *'Prudence'* from *'Five Romances on Words from Krokodil Magazine'* by D. Shostakovich (a quote from the *Dies Irae* can be heard with the words *'Although that hooligan Fedulov beat me up...'*), the *'Chizhyk-Pyzhik'* theme from the second act of *'The Golden Cockerel'* by Rimsky-Korsakov, and a quote of the Orpheus aria from Gluck's opera in J. Offenbach's operetta *'Orpheus in the Underworld'*².

Finally, the parodic effect also arises because of the *simultaneous* mismatch of extra-musical and musical levels of the content. Here it is enough to

¹ Note that here agglutination is combined with transformation — change in the timbre and tempo as compared to the original.

² Mismatch between an extra-musical semantic plane and the music itself was used by composers quite often and in different epochs — see, for example, the scene in the cellar from the opera by G. Paisiello *'The Imaginary Socrates'*. (Don Tammara sings a sublime text in the primitive melody).

Example 1 — D. Shostakovich, 'The Nose', First act, First scene, bar 44

Molto meno mosso

p *pp*

Tam-tam P-to *cresc.*

Example 2 — R. Schumann, 'Carnival Scenes from Vienna', Allegro, from bar 293

Sehr lebhaft

ff *sf*

Example 3 — D. Milhaud, 'The Abduction of Europa,' from the Fourth Scene

Jupiter Taurin 53

L'A_ mour qui chan_ ge les Humains en be_ tes

Example 4 — E. Satie, 'Cinq Grimaces pour «Le songe d'une nuit d'été»' ('A Midsummer Night's Dream') No. 1



Example 5 — M. Clementi, Sonata Op. 6 No.2, First Part



Example 6 — W. Mozart, 'The Magic Flute', Overture, main theme



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recall 'Aphorisms' by D. Shostakovich — in this cycle the play names direct listeners toward quite definite genre associations that do not match with the music at all, or the E. Satie's cycle 'Automatic Descriptions', in which conspicuously absurd comments seem to be completely inconsistent with the music¹.

It is obvious that in all these cases a listener has to be aware of the extra-musical content level — vocal text and program of symphonic music. So, parody refer-

ences in 'Don Quixote' by R. Strauss (Variation 7 — 'Ride of the Valkyries' from 'Die Walküre', Variation 8 — Introduction to 'The Rhine Gold' by R. Wagner) can be fully identified only if you know the name and content of the work.

The above techniques of deformation and agglutination reveal a structural perspective of the parodic action². As for its semantic perspective, it is

¹ Another grotesque example is the third number in the cycle 'Desiccated Embryos' that includes the middle section of the funeral march from F. Chopin's Piano Sonata No.2, while the author's commentary reads as follows: 'From the famous mazurka by Schubert' (!).

² Also note that the parody techniques were most often implemented in the relatively compressed text scale. Most parodies are small in scale — apparently, the inversion principle itself requires inevitable saving of means, their rigorous selection and compactness in the particular implementation. Otherwise parody will inevitably lose its sharpness and the effect of suddenness in the perception will be lost.

Example 7 — C. Saint-Saens, 'The Carnival of the Animals — The Elephant'

Allegretto pomposo

Piano II *mf*

Cb. solo

Example 8 — D. Shostakovich, 'Satyrs to Verse by Sasha Chyorny — The Kreutzer Sonata'

Adagio

f

dim.

Allegretto

mf *dim.* *p*

common for all situations — it manifests itself in the *inversion of the original semantics* that acquires an opposite sign in parody. In case of hyperbole, deformation and agglutination the inversion is achieved in different ways, but its *overall* effect is uniform. In particular, it is this effect that leads to the fact that the comparison of parody semantics and the original semantics is always conflictual¹. In this regard, M. Bakhtin noted that in parody 'as in stylization, the author again speaks someone else's discourse, but in contrast to stylization parody introduces into that discourse a semantic intention that is directly opposite to the original one. The second voice, once having made its home in the other's discourse, clashes hostilely with its primordial host and forces him to serve directly opposing aims. Discourse becomes an arena of battle between two voices'². We emphasize once again that this conflict is revealed in the active dialogue that inevitably leads to the creation of new meanings — the failure of the perception inertia, which was mentioned above, allows you to represent the semantics of the original parodied in a new and unexpected perspective.

Parody is often associated with the action of intertextual interaction mechanisms, and the leading position among them is undoubtedly occupied by the principle of quotation. Besides, the phenomenon of parody often intersects with *stylization*. In particular, this was pointed out by Y. Tynyanov: 'The stylization stands close to the parody. Both live a double life: behind the plane of a composed work stands another plane, stylized or parodied. In the parody, however, the lack of consonance between the two planes dislocates them. In the stylization this lack of consonance is missing; there is, on the contrary, a matching of the planes with each other: of the stylized, and that which glimmers through it'³. Thus, even if parody occurs on the basis of stylization, it is just a transformed reflection of its target. Stylization is a creative reconstruction of the original, while parody is not just a reconstruction, but its radical review.

When referring to specific versions of parody, we see that its targets are extremely volatile. At the same time, there were changes in the orientation of parody and, accordingly, in its *functions*. First of all,

¹ A telling example of parody built on a comparison of different styles is 'The Classic' by Mussorgsky. The parodic nature of this work is achieved not due to the means used (hyperbolized classical harmony and texture that have an emphasized refined appearance), but rather due to their comparison with Mussorgsky's style in general.

² Bakhtin M. 'Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics' M., 1972. P. 330–331.

³ Tynyanov Y. Dostoevsky and Gogol (Towards a Theory of Parody)//Poetics. History of Literature. Cinema.M., 1977. P. 201.

it should be noted that in addition to specific works, whole styles can be a target of parody. In the latter case, these styles are represented in parody either by their most typical and common features, or by elements taken from a specific work that is most representative of the style.

Thus, it is necessary to recall various parodies of French lyric tragedy and opera seria that appeared in the XVIII century. Examples are extremely numerous, among them — 'The Beggar's Opera' by J. Pepusch; later — 'The Chinese Idol' and 'Love Tricks' by G. Paisiello, 'The Impresario in a Tight Spot' by D. Cimarosa⁴. Obviously, in these cases, we should speak of a unique artistic criticism regarding legacy of the past that shows itself not just in a distorted form — its 'shortcomings' become exaggerated. In particular, the targets of parody are typical fable situations, in the general style of the libretto seria (intricate intrigues, stereotype structure of plots, metaphorical comparisons in texts of arias, etc.) and music (bel canto, with its system of effects?).

It is interesting to note that until the XIXth century parody in music was mainly associated with a certain organization of the *extra-musical* text plane. Intonation transformation techniques — deformation and hyperbole — were quite rare. The very same effect of parody was achieved mainly due to the mismatch of musical and verbal planes — for example, the content of an opera scene and its concrete implementation. Apparently, the homogeneity of the musical language, the orientation to its general acceptance and, finally, ethical and aesthetical standards themselves were a powerful obstacle to the parodic transformation of the intonation text plane. It would be possible in the XIXth century.

This is demonstrated by parodies of operas. For example, F. Lampe's opera 'Pyramus and Thisbe' parodies an opera seria solely by the opposition of a really absurd plot (one of the characters is the Wall; lovers can not find each other within a stone's throw; after death they reappear on stage) and the music. There is no parody in the opposition itself, but in appropriate stage situations it becomes grotesque.

Another example is a comic opera by F. Gassmann with a frankly provocative title 'Opera Seria'. Here the parodic plot is realized by both typically buffoonish methods and means that really correspond to opera seria. However, the latter have almost no parodic nuances — they are interpreted in quite usual outlines. The clash of stylistically disparate (for the XVIIIth century) elements belonging to the high and comi-

⁴ In general, parody of plot situations and seria style can be found in the works of a variety of composers, including W. Mozart (eg. 'Cosi fan tutti'), D. Cimarosa ('The Imaginary Armida'), and J. Offenbach ('Mr. Choufleuri').

cal style¹, and, finally, their use in the context of the plot itself turn the whole piece into outright parody. Thus, it is vitalized not so much by the musical plane of the text as by its dialogue with extra-musical series.

In the XVIIIth century, composers almost never allowed the caricature lowering and distortion of the intonation material². But they could easily take the liberty to use a popular melody, but with a new text that did not correspond to its meaning at all. For example, in the choir of robbers from the second act of the *'The Beggar's Opera'* J. Gay borrows a march theme from the third act of the opera *'Rinaldo'* by G. Handel. As a result, this melody — well-known to the English public — acquired pronouncedly lowered characteristics.

Of course, critical review accompanied the life of opera in subsequent centuries as well — it is evidenced by Borodin's *'The Bogatyr's'* and Ehrenberg's *'Vampuka, the African Bride'*. However, the 'art criticism' in parody could take on different shapes. In the XIXth century, the review of genres or styles, as well as revelation and mocking of their 'negative' features was often accompanied by extra-artistic polemics. In those cases, musical parody sought to direct its critical principles toward various social issues that at the appropriate time were the most acute and topical — for example, that aim was pursued in operettas by J. Offenbach (in particular — *'Orpheus in the Underworld'* and *'The Beautiful Helen'*). Thus, the musical parody began to draw closer to the literary parody — its satirical orientation found new forms of activity and, consequently, new artistic functions.

Of course, parody was not always related to a subverting and critical quality³. In the XVIIIth-XIXth centuries, there were parodies of operas by C. Gluck⁴, Mozart and many other composers⁵, and they were

not always associated with such an attitude. In those cases, the function of parody was to create a special view of the world opposite to the usual system of values. Well-known works appeared in an inverted reflection, in which their meaning was not destroyed, but gained a new inverted semantic interpretation. Such an attitude toward parody may be found in the XXth century as well — such are mini-operas by D. Milhaud that invert the essence of mythological operas at all levels — from the narrative plane to the deep ideas of myth, from stylistics to the basics of drama, time scales and the very essence of the genre.

At the same time, that inversion often led to completely unexpected results — in the XXth century parody could create a picture of degradation and complete (or almost complete) *destruction* of the usual value systems. It is obvious that, first of all, the picture of utmost disharmony (next door to chaos) was represented in certain styles (for example, surrealism, theatre of the absurd, etc.). Apparently, while retaining its polemical functions⁶ or inverting centuries-long traditions and thought patterns, parody also allowed the recreation of destruction images, so topical in the XXth century. The coordinate system of parody gave birth to a special world that did not obey the laws of everyday reality — parody itself appeared in that world upside down⁷.

That review of usual value systems could be of a pronouncedly shocking nature as well. Thus, in the sketch by P. Hindemith *'There and Back'* you can see several layers of meaning — it is a purely constructive idea of retrograde motion and the impact of cinema aesthetics, and small genres of literature and cabaret theatre. But in the foreground there is a pronouncedly absurd meaning. To be more exact, the external lack of sense gets interpreted artistically. To some extent, this work can be considered a parody of the operatic genre itself (at the same time, the external alogism of the situation has its own logic but is 'topsy-turvy'⁸) — that is, however, in the nature of a game as well.

Very peculiar refractions of carnivalesque aesthetics in parody may be found in F. Poulenc's opera *'The Breasts of Tiresias'* (based on the play by G. Apollinaire). The plot itself, in which a woman decided to become a man (not just in terms of gender reassignment, but also in terms of the social status and behaviour pat-

¹ It was not unique for the XVIIIth century, but its use almost always pursued the aim of parody.

² Even if composers used hyperbole, that was as delicate as possible, and in combination with the already described technique of mismatching the meaning of music and verbal text. Thus, in *'The Contented Aeolus'* by Bach the aria of Aeolus, who called winds to dampen their ardour and subside, was performed in an unexpected bravura, and in a very noisy manner (the instrumentation itself was quite unusual — three trumpets, two horns, timpani and continuo).

³ Let us recall that in general different authors considered parody as a peculiar kind of 'literary criticism'. (For example, it is noted by D. MacDonald — see *Parodies: An Anthology from Chaucer to Beerbohm.R.xiii*).

⁴ *'The Imaginary Socrates'* by G. Paisiello and T. Traetta's opera *'The Knight Errant'*.

⁵ One of the most prominent examples is *'The Little Faust'* by F. Hervé that became a parody of C. Gounod's opera. In the XXth century, parody was targeted at different authors, for example — R. Wagner (in the anti-Wagner opera *'The Nusch-Nusch'* by P. Hindemith).

⁶ For example, in *'Three Flabby Preludes'* by E. Satie that parodies some stylistic features of impressionism.

⁷ One of the most striking examples of this parody is *'Mass'* by L. Bernstein.

⁸ In the first half of the composition a husband and a wife wake up, then they start a quarrel that leads to a murder and a suicide, and after that it all happens backwards (music in the second half is a statement of the first in reverse).

tern!) and her husband became a woman, of course, can be interpreted either as the implementation of the carnival inversion principle, or reflection of social gender problems of the XX century, or the manifestation of surrealistic ideas. At the same time, it can also be interpreted as parody and the subverting of everyday values, traditional logic and world order (it is proved by quite grotesque details — for example, Teresa's husband found ways to make children without women, and in the amount of 48,048 per day).

Apparently, in the XXth century, the authors used to get excited by the idea of carnival inversion and the erosion of usual values and traditions quite often. Suffice it to recall an opera by A. Corghi with a title that requires no comments — *'The Libertine Absolved'* (*'Il dissolute assolto'*). Its plot is a parodic inversion of the famous *'Don Giovanni'* by W. Mozart — it is the main character who gets seduced by Zerlina; one of the characters is the Mannequin of Donna Elvira; in the scene at the cemetery Don Giovanni and Leporello mock the statue of the Commander that falls apart because of its helplessness. The characters of the story, its overall plot and reference to the quotations from the Mozart's opera appear as in the mirror image, although parody there has rather an ironic twist than a frankly destructive basis.

In any case, the effect of parody is possible only when the parodied original itself is topical¹. In this regard, the sheer fact of the parody creation can be considered as an indication of the phenomenon consistency, its historically conditioned artistic perfection and maturity². Indeed, to make parody be perceived as inversion, the original phenomenon must be alive in memory, acting as an object of comparison with its parodic reflection. The abovementioned opera seria parodies that were quite understandably topical in the XVIIIth century at a later time inevitably lost their sharpness since the parodied genre itself quitted the historical 'scene'.

Therefore, over time, the perception of parody could change, simultaneously indicating the historically evolving changes in attitude toward a particular

artistic phenomenon.³ Parody of a certain genre could appear only if that genre had already established itself as a phenomenon, and acquired a carefully balanced canon of artistic organization. On the other hand, the system of aesthetic guidelines that determined views on that phenomenon had to change.

It can be assumed that the principle of inverting a given form is one of the universal patterns of human behaviour. This universal is its stable and inevitable tendency for the polar transformation of social behaviour, gender stereotypes, and all usual systems of values in general. The tendency powerfully manifested itself in various cultural and historical contexts. Despite all the diversity of thought and behaviour patterns, people are constantly in need of finding a mirror opposite of everyday life, trying to get incarnated in it and find themselves fully in its space. Of course, in this process people often face social prohibitions and taboos, but the powerful desire to plunge beyond the usual meanings and laws is inevitably stronger. In this regard, the inversion creates genuine *otherness of culture*, while parody presents itself as its special case that refreshes the otherness of the text.

Parody knows no unified centre of gravity predetermined once and for all. It does not just present something usual in an unusual light, but causes a clash between disparate things and subverts embedded stereotypes. It proposes constant dynamics and changes of interpretational positions. Everything is possible and permissible with parody. The ambiguous nature of parody is infinitely variable and mobile. It has no end point, and no limits that can stop movement. This interpretation is possible because parody challenges, and does not let the mind sleep.

At the same time, the world of parody is *conditional*, as it implies a distancing between parody and its target. A recipient perceives it in the biased perspective, and compares the original and the parody versions. Their 'mismatch' creates both the effect of objective conditionality and semantic dynamics, incompleteness, and freedom of interpretation. The creation of parody is possible only in the situation when the perception distances from the target of parody — complete dipping into the emotional world of the target makes it absolutely impossible to use parody. It is characteristic that parody represents the very thoughts of an author in a very special light. For the author, a non-parody 'normal' world is usually serious and absolute. The author believes that his work at the end point of its implementation will be perfect — any creator aims for the most perfect realization of his ideas (even if the perception of this potential perfection looks an unattainable utopia to him). The world of parody is free of these idealistic concepts —

¹ It is easy to understand that, as a rule, parody is applied to genres and styles of immediately preceding, or present times — *'Don Quixote'* by Cervantes parodied medieval chivalric romances; in the era of classicism there were parodies of baroque novels (*'Candide'* by Voltaire); J. Austen parodied Gothic novels (in particular — *'The Mysteries of Udolpho'* by A. Radcliffe), etc.

² In this regard, again parody can be compared with the phenomenon of stylization — as noted by V. Vinogradov, 'Pushkin counted a highly developed art of literary stylization, parody and caricature, revealing the flexibility and high culture of the language, as one of the hallmarks of a mature literature.' (Vinogradov V. *'Style of Pushkin'* M., 1941. P. 492).

³ Therefore, parody provides an exceptionally fertile material for the study of the aesthetic ideas of a particular era.

by its conditional nature it is opened and allows for the diversity of points of view (at least two — normal and parodic). Moreover, when creating parody, the author seems to concede that other fundamentally different parodies targeted at the same object can be created.

The art space of parody is multi-faceted and multi-toned. Its world is truly infinite — it contains an unimaginable variety of shades of meaning, transitions and nuances, sometimes flexible and multi-valued. They are located in a broad perspective of values — from carnival elements and renewing laughter to the macabre and sinister grotesque, up to demonstrative denial of usual values. Parody does not conform to any single semantic root, and is independent of external laws. More likely, it itself acts as such a pole — the world of parody authoritatively and sometimes aggressively captures a variety of objects, ideas and texts into its space, transforming and melting them, turning them into the new structures, in which the original prototype is sometimes barely visible.

As a result, parody forms the direct opposite of *idealistic* and *mythologizing* principles that along

with parody constitute a significant plane of culture's dynamic existence. Mythologizing of any phenomenon (from the whole historical epoch to a particular individual) that follows its idealization in the mass consciousness is no less important to culture than debunking of ideals. Both processes constantly compete and conflict, but at the same time they complement each other, representing the polar points of view.

Thus, in different historical periods the parody functions could be supplemented and modified. It was parody that allowed the formation of a critical look at the existing system of values that was sometimes accompanied by an almost complete abandonment of parody. At the same time, it becomes clear that parody plays a very significant role in the development of art, which is proved not only by music and literature¹. Parody turns out to be a kind of a double that tails after a variety of phenomena in human culture² — from the archaic past to contemporary reality. Parody opens a new view of the world. Also, it often explodes traditional thought patterns, being a catalyst for further creative quests.

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¹ As a side note, the role of personal thinking characteristics of composers with regard to parody cannot be doubted — some of composers used parody quite often (D. Shostakovich, for instance), and some of them almost completely avoided using it (P. Tchaikovsky and S. Rachmaninoff).

²⁸ Suffice it to recall that in antiquity parody accompanied the genre of tragedy; in the Middle Ages there were parodies of church rituals, etc. When analyzing parody in the Middle Ages, V. Darkevich notes that it «seemed a game that created a 'reverse world' opposite to the empirical one. Medieval parody — an 'anti-world' — is inseparable from the idea of an unofficial holiday that is characterized by everting the life phenomena and turning the last into the first» (Darkevich V. 'Popular Culture of the Middle Ages: Parody in Literature and the Arts of IXth-XVlth centuries'. M., 2004. P. 8).

²⁹ When studying the nature of parody, O. Freidenberg writes that it is a kind of concept of 'the second aspect' and 'the double' with complete unity of form and content (Freidenberg O. 'The Origin of Parody'//Proceedings of the University of Tartu: Issue 308: Works on Sign Systems: Issue — Tartu, 1973. P. 494–496).

³⁰ There is much evidence to display the significant role of parody in popular art, mass media, etc.