# PALIMPSESTS

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# PALIMPSESTS

## Literature in the Second Degree

*Gérard Genette*

Translated by Channa Newman & Claude Doubinsky

Foreword by Gerald Prince

University of Nebraska Press

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# CONTENTS


Foreword by Gerald Prince ix
Translators' Preface xiii
Palimpsests
1 Five types of transtexuality, among which hypertextuality 1
2 A few precautions 7
3 *Parodia* in Aristotle 10
4 Birth of parody? 12
5 Parody as a literary figure 15
6 Development of the vulgate 19
7 General chart of hypertextual practices 24
8 Brief parodies 31
9 Oulipian games 39
10 *One word for another* 49
11 *Niagara: A Novel* 53
12 Burlesque travesty 56
13 Modern travesties 66
14 Imitation as a literary figure 73
15 A text cannot be imitated directly 81
16 Difficulties in distinguishing modes in mimotexts 85
17 Caricatures 89
18 Pastiches 98
19 Flaubert by Proust 103
20 Pastiche in the form of variations 120
21 Self-pastiche 124
22 Fictitious pastiches 128
23 The mock-heroic 133

24 Mixed parody 143
25 The antiromance 148
26 *Play It Again, Sam* 156
27 *La Chasse spirituelle* 158
28 Continuations 161
29 Endings for *La Vie de Marianne* and *Le Paysan parvenu* 165
30 *La Fin de Lamiel* 171
31 Cyclical continuations 175
32 *The Aeneid, Telemachus* 181
33 *Andromaque, je pense à vous . . .* 183
34 Unfaithful continuations 192
35 Murderous continuations 196
36 *The Non-Existent Knight* 200
37 Supplement 202
38 Sequel, epilogue, *Lotte in Weimar* 206
39 Generic reactivation 210
40 Transposition 212
41 Translation 214
42 Versification 218
43 Prosification 219
44 Transmetrification 225
45 Transtylization 226
46 Quantitative transformations 228
47 Excision 229
48 Concision 235
49 Condensation 237
50 Digest 246
51 Proust to Mme Scheikévitch 248
52 Pseudosummary in Borges 251
53 Extension 254
54 Expansion 260
55 Amplification 262
56 Ambiguous practices 269
57 Intermodal transmodalization 277
58 Laforgue's *Hamlet* 282
59 Intramodal transmodalization 284
60 *Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* 292

61 Diegetic transposition, starting with sex 294
62 Proximization 303
63 Pragmatic transformation 311
64 Unamuno, author of *Quixote* 317
65 Motivation 324
66 Demotivation 328
67 Transmotivation 330
68 Eulogies of Helen 335
69 Secondary valuation 343
70 Primary valuation 350
71 Devaluation 354
72 *Macbett* 358
73 Aragon, author of *Télémaque* 360
74 *Naissance de l'Odyssée* 363
75 Transvaluation 367
76 *Penthesilea* 375
77 New supplements 377
78 A baffling hypertext 381
79 Hyperesthetic practices 384
80 End 394
Appendix 401
Notes 429
Index 475

*The indications that follow chapter numbers are not titles, only guiding marks for those who need to be so guided, and who may not find much guidance.*

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# FOREWORD

Gérard Genette puts it well: the object of poetics is not the (literary) text but its textual transcendence, its textual links with other texts. One basic aspect of that transcendence pertains to the palimpsestuous nature of texts (for once, adjective is not Genette's; it was coined by Philippe Lejeune). Any text is a hypertext, grafting itself onto a hypotext, an earlier text that it imitates or transforms; any writing is rewriting; and literature is always in the second degree. Now though all literary texts are hypertextual, some are more hypertextual than others, more massively and explicitly palimpsestuous. It is that massive and explicit hypertextuality that Genette—who has investigated other aspects of textual transcendence in *Introduction à l'architexte* and in *Seuils*—explores in *Palimpsests* with splendid erudition, rigor, and verve. Relying on a sumptuous corpus, which draws on famous and not so famous works from classical and French literature but also from other major literatures (Ariosto and Calvino, Fielding and Joyce, O'Neill and Barth, Heine and Thomas Mann), Genette studies the fundamental types of textual imitation (pastiche, caricature, forgery) and transformation (parody, travesty, transposition), their distinctive traits, their mixtures, their thrust.

Genette's exploration constitutes a wonderful example of what he calls "open structuralism." Rather than insisting on the "text itself," its closure, the relations within it that make it what it is, he focuses on relations between texts, the ways they reread and rewrite one another, the "perpetual transfusion or transtextual perfusion" of literature. But Genette's exploration is open in other respects too. If he uses structural (relational) criteria to characterize different kinds of hypertextuality, he does not ignore functional ones: parody, travesty, and transposition all result from textual transformation, whereas pastiche, caricature, and forgery result from imitation; but both parody and pastiche are ludic, travesty and caricature are satiric, transposition and forgery are serious. If he favors a synchronic

mode of presentation, he does not slight diachrony (pondering the birth, evolution, mutation, or death of hypertextual forms). If he works as a poetician, he also works as a critic: his pages on Giraudoux's *Suzanne et le Pacifique,* for example, are dazzling. Indeed, the fact that his enterprise is scientific does not prevent him from evaluating. There are no real villains in *Palimpsests* (even Dreiser and Zola don't come close), but there are quite a few heroes—Thomas Mann, Giraudoux, Marivaux, Borges and Calvino, Proust—and Genette makes it clear that he prefers massively rather than modestly hypertextual works. After all, as he says, the former more readily evoke two texts for the price of one.

To be sure, I can read *Palimpsests* without having read *Palimpsestes* (I expect many readers will). I can also read *Vendredi, ou Les limbes du Pacifique* without knowing *Robinson Crusoe* and without suspecting that Tournier's novel is a rewriting of Defoe's. I can understand Joyce's *Ulysses* without Homer's help (even if the title would be baffling). But though I could decipher *Mots d'Heures, Gousses, Rames* without reference to its hypotext, I would probably not enjoy it very much. In fact, in all four cases, I would better appreciate the text—its craft, its form, its force—if I had access to its model (in the case of Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky's translation, I admire, among many other things, the cleverness and the heroism). A result of bricolage—of making something new with something old—the massively hypertextual work shows how literary discourse plays with other discourses (sometimes very seriously), how it uses them in surprising fashion, how it reads them in unforeseen ways.

There is another, more general, sense in which Genette's exploration is open. As a technically interesting study it does not merely answer many questions (on the nature of parody as opposed to pastiche, on the difference between parodic and nonparodic transposition, on the major manifestations of the latter); it also raises many others and suggests a number of research programs: why, for example, do some traditions favor certain kinds of hypertext? and to what extent can hypertextual categories be fruitfully applied to the nonverbal arts? Through his answers and questions Genette underlines the degree to which literature is made not so much or not only with good sentiments and bad ones, imagination, wit, and style but also and even more so with literature. This is, no doubt, one reason to know the canon. Furthermore, Genette points to the specificity of literary discourse as an aesthetic practice; it does not spring from *direct* imitation. To paint a faithful copy of a Vermeer, a Rembrandt, a Velasquez represents

a certain kind of artistic achievement. To produce a word-for-word copy of "The Raven," "The Purloined Letter," or even *A la recherche du temps perdu*, however, may be admirable but (unless one is Pierre Menard) not an achievement in any literary sense.

Above all, perhaps, Genette's exploration is open because its domain includes the possible as well as the extant, the real and the virtual, what is and what can be. In *Mimologiques* Genette played the Cratylian game, and in *Nouveau discours du récit* he would envisage externally focalized metahomodiegetic narratives. In *Palimpsests* he demonstrates the fertilizing powers of hypertextual operations and the inexhaustibility of literature by rewriting the first stanza of Valery's "Le cimetière marin" in alexandrines, proposing a retelling of *Madame Bovary* from the point of view of the protagonist's daughter, and considering a rewriting of Proust's "Combray" in the singulative rather than iterative mode. Genette's example is contagious. His many suggestions have, for example, inspired me to create a version of *Oedipus* in which the hero kills his mother and marries his father, as well as to write plot summaries in dialogue form for the "Guide to the Twentieth Century Novel in French" that I am preparing. (Here is a first sketch for *A la recherche du temps perdu*: "—Marcel? —I think that's what his name is. —The one who's always going to bed early? —Yes. He wants to become a writer. —And? —It's taking him a very long time!")

Genette's work on hypertextuality is classic: it teaches and entertains; it accounts for existing forms and invites new ones; it is most illuminating and very much fun.

Gerald Prince

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# TRANSLATORS' PREFACE

In translating Gérard Genette's *Palimpsestes*, our goal has been to bring to the English-language reader not only the book's content but its tone. Indeed, Genette's mode of communication—friendly, sometimes self-deprecatory, and often humorous—is part and parcel of what is being communicated and contributes largely to making the reading (and translating) of this book such a rewarding experience.

Translations of cited passages are ours unless otherwise indicated. Where it has been necessary to retain their original language in the text, the translations that follow appear in *braces*, as do our occasional comments and interpolations; hence, *square brackets* and *parentheses* are Genette's.

We have taken the liberty of adding to Genette's notes brief explanatory and source information where we felt that such clarifications would facilitate the reader's task. In the few instances when Genette's text has appeared to us to bear on textual operations that could be appraised and appreciated only in French, we have decided (with his permission) to summarize the substance of his argument and to relegate his illustrative quotations to an Appendix. In most of those cases, readers with a working knowledge of French will find their understanding of the quoted excerpts supported by partial or complete translations.

We would like to thank Elan Fessler, Marianne Paclisanu, and Rebecca Taksel for their invaluable help and support. Our gratitude goes also to all readers and editors associated with the University of Nebraska Press for their patience and competent counsel.

Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky



This translation is dedicated to the memory of my father.
—Claude Doubinsky

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# PALIMPSESTS

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# 1

The subject of this study is what I once called, for lack of a better term, *paratextuality*.[1] I have since thought better of it—or perhaps worse (that remains to be seen)—and have used "paratextuality" to designate something altogether different. It has become clear that this entire imprudent project must be taken up anew.

Let us resume then. The subject of poetics, as I was saying more or less, is not the text considered in its singularity (that is more appropriately the task of criticism), but rather the *architext* or, if one prefers, the architextuality of the text (much as one would speak of "the literariness of literature"). By architextuality I mean the entire set of general or transcendent categories—types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres—from which emerges each singular text.[2] Today I prefer to say, more sweepingly, that the subject of poetics is *transtextuality*, or the textual transcendence of the text, which I have already defined roughly as "all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts." Transtextuality then goes beyond, and at the same time subsumes, architextuality, along with some other types of transtextual relationships. Only one of these will be of direct concern to us here, although I must first list them all, if for no other reason than to chart and clear the field, and to draw a (new) list, which in turn may well prove to be neither exhaustive nor definitive. The trouble with "research" is that by dint of searching one often discovers . . . what one did not seek to find.

At the time of writing (13 October 1981), I am inclined to recognize five types of transtextual relationships. I shall list them more or less in the order of increasing abstraction, implication, and comprehensiveness. The first type was explored some years ago by Julia Kristeva, under the name of *intertextuality*, and that term obviously provides us with our terminological paradigm.[3] For my part I define it, no doubt in a more restrictive sense, as a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts: that

is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another. In its most explicit and literal form, it is the traditional practice of *quoting* (with quotation marks, with or without specific references).[4] In another less explicit and canonical form, it is the practice of *plagiarism* (in Lautréamont, for instance), which is an undeclared but still literal borrowing. Again, in still less explicit and less literal guise, it is the practice of *allusion*: that is, an enunciation whose full meaning presupposes the perception of a relationship between it and another text, to which it necessarily refers by some inflections that would otherwise remain unintelligible. Thus, when Mme des Loges challenges Vincent Voiture at a game of proverbs with "Celui-ci ne vaut rien, percez-nous-en d'un autre" {This one is worth nothing, broach us another}, the verb *percer* (for proposer) is justified and understood only through the fact that Voiture was the son of a wine merchant.[5] In a more academic vein, when Nicholas Boileau writes to Louis XIV

> Au récit que pour toi je suis prêt d'entreprendre,
> Je crois voir les rochers accourir pour m'entendre
>
> {As I make ready to tell this tale to you,
> Methinks I see rocks come rushing to hear me},

these mobile and attentive rocks will probably seem absurd to those unfamiliar with the legends of Orpheus and Amphion.[6] This implicit (sometimes entirely hypothetical) presence of the intertext has been for the past few years the chosen field of study of Michael Riffaterre. His definition of intertextuality is, in principle, much broader than mine is here, and it seems to extend to everything that I call transtextuality. "The intertext," writes Riffaterre, for example, "is the perception, by the reader, of the relationship between a work and others that have either preceded or followed it." Riffaterre goes as far as equating intertextuality (as I do transtextuality) with literariness itself: "Intertextuality is . . . the mechanism specific to literary reading. It alone, in fact, produces significance, while linear reading, common to literary and nonliterary texts, produces only meaning."[7] Riffaterre's broad definition, however, is accompanied by a de facto restriction, because the relationships he examines always concern semantic-semiotic microstructures, observed at the level of a sentence, a fragment, or a short, generally poetic, text. The intertextual "trace" according to Riffaterre is therefore more akin (like the allusion) to the

limited figure (to the pictorial detail) than to the work considered as a structural whole. This total field of relevant relationships is what I plan to examine here. Harold Bloom's inquiry into the mechanism of influence, although conducted from an entirely different perspective, engages the same type of interference, which is more intertextual than hypertextual.[8]

The second type is the generally less explicit and more distant relationship that binds the text properly speaking, taken within the totality of the literary work, to what can be called its *paratext*: a title, a subtitle, intertitles; prefaces, postfaces, notices, forewords, etc.; marginal, infrapaginal, terminal notes; epigraphs; illustrations; blurbs, book covers, dust jackets, and many other kinds of secondary signals, whether allographic or autographic.[9] These provide the text with a (variable) setting and sometimes a commentary, official or not, which even the purists among readers, those least inclined to external erudition, cannot always disregard as easily as they would like and as they claim to do. I do not wish to embark here upon a study, still to come perhaps, of this range of relationships. We shall nevertheless encounter it on numerous occasions, for this is probably one of the privileged fields of operation of the pragmatic dimension of the work—i.e., of its impact upon the reader—more particularly, the field of what is now often called, thanks to Philippe Lejeune's studies on autobiography, the generic *contract* (or *pact*).[10] I shall simply recall as an example (in anticipation of a chapter to come) the case of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. We know that at the time of its prepublication in installment form, this novel was provided with chapter headings evoking the relationship of each of its chapters to an episode from the *Odyssey*: "Sirens," "Nausicaa," "Penelope," etc. When it appeared as a volume, Joyce removed those headings, even though they carried "capital" meaning. Are these subtitles—which, though eliminated, were not forgotten by the critics—a part of the text of *Ulysses* or not? This perplexing question, which I dedicate to the proponents of the closure of the text, is typically of a paratextual nature. In this respect, the "foretext" of the various rough drafts, outlines, and projects of a work can also function as a paratext. For example, the final meeting of Lucien and Mme de Chasteleur is not strictly speaking in the text of *Lucien Leuwen*; it is only attested by a plan for a conclusion, abandoned with the rest of the manuscript by Stendhal. Should we take that into account in our appreciation of the story and of the personality of the characters? And speaking more radically still, should we *read* a posthumous text in which there is no indication of whether, or how, the author, had he lived, would have published it? One

work may also occasionally form the paratext of another: upon seeing on the last page of Jean Giono's *Bonheur fou* (1957) that the return of Angelo to Pauline is compromised, should or should not the reader remember *Mort d'un personnage* (1947), where one encounters Pauline's and Angelo's son and grandson? Knowledge of this detail eliminates in advance that knowing uncertainty. Paratextuality, as one can see, is first and foremost a treasure trove of questions without answers.

The third type of textual transcendence, which I call *metatextuality*, is the relationship most often labeled "commentary."[11] It unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes even without naming it. Thus does Hegel, in *The Phenomenology of the Mind*, allusively and almost silently evoke Denis Diderot's *Neveu de Rameau*. This is the *critical* relationship par excellence. Extensive studies (meta-metatexts) of certain critical metatexts have naturally been conducted, but I am not sure that the very fact and status of the metatextual relationship have yet been considered with all the attention they deserve. That may be about to change.[12]

The fifth type (yes, I know), the most abstract and most implicit of all, is *architextuality*, as defined above. It involves a relationship that is completely silent, articulated at most only by a paratextual mention, which can be titular (as in *Poems*, *Essays*, The Romance of the Rose, etc.) or most often subtitular (as when the indication *A Novel*, or *A Story*, or *Poems* is appended to the title on the cover), but which remains in any case of a purely taxonomic nature. When this relationship is unarticulated, it may be because of a refusal to underscore the obvious or, conversely, an intent to reject or elude any kind of classification. In all cases, however, the text itself is not supposed to know, and consequently not meant to declare, its generic quality: the novel does not identify itself explicitly as a novel, nor the poem as a poem. Even less—since genre is only one aspect of the architext—does verse declare itself as verse, prose as prose, narrative as narrative, etc. One might even say that determining the generic status of the text is not the business of the text but that of the reader, or the critic, or the public. Those may well choose to reject the status claimed for the text by the paratext: thus, it is frequently argued that a given "tragedy" by Pierre Corneille is not a true tragedy, or that *The Romance of the Rose* is not a romance. But the fact that this relationship should be implicit and open to dicussion (e.g., to which genre does *The Divine Comedy* belong?), or subject to historical fluctuations (long narrative poems such as epics are hardly perceived today as pertaining to

"poetry," whose definition has been progressively narrowed down to that of lyrical poetry), in no way diminishes its significance; generic perception is known to guide and determine to a considerable degree the readers' expectations, and thus their reception of the work.

I have deliberately postponed the mention of the fourth type of transtextuality because it, and it alone, will be of direct concern to us here. It is therefore this fourth type that I now rebaptize *hypertextuality*. By hypertextuality I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary.[13] The use of the metaphoric "grafted" and of the negative determination underscores the provisional status of this definition. To view things differently, let us posit the general notion of a text in the second degree (for such a transitory use, I shall forgo the attempt to find a prefix that would simultaneously subsume the *hyper-* and the *meta-*): i.e., a text derived from another preexistent text. This derivation can be of a descriptive or intellectual kind, where a metatext (for example, a given page from Aristotle's *Poetics*) "speaks" about a second text (*Oedipus Rex*). It may yet be of another kind such as text B not speaking of text A at all but being unable to exist, as such, without A, from which it originates through a process I shall provisionally call *transformation*, and which it consequently evokes more or less perceptibly without necessarily speaking of it or citing it. The *Aeneid* and *Ulysses* are no doubt, to varying degrees and certainly on different grounds, two hypertexts (among others) of the same hypotext: the *Odyssey*, of course. These examples demonstrate that the hypertext is more frequently considered a "properly literary" work than is the metatext—one simple reason being that having generally derived from a work of fiction (narrative or dramatic), it remains a work of fiction, and as such it falls automatically, in the eyes of the public, into the field of literature. This status, however, is not essential to it, and we shall probably find some exceptions to the rule.

I have chosen these two examples for yet another, more peremptory reason. If a common feature of the *Aeneid* and *Ulysses* is that they do not derive from the *Odyssey* as a given page of the *Poetics* derives from *Oedipus Rex* (i.e., by commenting on it) but by a transformative process, what distinguishes these two works from each other is the fact that the transformation is of a different type in each case. The transformation that leads from the *Odyssey* to *Ulysses* can be described (very roughly) as a *simple* or *direct* transformation, one which consists in transposing the action of

the *Odyssey* to twentieth-century Dublin. The transformation that leads from the same *Odyssey* to the *Aeneid* is more complex and indirect. Despite appearances (and the greater historical proximity), this transformation is less direct because Virgil does not transpose the action of the *Odyssey* from Ogygia to Carthage and from Ithaca to Latium. Instead, he tells an entirely different story: the adventures of Aeneas, not those of Ulysses. He does so by drawing inspiration from the generic—i.e., at once formal and thematic—model established by Homer in the *Odyssey* (and in fact also in the *Iliad*): that is, following the hallowed formula, by *imitating* Homer.[14] Imitation, too, is no doubt a transformation, but one that involves a more complex process: it requires, to put it in roughshod manner, a previously constituted model of generic competence (let us call it an epic model) drawn from that singular performance that is known as the *Odyssey* (and perhaps a few others), one that is capable of generating an indefinite number of mimetic performances. This model, then, introduces between the imitated text and the imitative one a supplementary stage and a mediation that are not to be found in the simple or direct type of transformation. In order to transform a text, a simple and mechanical gesture might suffice (an extreme example would consist in tearing off a few pages—a case of reductive transformation). But in order to imitate a text, it is inevitably necessary to acquire at least a partial mastery of it, a mastery of that specific quality which one has chosen to imitate. It goes without saying, for example, that Virgil leaves out of his mimetic gesture what in Homer's work is inseparable from the Greek language.

It could quite properly be objected that my second example is no more complex than the first, and that in order to have their respective works conform to the *Odyssey*, Joyce and Virgil each simply retain from that work different characteristic features. Joyce extracts from it a pattern of actions and relationships, which he treats altogether in a different style. Virgil appropriates a certain style, which he applies to a different action. To put it more bluntly, Joyce tells the story of Ulysses in a manner other than Homer's, and Virgil tells the story of Aeneas in the manner of Homer—a pair of symmetrical and inverse transformations. This schematic opposition—saying the same thing differently / saying another thing similarly—is serviceable enough here (though it does scant justice to the partial analogy between the actions of Ulysses and Aeneas), and we shall find it useful on many other occasions. But we shall also see that it is not universally pertinent and, especially, that it obscures

the difference in the level of complexity that separates these two types of operation.

In order to express this difference better, I must—paradoxically—draw upon some more elementary examples. Let us take a minimal literary (or paraliterary) text such as the proverb *Le temps est un grand maître* {Time is a great master}. To transform it, I need only modify in whichever way any one of its components. If, by eliminating one letter, I write *Le temps est un gran maître*, then the "correct" text is transformed, in a purely formal manner, into a text that is "incorrect" (spelling error). If, by substituting one letter for another, I write, as does Balzac in the words of Mistigris, *Le temps est un grand maigre* {Time is a great faster (*maigre* = lean)}, this substitution of a letter produces a word substitution and creates a new meaning—and so forth.[15] But to imitate this proverb is an entirely different matter; it presupposes that I should identify in this statement a certain manner (that of a proverb) with such characteristics as brevity, peremptory affirmation, and metaphoricity, and then express in this manner (in this style) another idea, whether commonly held or not—for example, that one needs time for everything, whence the new proverb *Paris n'a pas été bâti en un jour* {Paris was not built in one day}.[16] I hope it can now be seen with greater clarity why and in what way this second operation is more complex and more mediate than the first one. I have to rest my case for the time being, since I cannot here further pursue the analysis of these processes. We shall encounter them again in due course.

## 2

What I call hypertext, then, is any text derived from a previous text either through simple transformation, which I shall simply call from now on *transformation*, or through indirect transformation, which I shall label *imitation*. Before we embark upon a closer examination of these, two clarifications or warnings are probably in order.

First of all, one must not view the five types of transtextuality as separate and absolute categories without any reciprocal contact or overlapping. On the contrary, their relationships to one another are numerous and often crucial. For example, generic architextuality is, historically, almost always constituted by way of imitation (Virgil imitates Homer, Mateo Aleman's *Guzman* imitates the anonymous *Lazarillo*), hence by way of hypertextuality.

The architextual appurtenance of a given work is frequently announced by way of paratextual clues. These in themselves often initiate a metatext ("this book is a novel"), and the paratext, whether prefatory or other, contains many more forms of commentary. The hypertext, too, often acts as a commentary: a travesty such as Paul Scarron's *Virgile travesti* is in its way a critique of the *Aeneid*, and Marcel Proust says (and demonstrates) that a pastiche is "criticism in action." The critical metatext can be conceived of, but is hardly ever practiced, without the often considerable use of a quotational intertext as support. The hypertext tends to avoid this practice, but not entirely, for it makes use of textual allusions (Scarron sometimes invokes Virgil) or of paratextual ones (the title *Ulysses*). Above all, hypertextuality, as a category of works, is in itself a generic or, more precisely, *transgeneric* architext: I mean a category of texts which wholly encompasses certain canonical (though minor) genres such as pastiche, parody, travesty, and which also touches upon other genres—probably all genres. Like all generic categories, hypertextuality is most often revealed by means of a paratextual sign that has contractual force: *Virgile travesti* is an explicit contract which, at the very least, alerts the reader to the probable existence of a relationship between this novel and the *Odyssey*, and so on.

The second clarification concerns an objection which, I suppose, must have occurred to the reader when I described hypertextuality as being itself a category of texts. If one views transtextuality in general not as a classification of texts (a notion that makes no sense, since there are no texts without textual transcendence) but rather as an aspect of textuality, and no doubt *a fortiori* of literariness, as Riffaterre would rightly put it, then one should also consider its diverse components (intertextuality, paratextuality, etc.) not as categories of texts but rather as aspects of textuality.

That is precisely how I understand it, though without the exclusion it entails. The various forms of transtextuality are indeed aspects of any textuality, but they are also potentially, and to varying degrees, textual categories: every text may be cited and thus become a quotation, but *citation* is a specific literary practice that quite obviously transcends each one of its performances and has its own general characteristics; any utterance may be assigned a paratextual function, but a *preface* is a genre (and I would claim the same for *titles*); criticism (metatext) is obviously a genre; probably only the architext is not a class, since it is, I dare say, the very basis of literary "classness" {*classéité*}. To be sure, some texts are much more inherently, more pointedly architextual than others, and as I have said

elsewhere, the mere distinguishing among works more or less endowed with architextuality (more or less classifiable) is the first step toward architextual categorization.

What of hypertextuality? It too is obviously to some degree a universal feature of literarity: there is no literary work that does not evoke (to some extent and according to how it is read) some other literary work, and in that sense all works are hypertextual. But like George Orwell's "equals," some works are more so than others (or more visibly, massively, and explicitly so than others): *Virgile travesti*, shall we say, is more hypertextual than Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*. The less massive and explicit the hypertextuality of a given work, the more does its analysis depend on constitutive judgement: that is, on the reader's interpretive decision. I could decide that Rousseau's *Confessions* is an up-to-date remake of the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine and that its title is the contractual index thereof, after which there will be no dearth of confirming details—a simple matter of critical ingenuity. I can also trace in just about any work the local, fugitive, and partial echoes of any other work, be it anterior or ulterior. The effect of such an attitude would be to subsume the whole of universal literature under the field of hypertextuality, which would make the study of it somewhat unmanageable; but above all, this attitude would invest the hermeneutic activity of the reader—or archireader—with an authority and a significance that I cannot sanction. Having long been at odds with textual hermeneutics—and quite happily so—I do not intend at this late stage to embrace hypertextual hermeneutics. I view the relationship between the text and its reader as one that is more socialized, more openly contractual, and pertaining to a conscious and organized pragmatics. With some exceptions, I will therefore deal here with the sunnier side of hypertextuality: that in which the shift from hypotext to hypertext is both massive (an entire work B deriving from an entire work A) and more or less officially stated. At first I even contemplated limiting the inquiry to those genres that are officially (minus the word, of course) hypertextual, such as parody, travesty, pastiche. For reasons that will soon become evident, however, I was persuaded not to follow this course, having been convinced that such restrictions are in fact impractical. It will be necessary to go quite a bit further, beginning with these manifest practices and going on to those that are less official—so unofficial, in fact, that they cannot be designated by any accepted term and will require newly coined ones. Leaving aside, then, any local and/or optional hypertextuality (which to

my mind pertains rather to intertextuality), we are left, as Jules Laforgue more or less put it, with "assez d'infini sur la planche" {more infinity than we can handle}.

## 3

*Parody*: Today this term is the site of a perhaps inevitable confusion, one that apparently wasn't born yesterday. At the origin of its use, or very near its origin, once again, is Aristotle's *Poetics*.

Aristotle, who defined poetry as a representation in verse of human actions, immediately opposed two types of actions, distinguished by the level of their moral and/or social dignity as high and low, and by two modes of representation as narrative and dramatic.[1] The intersection of these two oppositions determines a four-part grid that constitutes the Aristotelian system of poetic genres properly speaking: high action in the dramatic mode—tragedy; high action in the narrative mode—the epic; low action in the dramatic mode—comedy. As for low action in the narrative mode, that is illustrated only by allusive references to works that are more or less directly designated under the term *parodia*. Since Aristotle has not developed this part, or perhaps his development of it has not survived, and since the texts he cites in this context have themselves not survived, we are reduced to conjectures as to what seems to constitute, in principle or in structure, the uncharted territory of his *Poetics*, and these conjectures do not entirely converge.

First, the etymology: *ode*, that is the chant; *para*, "along," "beside." *Paro-dein*, whence *parodia*, would (therefore?) mean singing beside: that is, singing off key; or singing in another voice—in counterpoint; or again, singing in another key—deforming, therefore, or *transposing* a melody. Applied to an epic text, this meaning could lead to several hypotheses. The most literal supposes that the rhapsodist simply modifies the traditional delivery and/or its musical accompaniment. It has been argued that such was the innovation introduced sometime between the eighth and the fourth century B.C. by a certain Hegemon of Thasos, whom we shall encounter again.[2] If this accurately describes the first parodies, it follows that they did not touch the text itself (which obviously did not prevent them from *affecting* it in one way or another), and it goes without saying that written tradition was unable to preserve any of them. A more general approach would have the

speaker—this time impinging upon the text itself—divert the text toward another object, investing it with a new meaning at the cost of only a few minor (minimal) changes. Let it be noted that this interpretation, which will come up again, corresponds to one of the current acceptations of the French term *parodie* and to a transtextual practice that is still vigorously in effect. On a broader scale still, the *transposition* of an epic text could consist of a stylistic modification that would, for example, transfer it from its noble register to a more familiar, even vulgar one. This is the practice that was to be illustrated in the seventeenth century by the burlesque travesties of the *Enéide travestie* type. But the tradition mentioned above did not bequeath us any ancient work, whether whole or mutilated, that may have been known to Aristotle and that would illustrate any of these forms.

Which are the works invoked by Aristotle? From Hegemon of Thasos, mentioned already—the only author to whom he explicitly links the genre he baptized *parodia*—nothing remains, but the mere fact that Aristotle thinks of and describes, albeit minimally, one or several of his "works" shows that his procedure could not have been reduced simply to his manner of *reciting* the epic (another account attributes to him also a *Gigantomachia* of "parodic" inspiration, but that would be rather a dramatic parody, which automatically puts it out of the field scanned by Aristotle). From Nicochares, Aristotle apparently mentions (the text is not certain) a *Deiliad*, which would be (from *deilos*, "coward") an *Iliad* of cowardice (given the meaning already traditionally assigned to the suffix *iad*, *Deiliad* is in itself an oxymoron) and therefore a sort of anti-epic: that's good enough but still rather vague. From Homer himself Aristotle cites a *Margites*, which would be "to comedies what the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are to tragedies"; from this proportional formula I draw the idea of a four-square grid, which seems to me, regardless of what (other than the *Margites*) one places in the fourth square, to be logically sound and even inevitable. Aristotle, however, defines the comic subject—and he confirms it precisely with respect to Hegemon's "parodies" and the *Deiliad*—through the representation of characters who are "inferior" to the average. If used mechanically, this definition would sharpen the hypothetical characterization of these vanished texts and lead toward a third form of "parody" of the epic, which much later and, as we shall see, even a bit too late will be named the "mock-heroic poem": it consists of treating in an epic (noble) style a lowly and laughable subject, such as the story of a cowardly soldier. Indeed—and in the absence of Hegemon's works, the *Deiliad*, and the *Margites*—all the surviving Greek

parodic texts, no doubt dating from a later period, illustrate this third form, from the several fragments cited by Atheneus of Naucratis[3] to the apparently complete text of the *Batrachomyomachia*, long attributed to Homer and embodying to perfection the mock-heroic genre.

Now these three forms of "parody"—those suggested by the term *parodia* and that induced by the texts preserved by tradition—are completely distinct and not easily reducible. They share a certain mockery of the epic (or potentially of any other noble or merely serious genre, provided—this restriction is imposed by the Aristotelian scheme—its mode of representation is narrative), the mockery being obtained by separating the letter of the work—the text, the style—from its spirit: namely, its heroic content. But one results from the application of a noble text, modified or not, to another subject, generally vulgar; another, from the transposition of a noble text into a vulgar style; the third, from the application of a noble style—the style of the epic in general or of the Homeric epic; indeed, if such specification has a meaning, of a single work by Homer (the *Iliad*)—to a vulgar or nonheroic subject. In the first case, the "parodist" diverts a text from its original purpose by modifying it only to the degree required; in the second case, he transposes it completely into a different style while leaving its subject as intact as this stylistic transformation allows; in the third, he borrows its style in order to compose in that style another text treating another, preferably antithetical subject. The Greek and the Latin *parodia* covers etymologically the first meaning and, in a somewhat more figurative sense, the second, as well as empirically (it seems) the third. French (among other languages) was to inherit this confusion and add to the muddle over the centuries.

## 4

The birth of parody? On page 8 of Octave Delepierre's *Essai sur la parodie* we find this note, which sets us dreaming: "When the rhapsodists who sang the verses of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* found that these tales did not fulfill either the expectation or the curiosity of the listeners, they would refresh them—by way of an interlude—with little poems composed pretty much of the same verses that had been recited, but whose meaning was distorted so as to express something else, fit to entertain the audience. They called that 'to parody,' from *para* and *ode*, counterchant."[1] One would

love to know how and from what source the amiable scholar drew this capital bit of information—if he didn't make it up. Since he mentions on the same page Richelet's dictionary, we turn to Richelet (1759, s.v. *parodie*), just in case. He too refers to the public recitations of the bards, and adds, "However, since these recitals were flagging and did not fulfill the expectations and curiosity of the audience, one tended to add, in order to refresh the listeners, by way of an interlude, actors who recited short poems made up of the same verses that had been recited, but whose meaning was distorted to express something else fit to entertain the audience." Such was then Delepierre's "source," hidden but resurgent, as is often the case, soon after having vanished. Since Richelet invokes in the same context, though seemingly in reference to something else, the authority of the Abbé Sallier, let us check what he has to say. Sallier quotes—only to reject it—an opinion, widespread according to him, which attributes to Homer himself the invention of parody, "when he used—as he occasionally did—the same verses in order to express different things. These repetitions no more deserve to be called parody than those literary diversions called *centones*, whose art consists of composing a work made up entirely of lines taken from Homer, Virgil, or some other famous poet." We shall return to this opinion, which Sallier rejects perhaps too hastily. "There would be," he goes on to say, "perhaps more reason to believe that when the singers who went from town to town reciting various portions of Homer's poetry had recited some of them, there appeared in the crowd some jesters who wished to amuse the listeners by ridiculing what had just been heard. I wouldn't presume to insist too firmly upon this conjecture, regardless of how plausible it appears to me, nor present it as a notion that one is compelled to accept."[2] Sallier cites no authority to support a "conjecture" that he refrains from appropriating while letting it appear as his own. It so happens, however, that Sallier, as well as Richelet, refers us to the *Poetics* of Julius Caesar Scaliger. Let us hear what Scaliger has to say:

> Quemadmodum satura ex tragoedia, mimus e comedia, sic parodia de rhapsodia nata est . . . quum enim rhapsodi intermitterent recitationem lusus gratia prodibant qui ad animi remissionem omnia illa priora inverterent. Hos iccirco *parodous* nominarunt, quia praeter rem seriam propositam alia ridicula subinferrent. Est igitur parodia rhapsodia inversa mutatis vocibus ad ridicula retrahens.

{Just as satire was born of tragedy, and mime of comedy, so parody derives from rhapsody. In fact, when the rhapsodists interrupted their recitations, entertainers would appear, and in an attempt to refresh the audience would invert everything that had been heard. They were therefore called parodists, since they surreptitiously introduced, alongside the serious subject, other, comic ones. Parody then is an inverted rhapsody, one which through verbal modifications brings the mind back to comic subjects.}[3]

This text, the obvious source of all the preceding texts, is not too clear, and my translation may even be forcing the meaning a bit here and there. At least it seems to credit the idea of an original parody conforming to the etymology of *parodia*, which Scaliger does not fail to invoke: a more or less literary reprise of an epic text inverted to obtain a comic effect. In the tenth century the Byzantine encyclopedist Suidas had asserted more crudely that parody consists—I quote Richelet's translation, which somewhat accentuates its bluntness—"in composing a comedy from the verses of a tragedy" (Greek text: *houtô legetai hotan ek tragôdias metênekhthê ho logos eis kômôdian*; literally, "is said when the text of a tragedy is inverted into comedy").[4] By transposing from the dramatic to the narrative, Scaliger's description does present parody as a comic tale composed from the lines of an epic, with the indispensable verbal modifications. Thus, the birth of parody as the "daughter of rhapsody" (or perhaps of tragedy) would have come about within the very locus of epic recitation (or dramatic representation) and of its text, preserved but turned inside out like a glove. It would be nice, again, to retrace the course of time, past Scaliger, then Suidas, and from tradition to tradition (from plagiarism to plagiarism), to arrive at some original document. But neither Scaliger nor Suidas refers to any such document, and the thread apparently stops there, with that purely theoretical hypothesis which was perhaps suggested to Scaliger by the symmetry of the relationship (itself obscure) between tragedy and satyric drama. The birth of parody, like so many others, is lost in the mists of time.

But let us get back to that opinion "of a few (?) scholars," an opinion discounted by the Abbé Sallier. After all, it is quite true that Homer, literally or not, repeats himself often, and that these recurrent formulas are not always applied to the same subject. The nature of formulaic style, the trademark of epic diction and the mainstay of epic recitation, consists

not only in these stock epithets—"light-footed Achilles," "Ulysses of a thousand ruses"—invariably affixed to the name of this or that hero, but also in those roving stereotypes, hemistichs, hexameters, groups of verses, which the bard shamelessly reuses in circumstances that are at times similar and at times quite different. Antoine Houdar de la Motte was very bored with what he called the *Iliad*'s "refrains"—"the earth shook horribly with the clanging of his weapons," "he was hurled into the dark abode of Hades," etc.—and was indignant that Agamemnon should have given the same speech in book 2 in order to test the morale of his troops and in book 9 in order to incite them seriously to flee.[5] Such uses may well pass for self-quotations, and since the same text is found to apply to a different subject (intention), one must surely recognize in it the very principle of parody. Probably not the function, because in these repetitions the bard does not in fact intend to make us laugh, but were he to succeed in doing so without having intended it, could one not say that he had involuntarily acted as a parodist? In truth the epic style, by its formulaic stereotypicality, isn't simply a designated target for jocular imitation and parodic reversal; it is constantly liable, indeed exposed, to involuntary self-parody and pastiche. Pastiche and parody are inscribed in the very text of the epic, which gives Scaliger's formula a stronger meaning than he probably intended: as a daughter of rhapsody, parody is always already present and alive in the maternal womb; and rhapsody, nourished constantly and reciprocally by its own offspring, is, like Guillaume Apollinaire's autumn crocuses, the daughter of her daughter. Parody is the daughter of rhapsody and vice versa. Here, then, is a deeper mystery for us to pore over, one that is in any case much more important than that of the Trinity: parody is the reverse of rhapsody, and everyone remembers what Ferdinand de Saussure said about the relationship between *recto* and *verso*.[6] Similarly, of course, the comic is only the tragic seen from behind.

## 5

The word *parody* is hardly used either in the poetics of the classical age or even in the quarrel of the two burlesques (to which we shall return). Neither Scarron and his followers, up to and including Pierre Marivaux, nor Boileau, nor, I believe, Alessandro Tassoni or Alexander Pope considered their burlesque and neoburlesque works to be parodies—and even *Chapelain*

*décoiffé*, which we will consider as the canonic example of the genre taken in its strictest definition, is titled more evasively *comedy*.

Overlooked by poetics, the term has found refuge in rhetoric. In his treatise *Des tropes* (1729), César Chesneau Dumarsais examined it as a figure "with adapted meaning," citing and paraphrasing Robertson's Greek *Thesaurus*, which defines parody as "a poem composed as an imitation of another poem," where one "distorts in a mocking manner verses that were composed by someone else with a different goal in mind. One has the freedom," adds Dumarsais,

> to add or to delete what is necessary for the proposed design; but one must preserve as many of the words as is necessary to call to mind the original work from which the words are borrowed. The idea of the original work and its application to a less serious subject present a surprising contrast for the imagination, and that is precisely how the parodic joke works. Corneille said, in serious tones, speaking of Chimène's father:
>
> Ses rides sur son front ont gravé ses exploits.
>
> {The wrinkles on his forehead have graven his deeds.}

Racine parodied this line in *Les Plaideurs*: L'Intimé, speaking about his father who was a sergeant, says amusingly:

> Il gagnait en un jour plus qu'un autre en six mois,
> Ses rides sur son front gravaient tous ses exploits.
>
> {Earned more a day than we in half a year:
> On his lined brow his deeds were graven clear.}[1]

In Corneille, *deeds* means "memorable actions, military actions," and in *Les Plaideurs*, *deeds* represents the acts or procedures that are performed by sergeants. It is said that the great Corneille was offended by young Racine's joke.

The most rigorous form of parody, or *minimal parody*, consists, then, of taking up a familiar text literally and giving it a new meaning, while playing, if possible and as needed, on the words, as does Racine here with the word *deeds*, a perfect example of an intertextual pun. The most elegant parody, since it is the most economical, is then merely a quote deflected from its meaning or simply from its context, or demoted from

its dignified status. Molière does that perfectly by having Arnolphe speak this line from *Sertorius*:

> Je suis maître, je parle; allez, obéissez.
>
> {I am the master, I speak; go, and obey.}[2]

But distortion is indispensable, even though Michel Butor was justified in saying, albeit from a different perspective, that every quotation is already parodic, and even though Jorge Luis Borges succeeded in demonstrating with the imaginary example of Pierre Menard that the mere displacement of context turns even the most literal rewriting into a creation.[3] Witnessing a suicide by dagger, a pedantic observer might quote Théophile de Viau:

> Le voilà donc, ce fer qui du sang de son maître
> S'est souillé lâchement. Il en rougit, le traître.
>
> {There it is then, this iron blade, which in its master's blood
> Did in cowardice sully itself. See it turn crimson, the traitor.}

This quotation would be more or less out of place, but it is not really, or perceptibly, parodic. If I were to take up these same two lines in reference to the iron in a horseshoe, or better still a clothes or a soldering iron, that would be the start of a pathetic but real parody, thanks to the play on the word *fer* {iron}. When Cyrano, in the *tirade des nez* {nose tirade}, applies to himself the famous paraphrase, he obviously has good grounds to call this application a parody—which he does as follows:

> Enfin, parodiant Pyrame en un sanglot:
> Le voilà donc, ce nez qui des traits de son maître
> A détruit l'harmonie. Il en rougit, le traître.
>
> {Last, to parody Pyramus in a sob:
> Here is the nose that of its master's face
> Destroyed the harmony. See it turn crimson, the traitor.}[4]

As the exiguousness of these examples demonstrates, the parodist rarely has the possibility of pursuing this game very far. Parody in this strict sense is therefore visited most frequently upon brief texts, such as verses removed from their context, historical pronouncements, or proverbs: thus Victor Hugo, who in one of the *Contemplations* distorted Caesar's heroic *Veni, vidi, vici* into a metaphysical *Veni, vidi, vixi* {I came, I saw, I lived}; or

Balzac, who through his characters indulged in verbal play with proverbs in the manner I have just described ("Le temps est un grand maigre"; "Paris n'a pas été bâti en un jour," etc.); or again Dumas, who wrote on the notebook of an attractive woman the (superb) bilingual madrigal *Tibi or not to be.*

This reduced dimension and the often extra- or paraliterary intent clearly explain why parody has been appropriated by rhetoric: it has been considered a *figure*, an incidental ornament of discourse (whether literary or not), rather than a *genre*, a category of works. Still, one could point to a classical and even canonical example (Dumarsais mentions it in the chapter cited above) of strict parody extending over several pages. In *Chapelain décoiffé*, Boileau, Racine, and one or two others had some fun around 1664 by adapting four scenes from the first act of *Le Cid* to the subject of a trivial literary quarrel. The favor that the king had granted to Don Diego here becomes a pension given to Chapelain and contested by his rival La Serre, who provokes him and pulls off his wig; Chapelain asks his disciple Cassagne to avenge him by writing a poem against La Serre. The parodic text follows the parodied text as closely as possible, by allowing itself to make only the few transpositions required by the change in the subject. As an illustration, here are the first four lines from the Chapelain–Don Diego monologue, which (I hope) will not fail to bring to mind four other lines:

> O rage, o désespoir! O perruque ma mie!
> N'as-tu donc tant duré que pour tant d'infamie?
> N'as-tu trompé l'espoir de tant de perruquiers
> Que pour voir en un jour flétrir tant de lauriers?
>
> {Oh rage! oh despair! oh thou my darling wig!
> Hast thou thus long endured but to suffer such shame?
> Hast thou deceived all the wigmakers' hopes
> But to see in one day so many laurels wilt?}[5]

The authors of *Chapelain décoiffé* were wise to stop after five scenes, but a bit more perseverance in the laborious joke would have garnered us a comedy in five acts that would have fully earned it the title of "Parody of the Cid."[6] The "Notice to the Reader" defines rather well the purely transtextual merit (interest) of this type of performance by recognizing that "the beauty of this piece wholly consists in the relation it has with that other (*le Cid*)." One could, of course, read *Chapelain décoiffé* without knowing *Le Cid*; but

one cannot perceive and appreciate the function of the one without having the other work in mind or in hand. This *requirement for reading* forms a part of the definition of the genre and—as a consequence, but a more restraining consequence than is the case with other genres—a part of the perceptibility and therefore of the existence of the work. We shall return to this point.

## 6

The strict form we have been discussing—that which most conforms to the etymology of *parodia*—is the only one that Dumarsais could include as parody. But this rigor, perhaps already rather unusual, was not to be imitated. In his discourse on parody, cited already {chapter 4}, the Abbé Sallier identifies five kinds of parody, which consist either of changing one single word in a line (we have already noted a few examples of this); or of changing a single letter in a word (as illustrated by *veni vidi vixi*); or of subverting, without any textual modification, the intended meaning of a quotation (this is pretty much the case in the "deeds" of L'Intimé); or of composing (this is the last and according to Sallier "the pincipal type of parody") an entire work based upon "a complete piece or upon a considerable segment of a known poetic work, deflected to another subject and to another meaning by changing several expressions" (such is the case of the *Chapelain décoiffé* ). These first four types are only as many variants—differing in the degree of the transformation (purely semantic, in one letter, one word, or several words)—of parody strictly speaking as defined by Dumarsais. The fifth one, however, (which Sallier places as number four, apparently without noticing how different it is from the four other kinds) consists of "composing verses in the taste and style of certain authors of low repute. Among these we find the lines of Vincent Voiture and of Jean-François Sarrasin, who imitated the work of the poet Louis de Neufgermain. That also is the case of M. Despréaux's (Boileau's) quatrain in which he imitates the harshness of the lines from Jean Chapelain's *La Pucelle*:

> Maudit soit l'auteur dur dont l'âpre et rude verve,
> Son cerveau tenaillant, rima malgré Minerve
> Et, de son lourd marteau martelant le bon sens,
> A fait de méchants vers douze fois douze cents.

{Cursed be the harsh author whose rough rude verve,
Racking his own brains, rhymed in spite of Minerva
And, heavily hammering home the merest common sense,
Composed of wretched verses twelve times twelve hundred.}

This last type of parody is clearly (for us) the satirical pastiche: that is, a stylistic imitation aiming to critique ("authors of low repute") or ridicule, an aim which, in Boileau's example, is enunciated in the very style that it targets (*cacophony*) but remains for the most part implicit, leaving the reader to infer the parody from the caricatural features of the imitation.

Pastiche thus enters, or reenters, the picture, among the types of parody. The Abbé Sallier is quite aware of having included here, at one stroke, the entire mock-heroic genre, since he wonders on the following page whether "the little poem about the battle between the rats and the frogs" could well be, as some claim, "the oldest parody known to us." And if he refuses to adopt this view, it is not because the *Batrachomyomachia* does not give "a correct notion of this sort of work," but rather because its date is uncertain. It may not be the most ancient, but for him it is a parody of the kind that "imitates the taste and the style of certain authors of low repute"; it is known that in neoclassical times the "reputation" of Homer's "taste" and "style" was on the wane, though lip service continued to be paid to his genius.

This definition of parody, which integrates the satirical pastiche (whether mock-heroic or other) and thus goes back to classical antiquity's implicit definition, will be transmitted faithfully throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and often in the same terms, borrowed more or less literally from Sallier. One finds it in the *Encyclopédie* (1765), in the *Dictionnaire universel* of the Jesuits of Trévoux (1771 edition), in Jean François Marmontel's *Essais de littérature* (1787), in Delepierre's *Essai* (1870), and again in the preface to the anthology *Les Poètes parodistes* edited by Paul Madières in 1912. Pierre Larousse (1875) and Emile Littré (1877) seem to be the only ones reluctant to accept such an integration, which they acknowledge only in its broad or figurative sense.

The extensive character of this definition is accompanied, and apparently consolidated, by an interesting exclusion: that of burlesque travesty. None of these essays or articles mentions the work *Virgile travesti* in reference to parody, but they always mention *Chapelain décoiffé*, the *Batrachomyomachia*, or *Le Lutrin*. The *Encyclopédie*, which talks of "dressing up the serious in

burlesque garb," immediately specifies the procedure as follows: "This is done by pretending to preserve as much as possible the same rhymes, the same words, and the same cadences," which of course excludes all of the Scarronian devices. The definition later asserts that "parody and burlesque are two very different genres", and that "*Virgile travesti* is nothing less than a parody of the *Aeneid*." Madières's anthology, which covers three centuries, essentially deals with parodies of the type of *Chapelain décoiffé*, with some pastiches—all from the nineteenth century and all at the expense of a perfect target: Victor Hugo—as well as two or three excerpts from dramatic parodies such as Dominique's *Agnès de Chaillot* (based on Houdar de la Motte's *Inès de Castro*) or Félix-Auguste Duvert and Augustin-Théodore de Lauzanne's *Harnali* (from Hugo's *Hernani*, of course). These are hybrid or indecisive performances (we shall encounter them again), falling somewhere between strict parody and satirical pastiche, which they blend or use alternately, or even forget at times as they freely forge ahead, but never to the advantage of burlesque travesty.

This practically unanimous exclusion[1] is explained and justified by Delepierre, who invokes the authority of P. de Montespin, the author of a lost *Traité des belles lettres* (Avignon, 1747): "It is the essence," says he, "of parody always to substitute *a new subject* for the one that is being parodied: serious subjects are replaced with light and playful ones, while using as much as possible the parodied author's expressions" (Marmontel in the same vein speaks of "substituting a trivial *action* for a heroic action"). This substitution of subject or action is according to Delepierre the condition required of all parodies, and one that distinguishes it absolutely from burlesque travesty: "The *Virgile travesti* and the *Henriade travestie* are not parodies, because the subjects have not been changed. What is done is simply to have the same characters speak in a trivial and low language, which constitutes the genre of the burlesque." Whatever liberties Scarron takes with their conduct, feelings, or speeches, Dido and Aeneas remain in his work the queen of Carthage and the Trojan prince in charge of their great destiny, and that constant excludes the travesty from the field of parody. Such is also the opinion of Victor Fournel, in the study "The Burlesque in France," which he places at the beginning of his edition of *Virgile travesti* (1858): "Parody, which could often and in many aspects be confused with burlesque, nevertheless differs from it in this, that when it is complete it also changes the conditions of the characters in the works that it travesties. That is not done by the burlesque, which finds a new source of comedy in the perpetual antithesis

between the rank of the heroes and their speech. The primary concern of the parodist who is contending with the work of Virgil would be to take away everyone's title, crown, and scepter. Aeneas, for example, would have become a sentimental traveling salesman with not much on the ball, and Dido a sympathetic innkeeper, and the conquest of Italy would have become some grotesque squabble over some object associated with these new characters."

Thus, burlesque travesty modifies the style *without modifying the subject*; "parody," conversely, modifies the subject *without altering the style*, and that is done in two possible ways: either by preserving the noble text in order to apply it, as literally as possible, to a vulgar subject, real and topical (that is strict parody, such as *Chapelain décoiffé*); or by creating by means of a stylistic imitation a new noble text to be applied to a vulgar subject (that is the mock-heroic pastiche, such as *Le Lutrin*). Strict parody and the mock-heroic pastiche thus share, despite their wholly distinct textual practices (adapting a text, imitating a style), the process of introducing a lowly subject without tampering with the nobility of the style, which they either *preserve* with the text or *restore* by way of the pastiche. These two practices together, by sharing this feature, stand in opposition to burlesque travesty; thus it is that they can be placed together under the common term of parody, which is at the same time denied to travesty. A simple chart can illustrate this (classical) state of the vulgate.

| style \ subject | noble | vulgar |
|---|---|---|
| noble | NOBLE GENRES (epic, tragedy) | PARODIES (parody proper, mock-heroic pastiche) |
| vulgar | BURLESQUE TRAVESTY | COMIC GENRES (comedy, comic narrative) |

This functional relationship between parody and mock-heroic pastiche is well illustrated in the latter's constant recourse to the former: the *Batrachomyomachia* systematically lifts warlike phrases from the *Iliad* and applies them to its battling vermin; and when the clockmaker's wife in *Le Lutrin*

calls to her husband in order to distract him from his nightly expedition, her speech becomes studded, quite naturally, as we shall see, with distorted borrowings from canonical exhortations in similar situations.

The nineteenth century saw a rapid change in this semantic field as burlesque travesty made its way among the acceptations of *parody* and *pastiche*, imported from Italy during the eighteenth century, came to mean the brute fact of stylistic imitation (whatever its function), while the practice of strict parody tended to disappear from literary consciousness.[3] In 1875, Pierre Larousse illustrated his definition of *parodie* via the *Chapelain décoiffé*. The *Larousse du XXe siècle* (1928) replaces this work without warning with *Virgile travesti*: "Parody: a burlesque travesty of a poem, of a serious work; Scarron did a parody of the *Aeneid*" (i.e., precisely what Fournel, its editor, had denied seventy years before). Today, the *Larousse classique* of 1957 and the *Petit Robert* of 1967 are clear witnesses to this new vulgate. Here is the *Larousse*: "The burlesque travesty of a work of serious literature: parody of the *Aeneid*. In a wider sense, every burlesque or ironic imitation." The *Robert*: "Burlesque imitation (of a serious work). Scarron's *Virgile travesti* is a parody of the *Aeneid*. Figurative sense: a grotesque counterfeit." In both instances, burlesque travesty is presented as the proper meaning of *parody*, the satirical or comic pastiche as its extended or figurative meaning, while expressions such as "burlesque imitation" and "grotesque counterfeit" blur the boundaries between the two practices. To be sure, the purpose—both professional and traditional—of these dictionary entries is to clear the lexical field. In everyday usage, however, the term *parody* has come to call forth spontaneously (and exclusively) the idea of satiric pastiche, and thus to overlap with *caricature*, as is the case in expressions as common as "a parody of justice" and "a parody of the western," or in the Goncourt brothers' transparent reference to the *Bois de Vincennes* as "a parody of a forest."[2] The examples would in fact be countless. To make a long story short, I shall be content to point out that scholarly studies tend to apply the term *parody* constantly (or almost constantly) to satirical pastiche, and to discriminate constantly (or almost constantly) between parody and pastiche by defining parody as an imitation that is more heavily loaded with satirical or caricatural effect.[3] In 1977 a volume of satirical pastiches appeared in France under the title *Parodies*.[4] The absence of strict parody and of burlesque travesty from this field stems clearly from a cultural waning of these practices, which today are supplanted by that of stylistic imitation, despite the persistence and even the proliferation of parodic practice in

short forms such as titles and slogans (I shall return to these), and despite some popular vestiges of the travesty. When these forms are reintroduced into the semantic field by an effort either of critical inquiry or of historical revival, a more comprehensive picture emerges which regroups under the term *parody* the three forms whose function is satirical (strict parody, travesty, caricatural imitation), leaving pure *pastiche* alone in its category, understood *a contrario* as an imitation without satirical function. Thus it is readily said that Proust's pastiches are pure, and those by Paul Reboux and Charles Muller are parodies, or parodic pastiches.

This commonly accepted distribution responds, consciously or unconsciously, to a functional criterion, since *parody* inevitably connotes satire and irony, and *pastiche*, by contrast, appears as a more neutral and a more technical term.[5] This distribution can be crudely charted.[6]

| *function* | satirical: "parodies" | | | non-satirical |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *genres* | PARODY PROPER | TRAVESTY | SATIRICAL PASTICHE | PASTICHE |

## 7

To conclude this attempt at what Paul Valéry called "the clearing up of the verbal situation," it would perhaps be of use to define precisely one last time, and to settle as plainly as possible, the terminological debate that concerns us here, which we should not allow to encumber us any further.

The word *parody* is currently the site of a rather onerous confusion, because it is called upon to designate at times playful distortion, at times the burlesque transpositon of a text, and on other occasions the satirical imitation of a style. The main reason for this confusion is obviously the functional convergence of the three formulas, each of which produces a comic effect, generally at the expense of the text or style being "parodied." This is so in strict parody because its letter is playfully applied to an

object that distorts and debases it; in the travesty because its content is degraded through a system of downgrading transformations, both stylistic and thematic; and in the satirical pastiche because its manner is ridiculed via a process of exaggerations and stylistic magnifications. This functional convergence, however, obscures a much more significant structural difference between the transtextual modes: strict parody and travesty proceed through a transformation of the text, and satirical pastiche (like every pastiche) through an imitation of style. Since the term *parody* is, in the current terminological system, implicitly and therefore confusedly invested with two structurally discordant meanings, it would be useful perhaps to reform the entire system.

I propose therefore to (re)baptize as *parody* the distortion of a text by means of a minimal transformation of the *Chapelain décoiffé* type; *travesty* will designate the stylistic transformation whose function is to debase, à la *Virgile travesti*; *caricature*[1] (but no longer, as previously, *parody*) will designate the satirical pastiche, of which Paul Reboux and Charles Muller's anthology *A la manière de . . .* offers canonical examples and of which the mock-heroic pastiche is merely a variety;[2] and *pastiche* plain and simple would refer to the imitation of a style without any satirical intent, a type illustrated by at least some pages of Proust's "L'Affaire Lemoine." And finally, I adopt the general term *transformation* to subsume the first two genres, which differ primarily in the degree of distortion inflicted upon the hypotext, and the term *imitation* to subsume the two last genres, which differ only in their function and the degree of their stylistic aggravation. Hence a new distribution, one that is no longer functional but rather structural, since its criterion for separating and grouping the genres is the type of relationship (transformation or imitation) that they create between the hypertext and its hypotext.

| *relation* | transformation | | imitation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *genres* | PARODY | TRAVESTY | CARICATURE | PASTICHE |

One chart can thus recapitulate the opposition between the two forms of divisions, which evidently still share the objects to be distributed: namely the four canonical hypertextual genres.

| *current (functional) distribution* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *function* | satirical ("parody") | | | non-satirical ("pastiche") |
| *genres* | PARODY | TRAVESTY | CARICATURE | PASTICHE |
| *relation* | *transformation* | | *imitation* | |
| *structural distribution* | | | | |

In proposing this taxonomic and terminological reform, I hold no real hopes for its future. Experience has repeatedly shown that if there is nothing easier than to introduce a neologism into common practice, there is nothing more difficult than to extirpate from it a set term or acceptation, an ingrown habit. I am therefore claiming not to censure the abuse of the word *parody* (since, in effect, this is what we are dealing with) but only to point it out and—because it is impossible to clear up this lexical area effectively—at least provide its users with a conceptual tool enabling them to check and focus with greater swiftness and accuracy what it is they are (probably) thinking about when they (haphazardly) utter the word *parody*.

Neither do I claim to substitute the structural criterion entirely for the functional one. I simply mean to bring it out into the open, if only to make room, for example, for a form of hypertextuality whose literary significance cannot be reduced to that of the pastiche or of canonical parody, and which I shall for now call *serious parody*. The yoking here of these two terms—which in ordinary usage would form an oxymoron—is deliberate, intended to indicate that certain generic formulas cannot be accounted for within a purely functional definition. If one were to define parody solely by its burlesque function, one would leave out such works as Laforgue's *Hamlet*, Jean Giraudoux's *Electre*, Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, Michel Tournier's *Friday*—all of which are linked to their text of reference by the same type of relationship (all other things being equal) that exists between *Virgile travesti* and the *Aeneid*. Functional differences notwithstanding, we have here, if not an identity, at least a continuity of process which must be acknowledged and which (as stated above) proscribes reliance on canonical formulas alone.

But, as the reader has probably noted already, the "structural" division that I propose retains a common trait with the traditional categorization:

inside each major relational category there is a distinction between parody and travesty on the one hand, and between caricature and pastiche on the other. The latter distinction is based quite clearly upon a functional criterion, which is always the opposition between satirical and nonsatirical. The former may be motivated by a purely formal criterion, which is the difference between a semantic transformation (parody) and a stylistic transposition (travesty); but it also includes a functional aspect, since travesty is undeniably more satirical or more aggressive vis-à-vis its hypotext than is parody. Parody does not actually subject the hypotext to a degrading stylistic treatment but only takes it as a model or template for the construction of a new text which, once produced, is no longer concerned with the model. My classification, then, is structural only as regards the distinction between major types of hypertextual relationships, and it becomes functional once more as regards the distinction between concrete practices. It would therefore be better to make this duality official, and to render it in a chart with two headings, one structural and the other functional, in a manner somewhat akin to Aristotle's (implicit) chart of genres, with its modal and thematic headings.

| *function* / *relation* | non-satirical | satirical |
|---|---|---|
| transformation | PARODY | TRAVESTY |
| imitation | PASTICHE | CARICATURE |

If the functional classification must be adopted or retrieved, however, even partially, then it seems to me that a correction is in order. The distinction between the satirical and the nonsatirical is obviously too pat, for there are no doubt several ways of not being satirical, and frequent exposure to hypertextual practices shows that in this field one must distinguish at least two kinds. One (to which belong the practices of the pastiche and parody) aims at a sort of pure amusement or pleasing exercise with no aggressive or mocking intention; I shall label it the *ludic* mode of the hypertext. But there is still another practice, to which I have just alluded by citing as an example Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, which we must now name (for lack of a better technical term) its *serious* mode. This third functional category

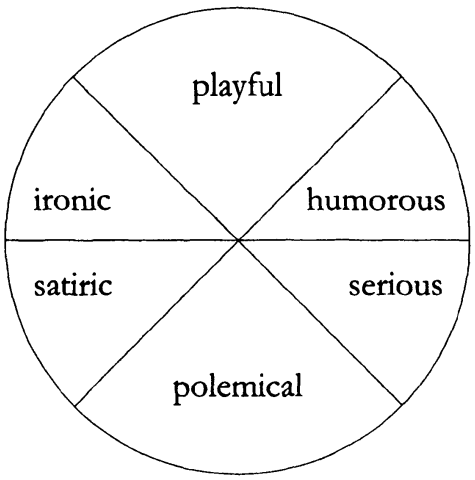
obviously forces us to extend our chart on the right to make room for a third column, one for serious transformations and imitations. These two vast categories have never been considered in themselves, and as a result they have no name. I therefore propose the neutral and extensive term *transposition* to designate serious transformations.[3] For serious imitations we may borrow from ancient usage a term that is more or less synonymous with *pastiche* or with *apocrypha* but is also more neutral than its competitors. That term is *forgery*. Now we have an even more complete and temporarily more definitive diagram, which could at least serve as a map for the exploration of the territory of hypertextual practices.[4]

| *mood* / *relation* | playful | satirical | serious |
|---|---|---|---|
| transformation | PARODY *(Chapelain décoiffé)* | TRAVESTY *(Virgile travesti)* | TRANSPOSITION *(Doctor Faustus)* |
| imitation | PASTICHE *("L'Affaire Lemoine")* | CARICATURE *(À la manière de . . . )* | FORGERY *(Posthomerica)* |

In order to illustrate the six major categories, I have indicated in parentheses, as an example, the title of a work representative of each category. The choices are inevitably arbitrary and even unfair, since specific works are always, and happily so, much more complex than the species to which they are affixed.[5]

What follows is, in a sense, a long commentary on this chart, a commentary whose primary effect will be, I hope, not to justify the chart but rather to blur, dissolve, and eventually erase it. Before I begin this follow-up, I must also briefly discuss two aspects of the chart. I have replaced *function* with *mood,* finding it more flexible and less brutal. Still, it would be rather naive to imagine that it is possible to draw a clear boundary between these great diatheses in the sociopsychological operation of the hypertext. I have therefore used dotted vertical lines to account for the possible nuances between pastiche and caricature, travesty and transposition, and so on. Furthermore, there is an insuperable difficulty inherent in the diagrammatic representation: it suggests that the satirical

occupies a fundamentally intermediate position separating inevitably and as if naturally, the playful from the serious. This certainly is not the case, and many works in fact straddle the boundary between the serious and the playful, a boundary impossible to illustrate here. (One need only think of Giraudoux, for an example). But reversing the columns of the satirical and the playful would result in the opposite kind of misrepresentation. One should rather imagine a circular system similar to the one planned by Goethe for his *Dichtarten*, where each mood would have a point of contact with the two others, but in this case the crossing with the category of relationships becomes in turn impossible to chart in the two-dimensional space of the Gutenberg galaxy. Besides, I do not doubt that the tripartition of the moods would be too crude (a bit like the separation of the three "fundamental" colors, blue, yellow, and red), and one could easily refine it by introducing three more gradations into the spectrum. Between the playful and the satirical, I would readily place the *ironic*; that is often the mood of Thomas Mann's hypertexts, such as *Doctor Faustus*, *Lotte in Weimar*, and above all *Joseph and His Brothers*. Between the satirical and the serious divisions, I see the *polemical*; that is the spirit in which Miguel de Unamuno transposes *Don Quixote* in his violently anti-Cervantian book *The Life of Don Quixote*, and that is also the spirit of Henry Fielding's anti-*Pamela*, which he titles *Shamela*. Between the playful and the serious I would add the *humorous*; this, as I have already said, is the dominant mood of some of Giraudoux's transpositions, such as *Elpénor*. (But Thomas Mann oscillates too constantly between irony and humor: hence a new gradation, a new blurring, for so it goes with great literary works.) Thus we would tentatively come up with a kind of rose window.



In the previous chart, however, I consider the distinction between the two types of relationships (imitation and transformation) as much more clear-cut: hence the unbroken boundary line separating them. Needless to say, this in no way excludes the possibility of mixed practices. The same hypertext may simultaneously transform a hypotext and imitate another. Travesty certainly consists of transforming a noble text by imitating, to that effect, the lax style of another text, namely vulgar speech. (One may even at once transform and imitate the same text; it is a borderline case with which we shall deal in due course.) But, as Blaise Pascal more or less put it, that Archimedes should have been both a prince and a geometrician is no reason to confuse nobility with geometry. Or, to belabor the obvious in the manner of M. de La Palice, a prerequisite to doing two things at the same time is that the two things not be the same.

The announced elaboration will consist, therefore, in examining more closely each one of the squares of our chart, in refining the discriminations, and in illustrating them with the help of selected examples.[6] These will be chosen for either their paradigmatic or, conversely, their paradoxical and exceptional character, or simply for their own interest, in full knowledge that the latter may encourage annoying digressions or welcome diversions. Here again, then, we shall have a more or less regulated alternation between criticism and poetics. In terms of the checkerboard (one should perhaps say hopscotch) drawn by our chart, we shall proceed roughly as follows. First we shall finish off the partially explored square of classical and modern parody (chapters 8 to 11), and move on to travesty in its burlesque and modern forms (chapters 12 and 13). Pastiche and caricature—forms that are often hard to distinguish—will occupy us in chapters 14 to 26, along with two complex practices that include pretty much all of these at once: mixed parody and the antinovel. Then we will look at some typical performances of forgery and, more specifically, of continuation (chapters 27 to 39). Finally (40 to 80), we shall discuss the practice of transposition, by far the richest in technical operations and in literary applications. Then it will be time to conclude and to put away our tools, for nights are chilly in this season.

# 8

For the reasons cited above, and with the one noted exception of *Chapelain décoiffé*, literary parody gravitates to short texts (and, it goes without saying, to texts that are sufficiently well known for the effect to be noticeable). Madières's anthology contains, among many others, two parodies of "*La Cigale et la fourmi*" {"The Grasshopper and the Ant"}, a privileged target, since it is most readily recognized.[1] Here is Charles-Auguste La Fare's version, "On a Mistress Abandoned by M. de Langeron":

La cigale ayant baisé
  Tout l'été
Se trouva bien désolée
Quand Langeron l'eut quittée:
Pas le moindre pauvre amant
Pour soulager son tourment.
Elle alla crier famine
  Chez la Grignan sa voisine . . .

{The Grasshopper having screwed
  All Summer
Felt quite disconsolate
Once Langeron had left her:
Not the merest, paltriest lover in sight
To allay her torment.
Off she went to cry for help
  To *la Grignan*, her neighbor.}

We need not indefinitely glean this unrewarding field, with its labored rather than gratifying output. I prefer to evoke a more recent and rather pretty paraphrase of the lyrics of the "Temps des Cerises,"[2] improvised in 1973 by Michel Butor:

Quand nous chanterons
Le temps des surprises,
Et gai labyrinthe
Et sabbat moqueur
Vibreront en fêtes.
Les peuples auront

La victoire en tête
Et les amoureux
Des lits dans les fleurs.

{When we shall sing
The time of surprises,
The gay labyrinth
And the mocking sabbath
Shall vibrate into feasts.
Nations will have
Victory in mind
And lovers will have
Beds in the flowers.}[3]

And point out the more curious case of the famous sonnet by Félix Arvers, which inspired at least two fairly clever parodies. These have the added merit of preserving the rhymes of the original poem. The first, called "A l'envers," reverses the theme of secret love to that of public misfortune. The second claims to be the reply (vainly hoped for) from the woman to whom it is dedicated. {See the Arvers text and its parodies in the Appendix.}

The practice of responding by using identical rhymes is a genre attested in classical Arabic poetry, and also in the Chinese poetry of the Sung period under the term *tz'u-yün* or *ho-yün*, which designates the very process of taking up the same rhymes.

> Even in T'ang times, Po Chü-i and Yüan Chen had composed poems to each other's rhymes, and during the Sung it became very popular for men, as an expression of friendship, to "follow the rhymes" of each other's poems. This practice of composing more than one poem with the same rhyme words is known as *tieh-yün*, or "repetition of rhymes." Wang An-shih, struck with admiration for a poem on snow by his political rival Su Tung-p'o, wrote his own poems to the same rhymes, employing the same rhymes again and again until he had written as many as six poems on Su's original set of rhymes. The term *tieh-yün* is also used when one uses the rhymes from one's own poems to compose a new poem. When Su Tung-p'o was confined to the Imperial Censorate Prison and was under investigation on charges of treason, he wrote a poem expressing his resignation at the thought of death. . . . Contrary to his expectation, he was freed, and wrote

a poem expressing his joy in which he employed the same rhyme words.[4]

One finds a very exacting form of this type of constraint in Jean-Luc Nancy's "Jeune Carpe," a poem in alexandrine verses whose number of lines and choice of rhymes (but not of the rhyme words) at the beginning and at the end of each section are—as the title suggests—those of Paul Valéry's "Jeune Parque."[5] But one could also recall, in an entirely different register that I shall not attempt to qualify, that "Ode au Maréchal" {Pétain} by Paul Claudel, which became, in the nick of time and with only minor textual changes, an "Ode au Général" {de Gaulle}.

The parodic distortion of proverbs (I have borrowed one or two examples from Balzac) is a type of joke probably as old and as popular as the proverb itself. Mistigris from *Un Début dans la vie* is probably the principal source of these in the *Comédie humaine* (examples: "Pas d'argent, pas de suif" {No money, no tallow}; "Les petits poissons font les grandes rivières" {Little fishes make big rivers}; "L'ennui naquit un jour de l'université" {Boredom was once born from the University}; "On a vu des rois épousseter des bergères" {Kings have been known to dust shepherdesses}.[6] But one can find examples in other works as well—such as *Illusions perdues*, *La Rabouilleuse*, *Ursule Mirouet*—in the guise of artsy puns, as is the case here, or an uneducated character's involuntary howlers. Balzac prized this genre and established for himself an entire repertory to be used as needed, which the Surrealists delighted in.[7] All of us have practiced these in our youth. A few none too glorious achievements pop to mind: "Qui trop embrasse manque le train" {He who embraces too much misses the train}; "Partir, c'est crever un pneu" {To leave is to puncture a tire}.[8] Jacques Prévert, who is more sophisticated, proposes a simple spoonerism {on "Partir, c'est mourir un peu"}: "Martyr, c'est pourrir un peu" {Martyrdom means to rot a little}. As is often the case, parody here remains close to plain punning.

Within a less playful or less gratuitous order, it is possible to observe—from Beaumarchais to the present—an interesting series grafted upon the proverb "Tant va la cruche à l'eau qu'à la fin elle se casse" {So often does the jug go to the well that in the end it breaks}. The one who started it all is Bazile, who in the *Barber of Seville* demonstrated his talent at this game.

BAZILE: And then, as the proverb says, what is fit to take . . .
BARTHOLO: I get it, is good . . .
BAZILE: To keep.
BARTHOLO (*surprised*): Ah! ah!
BAZILE: Yes, I have reworked a few little proverbs with similar variations . . .

In the *Marriage of Figaro* we encounter the same feature.

BAZILE: Watch out young man, watch out! The father is not pleased; the daughter has been slapped; she's not studying with you: Chérubin! Chérubin! you are causing her grief! So often does the jug go to the well . . .
FIGARO: Ah, here goes our imbecile with his old proverbs! Well, big bore, what does the wisdom of ages say? So often does the jug go to the well that in the end . . .
BAZILE: It fills up.
FIGARO (*as he is leaving*): Not so dumb, after all, not so dumb![9]

In both cases one notes the identical effect of suspense followed by a letdown. The same proverb subliminally informs the famous first line of the first Surrealist Manifesto: "So strong is the belief in life, in what is most fragile in life—*real* life, I mean—that in the end this belief is lost."[10] Closer to us, and closer to the popular model because of his use of puns, Raymond Queneau is also more sophisticated in the effects he gains from them: "Tant va l'autruche à l'eau qu'à la fin elle se palme" {So long goes the ostrich to the water that in the end it grows flippers}. And finally(?), Georges Perros: "Tant va la vache à lait qu'à la fin elle se mange" {So long goes the cow to milk that in the end it gets eaten}.[11]

The most systematic and lavish use of this process is to be found, no doubt, in the *Cent cinquante-deux proverbes mis au goût du jour* (1925) by Paul Éluard and Benjamin Péret.[12] These are essentially "Surrealistic" parodies, meaning that the principle of transformation is guided by arbitrariness or psychic automatism. It is left to chance and the surrounding semantic influence to confer some sense (or some fascinating strangeness) upon the obtained variant. With very few exceptions, the operating principle is that of substitution, here and there obtained through phonic inversions ("La métrite adoucit les flirts" {Metritis chastens petting}; "A quelque rose chasseur est bon" {A hunter is always good to some rose}), but more

often without any formal motivation.[13] Sometimes it is a substitution of one word ("Quand la raison n'est pas là, les souris dansent" {When reason is gone, the mice dance}; "A chaque jour suffit sa tente" {Sufficient unto the day is the tent thereof}).[14] On one occasion it is a substitution of three words ("Qui couche avec le pape doit avoir de longs pieds" {He who sleeps with the Pope must have long feet}).[15] But almost always—given the binary structure of the genre—it is a substitution of two words: "Orfèvre, pas plus haut que le gazon" {Goldsmith, no higher than the lawn}; "Les curés ont toujours peur" {Priests are always afraid}; "Il faut battre sa mère pendant qu'elle est jeune" {One must beat one's mother while she is young}; "Il n'y a pas de cheveux sans rides" {There is no hair without wrinkles}, etc.[16]

In all these examples the hypotext is easily spotted under its fanciful disguise. Occasionally, however, depending no doubt on the reader's competence, it escapes detection. The parodic effect is then lost, and what remains is the proverbial turn, the gnomic imprint. The Eluardian statement is then read as a whimsical pastiche of a proverb, imparting the proverb's peremptory tone to some preposterous observation. This, at least, is how I see the operation of these examples: "Dieu calme le corail" {God soothes the coral}; "Nul ne nage dans la futaie" {No one swims in the grove}—as well as the best-known, the ever present emblem of poetic "impertinence": "Les éléphants sont contagieux" {Elephants are contagious}.

Every distinctive, well-known, brief utterance is a natural and easy prey to parody. The most typical and frequent case is no doubt that of titles.

We all know that titles of literary or other works do not form an amorphous, arbitrary, timeless, or insignificant category of utterances. The vast majority of them—and the same goes for character names—are subject to at least two fundamental determinations: genre and period. A certain reciprocity between these two is implicit, since there are in fact period genres. Titles, like the names of animals, become an index: part pedigree, part birth certificate. For over a century the first-name title (*Adolphe*, *Dominique*, *Geneviève*) connoted the *récit,* a short psychological narrative *à la française*; the *Rougon-Macquart*, the *Thibault*, the *Jalna* series can only be family sagas, etc. The third determining factor, which obviously is the author's personal invention, often operates only as a variant on a model or within a framework imposed by usage: John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* / Georges Duhamel's *Chronique des Pasquier.*

These external determinations proceed either (as in the first case) from a "logical" bent or (in all the other cases) through imitation. It took the inventor of the picaresque novel no great effort of imagination to give his biographical narrative the name of its hero. *Lazarillo de Tormes* is thus a self-explanatory, purely denotative title, but in later titles this pattern was to function as a generic index: *Guzman de Alfarache*, *Moll Flanders*, *Gil Blas* all connote the picaresque genre by virtue of their reference to a titular tradition at least as much as by the fact that they denote the specific autobiography of a fictitious hero.[17] There is therefore in a title an element of transtextual allusion—in variable doses, of course—which is the beginning of a generic "contract."

The most conspicuous and most effective form of allusion is the parodic distortion. This form is particularly suited to contemporary journalistic production, which is always eager for headlines and always on the lookout for "striking" formulations.

The two lifesavers here are the pun and the parodic allusion—often inseparable, the former being in essence a specific instance of the latter. Puns (these few examples are culled at random from memories and chance encounters) can turn Leni Riefenstahl's *Les Dieux du stade* {The gods of the stadium} into *Les Jeux du stade* {The games of the stadium} or *Les Adieux au stade* {Farewells to the stadium}; Charlie Chaplin's *La Ruée vers l'or* {*The Gold Rush*} might become *La Ruée vers l'art* {The art rush}—the title of an article dealing with the art market; *Le Masque et la plume* {The mask and the pen, a cultural program on French radio}, changed into *Le Casque et la plume* {The helmet and the pen}, becomes a title referring to a writer's visit to some military facility. Some time ago, Edgar Morin discussed the ideas of the group called Socialisme ou Barbarie {Socialism or barbarianism}, ideas that were expounded by yours truly; his all too inevitable title was *Solécismes ou barbarismes* {Solecisms or barbarisms} (in *Arguments*, 1965), to which the answer might have been an equally inevitable *Solipsisme ou borborygmes* {Solipsism or borborygmus}, a lost parody that must have since resurfaced someplace.

With or without punning ("Apocalypse Mao"), parodic distortion is readily attracted to titles, as I have indicated, or to typical and easily recognizable clichés whose structure lends itself to practically infinite reuse. I have picked out a few examples at random, giving only their bare bones here and leaving it to my readers to identify the source and supply the original tenor: *Waiting for* ——; *Once upon a Time* ——; —— *Is Not What It*

*Used to Be*; *Some of My Best* ——; *The Discrete Charms of the* ——; *The* —— *with a Human Face*; *X,Y,Z, and the Others*, etc.

This kind of allusion is not reserved for standard journalistic titlemaking. On the contrary, intensive use is made of it in critical metadiscourse, where there is a constant temptation to mimic the titles and the formulas typical of the author concerned. A study of Immanuel Kant might easily be titled *Critique of Kant*; a discourse on Diderot, *Diderot the Fatalist and His Masters* or *The Paradoxes of Denis the Fatalist*; on Balzac, *Splendors and Miseries of Honoré de Balzac*; on Flaubert, *The Temptation of Saint Gustave*; on Proust, *Remembrance of Marcel Proust*, *Proust in Love*; on Ponge, *Siding with Words* or *Francis Ponge in His Various States*.[18] Worse examples could be found; let everyone confess to his or her own sins—if sins they be. The effect can even extend beyond the field of titles to be applied to opening lines: "For a long time I have been fascinated by the description of decanters plunged into the Vivonne." In all these cases the parody is motivated, quite understandably, by the effect of *contagion,* which often affects the critical metatext.[19] This is but one of its forms, the other being, naturally, the pastiche, intentional or not.

Another field for such exercises, one that is very characteristic of our modern culture, is the advertising catchword. To deal with it would require a 900-page thesis. I will cite only this recent gem, grafted onto the official (and unwittingly prophetic) slogan "We Have No Oil in France, but We've Got Ideas." A brand of black-currant liqueur (*Cassis*) has thought of featuring its characteristic bottle on a poster surrounded by several glasses of Kir made with white wine, red wine, champagne, etc., and captioned with the amusingly chauvinistic statement: "In France We Have Cassis and We Have Ideas." In anticipation of the day when we also run out of ideas, I am storing this consoling version in the cooler: "In France We've Got No Oil and No Ideas, but We've Got Cassis."

But it is also true that every brief, peremptory, and nonargumentative statement—proverb, maxim, aphorism, slogan—inevitably invites an equally peremptory and equally dogmatic refutation. Those who limit themselves to affirmation must expect to be summarily contradicted. This pure negation is a minimal transformation, and thus a form of parody, whose function and mood may vary according to the various contexts and situations.

In the twenty-fifth of his *Philosophical Letters*, Voltaire was in earnest, I think, in attempting to refute Pascal. Quite naturally, in the process of doing

so, he managed to turn around word for word some of Pascal's "thoughts." Thus, the statement "If there exists a God, one must love only Him, and not his creatures" calls forth this one: "One should love, and very warmly at that, all creatures; each one should love his country, his wife, his father, his children; and so much is it true that we should love them that God makes us love them despite ourselves." The observation "The foolish project of Montaigne's to do a portrait of himself!" becomes "The charming project of Montaigne's to depict himself naively as he has done! For he has depicted human nature, and the sorry project that Nicole, Malebranche, and Pascal had to decry Montaigne!" As we can see, however, Voltaire still feels a need for some succinct (though effective) argument. That is precisely where the seriousness of his purpose lies; after all, Voltaire has undertaken to "defend humankind" against this "sublime misanthrope." The case may indeed need some pleading.

In a mode somewhat less loaded with polemic intent, Lautréamont subjects some aphorisms of the same Pascal, and of one or two others, to diverse and constantly negative operations.[20] Some are metatheses: "Familiarity is the apprenticeship of the mind" becomes "Reserve is the apprenticeship of the mind." Reversed metaphors: "Cleopatra's nose, etc.," becomes "If Cleopatra's morals had been less short, the face of the earth would have changed. Her nose would not have become shorter for it."[21] Double negatives—that is, negative transformations in the proper sense of the term, which leave the meaning intact: "One despises great plans when one feels incapable of achieving great successes" becomes "One respects great plans when one feels capable of achieving great successes." Pure and simple negation: "Great thoughts come from reason"; "Man is an oaktree, nature has none that is more robust"; "Nothing has been said. We have come too soon, now that men have been living for over seven thousand years," etc.[22] None of this is of great consequence, either as play or as satire, but the material may not have warranted more.

The most successful example of this genre is perhaps Reboux and Muller's pastiche of La Rochefoucauld.[23] This pastiche consists of a letter by the author of the *Maxims*, from beyond the grave, to protest the posthumous edition of his work prepared by Claude Barbin, an edition in which he claims that the opposite of what he had written has been systematically printed. His true thoughts were, for example, these: "It is a sign of great wisdom to wish to be wise all alone"; "There are delicious marriages, but there are no good ones"; "A fool always has character enough

to be good."[24] And why not? In psychology, every maxim (the present one included) is exactly as valid as its opposite, and this little exercise is a fairly good demonstration of the reversibility of this sort of profundity. Such was, I hope, the satirical aim of the two pastiche writers. Or perhaps they simply wished to indicate that in this matter, where the front equals the back, the best pastiche is indeed, for once, parody. But I have saved until last this anti-Lamartinian aphorism spoken by Paris in *Tiger at the Gates*, Giraudoux's play about the Trojan War. It is a truly minimal refutation, a model of economy, of efficiency, perhaps even of wisdom: "Un seul être vous manque et tout est repeuplé" {One sole being is missing and the world is repeopled}.[25]

# 9

Among the modern manifestations of parody, or textual transformation with playful intent, the most remarkable, and no doubt most conforming to its definition, is provided by the practice that can be described, by way of a synecdoche, as *Oulipian*—even though not all of its manifestations are the work of the official members of the Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle, or Oulipo, created in November 1960 by Raymond Queneau, François Le Lionnais, and a few others.[1] Some of these playful operations, such as the anagram or the palindrome, in fact predate the Oulipo by several centuries. Still, the group has given these practices new luster and has integrated them into a (somewhat) systematic ensemble which (at times) makes it possible to situate them and to define them more rigorously.

The *Oulipeme* (a text produced by the Oulipo) or the *Oulipism* (a text written, even if pre-Oulipo, in the style of an *Oulipeme*—subtle distinctions are of no importance here, and we may simply take the *Oulipeme* to be a particular instance or an empirical specification of the *Oulipism*, which is the real theoretic object of our inquiry) does not always proceed from a transformation. A lipogram (a text written by entirely avoiding a certain letter or letters of the alphabet) such as *La Disparition* by Georges Pérec (a lipogram "in *e*": that is, without the letter *e*) does not transform any previous text; it was written simply (and, I think, rather directly) according to this formal constraint; it is therefore an *autonomous Oulipeme*. But any text can be rewritten as a lipogram (or a lipogram can be rewritten in accordance with any other type of lipogrammatic restriction; *La Disparition*, for example, by

precluding the use of the vowel *a,* could yield, among others, this new and more literal title: *L'Élision*). That would obviously constitute a *lipogrammatic transformation,* or a *transformational lipogram.*

I shall therefore consider only one aspect of this Oulipic activity: namely, its transformational aspect. That is, after all, its principal feature in a sense, especially if one takes into account the Oulipisms that consist first of an ad hoc textual production, followed by systematic transformation. The palindrome obviously falls within this category, or the holorhyme {a wholly rhyming (homophonic) couplet} (one could also, though with greater difficulty, assign a holorhyme or a palindrome—obtained through transformation—to a previous text that had not programmed or even anticipated it).

Lipogrammatic transformation (or "translation") is exemplified by Giacomo Casanova rewriting for Mme Vestris an entire role by eliminating the phoneme *r,* because she could not pronounce it properly. "Les procédés de cet homme m'outragent et me désespèrent, je dois penser à m'en défaire" thus becomes "Cet homme a des façons qui m'offensent et me désolent, il faut que je m'en défasse {The manners of this man give me outrage and despair, I must contrive to rid myself of him"; "This man has ways that offend me and make me desolate, I must find means to shed him"}, and so on.[2] Pérec lipogrammatizes without an *e* Charles Baudelaire's poem "Les Chats" (which has been subjected to worse kinds of treatment), and in a most audacious gamble he also lipogrammatizes Arthur Rimbaud's "Voyelles": "A noir (un blanc), I roux, U safran, O azur: / Nous saurons au jour dit ta vocalisation," etc. {A black (one blank), I russet, U saffron, O azure: / On the appointed day we shall know your vocalization}.[3] The rule of the game (which justifies here the use of the official, or indigenous, term "translation") obviously consists in remaining as close as possible to the (meaning of the) initial text while at the same time applying the formal prescription: whence the effect of an awkwardly synonymic paraphrase, with an inevitable series of slight, more or less coherent displacements of meaning. Chance is no stranger to the endeavor.

Chance plays an even greater role in the *homophonic transformation* (or "translation"—Léonce Nadirpher here proposes the portmanteau word *traducson,* which consists of giving an approximate phonic equivalent of a text by using other words, from the same language or from another.)[4] The Oulipian archetype of interlinguistic homophonic transformation (from English into French) is this exclamation by François Le Lionnais in front

of the primates in the Jardin des Plantes, quite clearly inspired by a line from Keats: "Un singe de beauté est un jouet pour l'hiver" {A monkey of beauty is a toy for the winter}.[5] An example of an intralinguistic (French-French) homophonic transformation is offered in this "transphonation" by Leon Robel of Stéphane Mallarmé's "Tombeau d'Edgar Poe":

Quelque ennui mène en vain le Termite et le Singe
L'appeau est un suicide avec l'anglais venu
Sans socle, époux vanté donne à voir Pâques aux nues

{Some boredom vainly drives the Termite and the Monkey
The decoy is a suicide that came with English
Without a pedestal, the vaunted spouse shows Easter to the clouds}.[6]

The procedure generates utterances that are presumably devoid of meaning (the term "translation" is therefore misused here), but the effect of irresistible semantic pressure (as one speaks of atmospheric pressure) conjures up some glimmers of meaning, which one can attempt to assign (in the first degree) to some autonomous reference (Le Lionnais in the Jardin des Plantes) or (at one remove) partially reconcile with the initial hypotext (here, for example, "avec l'anglais venu" or "sans socle"). The classic example of this genre is *Mots d'Heures, Gousses, Rames* by "Luis d'Antin van Rooten," who presents as a volume of hermetic French poems (with English glosses on the obscurities) a series of French transphonations of nursery rhymes ("Mother Goose Rhymes"):

Un petit d'un petit
S'étonne aux Halles
Un petit d'un petit
Ah! degrés te fallent

thus transposes, as you have probably guessed already, to

*Humpty Dumpty*
*Sat on a wall*
*Humpty Dumpty*
*Had a great fall.*

But several generations of French schoolchildren had already indulged in unwitting transphonations into Latin, with "Quiscam angelum lettorum?"; into Greek, with "Ouk elabon polin? Elpis, ephe, kaka, ousa, alla gar apasi";

into French, for the English "Thank you very much," with "Saint-Cloud Ménilmuche."[7]

The same inevitable expulsion of the initial meaning (and the same and equally inevitable semantic reinvestments), despite the radically different procedure, occurs in the operation labeled $S + 7$, which one could rename in (slightly) more orthodox fashion a *lexical transfer*. It consists of selecting a dictionary and then systematically replacing each substantive in a given text with the one located in the seventh position behind it in that dictionary (the traditional form of $S + 7$) or, more generally, displacing each "nongrammatical" word with the one found in an agreed-upon position either behind or before it. This is the generalized formula: $M \pm n$. Thus Gérard de Nerval's "El Desdichado," subjected to $M + 7$ (with the help of the *Petit Larousse illustré* of 1952), brings the following result: "Je suis le tenu, le vibrant, l'inconsolable / Le priodonte d'Aramits à la tourmaline abonnée," etc. {I am the kept one, the vibrant, the disconsolate one, / The giant armadillo from Aramits with the subscribed tourmaline, etc.}, a version clearly short on prosody.[8] But a functional $M + 7$ (meaning, I think, that one cheats enough on the formula to preserve the original rhythm and rhyme) yields the following by Raymond Queneau:

> Je suis le tensoriel, le vieux, l'inconsommé
> Le printemps d'Arabie à la tombe abonnie,
> Ma simple étole est morte et mon lynx consterné
> Pose le solen noué de la mélanénie.
>
> {I am the tensorial one, the old, the unconsumed one,
> The Arabian Spring with the improved tomb,
> My simple stole is dead and my appalled lynx
> Lays down the knotted razor clam of melanenia.}

Having been drilled in this fashion, the reader will have no trouble recognizing the hypotext, or uncovering the transformational formula, of two performances by Nadirpher on fables of La Fontaine: "La Cigale et la Fourmi," and " Le Corbeau et le Renard." {See these texts in the Appendix.}

Among other "mechanical operations" (Jean Lescure's formula) with similar effect, we find the transformation by internal "lexical permutations." For example, Rimbaud's "Bateau ivre" becomes

> Comme je descendais les haleurs impassibles,
> Je ne me sentis plus guidé par les fleuves:

Des cibles criardes les avaient pris pour Peaux-Rouges,
Les ayant cloués nus aux couleurs de poteaux.

{As I descended the impassive haulers,
I no longer felt guided by the rivers:
Screaming targets had taken them for redskins,
And nailed them naked to the colors of stakes.}[9]

Whence the possibility for an author of improvising texts of "combinational literature" whose permutational potential is calculated and indicated in advance: thus G. P. Harsdörffer's "proteic" poems in the seventeenth century (a distich composed of eleven monosyllables can generate 39,917,800 different distichs); or Queneau's ten sonnets which, since each line of each poem is permutable with its equivalent in all the other poems, are susceptible of $10^{14}$—i.e., one hundred thousand billion {100 trillion} combinations.[10] Antonymy is another possibility: i.e., a systematic substitution of each semantic word by its opposite (in fact, by one of its possible opposites). Valéry had inaugurated this procedure by proposing the following "negative" version of one of Pascal's thoughts: "Le vacarme intermittent des petits coins où nous vivons me rassure" {The intermittent din of the cosy corners we live in reassures me}.[11] Marcel Bénabou antonymized Mallarmé's poem "L'Azur" {Azure} into "La Gueule" {Gules}, on the model of a heraldic opposition:

De la gueule éphémère la gravité soucieuse
Allège, laide insolemment comme l'épine,
Le prosateur fécond qui bénit sa torpeur
Au sein d'une oasis fertile de Bonheurs.

{Of the ephemeral gules the anxious gravity,
As haughtily ugly as the thornbush,
Soothes the prolific prose writer who blesses his own torpor
Within an oasis abounding in Felicities.}[12]

Bénabou carefully (and correctly) differentiates this practice from adverse parody in the manner of Lautréamont, mentioned earlier on,[13] or in the manner of Reboux and Muller: "It is not a matter here of laying bare the absurdity of a maxim by formulating the maxim that contradicts it. . . . It is each word in and of itself which is 'treated' here. Thus the potential character of this procedure is safeguarded: it preserves the possibility of

obtaining perfectly unexpected sequences." The word "potential" evidently means *fortuitous* here, and this feature is of importance to us. Through "discreet"—i.e., *minimal*—transformations, Georges Pérec subjects Paul Verlaine's "Gaspard Hauser" to a series of fifteen variations, some of which are barely perceptible but none of which is insignificant. With due precautions taken to ward off misprints and accidental faulty transcriptions, one could imagine producing an edition of Proust's *Recherche* adorned with one such minimal variation; to make the reading easier, the variation might bear on the first line alone {"Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure": For a long time I would go to bed early}. A sportsmanlike version would read *Longtemps je me suis douché de bonne heure* {For a long time, I would shower early}; a nosographic version, *Longtemps je me suis mouché de bonne heure* {For a long time, I would blow my nose early}; a sexological version, and one that would probably be more accurately biographical, *Longtemps je me suis touché de bonne heure* {For a long time, I would touch myself early}. This would surely be a costly publishing operation, but such subversive practices are addressed, by definition, to wealthy audiences; lovers of literature who are less well off can be content with scratching out words by hand.

All these manipulations (I am speaking of Oulipian ones) resort to a "mechanical" principle (others could be invented) in order to draw from their hypotext (which Pérec named *texte-souche* {root-text}) a text that is lexically entirely different. Two other types, which operate in contrasting ways, limit themselves, always according to a conventional and mechanical procedure, to reducing or to amplifying the original text. Examples of reduction are offered by the "haiku" drawn by Queneau from poems by Mallarmé. Queneau retains only the ending of each line:

Leur onyx?
Lampadophore!
Le Phénix?
Amphore.

{Their onyx?
A lamp-bearer!
The Phoenix?
An amphora.}[14]

One could also retain only the beginnings and ends of lines, as Tristan Derême had already done with Joachin Du Bellay: "Heureux qui fit un

beau voyage / Heureux qui conquit la Toison" {Happy the man who went on a beautiful voyage / Happy the man who conquered the Fleece}.[15] Or, as François Le Lionnais proposes and does, one could keep nothing but the poem's "borders" or frame: first and last lines, first and last words in each line. It seems to me that the lingering effect of such operations is to suggest that the preserved elements suffice unto themselves and produce a satisfying meaning, one often little removed from the overall meaning of the original, and that all the rest was therefore useless padding. Such is indeed the implication of Queneau's proposed title *La Redondance chez Phane Armé*. A subtle satiric connotation is blended here with the playful function, deliberately or not. By this token, the initiator of this procedure would have to have been André Gide, who in his *Anthologie de la poésie française* excized the repetitive sections of a Charles Péguy poem and replaced them with insolent dots. Many other works could also do, for better or for worse, with this sort of trimming. I myself would propose the following forced haikuization of the *Recherche*: "Longtemps je me suis couché dans le Temps" {For a long time I would go to bed in Time}. The economical character of this transformation would, perhaps, sufficiently compensate for the wasteful publication evoked above, and the two versions could even be sold in the same case.

The inverse procedure, mechanical amplification, consists in substituting for each word of the initial text its lexical definition, taken from a specific, agreed-upon dictionary, and to continue with each word for a predetermined number of turns: *definitional transformation* is the name of the game. "A six-word line (*the cat has drunk the milk*) processed in this manner would yield a text which is nearly 180 words long by the third treatment." "El Desdichado" {see note 8} begins its expansion thus: "Je suis celui qui est plongé dans les ténèbres, celui qui a perdu sa femme et n'a pas contracté de nouveau mariage, celui qui n'est pas consolé" {I am he who is plunged in darkness, he who has lost his wife and has not contracted a new marriage, he who is not consoled}. With each successive manipulation, and especially if one resorts to definitions of the derivative or figurative senses of the words, the meaning of the definitional statements can be seen to drift gradually away from the initial meaning. One can even obtain, through a judicious choice of derivations, several entirely different statements, each of which evokes the style of a particular author: from "le presbytère [qui] n'a rien perdu de son charme" {the presbytery that has lost none of its charm}, etc.,[16] Bénabou and Pérec derive, through divergent

substitutions, some acceptable pastiches of the Marquis de Sade, Henri Lefebvre, Philippe Sollers, and Jean Lecanuet.[17] Definitional amplification is obviously only a specific instance of amplification per se, an exercise much in vogue during the neoclassical period, just as haikuization is only a specific form of reduction. But with regard to play, the advantage of this particularity lies, once again, in the "mechanical" character of the procedure selected, and therefore in the unpredictable character of the results obtained.

So far I have described only operations that bear upon a single hypotext, although it could be said that the use of a given dictionary for lexical transfers and definitional transformations already mobilizes something akin to a second text as a transforming or interpreting agent. The operation can from the outset, however, take on two or more texts, mixed in such a way as to engender a specific new text from each. One could use, as does Pérec, the traditional term *contamination* to designate these blending techniques and divide them (very roughly) into additive and substitutive contaminations. The most traditional (pre-Oulipian) form of additive contamination is the *cento*, which consists in taking from here and there a line of poetry in order to constitute a whole poem that should be as coherent as possible. Le Lionnais renames this form of contamination *enchaînement* {concatenation} and offers several new illustrations of it, such as

> Avez-vous vu dans Barcelone
> Deux grands boeufs blancs tachés de roux?
>
> {Have you seen in Barcelona
> Two large white oxen with red-brown spots?}[18]

As a correction to another of his performances, I would beg to submit the following couplet as being vaguely emblematic of our *Zeitgeist*:

> Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire,
> Et s'il n'en reste qu'un, je serai celui-là.
>
> {A fool always meets a greater fool who admires him,
> And should but one be left, I shall be he.}[19]

Nadirpher offers a very economical version of the cento: namely, the contamination of proverbs, such as "Pierre qui roule n'a pas d'oreille" {A rolling stone has no ears} (the added advantage here is that the formula automatically activates a complementary contamination; in this case, naturally,

"Ventre affamé n'amasse pas mousse" {A hungry stomach gathers no moss}); or the contamination of incipits, such as this one, which derives simultaneously from Louis-René Des Forêts's *Le Bavard* ("Je me regarde souvent dans la glace" {I often look at myself in the mirror}) and from one that will be easily recognizable: "Longtemps je me suis couché dans la glace" {For a long time, I would lie down in ice}.[20]

The cento is actually already substitutive in a sense, since it replaces an authentic sequence with an exogenous one. But this adjective can be reserved for a more intimate kind of mix, which Le Lionnais felicitously names *chimera*. Thus (I am deliberately simplifying the description), one would borrow from text A its grammatical structure and from text B its lexical substance. If I were to submit

> Le corbeau ayant chanté
> Tout l'été
> Se trouva honteux et confus
> Quand le renard fut repu
>
> {The crow having sung
> All Summer long
> Felt shame and confusion
> When the fox had had his fill}

you would not fail to identify the two fables contaminated here, although their commingling is much more complex than that in a cento and involves some reciprocal adaptations.[21] In the sequence of variations already cited in reference to Verlaine's "Gaspard Hauser," Pérec proposes this easily detectable (and delectable) "Nervalian contamination":

> Je suis venu, calme et ténébreux,
> Riche de mes seuls yeux veufs,
> Vers les hommes inconsolés:
> Ils ne m'ont pas trouvé Prince.
>
> {I have come, calm and somber,
> With my widowed eyes as my sole wealth,
> Toward the disconsolate men:
> They did not call me Prince.}[22]

The pleasure derived from all these contaminations, whether additive or substitutive, obviously stems from the ambiguity of the combination, which

is simultaneously nonsensical and whimsically pertinent. Their minimal forms could no doubt be exploited to interesting effect. I shall venture this random incipit conflating Racine and Molière (Jupiter in disguise is, of course, the character addressing Alcmena): "Oui, c'est Amphitryon, c'est ton roi qui t'éveille" {Yes, 'tis Amphitryon, 'tis thy king awakening thee}. Or this mixture, emblematic of the modern novel's possibilities and impossibilities: "Longtemps je suis sorti à cinq heures" {For a long time I went out at five}.[23]

We may now have gained a clearer view of the ways in which the transformational Oulipism is a production that conforms more rigorously than any other (and, specifically, more than all current forms of parody) to the formula *playful transformation.*[24] What guarantees clarity of focus here is the purely "mechanical" character of the transforming principle, and therefore the fortuitous character of the result. Chance is at the helm; no semantic intention is at work, nothing "tendentious" or premeditated. In classical (and modern) parody the "game" consists of diverting a text from its initial meaning toward another application that is known in advance, and to which it must be *carefully* adapted. We do know that there are different kinds of games. Parody is a game of skill; the Oulipism, like roulette, is a game of chance. But because the transformation of a text always produces another text, and therefore another meaning, this chancy recreation (as the Oulipo subtitle admits {see note 1}) cannot fail to turn into a *re-creation.* It banks on doing so, in fact, confident as it is from the start in the outcome of its manipulations and convinced, in François Le Lionnais's statement—itself parodic—that "la poésie est un art simple et tout d'exécution" {poetry is a simple art, consisting in mere execution}. This confidence in the "poetic" (semantic) productivity of chance clearly belongs to the Surrealist tradition, and Oulipism is a variant of the *cadavre exquis* {exquisite corpse}. *Confidence in* may sound naive; *awareness of* may seem less so, I hope. The great merit—perhaps the only one—of Surrealism is to have revealed, through its own experiments, that a throw of the dice will never abolish meaning.

# 10

Jean Tardieu's sketch *Un mot pour un autre* {One word for another}, which in the 1950s livened up parties on the Left Bank in Paris, may be considered a transformational para-Oulipeme and described as one of the (umpteen) possible lexical transformations of an imaginary sketch from the turn of the century.[1] A lexical transformation without a unique formal rule—that is how it differs from the strict Oulipeme. The terms are substituted in a capricious manner, either by homophony (*Salsifis* {Salsify} for *Ça suffit* {That's enough}; *C'est tronc, sourcil bien* {It's trunk, good eyebrow} for *C'est bon, merci bien* {OK, many thanks}; *Eh bien ma quille, pourquoi serpez-vous là?* {Now then, my skittle, why are you mowing here?} for *Eh bien ma fille, pourquoi restez-vous là?* {Now then, my girl, why are you standing here?}; *Vous avez le pot pour frire* {You have a pot to fry} instead of *Vous avez le mot pour rire* {You are lots of fun (always quick with a funny word)}; *Je n'ai pas eu une minette à moi* {I haven't had a chick to myself} instead of *une minute à moi* {a minute to myself}, etc.), or by metaphor ("a lemon-sole" for "an empty purse"; a "grand concert crocodile" for "a grand concert piano"; "my pittance" for "my wife"), or by a substitution of stereotypes (*Cher Comte* [pointing at his top hat], *posez donc votre candidature!* {Dear Count, do deposit your application!}). But most often, transformations occur in a very arbitrary fashion, and the underlying motivation—i.e., the semantic relationship between the absent word and its substitute—baffles us: *basoche* {colloquial form of "law school"} for *cuisine* {kitchen}; *barder* {to bard} for *entrer* {to enter}; *douille* {socket} for *porte* {door}, etc.

"*Semantic* relationship" was evidently the wrong phrase to use, because the presumed relationship may be formal, as in *sourcil* for *merci*, even if I do not so perceive it. The fact nevertheless remains—and a significant one it is—that every substitution whose operative principle escapes us (it may indeed have none, if the author has allowed pure chance to prevail) leaves us open to only one hypothesis: that of a semantic and preferably metaphorical relationship, present in the author's mind and hidden from us, simply because the analogical relationship, ever a good sport, is the most readily available, indeed the most promiscuous of all. Anything may, in one way or another, resemble anything else, like the baby in its carriage who, to well-meaning folks, always resembles its mommy, even if she happens to be the nurse. Hence the uncertain status of some of the substitutions: "Chinese

lantern" for "lover"; "zebu" for "husband"; "crabs" for "children." There may, as they say, be *something* to it . . .

Given the rather banal, or conventional, and in any case utterly *predictable* character of the play's conversation (small talk in a sitcom situation between a man, his wife, and his mistress), and the explanatory accompaniment of gestures and stage business, most exchanges are easy to understand, and as I have just demonstrated above, the reader or spectator replaces them mentally—most often without hesitation and with little risk of error—with the "normal" statement that the author undoubtedly had in mind before transforming it into the nonsensical one he now offers. The meaning of other sentences remains less assured in some specifics; nonetheless, their global function is undiminished. For instance: "My three young crabs had one lemonade after another. All through the beginning of the privateer, I did nothing but nestle mills, run to the diver or the footstool, I spent whole wells watching over their carbide, giving them pincers and monsoons." *Lemonade* is obviously (some sort of) infectious disease, the *crabs* are clearly the children, *carbide* is fever, *diver* and *footstool* are the doctor and pharmacist or vice versa, *nestle mills*, *pincers,* and *monsoons* remain indeterminate, but the doling out of maternal care is easily identified in this accumulation ad libitum. In his foreword, Tardieu himself draws from this experiment the lesson "that we often speak to say nothing; that if, by chance, we do have something to say, we are able to say it in a thousand different ways, . . . that in human exchange, very often the gestures, intonations, and facial expressions tell much more than the actual words spoken; and also that words do not have, in and of themselves, any other meanings than those we are pleased to assign to them. Because if we together decide that the dog's cry will be called neighing, and the horse's barking, then overnight we will hear dogs neigh and horses bark." One recognizes here, almost literally, Hermogenes' thesis as articulated by Socrates at the opening of the *Cratylus*, or rather, and for good reason, articulated even better than it had been by Socrates, and as Hermogenes himself should articulate it. "If *we together* decide"—that, after all, is linguistic convention understood as a social fact, and not as an individual's whim ("If *I* call horse what we call man and man what we call horse . . ."). The demonstration enacted on stage by *Un mot pour un autre,* however, is more radical: namely, that "words" are not the be-all and end-all of language, and that ordinary communication, whether "significant" or not, generates around us the circulation of redundant bits of information, which are cross-checked and which complement each other

in such a way that the *thingamajig* and the *whatchamacallit* designate with sufficient clarity what we hastily decide they should designate.

Just as Michel Leiris's *Glossaire* views itself as a Cratylian illustration, so is *Un mot pour un autre* a Hermogenistic fable. I would say the same regarding the entire body of Oulipian practices and the experimental writings of the Surrealists. In the "privileged" (meaning *common*) situation of Tardieu's playlet, the formula is obviously and precisely as follows: *any which word will do the trick*—that is, the very trick of supplying the specific meaning that one expects from a word placed in that slot. In the much less determined situation (for lack of pragmatic context) of Surrealistic and Oulipian texts, the formula is still the same but taken in a less demanding sense: *any which word will do the trick*—that is, any trick, unpredictable but assured. Since language is a convention, one word is as good as another, and every sentence makes sense. With the bonus, here, of the pleasure or the amusement provided by the substitution. For if *Fiel mon lampion!* {Gall! my lantern!} quite obviously means *Ciel mon amant!* {Heavens! my lover!}, it says so in an unexpected way, and it is this surprise, and the drollness of the relationship, that causes laughter.

But there may be a problem with considering as a hypertext a text whose hypotext is purely hypothetical. As obvious as the "French" translation of Tardieu's dialogue is to us (to varying degrees), it remains nevertheless a translation after the fact, like those proposed by classical rhetoricians for the examples they deemed to be "figurative"; and *mon lampion* for *mon amant* is nothing other than a trope, whether determinate (metaphor? metonymy? etc.) or not. The translation is provided by us; it is not presented or guaranteed by the author as the preliminary hypotext to his text.

The weakness of this objection will not, I hope, go unnoticed. It amounts to granting decisive force to the author's "guarantee," as if he could not in cases of this kind either delude *himself* (which is indeed hardly likely) or delude *us*, a hypothesis which, unlike the other, always remains an open possibility. We will have no truck here with a hypotext provided by way of supplement, like the libretto included in the box of an opera recording; the hypotext is contained within the text, whence we induce it, which means in this specific case that the hypertext induces its own hypotext. We have come very close to one of the borderlines of hypertextuality, but we still remain this side of it. In order to see why clearly, it suffices, I think, to compare the situation of *Un mot pour un autre* to that, for example, of an autonomous lipogram such as *La Disparition*. Of all the readers of

this novel—however strange and "belabored" (not without cause) they may feel its text to be—none is in a position to infer from it another, nonlipogrammatic[2] text that would be the hypotext of *La Disparition*, although it is not unthinkable that Pérec should actually first have written a "normal" version of it. All that the text invites the reader to do, not explicitly but rather structurally, is to infer the lipogrammatic restriction: that is, to perceive in it the absence of the *e* (a test that some critics are said to have failed). In this sense, *La Disparition* is not for us a hypertext.[3] *Un mot pour un autre*, on the other hand, is a hypertext because—or perhaps it would be more correct and more prudent to say *to the degree that*—its very texture transparently imposes or suggests its hypotext. As a result, one can say that it illustrates, singly or not, an exceptional class (in the administrative sense of the term, meaning eminent and privileged) of hypertexts: the class of hypertexts whose hypotext exists nowhere but in themselves, or hypertexts with a built-in—i.e., implicit—hypotext. Their economic and theoretical superiority is obvious. The perception of their hypertextuality does not depend on information that is more or less extraneous or secondary, as does that which alerts us to the fact that *Chapelain décoiffé* is a parody of *Le Cid*, or that *Ulysses* has something in common with the *Odyssey*—which after all is not disclosed by a mere reading of these texts, at least not for a reader who is unaware of their "sources."

For there are in fact several degrees of hypertextual relations, among which we number at least these four:

—Allographic hypertexts (or, which amounts to the same thing, hypertexts with an allographic hypotext), such as *Chapelain décoiffé* or *Doctor Faustus*.[4] These are the most numerous and the most obvious—in fact, the most canonical.

—Autographic hypertexts with an autonomous hypotext, like our hypothetical delipogrammatized version of *La Disparition* by Pérec himself, or the second *Tentation de saint Antoine* as a correction of the first, etc.

—Autographic hypertexts with an ad hoc hypotext. That is clearly what occurs in the palindrome, the holorhyme couplet, the spoonerism, texts with a programed permutation like the *Cent mille milliards de poèmes*, etc. Here the "original" version was manifestly contrived in order to make the second version possible, unless a lucky turn of fate happened to provide the two versions together;

—Finally, hypertexts with an implicit hypotext, of which *Un mot pour un autre* may be the only example, unless one means to read as such

every figurative text within which one detects a previous literal hypotext. This boundary is the most fickle of all. It varies with varying periods and aesthetic attitudes. Today, we generally do not indulge in such exercises, though classical rhetoric deemed them legitimate, taking it for granted (and confirmed in this by scholastic practice) that the poet first wrote a literal text, such as:

> Depuis que je vous vois j'abandonne la chasse
>
> {Ever since I have seen you I have abandoned hunting},

which he later dressed up with a figurative hypertext, for example:

> Mon arc, mon javelot, mon char, tout m'importune;
> Je ne me souviens plus des leçons de Neptune;
> Mes seuls gémissements font retentir les bois,
> Et mes coursiers oisifs ont oublié ma voix.
>
> {My bow, my javelin, my chariot, all importune me;
> I no longer remember the lessons of Neptune;
> My wailings alone fill up the woods,
> And my idle steeds have forgotten my voice.}

Thus speaks Hippolyte to Aricie in the second act of Racine's *Phèdre*. The preceding prosaic "hypotext" is found, as is known, in Nicolas Pradon's *Hippolyte*. But one could read it, following the example of Nicolas Ruwet, as itself a paraphrase or a periphrasis of the more literal utterance *I love you*, which would in turn be liable to a "reductive" interpretation such as *I would like to sleep with you*. Or we could decipher all this *riffaterriano more*—in the light of the intertext provided by the dictionary, s.v. *hunting* or *quiver*, etc. Whether ancient or modern, rhetorical or semiotic, interpretive criticism is always a great producer of hypotexts, or "hypograms," or imaginary or hypothetical "matrices," because in its eyes *one word* always stands *for another*.[5] It is up to us to refrain from following it too far along this verdant but slippery path.

## 11

If one is to define Oulipism as the transformation of a text for purely playful purposes, one may hesitate to assign the label to Michel Butor's *6 810 000 litres d'eau par seconde*—or more precisely to the treatment that he applies in this

work to a famous page from Chateaubriand, for that treatment quite clearly reaches beyond mere play.[1] The kind of extension involved, however, unlike that found in classical parody, is not a more or less tendentious semantic manipulation but rather a sort of aesthetic transcendence. What I mean is that the playfulness remains intact, but that instead of procuring a simple amusement it comes with its own beauty (if I may be forgiven such an obsolete term).

Remember that in this stereophonic étude devoted to Niagara Falls, Butor weaves into the voice of the reader reciting from Chateaubriand's text a series of other, contemporary voices: those of an announcer-emcee, of tourists, of newlyweds on their honeymoon, of old couples on a pilgrimage, etc. The text thus undergoes a first semantic transformation of purely contextual origin, stemming from this incongruous, unexpected environment, which conveys a pretty good idea of the metamorphosis undergone by the site in the course of some two centuries: "It goes without saying, says the Announcer, that the spectacle has much changed." A second transformation is provided by Chateaubriand himself, who reworked this description of the Falls, first inserted into the 1797 edition of the *Essai sur les révolutions*, in order to include it in the epilogue to *Atala* (1801).[2] Butor first presents it in its initial form (pp. 5–8), then slips in more and more repeated borrowings from the 1801 version, beginning with p. 31: carcasses; p. 100: pines, wild walnut trees; p. 80, the entire last sentence; and concluding, pp. 260–67, with the entire text of this version. As a result, the book, which opens with a presentation of the "celebrated description" of 1797, closes with "This is the description of the falls that François-René de Chateaubriand published on 2 April 1801, in his novel, *Atala, or The Loves of Two Savages in the Wilderness*," as if the main function of Butor's text had been to guide its reader gradually from one version to the next.

But that celebrated self-transformation immediately suggests and authorizes a series of others. "I somehow felt the need to ask permission" from Chateaubriand, says Butor, "to use his text . . . not as a quotation, but as primary material [that certainly is the definition of every hypertextual practice]. Fortunately for me, there were two versions of this description. It was a text that had two forms; consequently, it was a text with play already built into it." Butor's transformational practice is based upon that of Chateaubriand (which we shall consider for its own sake later on), as if to prolong it. But whereas Chateaubriand, in 1801, brought to his text a certain number of suppressions and substitutions, Butor's intervention is

limited first to the gradual shift that I have already mentioned, the wording being clearly provided by Chateaubriand himself; next to two or three specific substitutions motivated by a switch from day to night, whence *soleil* → *clair de lune* and *nappe de neige* → *de suie*, then *de sueurs*, then *de braise* {sunlight → moonshine; sheet of snow, of soot, of sweat, of embers} ("There are moments," Butor comments, "nighttime, for example, where a certain number of colors, of expressions, of adjectives were much too brilliant. I changed them to obtain a nocturnal vision"); finally, and most significantly, to a series of anamorphoses induced by repetitions, ellipses, and permutations that sweep the text into a kind of swirling brew:

> I have subjected this classical text to a certain number of treatments. I have set it into motion by making up *canons*, as if the same text were recited twice, by two different readers, with a slight delay between them. Words from the second reading will be interpolated into words from the first reading, thus forming a third text. The text appears to be superimposed upon itself. . . . The shock of two words which, in Chateaubriand's text, are separated by numerous lines, yields new and increasingly strange and fantastic images.[3]

It is difficult to illustrate this very accurate account through selections from the text, because the essence of hypertextual activity here lies in the stealthy and relentless continuity and progress of the transformation. The following bits are quoted almost at random (from pp. 214–16) and naturally preserve only the Announcer's voice {*voix*} (or way {*voix*}):

> Between two falls descend in spirals, jut out in the moonlight swept along by the air current and glisten, eagles of snow. An island hollow underneath adorns the scene which hangs with all its trees. . . . Then unrolls in a sheet of phantoms. . . . In a vast cylinder. . . . Cut into forms and becomes rounded. . . . Over the chaos of the waves, the pines, the wild walnut trees, the rocks. . . . The mass of the river which hurls itself southward. . . . Like the smoke of a vast forest fire, the mass of the river. . . . Above the trees, over the chaos of the waves, which hurls itself southward, which rises, becomes rounded.

This shred of Surrealistic prose both is and, via Butor, is not Chateaubriand, just as a "Diabelli variation" both is and, via Beethoven, is not Antonio Diabelli. It is a page from Chateaubriand that is—I shall not avoid this unavoidable contamination—swept along, rolled along, dislocated by its

own cataract, and whose recomposed debris spurts out again into the sun (for instance) in swirls of foam. Butor, in his commentary, carefully eludes this metonymic metaphor but only, I believe, the better to impress it upon us. Besides, did not Chateaubriand himself say in his *Mémoires d'outre-tombe* (8.8), "Niagara erases all"? He who erases must indeed rewrite, and this rewriting is apparently *6 810 000 litres d'eau par seconde.* Not one drop more, or less.

## 12

Burlesque travesty, as it appeared at the onset of the seventeenth century in Italy with Giambattista Lalli's *Eneide travestita* (1633)—which is still an almost serious paraphrase of Virgil—and, fifteen years or so later, with Scarron's *Virgile travesti*, is a "parodic" practice that seems to have been unknown in classical antiquity and the Middle Ages. It is one of the authentic innovations of the baroque age. It was, however, merely a flash fire, as quickly extinguished as it was lit.

One may consider as forerunners or adumbrations of the genre certain burlesque texts that are less strictly hypertextual, or whose hypotext is itself less canonical or more nebulous: for example, Poggio Bracciolini's *Scherno degli dei* (1618); the "banquet of the gods" (in prose) from Charles Sorel's *Berger extravagant* (1627), where the guests of Olympus indulge in all kinds of ribald actions and racy talk, the whole episode being sprinkled with amusing anachronisms (Fate wears glasses, Charon wants to become a boatman on the Seine, etc.). Among these forerunners one could also count Scarron's *Typhon, ou la Gigantomachie: Poème burlesque* (1644), inspired by Noel Conti's *Mythologie*, where we encounter giants bowling and breaking the windows on Olympus, and where a belch from Typhon cracks like lightning and sends the gods fleeing, etc. These free forms of the burlesque were to reappear later in some of Jacques Offenbach's operettas.

The canonical form of burlesque travesty is the rewriting in octosyllables and in the vulgar style, of an epic text, and more specifically, of a canto from the *Aeneid.* In 1648 Scarron published the first followed by the second book of his *Virgile travesti*, and by books 3 and 4 in 1649. Its success was instantaneous and immediately unleashed a wave of imitators, which might have been expected, especially at a time when success was valued over originality—or rather, I should say, when the road to success did not

necessarily involve a display of originality. The surprising fact was this: in 1649, Antoine Furetière published *Les Amours d'Énée et de Didon*, a travesty of book 4 of the *Aeneid*; one signing himself only M.C.P.D. published *L'Enfer burlesque*, a travesty of the sixth book; and Dufresnoy, *L'Énéide en vers burlesques*, which tackled book 2, already travestied a year before by Scarron. In 1650, while Scarron, who was either exhausted or had lost interest, was content with publishing book 5, Barciet published *La Guerre d'Énée en Italie appropriée à L'Histoire du temps en vers burlesques*—which in one fell swoop took care of the last six books—and Georges de Brébeuf, *L'Énéide enjouée* (in fact, book 7). In 1651 Scarron published his book 6, and in 1652, as he brought out his books 7 and 8 (unfinished), Petitjean issued still another *Virgile goguenard* (please note and admire the paradigmatic variation of the titles), *ou Le XIIe livre de l'Énéide travestie, puisque travesti il y a.*[1] So there we are, then: six travesties of the *Aeneid* within five years, not counting those of Scarron, which were the initial example for France. During this same period of the burlesque's great vogue, only four took on a work other than the *Aeneid*: *Ovide bouffon, ou Les Métamorphoses burlesques* by Richer (1649); *L'Art d'aimer travesti* (!) *en vers burlesques* by D.L.B.M. (1650); Assouci's *Ovide en belle humeur* (1650); and *L'Odyssée en vers burlesques* (books 1 and 2) by Picou (1650), who left it at that for the *Odyssey* and tackled the *Iliad* (book 1) until 1657, when the battle was over. The shooting was strikingly convergent: of sixteen burlesque travesties (including Lalli's), eight are on Virgil, three on Ovid, and two on Homer. The idea that would immediately occur to us—applying the type of treatment that Scarron inflicted upon the *Aeneid* to another epic, or better still perhaps to another serious non-epic work—came late and, as it were, reluctantly. Even taking into account the fact that neoclassical culture—primarily a Latinizing one—relegated Homer to a place far behind Virgil, we are still faced with a movement, or a rather an inertia, that is intriguing. All of these travestied *Aeneids* seem to have had as their function to compete as doggedly as possible with one another on the burlesque market. Scarron was to be imitated not on a different territory but on his very own, as if Lalli, by parodying the *Aeneid*, had inaugurated a genre, the travesty, which could number only one species: the travesty of the *Aeneid*.

What we have here, then, is a genre in the narrowest sense of the word, confined to its specific material and within its historical limits (1633–57, but for France, chiefly 1648–52). Perhaps "fashion" would be a better word than genre. But one must never be in too great a hurry to pronounce

fashions dead; they may always resurface a few decades later, by virtue of their quaint, outdated charm, and go through a revival or a nostalgia kick of their own. Such was to be the case with the burlesque: Marivaux revived it in 1714 with his *Homère travesti*, which appears to be the only complete performance of its kind, since it is a travesty in twelve books of the twenty-four cantos of the *Iliad*.[2]

But more important still, burlesque travesty, which is only one of the possible expressions of the burlesque spirit, is also—and symmetrically—only one of the possible forms of travesty in general, the principle of which can be renewed indefinitely at any period, with only the trouble of updating it. In this larger sense, travesty is not tied to any given age. Born, or better yet, fortuitously *invented* in 1633 or 1648, it has remained since then one of the inexhaustible resources of hypertextual writing. For genres, no doubt, are like volcanos in that their first eruption can sometimes be dated but never their last; they may be long dormant but perhaps never definitively extinguished. We shall therefore have to consider several postburlesque—i.e., modern—manifestations of travesty.

Burlesque travesty rewrites a noble text by preserving its "action," meaning its fundamental content and movement (in rhetorical terms, its invention and disposition), but impressing on it an entirely different elocution, or "style," in the classical sense of the term—closer to what we have been calling, since Roland Barthes's *Writing Degree Zero*, an *écriture*, a mode of writing, for we are dealing here with a generic style. Take the *Aeneid*, for instance: to "travesty" it, in the burlesque sense, means first to transcribe its heroic Latin hexameters (whose French equivalent would be alexandrines) into "short verse" or "burlesque verse"—namely, into octosyllables (this practice was de rigueur until and including Marivaux). Next, it means transposing the consistently noble (*gravis*) style of its narrative and of the characters' speeches into a familiar, indeed, vulgar style. In addition (and the second trait is inconceivable without this third one), it means substituting the Virgilian thematic details with other, more familiar details, both more vulgar and more modern; here is where the well-known practice of anachronism comes in (its fortune has extended far beyond the boundaries of the genre). It also means embellishing Virgil's text with amplifications or additions, to the point of treating it as a mere script to be developed by the parodist. "Unfortunate Dido," writes Virgil at the conclusion of book 1, "prolonged into the night and varied her conversation with Aeneas and

drank long draughts of love. She had so many queries about Priam and Hector! And what weapons did the son of Aurora bear? And how were Diomedes' horses? And great Achilles, how was he?" And here is what becomes of these five lines of Virgil's in Scarron's version:

Cependant la Didon se pique
De son hôte de plus en plus:
Par de longs discours superflus
Elle le retient auprès d'elle.
Elle se brûle à la chandelle.
L'autre, avec toute sa raison,
Sent aussi quelque échauffaison,
Et monsieur, ainsi que madame,
A bien du désordre dans l'âme.
Elle lui fait cent questions
Sur Priam, sur les actions
D'Hector, tant que dura le siège.
Si dame Hélène avait du liège,
De quel fard elle se servait,
Combien de dents Hécube avait,
Si Paris était un bel homme,
Si cette malheureuse pomme
Qui ce pauvre prince a perdu
Était reinette ou capendu,
Si Memnon, le fils de l'Aurore,
Était de la couleur d'un Maure,
Qui fut son cruel assassin,
S'ils moururent tous du farcin
Les bons chevaux de Diomède,
Qu'elle y savait un bon remède,
Si, voyant son Patroclus mort,
Achille s'affligea bien fort,
S'il fut mis à mort par cautelle.

{Dido the while was more and more
Taken in with her guest:
With long idle speeches
She kept him next to her.
She burnt her fingers at the candle.

The other, with all his reason,
Also felt his blood grow warm,
And the gentleman, as well as the lady,
Were quite disordered in their souls.
She asked him a hundred questions
On Priam, on the deeds
Of Hector while the siege lasted.
Did Lady Helen wear cork soles?
What makeup did she use?
How many teeth had Hecuba?
Was Paris a handsome fellow?
Was that wretched apple
Which doomed the poor Prince
A pippin or crab apple?
Was Memnon, the son of Aurora,
The color of a Moor?
Who was his cruel murderer?
Did Diomedes' good horses
All die of the farcy?
She knew a good remedy for it;
Seeing his Patroclus dead,
Did Achilles grieve a great deal?
Was he tricked into dying?}

This single example suffices, I think, to illustrate the first four devices of Scarronian travesty. The fifth and, to my mind, the last consists of intrusive asides by the parodist, who is visibly having a good time clowning at the expense of the Virgilian action, or even of his own diction (the following deals with the great construction works in Carthage):

Enfin là l'on taille et l'on rogne,
Là l'on charpente, là l'on cogne,
Là je ne sais plus ce qu'on fait.
J'ai peur d'avoir fait un portrait
Assez long pour pouvoir déplaire,
Mais je ne saurais plus qu'y faire,
Et si j'allais tout effacer
Ce serait à recommencer

{Lastly, here is hewing and there is paring,
Here is framing, and there hammering,
And there I forget what is being done.
I fear my description
Is long enough to displease,
But it is now past mending,
And if I were to erase all
I should only have to start again.}

The sum total of the amplifications and commentaries results in a very noticeable swelling of the text. From Virgil's 5,760 lines, Scarron generates 20,796 octosyllables. If one considers that an octosyllable roughly equals half a hexameter, and if one integrates the (small) constant coefficient of mechanical expansion entailed by the switch from Latin to French, the approximate ratio of the increase is 2 to 1.

In terms of textual economy, such quantitative lengthening is perhaps (only) the price to be paid for an effect that remains the point of qualitative convergence of all burlesque procedures (including the adoption of the tripping rhythm of the octosyllabic line): namely, the effect of familiarization. For the lower-middle-class public of *Virgile travesti*, no matter how cultivated, the text of the *Aeneid* remains doubly removed by its epic grandeur and its historic distance. Its transposition into the "vulgar" style of the period—the notion of "style" brings with it here as elsewhere a whole array of thematic trappings—contributes to bringing it closer to its audience and to taming it, regardless of how playful or even conventional (I will come back to this) the mode of this transposition may be. Burlesque trivialization in this sense is nothing more than one process of familiarization among many others, and one whose operation can be observed at diverse periods. Slang translations of La Fontaine's *Fables*, for example, constituted one of its most popular and well-received forms. In all cases, travesty functions not only as any kind of transstylistic diversion based on what Charles Perrault called the *disconvenance* {impropriety} between style and subject but also as an exercise in translation (the French might use the scholastic but more precise term *version*). For what travesty does is transcribe a text from its distant original tongue into a nearer idiom, one that is more familiar in all the senses of that word. The effect of travesty is the opposite of alienation; it naturalizes and assimilates the parodied text, in the (metaphorically) legal sense of these terms. It brings it *up to date*.

But like any updating, this one can be only momentary and short-lived. After a few decades the travesty loses its topicality and thus its effectiveness. In turn, it finds its way into historic distance, and unlike the original text, which continues to hold its own and to perpetuate itself by virtue of its very distance, the travesty becomes outdated precisely for having wished itself to be, and for having indeed been, in the taste and the manner of a specific moment in time. Travesty is by nature a perishable commodity, unfit to survive its age and ceaselessly in need of being modernized: i.e., replaced by another, more topical *update*. The ephemeral vogue of burlesque in the seventeenth century is a clear illustration of this condition; not surprisingly, the majority of those texts fell almost at once into irrevocable oblivion. More surprising is the fact that several fragments of *Virgile travesti* are still vaguely readable today, though for reasons and in a fashion far removed from the work's original purpose. Scarron's familiarity has become for us yet another form of exoticism. The topical jokes and allusions escape us; the Virgilian references are rarely of any help to us and often go undetected; its rowdy impropriety has evaporated along with the proprieties that it purported to flout. Its sole flavor today (its only justification) is that not of indecorousness but—less palpable and therefore more appealing—of quaint incongruity.

Since travesty is a stylistic transposition, and for that reason a rewriting in the strictest sense of the word, one of the crucial issues is to know who, the original poet or the transposer, will be inscribed within the text as having authority over the narrative discourse and its commentary. With Scarron and his direct imitators in the seventeenth century, the burlesque narrator evicts the epic poet completely. In *Virgile travesti*, when the characters are not speaking, the "I" designates exclusively Scarron, never Virgil. The initial *Arma virumque cano* is displaced without further ado by the following:

> Je, qui chantai jadis Typhon
> D'un style qu'on trouva bouffon,
> Je chante cet homme pieux
> Qui vint, chargé de tous ses dieux . . .
>
> {I, who once sang of Typhon
> In a style they named buffoon,
> I sing that pious man
> Who came, laden with all his gods . . . }

This "I" unequivocally designates the author by referring to one of his previous works, as he is also designated elsewhere by a precise allusion to his physical condition: "moi, cul-de-jatte follet" {I, a crazy legless cripple}.

Virgil is thus deprived of the use he had made of the first person (an exemplarily discreet one, following Aristotelian rules). Conversely, he finds himself frequently cited as a source not of the narrative, to be sure, but of the narrator's information, the narrator here taking up the common medieval practice of a narration presented explicitly as secondary and leaning on an earlier narration: "Here the tale tells us that . . ." Cervantes was still playing with this convention when referring here and there to the mythic Cid Hamet ben Engeli. For Scarron, who indeed finds himself in the position of a narrator once removed, the procedure for once coincides with a real situation: I, Scarron, am telling you for the second time and in my own manner what Virgil is telling—and I reading—in the *Aeneid.* Thus the authority of the *author*, in the etymological sense (not the author of *Virgile travesti* but rather its "source" and its guarantor), is often invoked, at times as an indisputable source,

> This is not a lie
> For I who speak to you, I, Scarron,
> Have it from Master Maro,

and at times (more frequently) with a hint of feigned incredulity:

> If Virgil is an author to be believed,
> At this point Virgil says
> (Since he says so he must be believed),

or even "Here I may be lying, I fear, But Maro writes that . . ." In one instance he pays his respects (not without heavy-handed insistence) to Virgil's silence regarding what happened (maybe) between Dido and Aeneas in the grotto:

> Outre que ma plume est discrète,
> Virgile, qui n'est pas un fat,
> Sur un endroit si délicat
> A passé vite sans décrire
> Chose où l'on pût trouver à dire.
> C'est pourquoi je n'en dirai rien,
> Mais je crois que tout alla bien.

{Besides the fact that my pen is discreet,
Virgil, who is no fool,
Over such delicate circumstances
Passed lightly without describing
Any untoward thing.
Therefore I shall say no more,
But do believe that all went well.}

On another occasion, the "true" reasons for Aeneas's departure are laid open to conjecture:

En cet endroit, maître Maron
N'a point approfondi l'affaire
Tellement qu'il se peut bien faire
Que maître Énéas était saoul
D'avoir toujours femme à son cou
Et pliait volontiers bagage.

{Here Master Maro
Did not delve into the matter
Hence it may well be the case
That Master Aeneas had a surfeit
Of that woman ever at his neck
And willingly did pack his bags.}

It even happens, indeed more than once, that Scarron openly diverges from the Virgilian version ("Those are crocodile tears, Whatever Sir Virgil may say"; "Maro says that he was horrified, But I believe this to be an error") or criticizes it from a fellow professional's viewpoint:

Messire Maron le compare
A la gomme jaune qui luit
Sur la branche qui la produit,
La comparaison est faiblette,
N'en déplaise à si grand poète:
Il devait, en sujet pareil,
Mettre lune, étoile ou soleil.

{Sir Maro compares it
To the the yellow gum that glows
On the branch that produces it.

The simile is weak,
If the great poet will forgive me:
He should, for such a noble topic,
Have used the moon, the stars, or the sun.}

Such discrepancies are pointed out here only for the fun of it, however, since travesty most often operates without ostentation. And the speeches attributed to the characters, in particular the long metadiegetic narrative spoken by Aeneas in books 2 and 3 (where by definition the burlesque poet cannot intervene in his own name), contain just as many transpositions and even anachonisms: young Trojan women dance the saraband and the pavane around the sacred horse; Aeneas compares Ajax to Lord Fairfax (for the rhyme); he holds melon seeds from a gentleman from Touraine; he speaks about Corbeil or the French crown prince; and when his spouse disappears during the flight of his small group, his father Anchises easily convinces him that she may have "stayed behind to mend her garter" (this is the most famous invention in *Virgile travesti*). Dido for her part quotes Pierre de Ronsard, and Juno quotes Pierre Corneille.

This status of dual utterance, in which the poet-author Virgil and the poet-speaker (narrator and commentator) Scarron, who follows him pretty faithfully, remain absolutely separate, is not, as we have seen, completely unprecedented. But here it connotes a situation specific to burlesque travesty, which, leaving aside any comic intent, is poised halfway between that of pure translation—where the original enunciation is faithfully maintained without intervention on the translator's part, except for possible marginal notes—and that of critical commentary. And Scarron, as we have noted, often arrogates to himself the privileges of a commentator. One can, however, conceive of a more discreet type of travesty—which does not necessarily mean a more restrained one—in which the burlesque narrator would remove himself completely from his narrative, just as Aristotle had already advised the epic poet to do. That is the type illustrated by Marivaux's *Homère travesti.* Marivaux flattered himself, and rightfully, for having "avoided narratives" more successfully than his predecessor and for having allowed his characters to converse, thus effecting "the disappearance of the poet so that the reader's imagination is carried, so to speak, into the Greek and Trojan armies, believing the leaders and the soldiers to be living through the very movement that I endeavored to give them."[3] Thus it is that his work does away both with traces of burlesque enunciation and with

references to the epic source. This epic source was, in any case, not much present in Marivaux's mind, since he based his travesty on Houdar de la Motte's "translation" of it, a rather free and much abridged adaptation.

The absence of commentary is somewhat compensated for by the amplification of the dialogues, where Marivaux most readily gives free rein to his farcical verve. But the general ratio of augmentation is clearly weaker here than in Scarron: against 4,308 alexandrines in La Motte, representing 51,696 syllables, Marivaux lines up 10,232 octosyllables representing 81,856 syllables—i.e., a ratio of 10 to 16, whereas Scarron had gone roughly from 10 to 20. Whatever the case may be, by doing without facetious commentary or digression, with Marivaux travesty forsakes one of its most effective humorous resources. Grafted upon La Motte's classicizing correction of the *Iliad*, *Homère travesti* is intended—like *Le Lutrin*, though from an entirely different angle—as a sort of classicizing correction of the burlesque. In Marivaux, as in Boileau, the result is not quite convincing; the freewheeling gusto and farcical fantasy suffer here and there from this effort at codification. Burlesque inspiration and classical discipline are not good bedfellows. Scarron's deregulated or, more precisely, nonregulated verve was much better suited to the demands of a genre that was born with him, reached with him its (juvenile) acme, and, most wisely, chose to disappear by throwing in the sponge in the very middle of the eighth round.

# 13

With the notable exception of *Homère travesti*, burlesque in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries abandoned epic targets for other serious works.[1] It moved on to the stage, where we shall encounter it soon, because this specific mode of expression takes on a more complex form there, a form that exceeds the limits of the genre. Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy's libretti for two Offenbach operettas seem to me to be more faithful to the spirit of travesty: *Orphée aux enfers* (1858), and especially *La Belle Hélène* (1864). The latter can be described as a score teeming with musical pastiches (Gluck, Rossini, Meyerbeer, Halévy, Verdi, and others) and composed upon an essentially burlesque or neoburlesque libretto. As in *Typhon* or *Le Banquet des dieux*, the hypotext here is more nebulous than in Scarronian travesty because it concerns the episode of Helen's abduction, which Homer has

not treated and the post-Homeric versions of which have been lost and handed down to us only through later versions that are themselves very hypertextual (Ovid, Colouthos). The role of travesty there consists chiefly in a modernization by way of anachronisms: the court of Sparta is a sort of farcical Compiègne {Napoleon III's court}, where courtiers play at charades, exchange puns, and compose verses, where dinner is served at seven o'clock, where Venus's grand priest sings Tyrolian songs, and where Agamemnon invites travelers to Cythera to step into a carriage. The familiarization is decorous enough, even timid when compared with Scarronian bawdry. The most sustained effort at modernization involves the character of Helen, and far transcends the playful-satiric mode of travesty; we shall encounter it again in another context.

After the seriousness of the Romantics, this Victorian neoburlesque joined up again with the playful culturalism of the neoclassical age (by a familiar and sometimes cavalier manner of courting tradition), but it was also paving the way—via Jules Lemaitre and Giraudoux—for several new tracks of modern hypertextuality. This same historical context applied, as we shall see, to the pastiche, and Proust was right on target when he named Meilhac and Halévy's jokes as the source of the "Guermantes wit." That wit, both casual and learned, is very characteristic of the turn of the century, and we shall find two illustrations of it, new modern reincarnations of the Scarronian travesty, in Georges Fourest and Alfred Jarry.

The *Carnaval des chefs-d'oeuvre* by Georges Fourest—the title can stand as a generic index: a carnival automatically involves a parade of travesties—is a sequence of seven little poems in the margins of seven great works.[2] One of these "To the Venus of Milo," is off limits for us; the remaining six bear upon two tragedies of Corneille and four tragedies of Racine.

"Phèdre," "Andromaque," and "Bérénice" are most faithful to the Scarronian tradition, both in their form (octosyllables, here grouped into alternating quatrains) and in the basic procedure of anachronistic vulgarization. "Horace," in the same spirit, stands out because of its shorter meter (three lines of six syllables, one of four). Unlike the model, but in keeping with the attention span of modern audiences, the transposition here operates not through amplification but through a reduction: four pages at the most. "Phèdre" is summarized in two scenes and an epilogue. The heroine dispatches Theseus's funeral oration in four lines:

Sans doute, un marron sur la trogne
Lui fit passer le goût du pain.
Requiescat! il fut ivrogne,
Coureur et poseur de lapin.

{No doubt a punch in the mug
Snuffed out his appetite for good.
Requiescat! He was a drunkard,
A skirt-chaser and he never showed up.}

She immediately offers Hippolyte a roll in the hay. The Amazon's son evokes the precedent of Mrs. Potiphar and rebuffs her advances. This brings upon him a quatrain in pure red-light-district style:

Eh, va donc, puceau, phenomène!
Va donc, châtré, va donc, salop,
Va donc, lopaille à Théramène!
Eh, va donc t'amuser, Charlot!

{Go then, you virgin nincompoop!
Go, you bastard without balls,
Go, you Theramene's pansy boy!
Go fry an egg, you clown.}

Thereupon comes Theseus's return and Phaedra's false denunciation:

Plus de vingt fois, sous la chemise,
Le salop m'a pincé le cul
Et, passant la blague permise,
Volontiers vous eût fait cocu.

{More than twenty times, under my shirt,
The bastard pinched my ass
And, crossing the limits of a permissible joke,
Gladly would have cuckolded you.}

Whence the father's curse and the well-known denouement. In "Andromaque," Pyrrhus makes his request wearing a tuxedo and white gloves, boasts of his qualities and his wealth—*all in real estate and 3 percent bonds*—and proposes a visit to the notary. The inconsolable widow gives him the brushoff by quoting Ubu; Pyrrhus threatens revenge on the "kid," and for the sequel the parodist sends the reader back to Racine's text. "Bérénice,"

on the model of Ovid's *Heroides*, consists essentially of a sanctimonious letter from Titus, which invokes not the *raison d'état* but rather ambient anti-Semitism:

> Hélas! vous êtes youpine
> Et j'ai peur de Monsieur Drumont
>
> {Alas, you are a kike
> And I am afraid of Monsieur Drumont.}[3]

Let Bérénice then take a pullman back to where she came from, reading the *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*, {Chateaubriand, 1811}; let her buy a car or take up golf or polo. "Horace" lingers on the superabundance of brothers and sisters-in-law and on a celebrated rhyme word in the subjunctive imperfect.[4]

"Iphigénie" and "Le Cid," two sonnets in alexandrines, engage in a more complex intertextual relationship, involving an obvious pastiche of the lyrical-visual imagery of the Parnasse poets:

> Les vents sont morts: partout le calme et la torpeur
> Et les vaisseaux des Grecs dorment sur leur carène . . .
>
> {The winds are dead: everywhere reign calm and torpor,
> And the Greek ships slumber upon their keels . . . }

or:

> Le soir tombe. Invoquant les deux saints Paul et Pierre,
> Chimène, en voiles noirs, s'accoude au mirador
> Et ses yeux dont les pleurs ont brûlé la paupière
> Regardent, sans rien voir, mourir le soleil d'or.
>
> {Evening is closing in. Invoking both saints Paul and Peter,
> Chimene, clad in black veils, leans her elbows on the mirador
> And her eyes, with eyelids burnt by tears
> Look sightless at the dying golden sun.}

The grand style of such evocations is always shattered, however, by a discordant, farcical comedown (Agamemnon slits his daughter's throat, braying, "That should bring the barometer down!") or by some subtler mode of impropriety:

> Dieu! soupire à part soi la plaintive Chimène,
> Qu'il est joli garçon l'assassin de Papa!

{Lord, the plaintive Chimene mutters under her breath,
What a handsome guy is my Daddy's killer!}

That, of course, is the famous line on whose merit alone Georges Fourest gained his small share of posterity. It illustrates rather clearly, better than the usual forced contrasts and with a certain grace uncommon in these parts, the spirit of travesty: the entire Cornelian "conflict" reduced to a single playful yet touching antithesis.

In 1649, smack in the middle of the burlesque melee, the announced publication of *Passion de Notre Seigneur en vers burlesques* {Our Lord's Passion in burlesque verse} stirred a certain commotion. It turned out to be a very pious work, not a farcical one at all, whose anonymous author or editor had thus titled it (possibly with an eye on the publicity effect) simply because it was written in octosyllabic verse.

It was a false alarm. Yet everything that is inscribed in the structures ends up being inscribed also in the facts ("Everything that can be," says Georges de Buffon, "is"). One could perhaps say in a different register that one must avoid tempting the devil. On 11 April 1903, Alfred Jarry published in the *Canard Sauvage* his famous "Passion considérée comme course de côte" {Our Lord's Passion considered as a bicycle hill climb}.[5] It is a perfect example of a sacrilegious travesty, a subgenre that must have been for centuries one of the stock humorous outlets for seminarians.

The supporting text, it must be said, is itself already pluritextual, since it is to be found concurrently in Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19. In truth, these do not go into much detail over the march to Golgotha; three agree that the cross was carried by Simon of Cyrene; Luke alone indicates that Simon was charged with bearing the cross "after Jesus"—that is, in midcourse. All in all, the travestied text is less close to the Gospel than to the later apocryphal narrative illustrated by the Stations of the Cross in our churches.

The principle of the transposition, which is clearly indicated in the title, is simple and highly efficient. It is inspired by a very topical event—the heroic beginnings of the sport of cycling—and by an evident analogy, no doubt already resorted to in the other direction: the "Calvary" inflicted upon the bicycle racers by the mountain passes of the Alps and Pyrenees is one of the oldest clichés in the rhetoric of sports, where such stereotypes abound.

The ascent to Golgotha is thus described (and received by the reader) as a climber's exploit, and this structural analogy, once formulated, determines a series of partial equivalences. The Via Dolorosa becomes a road with fourteen bends; Barrabas, who is freed, opts out of the race; Pilate becomes a starter and timekeeper; the cross becomes a bicycle whose tires are almost immediately punctured by a perfidious scattering of thorns; Jesus, much like the cycling champions, has to carry it on his back and continue the race on foot until Simon—who is now a coach—intervenes. Matthew is a sports editor, Mary is in the stands, the demimondaines of Israel wave their handkerchiefs, and Veronica, oddly, forgets hers and instead putters with a Kodak. Jesus keeps tumbling down at every bend in the road, on the greasy pavement, on the streetcar tracks (a sadistic contamination between the mountain stages of the race and the *enfer du Nord* {the "hell" of the bumpy paved roads of northern France}. He will not reach the summit because, following a "deplorable accident" at the twelfth bend, he must continue the race "as an aviator . . . but that is another story." This new sports metaphor does indeed foreshadow another period transposition, echoed in Apollinaire:

> C'est le Christ qui monte au ciel mieux que les aviateurs
> Il détient le record du monde pour la hauteur.
>
> {Christ it is who soars into the sky more expertly than the aviators
> He holds the world record for height.}[6]

The shift from one text to another clearly demonstrates how the same travesty may be turned, depending on context and tone, into either a derisive buffoonery or a subtly ambiguous glorification. Parodic incongruity is a bifid weapon, a form in search of a function. Scarronian burlesque, it has often been observed, paid indirect and perhaps involuntary homage to Virgil's text. The sophomoric seminary jokes perpetuate faith by poking fun at liturgy. It is not too hard to imagine—if the thing has not been done already—some Jesuit co-opting Jarry's profanation for the purpose of a spiritual exercise.

One of the "top ten" in the Hit Parade of the 1976 heat wave was not a song. It was a spoken sketch titled "The Grasshopper and the Ant" by the ephemeral Pierre Péchin. It was an authentic travesty—and to my knowledge the last one to date.

As the epic had been the favorite target of the learned (written) travesty, the fable is one of the most favored targets of popular (oral) travesty, for two obvious reasons: its brevity and its notoriety. Scarron offered to a cultivated audience a paraphrase (in familiar style) of noble texts engraved in everyone's memory. Today's humorists must take on classical texts still known to the general public, such as La Fontaine's fables or the first scenes from *Le Cid*, and impose upon them a more brutal transposition still: a transposition into slang, for example, which was done by Yves Deniaud, I believe, in the 1930s and 1940s, or into *pied-noir* {the lingo of French settlers in North Africa}, which was done by Edmond Brua (mentioned earlier). None of these procedures can be rendered faithfully in writing, since the accent plays a significant role.

In Péchin, the accent is nearly everything. His parodic instrument is the language spoken by immigrant workers from the Maghreb, which is marked more by the phonic influence of Arabic than by lexical idioms. The fable is first translated into popular French, then interpreted with the appropriate accent. Like all stylistic transpositions, however, this one also affects the thematic texture: the little worms and the bucolic seeds hoarded by the ant are not familiar to the *bidonvilles* {the immigrant ghettos}; they become cans of Kit-e-Kat brand couscous; the consequences of the grasshopper's carefree summer idleness are compounded by the purchase of popular motorcars; its begging for "just a little dough" is rebuked by "Scram, you slut!"

The most drastic transformation, however, applies to the punch line: that is, to the denouement and to the morality. One must remember here that La Fontaine himself, who, like most fabulists, did no more than rewrite in his own register one or two previous versions—the fable (and I shall return to this) being almost entirely a hypertextual genre and "parodic" in its very principle, since it attributes, as does the *Batrachomyomachia*, human speech and behavior to animals—La Fontaine allowed himself a rather daring turn for a beginner (the reader is reminded that "La Cigale et la fourmi" is the first fable in the first volume). In Aesop the moral had been formulated with a flat, heavyhanded dignity: "This fable shows that in each endeavor one must guard against negligence, if one wishes to avoid pain and danger." La Fontaine eliminates the moral, or subsumes it in the disdainful refusal of the thrifty ant—which clearly signifies that the moral is self-evident and that the reader can be trusted to supply it. Péchin goes much further, offering a different conclusion and a different moral: the snubbed grasshopper, after

wandering about the countryside without finding anything to eat, starves to death, as one might have expected; the ant, however, exhausted by its work ethic and overfed, dies also, upon its pile of hoarded food, from an inevitable heart attack. The moral: "Ti bôff', ti bôff' pas, ti crèves quand même" {You stuff yourself, you don't, you croak anyhow}.

This moral does not exactly contradict tradition (the ironic theme of the fateful precaution has been canonical since Oedipus), since negligence is also punished. What it conveys is the more modern theme—modern, I should say, in its generalized pessimism—of the *equal* harm inherent in foresight and its opposite, in bohemian insouciance and workaholic industriousness. The implications of the ancient *aequo pulsat pede*[7] have shifted here from the heartening to the disheartening, couched as they are in the fashionable tones of scoffing nihilism.

A justified nihilism maybe? This question fortunately does not fall within our jurisdiction—nor within that of the fable as a genre, since like the proverb it easily accommodates contradictory "truths." What matters here, and to me, is the ingenuity of the punch line as a frustrated expectation, a gratifying disappointment—whereby the fable shows that any fable can illustrate any moral, and that in all things we must consider not *la faim* but *la fin.*[8]

## 14

Grammar and rhetoric, perhaps also poetics, have for centuries shared a curious notion for which they have merely one word, and that word was proposed relatively recently—in French—by the last neoclassical rhetorician and does not demonstrate any great terminological inventiveness. It is not a technical term of Greek derivation and specialized use, like *metaphor* or *syllepsis.* It is an ordinary word, of Latin origin, whose accepted meaning extends far beyond the restricted one that will be assigned to it here. The (naive) vastness of its connotative charge will immediately be gauged: the word in question is *imitation.*

Imitation, according to Pierre Fontanier, is a figure that "consists of imitating a turn of phrase, a sentence construction, from another language; or a turn of phrase, a sentence construction, that is no longer in use. In the first case, it is called *Hellenism, Latinism, Hebraism, Anglicism,* etc., depending on whether it comes from the Greek, Latin, Hebrew, or English, etc. In the

second case, it may be called by the name of the author who provided the model for it. Thus we give the name *Marotism* to any affected imitation of Clément Marot's style."[1]

This definition, as can be seen, appears to target a purely syntactic phenomenon. The linguistic object imitated in *imitation* is *a turn of phrase, a construction.* Fontanier does not say "a turn *or* a construction." For him the two terms are equivalent; a turn is a construction: i.e., a way of arranging words in a sentence. That is in principle what is imitated in the figure called *imitation*—that, and nothing more.

In Fontanier, imitation belongs with "figures of construction through revolution." Figures of construction are unlike other types of figures in that they affect only "the assemblage and arrangement of words in speech."

Now there are only three ways of affecting the order of words in a sentence (I am deliberately reversing Fontanier's order). One consists either of suppressing certain words, whence the figures of construction obtained by "implication," such as the *ellipsis* or the *zeugma*; or of adding other words, whence figures of construction through "exuberance," such as the *apposition* or the *pleonasm*; or of modifying the word order itself by placing first what should be last and vice versa, whence figures of construction through "revolution": namely, *inversion* or *hyperbaton*, "an arrangement that is reversed or inverted relative to the order of succession of the ideas in the analysis of meaning" (example: "D'une robe à longs plis balayer le barreau" {With a long-pleated robe sweeping the bar}. *Enallage* consists of "an exchange of a tense, a number, or a person for another tense, etc." (example: "I *die* dishonored" for a more literal: "I *am going to die* . . ."). It is difficult to see how these substitutions of tenses, numbers, or persons affect "the place and rank" of the words in the sentence. It would appear that *construction* is too narrow a term and *revolution* too blunt to describe such figures. But here comes the third and last kind: it is our *imitation,* which infringes on the *ordo* of a language so as to imitate that of another language or a more ancient state of the same. In Jacques Delille, the insertion of the main verb between the antecedent and the relative clause is an example of *Latinism*: "And the veil is raised which covered nature" (this is evidently a specific case of inversion). An example of *Hebraism* is to be found in superlatives obtained through repetition (and as such pertaining to "exuberance"): *song of songs, century of centuries, vanity of vanities*, etc. Finally, "one word about *Marotism.* What characterizes it is the suppression of the articles, pronouns, and certain particles" (we are dealing here with

"implication"), "and in addition, those locutions, those obsolescent and so very naive forms of our language." Marotism is clearly a special case—but one that was privileged and canonical during the entire neoclassical era, to the point of pervading it through and through—of what we call today *archaism*; simple lexical archaisms may be involved here, such as *to confabulate* for "to chat" (found in Voltaire, where Fontanier identifies it rather hypothetically as a Marotism, on the basis of its oldish and colloquial mien). These three types of imitation are not the only ones. Alongside the Latinisms and the Hebraisms there are Hellenisms, Anglicisms, and so on. Alongside the Marotisms one can identify and record *Ronsardisms*, *Rabelaisisms*, etc. Imitation is thus not a homogeneous class of figures: it displays on the same level imitations of turns from one language to another, from one state of (the same) language to another, from one author to another; above all—and that despite Fontanier's proclaimed intentions—it regroups figures which in their formal operation are not only figures of construction strictly speaking but of syntax in the broad sense, of morphology, or even (most of all) of vocabulary. And if some day an author were to borrow from another author (in order to imitate his style), or from another language (in order to imitate its "genius"), a "figure of speech" or a "figure of thought" or even a characteristic trope, these borrowings too would constitute *imitations*. Examples: the stock epithet and the extended comparison, which are authentic Homerisms. Despite Fontanier's attempt to find a place for it in his system of figures, somewhere between inversion and enallage, imitation includes in fact all the figures produced within a state of language or style and imitating another state of language or style. It is distinguished from other figures not, as these are distinguished among themselves, by its formal procedure but simply by its function, which consists of imitating, in one way or another, a language or a style. In short, imitation is not a figure but rather the mimetic function accorded to any figure, provided only it lends itself to the process. This very special property deserves a very special consideration.

It is remarkable that the class called *imitation* should be established here through the regrouping and federation of a series of linguistic or stylistic facts that have been hitherto identified separately as so many distinct figures: Latinism, Hebraism, Marotism, etc. There is certainly a feature common to these several figures, or at least to the terms used to designate

them, but this common feature is not exactly a word; it is a kind of shifty and insistent morpheme: namely, the suffix *-ism.*

A curious usage attaches to this Greek suffix in our modern Indo-European languages. In the ideological register, and when it can be paired with a definite article that sets it up as a unique and indivisible entity, it serves to coin the name of a doctrine or a movement, formed upon its author or its real or supposed originator or its salient characteristic trait: Plato → *Platonism*, Romance → *Romanticism*, Reform → *Reformism.* In the linguistic and stylistic domain, and when preceded by an indefinite article that connotes its divisible and countable character, it designates any typical feature (of a language, a period, an author, etc.), inasmuch as this feature is marked and identified, and capable of being reproduced, imitated, transferred, and in some way exported into another idiom, wherein it will unfailingly—and, to the trained ear, always perceptibly—preserve the stamp of its origin. An Anglicism surely is a feature of the English language; a Marotism is a feature of Marot's style. Let us observe, however, that *Anglicism* is not appropriate to every kind of feature characteristic of the English language, nor is *Marotism* applicable to every kind of characteristic of Marot's style; rather, it is applicable more essentially to those features that seek to emigrate and whose behavior betrays them to the immigration authorities. Strictly speaking, an Anglicism is identified only as it comes into contact with another language, at the moment it steps out of the English language, and a Marotism when it wanders out of Marot's work. In English, *to realize* means quite simply "to become aware of," and an adjective may quite commonly modify a verb. These traits deserve to be described as Anglicisms only when an English-speaking person makes bold to transpose them into a language where such usage is not (yet) accepted—into French, for example, or when French speakers themselves begin to transpose them: *réaliser* (for *s'apercevoir*) or *achetez français* {buy French} are, in French, Anglicisms. *Confabuler* is not a Marotism in Marot, where it is perhaps not to be found; it becomes one when it pops up in Voltaire. A barbarian who is speaking his native tongue does not commit any barbarisms, he is simply speaking Median or Phoenician. He barbarizes when he attempts to speak Greek and betrays his origin in the turns of phrase characteristic of the "genius" of his mother tongue. An inhabitant of Soles "solecizes" constantly because he speaks the Greek dialect spoken in that Asian colony and deemed incorrect in Athens. It follows all the more evidently that native Greeks commit barbarisms and

solecisms when they disfigure their idiom by speaking like the Medes or the Solecians.

Fontanier resorted to this suffix *-ism* several times in order to name figures used to forge a sort of *simulacrum* (imitation) of another figure or of an entirely different linguistic feature: *allegorism* is an "imitation of allegory"; *paradoxism* (or oxymoron: dark light) is a purely verbal paradox, a simple "artifice of language." *Epithetism* (crimson-faced dawn) "has much in common with epithets," since it is merely "an epithet composed" of several words, whereas the epithet strictly speaking contains only one; it can therefore be called epithetism, a term that "appears to be quite suitable, since it means what that figure in fact is: namely, *an imitation of an epithet*, or *a species of very particular epithet*." Likewise, *enthymemism* is a semblance of "enthymeme"; *dialogism,* a fictitious dialogue, etc. One of the terms used by Fontanier in regard to epithetism seems very significant to me: "a *species* {*espèce*} of very particular epithet." In fact, *species* is rather ambiguous here, as the term *kind* would also be in the same context, and even more so the term *sort*. The French language has for a long time played on such ambiguity: all these words are used to designate either subclasses ("the whale is a species of mammal"), or else approximations or even misleading appearances: "the whale is a species of huge fish." Each one of these figures in *-ism* belongs to some extent, but not entirely, to the class of figures to which it is attached. The suffix *-ism* is here the equivalent of the prefix *pseudo-*.[2] A paradoxism is a pseudoparadox; it is and is not a paradox; it belongs to that very particular, if not special, species of paradoxes that are not really paradoxes. Similarly, a barbarism smacks of the barbarian without being barbarian; an Anglicism imitates English without being English, Marotism apes Marot without really being Marot. For imitation is not borrowing: "long drink" in English is an expression like any other; in French it is a simple borrowing from English, like a quote from one language to another; Anglicism begins when, with a view to avoiding the accursed *franglais*, one replaces "long drink" (I have seen this) with *longue boisson*. (This is how a language deteriorates.[3] A Queneau-type coinage like *longuedrinque* would have enriched it more, as "riding-coat" did in the past when it changed into *redingote*.) Similarly, *confabulate* will be a much better Marotism for not being the quotation of a word actually used by Marot but rather an old word placed there in order to write in the style of Marot—best of all if Marot himself never employed that word at all. Proust congratulated himself for having introduced in his pastiche of Ernest Renan the adjective

*aberrant*, rarely used at the time, which he found to be "extremely Renan-like," in spite of the fact that Renan himself probably never used it—or rather, for that very reason: "If I had found it in his work, my satisfaction in having invented it would have been diminished."[4] This *Renanism*, all the more satisfying—and more consonant with the norms of the genre—for not being a mere *Renaneme*, is a good illustration of the role played by *invention,* to use Proust's own word, in pastiche.[5]

The reason is that unlike parody—which operates by diverting the letter of the text to another purpose, and therefore makes a point of sticking to the letter as closely as possible—the pastiche, whose function is to imitate the letter, prides itself upon paying it the least possible literal allegiance. It can never condescend to direct quotations or borrowings.

Here is an exception that provides us with a subtle confirmation: a short phrase may pass literally from the model text to its pastiche provided that it has already reached, in its original text, the iterative state of a stereotype or, as current usage aptly puts it, of a stylistic *tic*. For example, if on one occasion I read in Balzac "Lady Stanhope, that blue-stocking of the desert," I shall not grant myself the facile option, in a pastiche, of simply reproducing this hapax, this unique Balzacian performance, this mere *Balzaceme*.[6] A pastiche is not a cento; it must proceed from an effort at imitation: that is, at re-creation. But lo and behold, I happen to notice that in Balzac this expression belongs to a group of statements of the same type: "Bianchon, the Ambroise Paré of the nineteenth century"; "César Birotteau, that Napoleon of the perfume trade" (I am quoting at random). From the accretion of such similar occurrences I draw a model of competence, the formula *x, that y of z*, which is indeed *Balzacism* properly speaking, the category of idiomatic locutions that are to be found, scattered and diversified, all over the Balzacian text. Then, upon this iterative model I contrive a new and singular formulation that I may legitimately consider as (and insert within) a pastiche of Balzac: "M. de Talleyrand, that Roger Bacon of social nature" (Proust). On the other hand, Balzac repetitively writes (among other expressions of the same type, similarly intended to introduce an explanatory backward glance), "*Voici pourquoi*" {Here is why}. The original repetition suffices to make of this single locution an iterative stereotype and, as such, open to imitation. Through its multiplicity of occurrence, *voici pourquoi* is no longer a mere *Balzaceme* but is already a *Balzacism*: a recurrent *formula*, a category of Balzacian statements whose only (negligible) peculiarity is that it constitutes a class (a subclass) whose

individual members are all identical. The same holds true—evidently and eminently—for the recurrent phrases that cause us to describe the epic style as "formulaic." Each Homeric formula—*rosy-fingered Dawn; swift-footed Achilles*—already forms a class of multiple occurrences whose use by another author, whether epic or not, is no longer a quotation from Homer, or a borrowing from Homer, but rather a true *Homerism*—the definition of a formulaic style being precisely that nearly all its idioms are iterative. I am therefore in the position simply to insert *swift-footed Achilles* in a pastiche of Homer, and *voici pourquoi* in a pastiche of Balzac (Proust does not do it, but he uses a variant that rings like a literal and recurrent *Balzaceme*: "In order to understand the drama to follow, and which the scene we have just described can serve to introduce, a few words of explanation are needed").

"What I tell you three times is true," claims a character in Lewis Carroll's *Hunting of the Snark*. What I said once belongs to me and it can be parted from me only by being given over through a voluntary or involuntary transaction, officially acknowledged by a pair of quotation marks. What I have said twice or more ceases to belong to me; it now characterizes me and may be parted from me through a simple transfer of imitation; by repeating myself, I am already imitating myself, and on that point one can imitate me by repeating me. What I say twice is no longer my truth but a truth about me, which belongs to everyone. The same rule applies in painting, where it goes without saying that a copy, be it ever so perfect, is not a pastiche; if a painter himself has painted the same painting several times (it happens), nothing distinguishes a pastiche any more from the mere copy of one of these repetitive versions, or *replicas*.

Such is the paradox of the idiolect: de facto use cancels de jure ownership. It even jeopardizes the possibility of subsequent use, because, as we know, an imitated trait is immediately branded in advance, becomes vaguely (or all too specifically) ridiculous, verging upon self-caricature. Pushing things to the limit, we could say that the pastiche is not only, as Proust said, cathartic for its author; it is also sterilizing for its victim, who is condemned to rehash stereotypes endlessly or to abandon them altogether, and thus become someone else. This limit, happily or not, is never reached, and furthermore, I imagine that a sort of protective censorship—I dare not say "healthy censorship"—prevents the model from ever recognizing himself completely in the image that is presented to him.

*Imitation*, then, is to figures (to rhetoric) what pastiche is to genres (to poetics). *Imitation*, in the rhetorical sense, is the elementary figure of pastiche. Pastiche—and, more generally, imitation as a generic practice—is a texture of *imitations*.

But *imitation* (the term) is at one and the same time a good and a bad thing, given its lack of technical specificity and—which amounts to the same thing—its fallacious transparency. To cap this family of *-isms*, one could wish for a more specialized term that would better connote its "science" and whose ending would echo, and rhyme with, all the others. Such a term does exist but unfortunately has been made unavailable by usage, which has assigned to it an entirely different function: that term is *mimologism*. It designates, as the reader may know, every kind of word, group of words, phrase, or discourse processed to imitate not another idiom but the object of which it speaks. It is somewhat late in the day to retrieve it. Curiously, another one is proposed by our language, which commonly designates something like the reverse of imitation, which is also its object: the term is *idiom*. An idiom is an expression pertaining to a specific language or a linguistic state, which may obviously be an individual style: an idiolect (*idios* precisely means "individual" or "particular"). "There are also," said Rameau's nephew, "idioms of trade" {Diderot}. Let us put it more flatly: there are also idioms of authors, or even of a single work, since the style of the same author may vary perceptibly from one work to another. But every idiolect, as such, is a collection of idioms. And every idiom is nothing other than a linguistic trait offered for imitation and, I dare say, just begging to be imitated. There are no Anglicisms in English, but every Anglicism in French (or in any other language) responds to an English idiom. When I do a pastiche of an author, I drop my own idioms as much as is possible in order to imitate those of my model, which are such only because I am able to imitate them, but stop being such the moment they are imitated, only to become . . . what? Marotisms if I am Marotizing, Flaubertisms if I am Flaubertizing, or Proustisms if I am Proustifying. Still missing is the overriding general term which in the mirror of language would provide the idiom with its inverted reflection. *Xenism* or *xenotism* (from *xenos*, "stranger") is a little too restricted to the field of relationships between languages; it could serve to designate all the translinguistic replications (Anglicisms, Gallicisms, etc.), but it is not suited for other types of imitation; *exotism* would replace it rather advantageously, come to think of it;

*archaism* already regroups, naturally, all winks at the past within the same specific language. But how about the rest? And how about the process as a whole?

Dare I propose *mimetism*, which, like *mimologism* only more economically, says pretty clearly what it means? True enough, the root forms here a rather pitiful pleonasm with the suffix. The most algebraic but least practical solution, perhaps, would be to lexicalize the suffix itself, since it is a trait common to all its specific applications: all those translinguistic replications, all those transplanted idioms, would simply and summarily become *isms*. But this is perhaps too much to ask (i.e., too little: "less is more"). We must be content with *mimetism*. I shall therefore designate by that term, upstream of the distinction between the modes of pastiche, caricature, and forgery, every particular instance of imitation; and (while I am at it) I shall call every imitative text, or arrangement of mimetisms, a *mimotext*.

## 15

I have described travesty as an exercise in *version*; conversely, pastiche, and more generally the mimotext, would be an exercise in *thème*.[1] Ideally, it would consist of taking a text written in familiar style in order to translate it into a "foreign" style: i.e., a more distant one. I mean "ideally" in terms of the symmetry of genres, and there is no reason why this should not turn out to be the case: the imitator could indeed have a text in a familiar style at his disposal, by him or by someone else, which he would then translate into a another style. In actual fact, that is generally not the case: the author of a pastiche most often has at his disposal a simple scenario—in other words, a "subject," invented or not—which he rewrites directly in the style of his model; ideally, the stage of the original text should be optional and empirically suppressed, as with the able Latinist of bygone days who, having quickly outgrown the *thème* stage, wrote Latin poems directly. One must, however, go one step further: the stage involving the invented or supplied subject is not itself indispensable, for a good imitator is capable of practicing the style of the model without even assigning to himself in advance any topic to be treated. As Proust says regarding his own pastiches, by reading an author one soon makes out "the tune under the words," and "when one catches the tune, the words (other words, naturally) quickly emerge."[2] The tune generates the lyrics, just as Valéry claimed that

the rhythm of decasyllabic verse had generated within him the lines of "Cimetière marin."

This dissymmetry is a good enough illustration of the structural difference between transformation and imitation. The parodist or the travesty writer gets hold of a text and transforms it according to this or that formal constraint or semantic intention, or transposes it uniformly and as if mechanically into another style. The pastiche writer gets hold of a style—an object that is a bit less easily, or less immediately, to be seized—and this style dictates the text. In other words, the parodist or travesty writer essentially deals with a text, and with a style only peripherally. Conversely, the imitator essentially deals with style, and with text only incidentally; the target is a style and the thematic motifs that it involves (the concept of style must be understood here in its broadest sense: it is a *manner*, on both the thematic and the formal level). The text he is elaborating or improvising on that pattern is for him only a means of actualization—and possibly of derision. The essence of a mimotext, its specific, necessary, and sufficient trait, is the imitation of style. We are dealing with a pastiche (or caricature, or forgery) when the operations of its text exhibit the imitation of a style.

Thus, and to cite a canonical example once again, the author of a mock-heroic poem such as *Le Lutrin* does not imitate any epic in particular—unlike *Chapelain décoiffé*, which specifically parodies several scenes from *Le Cid*—but rather it imitates the classical epic style in general. *Le Lutrin* imitates an epic in the sense that Boileau, having identified within the epic corpus (say, Homer plus Virgil, not forgetting that Virgil was already imitating Homer) a given number of stylistic traits and recurrent thematic motifs (for example, single fights, melees, divine interventions, exchanges of invectives, invocations to the Muse, descriptions of weapons, extended comparisons, stock epithets), has gathered all these characteristic features, these "epicemes," into a sort of ideal type upon which he attempts to model the writing of his own poem, while inventing as much as possible his own "epicisms": other adjectives, other comparisons, invocations, invectives, interventions, single fights, and melees that are meant to resemble as much as possible those in the epic text. In short, he is aiming for likeness, to the extent allowed by the difference in subjects and the difference in languages, and without making the job too easy for himself by resorting to literal borrowings. The pastiche, here, imitates not a text but a style.

One must go still a little further, however. The pastiche in general does not imitate a text, for one simple reason, which I will first formulate in a

deliberately provocative manner by stating that *it is impossible to imitate a text*, or—which comes to the same—that *one can imitate only a style: that is to say, a genre.* For imitation, in literature as elsewhere, always presupposes—as I announced in the first chapter and as we have just glimpsed in connection with *Le Lutrin*—the preliminary elaboration (conscious and deliberate or not; youthful imitations most often result from passive contagion) of a model of competence, every act of imitation of which will be a unique performance, since the essence of competence is, here and elsewhere, the ability to generate an unlimited number of correct performances. "I have set my internal metronome to his rhythm," says Proust, speaking of his pastiche of Renan, "and I could have written ten volumes in this vein."[3] Between the imitated corpus (I deliberately use this pedantic but neutral term, which does not choose between the singularity of *text* and the multiplicity of *genre*), whatever its length and its principle of constitution (of selection), and the imitative text itself, a *matrix of imitation* is inevitably interposed, which is the model of competence or, if one prefers, the idiolect of the imitated corpus destined also to become that of the mimotext. The imitated corpus can be a genre in the habitual sense of the term, as is the mock-heroic; it can be the product of one era or of one school such as eighteenth-century, baroque, or Symbolist style; it can be the entire opus of an individual writer, as when Proust produces, without any additional specification, a pastiche of Michelet or of Saint-Simon; it can be a single text whose author's style changes according to the work, whether for generic reasons (the notion of a pastiche "of Virgil," for example, would signify little, or nothing very precise, since the style of the *Aeneid* is not that of the *Bucolics* or that of the *Georgics*, as the medieval grammarians well knew) or for reasons of personal development (the style of *Hérodias* is not that of *Education sentimentale*, whose style is not that of *Madame Bovary*). This observation, however, in no way contradicts the principle, bluntly stated above, that only a genre can be imitated. For to imitate a particular text in its particularity first means that one should establish that text's idiolect—i.e., identify its specific stylistic and thematic features—and then *generalize* them: that is, constitute them as a matrix of imitation, or a network of mimetisms, which can serve indefinitely. No matter how individual and specific the corpus of extraction, an idiolect, by definition, is not a word {*parole*}, a discourse, a message but rather a language {*langue*}: i.e., a code wherein the specificities of the message have been made fit for generalization. I can therefore now present my principle in what is perhaps a more acceptable and more accurate form: it

is impossible to imitate a text *directly*; it can be imitated only indirectly, by practicing its style in another text.

This situation, let us note in passing, is specific to literature and music; in the visual arts, direct imitation does exist: *copies* are routinely done in art academies and in museums. To imitate directly—i.e., to copy—a painting or a piece of sculpture means an attempt to reproduce it as faithfully as possible by one's own means, and the difficulty and technical value of the exercise are obvious. To imitate directly—i.e., to copy—a poem or a piece of music is a purely mechanical task, at the disposal of anyone who knows how to write or to place notes on the staff, and without any literary or musical significance. This difference in value denotes a difference in status between these two types of art or, otherwise stated, a specificity of status proper to the types of works that are texts (literary or musical)—in short, a specificity of the text which only a phenomenological aesthetics can describe: namely, I think, a comparative analysis of the types of ideality proper to different arts. Let us content ourselves here with noting this difference and conclude that direct imitation in literature or music, unlike what occurs in the visual arts, does not constitute a significant performance at all. Here, to reproduce is nothing, and imitating supposes a more complex operation, the completion of which raises imitation above mere reproduction: it becomes a new production—that of another text in the same style, of another message in the same code. The visual arts, too, are familiar with this standard of imitation, which they were first to name pastiche; it is, of course, artistically (if not technically) more difficult and more convincing to produce a false Vermeer than a perfect copy of the *View of Delft*. Because of the specifics of their own ideality, music and literature alone are ignorant of the lower degree of direct imitation, which in their case signifies nothing.

To imitate a text directly is therefore impossible *because it is too easy, hence insignificant.* It can be imitated only indirectly, by using its idiolect to write another text; that idiolect cannot itself be identified except in treating the text as a model—that is, as a genre. That is the reason why there can be only a pastiche of genre, and why imitations of an individual work, a specific author, a school, an era, a genre are structurally identical operations—and why parody and travesty, which do not go through that stage at all, can be defined in no circumstance as imitations but rather as transformations—limited or systematic—imposed upon texts. A parody or a travesty always takes on one (or several) individual text(s), never a genre. The notion, so commonly found, of a "parody of genre" is a pure chimera, unless one sees

it explicitly or implicitly as a *parody* in the sense of satirical imitation. One can parody only particular texts; one can imitate only a genre (a corpus, no matter how narrow, that is treated as a genre)—for the simple reason, which has been clear to all from the start, that *to imitate is to generalize.*

## 16

Up to now I have used the general term *mimotext* to designate the various modes of stylistic imitation that did not need to be differentiated in these very general considerations. I have used the term somewhat recklessly or perhaps, on the contrary, without running too much of a risk. Now we must return to it, and we must also acknowledge that the distinction between those modes is not easily made, or more precisely, that it is easy to make at the level of notions and functions but not at all easy at the level of textual manifestations. In other words, the theoretical distinction between pastiche, caricature, and forgery is clear, but the specific mode of a given mimetic performance often remains indeterminate, except when determined externally through context or paratext.

Let us begin with what is clear and actually self-evident: the pastiche is an imitation in playful mode whose primary function is pure entertainment; caricature is an imitation in satiric mode whose primary function is derision; forgery is an imitation in a serious mode whose dominant function is the pursuit or the extension of a preexisting literary achievement.

Perhaps unlike what happens with transformations, this distinction brings forth quite a legitimate objection, at least on the face of it: it is that each imitation is inevitably satirical (elicits laughter at the expense of its model) for reasons that lead straight back to the Bergsonian definition of laughter.[1] There would therefore be only one possible mode for imitation—the satirical mode. This theoretical objection can be countered with a theoretical and a practical argument. The first is that even if an imitation, to the extent that it is (and it evidently is) a "mechanization of life," did have an inevitable comic effect, still nothing would guarantee that this comic effect would inevitably have to be directed against the model of that imitation. If we follow Bergsonian logic, the victim a priori could just as well—and perhaps even *better*—be the imitator himself, in that he would behave in a mechanical manner or a manner prescribed by that of his model. But perhaps there need not be a victim; imitation in itself elicits laughter, like

a pun, that is at no one's expense, and the victimization of the model by the comic response would depend on some other factor. This would leave imitation with the choice between at least two modes, the playful (or purely comical or gratuitous) and the satiric (or tendentious and comical).

The second and purely practical answer reestablishes ipso facto the third mode: it is simply the fact that a nonidentified imitation—a common enough occurrence—does not necessarily provoke laughter. This hypothesis concerns in fact two types of situations: the first is one where the model of a pastiche or a caricature is for some reason left anonymous by the imitator and is not identified by the reader. Suppose that I should write a pastiche of Marivaux, that I submit it to you without apprising you of the fact, and that for lack of sufficient cultural competence you fail to recognize any model in it. Unless my pastiche is *in itself* comical or ridiculous (this qualification is important), you have no reason to laugh at it, and no wise man, they say, laughs without reason. Such a situation is in actual fact rather rare (though we shall encounter at least one example), because pastiche writers (who are legitimately concerned with producing their effect) most often forestall it by giving their audience due warning. This could be termed the *pastiche contract.* We will encounter it, and it could be spelled out by the compact formula *this is a text where x imitates y.* The forewarned reader, who is surely worth two, will not fail to detect the likeness in the imitation and will therefore find it amusing—such at least is the imitator's gamble. The second case of nonidentification is the one where the imitative text itself is not identified *as such* and therefore passes for an authentic text, belonging to its true author or to its model. For example, a reader of Giono's *Angelo* would recognize no *Beylisme* in it (no Stendhalian mimetism) and would read it without qualification like any other work by Giono. Or again, an eminent Rimbaud specialist would read the fake *La Chasse spirituelle* {see chapter 27} as an authentic unpublished text by Rimbaud which has been discovered at last (a fantastic conjecture). This second variant of the second situation is the well-known *literary fake* or apocryphal text; here, obviously, the imitator is the only one to laugh—with his friends and accomplices, if there be any—at the expense of everyone and especially of self-proclaimed experts. It proves at least that an imitation, good or bad, may in fact not produce in the audience any comical effect whatsoever. And if its author laughs (up his sleeve) at the incompetence of his readers and at the success of his ruse, he has nevertheless produced a serious imitation for consumption, an imitation that functions in this particular case as an unpublished Rimbaud

text: that is to say, as an item to be added to the Rimbaud corpus. This is proof—if such be needed—that serious imitation is not a purely theoretical hypothesis and that therefore imitation does function in the three modes: playful, satirical, and serious.

This is an easy demonstration but one which for the moment bears only upon *situations*: that is, upon networks of production and reception which encompass the model, the imitator, the mimetic text, and the reader (or readers), and where pragmatic indices can induce—regardless of the mimotext itself, and at times deceptively (as is the case with the apocryphal text)—*modal effects* that the text could not produce by itself and that do not correspond to identifiable and typical hypertextual features. This is where the demonstration becomes a bit more slippery.

The simplest, purest, or perhaps the most neutral mimetic *state* is without doubt that of forgery. It can be defined as the state of a text resembling as much as possible those of the imitated corpus, without anything in it that draws attention to the mimetic process itself or to the mimetic text, whose resemblance must be as transparent as possible without designating itself as resemblance—that is, as an imitation. The exemplary pragmatic situation here is obviously that of the serious apocryphal text (of which, as we shall see, the scandal of the *Chasse spirituelle* is not in fact the purest example): that is, of a mimotext whose challenge would be to pass for an authentic text in the eyes of a reader of absolute and infallible competence. This requirement obviously carries with it some negative rules, such as the absence of anachronisms, and a positive rule that one may crudely formulate in the following manner: to contain the same stylistic traits as the original, no more and no less, and in the same proportion as in the original (but with the effect of a fresh performance and in principle without literal borrowings). I believe that no forgery abides by this rule, but none probably sets out to break it deliberately.

In relation to this transparent and unsuspected state of imitation, which is the ideal state for forgery, the ideal state common to pastiche and caricature can be defined as the state of an imitation *perceptible as such.* The essential condition of this mimetic perceptibility seems to be what is superficially described—perhaps not without exaggeration—as *exaggeration.* Everyone knows intuitively that a comic imitation always "exaggerates" the characteristic traits of its model. To designate this procedure, the Russian Formalists used a more technical but still somewhat crude and certainly ambiguous term: *stylization.*[2] The most appropriate and accurate term might

be *saturation*: the recurrence of a stylistic or thematic feature characteristic of an author, such as the Homeric epithet. The average quantifiable frequency of this trait might be (I am suggesting an arbitrary number) one appearance per page; the typical saturation of a pastiche or caricatural exaggeration would consist of using something like two, five, or ten times more. Proust evokes and effectively illustrates this state of saturation (although in relation to a more complex situation) in a page devoted to his childhood readings of *Le Capitaine Fracasse*. The following sentence is first attributed literally to Théophile Gautier: "Laughter is not by nature cruel: it distinguishes man from the lower animals, and it is thus that it is shown in the *Odyssey* of Homer, the Grecian poet, as being an attribute of the happy and immortal gods, who take their fill of Olympian laughter through the long leisures of eternity." Proust at once corrects himself in a footnote: "In point of fact, this passage does not occur, or not in this form, in *Le Capitaine Fracasse*. Instead of '—it is thus that it is shown in the *Odyssey* of Homer, the Grecian poet'—he says, more simply, 'according to Homer.' But because the expressions 'it is shown in Homer,' 'it is shown in the *Odyssey*,' which do occur elsewhere in the book, gave me an identical quality of delight, I have taken the liberty, in order to make the example more striking, . . . of running all these beauties into one."[3] For brevity's sake let us call this feature archaism. Proust in a pseudoquotation saturates a sentence with archaisms which in Gautier's text are far more dispersed (much less frequent), and that is what turns this pseudoquotation into a pastiche or a caricature.

I have not yet differentiated between these two states, but only grouped them and contrasted them with the state of forgery. Such a distinction may not be possible; the same mimotext might after all produce, depending on the pragmatic situations and contexts in which it occurs, either the comic effect of the pastiche or the satiric effect of the caricature. But it might also be the case that caricature is characterized (sometimes in the most clear-cut cases) by an additional degree of exaggeration, inducing a sort of tilting into the absurd. For example, Proust constructs the Balzacian model *X, that Y of Z* into this intentionally exaggerated performance: "The lady of the house, that Carmelite of worldly success." But I sense the objection: this is after all nothing but an oxymoron like any other, and in matters of extravagance or enormity, Balzacian reality often surpasses any fiction. Thus, on the first page of *La Muse du département*, we have "The Vistula, that Loire of the North."

The specifically textual distinction between pastiche and caricature thus remains very risky or subjective. Vulgar pastiche-makers (all of whom end up in fact producing caricatures) like to stuff their imitations with additional comical and satirical effects: puns,[4] anachronisms, clever allusions to the person and work of the model's author, parodic plays on the names of characters, etc.—all of which are nonessential to the caricatural purpose but act as functional indices or signs. But above all, caricatural practice is almost always accompanied by a commentary destined to dot the *i*'s (paratextual prefaces, notes, interviews, etc.). The nonsatirical pastiche, on the other hand, does the same in the contrary direction, or at least abstains from any negative marginal appraisal. The nature of the opposition between these two practices is thus essentially pragmatic (related to situation rather than to performance), metatextual, and ideological. We are going to examine these ideologies, or indigenous theories, in detail, beginning with that of caricature, which seems to me to be the most ancient or the most traditional—and which remains today the most widely practiced.

## 17

In the neoclassical period, imitation, whether playful or satiric, bore no generic name. The term *pastiche* appeared in France at the end of the eighteenth century in the terminology of painting. It was a transfer of the Italian word *pasticcio*; the term literally meant "paste" and designated first a mixture of diverse imitations, then a particular imitation. In 1767 Diderot, though he practiced it himself, spoke of its literary equivalent only in hypothetical terms, as of a potential genre.[1] Marmontel noted this new acceptance and cited as an example a page—to which we shall return later—written by Jean de La Bruyère in the style of Montaigne.[2] The nineteenth-century Larousse picks up Marmontel's reference to La Bruyère. In conformity with the already established dogma, it separates a serious pastiche from a satirical or demonstrative one, which, when it pushes the caricature too far, deserves rather to be called *parody*.

Whether satirical or not, the imitation of a style presupposes an awareness of it. We know that during the neoclassical period the stylistic and thematic features of a genre were more clearly recognized than the individual features, which are not clearly mapped out anywhere in the poetic canon. The imitation of generic styles is no doubt as old as the genres themselves, and

we have seen that the mock-heroic poem, a typically neoclassical product, consists of satirical imitation of the "epic style"—whatever is meant by that.

The poetic consciousness of neoclassicism, practically as soon as it perceived a given stylistic feature, interpreted or converted it—and thereby absorbed it—into a timeless generic characteristic. "Marotism" is clearly a feature of Marot's style, but in neoclassical terms it would be truer to say that Marot is simply the inventor of Marotism, which is henceforth at the disposal of everyone, within the repertoire of rhetorical figures such as the metaphor or hypallage. Boileau produced his famous imitation of his favorite target because Chapelain typically embodied a general stylistic feature that happens to be a flaw and is named *cacophony*. The caricature here is thus simultaneously satirical and reductive; it remains so in the famous letter to the Duke of Vivonne, in which Boileau imitates in succession the styles of Guez de Balzac and of Voiture.[3] His imitation of Guez de Balzac illustrates a (negative) feature, the grandiloquent hyperbole, and that of Voiture the opposite: the understatement that resorts to asteism. The first, "who did not know how to speak simply or to step down from his heights," comments Boileau, "for wanting to say too much, said nothing at all" (that was to be Talleyrand's principle: "Everything that is exaggerated is insignificant"). The second, "while pretending to say nothing, says all that need be said" (this is the implicit superiority of the understatement, and anticipates Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe's future motto: "Less is more"). Whether "good" or "bad," then, for Boileau an author is apparently always—at least as an object of imitation—not a complex literary entity but rather the typical incarnation of a general feature. Typical and exclusive: not only do Chapelain, Balzac, and Voiture practice eidetically a universal trait; it all seems as if this practice exhaustively defined and subsumed their style.

The same, but with an added twist, applies in the eighteenth century to Crébillon's caricature of Marivaux, which he assigns to the mole Moustache in his novel *L'Écumoire* (1734).[4] The following is an excerpt:

> "These manners seem peculiar to you, and you are in error. Suppose that a woman—from among those that are called virtuous among you—should keep you waiting one full month. That is a long time to wait. Well! At the end of your martyrdom, what else does she give you but that which another, less infatuated with modesty, gives you from the very first? For you see, it comes down to the same after all: the

end of love is in its effect. Through the studied rebuttals of a woman, her defeat is ever intended; be she hasty, be she wary, at last she comes around; but fancy's anticipation has been too eager; prod desire as you will, it is now but reluctantly roused: and when it happens to be roused, the pleasure to which it beckons from too far afield either fails to come in time or no longer cares to come at all. Virtue is but a dallying wench, ever seeking to waste your time, and when she thinks to have cast love out . . ."

"Would you mind repeating what you have just been saying?" Tanzai interrupted. "The devil if I have understood a single syllable of it. What language is it that you are speaking?"

"That of Trifle Island," the mole replied.

"If you could speak mine to me, you would indeed cause me pleasure," he retorted. "Why! how do you ever understand yourself?"

"I guess at myself," the mole replied.

So do I. But Crébillon's own appraisal was conceivably more finely shaded or more ambiguous, as is perhaps indicated by the complimentary response of the other listener, Princess Néadarné:

I know of nothing so charming as to be able to speak two hours where others could not contrive to entertain you for one minute. Never mind that one should repeat himself, provided he can give a novel turn to what he has already said. Besides, that admirable mode of expressing oneself, which you call cant, is dazzling and sets one musing: happy he who can bring that tasteful elegance into his conversation! Zounds! Why should we be reduced to using none but the same terms, without daring to sever those that are wont to walk together? Why should it be forbidden to acquaint with each other words that have never met, or who presume that they are ill-suited to each other? Is there not something exquisitely gratifying in their very surprise at finding themselves together! And were it come to pass that, under the spell of this surprise which amuses you, they should turn into beauty what you perceive as a flaw, would you not find yourself singularly amazed? Must a prejudice . . .

That argument itself is evidently again an imitation of Marivaux, as Tanzai notes immediately: "You amaze me singularly yourself, and I admire the speed with which you have been able to acquire this bad taste." Whatever

the case may be, Tanzai illustrates perfectly the critical attitude typical of caricature: he views Moustache's style as a foreign language ("What language are you speaking?").[5] And that language, he will later say, is a *dull jargon,* a *verbiage* where nothing can be understood and which dwells "for two hours upon reason and wit without providing either . . . and I know of nothing more ridiculous than being witty out of place." This style is a *type* whose inventor may well have been Marivaux, but in much the same way as Marot had been the inventor years before of the art of "Marotizing": those convoluted discourses—"flies' eggs," Voltaire was to call them, "weighed in cobweb scales"—are a manner, a manner both thematic (with its sentimental subtleties) and stylistic (with its neologisms, oxymorons, substantivated adjectives, abstractions), one that would also, and most significantly, end up as a noun based upon the name of its inventor—*Marivaudage*, naturally.

The satirical procedure that consists in describing an imitated style as an artificial language will become one of the *topoi,* if not one of the hackneyed recipes, of the caricatural metatext. In *Un prince de la bohème* (1840), Nathan the journalist comes up with a caricature of Sainte-Beuve which, unlike Crébillon's mole, he does not fail to relate to his model.[6]

> "All this, if you will permit me to make use of the phraseology employed by M. Sainte-Beuve for his biographies of obscurities—all this, I repeat, is the playful and sprightly yet already somewhat decadent side of a strong race. It smacks rather of the Parc-aux-Cerfs than of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. It is a race of the strong rather than of the sweet; I incline to lay a little debauchery to its charge, and more than I should wish in brilliant and generous natures; it is gallantry after the fashion of the Maréchal de Richelieu, high spirits and frolic carried rather too far; perhaps we may see in it the *outrances* of another age, the Eighteenth Century pushed to extremes; it harks back to the Musketeers; it is an exploit stolen from Champcenetz; nay, such light-hearted inconstancy takes us back to the festooned and ornate period of the old court of the Valois. In an age as moral as the present, we are bound to regard audacity of this kind sternly; still, at the same time that 'cornet of sugar-plums' may serve to warn young girls of the perils of lingering where fancies, more charming than chastened, come thickly from the first; on the rosy flowery unguarded slopes, where trespasses ripen into errors full of equivocal effervescence,

into too palpitating issues. The anecdote puts La Palférine's genius before you in all its vivacity and completeness. He realizes Pascal's *entre-deux* (middle-space), he comprehends the whole scale between tenderness and pitilessness, and, like Epaminondas, he is equally great in extremes. And not merely so, his epigram stamps the epoch; the *accoucheur* is a modern innovation. All the refinements of modern civilization are summed up in the phrase. It is monumental."

"Look here, my dear Nathan, what farrago of nonsense is this?" asked the marquise in bewilderment.

"Madame la Marquise," returned Nathan, "you do not know the value of these 'precious' phrases; I am talking Sainte-Beuve, the new kind of French. I resume." . . .

"This, still following on Monsieur Sainte-Beuve's tracks, recalls the *raffinés* (lit.: keen), the fine-edged raillery of the best days of the monarchy. In this speech you discern an untrammeled but drifting life; a gayety of imagination that deserts us when our first youth is past. The prime of the blossom is over, but there remains the dry compact seed with the germs of life in it, ready against the coming winter. Do you not see that these things are symptoms of something unsatisfied, of an unrest impossible to analyze, still less to describe, yet not incomprehensibe; a something ready to break out if occasion calls into flying, unleaping flame? It is the *accidia* of the cloister; a trace of sourness, of ferment engendered by the enforced stagnation of youthful energies, a vague, obscure melancholy."

"That will do," said the marquise; "you are giving me a mental shower-bath."

"It is the early afternoon languor. If a man has nothing to do, he will sooner get into mischief than do nothing at all; this invariably happens in France. Youth at the present day has two sides to it; the studious or unappreciated, and the ardent or impassioned."

"That will do!" repeated Mme de Rochefide, with an authoritative gesture. "You are setting my nerves on edge." . . .

"Assuredly (to avail ourselves yet further of Sainte-Beuve's Babylonish dialect), this far outpasses the raillery of Sterne's 'Sentimental Journey'; it might be Scarron without his grossness. Nay, I do not know but that Molière in his lighter mood would not have said of it, as of Cyrano de Bergerac's best—'This is mine.' Richelieu himself was not more complete when he wrote to the princess waiting for him in

the Palais Royal—'Stay there, my queen, to charm the scullion lads.' At the same time, Charles Edward's humor is less biting. I am not sure that this kind of wit was known among the Greeks and Romans. Plato, possibly, upon a closer inspection, approaches it, but from the austere and musical side—"

"No more of that jargon," the marquise broke in, "in print it may be endurable; but to have it grating upon my ears is a punishment which I do not in the least deserve."[7]

One notes in passing, in the mouth of the marquise or of Nathan himself, expressions that seem literally lifted from Tanzai's speech: *jargon*, *farrago*, *Babylonish dialect*, *grating upon my ears*, *setting my nerves on edge*, and above all, "I am talking *Sainte-Beuve*, a *new kind of French*." We shall encounter this discourse again, in its most recent and coarsest form, but first I must introduce here a historical clarification.

Whether they deal with Boileau, Crébillon, Diderot, or Balzac (I could have cited two or three others whom we will come upon in a different register), the caricatures with which we have just dealt are exercises performed by *amateurs* who indulge in imitation in passing, in their correspondence or through the words of their fictional characters. Until the end of the nineteenth century, this marginal status was to remain the lot of caricature and the pastiche, which had not yet become canonical genres capable of giving rise to autonomous publications, produced by quasi-professional specialists. It is not my purpose here to provide a survey of the genre, but it seems to me that this sort of professionalization began during the Second Empire, when the glory of Hugo—a prime target by virtue of his poetic idiosyncrasies and monumental visibility—generated an unprecedented wave of imitations: in the same year, 1865, appeared the three volumes by Edouard Delprat, Charles Monselet, and André Gill.[8] The spirit of the time, which, as we know, was illustrated by Offenbach's operettas, must also have played its part. But the trend, once launched, could no longer be checked: at the end of the century we find various pastiches that Jules Lemaitre slipped into his literary column, and at the outset of this century (starting in 1907) we have the series by Paul Reboux and Charles Muller, *À la manière de . . .*, whose success no doubt decided Proust to write and publish his "Affaire Lemoine" (1908). The same fashion prevailed in England with Max Beerbohm's various collections.[9] Since then, France must have seen the publication, every four or five years or so, of at least one volume of

more or less satirical pastiches; their targets are either illustrious classics or current celebrities, whose periodic renewal accounts for the the genre's enduring commercial success.[10]

*Le Roland Barthes sans peine* {Roland Barthes made easy}, by Michel-Antoine Burnier and Patrick Rambaud, offers a certain number of formal features that do not conform to, or are an innovation in, the history of the satirical pastiche.[11] They are at the service of an "idea" which, on the other hand, is a rather sound illustration of the dominant ideology of the genre.

To begin with, it is the first time, to my knowledge, that a collection of pastiches is devoted entirely to one author: hence, several spoofs of the same writer, all of which are a heavy remake of the caricature already contained in Burnier and Rambaud's volume *Parodies*.[12] We thus have a double infringement of an implicit rule concerning the genre: *ne bis in idem*, one single performance must suffice; it is as vulgar to repeat a pastiche as it is to repeat a joke. On the other hand, and this too is probably the only example of such a practice, an authentic page ("L'écorché" {The flayed one}, from *Fragments d'un discours amoureux*) was introduced in the midst of the imitations, with the obvious intention of "proving" that reality lives up to fiction and that no caricature can surpass this particular model. An implicit question was addressed to the reader: "Did you recognize this page as authentic, or as one that is less exaggerated than the others?" Perhaps also a trap was being set for the victim, were he to charge the satirists with plagiarism—a charge that would have redounded to their profit by providing a source of publicity. Finally, and this feature is the most important for us, the mimetic performance here is preceded by a record of the development of the stylistic competence upon which it is based. This account of the Barthesian idiolect takes the form of a school handbook: exercises and lessons for a speedy learning of that idiolect. The first lessons, via the "direct method," involve pastiche sentences or, less frequently, authentic sentences accompanied by their "French" translation (*version*), and gradual *thème* exercises: incomplete sentences to be completed, etc. The rest consists of a "description" of the prominent features of the idiolect: vocabulary, pronunciation, characteristic turns of phrase, methods of combination and padding. The majority of these analyses, it must be noted, again refer to forged examples: unlike Proust, who included in his pastiches of Balzac or Flaubet analyses of authentic texts by these authors, Burnier and Rambaud made things easy for

themselves by basing their caricature upon a stylistic analysis—of the caricature itself.

The satirical theme that dominates this description is clear and, besides, is displayed at the outset in the title: *the* Roland Barthes (in the French title) signifies here a language (like *the* Sainte-Beuve in Balzac or *the* Marivaudage in Crébillon)[13]—or, at the very least, a dialect that is derived from the French, progressively moves away from it, and is characterized by gratuitous redundancy and complication in the expression of ideas that are in themselves quite banal: "dressed-up truisms." This polemical theme is what I call the ideology of caricature: caricatured style is always presented as a form of mannerism. But why as a "language"? Why *le* Marivaux, *le* Sainte-Beuve? *le* Roland Barthes? This designation may pass for a simple hyperbole: the targeted style is so marked, so deviant, so idiosyncratic that it is as far from ordinary language as a foreign language would be. But in fact it always points to a more specific and more negative characteristic: not only the idiom's originality but also its *preciosity*. "Could you not say the same thing in (good) French?"—that is, in the honest language that classical rhetoricians called "simple and common" expression? The implicit answer to that question—rhetorical in itself—is always affirmative.[14] The same thing can be said in simple language; therefore, you are writing a uselessly complicated language (that is the polemical definition of preciosity and of neology). "A simple proposition must always be made complicated"—this is one of the generative rules of the Roland Barthes, according to Burnier and Rambaud. Whence the translation exercises intended to show how a simple truism can be "dressed" into pretentious gibberish, and vice versa.

Underlying the practice and the tradition of caricature is a stylistic *norm*, an idea of "good style," which is the (simple) notion that good style means simple style. This generally implicit notion is found in its most (which is not to say *best*) articulated form in Paul Reboux—not in his pastiches themselves, which fortunately abstained from explanations, but (since explanation never fails to come) in his later preface to the volume by Georges-Armand Masson, *À la façon de . . .*, a preface that is intended as a poetics of the genre. The first "condition" established (and self-evident) as necessary to the success of caricature is that the pastiched author be famous (to be recognizable, one must be known); the second condition is that the author "be imitable: that is possess bold characteristics, mannerisms, specialities." This, too, is self-evident: in order to imitate a style, one must

be dealing with a style, a specific manner of writing. But here is how Reboux clarifies his notion of "speciality" and, above all, of its opposite:

> It is possible to mock the fiery humanitarianism of an Octave Mirbeau, the nostalgia of a Pierre Loti, the good-naturedness of a J. H. Fabre, the Art Nouveau style of a Henry Bataille, the fastidiousness of André Lenôtre, the hermeticism of Stéphane Mallarmé, the verbosity of this or that politician, the bourgeois smugness of this or that moralist [we note in passing that thematic traits here have taken over from those that are "purely" stylistic] . . . but it is impossible to do a successful pastiche of Anatole France's diamond style, or the crystal-clear Voltaire, the blameless Guy de Maupassant, the inimitable Molière. . . . Mockery of such writers would fall flat, slide off them like water drops from the surface of a waterproof plumage.

The reference to Molière, Voltaire, Maupassant, and France makes it clear that the *inimitable* here is described and illustrated (well or poorly) as representing the *simple* style, a sort of zero-degree or blank writing, language itself in its basic purity. This, the caricaturist is neither able nor willing to tackle. Caricature, then, implies an ideal of style as inseparable from itself (since it defines its own notion of the "conditions" of its very practice).

> A book like that [Reboux no doubt means to say "a book like *this*"] is an aesthetic necessity. It clears up the literary horizon. It serves as a warning to those dimwitted enough to be taken in by those who are sly enough to mask their impotence behind a systematic obscurity. It promotes sharp thinking, clear speech, the art of representing what is round as round and not square, of evoking nature not through vague and elusive analogies but through images that cast themselves into terse phrases. It makes us understand, by mocking the fatheads and the knaves, that one does not write solely for oneself, for the fun of it, to express emotions one has felt. One must write to make oneself understood, to communicate to others what one has experienced. It demonstrates the risks of wandering from the paths of balance and good sense.

End of message. Do not believe this to be an ad hoc apocryphal forgery of mine, or a borrowing from some underling's speech at a prize-awarding ceremony; this *credo of the pastiche writer* really bears Paul Reboux's signature. Jean Milly, who quotes it in his critical introduction to Proust's pastiches,

hastens to add, quite appropriately, that such a manifesto is at the opposite extreme from Proust's philosophy of style—as expressed, for example, in his pastiches. This diametrical opposition gives a fairly accurate measure of the full distance separating the spirit of caricature from that of the pastiche—at least as it is illustrated by Proust. By him alone, perhaps (along with the Joyce of the "Oxen of the Sun" chapter in *Ulysses*)—but as Ion would say, "He is in himself quite enough."

## 18

We know that the satirical mode of imitation was known to the Ancients first by the Greek and then by the Latin term *parodia*, even if only as the mock-heroic poem, which we shall encounter presently. Satirical also are those scenes from Aristophanes' *Frogs* in which Aeschylus and Euripides hurl spoofs at each other.[1] The function of Eumolpus's poem on civil war in Petronius's *Satyricon* is more difficult to assess; I see it rather as a purely playful—or even serious—imitation of Lucan's manner.

Plato could also have been the inventor of pastiche in its purest form. He was capable as none other after him, perhaps, until Balzac, Dickens, and Proust, of *individualizing* (even if only through literary imitations) his characters' speech. Consider, among others, the example of the *Symposium*, where Phaedrus expresses himself in the manner of Lysias, Pausanias in the manner of Isocrates, Agathon in the manner of Gorgias (plus two lines improvised in his own poetic style), and Aristophanes, Alcibiades, and naturally Plato himself in very different and strongly characteristic styles. Of course, there is also the *Phaedrus* with Lysias's speech, which for twenty-four centuries no one has managed to identify definitively as either an apocryphal statement or a long quotation.

Whatever the case may be, it is a kind of *homage*. This traditional term, which Claude Debussy was to use as a title for a (quite free but fervent) pastiche of Jean-Philippe Rameau, aptly designates the nonsatirical mode of imitation, which can hardly remain neutral and offers no other choice except that between mockery and admiring reference—unless the two are mingled in an ambiguous mode, which appears to me the most specific effect of the pastiche when it succeeds in escaping the aggressive vulgarity of caricature. I found another example, on the fringes of neoclassicism, by La Bruyère.

> I dislike a man to whom I cannot make the first approach, nor greet before he greets me, without lowering myself in his eyes and contributing towards his own good opinion of himself. Montaigne would have said: "I like to have elbow-room: and to be courteous and affable as I choose, without remorse or consequences. I cannot strive against my own bent, nor go against the grain of my nature, which inclines me towards the man I happen to meet. When he is my equal, and is not hostile to me, I forestall his welcome, I inquire as to his health and state of mind, I offer my services without much haggling over details or standing upon ceremony. I cannot like the man who, through the knowledge I have of his habits and his way of behaving, deprives me of that ease and freedom. How am I constantly to remember, when I see such a man in the distance, to wear a solemn and self-important air, so as to let him know that I think myself as good or better than he? and to that end, to remind myself of my own good qualities and his bad ones, and make comparisons between them. This is too hard a task for me, and I am not capable of such strict and sudden attention; and even if I had achieved it on a first occasion, I should probably weaken and fail on a second attempt; I cannot force and constrain myself to be proud, for any man's sake."[2]

I see nothing in that very faithful imitation that can be imputed to satire, and the chapter "On the Works of the Mind" contains nothing that would corroborate such a reading. But La Bruyère's neoclassical readers were not inclined to see it that way; for them, it was evident that an agreeable imitation must—indeed, *could not but*—take on the "flaws" of a given style. Marmontel, who cites this page in his *Éléments de littérature* (1787), s.v. "Pastiche," follows it up with a typical commentary: "Here we have unquestionably Montaigne's language, but diffuse and endlessly circling around the same idea. What is difficult to imitate is the copiousness, the vivacity, the energy, the taut, vigorous, and swift stroke, the unexpected and appropriate metaphor, and above all the marrow and the substance. At times, Montaigne's discourse is casual and long-winded: that is what La Bruyère imitated, the flaw." In other words, La Bruyère could imitate in Montaigne—just like Boileau in Chapelain or Crébillon in Marivaux—only the characteristic defect, in this case *prolixity*.

I mentioned Debussy's *Hommage à Rameau*. We know that Maurice Ravel in turn wrote a piece in the same spirit (for what concerns us here), which

he titled *Tombeau de Couperin*, in the manner of Mallarmé's commemorative poems. In chapter 11 of Gustave Flaubert's *Par les champs et par les grèves*, we find a veritable *Tombeau de Chateaubriand*, which is again a tribute in the form of a pastiche. Flaubert and Maxime Du Camp, passing through Saint-Malo, set out one evening for the little island of the Grand-Bé, which already (1847) harbored the future tomb "in three pieces, one for the base, one for the slab, one for the cross." Then follow these two imitations, separated by a transitional sentence:

> Chateaubriand will rest beneath it, with his head turned towards the sea; in this grave, built on a rock, his immortality will be like his life—deserted and surrounded by tempests. The centuries and the breakers will murmur a long time around his great memory; the breakers will dash against his tomb during storms, or on summer mornings, when the white sails unfold and the swallow arrives from across the seas; they will bring him the melancholy voluptuousness of far-away horizons and the caressing touch of the sea-breeze. And while time passes and the waves of his native strand swing back and forth between his cradle and his grave, the great heart of René, grown cold, will slowly crumble to dust to the eternal rhythm of this never-ceasing music.
>
> We walked around the tomb and touched it, and looked at it as if it contained its future host, and sat down beside it on the ground.
>
> The sky was pink, the sea was calm, and there was a lull in the breeze. Not a ripple broke the motionless surface of ocean on which the sudden sun shed its golden light. Blue near the coast and mingled with the evening mist, the sea was scarlet everywhere else and deepened into a dark red line on the horizon. The sun had no rays left; they had fallen from its face and drowned their brilliancy in the water, on which they seemed to float. The red disc set slowly, robbing the sky of the pink tinge it had diffused over it, and while both the sun and the delicate color were wearing away, the pale blue shades of night crept over the heavens. Soon the sun touched the ocean and sank into it to the middle. For a moment it appeared cut in two by the horizon; the upper half remained firm, while the under one vacillated and lengthened; then it finally disappeared; and when the reflection died away from the place where the fiery ball had gone down, it seemed as if a sudden gloom had spread over the sea.[3]

Proust's mimetic production is obviously more considerable than these few erratic performances.[4] One can hardly expect to find there a uniform attitude regarding authors as diverse—and as diversely close to him—as Sainte-Beuve, Balzac, Renan, Chateaubriand, Michelet, Régnier, Goncourt, Saint-Simon, and Flaubert. The mode of his pastiches goes from the most satirical to the most admiring. But it is very characteristic that none of these authors elicited in Proust either a condemnation or a critique of their stylistic peculiarities. What comes closest to that is the reproach of mendacious and "artificial cleverness" which he levels at Sainte-Beuve's writing; still, this censure is amply compensated for by another, more ambiguous appraisal, when he speaks of having truly "debauched" himself by "indulging in the delicious but shoddy music of Sainte-Beuve's florid conversational style."[5] And even here, allowances must be made for a more general antagonism, the true reasons for which are extrastylistic: the "Sainte-Beuve" of "L'Affaire Lemoine" does not fail to focus chiefly on the pettiness and futility of his critical judgments. Stylistically, the most marked feature of this pastiche is dissonance, the discrepant association of terms, particularly noticeable in doublets such as these: Flaubert is admired for "his impulse and his predilection"; Stendhal for his "clear and fruitful" views; and Chaix d'Est-Ange for the "impetus and the salt, the timeliness and the colloquium"—those "deliberately false" notes, as Verlaine would put it, are evidently responsible for making of Sainte-Beuve's idiom a "delicious shoddy music." The pastiche of Balzac targets primarily the vulgar snobbishness and conceitedness of an author who is ever ready to swoon in ecstasy before the superiority of "high society" ("the impregnable poise of high society women," "the immobility so special to the servant population of the Faubourg Saint-Germain," "the knowing glance, the true privilege of those who had long enjoyed the intimacy of *Madame*") and to "exclaim in admiration for the witticisms of his characters, that is to say for himself": "That was spoken in a tone so perfidiously enigmatic that Paul Morand, one of our most impertinent diplomatic secretaries, murmured: 'He is better than we are.' The Baron, knowing he had been found out, felt chills down his spine. Mme Firmiani sweated in her slippers, one of the masterpieces of Polish industry."[6] Proust also takes aim at Balzac's insipid forays into onomastic speculations, which foreshadow some of the lucubrations of "modern" criticism: "Werner! Doesn't that name strangely evoke the Middle Ages to you? Just hearing it, can you not see Doctor

Faust, bent over his crucibles, with or without Gretchen? Doesn't it imply the idea of the philosopher's stone? Werner! Julius! Werner! Change two letters and you have Werther. *Werther* is by Goethe." Renan stands out, naturally, for his effusive and sanctimonious style, the "endless effusion of a choir boy." But the most outstanding (most saturated) satirical feature is of an ideological order, the howlers occasioned by Renan's philological hypercriticism (or skepticism): "The dull collection of improbable tales bearing the title *Comédie humaine* by Balzac may not be the work of one man or of one age. However its still formless style, its ideas characterized by old-fashioned absolutism, allow us to date its publication two centuries, at least, before Voltaire. . . . In the *cento* of disparate poems called *Chansons des rues et des bois*, commonly attributed to Victor Hugo, although it is probably the work of a later author . . . The Comtesse de Noailles, if she is indeed the author of the poems attributed to her. . . ." Chateaubriand is pinned down for his self-conceit under the guise of preterition: "When the vain clamor attached to my name will have ceased . . . the vain clamor of my glory. . . ."[7]

This completes the list, it seems to me, at least for "L'Affaire Lemoine," of the *mostly satirical* pastiches. The Régnier is more admiring, its most saturated mannerism being his knack for contrasting qualifications: "More picturesque than comfortable," "more propitious to daydreaming than inducive to sleep," "amusing without ceasing to be perilous." Its last page, devoted to a drop of nasal mucus that had fallen, like a symbolic decoration, on the lapel of the forger's jacket, strongly resembles a Proustian "metaphor": "Only a single juicy mass, convulsive, transparent, and hardened, could be distinguished; and in the ephemeral glitter with which it decorated Lemoine's jacket, it seemed to have affixed there the prestige of a momentary diamond, still hot, as it were, from the furnace, and of which that still unstable, corrosive and vital jelly that it remained for another moment, seemed at the same time, by virtue of its deceptive and fascinating beauty, to proffer both the mockery and the emblem."[8] Of the two Goncourt pastiches, the one in "Lemoine" and especially the one in *Le Temps retrouvé*, Proust himself declared after the fact that they were examples of a "favorable critique, all in all," of the Goncourt brothers' famous *écriture artiste* {"artistic writing"}.[9] However, the three texts that come closest to the ideal of the pastiche-as-homage are without doubt those on Michelet, Saint-Simon, and Flaubert.[10] {For Genette's examples of Proust's pastiches of Goncourt, Michelet, and Saint-Simon, see the Appendix.} Of the last on this list, I have a little more to say.

# 19

In Proust's "L'Affaire Lemoine" series, the pastiche of Flaubert holds a special place, a place not entirely due to its being "successful," which after all is a matter of personal appreciation. Its privileged position is due to the fact that we have available a parallel, if later, text that clarifies and comments upon this one. These two texts, furthermore (and, accessorily, two or three others that are complementary and corroborative), together make up a "Flaubert by Proust," which we must take in both possible senses of this formula: Flaubert *as read by* Proust, Flaubert *as written by* Proust (not including a third, perhaps the most important: Flaubert as read by us *through* Proust, or *by way of* Proust, as one goes to the Guermantes by way of Méséglise—"it's the prettiest way"). These two performances are inseparable. I separate them therefore for the purposes of analysis, beginning with what is, in the visible chronology of the texts, the end: that is to say, exactly with what Proust himself calls analysis, the "synthesis"—a little as we might speak today of a "synthetic fabric"—being precisely the pastiche. The double equivalence is proposed in the case of the Goncourt pastiches: "About that style, I would have too much to say if I were to analyze it. By means of synthesis I have also done my critique of it—a favorable critique all in all—in my *Pastiches et mélanges*, and especially in one of the volumes yet to appear of the *Recherche du temps perdu*, in which my hero, finding himself at Tansonville once again, reads a pseudomanuscript of Goncourt's in which the various characters of my novel are appraised." Again, apropos of Flaubert,

> When I set about producing my own, rather detestable, parody of Flaubert, I did not stop to ask myself whether the "tune" ringing in my ears owed its peculiar quality to a recurrent series of imperfects or of present participles. If I had bothered about that, I should never have got the thing on paper at all. But now, as I hastily jot down these few comments on the characteristics of Flaubert's style, I am operating a reverse process. The human mind can never be satisfied unless it can manage to achieve a clear analysis of what, at the moment of composition, it produced unconsciously, or can recreate in vital terms what, till then, it has been merely analysing.

Finally, in a letter to Ramon Fernandez (1919), "I had first wanted to have these pastiches appear along with parallel critical studies on the same authors, the studies thus stating in an analytic fashion what the pastiches did instinctively, and vice versa."[1]

"Analysis" here is thus a critical description of an author's style, and "synthesis" is the active imitation of it—"criticism in action" he calls it elsewhere: "I was too lazy to write literary criticism, or rather because I found it amusing to write literary criticism 'in action.'"[2] Descriptive criticism would appear to be less amusing, more tiring, and in any case more time-consuming to write (and/or to read?) than imitative criticism. From a purely quantitative standpoint, this assertion is debatable, since a pastiche, once it has established its model of competence, can be prolonged indefinitely, and Proust in fact sometimes let himself go in that way: the Renan of "L'Affaire Lemoine" covers seven pages; the Goncourt of the *Temps retrouvé*, eight; and the Saint-Simon, whose prolixity is clearly germane to the model, is twenty pages long, "to be continued." Conversely, Proust would have been quite capable of describing in one sentence, not necessarily one of his longer ones at that, the style of Renan, or Sainte-Beuve, or Saint-Simon. But above all, pastiche does not totally dispense with criticism, since it presupposes the task, however unconscious, of the formation of the model of competence: i.e., the stylistic idiolect to be "imitated," which, once acquired, is quite simply to be *practiced.* I doubt if that is ever entirely unconscious, and if it were, I don't know whether it would be less tiring and more gratifying. There is an advantage, perhaps, in being able to do something else "on the conscious level" at the same time. One is spared in any event the task of writing a critical analysis. "The style of the Goncourts? Sorry, no time, here's a pastiche." And we know that toward the end Proust was, not without reason, a little nervous about his deadline.

Flaubert, then, is granted special treatment in Proust's critical article from 1920.[3] Its pretext is another article, one that appeared in 1919 in the *NRF* {*Nouvelle Revue Française*}, in which Albert Thibaudet declared, among other things, that "Flaubert is not a natural-born great writer, . . . full verbal powers were not given to him as part of his nature." This is little more than a paraphrase of an assessment by the interested party himself, written when he was twenty-five: "But as for becoming a master myself, never; I am sure of it. I have immense deficiencies: I have no inborn gift, to begin with, and I lack perseverance in my work."[4] Not much is left, but what follows gives the lie to this *lasciamo ogni speranza.* Thibaudet's comment: "Perseverance

can be acquired, but innate talent cannot."[5] But the debate is about innate talent, and Proust means to *take a stand* for the defense (or believes he does): this plea is entered in "Sur le style de Flaubert," which appeared in the *NRF* in January 1920, and which we may consider and treat as an a posteriori justificatory commentary on the 1908 pastiche, and incidentally on that of 1893–95, "Mondanité et mélomanie de Bouvard et Pécuchet," reprinted in *Les Plaisirs et les jours*.

I am not entirely sure, as I have already said, that the pastiche form (in general) is a purely "stylistic" affair in the usual sense of the term. There is no law against imitating also the "content," the actual theme, of the model; see the immortal pseudo-Tolstoy ("Rédemption") by Reboux and Muller, in which Ivan Labibine converts and takes in prostitutes, with the predictable result that we know.[6] But it is the common idea that is faulty; style is form in general and therefore, as was said earlier, the form of the expression *and* the content. In Tolstoy, for example, there is a certain conception of charity. Or, to drift away from this ribald example, with Dostoyevsky it is a certain obsession with crime; or, with Stendhal, the link between the life of the spirit and high places; with Thomas Hardy, geometric vision; with Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly, "a hidden reality revealed by some material trace." I have borrowed these new examples, of course, from Proust, or at least from "Marcel," who mentions them before Albertine. These are thematic examples if ever there were any, but what does Marcel (twice) call these characteristic and recurring motifs? "Sentence-types." It would be hard to find a better way to express the unity of content and expression than this, and it is this unity, unique to each writer (to each artist), that Proust calls style. The example of Stendhal (and Dostoyevsky) is found again in the preface to Paul Morand's *Tendres Stocks*, with a commentary that confirms this usage: from a traditional viewpoint, one might judge that an author who could write, "She wrote him a letter that went on forever," must be lacking in style, "but if one considers *the great unconscious bony structure which underlay the conscious and deliberate development of his thought* as being a part of his style, then style Stendhal most certainly had."[7] And it would be hard to imagine an "in the style of Stendhal" signed by Proust which would not succeed in evoking in one way or another the "voluptuous disinterestedness" provided by elevated places. And so on and so forth, *mutatis mutandis*.

But Flaubert, once again, proves the exception. The only mention made by Proust of a particularly Flaubertian thematic scheme is the following: in the same sense that all Dostoyevsky's novels could be entitled *Crime and*

*Punishment*, "all of Flaubert's, and especially *Madame Bovary*, could be called *L'Éducation sentimentale*." It's a bit thin, and not easily applicable to *Salammbô* or to *Bouvard et Pécuchet*. Proust was well able (it wasn't very difficult) to illustrate in his pastiche published in *Les Plaisirs et les jours*, the central theme of the latter work: that is, the encyclopedic compulsion of the self-taught. But "Mondanité et mélomanie" is not only a pastiche; since its heroes are the same as those in the model novel, this (double) passage seems rather like an unpublished, apocryphal (double) chapter of the unfinished novel itself. What we really have here is a (partial) *continuation*. The pseudo-Flaubert of "L'Affaire Lemoine," in the trial scene, has nothing of a Flaubertian theme about it except perhaps in the last part, concerning the dreams of wealth and escape of those in attendance, which bring to mind the similar dreams of Emma or Frédéric. But even this corresponds to none of the traits explicitly noted by Proust.

The "style of Flaubert," as Proust analyzes it in his article and practices it in his pastiches, is for once a purely "formal" notion in the current (i.e., limited) sense of the term. (I shall not, for all that, reduce it to being purely *technical*, for we shall see that style, even in this limited sense, remains for Proust a question "not of technique, but of vision.") Individual style is rather strictly meant here as a singularity of writing, a singular manner of writing that expresses in principle a singular manner of seeing. Let it be remembered that Flaubert himself defined style as (among other things) "an *absolute* manner of seeing things." The adjective is most ambiguous here and could evoke a universalizing aesthetic of the neoclassical type: in its context (the "book about nothing"), it expresses rather the self-sufficiency of form and the insignificance of the "subject." Flaubert grants the artist, moreover, the specific gift of "*seeing everything* in a manner different to that of other men" {*voir tout* d'une manière différente à celle des autres hommes}. Except for the grammatical lapse, that sentence might have been written by Proust. For him, the great artist is the man capable of an original vision and capable too of imposing that vision (little by little) upon his public:

> And, lo and behold, the world around us (which was not created once and for all, but is created afresh as often as an original artist is born) appears to us entirely different from the old world, but perfectly clear. Women pass in the street, different from those we formerly saw, because they are Renoirs, those Renoirs we persistently refused to see as women. The carriages, too, are Renoirs, and the water, and the

> sky; we feel tempted to go for a walk in the forest which is identical with the one which when we first saw it looked like anything in the world except a forest, like for instance a tapestry of innumerable hues but lacking precisely the hues peculiar to forests. Such is the new and perishable universe which has just been created. It will last until the next geological catastrophe is precipitated by a new painter or writer of original talent.[8]

For him, then, the great writer can be recognized also by the singularity of his style, writing, and vision, and it is this *value placed upon singularity* that sets his aesthetic in opposition to that of almost all of his companions in pastiche. Despite all the deference he owes him, Proust rebels against a pronouncement of Anatole France, who had also just declared that "all singularity in style must be rejected": "Should I ever have the joy of meeting once again Monsieur France, . . . I should ask him how he can believe in the unity of style, since [please observe the conjunction] all sensibilities are singular. Nay, the beauty of style is an infallible sign that thought is rising to new heights, that it has discovered and averred necessary connections between objects which their chance condition had kept asunder."[9] Necessary connections, abolition of chance—here we are at the heart of Proust's personal aesthetic. But what we must consider at this moment is the surreptitious and therefore highly revealing shift from *singularity* to *beauty*. For Proust, the two terms are equivalent in this case. For "*we want no canon of any sort.* The truth . . . is that from time to time there appears a new and original writer. . . . This new writer is usually rather exhausting to read and difficult to understand because he unifies things through new relationships. . . . Now, it is with original writers as it is with original painters. When Renoir began to paint, people did not recognize the things he displayed," and so on.[10] (The rest is almost literally identical with the page on Renoir in *Guermantes*, quoted above.) The singularity of a "new" artist, whether his name be Renoir or Morand, is always in the *new relationships* between things that he is able to make—not things, but their relationships. Let us note in passing that this is the very formula of Georges Braque which is often cited by Roman Jakobson, and the watchword of "structuralism." (Proust a structuralist?—don't quote me on this.) These new relationships are somehow the foundation and the guarantee of authenticity (and *therefore*, very obviously, of the aesthetic value) of any original style. "I have no sympathy," Proust responds to a journalist's

inquiry, "for writers whose concern is originality of form. . . . One should be concerned only with the impression or the idea to be conveyed. . . . A most strenuous effort at submission to reality is required, if one is to succeed in transferring the seemingly simplest impression from the sphere of the invisible to the different one of the concrete, wherein the ineffable crystallizes into clear formulas."[11] Here is the necessary counterweight to the valuation of stylistic singularity which we have just discussed. A prerequisite, however, is that this singularity should not proceed from a simple technical artifice but flow from an authentic singularity of vision. Unless "originality of form" simply cannot exist without the gold standard of an original vision, which should, from the start, guarantee us against any stylistic inflation. Is this optimistic hypothesis, then, that of Proust himself who, after all, did not write "style must be" but "style *is* a question not of technique," etc.? Yes, but "question" leaves open—the question, to which I find in his work no explicit theoretical answer. On the other hand, I remember that he described as "artificial" the cleverness of Sainte-Beuve. The adjective is, in our present context, unequivocal and final. Here we are in some difficulty. Will the Flaubert case help us get out of it? In any event, it is time we returned to it.

What holds Proust's attention about Flaubert (and mobilizes his mimetic impulse) is not, then, this or that thematic motif, as had been the case for Stendhal or Dostoyevsky, but merely a singular manner of writing, linked (or not) to a singular vision. In what does this manner consist?

Let us look first, in order to eliminate it, at that in which it does *not* consist. We have become familiar with Proust's statement: "It isn't that I prefer above all others Flaubert's books, or even Flaubert's style" (let us note here that "or even"; Proust does prefer Flaubert's *style* to his *books*, which serves to confirm, had we need of confirmation, his indifference to Flaubert's themes). "For reasons too lengthy to consider here, I believe that metaphor alone can give a kind of eternity to style, and there is perhaps, in all of Flaubert, no single instance of a beautiful metaphor. Worse, his images are generally so weak that they scarcely ever rise above the level of those that even his most insignificant characters could invent." An example: "Sometimes your words come back to me like a far-off echo, like the sound of a bell carried by the wind." The "metaphor" here is Frédéric's, but Proust adds that Flaubert, speaking in his own voice, never comes up with anything much better. What is it that he finds wrong with this comparison?

Its "weakness"—i.e., no doubt its banality—but more specifically, I think, its arbitrariness, its mediocre or approximate appropriateness, the fact that some other, similar image might have done just as well. These are what he calls elsewhere images "that are not quite inevitable. Now, all images that are merely approximate do not count. Water boils at 100 degrees. At 98, at 99 degrees, the phenomenon does not occur. Better, then, to do without images."[12] The infallible sign of such an inadequacy is that merest hint of a fumbling hesitation: the doublet (*far-off echo / sound of a bell*). There is, for every circumstance, one "inevitable" image (that is to say, of course, a necessary one, imposed not by the beaten path of stereotype but by "submission to reality" and faithfulness to the impression), and a great many that are not. The fact that a writer proposes two or three choices is in itself a proof that none of them fits: "This is a reproach that might be leveled at Péguy . . . to try ten ways of saying the same thing, when there is only one." Hence the satirical abundance of double comparisons in the "Lemoine" pastiche: "His sentences went on without interruption, like water over falls, like a ribbon unwinding. Sometimes the monotony of his speech was such that it could no longer be distinguished from silence, like a bell whose vibration persists, like an echo trailing off" [here imitation gives way to an almost literal quotation]; "the thin fabric of her blouse fluttered like grass at the edge of a fountain ever ready to rise, like the plumage of a pigeon about to fly away."

One might well ask how Proust recognizes (in someone else's work) a metaphor that is inevitable. No answer to that question; it is possible that he was never satisfied with anyone's except his own. In any case, nowhere, to my knowledge, does he cite an example of one taken from someone else's work. As for his own practice, the criterion might be simply that a good metaphor is the one that imposes itself without effort or contest, stamped with that seal, always decisive for Proust, of being *involuntary*. That, at least, is the prevailing theory. But I have my own pet notions on the matter, which I have fondled elsewhere.[13] Just a word will do, since the topic is of no primary concern to us here: a "good" metaphor is one imposed by the context and the situation, be it a diegetic metaphor or a metonymic one. Don't say, of the bell tower at Combray, that it appears to be covered with shells. The sea is too far away; we are in Beauce. Say, therefore, that it resembles an ear of grain.

Flaubert's merit is thus not to be found in his metaphors, "but after all, metaphor isn't all of style." Let us look elsewhere. Here is a highly

positive appreciation, though in the last resort an inoperative one because not specific enough. It is again found in the preface to *Tendres Stocks*:

> In other centuries (earlier than the nineteenth), it seems that there was always a certain distance between an object and the most elevated minds that discoursed upon it. But with Flaubert, *for example*, the intelligence, which in his case was not perhaps of the highest, seeks to become the shuddering of a steamboat, the colors of the foam, the islet in the bay. Then comes a moment when intelligence (even the middling intelligence of Flaubert) is no longer to be found; all we have before us is the boat "running into bales of timber that began to undulate in the swirling waves." That undulation is intelligence transformed, incorporated into the material. It is also able to penetrate the heather, the beeches, the silence and light of the underbrush. This transformation of energy, in which the thinker disappears and things themselves are dragged right in front of us, is this not the writer's *first effort toward a style*?[14]

Intelligence incorporated into the material—that is possibly a definition of a "beautiful style," and the examples he chooses show that Proust is thinking of the very performances of Flaubert that he has already cited in his article: the second page of *L'Éducation*; Rosanette and Frédéric's or Emma and Rodolphe's walks in the forest; certain sentences from *Salammbô*, which we will consider later. But the definition remains metaphorical, and the metaphor itself characterizes only the effect. It says nothing about the means. Then too, this effect signals only "the writer's first effort toward style," a necessary but not sufficient condition. Finally, and above all, Flaubert is only *one example* among others of a success common to modern styles. Incorporation of the intelligence is thus not specific to Flaubertian style. This modern quality has something to do, it would seem to me, with what Proust elsewhere describes as a *substantial homogeneity* of style: "In Flaubert's style, now, all the elements of reality are rendered down into one unanimous substance, into vast, unvaryingly polished surfaces. No flaw remains in it. It has been rubbed into looking-glass smoothness. Everything is shown there, but only in reflection, and without affecting its uniform substance. Everything at variance with it has been made over and absorbed." Flaubert is contrasted here with Balzac, who lacks this homogeneity and therefore also lacks style itself: "Style is so largely *a record of the transformation imposed on reality by the writer's mind* [yet another Proustian definition of

style, the most efficient one, perhaps] that Balzac's style, properly speaking, does not exist."[15] But he is again only one example among others, and we know that despite the privilege he grants to modernity, Proust at least once granted this merit to La Fontaine and Molière: "a sort of melding, a transparent unity . . . with not a single word that is left out or that remains resistant to this assimilation. . . . I suppose this is what is called the Polish of the Masters."[16] Intelligence incorporated into the material, substantive homogeneity of vision and style—these are the polish of the masters *in general*, not the special touch of Flaubert, whose specificity remains to be described.

In truth, it is I who have been circling around the point for several pages, not out of a perverse taste for suspense but the better to proceed by stages through the levels of quality (what Flaubert does not have, what he shares with all the other "masters," what he alone has) and to set this Flaubertian specificity more precisely in opposition to that which, according to Proust, it is not. Proust himself does not go about it halfheartedly. Here is the second sentence of his reply to Thibaudet {in "Sur le style de Flaubert"}: "I was amazed, I confess, to see treated as one hardly gifted for literature a man who, by his entirely novel and personal use of the past definite, the past indefinite, the present participle, certain pronouns and certain prepositions, has renewed our vision of things almost as much as Kant, with his Categories, renewed our theories of Knowledge and of the Reality of the outside world." The (necessary?) image of the Kantian revolution had appeared as early as the 1910 sketch {see note 16}, with the stylistic equivalent, or perhaps instrument, of the Flaubertian revolution already clearly designated: i.e., grammar and syntax. "As he took such pains with syntax, it is there that he placed his originality. He is a grammatical genius." I shall come back to this, of course, but first I wish to underline my own uncertainty, as I was just hesitating above between stylistic *equivalent* and *instrument*. Here it is Proust himself who hesitates: "The revolution in vision, in the representation of the world which *proceeds from—or is expressed by*—syntax" (emphasis added). This is not a minor point. It is no less than a matter of knowing whether Flaubert's stylistic originality *expresses* an original vision or whether it *creates* one. This question, obviously, is related to the one we left earlier in suspense: is originality of style always (and, for example, in Flaubert) founded upon and guaranteed by originality of vision? Surely the former is identified with the latter by displacing it;

this much we know. But we must first bring to light, or clarify, Flaubert's specificity as Proust outlines it. Nothing in it, then, but syntax. There is nothing admirable about the images, nothing special about the vocabulary (Thibaudet is a little more inspired on this point), nothing of *substance*, in sum; it is a type of originality that is *purely formal, or relational.* What exactly does it consist in?

The passage quoted above enumerates almost exhaustively the points of application of this grammatical originality: tenses of verbs, pronouns, prepositions. Let us add (following Proust's own analysis, of course), adverbs and the conjunction "and." About adverbs, Proust specifies that in a Flaubert sentence they have "only a rhythmic value," which explains their often unexpected placement, ugly and heavy, "as if to wall up those compact sentences, to plug up the smallest holes": "Your horses, *perhaps*, are spirited." Often they appear at the end of the sentence, even at the end of the work: "A lamp shaped like a dove burned above *continuously*"; "as it was very heavy," etc. But this observation seems to have come late, since I find no application of it in the pastiche. Flaubert's use of "and" is well known, and Thibaudet similarly devotes several attentive pages to it. This conjunction "does not at all serve the purpose in Flaubert's work that is assigned to it by grammar," says Proust. "It marks a pause in the rhythmic pace and divides a picture." That is why it almost always comes in when least expected. "Wherever we would use 'and,' Flaubert leaves it out. That is the model and pattern of so many admirable sentences: 'The Celts longed for three crude rocks, under a rainy sky, in a bay filled with islets' (it may be 'strewn' instead of 'filled'; I'm quoting from memory)." (It is neither "strewn" nor "filled" but more modestly "full of"; however, it is not merely "in" but "in the hollow of" a bay.) This asyndetic effect is one of the Flaubertisms most often used by Proust. Thus we have in his *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, "Besides, he is always in a carriage, dresses without grace, habitually wears a pince-nez," and "Every artist is a flatterer, at odds with his family, never wears a top hat, speaks a special jargon." In "Lemoine": "He was old, with a clownish face, a garment too tight for his corpulence, pretensions to wit," and "He had begun on an emphatic note, spoke for two hours, seemed dyspeptic." (The imitation may seem heavy and ironic, but many sentences of this "cut" can be found in the real *Bouvard*, and also in a less satirical context in *Un Coeur simple.* For example, "As he managed 'Madame's' properties, he shut himself up with her for hours in 'Monsieur's' study, and was always afraid of being compromised,

had boundless respect for the magistracy, had pretensions to Latin.") "On the other hand, in those places where no one would think of using one, there Flaubert uses 'and.'" This Flaubertian "and" often comes at the beginning of the sentence, after a period or semicolon; he "almost never finishes an enumeration" but "always starts a second sentence." It is "like an indication that a new part of the picture is about to begin, that the ebbing wave is gathering strength again." Example: "The Place du Carrousel had a peaceful look. The Hotel de Nantes stood there, still solitary; *and* the houses behind," etc. A mimetic application: "He was old, with a clownish face, a garment too tight for his corpulence, pretensions to wit; *and* his identical sideburns imparted something decorative and vulgar to his whole personality." "He was terrible for Lemoine, but the elegance of the formulas softened the harshness of the indictment. *And* his sentences followed one another without interruption," etc. This "and," which Thibaudet calls the "and" of movement, passage, or disjunction, contaminated ad nauseam the Naturalist Koine, and especially in Zola, where the context assigns it a completely different function.[17] Thibaudet—more sensitive to Flaubert's lasting innovations than to his truly individual idiosyncrasies, and always tending, as a true Bergsonian, to value movement and to see it where it is least to be found—considers that "and" as a characteristic "motor scheme." It can become so, and does become so in Zola, carried away as he is by an irresistible flood of oratory. In Flaubert, who sought always to suppress every sort of movement, it creates, as Proust says, a pause and a plateau.

The elision and counterusage of "and" constitute two complementary rhythmic effects that work together (and most often contiguously) toward a very particular structuring of the sentence. But one cannot correctly assess that structure without taking into account at least two other elements, the use of tenses and the use of prepositions. These too are well known but should be considered here from another angle. We know that Flaubert uses and abuses the imperfect (his "eternal imperfect," says Proust), calling upon it sometimes as a durative, sometimes as an iterative, sometimes as a vehicle for the free indirect style, and very often in an ambiguous mixture of all of the above. And he brings the present in too, just as he pleases, when it is not expected, using it also for (just barely) indirect discourse, or as witness to an ongoing condition, and often as the mark of a personal observation, even as the reminder of an earlier documentary version, as perhaps in this passage from *Un Coeur simple*: "When the weather was fine, they set off early for the Gefosses farm. The courtyard *is* sloping, the house

in the middle; and the sea, in the distance, *looks* like a gray patch." But what is important from the perspective of the Proustian analysis and imitation is the effect produced, in sentences of unusual structure, by the heterogeneity of tenses and by their disorderly, almost comical, collisions: "For a hundred francs a year, she cooked and kept house, sewed, washed, ironed, knew how to harness a horse, fatten the fowls, churn the butter, and *remained* {*resta*} faithful to her mistress" (*Un Coeur simple*). The break here is double: between the imperfects and the preterite of *resta*, but also in the interposition of the infinitives governed by *knew how* {*savait*}—everything for a hundred francs, whence a sort of syllepsis, or semantico-temporal zeugma, verging upon the non sequitur. A similar effect occurs in the pastiche: "Already the jokesters *were beginning* to heckle from one bench to the other, and the women, *watching* their husbands, *were stifling* their laughter in their handkerchiefs, when a silence *fell*, the president *appeared* to concentrate on falling asleep, Werner's lawyer *was stating* his case. He *had begun* on an emphatic note, *spoke* for two hours, seemed dyspeptic." Or, "And they *ended up* seeing only two bunches of purple flowers, *descending* as far as the swift waters which they almost *touch*, in the harsh light of a sunless afternoon, along a reddish wall that *was crumbling*." The use of prepositions often serves to relay or sustain this effect. Proust describes it simply as "rhythmic," as we have seen, and does not comment further upon it. But his quotations, even or especially when they are false, give a good indication of what is at stake: "The Celts longed for three crude rocks, *under* a rainy sky, *in* a gulf filled with islets." Or, "Julien's father and mother lived in a manor house *in the middle of* the woods, *on* the side of a hill." "The variety of the prepositions," Proust points out, "adds to the beauty of these ternary sentences." Although that "variety" might well stem, on Flaubert's part, from a somewhat schoolboyish fear of repetition, their effect remains, and I should wish to call it an effect of *dislocation*: like the verb tenses, these circumstantial complements (but also, as we shall see, object complements) undergo a process of *dissimilation*, and the sentence, sliding or rather zigzagging from one to the other, wiggles gracelessly, letting its angles stick out like a dislocated puppet: "The awning had been spread and big cushions promptly brought to them. Herodias sank down there and began to cry, turning her back to him. Then she passed her hand over her eyes and said she did not want to think of it any more; she was happy as she was; and she reminded him of their talks there in the atrium, the meetings at the baths, their walks along the Sacred Way, and evenings in the great villas, by murmuring fountains, under arches of

flowers, with the Roman Campagna before them."[18] Here is the (superb) Proustian imitation: "They saw themselves with her, in the countryside, *until* the end of their days, *inside* a house all of white wood, *upon* the dreary bank of a great river. They would have known the cry of the petrel, the coming of the fog, the rocking of the ships, the gathering of the clouds, and would have stayed for hours with her body on their laps, watching the rising tide and the rattle of moorings, *from* their terrace, *in* a wicker chair, *under* a blue-striped tent, *between* metal balls."

Pronouns: We are obviously dealing with those anaphoric shifts that refer to a noun which was not the subject of the preceding sentence—an infringement of pure grammar but also, literally, of the logical articulation of sentences, resulting again in an effect of dislocation. Proust enjoys seeing Flaubert enjoy an analogous trick in Montesquieu: "He was terrible in anger; it made him cruel." And he notes in turn, in *L'Éducation*, "There came up another, nearer, on the opposite bank. Trees crowned *it*." And he undertakes to outdo him: "A woman removed her hat. A parrot topped *it*. Two young men expressed surprise at the sight *of it*." The benefit of such turns of phrase is, according to Proust, that by allowing a flying arch to surge up from the heart of one clause and not touch ground again until the middle of the next clause, they ensure a tight, hermetic continuity of style. Perhaps more specifically, such shifts of subjects and objects contribute to a particularity he notes in his 1910 draft: in Flaubert "things behave like people"; they "exist not as props to a story, but in the full reality of their apparition; they are generally the subject of the sentence, for the character does not intervene and is subjected to the vision." Conversely, "when the represented object is human, since he is apprehended as an object, what appears of him is described as simply appearing, and not as if produced by will. . . . When there is an action, of which another writer would bring out the different phrases [*sic*, for *phases*?—a most revealing slip] of the motive that underlies them, we are given instead a general picture whose different parts seem to harbor no more specific intention than if a sunset were being described."

Here then is the "revolution" that began with *L'Éducation*: "*What until Flaubert was action becomes impression.* Things have as much life in them as people, for it is the mind which, after the fact, assigns external causes to every visual phenomenon, but in the *first impression* that reaches us this cause is not implied" (emphasis added). This Flaubertian impressionism, which Proust, ten lines later, prefers to call "subjectivism" (the term is

more congenial—and makes Flaubert more congenial—to him), is what we might also call, in just as Proustian a fashion, the "Dostoyevsky side" of Flaubert, thereby paraphrasing Marcel speaking about Madame de Sévigné: "What I meant was that Mme de Sévigné, like Elstir, like Dostoyevsky, instead of presenting things in their logical sequence, that is to say beginning with the cause, shows us first of all the effect, the illusion that strikes us."[19] The reference to Elstir is no doubt a sufficient indication of the aesthetic and philosophical significance of this theme. For Sévigné, another page in the *Recherche* confirms and illustrates this trait:

> Mme de Sévigné is a great artist of the same school as a painter whom I was to meet at Balbec, where his influence on my way of seeing things was immense. I realised at Balbec that it was in the same way as he that she presented things to her readers, in the order of our perception of them, instead of first explaining them in relation to their several causes. But already that afternoon in the railway carriage, on rereading that letter in which the moonlight appears—"I could not resist the temptation: I put on all my bonnets and cloaks, though there is no need of them, I walk along this mall, where the air is as sweet as that of my chamber; I find a thousand phantasms, monks white and black, nuns grey and white, linen cast here and there on the ground, men enshrouded upright like tree-trunks"—I was enraptured by what, a little later, I should have described (for does not she draw landscapes in the same way as he draws characters?) as the Dostoyevsky side of Madame de Sévigné's Letters.[20]

The *Dostoyevsky side* is the primacy of the impression, even of the first illusion, and it is clearly thus that Proust interpreted, whether rightly or wrongly, that enigmatic phrase from the preface to Louis Bouilhet's *Dernières chansons*, which he so loved to quote (incompletely): Flaubert says of that writer that "the accidents of the world appear to him completely transposed, as if for use in describing an illusion." Proust quotes this in reference to the "nascent madness" of Nerval, his "excessive subjectivism, a greater importance, as it were, attached to a dream, to a memory, to the personal quality of a sensation, than to what this sensation signifies that is common to all, perceptible to all, i.e., reality." And he adds that this disposition "to consider reality only 'for use in describing an illusion' [note the co-optation of the Flaubertian formula] and to create, out of illusions that are valued enough to be described, a sort of reality . . . is in truth *the*

artistic disposition." This is once again of more than marginal significance, being obviously an indirect definition of the Proustian aesthetic itself, to which Flaubert is here annexed and assimilated, together with Nerval, Dostoyevsky, Sévigné, and a few others. But this (*the*) artistic disposition is achieved by each through means appropriate to each alone: Sévigné through phantasms, Elstir and Proust himself through metaphors, Flaubert through (I am finally coming to the densest formula, which just about says it all) "the immutable singularities of a distorting syntax."[21]

Such, essentially, is the singularity of Flaubert's style, or perhaps the illusion of it, an illusion that Proust "found valuable enough to describe" and pleasurable enough to use.[22] Proust himself, lest he betray his own doctrine, would have to recognize, and even to argue, that this is indeed a "distorting" vision, as is the whole of his vision and the vision of every artist. Only non-artists have a "correct" vision, but that correctness is sterile. Only artistic distortion is fruitful because it is revealing for the non-artists themselves: "And now, look!" And now, read Flaubert through a Proustian lens, or, what comes to the same, read Flaubert as if you were reading—why not?—a pastiche of Flaubert by Proust. You will certainly find it to be a success in that genre, especially starting with *L'Éducation.* Proust's Flaubert is late Flaubert, the last Flaubert, the "old (though not very old) Flaubert," just as there is an old Titian, an old Hals (an old Elstir), at the moment when the artist rids himself of his superficial talents, "renounces his innate 'virtuosity' and 'facility' in order to create, for a new vision, expressions that seek little by little to adapt themselves to it." Proust is therefore not so much in disagreement as he thinks he is with Thibaudet, who also believes Flaubert's stylistic maturity to be late-blooming, coming at that moment when the art of "trimming" that he learned from Montesquieu or La Bruyère happily succeeded in subverting a natural talent that was—as a perusal of his youthful works amply confirms—essentially "oratorical." Such an accomplishment, which is in fact a laborious and painful deconstruction, can happen only late in a career. "Since these grammatical singularities in fact translated a new vision, what effort must have been required to fix the shape of that vision, to bring it from the unconscious into the conscious, to incorporate it finally into the various parts of his discourse!"[23] A late, and perhaps necessarily rather rare, accomplishment, even in the last works. It is striking to note how Proust's Flaubert consists in fact of a corpus of a few privileged pages—the beginning of *L'Éducation* and some scraps of *Salammbô*, of the *Trois contes*,

and of *Bouvard*, of course, in which he steeped himself very early for his juvenile pastiche (but which he quotes nowhere else), and almost always the same quotations. It all seems as if he based his Flaubert on two or three characteristic sentences, learned by heart and vaguely rewritten by an egotistical memory—I mean a memory that was "artistic" in its own right, and thus at the exclusive service of his art. All in all, and thanks to a bit of help from another genius, this particular Flaubert may well be the best Flaubert we have.

To be perfectly precise, Proust, it seems to me, has put his finger with truly surgical precision on what is most specific to Flaubert. These Flaubertisms are found in his work in relatively small but increasing and, above all, decisive quantities; they set the tone, and we know that it takes only two or three original dissonances to transfigure a score which without them would be simply correct. I am not sure, on the other hand, that in his interpretation Proust does not give in a little to the unavoidable and unconscious temptation to pull Flaubert in his own direction and to turn him illegitimately, along with Nerval, Dostoyevsky, and others, into one of his own precursors. He seems to me more prudent, and more "subjected to the reality" of Flaubert, when he simply evokes a change "in the aspect of things and beings, like that effected by a lamp which has been shifted, or by one's arrival in a new house, or by the old house if it is almost empty and one is in the middle of moving. It is this kind of sadness, arising from the breaking of habits and the unreality of the setting, that Flaubert's style calls forth."[24] The "distorting" effect of Flaubertian syntax depends perhaps exclusively (and whatever its modalities, which are so many "breakings of the habits" of grammar) upon an unusual degree of visibility and density of the grammatical aspect of discourse—a discourse that was thereby inevitably and, as it were, mechanically weighted down, trammeled, and, as André Malraux and Jean Prévost both noted, "paralyzed" and "petrified"; and Flaubert often spoke of himself as being physically numb and stiff.[25]

There remains a point, which I have not forgotten: does this "distorting syntax" *translate* a new vision, as Proust wrote in 1920, or conversely, following the hypothesis he still left open in 1910, does this vision *flow out of* this syntax? It seems to me that over time Proust increasingly tended to lean his aesthetic upon a "metaphysics," and that his final position was the most expressionistic: Flaubert's syntax, in his view, was therefore not "distorting" but indeed *distorted* by a singular vision that had gradually become more insistent, leaving an ever stronger imprint upon his discourse.

I find it useless (though very convenient) to add that such an issue, perhaps a decisive one for Proust, seems to me rather frivolous. The "Flaubertian vision," when all is said and done, matters little to us, unless it is taken as a metaphor to designate his style; and in his use of the very term "vision," Proust may very conspicuously be begging the question. If such a vision did exist, it exists no more, and Proust himself indicates that he finds it almost nowhere in the correspondence. He speaks of those writers "whose *literary reality* (a form that fascinates them, like Flaubert) is so private that it cannot apply to their conversation or their correspondence."[26] This is perhaps a clear enough indication that "literary reality" is *purely literary* and can express itself only in the specific act of writing. But no matter: is there anyone left to speculate today upon El Greco's impaired sight, or to wonder whether Beethoven's final audacities had to do with his deafness? Let's leave it at that for Flaubert, and let us refrain, above all, from invoking his all too famous, all too mysterious "illness." What counts is that he became, in his later works—and we perceive this better since Proust drew our attention to it, even if ours differs from his own—a kind of Cézanne of writing, in whose work the "real" begins to go to pieces, or rather to become seriously *blocked*, and who, as Proust first put it, renews "*our* vision of things." The first Impressionist novelist? Despite the dates, and given some of his very sharp angles, I would say instead the first (and the last?) *Cubist* writer.

Proust, we know, justified his own mimetic practice by what he called the "purgative, exorcising virtue of the pastiche. When we have just finished reading a book, not only do we wish we could continue to live with the characters . . . but our own inner voice, also, which has been disciplined during the entire time of our reading to follow the rhythm of a Balzac or a Flaubert, would like to continue to speak like them. We must let it do so for a moment, must let the pedal prolong the sound; that is, we must do a deliberate pastiche, so that afterward we can become original once again and not do an involuntary pastiche for the rest of our lives."[27] But this justification itself finds an explanation in that exceptional mimetic capacity, that porousness to contamination by others, which so struck all Proust's friends (and, in a different way, all his enemies), and which we know to have found expression in the characterizations of his novels. He had a mostly congenial attitude toward his targets, and this point is important in understanding the dominant tonality of his pastiches, a specific mixture

(with a variable dosage) of admiration and irony. This nuance seems to me to be close enough to the mixture of affection and irony that marks Proust's friendships, a mixture that is translated by the attitude commonly called *teasing*. The Proustian pastiche is neither purely satiric nor purely admiring, and what governs it is properly the irreducible ambiguity of teasing, in which mockery is a way of loving and irony (understand who must) only a byway of tenderness.

But the most profound indication is surely the passage from *Contre Sainte-Beuve* in which Proust relates his gift for imitation to that sensitivity to analogies which is the very basis of his aesthetic (and his philosophy): "I think that the boy in me who has fun (doing pastiches) must be the same one who has a finely tuned ear for hearing, between two impressions, two ideas, a very subtle harmony that not everyone can hear."[28] *A fundamental statement*: the mimetic capacity and the "demon of analogy" are but one and the same, an aptitude for perceiving and producing resemblances. Pastiche for Proust, then, is not an incidental practice, a purely stylistic catharsis, or a simple prenovelistic exercise. It is, along with reminiscence and metaphor, one of the privileged—and, in truth, necessary—modes of his relationship to the world and to art.

## 20

Every travesty, as we have seen, includes an element (a facet) of pastiche, since it transposes a text from its original style into another style which the writer of travesty must in fact borrow in order to practice the form. In *Virgile travesti* Scarron translates the *Aeneid* into a "vulgar" French that is no more "natural" to him than the Virgilizing French of *Le Lutrin* is to Boileau, and is just as conventional, from what we can tell. His text is therefore both a travesty of the *Aeneid* and a pastiche of the conventional speech mode called "vulgar French." Even if he were to operate in a style that was the most spontaneously his own, the very fact of his using it for the purpose (and as a means) of transposition would make it inevitably less "natural," less transparent, less *immediate*. In order to apply it to the action of the *Aeneid*, he would constantly have to be reconstituting his own idiolect, practicing his own style in a mode of *self-pastiche*—which would leave marks on the style itself.

I would like to be able to say, for the sake of symmetry, that every pastiche reciprocally includes an aspect of travesty. But that is not the case at all. An isolated mimotext produces no effect of transformation, because it does not transpose any preexisting text, known—or even, for that matter, unknown—to us, into the style of its model, and this situation is by far the most common. On the other hand, in the (very exceptional) case in which a series of pastiches is composed as a suite of variations on a single theme, like "L'Affaire Lemoine" (with the exception of the pseudo-Sainte-Beuve, which comments metastylistically on the pseudo-Balzac), any one of them can serve as a transposition of any of the others. But to be accurate, "L'Affaire Lemoine" does not exactly illustate this situation, for even though its different chapters all refer to the same subject, it cannot be said that they all tell the same story; each one selects from the little news item the detail or the point of view that suits it, and these segments therefore cannot be entirely superimposed and seen as concurrent.

Another imperfect approach is a curious performance by Reboux and Muller.

Everyone knows Maupassant's "The Necklace." The two *pasticheurs* imagine that Maupassant died before he was able to write this tale, only the scenario of which has been found among his papers. His four friends, Dickens, Edmond de Goncourt, Zola, and Alphonse Daudet (grouped in the first edition under the collective—and incorrect—label of the "Naturalist School"), divide the task of writing it out among themselves. Whence a series of four pastiches, which are not concurrent and have no transformational relationship with one another. But each one of them, presented as the realization of a segment of Maupassant's sketch for the tale, is in fact a transcription in the style of the fictive author of a segment of the tale actually written by Maupassant. Each of the pastiches is therefore both a caricature and, incidentally but deliberately on the part of Reboux and Muller, a travesty. The alerted reader need only refer to the original text (which of course is not included in the collection) to compare Maupassant successively with his rewriting by "Dickens" (first part: Mme Loisel, invited to a ball, borrows a necklace from her friend Mme Forestier), by "Goncourt" (second part: the ball), by "Zola" (the necklace is lost; ten years of privation in order to pay her back), and finally by "Daudet" (final revelation: the necklace was paste). The last part includes besides, as a bonus, what we can't be sure should or should not be interpreted as a "Daudetism," a happy ending, which Maupassant's text authorizes but does not carry out or even indicate:

Mme Forestier makes restitution to her friend of the difference in value between the two necklaces, an "involuntary savings account" that will allow her a comfortable retirement in a villa on the banks of the Seine, which she will of course name "the Necklace."

This coexistence of the text of one author with transcriptions in the style of one or more others is, to my knowledge, unique. It has the secondary effect of placing the original text in the position of a *theme* on which the four pastiches are so many variations—except that each does its variation on a different segment rather than competing with the others by dealing with the whole text. This means, for the reader, the following inevitable illusion: compared to its pastiche variation, each segment of Maupassant's text seems by contrast to be of a perfect stylistic neutrality, a norm, a retrospective zero-degree of writing, one that is of course entirely relative, as if Maupassant himself hadn't any stylistic traits and as if it weren't possible to write an "in the manner of Maupassant." That was in fact, as we know, the opinion of Paul Reboux—whence, perhaps, this quadruple travesty, this masked ball organized entirely in Maupassant's honor, the better to exalt *a contrario* his perfection. But what can the confrontation between an authentic original and four caricatures really demonstrate?

By way of counterexample, and to continue with a pointless challenge of my own, I can imagine a noble exercise for some idle and reverential Pierre Menard: (1) forget the text of "The Necklace"; (2) absorb the style of Maupassant from all of his other work; (3) thus armed, taking Reboux and Muller's four forged transcriptions as points of departure, reconstitute the original.

A more rigorous example is given us in Queneau's *Exercises in style*, made up of variations on a single theme.[1] The version entitled "Récit" can fairly be considered (although the author in no way presents it as such, and although it was certainly not written first) as the closest possible state to a hypothetical zero-degree (exposition of the theme) of stylistic variation—or variation of something else, for the series presents some states ("Translation," "Lipogram," "Homophonic," etc.) that pertain to a completely different type of textual transformation, as we have seen in reference to other Oulipo productions.[2] We must also point out that the "styles" that Queneau considers are never, as in the canonical pastiche, the idiolects of authors but rather general types: genres ("Official letter," "Blurb," "Cross-examination"), levels of usage ("Noble," "Cockney"), grammatical options

("Present," "Past")—even though "Exclamations" ("Goodness! Twelve o'clock! time for the bus!") inevitably evokes Louis-Ferdinand Céline, and "Past Indefinite" ("I got into the Porte Champerret bus. There were a lot of people in it, young, old, women, soldiers. I paid for my ticket and then looked around me.") suggests the Albert Camus of *The Stranger* in a way that is perhaps not entirely accidental or purely grammatical, given such a sentence as "It wasn't very interesting" or "I had a seat and I wasn't thinking about anything," which connote a typical Meursault-like apathy.

The zero-degree "Récit"—"One day about midday in the Parc Monceau district, on the back platform of a more or less full S bus (now No. 84), I observed a person with a very long neck who was wearing a felt hat which had a plaited cord round it instead of a ribbon. This individual," etc.—in no way implements the (highly improbable) notion of what Queneau's own "natural style" might be. It would not be difficult, however, to add to the series a fairly presentable "In the manner of Raymond Queneau," a self-pastiche that could be based, for greater safety (and effectiveness), on his most notorious and most clearly defined style, that of *Zazie dans le métro.* As a matter of fact, we already have it, under the title "Unexpected." It is, perhaps not accidentally, the ninety-ninth and final variation:

> They were sitting around a café table when Albert joined them. René, Robert, Adolphe, George, and Théodore were there.
>
> "How's everything?" asked Robert amicably.
>
> "All right," said Albert. He called the waiter.
>
> "I'll have a picon," he said.

The preface that Queneau wrote for the 1979 illustrated edition (of which I observe that "Récit" was chosen to appear on the cover, a confirmation perhaps of its a posteriori status as the thematic exposition) perfectly defines, by reference to its musical model—the variation, of course—the formal principle that governs the composition of *Exercises in Style*:

> In an interview with Jacques Bens, Michel Leiris remembers that "sometime in the '30's we (M.L. and I) went together to the Salle Pleyel to attend a concert where 'The Art of the Fugue' was played. I remember that we were enthralled by it and that we said, as we were leaving, that it would be very interesting to do something along the same lines on the literary plane, thinking about Bach's work not in terms of counterpoint and fugue but in terms of building a work by

means of variations proliferating almost infinitely around a very slim theme." I was actually and very consciously thinking of Bach—and very specifically of that session at the Salle Pleyel—when I wrote *Exercices de style.*

In the mind of its creator, this work is thus indeed a series of variations (stylistic and otherwise) on a single theme (an original but deliberately neutral or innocuous one), which is transformed by each of its variations, whether according to a mechanical principle of manipulation of the Oulipo type or by being rewritten in a defined style.[3] In this second aspect, the work clearly pertains to both parody and pastiche, since each variation parodies the theme by means of a pastiche of a new style. As much can be said of Carelman's pictorial variations in the illustrated edition: the same scene is executed in the style of a child's drawing, of a postage stamp, of Persian, Japanese, Flemish art, etc. I shall call this procedure of stylistic variation *transstylization*, and we shall encounter it in other manifestations of a less expressly (or less deliberately) playful nature.

We have been discussing several examples of pastiches as transstylistic variations. In the sphere of multiple imitation, we can also think up the hypothesis, not at all far-fetched, of a pastiche in the second (or third, or fourth) degree, a pastiche by A of B pastiching C (etc.). That is a bit like what Diderot was doing when attempting to "out-Marivaux" Crébillon. I once tried my hand at a Bossuet by Proust by Queneau, in which the three levels, not counting the fourth, were fairly recognizable, but I can't seem to find it, and I haven't the time to re-create it. Anyone among you could give it a try; it's no big deal.

## 21

*Self-pastiche*, which I have already mentioned once or twice, is a bit of a phantom notion, used frequently in its capacity as a metaphor or hyperbole but corresponding to almost no actual practice. Whenever an author accentuates his idiolect by multiplying or exaggerating its characteristic traits, we are often tempted to tax him with—or, more precisely, pretend to suspect him of—having engaged in an ironic self-pastiche or, to use the more current term, "self-parody."[1] The suspicion is fictitious in that

it imputes an intentional character to the practice ("My word, he's doing it on purpose!"), but the real criticism it conveys is leveled at a kind of unintentional self-caricature, an unconscious or careless aggravation of the idiolect's characteristics, due to fatigue or complacency.

Involuntary self-pastiche is by definition only an effect, not a deliberate practice. Self-pastiche as a genre can consist only of intentional self-imitations. A very rare practice, as I have said, perhaps because it presupposes an uncommon capacity for self-awareness and for stylistic objectivation. It requires a writer gifted with both a high degree of stylistic individuality and a great aptitude for imitation.

The other writer who best answers those prerequisites (the other French writer, that is; a third case, non-French, would be that of Joyce, a more tricky one because his writing is more polymorphous; a fourth would be that of Nabokov) is certainly Proust—who else?—who not surprisingly offers us the rare example of a conscious, intentional self-pastiche. Not, as we might expect, on the occasion offered by the series "L'Affaire Lemoine": in 1908 his published work was still too scanty and his reputation too limited to justify or excuse such a typically narcissistic gesture; possibly the most characteristic traits of his style were not yet fully formed or fixed. It is only in *La Prisonnière* {*The Captive*}, thus in a late segment of his work (written during the war), that Proust allows himself this ambiguous pleasure. Even here, the auto-pastiche, in a significant effect of dramatic presentation, is introduced under the guise of an allo-pastiche: i.e., a pastiche pure and simple. I am referring to Albertine's speech about ice cream, already dear to critics for less formal reasons, a speech that the narrator gives as an example of the influence of his own style on that of his companion.[2] Albertine has taken up the linguistic tics of her friend; she is aware of having done so but is unable to stop herself. The result is a fictive, unintentional pastiche of Marcel by Albertine, which amounts to a disguised, real, intentional pastiche by Proust of himself. Disguised: I think the concealment was necessary, and maybe even indispensable, to provide Proust with the alibi required for the production of a self-pastiche. It is unavoidably ridiculous and practically impossible to speak or write "in the style of oneself," supposing (I shall return to this point) that this hypothesis means anything at all. On the other hand, it is entirely conceivable that in a novel with such strong characterizations as the *Recherche*, one character might imitate another. One can easily imagine Swann or Oriane, for example, producing a caricature of Charlus or Norpois. In the pastiche of Marcel by Albertine, the situation is

complicated—and made more piquant—by the fact that the subject of the pastiche is also the narrator and consequently the author himself.

This "consequently" is a bit hasty. The narrator may well, as a speaking character ("Marcel"), have an oral style very different from his writing style (the latter being, or rather *constituting*, not by logical necessity but by simple fact, the style of the author Marcel Proust). Such is in fact precisely the case—although Marcel-the-character is not heard speaking often or for very long; but it is clearly specified that Albertine has been talking for some time not as her friend *speaks* but as he would be *writing* if he wrote and undoubtedly will write when he writes: "And then she answered me in words . . . akin to those which, she maintained, were due entirely to my influence, to living continually in my company, words which, however, I should never have uttered, as though I had been somehow forbidden by an unknown authority ever to decorate my conversation with literary forms . . . images so 'bookish,' which seemed to me to be reserved for another, more sacred use, of which I was still in ignorance."[3] Albertine thus violates a rule of proper behavior that was part of the spirit of Combray (earlier on, the narrator's grandmother had reproached Legrandin for speaking a little too much "like a book") and also the spirit of Swann-Guermantes, which demands conversation that is witty but unaffected (in the same passage, a little further on: "I thought that this was a little too well expressed"). More seriously, she violates a taboo and commits a sacrilege by prostituting in oral discourse some of the "forms" reserved for the "sacred" usage of literature, more specifically of the Book to come. These forms Marcel calls "images," then a little later on "comparisons," then "extended images." Almost the entire speech, in fact, like so many "poetic" passages in the *Recherche*, rests on a drawn-out, developed, and varied comparison between cups of ice cream and monuments (columns, obelisks) or snowy mountains that the sweet-toothed young lady promises to cause to melt away or crumble into avalanches; we even encounter the inevitable metonymic metaphor: the ice cream confections of the Ritz will be—the Vendôme column!

This Proustian self-pastiche, placed here in the mouth of Albertine, is not absolutely convincing, diegetically speaking, since Albertine is imitating orally a written style she has never had occasion to set eyes on, the style that the fictive Marcel is destined to practice later in his yet-to-be-written work, well after Albertine's death. It is manifestly, if discreetly, satirical, because of the invasive nature of a procedure reduced here to mere virtuosity and

deprived of its aesthetic, indeed its metaphysical, function, which was to be assigned to it by the manifesto in *Le Temps retrouvé* {*Time Regained*}. For the criticism with which Marcel surrounds and attacks this purple passage is not limited to its being out of place in conversation. He finds in it, in every sense, a "somewhat facile charm," "a poetry less strange, less personal than that of Céleste Albaret, for example." Such formulations suggest that despite the immense power he attributed to "metaphor," Proust sensed that there was often something mawkish, and also a little derivative, in his most spectacular or demonstrative performances. And it is this single stylistic trait, the most *exposed*—i.e., the most perceptible and most vulnerable—that he subjects to Albertine's reductive imitation. Pastiche here, therefore, plays its (self-) critical role not by a wholesale exaggeration of the writer's traits but by isolating a single trait, thus depriving it of its structural function in relation to the total work and thereby reducing it to a mere *procedure.* A reduction perfectly in keeping with classical caricature, metaphor here becomes what it is, Proustism par excellence. Crébillon, Balzac, Burnier and Rambaud, and others would no doubt say that what Albertine is speaking is no longer French but "Marcel Proust." That, by the way, is called *Proustifying.*

{Genette then quotes another famous self-pastiche, Verlaine's "À la manière de Paul Verlaine," included in *Parallèlement.* He points out that Verlaine imitates his own thematic as well as stylistic features in a spirit of indulgence, despite the obligatory self-ironic stance; the resulting poem reads like a wry postscript to his "Art poétique." See the Appendix for Verlaine's text.}

These two examples of stated self-pastiche (Queneau's is not) are a good illustration of the difficulty, not to say the impossibility, of the genre, while being exceptions that overcome those hindrances: literally, "to write in the style of oneself" signifies nothing or, more accurately, nothing that is exceptional and therefore *notable.* What is notable is of course to write differently. Verlaine's self-pastiche is obviously very emphatically "in his own style," a deliberately caricatural self-pastiche. This doesn't necessarily mean that it is more caricatural than other poems by the same Verlaine in which the self-caricature might not be deliberate. Taken together with the confirmation of the title, however, it suffices to mark this text and therefore to mark it off from the rest of Verlaine's work. On the other hand, a merely conforming or faithful or look-alike self-pastiche (not caricatural and not satiric) is indistinguishable from any other passage by the same author. Its

existence is therefore reduced to its *declaration*, to the (self-)mimetic pact inherent in the title (*self-pastiche* or any other variant). We see here that the impossibility of the genre is entirely one with its too great and, I dare say, too absolute facility of production: to produce a faithful self-pastiche, an author has only to take any page, already written—to be safe—with no mimetic intention whatsoever, and title it *self-pastiche*. In a (subtle) sense, the self-pastiche in *La Prisonnière* is an illustration of this borderline hypothesis: by placing a fairly typical sample of his written style in Albertine's mouth, and by thus depriving it of any aesthetic or other function that he would have assigned to it in his work, Proust turns it into an index of gratuitous virtuosity and therefore invests it with a caricatural value and a satiric function, *without having to modify a single word.* This metamorphosis at the lowest possible cost (indeed, at no cost at all) seems to us particularly effective because it bears on a work whose structural economy (the finality of the total work and the function, within that overall finality, of a particular stylistic trait: "metaphor") is explicit. But the same would no doubt hold true for any author worthy of that name: Every anthology functions more or less as a collection of pastiches (and this is especially the case with the Proust anthology once put together by Ramon Fernandez),[4] so that if a faithful self-pastiche can very easily (all too easily) exist at the original stage of writing, it cannot *persist* as such in its real existence—that is, once it is read—but turns inevitably into self-caricature. Although it is not in principle absolutely meant as such, self-pastiche, even more than pastiche, thus fatefully tends toward caricature. One can imitate (oneself) without forcing (oneself), but it paradoxically requires a greater effort, both on the author's and on the reader's part.

## 22

It is tempting to apply to pastiche and caricature, more perhaps than to any other genre, a criterion inspired by that which Philippe Lejeune applies to autobiography. According to this theory, a text can function as a pastiche only when both author and audience enter a "pastiche contract," sealed by the coappearance somewhere, in some form, of the name of the *pasticheur* and the subject of the pastiche: *here, X is imitating Y.* This is in fact the most canonical and most frequent occurrence, as illustrated by the collections of Proust, of Reboux and Muller, of Max Beerbohm,

etc. Every other situation falls into the category either of apocrypha (the *Batrachomyomachia* attributed to Homer, the poems of "Ossian" forged by James Macpherson, the *Chasse spirituelle*, etc.) or of a nondeclared imitation (whether unconscious, or embarrassed, or felt to be so natural as not to require an avowal) of an undesignated master, an exercise common to beginning authors.[1] The earliest poems of Mallarmé, which bear the clear stamp of the "influence" of the *Fleurs du mal*, are nevertheless not pastiches of Baudelaire.

The border is not, however, so neat or easy to draw. I can very well produce a pastiche and call it such but without revealing the model, leaving the identification of it to the reader: this would be a riddle pastiche. That is pretty much what Verlaine does in *À la manière de plusieurs*, whose uncertainties have more to do with the imprecision, the carelessness, or the mimetic clumsiness of the *pasticheur* than with the anonymity of those being pastiched. The contract here is less specific but no less present in the following form, which is not even a minimal one: *Here, so and so is imitating someone* (the minimal form would perhaps be, *Here someone is imitating someone else*, or simply, *This is a pastiche*). A contract badly fulfilled or deliberately broken (*This, which claims to be a pastiche, is perhaps not really one*) is something else altogether: *bad* pastiches with explicit and maximal contracts are still accepted as pastiches. Or again, with André Maurois's *Côté de Chelsea*, the parodic allusiveness of the title functions virtually as a designation of the model and therefore implicitly as a declaration of pastiche. A simple presumption, certainly, but one that the Proustifying aspect of the text suffices to confirm: two dubious but converging indices have to serve as a certain index in this case.[2] But to go further, the "Oxen of the Sun" chapter of *Ulysses* contains a series of pastiches of the history of English literature that anyone would recognize as such, though Joyce did not think fit to declare them officially as such within the very text of *Ulysses*. It is true that, contrary to those of Verlaine, the stylistic characterization of each of these pastiches is so strong that it suffices, at least for the sophisticated Anglophone reader, to qualify the nature of the whole—especially given that the series, arranged in chronological order according to the models, begins with a sort of canticle whose archaism serves as an entry signal, and ends with a page of modern slang that signals the exit. Here, the mimetic faithfulness of the pastiches, and therefore the evident identity of the models, compensates for the implicitness of the imitation itself and serves as a *tacit pact*.

When the model is not an individual author but a collective entity (a group or a school, a period, a genre), the contract is generally more difficult to stipulate and perhaps also to conjecture in the absence of a stipulation. Boileau, as we shall see, searched (or hesitated) for a quarter of a century before finding an adequate formula for *Le Lutrin*: a *mock-heroic poem.* The publisher's announcement and the prologue to the first ten of Balzac's *Contes drôlatiques* dot all the *i*'s and cross all the *t*'s, and Queneau was probably well advised in his *Exercises in style* to use titles such as "Blurb," "Official Letter," or even "Sonnet." Things get even more complicated when the pastiche of a group is, in addition, attributed to a single fictitious author who is supposed to synthesize the individuals who constitute the group or, if you prefer, to embody the group's spirit. Such is the slippery situation that is so marvelously illustrated by *Les Déliquescences: Poèmes décadents d'Adoré Floupette.*

The presence at the beginning of a work of the name of a fictitious author substituted for or added to that of the real author (or to his pseudonym, as in the case of the trio Ducasse-Lautréamont-Maldoror) is a specific editorial practice that is not necesssarily linked to pastiche but can at times be combined with it. If a fictitious author coexists with the real author, he can function as a conventional and transparent agent, who dissolves either into an aborted pseudonym—as in the Sainte-Beuve's *Vie, poésies, et pensées de Joseph Delorme*, in which "Joseph Delorme" no more exists than does "Henry Brulard" in Stendhal's autobiography or the "Monsieur L——, traveling salesman in the iron trade," of his *Mémoires d'un touriste*— or into a fictitious character, as in Valery Larbaud's *Journal de Barnabooth.* Sometimes he hesitates between these two states of evanescence, as is the case of Gide's André Walter, whose ghostlike existence, in my memory, is entirely subsumed by a prolonged hesitation of this nature. But he can also, if the real author so desires, be condensed into an autonomous literary personality, provided with his own thematic material and/or style. Such is the case, for example, of Cecil Saint-Laurent, a heteronym used for a kind of production different from those signed by the author, or rather by the actual individual, with what I think is his real name (although it might be just another pseudonym), Jacques Laurent. The more recent case of Emile Ajar, a heteronym of Romain Gary (who used several others and whose "Gary" was also a pseudonym), is entirely similar except for one detail (which has nothing to do with the text): the fact that a straw man, Paul Pavlowitch,

was entrusted with the task of assuming and "embodying" the personality of Ajar until Gary's death—mainly because Romain Gary, unlike Jacques Laurent, wanted to keep his double identity a secret. In all these cases (and innumerable similar ones) the text endorsed by the heteronym constitutes a sort of *imaginary pastiche*, a text attributed to a fictitious author, just like the speeches or writings attributed by Proust, for example, to fictitious writers such as Bergotte and Legrandin in the *Recherche*.

The imaginary pastiche; having no real model, is in all rigor not a true pastiche; its author fabricates an idiolect hitherto unknown, one that does not come from a preexisting text and thus does not mediate any transtextual relationship. In actual fact, just as the imaginary languages of Swift and Rabelais and on down to those of our science fiction novels are never anything but deformations or contaminations of real languages, these imaginary styles are usually only variations on existing styles: Proust describes Bergotte's style more than he produces it, but Legrandin is a turn-of-the-century prose writer very much in the manner of Renan, and the anonymous "new writer" of the *Côté des Guermantes* {*The Guermantes Way*} is strongly reminiscent of Giraudoux, and for good reason.[3] The "Bustos Domecq" of Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares is a pastiche of a genre (avant-garde literary criticism), and the three (principal) heteronymic instances of Fernando Pessoa differentiate themselves by moving out (from a hypothetical and rather elusive center, supposedly Pessoa "himself") in three directions, which are defined by three preexisting poetic traditions: for "Alberto Cairo," it is that of bucolic poetry, with a simple, monotonous diction (Virgil's *stylis humilis*); for "Ricardo Reis," a fin-de-siècle neocultism, hermetic and contrived; for "Alvaro de Campo," a grand lyricism, modernistic and cosmic, explicitly inspired by Walt Whitman. Profound as the dissociation among these three aspects of Pessoa's poetic persona may be, their thematic-stylistic characterization is inevitably predicated upon real external references and thus involves a kind of pastiche. A literary (or any artistic) individuality can hardly be both completely heterogeneous and completely original and "authentic"—unless it is in the very fact of its splintering into fragments, a splintering that at the same time transcends and, as it were, *gathers in* its own splinters, in the sense that Pablo Picasso is himself only *by way* of the succession of styles that he successively appropriates from Lautrec, Braque, Ingres, etc; or Igor Stravinsky is Stravinsky *by way of* his experiments in impressionism, polytonality, neoclassicism, and his tardy conversion to the discipline of serial composition. The same

situation obtains in the imaginary apocrypha of the *Théâtre de Clara Gazul*, in which Prosper Mérimée instills Hispanic references into the literary personality of his supposedly Iberian playwright, or in the novels signed "Vernon Sullivan," in which Boris Vian is greatly inspired by American thrillers. As for Macpherson's "Ossian" (who may in fact have existed), he condenses an entire Gaelic tradition as faithfully as possible, adroitly mixing with the authentic "period" material what antique dealers aptly call "imitation period style": that is to say, a "replica." But let us return to our Floupette, who is something like the Ossian of French symbolism.

The *Déliquescences* (that is the title), *Poèmes décadents d'Adoré Floupette* (the subtitle), was printed in May 1885 in an edition of 110 copies; it immediately achieved great success and was reprinted with a "biography" of its "author" by "Marius Tapora, second-class pharmacist." It was in fact the work of two literary fantasists, Henri Beauclair and Gabriel Vicaire. Since it was not signed by the authors and did not refer to a model author but was attributed to a fictitious author, this collection apparently fits no known pastiche-reading contract.[4] It might be described as an imaginary apocrypha, like Mérimée's *Théâtre de Clara Gazul.* But the subtitle, "poèmes décadents," suffices to orient the reader toward an existing group, even though the designation "decadent poets" was not yet in general use in the spring of 1885.

{Genette discusses this collection of pastiches as a spoof aimed at the Symbolist poets' themes (languor, morbidity, disgust with living, a mixture of mysticism and sensuality) and at their style (rare words, typical neologisms, deliberately dissonant prosaisms, tortuous syntax, uneven meter). The caricature is so mild, however, that its satiric or playful intention is not apparent at first; the poems could almost be taken as "involuntary imitation by a diligent disciple of better-than-average talent."}

What is there in all of this that resolves the ambiguity and comes down in favor of a satiric pastiche? Certainly the parodic winks, and the factitious biography that appears with the publication of the second edition. But there is still a final, or rather a prime, detail: the name Adoré Floupette itself, too laughable to be real (or, if real, to be retained), suffices by itself to indicate the mocking intention; it functions as a minimal indication, an exemplary economical form of the contract. We don't pay enough attention to the effects of patronymics and pseudonyms. Jules Farigoule did well to rechristen himself Jules Romains. And how much of its (illegitimate) poetic prestige does the work of Saint-John Perse owe to that splendiferous name?

# 23

*Batrachomyomachia*, or the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, was for a long time attributed to Homer, but today it is believed to date from no earlier than the sixth century B.C. and, in its final form, to bear traces of revisions made in the Alexandrian period. We can surmise that if it had been known to Aristotle, he would have mentioned it among the other *parodiai*, but the silence of the *Poetics* in that regard cannot be taken as absolute proof of its later composition.

Whatever the date of its production, the *Batrachomyomachia*, by reason of its dialect, meter, style, and motifs, belongs squarely to the Homerizing tradition that lasted at least to the third century A.D., a tradition that turned the entire ancient Greek epic genre, from the *Aethiopis* to Quintus of Smyrna, into a vast pastiche of Homer (more particularly, of the *Iliad*). It is a specific mix of the Ionian and the Aeolian, with dactylic hexameters, a formulaic style, noble speeches, crude invectives, scrambles and duels, divine interventions, etc. But in this instance, the characteristic formulas of epic themes and diction are applied to a subject that is "low," since it concerns animals, and animals devoid of any prestige. Psycharpax the mouse meets Physignate the frog, who invites him to visit his dwelling and carries him on his back across a pond. Frightened by a water snake, the frog forgets about his passenger and plunges to the bottom of the pond. The mouse, before perishing by drowning, calls upon his fellow mice to avenge him. The mice convene and take up arms, declaring war on the frogs. Seeing the two armies ready to clash, Zeus summons the gods, who refuse to take sides and decide to attend the battle as simple spectators. Exploits and massacres continue until the arrival of the young mouse Meridarpax, the invincible hero capable of destroying the entire race of frogs by himself. To avoid this annihilation, Zeus hurls his thunderbolt, then sends to the rescue a squadron of crayfish whose murderous pincers put the mouse army to flight. The war ends at daybreak.

Not the least merit of this work is its brevity (293 lines), a quality that the burlesque and neoburlesque poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not always have the wisdom to emulate. This *epyllion* is clearly a caricature of the *Iliad*, whose procedures we see here applied *in anima vili*. The offensive Trojans are the frogs; the Greeks in search of vengeance are the mice, with Achilles as Meridarpax. The two armies improvise makeshift

equipment that mimics the glorious Homeric weaponry: for the mice, boots made of bean pods, breastplates of straw thatch strapped on with cat skin, shields of the lids of lamps, spears of needles, helmets of walnut shells; for the more rustic frogs, mallow-leaf leggings, beet-leaf breastplates, cabbage-leaf shields, rush spears, shell helmets. Athena refuses to support the mice because they gnaw her draperies and drink her lamp oil; she likewise refuses to help the frogs because their nocturnal racket keeps her awake. Wounds sustained in battle are described according to ritual formulas: Lichenor is fighting in the front ranks when "the spear, piercing his belly, reaches his liver; he falls backward, and the dust sullies his sweet head. Troglodyte then wounds Pelion and buries in his breast his enormous spear. He falls in the mud, black Death takes him, and his soul flies from his body. . . . Artophagus strikes Polyphone in the belly; she falls and her soul abandons her body. . . . Hydrocharis kills the king Pternophagus with a rock she throws at his head. His brains run out of his nostrils; the ground is soaked with his blood. Lichopinax kills the valiant Borborocetes with a blow of his lance and shadows cover his eyes." Here, only the proper names derogate from Homeric grandeur and remind us of the humble condition of the protagonists: Lichenor the licker, Troglodyte who lives in a hole in the ground, Pelion who lives in the mud, Artophagus the bread eater, Polyphone the noisy one, Hydrocharis who thrives in water, Pternophagus the ham eater, Leichospinax the plate licker, Borborocetes who sleeps in the mud, etc. The mock-heroic contrast is obtained at minimum cost and produces maximum effect. Neither Tassoni nor Boileau nor Pope will achieve such efficiency or such elegance, which they sacrifice to punning, amplification, digression, annexed satires, and marginal polemics. The genre, possibly still close here to its birth, is nevertheless at its zenith. Its possibilities are accomplished, and perhaps exhausted, in its first and perhaps its last masterpiece.[1]

This genre, then, is what will (much) later come to be called the *mock-heroic poem*, which is a particular kind of pastiche, or rather of caricature (because its stylistic traits are both exaggerated and depreciated by an "inappropriate" application and are thus doubly satirized). Some of the works cited by Aristotle under the heading *parodia* undoubtedly also belong to this group: *Margites*, the *Deiliad*, etc. It is, by all accounts, a much more ancient genre than the burlesque travesty that was to be its dearest enemy in the seventeenth century. Born in post-Homeric antiquity, it was given its second chance in the neoclassical period, then awaited its third, which may have come today.

*La Secchia Rapita* (1615–17), by the Italian Alessandro Tassoni, is the first modern example of the genre. It tells in epic form the story of a little imaginary war that broke out between Bologna and Modena because of the theft of a pail (shades of Helen's abduction). Boileau mentions it along with the *Batrachomyomachia* as the generic model for *Le Lutrin*, which likewise recounts in the Homeric-Virgilian style already discussed a quarrel between the cantor and the treasurer of the Sainte-Chapelle.[2] But here, as in the case of Tassoni, the imitation seeks only (and is only able) to retain translinguistic elements: that is, elements that are independent of the original language (Greek or Latin) and are susceptible to transposition into another language. The Homeric dialectal traits, for example, have no equivalent in Boileau's work, nor does the dactylic hexameter. Hence the "epic style" is reduced to a certain number of canonic "figures" and thematic motifs. There are stock epithets ("the broad-bellied jug," "the prudent Gilotin") and extended comparisons:

> Have you not seen a bull by gad-fly stung,
> When his tormented pride flownc'd, kick't, and flung?
> The vexed air, with echoes frighted rings!
> Whilst he exhales his rage in bellowings!
> So storm'd the prelate . . .[3]

These adorn a discourse whose undifferentiated "nobility" is that of French classicism in general. The motifs include premonitory dreams, divine interventions (by Discord, Fame, Sloth, Night, Squabble, Pity), and of course armed combat, represented here by a famous battle whose weapons are books borrowed from publisher Barbin's stall. To these properly mimetic elements are added some congruently modified borrowings that introduce a touch of parody into the pastiche: "The feuds I sing, and that fierce prelate . . ."; "But the three champions, full of wine and bravery . . ." etc. The most successful of these paraphrases surely is the speech in the second canto by the watchmaker to her husband, whom she wants to dissuade from his nocturnal expedition. This speech is very clearly taken from Dido's reproachful exhortation to Aeneas, and from a few others.[4]

> Dissembling traitor! Could not faith once plighted,
> Nor those embraces wherein we delighted,
> Nor thy poor wench ready to run a madding,
> Cool thy hot cod-piece, but thou must be gadding? . . .

Ah! whither goest my John? dost fly thy Nancy?
Can our delightful nights forsake thy fancy?
What! can'st with dry eyes view my tears still dropping? . . .
If my soft heart easy to thy desires
Hath always met with equal flame thy fires;
And if, to gratify thy itch, (my honey),
I stood not on th' nice points of matrimony;
If in my arms, thou, thou hast had sole part,
Speak not that wounding, killing word, Depart.

But the line between imitation and transformation is very hard to draw in this instance. The opening ("Of feuds I sing, and . . ."), the syllepsis of the physical and the moral, the tender pleas of an abandoned lover are also recurrent stylistic and thematic *topoi* in the epic and para-epic tradition (Catullus, Ovid); they are thus "epicisms," the borrowing—i.e., repetition—of which is tantamount to mimetism.

*Le Lutrin* carries the subtitle of "heroic poem" or "mock-heroic poem," according to the various editions. In fact, all the early editions say "heroic"; the second designation does not appear until 1701. From an author who is so strict about genre, such a hesitation or indication of ambivalence is in no small measure surprising.

It is more surprising still when we consider that with this poem Boileau has given us not only a canonic illustration of the genre but also, in his 1674 "Notice to the Reader," its first official description: "It is a new sort of burlesque, which I have invented in our language. Whereas in other burlesques Dido and Aeneas spoke like fishwives and porters, in this one a married couple of watchmakers speak like Dido and Aeneas. Although I do not know whether my poem will have the requisite qualities to satisfy the reader, I dare to believe that it will afford at least the pleasure of novelty, since I do not believe a work of its kind has yet appeared in our language." The burlesque travesty, illustrated by *Virgile travesti*, treated a noble subject in base style; *Le Lutrin*, like the *Batrachomyomachia*, does the opposite, treating a base subject in noble style. Even Boileau's adversaries accepted it on his terms, ready to use them against his poem. Thus we have Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin:

> The poet believed he would create an altogether new and altogether marvelous poem if he treated a ridiculous subject in grand verse.

> We have often heard him say that others had made "the Heroic ridiculous," whereas he had made "the Ridiculous heroic." But he has grievously erred himself, in breaking Horace's rule never to treat a comic matter in tragic verse. The fault of not having treated his subject in comic and burlesque style, as he should have, was somewhat mitigated when he recited it by his tone of voice, which had something of the ridiculous in it. But the printed work, deprived of the effects of recitation, appeared extravagant, when one could read as coming from a watchmaker the words Virgil had given to Dido, which are entirely unsuited to a watchmaker.[5]

Almost twenty years later, Charles Perrault defined the artistry of *Le Lutrin* as a "reverse burlesque" and clarified his thinking as follows: burlesque, "which is a species of ridicule, consists in the incongruity between the idea the author conveys of something and the right idea of it, just as reason consists in the congruence between those two ideas. Now, this incongruity can be achieved in two ways, one by speaking basely of the most elevated things, and the other by speaking grandly of the basest things." The first sort of incongruity is that of *Virgile travesti*, which clothes "the greatest and noblest things in common, trivial expressions." The second is that of *Le Lutrin*, which, by taking the opposite tack, speaks "about the most common, most abject things in terms that are pompous and grand." Up to this point, Perrault is merely paraphrasing Boileau, perhaps stressing a little the abjectness of the subject matter. But here is where (de)valuation comes into play:

> In the old burlesque [continues the Abbé, a biased arbiter in this dialogue between a President who upholds the Ancients and a Chevalier who is championing the Moderns], the ridiculous is without, and the serious is within. In this new burlesque, which Monsieur le Chevalier calls a reverse burlesque, the ridiculous is within and the serious without. . . . The burlesque of *Virgile travesti* is a princess in villager's clothing; and the burlesque of *Le Lutrin* is a villager dressed up as a princess. And, just as a princess is more charming wearing ribbons than a village girl wearing a crown, so grave and serious matters hidden under common and playful expressions give more pleasure than trivial and vulgar things concealed by pompous and brilliant expressions. When Dido speaks like a shopkeeper, I gain more joy when I perceive her sorrow, her despair, and her queenliness

through the joking manner in which they are conveyed, because the focus of attention is something that deserves it, than I do when I hear a shopkeeper speaking like Dido, because at bottom this shopkeeper is only mouthing impertinences that do not deserve our attention and leave a flat and unpleasant aftertaste.[6]

This devaluation reveals after the fact, and by way of a reversal, the valuation implied in the terms of Boileau. For him, it was implicitly more meritorious or more successful to ennoble as he had done the speech of a shopkeeper than to vulgarize (as Scarron had done) the discourse of a princess; he was thus asserting the superiority of a (new) dignifying burlesque over an (old) degrading one. Perrault ignores this restorative effect of the form and gives as essential the "focus of attention"—that is, the content alone—beyond the trivialities of the expression. But Boileau's point of view was ultimately to prevail in neoclassical opinion until well into the nineteenth century, and it can be found in 1888, stated explicitly this time, by the Academician Louis-Simon Auger:

The mock-heroic poem is a parody of the epic. There are two sorts of parodies. One attacks characters who, by reason of their grandeur, belong to the muse of tragedy or the epic poem, and it takes a malicious pleasure in degrading them. . . . The other parody takes its actors from a lower order and makes an innocent game of enhancing, by the nobility and gravity of the expression, that which is bourgeois and laughable in their demeanor and speech. . . . Such is the difference between the burlesque and the mock-heroic. The superiority of the second genre is universally perceived, and the reason must be easy to explain. . . . Burlesque . . . purposely sullies what is intrinsically noble; it sees as its obligation and its glory to spoil what is beautiful, when it should be making it even more beautiful. . . . The mock-heroic, on the other hand, works from base models, and through the grandeur of its manner, the dignity of its costume, the elegance of its drapery, it ornaments their forms without concealing them, enhances their porportions without distorting them, fulfills all the conditions of pictorial and poetic imitation.[7]

In brief, everyone, depending upon which of the two genres he favors, decrees as proper the nobler aspect of each—either the form, because it transfigures the content, or the content, because the form is just cheap

finery or vain ornamentation—and reveals thereby the common frame of reference in two antithetical evaluations. (A frame of reference, by the way, that is entirely superficial, conventional, and rhetorical: the point is to co-opt an agreed-upon value for the sake of argument, whether or not one adheres to it.) But setting aside this peripheral and unresolved quarrel, the two parties agree upon a (double) definition that will survive into the twentieth century.

Everything is thus apparently in place by 1674 except for the term "mock-heroic," which neither Boileau nor his adversaries nor anyone else, it seems, is thinking to apply as yet to *Le Lutrin* or to either of its two predecessors. Desmarets, who, not without cause, finds an air of "satire" in everything that comes from Boileau's pen, takes objection only to the "specious title *heroic poem*." This criticism is said to have prompted Boileau to change it, but if that is so, the effect was delayed, since in 1683 and again in 1694 the specious label was retained and disappeared only, as I said, in 1701.

The delay may have been due to a terminological deficiency. Aware of the inadequacy of "heroic" but reluctant to designate simply as "burlesque" a poem whose method was the opposite of what that adjective inevitably suggested, Boileau may have held back from making any change until such time as he finally came up with the correct designation, which had no previous existence, since tradition had not yet attributed a generic term (except perhaps, very sporadically, *parodia*) to works like the *Batrachomyomachia* and *La Secchia rapita*. But the composite term "mock-heroic" is not Boileau's invention. It comes apparently from Girard Saint-Amant, who first used it in 1640 for his *Passage de Gibraltar: Caprice héroï-comique*. "Caprice" was borrowed from Tassoni, who had called *La Secchia rapita* a *capriccio spropositato, fatto per burlare i poeti moderni*. In his preface, Saint-Amant paid explicit homage to that poem, in which he discerned "the heroic admirably merging with the burlesque." (Here is also to be found, if only in passing, one of the first occurrences in French of that adjective "burlesque," which is of Italian origin—*burlare*. Saint-Amant does not give it any really technical connotation but uses it as a simple equivalent of "comic.") "Mock-heroic" (*Héroï-comique*) does seem to have been forged by him; he was to use it again later for an epistle, then an ode, then another caprice, *L'Albion* (1644). But for him, the term designates simply a mixture of heroic and comic, or more precisely the "incongruity" between one kind of subject and another kind of style, without specifying what

Perrault was to call the "manner," or distributive pattern: *La Secchia rapita*, he mentions, has a vulgar subject treated in heroic style, yet his own two "mock-heroic caprices" deal with a heroic subject (war) in a farcical style. This is the "manner" that Scarron was to take up again in 1644, in his *Typhon*. Meanwhile, that same Scarron had published *Recueil de quelques vers burlesques* (1643), and the term owes him the specific meaning we attach to it: i.e., that of an almost complete identification with the practice of travesty. "Mock-heroic" disappears in the wake of this storm (the term *comédie héroïque*, invented by Corneille in 1650 for *Don Sanche d'Aragon* and used again for *Tite et Bérénice* and *Pulchérie*, designates a completely different mixture, a nontragic subject in a noble setting) and has become half lost, half confiscated by the meaning given it by Saint-Amant, which made it simply a synonym for "burlesque." This state of affairs might explain Boileau's hesitation to revive it for another usage.

But there is no doubt another reason, clearly revealed in the 1674 "Notice to the Reader," even if the anecdote was made up. As Racine maintained in the case of tragedy, Boileau believed that a heroic poem could take for its subject some action "of little substance" (preface to *Britannicus*), which the poet's "invention" could "sustain and extend." In the course of a conversation someone jokingly challenges him to write a heroic poem about a petty ecclesiastical quarrel. He rises to the challenge and writes *Le Lutrin*, thinking not to imitate Tassoni and "reverse the burlesque" but to attempt the feat of writing an epic on a bourgeois and therefore trifling theme. Along the way, he realizes the actual nature of his work—as is proved by the reference to his predecessors in book 4—and, according to the perhaps significant expression he uses in the "Notice to the Reader," he "bethinks himself" of the new burlesque (new in French) which he is in the process of illustrating. But he is not yet ready to repudiate his original purpose, and it is to that purpose that the subtitle *heroic poem* continues to pay its "specious" homage.

A tardy appellation, then, since this "new burlesque" genre is much older than the Scarron burlesque, almost posthumous in part, since the now christened genre does not seem to have much of a future in its canonic form. That future is limited, after all, to Pope's *Rape of the Lock* (1712–14), the last fruit to bloom on a dying branch, which in English is called a mock epic, or mock heroic poem. At least it has a happy ending with this stolen lock: a rococo-style war is finished off (finishing off the genre as well) by a playful apotheosis; Belinda's lock of hair rises to the heavens and,

like Berenice's hair in Callimachus, becomes a new star. A fitting exit for a comet of a genre.

But a false exit, perhaps, and that is as it should be. It is easy to observe the birth of a genre. It is trickier, as I've said before, to pronounce it dead. There is always the possibility of a revival, an avatar. One cannot imagine anyone today wanting to do a mock-heroic pastiche in its literal—i.e., academic—Homeric form. The last frankly playful traces of it are perhaps found in the apostrophes of Proust's Bloch, inspired by Leconte de Lisle's unwittingly caricatural translations: "Saint-Loup of the bronze helmet, take a little of this duck, its thighs heavy with fat, upon which the illustrious sacrificer of fowls has spread many libations of red wine"; or in an exercise like Queneau's "*Noble*: At the hour when the rosy fingers of dawn start to crack, I climbed, rapid as a tongue of flame, into a bus, mighty of stature and with cow-like eyes, of the S line of sinuous course." But in a broader sense, any text in which a noble or serious or scholarly or academic style is applied to a reputedly low or trivial subject brings back to life in its own way the mock-heroic incongruity—in the same *Exercises in Style*, for example, in the "Official Letter" ("I beg to advise you of the following facts of which I happened to be the equally impartial and horrified witness"), "Philosophic" ("Great cities alone . . ."), "Apostrophe," or "Sonnet." More generally, Queneau's humor, both in verse and prose, is known to delight abundantly in these simulacra of mock gravity.

Less farcical and of a glossier sort of humor is Pierre Klossowski's application to erotic objects and situations of a pseudojudicial vocabulary (Roberte's fleece opens upon her *utrumsit* and releases her *quidest*; Victor installs her on his *sedcontra*), or of a pseudoscholastic or more generally high-flown phraseology. This tradition, as we know, goes back at least to Sade, who established for a long time to come the ritual of that obligatory "incongruity" that makes for the erotic "grand style."

But we also have, in Alain Robbe-Grillet, the contrast between the (apparent) insignificance of objects and the pseudoscientific precision with which they are described. And common to Klossowski and Robbe-Grillet—and thus by extension to a whole body of modern writing—we have that conspicuous glaze of cool, affected gravity applied to all things, whether idle or disturbing.

This tendency can easily degenerate into policelike rigidity. There was already, in André Breton, a readiness, over the slightest slip, to strap on

his buskins or lace on his boots (the practice of automatic writing, a tissue of clichés, may have had something to do with this), and this avant-garde puffery has left its mark. But here, we are far astray from the mock-heroic, whose comic aspect, stale as it is today, was at least intentional.

As may have been noted, in neither the burlesque nor the mock-heroic does the classical *doxa* take into account the hypertextual dimension: that is to say, the fact that the burlesque travesty transposes a text and the mock-heroic poem pastiches a genre. It is true that burlesque is not necessarily reducible to travesty; it requires only that a noble subject be treated in vulgar style. But it is also true that it attained its fullest expression, and its (ephemeral) success, only in the form of travesty, which is a secondary but decisive specification (the detail that changes everything). The noble "subject" is borrowed from a celebrated text, and the travesty consists in transposing it into vulgar style. This transposition affords the reader a supplementary pleasure, which comes from identifying at every moment beneath the travesty the text that is being travestied. Symmetrically, the mock-heroic might be content with simply treating a vulgar subject in a nondescript, vaguely noble style. But it accomplishes its potential *vis comica* (as it apparently did from the start) only when it takes aim at one noble style in particular, one that we can enjoy identifying and seeing lampooned.

There are, in sum, two levels of accomplishment: a level of stylistic practice, which defines the burlesque and the mock-heroic and which consists of an incongruity, in one direction or the other; and a level of textual practice, which defines the burlesque *as travesty* and the mock-heroic *as pastiche* and which consists, in the first case, of applying the principle of burlesque incongruity to a specific text and, in the second case, of applying mock-heroic incongruity to a specific style—i.e., to the style of a genre or a work (the *Iliad*, for example, in the *Batrachomyomachia*) that is regarded as a genre.

Of this textual practice the critical vulgate takes no account. It is limited to identifying an "incongruity" between style and subject, which allows it to set the two burlesques in opposition as two rigorously antithetical genres (what would later be called two symmetrical variants of the *epic parody*) without noticing that this surface symmetry masks a profound dissymmetry between the actual practices: more specifically, between parody, which deforms a text, and pastiche, which "imitates," *borrows*, a style—and all that goes with it.

# 24

The classical system, which was very sensitive (and very attentive) to the distinction between subjects and styles, had identified three very clearly defined types of playful or satiric transgression (of that distinction). The types themselves were sharply distinguished, whatever possibilities might exist for bringing them together or allowing them to interfere with each other:

—*parody*, which consisted of applying, as literally as possible, a noble text to a (real) vulgar action very different from the action in the original but analogous enough to make the application possible;

—*burlesque travesty*, which consisted of transcribing into vulgar style a noble text while keeping its action and the original names and qualities of its characters, so that the stylistic incongruity or discordance arose from the very disparity between the nobility retained in the social situations (with kings, princes, heroes, etc.) and the vulgarity of the narrative, the speeches, and the thematic details;

—the *mock-heroic poem*, which consisted of treating a vulgar subject in a noble style and using the heroic style in general: that is, without specific reference to any particular noble text.

The last two types were considered to be strict opposites by reason of the patent symmetry of their discordance. The first did not really have the status of a genre, given the normally exiguous nature of its performance, but had rather the status of a *figure*: i.e., a particular verbal practice that might be found in a ("poetic") literary text, though it could not constitute a work in its own right. As such it was more relevant to rhetoric than to poetics. *Chapelain décoiffé*, the most extensive example of the type, was called simply a "comedy." Calling it a parody would have seemed as incongruous as calling this or that poem a metaphor or a metonymy. But if we consider it not from the point of view of its hypotext but rather from that of its subject, we could look at it as a special case or, rather, a borderline case of the mock-heroic pastiche: the case of a pastiche of the noble style becoming particularized to the point of (almost) literally coinciding with a specific noble text, thus passing from *imitation* to (misappropriated) *citation*.

This critical apparatus was still applicable, if not actively applied, when Marivaux wrote his *Homère travesti*, which conforms strictly to the criteria of the burlesque travesty, whatever innovations Marivaux claims to have

introduced. His *Télémaque travesti*, on the other hand (besides the fact that it is written in prose and that it takes on a modern text whose generic status is itself in question, without taking into account another trait to which we shall return), was to transgress these criteria on at least one decisive point: his characters are not Telemachus, Mentor, and Calypso made to speak and behave in a vulgar manner, but young Brideron, his uncle Phocion, and the lady Mélicerte, whose adventures are to a certain extent homologous to those of Fénelon's characters but on a lower social scale. This situation is one that belongs no longer to travesty but to a genre apparently unknown in the classical canon, despite its having appeared in the late seventeenth century. It was officially baptized *parody*, although its manner and method can in no way be confused with those of *Chapelain décoiffé* and although, again in contrast to classical parody, its action is entirely invented. It established itself essentially in the theater, its destiny thus linked to that of the popular troupes, especially the Italians. Its development, wrote Gustave Lanson, was "subordinated to the vicissitudes of the existence of the Italian Comedy and the fairs. It made its appearance during the waning years of the old Italian comedy, disappeared with it (in 1697), then revived with it (in 1716) and became part of its regular fare; it had two periods of splendor, from 1725 to 1745 and from 1752 to 1762."[1] These "parodies" evidently derive from a burlesque transfer on the Italian stage of noble plays (tragedies or operas) that had been successes on the French stage. Thus Philippe Quinault's *Phaéton* generated an *Arlequin Phaéton* as early as 1692, its title providing a clear enough idea of its governing principle.

Lanson was at no pains to observe that their authors "applied Scarron's methods to these counterfeits of literary works" but concluded a bit hastily that "parody is, by definition, the dramatic form of the burlesque genre." Contemporary audiences, and some early nineteenth-century critics, had a more accurate judgment: Houdar de la Motte, who was one of the genre's most famous victims, observed, "The art of these travesties is quite simple. It consists of keeping the action and articulation of the play, while simply changing the social rank of the characters. Herod will be a police constable, Marianne the daughter of a sergeant, etc. Once this precaution has been taken, the lines of the play are appropriated, with occasional burlesque words and ridiculous circumstances mixed in."[2] This "change in the social rank of the characters" is a prerequisite that is completely

foreign to the "burlesque genre"—i.e., Scarronian travesty—referred to by Lanson. And if we keep in mind the neoclassical criteria for noble subjects, the point can certainly not be taken lightly. Victor Fournel, introducing the text of *Virgile travesti* in 1858, is careful, as we have seen, to draw a distinction between burlesque travesty on the one hand and, on the other hand, parody as illustrated by *Chapelain décoiffé* and especially (for him) by the dramatic parodies of the eighteenth century. This definitive page deserves to be quoted again; I shall now do so, not without noting in passing (we shall have to keep it in mind) that his definition of parody can be applied just as well, *mutatis mutandis*, to *Mourning Becomes Electra* or *Dr. Faustus* or *Ulysses*:

> Parody, which is often confused in many particulars with burlesque, differs from it completely in that, when it is complete, it changes the social condition of the characters in the travestied work, and so does something that burlesque does not do, which uncovers a new source of comedy in this constant antithesis between the heroes' rank and their words. The first thing a parodist of Virgil had to do was to strip each character of his title, his scepter, and his crown; he would turn Aeneas, for example (may scholars forgive the layman, and lay down these awkward and gratuitous suppositions to his inexperience), into a sentimental fool of a traveling salesman, Dido into a considerate innkeeper, and the conquest of Italy into a grotesque battle for some objective commensurate with these new characters.[3]

The most famous dramatic parody of the eighteenth century is *Agnès de Chaillot*, a parody by Dominique of Houdar de la Motte's *Inès de Castro* (1723). It illustrates this new procedure perfectly: King Alfonso of Portugal becomes the bailiff of Chaillot; his son, Prince Don Pedro, hero of the war against the Moors, becomes "Pierrot the Kid," who has just won the musket-shooting prize; and the lady-in-waiting Ines becomes Agnes the servant girl. (Playing with the names of the characters seems to be one of the constants of the genre: in a parody of *The Trojan Women* Astyanax becomes Castagnette.) Instead of compromising the relations between two countries, the love affair of the hero and heroine threatens only to put the bailiff of Chaillot at odds with the Gonesse villagers. The essential elements of the plot—King Alfonso's being torn between the demands of

state and his paternal affection, Don Pedro's rebellion, his condemnation to death, and his final reconciliation—endure a series of degradations, down to Ines's death by poisoning, transformed here into a colic of which she is cured by Pierrot in time for the happy ending required by the comic ethos.

This displacement of the point of transformation completely alters the nature of the incongruity relationship. According to Boileau's universally received definition, the source of comedy is that in burlesque, kings and princes are made to speak like villagers, and in the mock-heroic genre, villagers (or bourgeois) are made to speak in the epic style. In the new parody, kings and princesses *become* villagers; this being the case, the parodist has a choice: make them literally declaim the exact speeches of the tragedy being parodied, which comes back to the method of *Chapelain décoiffé*; make them use an unspecified noble style of speech, as in the mock-heroic pastiche; or make them speak village-style, which brings us back to the burlesque travesty but without the effect of discordance, since the characters have already been brought down in rank. The first solution, which is, properly speaking, parodic, is as usual difficult to maintain for the entire length of a play. The second is a little too lacking in *vis comica* for a popular entertainment. The third lacks it completely because it lacks any discordance. In this glaring confusion, Dominique chooses not to choose. He mixes in a little of each and keeps most often to a vague, and fatally insipid, middle ground: he retains the Alexandrian verse of tragedy; lowers the style to the level of the characters' circumstances but does not descend to the level of burlesque vulgarity; and slips in here and there, as the action warrants, a few quotations from the original that clash much less, and therefore amuse much less, than the borrowings from Corneille in *Chapelain décoiffé*, for the very reason that they are a little too suitable to the actions taking place. We must suppose that the skill of the actors and the freshness of a still-current model sufficed for the length of one season to make a success of an entertainment that in itself is really rather dull.

These different systems of normal or transgressive relationships between subject and style are clearly laid out, I hope, in the following table, in which Dido represents the noble character; the lady watchmaker of *Le Lutrin*, the low character; and Dondon, the innkeeper imagined by Fournel, the heroine of one of those parodies which, because of their complex and indecisive form, I would like to rename *mixed parodies*.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dido → noble style | NOBLE GENRE | *neoclassical congruence* |
| Watchmaker → vulgar style | VULGAR GENRE | |
| Dido ↘ vulgar style | BURLESQUE TRAVESTY | *burlesque incongruity (downgrading)* |
| Watchmaker ↗ noble style | MOCK-HEROIC | *classical incongruity (upgrading)* |
| Watchmaker ↗ Dido's own speech | PARODY | |
| Dido ↓ Dondon → unstable or middling style | MIXED PARODY | *abortive incongruity* |

The genre survives, in any case, into the nineteenth century, where it is represented by, among others, a famous "parody" of Victor Hugo's *Hernani*, a work by Félix-Auguste Duvert and Auguste de Lauzanne called *Harnali ou la contrainte par cor*—given at the Vaudeville theatre on 22 March 1830—in which we find the system of lowering social rank. {Genette summarizes *Harnali* and quotes from it. He observes that as in *Agnès de Chaillot*, the manner hesitates between parody, burlesque, and the mock-heroic; further, as Hugo's play is itself characterized by mock-heroic shifts of tone, it is no easy task to turn into farce what is already partly farcical. The work's chief originality lies in its technical critique of the model, a critique formulated in the name of common sense and/or the neoclassical code of verisimilitude. E.g., *Harnali*: You know my voice well? / *Quasifol*: Of course! / *Harnali*: I will clap my hand three times.}

The *degradation of the action* by means of degrading the social rank of the characters already existed in neo-classical comedy, it should be noted, especially in Molière—for example, in all those instances where the love interest between the young leads is echoed as parody in a corresponding love interest between their valet and maidservant (in *Le Dépit amoureux*, Éraste-Lucile and René-Marinette; in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, Cléonte-Lucile and Covielle-Nicole; in *Amphitryon*, Jupiter-Amphitryon and Mercure-Sosie-Cléanthis).

As Jacques Voisine correctly points out, in reference to *Amphitryon*, "The parallelism between the situation of masters and their valets constitutes in itself a form of parody."[4]

It is perhaps not insignificant that Marivaux, in *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard*, appropriated the procedure in order to produce a revealing reversal—after which this motif of the amorous travesty continued to circulate in the comic theater and comic opera, with the exchange of cloaks between Suzanne and the Countess, which deceives both the Count and Figaro ("So who stole whose wife?"), and the criss-cross exchange through disguises in *Così fan tutte*. One kind of travesty was just a step away from the other, and Marivaux stepped lightly but profoundly from the first to the second.

## 25

*Don Quixote* is often described as the first "modern" novel: that is, the first novel in the modern sense of the word, which is synonymous with the "realistic" novel, which is a *novel* as opposed to a *romance*—i.e., what Fielding, in his preface to *Joseph Andrews*, defined as "a comic epic in prose."[1]

If *Don Quixote* were a realistic novel, I am not certain that it would really have been the first, foreshadowed as it was in antiquity by such works as the *Golden Ass* and the *Satyricon*, in the Middle Ages by the second *Romance of the Rose* and certain *fabliaux*, and most of all at the end of the sixteenth century by that typically Spanish genre, the picaresque novel.[2] Let us therefore leave aside the question of precedence; I am not even sure that the appellation "realistic novel" in itself would correctly apply to *Quixote*, for the simple reason that it does not take into account an essential aspect of this narrative, its evident hypertextual character: namely, its well-known relationship to the genre called "chivalric romances," and more precisely to later illustrations of this genre such as Juan Montalvo's *Amadis of Gaul* (1508). Don Quixote is not first and foremost a hidalgo (in fact, he is scarcely more than a picaro) who roams about the countryside and its villages and inns; he is above all a hidalgo who wishes to live like a knight: i.e., like the heroes of chivalric romances. The reference to this model absolutely determines the type of the work.

This type is just as frequently designated by another simple (too simple) formula: "parody of chivalric romances." The formula is of course absurd if one uses *parody* in its strict sense (playful transformation of a specific

text), for in that sense there are not and cannot be parodies of a genre. If one uses it in its crudest sense (satirical imitation), the formula ceases to be absurd, since there are obviously pastiches of genres, but it remains flawed because one cannot really describe *Quixote* as a pastiche, satirical or not, of chivalric romances—precisely because Don Quixote is not a knight-errant, caricatured or not, but rather a madman who believes or wishes himself to be a knight-errant. *Quixote* is thus in no sense a parody of a chivalric novel, but this improper formula at least has the merit of underscoring, however inadequately, its hypertextual character—which remains to be defined.

In this respect, *Don Quixote* is not quite a hapax but rather the prototype of a genre; true enough, *Quixote* towers above it by virtue of its genius, but the genre itself should not be overlooked. It comprises at least two French works that explicitly chose *Quixote* as their model, and set about applying its method to genres other than chivalric romances: same formula, different object.

The first is Charles Sorel's *Berger extravagant* (1627), which tells of the (mis)adventures of a young bourgeois whose head has been turned by a surfeit of pastoral romances, to the extent that he mistakes their fictions for reality and decides to become a shepherd in a pastoral.[3] He names himself Lysis and calls the young servant girl, of whom he is enamored, Charite. In the countryside around Saint-Cloud he comes upon a real shepherd and speaks to him in pastoral lingo, which leaves the shepherd completely baffled. {The plot summary that follows brings out the similarities between *Le Berger extravagant* and *Don Quixote*, and the burlesque degradations inflicted upon pastoral conventions.}

Marivaux develops a more original and subtler variant in *Pharsamon, ou Les Nouvelles folies romanesques* (completed in 1712, first published in 1737). {The summary that follows again underscores the parodic handling of the pastoral genre. Quotations from the work illustrate Marivaux's precious style.}

Marivaux, unlike Sorel and Cervantes, does not surround his hero with commonsensical and mocking companions. Not only does his valet half-share his folly, but his Dulcinea exceeds it: "Our young lady's brain was even more deranged than Pharsamon's, unreasonable as the latter may have been. She had read as many romances as he did, but with these kinds of books, a woman's imagination, let it be noted with due respect, takes flight faster than a man's, and is much sooner filled." Here is one of the missing links between *Don Quixote* and *Madame Bovary*. Pharsamon is

not made to confront prosaic reality in his relationship with his beloved Cidalise. The two heroes thus conform to the romantic model. Their behavior functions simply as a caricature of romance, reinforced by the low burlesque provided by the servants Cliton and Fatime. The theme of illusion is most often displaced by that of imitation: the servant Cliton imitates his master Pharsamon, who in turn imitates Amadis. The contrast between illusion and reality is supplanted by the alternation between "romantic" and "realistic"—or, rather, burlesque—scenes, with scuffles in the servants' quarters and nocturnal ruckus. The tradition of the *roman comique* can be seen to intermingle with the beginnings of Marivaux's juggling with mirror effects.

The genre, if it can be considered such, which was established by these three texts (among others, and provided we discount variants of those texts) has occasionally been named *antiroman* {"antiromance" or "antinovel"}, a term used by Sorel on the title page of one edition of *Berger extravagant.* From the theoretical standpoint this term is both too narrow and too vague: too narrow because the same procedure could be applied to other lofty genres, such as the epic or tragedy; too vague because the term "antiromance" fails to designate the specificity of the procedure, which is described somewhat better by the subtitle of *Pharsamon: folie romanesque* {"romantic delusion"}. Delusion or, more precisely, derangement is clearly the operating principle of the type of hypertextuality proper to the antiromance: a weak-minded hero who is unable to distinguish between fiction and reality takes the universe of fiction to be real (and present), assumes that he is one of its characters, and "interprets" the world around him from that perspective.

The relationship between such a genre and parody is evident (although it is most frequently concealed by a hasty assimilation): as in parody, and especially in mixed parody, the vulgar heroes of the antiromance encounter the same types of adventures as the heroes of lofty literary genres. In parodies, however, the analogy is real, unconscious, and purely diegetic: Chapelain is insulted just like Don Diego; Pierrot impregnates Agnès just as Don Pedro puts Inès in the family way, but without their noticing, let alone proclaiming, their relationship to their "model," which they know nothing of and which is known only to the author and to the public. Conversely, in the antiromance, the analogy is metadiegetic, entirely situated in the mind and the speech of the hero (who perceives it not only as an analogy but as an

identity), denounced (and received) as illusory by both author and public: "Don Quixote *imagines* that the shaving mug *is* Membrino's helmet." An *imaginary identity* thus replaces the *real analogy* (meaning of course the fictive one) found in parody. The imaginary romance in which Don Quixote, Lysis, and Pharsamon believe themselves to be involved, and the prosaic reality where we see them live and into which they topple again—much to their dismay—after each one of their "exploits" or "forays," conjures up for us (authors or readers—i.e., extradiegetic spectators in either case) a comical contrast similar to that created by parody, but pretty much opposite to that of travesty, where we perceive characters whom we know to be Aeneas or Dido behaving and speaking in vulgar manner; here we see protagonists whom we know to be no more than hidalgos or petty bourgeois figures behaving and speaking like heroes from romances. The antiromance is thus close not only to parody but also to the mock-heroic poem, which relies on a similar contrast between story and discourse (of the narrator, but also of the heroes). To turn *Le Lutrin* into an antiromance or, rather, an anti-epic, it would suffice to have the clockmaker not only speak like a hero from Virgil but take himself for one. And since he imitates a hero in his speech without (on his part) any trace of irony, how do we know that he does not actually identify himself with him?

Thanks to delusion, which functions as a kind of hypertextual transformer, the antiromance shows a closer kinship to the elevating forms of the burlesque than to travesty, its degrading version. Boileau would say that it is better to show us a hidalgo acting as a knight than the reverse. And Cervantes' tenderness for his hero, so clearly perceptible through the sarcasm, may well have issued from such a movement of sympathy for the delusional grandeur of the knight of the sad countenance. I venture to detect a similar streak in Marivaux, who was soon to give it full expression in his subsequent works. On the other hand, no such thing can be found in Sorel—whence perhaps the dryness and meanness of his tone.

Delusion, however, is only the principal operator in the antiromance, Others have already come our way:

—Objective hoaxes take their clue from the hero's delusion in order to multiply or aggravate its effects; such is the dominant procedure in the *Berger* and in the second part of *Don Quixote*, where accomplices, made wise by Don Quixote's fame (and by the reading of the first part of the book), involve him in hoaxes that make the most of his madness: a duenna in love, a talking statue, a flying horse, etc.

—Conscious and (nearly) lucid imitation—the dominant procedure in *Pharsamon*—is already present in Cervantes, where, for example, Don Quixote does not at first *believe* himself to be a knight but seeks to *become* one, and cannot hold himself to be one until he has been knighted by an innkeeper whom he mistakes for a lord of the manor. He deliberately *simulates* madness in the Sierra Morena, not because he thinks himself to be Amadis but simply to do as his hero would have done; and we know how ambiguous is his relationship to Dulcinea, whom he staunchly refuses to "recognize" in just any country bumpkin, despite Sancho's incitements.

—The pastiche or caricature in the numberless speeches, love notes, and poems with which our antiheroes perpetuate the language of their idols—especially in the two admirable chapters where Don Quixote launches into a synthetic evocation of chivalric adventures, first for Sancho's benefit, then for the canon's[4]—constitutes a genre pastiche if ever there was one, sublimely ambiguous in the way it weds Quixotic exaltation with Cervantine irony.

—Last, there is serious criticism, in book 14 of the *Berger*, and in the auto-da-fé that ends Don Quixote's first foray, and in his disputes with the canon and the priest.[5] But the hypertext, here, has turned itself into a commentary—i.e., a metatext—and as such is not within the scope of our (present) inquiry.

The antiromance is thus a complex hypertextual practice that is in some respects close to parody but cannot be defined as a textual transformation, owing to a textual reference that is always multifaceted and generic (the chivalric romance, the pastoral romance in general, even though that nebulous reference often coalesces around a specific text such as *Amadis* or *L'Astrée*). Its hypotext is in fact a hypogenre. One could, however, imagine the application to a specific text of the fundamental procedure of the antiromance—which is not a priori condemned to a generic reference unless perhaps by the critical weight of the Cervantian model. A reader who is (too) enthusiastic could quite easily identify himself not with the knight or the shepherd in general but precisely with Amadis and Céladon, and could imagine that he is reliving the character's adventures, provided that he detects between his own situation and that of his "hero" an analogy upon which to peg his interpretive delirium. The course of the action would, as a consequence, be prescribed by that of the model, as in a parody or a travesty or, better yet, in a mixed parody, with each episode of

the hypertext reproducing in its manner the corresponding episode of its hypotext, following an identical order and a similar sequence. We would thus have an anti-*Amadis* or an anti-*Astrée*, or more accurately a *Pseudo-Amadis* or a *Pseudo-Astrée*, as the antiromance is more accurately, in a limited sense, a *pseudoromance*. That idea seemed to have occurred to Subligny, if he is indeed the author of the *Fausse Clélie* (1671), whose very title relates to our hypothetical type. Following various adventures, the heroine reads *Clélie*[6] and is fascinated by the similarities between this romance and her own life: "He predicted in this romance, she said, the adventures which I was going to have. She could not stop admiring the astonishing correspondence between Clélie's adventures and hers. She reread them day and night over a period of two years." But the heroine's discovery of the analogy is retrospective here; the analogy itself was thus, as in parody, purely pragmatic and unconscious, and the ensuing action, which is somewhat patchy, hardly bears the impact of that revelation. This "false" *Clélie* remains thus a false pseudo-*Clélie*, or perhaps an abortive pseudo-*Clélie*. Marivaux's *Télémaque travesti*, on the other hand, is a full-fledged pseudo-*Télémaque*, even a highly successful one—and incidentally one of the few narrative works completed by Marivaux.[7]

The idea is simple, though not so easily carried out. Timante Brideron is a young country boy whose father, like a latter-day Ulysses, has gone off to some Seven Years' or Thirty Years' War; he remains alone with his Penelope-like mother, who is besieged by suitors, and with his Mentor-like Uncle Phocion, a semischolar who is the first to notice the analogy between this situation and that of the *Odyssey*, and therefore also of Fénelon's *Télémaque*. "Here he is, then, overcome by the desire to accomplish the congruence that chance seemed to have so felicitously begun." Phocion takes up that fancy, imparts it to his nephew, and off they go in quest of the father. Henceforth, as Marivaux boasts appropriately, "this story provides the same relationships and the same adventures as the real *Télémaque*"—except for the vulgarization. {Genette here details the adventures of Brideron and Phocion, pointing out the echoes from *Télémaque* transposed into a vulgar register.} From what appears in this summary, *Télémaque travesti* could be seen as a mixed narrative parody, and even a perfect illustration of parody as it was to be defined by Victor Fournel. But to limit it to this formula would entail forgetting the essential element, which is still here as in the antiromances: the delirium of the two protagonists, or at the very least the mild delusion that makes them interpret whatever happens to them as the equivalent of one of Telemachus's adventures (all this made

possible by Marivaux's manipulation of the sequence of events), and thus enjoins them to behave according to the Fénelon model. What we have here, then, is not quite an imaginary identity (since Phocion and Brideron are not insane enough to believe in it) but at least a conscious analogy—which is never found in parodies. In spite of its title, *Télémaque travesti* is in no way a burlesque travesty but rather a variant of the antiromance: namely, an antiromance whose hypotext is specific and (therefore) whose action is prescribed.

From this stable base, the essence of the variations consists in changes in the type and degree of analogy, and in the manner in which the analogy is introduced or brought about. Most often it is acknowledged by the protagonists themselves, either in their role as narrators—since, as in *Télémaque*, Brideron himself recounts his initial adventures, in books 1 to 4 (hence, "Telemachus's vessel was intercepted by an Egyptian flotilla; listen to how we too came to be captured like that prince")—or in their role as characters (hence, "Whereupon they made me climb into their cart, saying that they wanted me to go with them. I then said to myself, this vehicle is presented to me in place of the vessel in which Telemachus left Tyre in the company of the Cyprians"). A clear division is established here between them and the secondary characters: only the protagonists are aware of the parallel between their actions and situations and those to be found in *Télémaque*; the others are as unaware of that likeness as characters in a parody and are baffled by correlations whose meaning escapes them.

Like all analogies, these involve both "presence and absence," similarity and difference, and in varying degrees. Mélicerte falls in love with Brideron just as Calypso had done with Telemachus, but they are not quite Telemachus and Calypso; Telemachus's real descent into hell is turned into a mere dream for Brideron, etc. Faced with the unavoidable deficiencies of these approximations, the protagonists can either congratulate themselves upon the similarities or adjust grudgingly to the differences, according to the motto "You had better take what you get": "This century is harsher than that of Telemachus. . . . One must adapt to the times. . . . Mores have changed," etc. Phocion adjusts Mentor's political sermon to Oménée's modest station, but only reluctantly: "Frankly, he was somewhat at a loss, and did not know how to go about giving as much counsel and advice to his lieutenant as Mentor had given to Idoménée. By gad! he would say, this man has no cities, ministers, subjects, or land; all he has to his name is a salting tub, a cellar, a kitchen, a few pieces of furniture, a cesspool, a

garden, and three or four servants." Brideron is "extremely mortified" not to be able to burn the corpse of his friend Hidras (= Hippias) on a funeral pile, but "one must follow the rules, and drink water when fountains are in fashion": in other words, he will be content with burying him.

Since they cannot, despite the author's endeavors, always come across the same places, the same objects, and the same persons as do Fénelon's heroes, Phocion and Brideron can seek to make up for that approximation by a more rigorous faithfulness to their models in their own behavior, guided by constant reference to their copy of *Télémaque*. Phocion, especially, sees to the rigor of the imitation; he adds to his primary role of Mentor, with his didactic admonitions, the secondary role of a guardian of the Fénelon orthodoxy, harking back to the hypotext—"Take your book. . . . Read *Télémaque*. . . . You should already have spoken a quarter of an hour ago,"—even though he too has to resign himself to imperfections, and twice in these terms: "You are a shitty Telemachus, and I a sawdust Mentor."

The nature and effect of the inevitable transposition could not have been better expressed. But only Phocion and Brideron suffer from the discrepancy. For the reader, by contrast, the whole pleasure of the text lies in its ambiguous relationship with the hypotext: the "imitation" is always imperfect, the analogy always frustrating, but the transposition is always clever and picturesque. As a result, *Télémaque travesti* unquestionably remains the masterpiece of French burlesque, and incidentally one of the most enjoyable peasant novels of the eighteenth century and thus of all times. In book 12, for example, the description of Brideron's shield, the last link in a venerable chain inaugurated by Homer, deserves notice; or the narrative of Brideron's prowess at the village fair (book 4); or again the charming vulgarization of the Fénelon incipit ("Calypso could not be consoled for Ulysses' departure. In her grief, she felt unhappy at being immortal. Her grotto no longer resounded with her singing, and her servant nymphs dared not speak to her"):

> Mélicerte, sad and dreamy, was still remembering the happiness she had enjoyed during the time of her romance with M. Brideron, the father; she was often awakened before dawn by her sorrow; those who courted her, bored her; she was brusque with them, and she no longer cared about her complexion or her dress; she was most often badly coiffed and no longer disdained the dust rising from the thrashed wheat; the most scorching sun no longer frightened her; she would

> risk sunburn to see the harvesters; she no longer was that delicate beauty who so feared exposure to the open air: working clothes, no more masks, no more bracelets or earrings; she did not wish to please anyone.[8]

*Télémaque travesti* is to my knowledge the only example of a *singulative* antiromance—i.e., one with a single hypotext—unless one wishes to find an involuntary echo of it in a much more recent and more ambitious hypertext, which we shall discuss in due course. On the other hand, I suspect that the formula of the generic antiromance has been applied to all sorts of novelistic subgenres, those marked by the already caricatural intensity of their thematic material: the pitiful and ridiculous misadventures of a character who takes himself to be the hero of a thriller, of a spy novel, of science fiction, and who interprets in that light the trivial incidents of his humdrum existence. The English "Gothic" novel, an ideal target, at least aroused Jane Austen's verve in several chapters of *Northanger Abbey* (1798). While sojourning in an old castle the heroine, having read too much of Ann Radcliffe, spends several nights in the throes of horrible fears and suspicions that the author fittingly describes as "bookish," until she is brought back by her host to a more sober appraisal of reality. I sometimes dream of devoting a sabbatical leave (?!) to the writing of a new antinovel, which would really be an anti–New Novel: it would be the story of a fellow whose brain has been muddled by reading Robbe-Grillet, and who attempts to live by this model (repetitions, variants, structural loops, analepses, prolepses, metalepses, etc.) in a world that resists his delusion. He would no doubt encounter a few adventures as pleasing as those of the imaginary knight with the windmills of reality—and as unpleasant, for there is one thing more painful than being trapped in a labyrinth, and that is to believe oneself to be inside it when one is actually outside, the risk being that by seeking the exit, one may indeed find the entrance.

## 26

The title of Woody Allen's film *Play It Again, Sam* (1972) acts for film connoisseurs as a contract of cinematographic hypertextuality (hyperfilmicity). They recognize it as the most famous {misquoted} line from the Michael Curtiz film *Casablanca*, in which Humphrey Bogart asks the pianist at the

bar to play for him, once more, "his" song. The tune is an emblem of Bogart's sacrificed passion for Ingrid Bergman; it is the Vinteuil sonata of *tough* cinema. Allen's title itself can in turn be seen as emblematic of all hypertextual activity, for isn't it always a question of "replaying," in one way or another, the same undying old song?

The film can be taken at first as a kind of cinematic equivalent of the antinovel. Woody Allen (or his character, whose name I have forgotten) is to Humphrey Bogart (or more precisely to the type of character Bogart tended to portray) what Don Quixote is to Amadis and more generally to all the heroes of novels of chivalry. Obsessed with this sort of man and with the actor who embodies him (a cynical hero who seduces women and is never taken in by them precisely because he is so tough), the character's sole dream is to resemble his hero on all scores. But, being ugly, timid, hypersensitive, neurotic, blundering, and systematically a loser with women, the Allen character is, in fact, the antithesis of his idol. As soon as he is alone, the ghost of Bogart appears before him—played, as best he can, by Jerry Lacy, with the aid of a trenchcoat, a felt hat pulled over one eye, a chewed-up cigarette, a grin, and a hissing and jerky elocution. Lacy offers great words of advice to Woody, who records them in his continual effort to imitate this pseudo-Bogart, whom he resembles about as much as I resemble Robert Redford. From this setup arise some misadventures that are to the modern art of seduction precisely what Don Quixote's tilting at windmills was to the practice of the knight errant, and from which Woody emerges at times rebuffed, at others bruised and rumpled, just like the knight of the sad countenance.

As is the case with *Télémaque travesti*, however, the reference here is not merely generic (i.e., the Bogartian *film noir*) but singular as well, for it is the Bogart of *Casablanca* who is the targeted model. In fact, the last sequence of the film *Casablanca* is replayed in the beginning of the Woody Allen film. In the company of a Woody lockjawed with admiration, we watch the heroic Bogart as he hands back Ingrid Bergman to her legitimate spouse and, without weakening his resolve, walks off into the Moroccan night. The stroke of genius offered by *Play It Again, Sam* is that throughout the rest of the film the viewer forgets the initial reference (which is, properly speaking, a quotation functioning at first as mere epigraph); the similarity between the plots of the hyperfilm and its hypofilm is revealed only at the conclusion. Without intending to do so and by his very awkwardness, Woody manages to seduce the wife of his best friend and proceeds to

fall in love with her. During the entire adventure the Bogart role model intervenes to precipitate matters, to compromise them as a result of his too good counsel, and finally to bring them limping along to their inevitable resolution. In the end, realizing that his beloved loves only her husband, who in turn still loves only her, Woody returns her to him in a final scene whose dialogue reproduces verbatim the dialogue from the last scene of *Casablanca.* Thus, one goes from antinovel to travesty, the unchanged text being travestied solely through a change in the speakers. We witness an unexpected but also unexceptionable return to the source. It is a most skillfully managed twist, one that goes beyond being merely funny.

This sort of "stuff"[1] is a bit out of my field, but I am not apologizing for evoking this masterpiece immediately after those of Cervantes and Marivaux. In order to have some notion of parodic art at its best, it is necessary to see and hear Woody Allen repeat before a flabbergasted Diane Keaton, with the right accent, this Bogartian statement, the Open Sesame of hard-boiled seduction (I quote from memory): *I've sheen a lot of damesh in my life, shweetheart, but you are really shomeshing shpeshal.*[2]

# 27

Within the category of mimetic hypertexts, *La Chasse spirituelle* plays a paradoxical and irksome role. Of course, I am not referring to the hypothetical text by Rimbaud which Verlaine guarantees was thus titled and about which one does not know whether it has been lost (definitively or not) or whether this title designated only a portion of the work that is known and published today; rather, I am referring to the text that was published 1949 by *Le Mercure de France.* This is not the place to rehash an "affair" which shook the literary world for several weeks and in which several "specialists" and journalists distinguished themselves. The event was exhaustively detailed by Bruce Morrissette in a book that appeared in the United States more than twenty-five years ago now, and whose unavailability in French translation says much about our publishers' priorities.[1] I merely wish to remind readers that on 19 May 1949 *Le Mercure de France* put on sale a slim volume titled *La Chasse spirituelle,* attributed to Rimbaud and introduced by Pascal Pia, who identified it as the "lost" work once mentioned by Verlaine. On the same day the literary section of the daily *Combat,* then edited by Maurice Nadeau, played up this publication and reproduced excerpts. On 21 May

*Le Figaro* disclosed that an actress and an actor, Mlle Akakia-Viala and M. Nicolas Bataille, claimed to have written the text in order to prove their competence in the Rimbaud idiom (a competence that had been contested by "specialists" several months earlier in response to their dramatized version of *A Season in Hell*), and to have attributed it to Rimbaud only temporarily, so as to mystify those very "specialists" and/or others and thus to demonstrate where the real incompetence lay (in fact, the text had been submitted by them to Maurice Saillet, who transmitted it to Pascal Pia.) Pia at once denied this version and claimed that the text he published conformed to an original that had been known to him for thirty years (which no one was ever to mention again). Here begins a long polemic that pits the supporters of Pia's thesis (this *Chasse* is Rimbaud's) against those upholding the Akakia-Bataille thesis (this *Chasse* is ours). Saillet and Nadeau, on Pia's side, were too involved to retract, as were the novelists François Mauriac and Georges Duhamel, it seems, whose opinion greatly contributed to the *Mercure*'s acceptance of the text. They had no external supporting evidence, since despite Pia's initial claims, no one would dispose of any autograph manuscript attributable to Rimbaud, but there was a paradoxical—yet legitimate—suspicion, which Nadeau expressed in the following terms: "It is not enough to claim to be a forger; one must be able to prove it." And there was a presumption of authenticity based on internal evidence: the text reads too much like Rimbaud not to be by Rimbaud. The other side had no concrete proof either; Akakia-Bataille did produce their "manuscripts," but it was objected, with equal legitimacy, that they could have produced them after the fact and substituted them for Rimbaud's authentic manuscript. But there too arose a certainty pertaining to intuition and to internal criticism: this text is too awful to be by Rimbaud. This certainty was expressed at first, peremptorily as could be expected, by André Breton in a letter sent to *Combat* as early as 19 May—that is, even before Akakia and Bataille had claimed authorship of *La Chasse*; this text, he states, is "an exceptionally contemptible fake," a view that he reiterated in *Le Figaro* of 28–29 May and then in July in the pamphlet *Flagrant délit*, where he presented his argument with greater precision: on the one hand, the text is mediocre and vulgar, and on the other hand, it contains verbatim borrowings from Rimbaud's authentic work.[2] These two assessments encapsulate more or less the arguments of the other pastiche proponents: Rolland de Renéville ("I do not believe that one could seriously uphold the view that Rimbaud would have accepted to do in *La Chasse*

*spirituelle* what he never did elsewhere, namely mimic himself"—*Combat*, 26 May); Jean Cocteau ("Is this text authentic? is it apocryphal? As far as I am concerned, it is laborious and soulless"); one G.A. in the daily *Franc-Tireur* of 26 May ("*La Chasse spirituelle* may be by Rimbaud, but it is not good Rimbaud. It lacks the breathing, the inspiration, the dazzling image. . . . It is a studious pastiche, or bad Rimbaud"); Jean Paulhan ("The work is inconsistent, the metaphors are bombastic and garish, the ideas banal. Not a single image that has not already been used in the *Saison* or in *Illuminations*. This is modern poetry as country hicks imagine it to be"—*Combat*, 26 May); Luc Estang ("A caricatured and derivative Rimbaud"—*La Croix*, 29–30 May). André Maurois may have condensed that opinion most convincingly: "My impression is that this is too much like Rimbaud to be by Rimbaud. We encounter again all the expressions we know, lifted from previous writings, and truly, a man does not repeat himself in this fashion" (*Tribune de Paris*, 21 May). With the passage of time, and given the inevitable absence of any evidence, this opinion has come to be accepted as fact.[3] No one, to my knowledge, believes any longer in the authenticity of *La Chasse spirituelle*, and the "version" given by its probable authors has finally won the day—but, as we have seen, not without damaging their reputation as writers and the primary goal of their operation. They had written *La Chasse* to prove that they were capable of writing like Rimbaud; the final verdict, however, is that they must indeed have written it, because what they wrote was absolutely unworthy of Rimbaud.[4]

This confusing to-and-fro illustrates, it seems to me, the ambiguity of that work's hypertextual status: Akakia and Bataille only wrote—and presumably intended to write—a *pastiche* of Rimbaud. As such, their text is neither better nor worse than many others, among them the eighteen texts published by Morrissette in the appendix of his study. {Genette quotes a representative passage from *La Chasse spirituelle*; see the Appendix.}

But as it happens—and this is how the two *pasticheurs* were caught in their own trap—their pastiche was at first presented as an authentic text; that was enough to alter its readers' expectations and to subvert the criteria for its appreciation. With the possible exception of a mimetic genius—and in my view Proust is the only one who comes close—the reader's expectations for a successful pastiche are a far cry from those brought to the reading of an authentic text, or a text presented as such: i.e., an apocryphal one. We have seen that the very essence of pastiche implies a stylistic saturation that is considered not only acceptable but desirable,

since it constitutes the primary source of the pleasure provided in the playful mode, and of critical merit in the satirical mode. This saturation, very much in evidence in *La Chasse spirituelle*, is precisely what is held as evidence against its authenticity: "Too much like Rimbaud to be by Rimbaud." This (accurate) criticism by Maurois is, so to speak, the rule of the pastiche and *a fortiori* of caricature, and I imagine that Maurois would have willingly applied an analogous formula to his *Côté de Chelsea*: too much like Proust to be by Proust. Saturation identifies the pastiche and caricature as such—and carries with it an inevitable dose of vulgarization, since it is always vulgar to "overdo it." Saturation thus gives away the apocryphal text as such: i.e., as a failed apocryphal attempt. The misadventure of *La Chasse spirituelle* illustrates the difference and gauges the *distance* between the pastiche, however successful, and true forgery—i.e., a perfect imitation—which, by its very definition, and as Plato already noted, cannot in any way be distinguished from its model. The true *pasticheur* wants to be recognized—and appreciated—as such. The author of an apocryphal text does not. His goal is to *disappear.* This is no doubt a more difficult undertaking, but it is also an entirely different matter. Akakia and Bataille wanted to have their cake and eat it too (or rather, do both in succession, but with the same text): hence their failure.

## 28

Contrary to what is true of painting, the "literary fake" (the apocryphal text that *La Chasse spirituelle* intended to be, and was—for forty-eight hours) is assuredly not the principal mode of expression of serious imitation. That mode of expression is much rather to be sought in the practice that the Middle Ages (which did not invent it) called *continuation.*

With greater rigor than common usage demands, D'Alembert's *Dictionnaire des synonymes* invites us to distinguish between the continuation and a similar practice called *la suite*, the sequel: "One may write a continuation of someone else's work and the sequel to one's own." Waucher, Menessier, Gerbert, and others offer continuations of Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval*, but Corneille himself writes *La Suite du Menteur.*

This genetic difference (a sequel is autographic, a continuation allographic) stems from a functional and structural difference that Littré in his dictionary defines with great precision: "These words designate the

connection between a thing and that which precedes it. But *sequel* is more general, since it does not indicate whether that to which a sequel is given be completed or not, whereas *continuation* asserts positively that the thing had been left at a point of incompleteness." When a work is left unfinished by reason of the death of its author or some other cause of final abandonment, continuation consists in finishing the work in the author's stead, and can only be the work of another. The *sequel* performs an entirely different function, which in general consists in exploiting the success of a work that in its own time was often considered complete, and in setting it into motion again with new episodes: thus the *Suite du Menteur*, or (minus the name) the second part of *Robinson Crusoe* or of *Don Quixote*, or the *Mariage de Figaro* and *La Mère coupable*, or Alexandre Dumas's *Vingt ans après* and *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*, etc. These are no longer completions but prolongations, and if one wished at this point to improve on traditional terminology, the most judicious course would no doubt be to rename *completion* what Littré calls "continuation," and *prolongation* what he names "sequel" (which does not necessarily imply an ending). We shall see, however, that theoretical distinctions are often at odds with the facts: one cannot complete without first continuing, and by prolonging a work one often ends up completing it.

The practice of continuation has often been resorted to in order to complete an interrupted text, whether literary or musical, by giving it an ending that conforms as closely as possible to the author's attested intentions: thus did Balthazar Baro proceed for *L'Astrée* and Franz Xaver Süssmayr for Mozart's *Requiem*. Such posthumous completions are considered as fakes or apocryphal works only when they are falsely attributed to the dead or defaulting author—and when the fraud happens to be found out. But fraud or no fraud, the textual structure is obviously the same: an author (or several), capable of imitating as faithfully as possible the style of the unfinished text, puts that stylistic competence to use in a very specific textual performance. Continuation is not like other imitations, since it must abide by a certain number of additional constraints: first, naturally—given that any satirical caricature is prohibited—imitation here must be absolutely faithful and serious, which rarely happens in usual pastiche. But above all, the hypertext must constantly remain continuous with its hypotext, which it must merely bring to its prescribed or appropriate conclusion while observing the congruity of places, chronological sequence, character consistency, etc.[1] The "continuator" works under the constant supervision

of a kind of internalized script girl, who sees to the unity of the whole and the invisibility of the seams.

Continuation is thus a more restricted imitation than the autonomous apocryphal text; to be more specific, it is an imitation with a partially prescribed subject. But this restriction can vary greatly, depending on whether or not the dead or defaulting author has left indications—and how many—as to the sequel he intended to give his work, or wanted given to it. What is in question is not so much the degree of freedom, and therefore of inventiveness, to be granted to his continuator; I am thinking of the position of the complementary text itself, which is at times limited to continuing an interrupted text, and at times compelled in addition to carry out the stated intentions that accompany the incomplete text (unless the continuator chooses not to heed them, or only so far as he pleases), such as instructions leading to a compulsory denouement, which must be prepared for; often, also, a general outline that must be followed and executed; or perhaps more often still a few scattered, partially developed sketches that must be worked into the continuation. Those are specific connections that the reader, most of the time, is no longer in a position to appreciate, for continuators of yore were not concerned with displaying their devices or acknowledging their debt, and they destroyed the projects that had more or less directly inspired them. Conversely, the respect for unfinished works that has been growing since the nineteenth century most often prohibits any attempt at continuation.

I mentioned almost at random those two canonical examples of posthumous continuation: that of *L'Astrée* by Baro and that of the *Requiem* by Süssmayr. It so happens that both offer a good notion of the complexity of this kind of paratextual situation.

Concerning the *Requiem*, Mozart is believed to have been able to compose fully only the first two numbers (*Requiem* and *Kyrie*), and Süssmayr had to orchestrate the middle sections according to drafts left by Mozart that are at least partially known to us. As for the last three numbers (if we discount the final repeat of the *Requiem*), they are generally taken to be the work of Süssmayr alone (I am referring to the *Sanctus*, the *Benedictus*, and the *Agnus Dei*), although he consistently denied having invented any of it—which places this portion of his work in the category of apocryphal continuations. But what prevents musicologists from giving credence to his denials is not the intrinsic quality of these three pieces, which are in no way

unworthy of the *Requiem*, but merely the absence of any sketches for them in Mozart's hand. If pastiche it be, it is successful, unless one ascribes to Süssmayr a devious scheme that involved pilfering some of the drafts and then destroying them, precisely in order to cast doubts on his own denials and thus lead musicologists astray. Whatever the case may be, doubts linger on, much to the credit, deserved or not, of the faithful disciple.

As for *L'Astrée*—for which there was not merely one continuator but at least two—here is Maurice Magendie's succinct account:

> When Honoré d'Urfé died, in 1625, he left a fourth part, which was, it seems, entirely written out, and which his secretary Baro published in 1627. If Baro is to be believed, he limited himself to correcting the typographical errors; but we do not know his actual role, since we are in ignorance as to the state of d'Urfé's manuscript at the time of his death: was it completely finished, revised, ready to go to press, or was it only a more or less advanced draft? This little problem will no doubt remain forever unsolved. D'Urfé was barely dead when, under a license granted on 10 July 1625, one Borstel de Gaubertin published a fifth and a sixth part of *L'Astrée*. Baro, insisting that he was the sole trustee of the author's true intentions, protested the publication, which he denounced as counterfeit; but it was not until 1627 that he himself could come up with the conclusion to the novel, which he called the "true sequel," and which he claimed to have based on d'Urfé's genuine rough drafts. Baro carried the plot to its conclusion, while Gaubertin did not complete his work; Baro's book is laden with a tangle of puerile supernatural effects, Gaubertin's is more human and pausible; Baro faithfully reproduces d'Urfé's procedures, Gaubertin shows more independence. What is certain is that since the seventeenth century, only Baro's sequel has been accepted by the editors of the complete *L'Astrée*; but it is highly likely that Gaubertin did have access to d'Urfé's papers. Where is the truth in this imbroglio? Yet another mystery which most likely will never be cleared up.[2]

But since Baro's and Gaubertin's continuations have practically nothing in common, it must follow that the same "genuine rough drafts" authorized two different completions. In fact, since Gaubertin's continuation is itself unfinished (planning to complete a work apparently is no guarantee of immortality), it is Baro's ending that has taken hold. Its chief aim was to

provide a satisfying denouement: an end to the war, with Adamas deciding to bring matters to a head; he induces Astrée to conjure up the presence of Céladon, whom she believes to be dead. Céladon appears at her call. Astrée, frightened by what she had once granted to Céladon-Alexis, rebuffs him and orders him to die. Each of the two lovers comes to the Fountain of Love's Truth to reveal that truth by allowing themselves to be devoured by the lions. The lions spare the perfect lovers, and the god Love marries them. This brings universal joy—and a rather crafty solution to the problem of the *denouement*: how to untangle the knots tied by d'Urfé (Astrée's injunction, Céladon's disguise). The first obstacle is lifted by a stratagem, the second by a *deus ex machina* who commands and thereby absolves.

The fourth part of *L'Astrée* is thus a good example of a self-confessed or nonapocryphal continuation, one that we acknowledge (without certainty) as faithful to the author's intent. Another case is that of apocryphal continuations, which are falsely attributed to the defaulting author, fraudulently published under his name, and—all notions of a possible conspiracy being excluded—entirely invented by their real author.[3] Such is the case of the various continuations of Marivaux's novels.

## 29

One common point that binds the Marivaux continuations is that they are not posthumous, and that they take to their end (more or less) narratives that had been abandoned, for reasons unknown to us, by an author in full possession of his creative powers and in a position to judge, and thus to approve or censure, those (more or less) apocryphal continuations. In fact, it seems that Marivaux condescended to express his opinion only on the subject of the *Suite de Marianne*, acknowledged (though not officially signed) by Mme Riccoboni—and thus, in this specific instance, not apocryphal. According to one contributor to the *Bibliothèque des romans*,[1] "the manuscript was first presented to M. de Marivaux, and the writer herself took it to him. The Academician was quite surprised to see himself so well imitated; he expressed his wonder in very flattering terms, and highly approved of such a piquant piece going into print. He promised to keep it a secret, and did so keep it for some time."[2]

When he gave up his novel after the eleventh part in March 1742, Marivaux had apparently conveyed no indication to anyone as to a possible

sequel, of which he himself may not even have had a clear idea. But the very status of the pseudoautobiographical novel, the subtitle (*Les Aventures de Mme la comtesse de* ***), and the first pages unequivocally pointed to a successful conclusion, with Marianne as a countess in her fifties, retired from the world and occupying her leisure time in writing that account for the benefit of a lady friend. That *terminus ad quem* of the retrospective narrative imposed an obligation upon the continuators but provided no specific denouement concerning the two points that Marivaux had left in suspense: the mystery of Marianne's birth, and the success of her affair with Valville after the latter's betrayal. As early as 1738, when Marivaux had been withholding the sequel of his narrative for more than a year, a ninth part appeared anonymously at The Hague. In it, Marianne heard of Valville's marriage to her rival, Mlle Varthon, and wedded the officer who had already been courting her in Marivaux. Valville was soon disappointed and deceived by his new spouse, broke up his marriage, and became a monk after vainly imploring Marianne's forgiveness. Marianne discovered her father's true identity: he was the very brother of her protector (also Valville's mother), Mme de Miran; Marianne inherited the entire estate at the latter's death. A bitter victory, then, and one more gratifying to pride than to feeling.

Without deigning to respond to that forgery, Marivaux, published in 1742 the last three parts he completed. They shed no light on the outcome of the main plot line, since they are almost wholly devoted—without actually completing it either—to the story of the nun, formerly Tervire. In 1745 a twelfth part was published in Amsterdam, also anonymously, which offered a notably different denouement: Valville, who had been imprisoned in the Bastille at his mother's request, so as to forestall his marriage with Varthon, falls ill and obtains Marianne's forgiveness in jail. Marianne turns out, soon after, to be the granddaughter of an English duke; she nevertheless marries her faithless but repentant lover and lives happily ever after.

The chief aim of these two continuations was quite naturally to conclude the narrative, and they might well have been commissioned by publishers eager to provide their public with the denouement they expected. In both cases, of course, and in due conformity with the rules of the genre, Marianne retrieves her identity and social rank. But on the sentimental plane, where Marivaux's withdrawal left open the fundamental question (will Marianne forgive Valville?), the two conclusions are antithetical, and it may be surmised that the first of them had disappointed its readers; hence

the second one, more gratifying to sensitive souls, functions as a corrective to the first.

The *Suite de Marianne* proceeds from an entirely different intent and responds to an entirely different requirement. Mme Riccoboni had attended a discussion bearing on the merits and faults of the caricature of *Marianne* provided by Crébillon in *L'Écumoire*, and on the more or less imitable character of Marivaux's style. Apparently stung by the challenge of bettering Crébillon, she reread "two or three parts of *Marianne*, sat down at her writing desk and wrote that sequel."[3] Even though the author of that foreword clearly overstates the casualness of the intent and the ease of its execution, we are indeed dealing chiefly with a pastiche under the guise of a sequel—a "sequel" in the classical sense of the word, and not a "continuation," since the action is not developed to its conclusion. The foreword even reminds the reader with notable insistence that Mme Riccoboni, who had several times been requested to complete the narrative of *Marianne*, had never intended to "continue nor to complete" that novel, or to "finish either M. de Marivaux's works or any other author's"—a task that she apparently judged too menial for her.

The most evidently interesting aspect of the sequel is indeed the generally faithful and not grotesquely overdone imitation of Marivaux's style and of the characteristic motives of *La Vie de Marianne*: the frequent and indiscreet "remarks" on the part of the narrator, the conceits, the psychological subtleties, the ambiguous emphasis—both critical and self-complacent—on the heroine's vanity and coquettishness, the feminist protestations, and even the cliffhanger suspense of the last lines ("But before coming to the most interesting part of my life, allow me to rest a little. In truth, Marquise, the mass of events I have to report to you is daunting; how shall I go about telling all that? I have to pore over these things, adieu"), the necessity of which made the purposes of imitation and of completion incompatible from the start. Whether deliberate or not, incompleteness does remain a specific feature of *Marianne*, one that a faithful pastiche is duty-bound to imitate as well.

Rigorously speaking, such a contradiction renders the task of any continuator logically impossible, unless he renounces imitation—a relatively infrequent renunciation (but I shall return to it), since the implicit model here is the apocryphal continuation. But *La Vie de Marianne* raises a special difficulty, which we no longer find to the same degree in *Le Paysan parvenu*, owing to the fact that Marivaux suspends almost each of the former's

parts, including the last, with a very marked and somewhat cheaply alluring "to be continued" ("I am here approaching an event that was to cause all my other adventures"; "Here is where my adventures are about to become abundant and interesting," etc.). A final part that would end with a definitive denouement would thus be particularly atypical. It is evident, in any case, that Mme Riccoboni preferred the pleasure of suspense in the guise of a complicitous wink to the boredom of an all too predictable conclusion, which her own contibution actually allows us to glimpse readily enough: Marianne, courted by the Marquis de Sineri, responds to Valville's unfaithfulness with a studied indifference that is sufficient to avenge her; but when she receives a passionate letter from him, she feels "moved" and realizes that were she to meet Valville again, "all would be said." She has "satisfied her vanity at the expense of her heart," but her heart "rebels": "The fact is that I was tender more than I was vain, and that, with a sensitive and deeply moved soul, feeling always moans at the victories of self-love"—an observation that is quite in tune with Marivaux's problematics and foreshadows clearly enough, it seems to me, the final "triumph" of feeling. *Clearly enough*, that is, perhaps just to the degree required to spare us the recognition scene and the "happy end"[4] in marriage that Marivaux had spared himself, and to cast over the forthcoming happiness the shadow of an anxiety and the hint of an injury—but also the outlines of a future strategy.

For on this point, Mme Riccoboni contributes to Marivaux's text a complement that is not quite on the order of a simple continuation, but more like a correction. In Marivaux, Valville's infidelity—a highly unexpected one, according to the rules of romance that the plot of *Marianne* had seemed to abide by so far—remained, properly speaking, unexplained. Marianne, at the onset of part 8, was content to recall that her narrative was authentic and that Valville was thus in no way "a hero of romance" but indeed "a man," "a Frenchman," "a contemporary," and for that threefold reason, inevitably flighty, "a little surfeited with the pleasure of loving me, for having had too much of it to begin with." Mme Riccoboni is at no pains to uncover a more specific and more efficient motive: Valville belongs to

> those people for whom obstacles have a seductive charm. Obstructions, difficulties, impossibility even, that is what flatters them; they enjoy the confusion of a complicated intrigue; they wish to pursue and seem fearful to obtain. There are minds that it is good to keep

> in suspense, hearts that must be kept striving, for what they enjoy about passion is less the sweetness of feeling than the amusement of scheming; they desire less to be happy than to busy themselves with the means of becoming so. Imagine Valville to be one of those characters. I had been perfect for him: with me, his desires were opposed in all things, a hundred hurdles surged up between him and the little orphan girl; he had to fight, to overcome thousands upon thousands of obstacles: he glimpsed a prospect of happiness, and was charmed. His mother's indulgence spoiled it all. He was told: You wish for Marianne's heart, she will give it to you; you wish for her hand, you have my consent, here it is. Therewith, all was said and done, and love went to sleep in the bosom of ease.[5]

Let those who deem such a psychology too elementary remember that Marivaux, in any case, had sometimes been satisfied with less, and that Stendhal and Proust did not come up with anything much more elaborate.

The incompleteness of Marivaux's *Paysan parvenu* left his continuators with a situation that was both very similar and close to the reverse: Marivaux indicates in his fifth and last part (1735) that Jacob will owe his fortune to the Comte d'Orsan, but his emotional future, on the other hand, remains entirely indeterminate. It goes without saying that his first spouse, the former Mlle Habert, must give way to a more gratifying partner, but that partner's identity is still undecided. Mme d'Orville is quite presentable, but apparently coveted by d'Orsan—who might, however, renounce her out of gratitude for his savior, but that would mean two good deeds against one. D'Orville it will thus have to be, or another, depending on the tactfulness of the continuators.

The first continuation, appended to a German translation of 1753, opts for d'Orville, after dispatching both hindering spouses, and Jacob, now rich, retires into his native countryside. The third and (to my knowledge) last continuation, paperbound for the English edition of 1765, goes to the trouble of producing a fresh young lady whom Jacob, out of ingrown habit, rescues at the theater. The second continuation, published in a 1756 edition at The Hague, is much more fleshed out and comprises three complementary parts. Jacob is found attractive by a noble lady encountered after the theater performance. He marries her shortly after the death of the former Mlle Habert, while d'Orsan marries d'Orville. Having become the

tax farmer general of his province and lord of his native village, Jacob triumphally returns there, in what constitutes one of the most naive and most unabashedly self-glorifying scenes in novelistic literature; in its own way, it is one of the masterpieces of what Freud was to dub "His Majesty the Ego." Setting aside this highly charged stint, concerning which it would have been nice to have Marivaux's opinion, the imitation here is very meticulous and the diegetic continuity very carefully observed: it is faithful to the characters and their idiolects; all plot strands come together in a laborious epilogue that scrupulously leads us onward to the moment of narration. But the verve and liveliness of action characteristic of *Le Paysan parvenu* are cruelly missing.

Those deficiencies were keenly perceived by contemporary audiences but did not stop several publishers from ascribing these last three parts to Marivaux. And after all, what other indications do we have of their inauthenticity? In 1756 Marivaux still had seven years to live, but he was not at his best. Had he wished, after twenty years, to complete his *Paysan* himself, who knows what the outcome would have been? This may well be a frivolous and/or sacrilegious question, but its merit, at least, is that it raises a few additional ones: if the "Sequel to (and end of) Jacob" (or Marianne) were Marivaux's work, what would be the impact on its status as a continuation? What should we make of an *autograph continuation*? Does a twenty-year delay constitute an equivalent of allography? What would the minimum interval have to be? If none is required, why should we not consider book 2 of *The Red and the Black* as the autograph continuation of book 1? Etc. And what must we think of a genre in which each work's generic status would depend entirely on its author's identity? "I have to pore over these things, adieu."

I have been ill advised to curtail the list of pseudo-Marivaux continuations too drastically: the most ingenious and the most economical in all respects (one denouement for two novels) was suggested by Henri Coulet in his entirely serious *Marivaux romancier*.[6] It is contained within a single sentence: "Do you wish to know the real deouement of *Le Paysan parvenu* and *La Vie de Marianne*? The tax farmer general Jacob marries the noble lady Marianne . . ." I can see a few objections to that solution, of course, but also a few benefits, and again something to pore over. Not counting the potential resources of a generalized application of that procedure: in the first-degree formula, Julien Sorel, having been acquitted, marries Lamiel, or Countess Mosca; in the second degree, Vautrin saves and adopts Gavroche;

in the third (?) degree, Ulysses sleeps with Molly Bloom and Leopold with Penelope . . .[7]

## 30

The historical "law" mentioned above—which states that the existence of an allographic continuation and the preservation of autographic projects and drafts are incompatible and mutually exclusive—fortunately admits of a few exceptions. Such is at least partially the case, in music, for Mozart's *Requiem*, and wholly the case for Puccini's *Turandot*, which we shall come to again. In literature, I know of at least one example, or rather one and a half if we take into account the very special situation of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen.*

We know that this novel consists of two parts, the first of which ("Expectations") was completed at the end of March 1800. During the summer, Novalis undertook to compose the second part ("The Fulfillment"), for which he was able to write only about twenty pages of preparatory notes before his death on 25 March 1801—notes more often in the shape of poems or aphorisms than of narrative indications, and it is not always easy to tell which of those refer to Heinrich's real existence and which to his dreams. All we learn is that Heinrich became a soldier in Italy, that he traveled to Loreto and to Jerusalem, and that the ending is set in an allegorical landscape with talking flowers and beasts, where he himself becomes a "flower-beast-stone-star." Instead of these sparse notes, the original 1802 edition included an afterword by Ludwig Tieck in which, relying on his friend's verbal confidences rather than on his written drafts, he attempted to "give the reader an idea of the outline and content of that second part": Heinrich went to Loreto, to Greece, to the Orient, came back to Italy; he entered the court of Emperor Frederick, who befriended him; he discovered the marvelous land where he was able at length to pick the Blue Flower once glimpsed in a dream, to deliver his beloved Mathilda, and, invested at last with a divine power, to destroy the empire of the sun and gather the seasons together—a conclusion quite in keeping with the design the author had disclosed to Friedrich Schlegel in April 1800: "The novel must progressively turn into a fairytale."

This summary continuation (ten pages approximately), whose faithfulness we have no reason to doubt, does not really overlap with the drafts now appended to all respectable editions of Novalis's novel. It definitely

specifies and structures some of his excessively vague or erratic indications, but it is evidently a mere sketch, and Tieck just as evidently never intended to provide anything else: "The completion of this magnificent work would have been the imperishable monument of a new poetry. For this simple note, I have favored dryness and conciseness over the danger of adding anything of my own invention. Perhaps the sketchy aspect of these verses, of these few strokes, will move some readers as much as they moved me, who could not experience more saddened fervor if I were to contemplate some vestige of a destroyed canvas by Raphael or Correggio."[1] This *saddened fervor* already foreshadows the poetry of ruins, and the respect for, if not the cult of, incompleteness. Thus we cannot quite place Tieck's contribution—or rather, if we are to believe him, his *testimony*—among the allographic continuations coexisting with autographic drafts. On the other hand, that case is perfectly illustrated by the tongue-in-cheek narrative published in 1966 by Jacques Laurent under the explicit title *La Fin de Lamiel.*

Jacques Laurent denies having intended to write a pastiche of Stendhal.[2] But that is because he gives this term—contrary to what he had done in his "Éloge du pasticheur"[3]—the canonical (and restrictive) sense of a satirical pastiche, in which the writer "magnifies the idiosyncrasies of his model to make them obvious to all." There are indeed no such satirical effects in *La Fin de Lamiel*; on the other hand, the (half-playful, half-serious) imitation of the Stendhalian style is obvious from beginning to end, and Laurent implicitly ackowledges—although metaphorically—Stendhal's presence, or at least his influence, when stating that "I have only wished to write under his dictation." In this respect, the execution does not seem to me to be unworthy of the design, given the extreme difficulty of such an undertaking—Stendhal being perhaps, together with Saint-Simon, the most inimitable, because the least predictable, of writers. Whatever deficiencies there are in *La Fin de Lamiel* are due not—as one might have expected—to an excess of "Beylism," an exaggerated use of his most notorious mannerisms and a drift into caricature, but to a contrary excess of restraint or timidity; the result is paradoxically a (too) well-tempered and toned-down Stendhal.

The section of *Lamiel* that Stendhal actually wrote out (completely?), according to the text established by Henri Martineau, stops at the beginning of the heroine's Parisian adventures. Stendhal left an "outline" of the sequel dated 25 November 1839—a very confused affair, from which the following plot line can be roughly disentangled: Lamiel first takes lovers in order to

show off—an Opera dancer and one Comte d'Aubigné (in that order?)—but discovers true love in the person of a robber named Valbayre, who had broken into her house one night to burglarize it. Doctor Sansfin succeeds in having her adopted by a Provençal nobleman, the Marquis d'Orpierre, and finally marries her off to the Duke de Miossens, who had eloped with her from Carville to Paris. Valbayre gets caught by the police and is condemned to death. To avenge him, Lamiel sets fire to the Law Courts, where her bones are found "half-burnt to ashes": a "happy end" for the "happy few."[4]

If we know one thing about Stendhal it is that we cannot be sure he would have respected that outline—except for what concerns the (more or less) delayed discovery of passion, which is the constant subject of all his great novels. But in the absence of a later version, we are condemned to viewing this project as his final intention concerning the end of *Lamiel*, just as we are compelled to believe that Leuwen was to end up marrying the forgiven and then exculpated Madame de Chasteller. Jacques Laurent, knowing that "Stendhal never kept to his outlines and that he had explained himself on that point," chose to stick to this one while altering it. His Lamiel is adopted by one Comte d'Orpier, an old Provençal rake whom she has seduced by her casual bearing, then marries Comte d'Aubigné without loving him and becomes bored. "Take a lover," her adoptive father tells her. She chooses a dancer, becomes bored once more, betrays him with a painter, is still bored, and continues to be bored in the midst of conventional orgies. She discovers passion when the robber—now "Valber"—breaks in; she helps him in his robberies and hides him behind her bed when he is wounded (a bit like Stendhal's Vanina Vanini with Missirili). To test her, he asks her to assist him in burglarizing the Miossens castle, and back she is where she started. During the night Doctor Sansfin slinks into her room to rape her. In a risky but successful move she offers herself to him; he fails miserably and flees in shame. During the burglary the young duke steps in and kills Valber. Lamiel could exonerate herself and save her life, but she panics at the prospect of the boredom to follow, so she stabs Miossens, sets fire to the castle, and dies in the flames.

Jacques Laurent thus kept the heroine's preliminary affairs, the adoption, and the aristocratic marriage (substituting d'Aubigné for Miossens), but shrank from an overly spectacular denouement. In one of the notes appended to his contribution, which are an amusing pastiche of Stendhalian erudition, he justifies himself by imagining that Stendhal, the supposed

author of this continuation, had recoiled from romantic excess: "I would have much preferred the L.C. [Law Courts] to the Miossens castle, it would have made a nicer bonfire! But there always comes a moment when I write as my character acts, as naturally as she (at least I try), and some things become impossible for both of us. This would have been sheer Pix(érécourt)."[5] The fire at the castle is still an honorable bonfire, with the added advantage of looping the loop of the heroine's destiny, from Carville to Carville. Sansfin's failure is eminently Stendhalian, but this ordinary side effect of passionate love becomes here the punishment of a ridiculous vanity, unless one views it as retroactively exalting Sansfin to the rank of true passionate lovers. Mérimée is said to have shown little appreciation for this repetitive failure: "After Octave, Sansfin! You are creating a Knighthood of the Dildo."[6] But the chief difference seems to me to lie in the care taken by Laurent to delay Valber's entrance, and thus the discovery—now final—of true love.

Only then does Lamiel's life find its meaning, and her suicide follows directly upon Valber's death—even though it is accompanied by a characteristic tremor of ambiguity or uncertainty: her lover's fall causes Lamiel no emotion, no regret, but only admiration: "Death befits heroes." All this seems to me entirely appropriate, and to out-Stendhal Stendhal himself.

A successful continuation—one that is faithful not so much to a given work's patchy intentions as to its style and movement—is not a sacrilegious defilement, as the peevish churchwardens of authenticity would have it. To my taste, it is even one of the most respectable uses of the hypertext. But incompleteness, as we have seen in connection with Marivaux's *La Vie de Marianne*, is sometimes also the very truth of a work. Continuation should thus only stand parallel to the mutilated text and to its appended drafts, which it should seek not to displace but to accompany—like Tieck's afterword to *Ofterdingen*—as a complement, or a possible alternative.

The history of music offers us a moving example of such an alternative with *Turandot*. As he was composing his last opera, Puccini, already gravely ill, had a premonition one day and made a statement part forecast, part testament: "The opera will be performed in its incomplete form and someone will walk on stage to say: 'At that moment, the Maestro died.'" After his death in November 1924, Franco Alfano completed the score with the help of the sketches Puccini left behind, and this is the version performed today on opera stages the world over. But for the first performance in La Scala on 26 April 1926, Toscanini symbolically opted for the other alternative.

Immediately after Liu's death, he laid down his baton, turned toward the audience and spoke: "Here ends the Maestro's work. He had reached that point when he died." And the curtain fell amid the silence.[7]

# 31

The function of continuation, however, is not always to complete a work that has been left manifestly and, as it were, officially unfinished. One can always decide that a work which is finished and published as such by its author is nevertheless in need of a prolongation or a completion. Such was the conclusion, for example, of the anonymous author of the *Segunda parte del Lazarillo de Tormes* (1555), which appeared one year after the authentic and equally anonymous *Lazarillo*, and also of another author, Juan de Luna, who in 1620 published under the same title a new, more successful continuation. This one was in truth more emancipated from its model, since it claimed to improve Lazarillo's overly Frenchified style and transformed the narrative into a violent satire on the Church and the Inquisition. We shall return to this category of the unfaithful or corrective continuation. Meanwhile, here is our *Lazarillo* supplied with one or two continuations, which it did not perhaps call for, but its purely linear structure and its rather inconclusive final line ("It was the time of my prosperity and I was at the peak of my good fortune") authorized an implicit "sequel": good times were apparently over, and could thus be followed by new periods of misfortune, providing the stuff of new narratives.[1]

The same could probably be said about *Le Neveu de Rameau*; it ends in an abrupt manner as we know, with "He who laughs last, laughs best," which suspends the dialogue more than it concludes it. But Diderot also knew another proverb, according to which it is unwise to prolong a good joke. So he did not get back to it, nor did he even feel compelled to publish his "second satire," which appeared in French only in 1823, after having been published in 1805 in Goethe's famous German translation, and in 1821 in the shape of a very unfaithful French version of that translation. This first, somewhat teratological venture could not be the last.[2] In 1861, Jules Janin published in the *Revue Européenne* a continuation that bore this equivocal and at the same time explicit title: *La Fin d'un monde et du Neveu de Rameau* {The end of a world and of Rameau's Nephew}.[3] Was it the end of the nephew or of the *Neveu*? Both, in fact, since Janin takes the story as far as the

melodramatic death of his hero, who perishes as a victim of his passion—a purely musical one?—for one of his students, the abandoned daughter of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Thérèse Levasseur.[4] With the exception of this denouement, *La Fin d'un monde* is an excellent pastiche of Diderot, the conversation between the philosopher and the parasite rebounding with new gusto from one encounter to the next and from chapter to chapter, in a style and a spirit that are often worthy of the model:

> Whence his laughter and whence his tears? I could not tell you. I often said to him: "Rameau, you are not a man, you are, at the very most, an Vaucanson automaton; Rameau, you are the first cousin of the *flute player* and of the *digesting duck*!" He would laugh, he did not claim I was wrong; he would only maintain that he was a masterpiece among automatons and that he was peerless. "Indeed," he would say, tapping his chest, "here I have springs, pulleys, cogs, wheels, mechanisms that can be assembled and disassembled at will. . . . I am, at this very moment, choking with sympathy and tenderness. . . . Wait until tomorrow, just wait one more hour: bang, there goes one cog! and back comes the buffoon, the windbag, the oaf, the rogue! Today I am both sad and affectionate, and could not hope to amuse you: good-bye!"[5]

The pastiche is worthy of the model, except that the continuation is three or four times longer than its hypotext. Janin retained everything of Diderot's lesson save that which no continuator wishes to learn: the art of interrupting oneself and of stopping short. Here, once again, is the fundamental contradiction of all continuations: namely, one cannot complete the incomplete without at least betraying what is sometimes essential to it—incompleteness, of course.

At the opposite extreme from this garrulous prolongation, one should perhaps cite the rather concise conclusion (unfaithful by virtue of its very conciseness) appended to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (three years after its publication) by Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1764). This novel ends as dramatically as possible with Julie's death. Yet the last four letters—addressed to Saint-Preux by M. de Wolmar, by Mme d'Orbe, and by Julie herself, who asks him to take charge of her children's education after her death—leave us curiously in ignorance of the hero's feelings and decision. This gap was filled by Mercier, who composed in the appropriate style one last letter, from Saint-Preux to Wolmar: he informs Walmar that he nearly

killed himself out of despair but that he has finally resolved to go on living in order to carry out Julie's last wishes; he will therefore come to Clarens to bring up her children. All in all, a rather respectful and uninventive epilogue. We shall come across another one, the tone of which will be quite different.

Respectful or not, those continuations add to their hypotext only the prolongation and the conclusion that the continuator thinks it fit (or profitable) to adduce. One can also view a work as flawed by an inadequate beginning, or even—as Aristotle would put it—an inadequate middle or inadequate asides, and decide to correct those flaws. Several types of continuation can thus be identified: first, a forward continuation (i.e., what will come *after*) or, in plain English, a *proleptic* continuation (this is the most widely used and has been illustrated by all the examples mentioned so far); second, an *analeptic* or backward continuation (i.e., what came *before*), meant to work its way upstream, from cause to cause, to a more radical or at least a more satisfactory starting point; third, an *elleptic* continuation, meant to fill in a median gap or ellipsis; and fourth, a *paraleptic* continuation, designed to bridge paralipses, or lateral ellipses ("Meanwhile, back at the ranch . . ."). These monsters may seem to have been tailored to the purpose. Not so: all the varieties listed above are to be found in the post- or para-Homeric epic cycle called the Trojan Cycle, written after or around Homer's time by poets intent on completing and extending the narrative of which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were seen as merely two erratic episodes or fragments. Thus we have an *analeptic* continuation in the *Cyprian Poems*, which go back to the "primary" causes of the Trojan Wars (the abduction of Helen, whence, regressively, the judgment of Paris; the wedding of Thetis and Peleus). We have *elleptic* continuations by Lesches in the *Little Iliad* and by Arctinus in the *Aethiopis* and the *Destruction of Ilium*, which extend the *Iliad* up to its "necessary" term—that is, up to the beginning of the *Odyssey*—by way of Penthesilea, then Memnon, Philoctetes' return, Pyrrhus's arrival, and the Trojan horse, down to the final massacre and fire, thus filling in the "gap" left by Homer between the actions of his two poems. A *paraleptic* continuation by Agias in his *Nostoi* completes the *Odyssey* by attaching to it the narrative of all the other returns. And finally, there is Eugammon's *proleptic* continuation in his *Telegonia*, which prolongs the story of Ulysses beyond his return to Ithaca: he marries the queen of the Thesprotes, battles the Bryges, and is killed by mistake by his second son (Circe's son), Telegonus. There is a "happy end," nevertheless, if you can

call it that: Telemachus marries Circe, and Telegonus marries Penelope, who has probably survived just for this para-Oedipal mixup. "What improbabilities!" a modern commentator exclaimed, "what bad taste! what a profound and definitive degeneration of the epic, which for centuries had charmed all ears and hearts, what lamentable death of a genre which had shown Hector and Andromache's farewell, King Priam at Achilles' feet, Penthesilea's superb agony, the virginal and fugitive apparition of Nausicaa, the old dog's death on his dung heap."[6]

Great epics seem universally fated to such malignant strings of continuations and doomed to be relentlessly totalized by similar "cycles." A counterpart can be found, for example, in the various cycles composed as early as the middle of the twelfth century around a few epics: the cycle of Charlemagne around the *Song of Roland*, the cycle of Guillaume around the *Song of Guillaume*, the cycle of the rebellious barons around Raoul de Cambrai and Girart de Roussillon.[7] But the relationship of the Trojan Cycle to Homer's work is not indubitably or totally of the order of continuation, since one can still surmise that some of its elements were contemporary and concurrent with the *Iliad*. In any case, the text of these epics is lost today; we know them only through minute fragments and through the summaries of later scholiasts and mythographers. Their writerly status, therefore, remains impossible to assess, even though they were unquestionably written in the same conventional dialect, the same meter, and the same style as the Homeric poems.

The most typical of the post-Homeric continuations for us today is the *Posthomerica* by Quintus Smyrnaeus, which probably dates from the third century A.D. The dialect and the style are as strictly Homeric as they could have been ten centuries later (but ten centuries during which the tradition had been faithfully transmitted); the action is inserted rigorously between Hector's funeral and Ulysses' departure, thus between the end of the *Iliad* and the beginning of the *Odyssey*; and the facts of these two poems are nearly always scrupulously respected. With all that, Quintus could not escape the inevitable choice between the thematic content (and narrative style) of his two hypotexts. Or rather, his choice was made in advance, and the *Odyssey* is here only a source of retrospective information and a *terminus ad quem*. As for the rest, no doubt is possible: Quintus's *Fall of Troy* is at once a continuation and an imitation of only the *Iliad*, intended to add to its long series of melees, single fights, divine interventions, and funereal games another succession of melees, single fights, divine interventions,

etc. The only deviating elements are the denouement—bequeathed by the *Odyssey*, the cyclical poems, the tragic authors, and the *Aeneid* (the sack and burning of Troy)—and the initial episode, most likely borrowed from the *Aethiopis* (which was known only indirectly to Quintus himself), opening with the exploits of Penthesilea, her death, and Achilles' sorrow: a feminine presence and a love theme that contribute in their own right to the epic's drift toward romance. Otherwise, this continuation feeds on repetition or, at the very least, on rehashing the same material—not that it returns to the same incidents but that it thinks fit to continue them through a long series of similar incidents. Whence the evidently unintended consequence that of the fourteen cantos, ten should read like an endless and crushing caricature, benefiting neither its author nor its model. The task of completion in fact consists in joining up with the *Odyssey* and in trusting Homer himself to take over—a rather infrequent and most privileged situation. For the *Odyssey*, of course, is also in its own manner a kind of continuation of the *Iliad*. But its manner is not that of Quintus, precisely because it is already no longer that of the *Iliad*.

*Iliad/Odyssey*: the strongest argument in favor of the unity of the author is perhaps precisely the fact that the second work is not a mere mimicry of the first, which it would quite naturally have been had it been penned by a follower or a competitor. Only the author himself could have the energy and the good taste to avoid such self-imitation, being more tempted by an entirely different work, and one whose relation to the preceding work can be seen to be rather oblique: ten years later, the secondary character has become the hero; the theme of the action has changed (from exploit to adventure), as has the narrative attitude, which has become all of a sudden almost entirely focused upon the hero alone—and to a lesser degree upon his son, in the Telemachia {books 1–4}—and completely breaks with the Olympian objectivity ("an external procession," says Hegel) of the epic mode. It is almost a change of genre, since Homer here covers more than half the distance separating the epic from romance, with the shift from the war theme to the theme of individual adventure, the shrinking of the multiple cast to one central hero, the focalization of the narrative upon that hero, and finally the introduction—so alien to the narrative mode of the *Iliad* (and later also of medieval epics)—of the beginning *in medias res*, balanced by an autodiegetic first-person narrative in books 9 through 12. A break, then, a transformation on sight, an astoundingly bold change of

course, which are the very hallmark of genius—and of the *same* genius, as we are led to believe, for the same genius is needed to produce, at the same period and starting with a previous work, a second work as different as this is from the first. The *Odyssey* is thus neither a continuation nor a sequel; by its superb unfaithfulness it upsets and contests that demarcation in advance, and a few others as well.

With all of that, the *Odyssey* is nevertheless a hypertextual work, and significantly the earliest that we can fully receive and appreciate as such. Its *secondary* character is inscribed in its very subject, which is a sort of partial epilogue to the *Iliad*, whence these constant cross-references and allusions, which clearly assume that the reader of the one work must have already read the other. Ulysses himself is constantly in a secondary situation: he is regularly spoken of to his face without being recognized, and among the Phaeacians he can hear the tales of his own exploits sung by Demodocus; or else he himself tells of his adventures, to the extent that a large portion of the work (the narrative to Alcinous) is like a retrospective in relation to itself—in fact, the essential portion dealing with Ulysses' adventures proper. The remainder serves rather as a kind of epilogue: Ulysses' return and his final revenge. And this narrative, with its complex and as it were swirling structure, is not without its articular problems. We have two narratives of the sojourn with Calypso, of the parting and the tempest (in book 5 by Homer, in book 12 by Ulysses), and we barely escape a third one in book 12 at the conclusion of Ulysses' narrative. Such insistence makes the episode ubiquitous and sows the seeds of its resumption by Fénelon—in Telemachus's voyage, which also initiates a reduplication of the action. Let us add to these the diverse occasions when the disguised Ulysses tells imaginary adventures and mentions himself as if he were someone else of his acquaintance. And the episodes announced by means of prophecy (from Proteus, Tiresias, Circe) and thus also told twice—resulting in a certain narrative confusion that troubles and dislocates our memory of the narrative ("where is this episode to be found?") and more than sanctions the ironic, wary, and deliberately dizzying versions by the likes of Giraudoux, Joyce, Giono, and John Barth.[8] The *Odyssey* is not for nothing the favorite target of hypertextual writing.

Conversely, the effort at cyclical totalization, or generalized continuation, may be imputed to an inferior, laborious, schoolish, and decadent inspiration. Hegel describes this situation in rather severe terms and brands it

*prosaism*: i.e., a pedantic and, as it were, administrative conception of unity, which is contrary to the abrupt and haughty discontinuity of the true epic narrative. This conception is notably typified by the concern for closure (later dismissed as inept by Flaubert as well):

> Every event is prolonged *ad inf.* backwards in its causes and forwards in its consequences, and it extends into both past and future in a chain of particular circumstances and actions so innumerable that there is no determining which of all the situations and other details are part and parcel of the event or are to be regarded as connected with it. If all that we have in mind is this *sequence*, then it is true that an epic can always be continued backwards and forwards and in addition it affords an ever open opportunity for interpolation. But such a succession is simply prosaic. To quote an example, the Greek cyclic poets sang the entire compass of the Trojan war and therefore continued from where Homer left off and began from Leda's egg; but precisely for this reason they were a contrast to the Homeric poems and became rather prosy.[9]

Such a concern, in any case, is obviously far removed from the lofty and almost casual insouciance of the *Iliad*, which does not even deign to follow its hero to his death, however near and certain.

## 32

Two examples of continuation, inscribed outside cyclical totalization (though quite obviously within its tradition), are most typical of the classical mind at both its onset and decline: Virgil's *Aeneid* and Fénelon's *Telemachus*. Either one fills what might be considered a lateral gap, or paralipsis, in the Homeric text.

Among the Trojan heroes the *Iliad* mentions, alongside Hector and Paris, Aeneas, the son of Anchises and Aphrodite. In the last book Aeneas is still alive, and Poseidon, who has saved him from Achilles' onslaught, has mentioned a prophecy according to which he and his progeny will rule over (a new) Troy. But the *Odyssey* tells nothing of what became of him after the battle. Therefore, the cyclical epics—the *Little Iliad*, the *Aethiopis*, and in their wake, Quintus of Smyrna—had to take over: during the sack of Troy, Aeneas battles valiantly, then leaves the city, taking his father {who dies en

route} and his son along with him. The sequel that remains to be written thus constitutes a *return*, parallel to those of Ulysses and Agamemnon and, incidentally, the only one that can be told from the Trojan side, of which Aeneas is the only adult male survivor. It is this return, a traditional epic topos, that is recounted by Virgil. It gives him occasion to answer two purposes: one is "patriotic" and consists in diverting the Trojan heritage and the wealth of sympathy that it commmands (more of this later) to Rome's benefit by assigning to Aeneas the founding of Rome and the seed of the people of the *gens Julia*, Caesar's and Augustus's lineage; the other, purely poetic and strictly classical in spirit, consists of a synthesis of the two Homeric models: that of the *Iliad* (battles and exploits) and that of the *Odyssey* (wandering and adventure). The last six books of the *Aeneid* were to be an *Iliad*, the first six books an *Odyssey*, with a marked development of the feminine theme initiated in the *Odyssey* by the roles of Calypso, Circe, and Nausicaa. That synthesis was to constitute, for the entire neoclassical age, the academic model of an epic—indeed a sterile one, since the true epic inspiration had meanwhile found a new and original expression in the *chanson de geste* or the *romancero*.[1]

As for Fénelon's *Adventures of Telemachus*, they fit into a paralipsis of the *Odyssey*, of which they provide a lateral continuation.[2] Homer recounts in books 1 to 4 Telemachus's initial tribulations as he seeks information concerning his father's fate, and up to his stay in Sparta with Menelaus. Nothing more is then heard about Telemachus until he reappears in book 15, as he returns to Ithaca to identify Ulysses. *Telemachus* thus answers the question of what happened to Telemachus during this time lapse. The first five books were in fact initially published as a "Sequel to the Fourth Book of Homer's Odyssey." Fénelon, like Virgil, strives to restore the epic equilibrium by introducing—in book 13 and especially in 15 and 16—a veritable war. But, again in the manner of Virgil, he deflects the model in the direction of romance, with a captivity in Egypt that smacks of Heliodorus, and with Calypso's feelings for Telemachus (a younger likeness of Ulysses) and of Telemachus for the nymph Eucharis, then for the princess Antiope. Fénelon did not really claim to write a true epic with this prose narrative, which he designated more modestly "a fabulous narration in the form of a heroic poem." Moreover, his chief objective was pedagogical: by way of errors and temptations overcome, tests and trials, good and bad examples, and Mentor's timely lessons, Telemachus is made to go through a real apprenticeship, obviously intended by proxy for the Duke of Burgundy. Its

very principle, the evolution and formation of a character, is quite alien to the resolute fixedness of epic psychology (Achilles is hotheaded, Hector is generous, Ulysses is sharp, Aeneas is pious—and, as Hegel was to put it, "that must suffice").[3] Indeed, it constitutes one of the most pronounced features of the drift from the epic to romance—albeit of the edifying sort: the theme of apprenticeship was already apparent in Chrétien de Troyes. We could thus define *Telemachus* as a graft between an ancient epic and—dare I coin this monstrous phrase?—a *Bildungsroman ad usum Delphini.* No doubt we could—but need we bother?

## 33

Another post-Homeric trail takes up the undetermined destiny of Hector's widow and her orphan son. The treatment of this subject implies, retroactively, an entire conception, or interpretation, of epic ethos.

Hegel, who defines the historic content or, more precisely, the "world situation" specific to the epic as a state of war between two nations, insists that a civil war or a revolution cannot under any circumstance provide a subject for an epic (but can on the other hand furnish excellent dramatic subjects), because the epic requires that each side express a "substantive unity" of a people whose specific individuality is challenged in the conflict—hence the inevitable aesthetic failure of attempts such as Lucan's *Pharsalia* or Voltaire's *Henriade.* Just as insistently, Hegel states as an additional prerequisite that one of the two peoples involved act in the name of a "superior necessity," even though this necessity "may assume the character of some single violation or of revenge," and he observes that all great European epics, starting with the *Iliad,* "describe the triumph of the West over the East, of European moderation, and the individual beauty of a reason that sets limits to itself, over Asiatic brilliance and over the magnificence of a patriarchal unity still devoid of perfect articulation or bound together so abstractly that it collapses into parts separate from one another": a glorification that is naturally consecrated by an absolute victory—one "that leaves nothing over for the defeated"—of "the world-historically justified . . . higher principle."[1]

This description could fit the *Song of Roland* (which was not known to Hegel) and the *Romancero del Cid,* where the struggle against the Moors is indeed presented as the confrontation between a good and a bad camp. It

becomes more debatable regarding *Orlando furioso* and *Jerusalem Delivered* (which Hegel ranks here, exceptionally, among true epics), where the superiority of the principle of the Christian camp in no way leads the poet to devalue the opposite side, which provides him with some of his most superb heroes. Concerning the *Iliad*, on the other hand—which according to Hegel shows us that the Greeks "take the field against the Asiatics and thereby fight the first epic battles in the tremendous opposition" between two civilizations[2]—it has often been noted that the two civilizations involved are close to each other, identical even, their material state, their social organization, their language, and above all their religion, even though (or rather, so that) Olympus is divided regarding them: a division that would have no cause if each side had its own Olympus. If there is such a thing as a Homeric civilization, the Trojan War does indeed appear as a fratricidal conflict--and we know full well how many friends and relatives are made to confront one another at the foot of the ramparts.

As for the division of the sides according to a scale of values, we would be hard put to read into the *Iliad*, even implicitly, the exaltation of a Greek nation "superior" to the Trojan nation. The victory of the Achaeans, which is due mostly to Achilles' courage and then (beyond the *Iliad*) to that of his son Neoptolemus, to Ulysses' shrewdness, and to more efficient divine help, is in no way presented as the triumph of the "good" side over the "bad," and even less as that of a civilization more "advanced" than the other. The Greek cause is the just cause only inasmuch as Menelaus's rights over the person of Helen surpass those of Paris, and we know how little sympathy the legitimacy of conjugal ties elicits for the betrayed husband; he is, rather, despised for his misadventure and detested for having drawn an entire people into a punitive venture that it could well have done without, were it not for the additional hope of rich loot. Furthermore, the mere fact of Agamemnon's injustice toward Achilles offsets, to put it mildly, the soundness of the Atreidae's cause. In truth, it all seems to the reader as if the war here opposed a camp of brutal and unscrupulous invaders and a peaceful city that did not deserve any of this persecution.

Pierre Vidal-Naquet observes that the dead on the Trojan side numbered 150 against 44 on the Achaean side, which indicates a military superiority and announces the final victory.[3] He adds that the collective comparisons are all in favor of the Greeks: bees against grasshoppers; invincible lions against bleating sheep, frightened does, scared fawns—"generally speaking, order and military effectiveness characterize the besiegers, while the Trojans

embody disorder and confusion." Such is, in fact, the (only) terrain of Achaean superiority, which is that both of the stronger and of the better organized: "the Trojans are civilians, *tamers of mares*, and the Achaeans with their *beautiful greaves* are soldiers." Vidal-Naquet adds that the "nascent Greek city is too profoundly linked to military virtues for there to be much question" as to the valuation implicit for Homer in such a contrast. But he concedes at once that this valuation holds "for us" a certain ambiguity that "allowed readers very early on to turn Hector into the hero of the *Iliad*." Without taking it this far, let us note that "very early on" forcefully—and fortunately—corrects "for us." The reversal certainly began with Euripides, and I am not certain that the idea had not already occurred to the first listeners of the *Iliad*, whose values were perhaps no longer as "tied to military virtues" as those of the "new Greek city." Vidal-Naquet himself acknowledges that "facing the Achaeans, the Trojans at war form, unlike their enemies, a complete society. There is not a single legitimate spouse, not a single child in the Danaan camp." However "nascent" the city, it is at least and above all the place where the warriors join their spouses and children between battles. In the *Iliad*, as is indicated by the title after all (before all), the only city is Troy; the Achaeans have only a camp: tents and boats.

This opposition between the Greek *camp* and the Trojan *city* is undoubtedly most significant: nothing in the *Iliad* evokes an Achaean civilization, only a horde of warriors settled amid their ships and tents with their servants, their captives, and their previous loot. On the opposite side, behind the walls of Ilium, lives a true people with its palaces, its ramparts, its temples, its citizen-soldiers, its trembling wives and frightened children, all anticipating the pillage, the fire, the slaughter, the enslavement, or, in the best of cases, exile. If a civilization consists of the life of a people, the only civilization present in the *Iliad* is obviously the Trojan one, and the scenes in Ithaca, Pylos, Sparta, and at the court of Alcinous, in the *Odyssey*, are only a belated compensation for this imbalance. The Trojan War is quite clearly the war waged against Troy, and the sympathy of the narrative (regardless of that of the narrator) goes to the losing side.

One cannot claim therefore, as does Hegel, that the military superiority of the Greeks is that of civilization over barbarism; rather, the exact opposite is true, as Shakespeare's Thersites more or less states in *Troilus and Cressida*, and true to a rather common paradox that should not have been beyond the reach of Hegelian dialectic. Vidal-Naquet shrewdly observes that in the *Iliad* the Trojans are *civilians*, and that word tells the whole story. I say

"in the *Iliad*," and this qualification only makes things worse: we know nothing of the historic reality of the Trojan War, and no doubt at certain moments in history there existed warfaring people without cities (the Huns, the Tartars?), or people whose cities were no more than vast barracks (Lacedaemon), but there is no evidence that such was the case of the Greeks; in the *Odyssey*, the evidence (though later) points rather to the contrary. Our vision of the Achaean world is thus indeed the *Iliad*'s doing, and the *Iliad*'s alone. Greek barbarism is an epic artifact, an *epic effect*. The (purely poetic) theme of the moral and, in the strongest sense, cultural superiority of Troy would never have seen the light of day were it not for the *Iliad*'s helping hand. A curious contribution to national Hellenic edification.

This paradoxical and perhaps unintended partiality was emphasized by the vast literary posterity spawned by the *Iliad*, beginning with Greek tragedians, or Euripides at least, who devoted no less than three tragedies—*The Trojan Women*, *Hecuba*, *Andromache*—to the fate of the captive women victimized by war and then by defeat, slaughter, and exile. Virgil did not have a difficult task turning these sympathetic Trojan survivors into the legitimate heroes of a new quest and the glorious founders of the Roman nation. Thanks to him, to Dictys of Crete, Dares the Phrygian, and a few others, medieval literature was to inherit this vulgate, which inspired the *Romance of Aeneus*, *The Romance of Troy*, and all their medieval and Renaissance posterity in Germany, Italy, England, and most of all in France, where Ronsard—after Lemaire des Belges[4]—co-opted the aggrandizing myth of Trojan origins for the benefit of the French (*Franciade*, 1572), where Racine extolled Andromache's virtue and fondness, where Giraudoux attempted for two whole acts to exorcize the inevitable.

*Andromaque, je pense à vous* . . . {Andromache, I am thinking of you}.[5] Starting with book 6 of the *Iliad*, our vision of the Trojan War has been focused upon this grieving figure who casts into the shadow all the heroic feats in the plain, all the glorious slaughters on the bank of the Xanthus. Homer probably neither intended nor expected this distortion, which was—in Virgil and his successors, during those centuries when the Homeric text was forgotten—a deviation in the writing before it became a misreading. Today, we read the *Iliad* with a sensibility that is informed by, among other things, a long tradition of reinterpretation and rewriting of its text. One example is this recent, very revealing commentary on the jacket of a popular edition of the work: "The character of Achilles brings us the

wild scent of primitive cultures, but here comes Hector, and with him the onset of modern humanity." Homer certainly had not intended that, but his text, to say the least, does lend itself to and unwittingly authorizes this singular drift from the heroic to the elegiac, and this ironic reversal of what Hegel, alone and against majority opinion, persisted in describing as the "superiority" of Greek civilization. Unless, of course, that superiority—Homer's and Euripides'—already lay in that poetic conversion of fierceness into pity, of the glorification of the conquerors into the exaltation of the vanquished. Here the hypertext follows and emphasizes, by prolonging it, the secret slope of the text.

As Cassandra puts it at the conclusion of Giraudoux's play *La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*, "The Trojan poet is dead. . . . And now the Grecian poet will have his word," and the Greek poet spoke, more clearly perhaps than he was aware, and induced nearly all his inheritors and successors to speak, for the Trojan cause.

What all this may imply is that the heroic "world situation," warlike confrontation, can sustain the epic poet's inspiration only so long as it allows for the expression of that pathetic other truth whereby a woman's voice is heard to say that heroism is not man's most profound, or noblest, calling. Gilbert Durand—who in this follows Hegel's historic scheme fairly closely—designates as the "moment of romance" that in which epic heroism is displaced by lyrical intimacy. Romance or no romance, that moment may have occurred even earlier than might appear, right in the heart of the earliest (?) and most rigorous Western epic. The *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, *Jerusalem Delivered* only emphasized that feature. Maurice Barrès's quip may be parodied once again: scratch the epic, and you will find the elegiac. But you can only scratch what is already itching.

*Andromaque, je pense à vous* . . . Even this pious thought found its ironic paraphrase in one of Marcel Aymé's novels, *Uranus* (1948), and that is the book's only saving grace. In the aftermath of World War II, classes from the now destroyed Blémont high school are being held in commandeered cafés. Léopold Lajeunesse, owner of the Café du Progrès, plays host to first-year senior high, a class which, in those bygone days, used to study Racine's *Andromaque* (nowadays, in the best of cases, it would probably study *Uranus*). As a result of hearing the students recite it, that crude alcoholic giant of a man ("Although, come to think of it, I have never drunk more than I needed: it was unusual for me to go beyond my twelve liters per day") falls

passionately for this text and, through it, for the heroine. Soon he dreams of interfering in the diegesis (he does not use that word) and engineering an escape: "Arriving one evening at Pyrrhus's palace, he bought the porter's complicity, and, as night came, he made his way to Andromache's room. . . . Leopold assured her of his respectful devotion, promising that she would soon be free without her having to spend even a cent, and concluded by telling her: 'Hand me Astyanax, we'll make off on the sly.' "

Delighted when he discovers that he has just composed an alexandrine verse, he decides to forge ahead and write himself a continuation in which he will be the hero. A few days later, taking advantage of the inspiration afforded by his favorite drink, he blurts out the following lines:

LÉOPOLD: Passez-moi Astayanax, on va filer en douce,
Attendons pas d'avoir les poulets à nos trousses.
ANDROMAQUE: Mon Dieu, c'est-il possible! Enfin voilà un homme!

{LEOPOLD: Hand me Astyanax, we'll sneak off on the sly,
Let's not wait for the cops to be on our heels.
ANDROMACHE: My god! it ain't possible! A real man at long last!}

A little later still, he finds a rhyme for *homme* and has her continue thus: Vous voulez du vin blanc ou vous voulez du rhum? {You wanna have white wine, or you wanna have rum?}

LÉOPOLD: Du blanc.
ANDROMAQUE: C'était du blanc que buvait mon Hector
Pour monter aux tranchées, et il n'avait pas tort.

{LEOPOLD: White.
ANDROMACHE: My Hector drank white
When he went up to the trenches, and damn right he was, too.}

Here the scene ends, because Leopold, detained by the police for another misdemeanor, resists and gets himself slaughtered on the spot, two steps away from his *opus interruptum*, a tragicomic variation on the Trojan myth, fitting into the unending chain of all those who have been concerned, with or without an ulterior motive, about what Leo Bersani recently called the *future of Astyanax*.[6]

I wrote *continuation* a bit too hastily; the case is more complex. As a text produced by Leopold, it is first a metadiegetic work inside the story told in *Uranus*. But this metadiegesis, which joins up with Racine's diegesis

(and through it, with Homer's), is open to the Uranian diegesis, since Leopold is simultaneously the author and the hero, having been to this point a simple listener: a perfect metalepsis, or I don't know my stuff. Next, this continuation becomes a correction, for Leopold fully intends—having introduced himself into the plot of *Andromaque*—to cut through its plot line with his unexpected intervention: Andromache will probably escape Pyrrhus's advances; he will then perhaps turn to Hermione, who will thus be able to escape Orestes, who in any case can be counted upon to go mad. After all this, Andromache will decide on her own whether she should or not, and in what manner, repay her rescuer. This correction, however, remains unfinished, owing to the policemen and the death of Leopold, which sends Andromache back to her fate as a captive and Astyanax to his uncertain future. An aborted correction then, and a return to Racinian fate, which, in the manner of Giraudoux's ironic parodies (in the tragic sense of the term), comes to pass when least expected, with simply another victim having been added, in passing, to *Andromaque*'s record.

Formally, the fragment composed by Leopold is of an equally complex order. Leopold is inspired both by his sympathy for the beleaguered heroine and by his admiration for the author. He competes simultaneously with Pyrrhus (as a hero) and with Racine (as a poet): "Racine, in fact, is I-me-myself. Obviously I am not about to compare myself to a man who wrote thirty or forty thousand lines, since I myself have written only three so far, but he too had to begin at the beginning." His text, written in imitation of the only author he knew, is intended as a pastiche—like most continuations. But his lack of culture and his vulgarity deflect the execution toward a result that no one—not even in Port-Royal—would think of imputing to Racine. The distance between the intention and the execution induces the comic effect in the text, entirely at the expense of the poor café owner: this round is on him. We get an unanticipated version of the mock-heroic pastiche, based on the contrast between the lowliness of the content and the loftiness of the style—a loftiness reduced here to the mere form of alexandrine verse, since Leopold has not perceived the incompatibility of his vocabulary with the dignity of the grand style. The mock-heroic sinks into the vulgar and falls back into burlesque parody; Andromache and Leopold speak here exactly as they would in an *Andromaque travestie.*

In the second preface to *Andromaque*, Racine justifies having allowed Astyanax to live "a little longer than he did." "I write," he adds, "in a land

where this freedom could only be well received. For without mentioning Ronsard, who selected this same Astyanax as the hero of his *Franciade*, don't we all know that our ancient kings are said to descend from that son of Hector's, and that our ancient chronicles save this young prince's life, after the destruction of his country, in order to make of him the founder of our monarchy?"

This tradition, which goes back to the Middle Ages for what concerns the Trojan ancestry of France's "ancient kings," is evidently of Virgilian inspiration. Obviously enough, it is a scholarly rather than a popular legend, attested in England as well, and one that has its linguistic counterpart: English and French were supposed to be derived, much in the same way, from Celtic, and Celtic from Phrygian. Just as Virgil had given Ascanius-Iulus to the Julii as an ancestor, so the other child saved from the devastation of Troy was confiscated for the benefit of the Tudors and the first kings of France. This version of Astyanax's fate is considered by modern mythographers to be "more recent" and less attested than the other. The fact is that in the *Little Iliad*, Neoptolemus can be seen tearing Astyanax out of his nurse's arms, dangling him by the foot, and hurling him from the top of the ramparts;[7] that the *Ilioupersis*, according to Proclus's summary, has Ulysses cast him off, in compliance with a general decision by the Greeks;[8] and that in *The Trojan Women*, Euripides attributes the same feat to Ulysses. Apollodorus, Quintus of Smyrna, and Ovid do not identify the executioner but do confirm the decision, and Quintus, like Polygnotus in the Delphi fresco described by Pausanias, has the child torn out of his mother's arms, not the arms of his nurse.[9] The other version is mentioned in a Homeric scholium: "The *Neoteroi* claim that he later became the founder of Troy and of other cities."[10] This "Troy" was no doubt a Trojan colony, perhaps built in imitation of the city of Priam, like that of Helenus in the *Aeneid*. A Euripidean scholium confirms this: "Some say that Astyanax founded cities and became king: those authors' opinion is reported by Lysimachos in his second book of *Nostoi*."[11] According to Albert Séveryns, from whom I am borrowing this information, the origin of that version is to be found in the post-Homeric poets (*Neoteroi*) who lived before the fifth century B.C. but were "noncyclical, and today are lost."[12]

That is, then, the variant that emerges again in the "ancient chronicles" referred to by Racine, in order to endow the French monarchy with prestigious ancestry. To be sure, the Trojan lineage could survive

while bypassing the dubious Astyanax, who would be left to die below the ramparts of Troy in conformity with cyclical tradition: all one would have to do is provide him with a brother who survived the massacre. Such is the option introduced by Dictys, who credits Hector with two sons, Astyanax-Scamandrios and Leodamas. Lemaire des Belges takes up this addition, giving Francus as a second name to Leodamas and assigning him Celtic Gaul as his kingdom. This conciliation, however, seems a little too expedient to satisfy the imagination; moreover, it finds no support in Homer, who not only never mentions a brother to Astyanax but irresistibly suggests that Astyanax is Hector's only child, or at least his only son. Ronsard thus has to resume the hypothesis of Astyanax's survival: saved from the massacre, the child, following the death of Pyrrhus-Neoptolemus, is raised by Andromache and Helenus in their new Troy in Epirus. Thence he leaves for Gaul, where he marries king Diceus's daughter, whence his Frankish posterity: Pharamond, Mérovée, and the rest.

Regarding such a controversial fate, what stand did Homer himself take? (This is clearly what I was getting to when unraveling all the threads of this intricate story.) None, in fact. Or more precisely he stood with both sides: hence the ambiguous support that the two post-Homeric versions claim as authority. In book 24 of the *Iliad*, immediately after Hector's death, Andromache evokes both eventualities with disturbing precision: "And you, my child, will go with me to labour somewhere at a menial task under a heartless master's eye; or some Achaean will seize you by the arm and hurl you from the walls to a cruel death."[13] It looks as though Homer, in this dubious prolepsis, were himself referring to an ambiguous tradition, or rather—since nothing in the present case prevented him from choosing, as did his continuators after him—as though he wished to leave them an open field by merely indicating the two possible roads to follow. As if to emphasize this uncertainty with silence, the *Odyssey*, which in other instances supplies the *Iliad* with its retrospective epilogue, remains deliberately mute on this point.[14] Slaughtered, spared in order to found a new Troy with which each nation can mythically identify, open to all the interventions of the hypertext, available for tragic lament, for the cruel Racinian game, for this strange epic co-optation: that ultimate echo of the Trojan misery, the fate of Astyanax—and consequently that of Andromache, prisoner without hope or queen-mother warden of Trojan destiny—remains forever uncertain. All may use it as they please, or according to their fantasies: thus has the Homeric text ironically decided.[15]

By a curious coincidence, the myth of the origin of Troy—monarchical at first—survives also, very subliminally, in the symbol of the French Republic: Marianne is wearing a Phrygian bonnet. This headgear, worn in classical antiquity by the Phrygians—distant descendants, if any remain, of Homer's Trojans—and later by emancipated slaves, became the emblem of liberty under the French Revolution, then, metonymically, the emblem of the Republic and, finally, of the French nation. A most indirect association, but one that can be read as a very muted echo of an irreplaceable mythical filiation, as if the "victorious West" continued to expiate its victory and to identify symbolically with its first victims: *Aux captifs, aux vaincus! . . . à bien d'autres encore!* {[I am thinking of] the captive, the vanquished . . . and many others more!}.[16]

## 34

The *Romance of the Rose* offers the rare example (and I have explained why), though one not to be ruled out in principle, of an official continuation that is emancipated from any stylistic mimeticism, indeed from any ideological faithfulness. The facts are as follows: sometime around 1230, Guillaume de Lorris's death interrupted at line 4058 the allegorical narrative of the trials and tribulations of the Lover as he quests for the Rose of whom he is enamored. His enemies Danger, Shame, and Fear have imprisoned his indispensable ally Fair Welcoming in a tower, and the hero remains alone and desperate. We know that the author's intention was to have Fair Welcoming delivered from prison and to allow Lover, finally, to pick the Rose. As it stands, and despite its incompleteness, the poem enjoyed great success for about forty years. Beneath the narrative fiction it offered, as is known, a kind of breviary for courtly love, a chivalric Art of Loving. Around 1275, Jean de Meun undertook to finish the poem. Thus was born the second *Romance of the Rose*, whose official purpose and general structure are typically those of a continuation. The seam between the two is marked with maximal reverence and probity:

> Cy endroit trépassa Guillaume
> De Lorris, et n'en fit plus psaume
> Mais après plus de quarante ans
> Maitre Jean de Meun ce roman

Parfit, ainsi comme je treuve
Et ici commmence son oeuvre.

{In this place Guillaume de Lorris
Passed away, and no longer sang
But more than forty years later
Master Jean de Meun completed
This romance, as I discover
And here begins his work.}

The expected denouement is scrupulously carried out: Frankness and Pity deliver Fair Welcoming; the hero picks the Rose; and his dream—for it was a dream—ends there. But so does the faithfulness of the continuator, for between the respectful transition and this fitting conclusion are interposed nearly 18,000 octosyllabic lines whose style and didactic content are very foreign to those of the model—and sometimes at the opposite extreme, since Jean de Meun's philosophy, marked as it is by a return to the sources of ancient naturalism, in many respects takes a stand that is hostile to the ideal of courtly love, and he is not afraid to express a wholly bourgeois distrust and disdain of the eternal feminine. If one keeps in mind the enormous quantitative disproportion between the unfinished work and its continuation, the latter appears more like a flagrant act of misappropriation, indeed a betrayal, even though there is no evidence pointing to a deliberate and fully conscious intention on the part of Jean de Meun. Imagine Voltaire—I am exaggerating deliberately—taking it upon himself to finish Pascal's *Pensées* by appending his *Dictionnaire philosophique.*

The case of the continuations of Perceval is more subtly paradoxical—among the three or four texts thus baptized, at any rate, this is true of that of the Mons manuscript, which best answers the definition of the genre and even constitutes its French prototype, if one excludes the completion of *Lancelot* by Geoffroy de Lagny, but according to Chrétien de Troyes's own instructions.

Chrétien had abandoned his hero just after his meeting with the wise man who revealed to him the nature of his sin and left him to his penitence and communion. The continuator sends him back on the road and, after sundry episodes, brings him back to the Fisher King's castle where he had earlier seen the procession of the Grail without daring to inquire about its significance (more precisely, why does the lance ooze blood? and not

what is this luminous Grail but simply, to whom are they bringing it?). We know besides that it had been a great error on his part, not because his discretion had robbed him of a piece of information—indeed of a revelation that was essential to his own edification—but only because the fact of asking the question was the gesture expected of him, the liberating event necessary to the recovery of the king and to the breaking of the spell that had been cast over his devastated kingdom. The revelation is brought home to him the next day by the "maiden" he meets in the forest, then confirmed to him by the hideous damsel before King Arthur's court and again by the aformentioned wise man in the last pages. I say, *the very fact of asking the question* and not of obtaining an answer, an answer which, in Chrétien, is not even once mentioned as important in itself. Besides, it is already perfectly known by him whose fate is at stake here, and of whom it should have been asked in the first place: the Fisher King himself. "*Your silence* was a misfortune for us," said the hideous damsel. "You should have *asked the question*: the Fisher King of the sad life would have been cured of his wound, would have ruled in peace over his land, of which he will keep never a shred."[1] No one knows how Chrétien would have finished Perceval's adventures, or even whether, after all, he would have brought his hero back to the castle of the Grail. By default, Wolfram von Eschenbach's later text *Parzival* may give us an idea of what would have been an ending conforming to these premises: Parzival simply asks Amfortas, "Good uncle, what then is your torment?"—and the king immediately recovers, which excuses him ipso facto from giving an answer that has become purely retrospective and therefore pointless (book 16). Such disdain may be hyperbolic, but it does bring out the contrasting distortion effected by the French continuator. In this version Perceval, having returned to the castle of the crippled king, immediately inquires about "the truth of all things," and now it is the king who equivocates, objecting that the moment for answering has not yet come, pressing Perceval to have something to eat, and even taxing him with "asking much," as if his delayed questioning had now become a guilty indiscretion and no longer an act of salvation. And, in fact, recovery does not follow, from either the question or the answer. Perceval will have to vanquish and decapitate Pertinax, the Fisher King's enemy, for the king to recover from his wound and the wasteland from its sterility. The continuator has in the meantime obviously forgotten, or has never really understood or sought to understand, Chrétien de Troyes's original intention. For the expectation of appropriate conduct he substitutes the more vulgar suspense

linked to the search for a secret, a search magnified by the commentators with the term *quest*, which was obviously absent in Chrétien and here is quite improper. It was only in the anonymous *Lancelot en prose* (thirteenth century) that the Grail itself (and not the truth about the Grail) was to become the object of the quest. The nature of the dazzling Grail and of the bleeding sword becomes then in the continuation what it was not at all in Chrétien: a riddle to be solved, a mystery to be penetrated.

That constituted the first decisive intervention by the anonymous continuator. The second almost inevitably followed from the first; it was the answer given to that enigma, which everyone knows today: the bleeding lance is that with which Longinus the Roman pierced Jesus' side, and the Grail is the vessel wherein the holy blood was collected; the two objects are thus linked to the Passion of Christ and to the sacrament of the Eucharist. Chrétien had been compelled, perhaps by weariness, to abandon his *Conte du Graal* on a note of manifest ambiguity, but his continuator took it upon himself to dispel that ambiguity in the most orthodox fashion, and without paying undue notice to those complications that the medievalists have since handed down to one another for generations like a hot potato: can a grail (a flat dish) serve as chalice? where the devil did the continuator get the notion that Longinus's spear continued to weep the blood of Christ? what are we to make of the pagan (Celtic) origins of these motifs? etc.[2] The endeavor to *Christianize* the Grail and Arthurian chivalry is most evident in the first attempts at cyclical integration by Robert de Boron in the *Didot-Perceval, a fortiori* in the thirteenth-century *Lancelot-Graal* in prose, and more specifically in the very mystical *Queste del Saint-Graal*—and so on, down to Wagner (who chose to revise and turn into a mass, however equivocal, the one version least suited to it: Wolfram's), not to mention a recent "cinematographic" adaptation {Eric Rohmer's *Perceval le Gallois*, 1978}: its sole redeeming grace consists in having disdained the continuations, but it more than makes up for that omission by a wholly improper and wholly ridiculous staging of Christ's Passion. It is interesting, however, to observe that theme in operation as early as the first continuation, where it could only have been based on a massive misinterpretation, deliberate or not, of the text that it claimed to complete. In short, what we have here, once again, is a continuation with a corrective function—no longer, as with the second *Romance of the Rose*, in a contentious and rebellious sense but in the sense of what was later to be called *co-optation*.[3] And this, to be sure, is a case of co-optation par excellence.

# 35

Those two continued texts are at least still remembered for themselves (up to a point), and their continuations (and, for *Perceval*, the numberless corrections that followed) have not quite succeeded in erasing all signs of their previous existence. And if Chrétien's *Perceval* remains—no doubt incurably—branded by the posthumous interpretation to which it was subjected, the accepted image of the *Romance of the Rose* remains that of a "courtly allegory," faithful to the spirit of Guillaume de Lorris. It seems as though the corrective function of Jean de Meun's contribution has been—or become—ineffective: the hypotext has risen to the surface and abolishes its own hypertext. But conversely, it may be the case that the continuation almost entirely erases the continued work. This has happened twice at least, and by some strange coincidence both examples bear the same date: 1532.

One of these two cases is that of *Orlando furioso*, familiar to everyone and revered at least through hearsay; but who, apart from the specialists, knows that it is a continuation of Matteomaria Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*? This occultation is far from recent: I note that the *Orlando furioso* was translated into French only in 1769, and that Stendhal, who, as we know, was so set on Ludovico Ariosto, does not mention Boiardo once, either in *Henri Brulard* or in his Italian works; no more does Hegel think of Boiardo in his commentaries on Ariosto.

*Orlando furioso*, however, begins exactly where Boiardo's death in 1494 had interrupted the action of *Orlando innamorato* and owes to it all its principal characters: Orlando, Rinaldo, Ruggiero, Astolfo, Angelica, and Bradamente, as well as the tangle of their quarreling and loving relationships. It is especially indebted to the earlier work for its essential contribution: namely, the entirely novel contamination of the Carolingian epic and the courtly romance. This specific admixture, with its ever precarious and explosive equilibrium, derives wholly from Boiardo, and all Ariosto did was to extend the fantastic twists and turns of its plot ad libitum. It is said that his patron, Cardinal d'Este, asked him one day, half admiringly, half reproachfully, where on earth he had found *tante coglionerie* {such bullshit}. History has not recorded Messer Ludovico's answer, but he could at least have said, and without false modesty, that he had not started any of the *coglionerie* but

had only taken up and continued what was begun by another. The cardinal, apparently, no longer knew any of this. It is true that Boiardo, among other misfortunes, was unlucky enough to write in a language said to be a little too colloquial and too infused with the Lombardian dialect. So much so that Francesco Berni was able to publish, in the same year the definitive edition of *Orlando furioso* appeared (1532), a *Rifacimento dell'Orlando innamorato* that was a linguistic rectification: in other words, a translation into good Tuscan. There is something pathetic about the fortune of that sacrificed text, which has survived only by dint of humiliating corrections—and ironic continuations, for as everyone knows, such was Ariosto's constant attitude toward his borrowed material.

Boiardo did at least enjoy a few decades of popularity before becoming at one and the same time "restored" and degraded—and supplanted—in the eyes of the cultivated public. The other triumph of continuation was swifter, and even brutal; I am, of course, referring to Rabelais's *Pantagruel*, which saw the light of day merely as an opportune, not to say opportunistic, sequel to the anonymous *Grandes et inestimables chroniques du grand et énorme géant Gargantua*, published in Lyons at the beginning of 1532. Rabelais's quite obvious purpose was to cash in on another's success while it was still hot from the press. Hence his decision to dash off a continuation that followed a recipe as old as storytelling itself: *moving to the next generation*—Pantagruel, son of Gargantua.

But the relation between Rabelais's work and its source in folk literature is more complex than that between Ariosto and Boiardo. The shift from Gargantua to Pantagruel had already afforded Rabelais the opportunity of a momentous alteration: extricating the giant motif from the world of legend where it had been located by his predecessor (perhaps under the influence of folk models). In Breton romance, Gargantua was the miraculous grandson (by way of Grandgousier and Galamelle) of the wizard Merlin; he had been warring for several centuries at King Arthur's service before finding his Elysium with the fairies Morgane and Mélusine. Pantagruel's adventures, as we know, were to receive an entirely different setting, one closer to ours in both time and space, thus gaining an entirely different resonance. All question of genius aside, *Pantagruel* is already in that respect a corrective continuation. But Rabelais's further works show that he was not content with updating the pseudo-Arthurian giant's descent. Before following its course, he made a point of retracing it to its "model" in

order to erase the anonymous work definitively by rewriting it afresh: hence the *Gargantua* of 1534, a murderous correction of the *Grandes chroniques*, which endows Pantagruel with a father who is worthy of him—and of their author. After which the third and fourth books {*Tiers Livre* and *Quart Livre*} could follow, and perhaps the fifth—two or three books that were no longer in any way the allograph continuation of the *Grandes chroniques* but the autograph sequel (and end?) of *Pantagruel.* The *Grandes chroniques* was never to be heard of again, except among scholars. The Gargantua and Pantagruel books are not only a story of giants; they are also an ogre of a work, a parricidal and patrophagous work, like the primal horde in *Totem and Taboo*, but one without shame—as befits the artist's ingratitude—and without any postprandial remorse.

The existence of those unfaithful, or even murderous, continuations raises a few theoretical issues that should not be indefinitely set aside. Let us observe, first, that there is an imperceptible gradation between, say, Baro's fidelity (with the benefit of the doubt) and the unfaithfuness of Jean de Meun or of Ariosto; second, that thematic faithfulness and stylistic faithfulness are generally independent of each other: Ariosto, who writes not only in a different style but also in a different dialect from Boiardo, makes no claim to diverge from the spirit of his work; conversely, Jean de Meun and the first continuator of *Perceval* remain respectful—within the limits set by the swift evolution of the French language—to their hypotext's stylistic manner.

Now the thematically unfaithful continuation extends beyond the category of serious imitation to that of transposition, actually a very marked, at times very aggressive, variant of transposition—i.e., thematic correction, or even refutation. I shall not go into a full discussion of that practice here, but it stands to reason that one can just as easily reverse the significance of a text by giving it a sequel that refutes it as by modifiying its setting, its tone, or its plot. A convincing example is provided by a continuation of Molière's *Misanthrope* inspired by Rousseau's very polemical commentary in his *Lettre sur les spectacles*, the point of which is that Molière is on the side of Philinte, who is nothing but a selfish hypocrite. I am referring to Fabre d'Églantine's comedy, *Philinte de Molière, ou La Suite du Misanthrope* (1790). Stylistically, it is a classical—i.e., faithful—continuation. Thematically, it is a refutation of a *Misanthrope* supposedly on Philinte's side: Alceste lavishes his help, despite Philinte's sarcasms, upon an unknown stranger who turns

out to be none other than—Philinte himself. It is now Alceste's turn to triumph and launch into a sermon.[1]

Rousseau himself found an iconoclastic continuator of his *Nouvelle Héloïse* in the person of Jules Lemaitre, who imagined a different denouement: "All it takes," he said, "is to suppose that Julie does not die and that the novel continues."[2] We thus have a continuation grafted on to what I shall later call a pragmatic transformation (a change in the course of events), which it does not spell out but does presuppose. Julie having been saved, Saint-Preux nevertheless comes back to Clarins to educate her children. He courts and seduces Mme d'Orbe, whom he refuses to marry, however, out of faithfulness to Julie; then he once again seduces Julie herself and then Fanchon Anet, the servant girl; he is about to seduce the latter's very young cousin, etc. All those escapades are narrated in the enthusiastic and self-righteous style of the hypotext, which is here very skillfully pastiched but ironically demystified as a hypocritical screen to a less edifying kind of conduct. This "incongruity" between acts and discourse elicits some juicy effects, as when Saint-Preux writes to Julie, concerning her husband, "I respect Wolmar; but how cold the embraces of an atheist must be!"; or when Mme d'Orbe forgives Saint-Preux in these terms: "Julie is so much more intelligent, more educated and more virtuous than I am!"; or when Saint-Preux describes, for the benefit of Julie, his capers with Fanchon: "Fanchon is the cup of milk that the thirsty traveler drinks in passing. Dipping one's lips into it is no crime. And I feel that I, too, am doing Fanchon some good: imperceptibly, in the course of our brief interviews, I instill virtue into that primitive and sincere soul, and I teach her the religion of the heart." I am no less a man for loving virtue, no doubt—on the contrary. All in all, this Saint-Preux-turned-Tartuffe provides a very impertinent, indeed vengeful, continuation.

Less impertinent but at bottom much more subversive is D. H. Lawrence's story "The Man Who Died" (1930), since the man in question is none other than Jesus Christ who, having risen from the dead, wanders about the world and discovers physical love—and through it Lawrence's own gospel. This very beautiful tale is thus both a continuation and a refutation of the Christian Gospel—unless we are expected, as is my inclination, to take in a Lawrentian sense the precept "Ye shall love one another."[3]

These practices are mixed, then, or ambiguous, and we shall find other examples of them. They are as a matter of course the most interesting and the most successful, for it stands to reason that a gifted artist, however

piously disposed toward a great forebear, cannot be content with a task as menial as a simple continuation. Arnold Schönberg is said to have refused to complete Berg's *Lulu* because of an anti-Semitic line—an honorable excuse. But a true creator cannot touch the work of another without leaving his mark on it. Continuation thus becomes, in the best of cases, the pretext for an oblique rewriting.

What I have termed a murderous or parricidal continuation raises another problem, one not merely of taxonomy ("Where do you put unfaithful continuations?") but of method and principle. Whether "faithful" or not, a continuation of the type of *Pantagruel* or *Orlando furioso* entails oblivion for its hypotext, unfairly or not and with the exception of scholars. But what is a hypertext whose hypotext has been forgotten and which everyone reads as an autonomous text? It is obvious in such cases that the status of hypertext vanishes whenever the reader no longer keeps in mind the *Grandes chroniques* or *Orlando innamorato* as he is reading Rabelais or Ariosto. Here, then, we have two works whose status changes with changing times and audiences: they were received at first as continuations but soon ceased to be so for the majority of readers, and their hypertextuality is today only an appurtenance of culture, or even scholarship. But since I persist in thinking that hypertextuality adds a dimension to a text, it seems to me that here—for once—scholarship can enrich one's reading. Alas, Rabelais may soon himself become (it is already true of Ariosto, at least in France) no more than an author for scholars.

## 36

*The Non-Existent Knight* (1959) evidently derives from Ariosto and thus from Boiardo, and thus from many others too.[1] Its Bradamante is certainly the beautiful warrior of *Orlando furioso*, but without Ruggiero and destined for the naive love of Raimbaut of Roussillon. The setting is Charlemagne's camp, with his illustrious paladins, but the hero, if he can be so called, is a pure invention. The work's approximate status as a paraleptic continuation (a narrative *in the margins* of Ariosto, Lemaitre would have said) entails no attempt at stylistic imitation, and the overall tone is more like that of a modern travesty—the travesty not of a specific work but of the chivalric romance in general. It is an often whimsical fantasy in the spirit of Giraudoux: the sign of battle is the cough induced by the dust, and the plain

is "resounding with the din of throats and spears"; the ritual exchanges of insults between Christians and Saracens are conveyed through professional interpreters who can translate *son of a whore* into two or three languages and back, and who are authorized to glean, as evening falls, the battered remnants that they sell as antiques; Raimbaut wishes to avenge his father by killing Argalif Isohar, but the Superintendency of Duels, Feuds, and Besmirched Honor dismisses his plea on account of a clerical irregularity (rules, regulations, and paperwork are rampant at the camp); the Aregalif, deprived of his eyeglasses, will die nonetheless; Bradamante slinks off for an Amazon's wee-wee, and Raimbaut, having glimpsed her by surprise, at once falls in love with her harmonious posterior, her tender down, and her limpid secretion. But the work sometimes waxes more aggressive and "demystifying": the brotherhood of the Knights of the Holy Grail is an infamous gang of ruffians, bent on plundering and slaughtering the villagers upon whom they impose their protection. The hero himself is a sort of metaphysical hyperbole—I was about to say, an embodied hyperbole—but the point is indeed that he pushes to the limit the doubt that seizes us all before resounding and resplendent armor (his own, fittingly enough, is white): what if there is nothing behind—that is, no one inside? Agilulf Emo Bertrandin of the Guildivern and of the Others of Corbentraz and Sura, Knight of Selimpia Citeriore and Fez (for such is his name), is precisely nothing but an empty suit of armor, moved by the utter exertion of will and professional conscience of a knight who is not there but who would even less be anywhere else, and who clings to his regimental number and leans against the ritual, which he knows by heart and recites to himself during his sleepless nights, for how can one sleep if he does not exist? When his official identity and his hierarchical status are questioned, there will be nothing left for him to do but vanish far from his scattered tinware: a proof that discipline and regulations make not only for the strength of armies but for the soldier's very being. On the other hand, his occasional shieldbearer Gurduloo, a.k.a. Omebe, a.k.a. Gudi-Ussuf, etc.—a perfect nobody, a *uomo qualunque* without a fixed status or family name—is constantly blundering in all things great and small, answers for Charlemagne when Charlemagne addresses him, and knows not whether he must eat his soup or his soup must eat him.

Bradamante believes she loves Agilulf, and unwittingly gives herself to Raimbaut, heir to the vacant white armor. Once the hoax comes to light, she vanishes in a rage—but not for long.

The subtlest of all tricks in this narrative, which is bristling with them, is of a technical order, as it were, but technique is functioning here like the fable of a moral that escapes us: the narrator, transparent and omniscient—to the extent of knowing the thoughts of an empty suit of armor—reveals himself in midcourse to be a female narrator, vaguely contemporaneous with the facts: Sister Theodora, seated at her convent table. Thereafter, the humble nun gradually gains in self-assurance, becomes engrossed in her own narrative, grows bold enough to venture commentaries. In the end the truth is revealed . . . But in case some readers of this dull paraphrase happen to be lucky—or unlucky—enough not to have read Italo Calvino, I should hate to spoil their fun at the final surprise. Let me simply say, in coded language, that we somewhat brutally move by means of a bold metalepsis from the heterodiegetic to the autodiegetic, and that two narrative agents join up in the end for the greater joy of a third—and for that of the deserving reader. That third, however, is here—not *here*, naturally, but over there—only through an indiscretion, for the narrative's addressee (prigs would say the narratee) is none other than the narrative itself: "Book, now you have reached your end. . . . Yes, my book. Sister Theodora, who tells this tale," etc. To my knowledge—but I have not yet read all the books—this is the first instance in which one of them, invited to read itself, plays the part of its own public. That may well be the safest course at times—and this, too, may have something to do with hypertextuality.

## 37

In general, unfaithful continuations are careful not to exhibit a betrayal that is perhaps not conscious and intentional, and their titles (*Orlando furioso*), let alone their lack of title (the second *Roman de la Rose*), proclaim a more modest and respectful function: that of a simple *complement.*

By virtue of a well-known ambiguity, the term *supplement* bears a more ambitious significance: the postscript here is wholly prepared to substitute for—that is, to displace and therefore to erase—that which it completes. I do not know whether Diderot had that connotation clearly in mind when he chose *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*[1] as the title of the extended and dramatized version of a review of Louis Antoine de Bougainville's *Voyage* written by Friedrich-Melchior Grimm in 1771 for the *Correspondance Littéraire.* But then, *supplement* does call forth the idea of an optional

addition, or at the very least an eccentric or marginal one that brings a surplus to the work of another—a surplus in the nature of a commentary or a free, even illegitimate, interpretation. According to a cliché that must in this case be taken literally, the hypotext here is no longer anything but a pretext, the point of departure for an extrapolation disguised as an interpolation.

Diderot first brings on two interlocutors, one of whom (B) presents this "supplement" to the other (A) as a perfectly authentic text, containing among other things the farewell speech of an aged Tahitian and the conversation between Orou and the chaplain. The vehement old man was in fact mentioned by Bougainville, who described his "dreamy, worried air," which "seemed to announce that he feared that these happy days, which he had spent in the bosom of peace, would be troubled by the arrival of a new race." Diderot is thus merely giving voice to that mute reproach at the moment of the departure of the French. The chaplain was also mentioned by Bougainville, and Diderot gives him an adventure that is inserted with some credibility into the tableau of Tahitian mores. These two pieces, and several others that are only mentioned, thus form the pretended "supplement" interpolated into the *Voyage autour du monde* published by Bougainville in 1771. But Diderot's work also includes the dialogue between A and B that frames these fictitious interpolations, a dialogue that quite obviously cannot claim the same status, and whose paternity Diderot in no way denies. The attribution to Bougainville is therefore purely conventional and claims no credence. The famous navigator's narrative of his voyage serves Diderot only as the occasion for a commentary in dialogue form and as the setting of a very eloquent declamation ("The Old Man's Farewell") against the beginnings of colonization, which he condemns as forced depredation and, especially, as the physical and moral pollution of a completely sane and innocent state of nature: "The idea of crime and the danger of disease have come with thee among us. Our pleasures, formerly so sweet, are accompanied by remorse and terror. That man in black, next you, who listens to me, has spoken to our boys; I know not what he has said to our girls. But our boys hesitate: our girls blush."[2] Then comes an entertaining and devastating confrontation between that idyllic state of nature and a state of civilization in a very sorry posture, since it is embodied by a pitiable cleric (the "man in black" himself) who has been unable to resist ("But my religion! But my calling!") the advances of a young, pretty Tahitian girl, his host's daughter. This "Conversation of the Chaplain and Orou" is,

as the general subtitle of the work puts it, "about the inconvenience of attaching moral ideas to certain physical actions which do not entail them," and it inevitably addresses the shame of the chaplain and the morality he awkwardly attempts to defend but is no better able to apply on the following nights ("But my religion! But my calling!") with the other girls and with the generous Orou's own wife. The lesson of this episode is thus given by one of the speakers of the framing dialogue: "Would you like an abridged account of almost all our wretchedness? Here it is: There existed a natural man. There was introduced into this man an artificial man: and a civil war, enduring the whole of life, arose in the cavern."

As everyone knows, this *Supplement* in turn—and at some distance—inspired another, which is an amplified, modernized version of it but whose title carries an ambiguous contract: the *Supplément au voyage de Cook*, a one-act play written by Giraudoux in 1935. The work fictitiously supplemented this time is of course Captain James Cook's *Voyage around the World* (1777), which does supply certain characters, but the work that is really being transposed is indeed Diderot's *Supplement*, whose Orou becomes Outourou, and whose anonymous and fallible chaplain becomes the worthy churchwarden-naturalist Banks (actually present in Cook), here flanked, in a fertile innovation, by his no less worthy and very suspicious wife.

The thematic displacement is, as it should be, almost imperceptible. The theme of sexual morality is first expanded to encompass the Western trinity: work, property, "morality." The first term is exploited in a manner reminiscent of certain pages (to which we shall return) of the same Giraudoux's *Suzanne et le Pacifique*: work is not only unknown in Tahiti; it is deemed unlucky. "As soon as we dig here, or work the soil, it becomes sterile. . . . We had a worker once on the island. He went looking for his shellfish far at sea, when the shore is carpeted with them. He dug wells, when springs stream over all things. He turned the pigs out of our meadows to fatten them with a special mash, and he made them burst. Everything around him wilted. We were forced to kill him. There is no place here for work." To which Mr. Banks, like the true heir of Robinson Crusoe that he is, retorts that "the greatness of man is precisely that he can find an opportunity for toil where even an ant would take a rest," and he has shovels distributed to the young Tahitian men, who are exhausted by the very sound of the word *work*.[3] The teaching of the concept of property fares better, because Mr. Banks rashly reveals that there exists a (wrongful) way of procuring for oneself that which belongs to another, and the delighted Outourou,

little worried by the penal clause, rushes off to spread the good news. (Sexual) "morality" also has its dangerous roundabout ways: Mr. Banks sees its foundation in the fact that a man ought to approach a woman only for the purpose of procreation, which infallibly makes him the choice candidate to service the hitherto sterile young Tahiriri, with whom his wife surprises him in a seemingly sinful position; there follows a scene between husband and wife and a turning of the tables, with Mrs. Banks exposed to the advances of young Vaïturou, with whom her husband will surprise her, etc. The curtain falls at the moment when the churchwarden's moral lessons, misinterpreted by the Tahitian chief, are about to put the entire English crew at the mercy of their hosts and hostesses. Western morality, instead of simply being subjected to a polemic refutation, as in Diderot's work, is also more subtly caught in a trap of its own devising and subverted by an enthusiastic and faulty interpretation. This is the first appearance (for us) of a procedure dear to the Giraudoux hypertext, which consists of reverting to the model text's own conclusion at the end of a detour that would logically lead us to expect a contrary ending. In Sade-like terms, it is for having known all too well how to "explain what perverted nature is" that the occasional missionary finds himself "perverted by nature."

Do two works suffice to constitute a genre? Specialists are aware that the genre of the *chantefable* can be reduced to one work, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, and that it does not do so badly at that. But we could without too much difficulty bring within the category of the supplement several other hypertexts whose status also wavers between the complementary one of continuation and the substitutive one of transformation.[4] They are complementary by their form, since they present themselves as simple interpolations; substitutive by their content, because by means of this interpolation they bring about a transmutation of meaning and value in their hypotexts. Giraudoux's *La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* {translated as *Tiger at the Gates*}, for example, and Valéry's *Faust*, could in a way fall under the heading of this complex genre. But the importance of their hypotexts increases the part played by transposition and compels us to postpone discussing them until after we have gained a fuller understanding of transpositional practices.

# 38

The *sequel*, as we have seen, differs from a continuation in that it continues a work not in order to bring it to a close but, on the contrary, in order to take it beyond what was initially considered to be its ending. The motive is generally a desire to capitalize on a first or even a second success (Alexandre Dumas's *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne* prolongs *Vingt ans après*, just as *Vingt ans après* prolongs *Les Trois Mousquetaires*), and it is entirely natural that an author should wish to profit from such a windfall; the case of the second part of *Robinson Crusoe* is a perfect, and perfectly clear, example of this. For Cervantes, who announced as early as the last lines of the first part of *Don Quixote* a future narrative of his hero's "third adventure," the situation is more complex: we can consider that the second part gives the adventure a necessary completion and that it is therefore, properly speaking, neither a continuation (since the author himself wrote it) nor a sequel (since it finishes a story that was explicitly interrupted and suspended). Or else, this might be an instance of what I had in mind in the case of Marivaux under the heading of self-written continuations. But I must add that Cervantes, who was in no hurry to keep the promise he made in 1605 and apparently content to get to work writing the *Novelas Ejemplares* {*Exemplary Novels*}, found himself impelled to complete it by the unexpected publication in 1614 of an entirely allographic and improper continuation, improper because it was written during the author's lifetime and in open competition with him: this was the *Segundo Tomo* signed by the unidentifiable Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda. Thus the publication in 1615 of the authentic second part. But if we add that Cervantes was to die in April 1616, we must perhaps conclude that we owe the continuation written by Cervantes himself to the counterfeit one by Avellaneda. This latter is, certainly, as is so often the case with ordinary continuations, more an imitation than a continuation: the intimidated (if impudent) author of the pastiche believes himself obligated to dip his pen constantly into his victim's inkwell (where else could he dip it?) and to repeat ad nauseam his manner and his methods. Don Quixote, first cured, then goaded back into nonsense by Sancho, continues to add indefinitely to the list of his follies and misadventures. Cervantes, on the other hand, and he alone, could give to his second part that transcendent liberty which is the hallmark of his sequel. All other things being equal, the *Segundo Tomo* is to the first *Quixote* what the *Posthomerica* is to the *Iliad*, an

endlessly repetitive prolongation, whereas the authentic second part is like an *Odyssey*, with that privilege of genius: an unpredictable continuation.

But I digress, having encountered this hapax, a self-written continuation.[1] I was about to speak of the opposite occurrence: despite D'Alembert's opinion, there is no law that a sequel should be necessarily self-written. The second *Lazarillo*, the second *Guzman* of Sayavedra, the *Segundo Tomo* of Avellaneda are certainly sequels as much as they are continuations, given their commercial motive as well as their repetitive content. And in our own time, shrewd inheritors have been known to produce interminable sequels to adventures that were terminated over and over again.[2]

Except for the ending, which is changed indefinitely so as not to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs, the allographic sequel can be considered a continuation. The autographic sequel, to take things in their strict sense, escapes our consideration here because it does not proceed by imitation—or, more exactly, not any more than the second part of a novel such as *The Red and the Black* proceeds by imitating the first part, the second chapter by imitating the first, the second sentence by imitating the first, etc. (etc?). An author who prolongs his work doubtless does imitate himself in a certain way, unless he transcends himself, betrays himself, or collapses, but all that has little to do with hypertextuality.

Nevertheless, the sequel, and the innumerable forms of narrative integration that can be attached to it (local cycles of the Walter Scott or James Fenimore Cooper type, from which derive, with a greater concern for totalization, Balzac's *Human Comedy* or, in more concerted form, Zola's Rougon-Macquart novels and the diverse sagas which, from Galsworthy to Mazo de la Roche, derive from them, or the more rigorously consecutive *romans fleuves* of the type of *Thibault*, *Hommes de bonne volonté*, or *Chronique des Pasquier*)[3] raise issues that cannot really be solved by referring to the "immanence" of the text. There are in these cases *several texts* that refer in some way to one another—several texts, even if signed by the same name.[4] This "autotextuality" or "intratextuality," is a specific form of transtextuality, which ought perhaps to be considered in itself—but no hurry.

If the continuation is in principle an allographic completion and the sequel an autographic prolongation, the *epilogue* has as its canonic function the brief exposition of a (stable) situation subsequent to the denouement, from which it results: for example, the two heroes are reunited after several years,

and they tenderly and peacefully gaze at their numerous offspring. "That," Hegel says, more or less, "is very prosaic and not at all romantic." But this judgment implies an extreme definition of romance, specific to the Romantic era. In a more classical age, leaning more toward the sentimental and the moralistic, the happy and enlightened epilogue could be one of the privileged moments of gratification for the reader: see, for example, those of *Tom Jones* or *War and Peace.*[5]

Of course, these autographic epilogues are not precisely hypertextual, but an allographic epilogue, if such exists, is a variant of continuation. In its way, "La Fin de Robinson Crusoe" by Michel Tournier is a good illustration of this notion.[6] It is an allographic epilogue to Robinson's island adventure. This brief narrative begins just about at the point where Daniel Defoe's first part ends: Robinson comes back to England at the end of twenty-two years and gets married. After having committed all sorts of misdeeds around the area, Friday disappears; he has no doubt gone back to their island, Robinson supposes. Robinson's wife dies, and he leaves for the Caribbean Sea, from which he returns after several years—without having found his island, whose geographic location he nevertheless knew quite well. He wails and wonders at this stupefying disappearance. An old helmsman finally gives him the key to the mystery: his island has not disappeared at all, and he must have passed by it twenty times without recognizing it. It has quite simply changed, just as he has, and no doubt it didn't recognize him either. Robinson's expression is suddenly sad and haggard. This anti-epilogue teaches us the impossibility of every epilogue, autographic or allographic: you cannot ever visit the same island twice (or the same woman, for sure); it/she is no longer itself/herself; you are no longer you.

"In September 1816, Charlotte Kestner, née Buff, a rather mature and plumpish matron, afflicted with a not too noticeable trembling of the head, stopped at the Elephant Hotel in Weimar. The innkeeper identified her as soon as she had filled out the required police form: in this old lady with blue eyes—not dark ones (but like everyone in Weimar he knew what poetic license is), he had before him, forty-four years later, the Lotte of *Werther.*"[7]

In principle, Thomas Mann's *Lotte in Weimar* is not a continuation of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* but rather the fictitious epilogue of another adventure, a real one, more banal and less romantic: the aborted idyll at Wetzlar between the young Goethe and Charlotte Buff. Here we have a case, then, as in Léon Daudet's *Le Voyage de Shakespeare*, Jean Giono's *Pour*

*saluer Melville*, or Hermann Broch's *The Death of Virgil*, of a biographical fiction, a novel grafted onto the life of a historical figure who happens to be a writer.

In fact, the situation is more complex, because between the idyll at Wetzlar and the visit to Weimar is interposed the text of *Werther*, without which Frau Kestner's voyage would not have the same meaning, or the same resonance. For everyone in Weimar—except for Goethe himself, who had wanted for a long time to forget not only the episode but also, and even more so, the "pathological" work it had inspired—the blue-eyed visitor is indeed "the Lotte of *Werther*," and neither of the two principals involved can do anything to change that. For the witnesses, therefore, the relationship is established not between the Charlotte of 1816 and that of 1772, whom they could not have known at all, but between the visitor and her faraway romantic replica, Charlotte of the dark eyes. The same is true for the reader, and symmetrically the comparison goes from the majestic counselor of state to the pale melancholy hero dressed in blue with a yellow vest. Inevitably also, we feel the contrast between the desperate suicide of the second and the serene and prosperous old age of the first. "I survived my Werther," wrote (the real) Goethe in 1805. This survival is indeed what is here questioned, and silently indicted, without any evil intention on anyone's part. One does not survive suicide, real or fictive, with impunity, and this situation necessarily tinges with irony every manifestation of the glorious genius's existence and reinstates in Frau Kestner's favor the equilibrium that had been compromised by her ill-advised action. Faced with Charlotte, Goethe is more ridiculous for his good health than Charlotte for having come to Weimar under a pretext, and even for appearing in a white dress that is missing one famous pink ribbon. This psychological relationship can be translated into textual terms: Frau Kestner is also for us "the Lotte of *Werther*," but the respectable counselor can in no case be Werther. Between them stands no longer, as before, a fiancé but the hero of a novel: that is, the novel itself, to which, paradoxically or not, she has remained truer than he. A text, a fiction, separates them, and it is the equivocal status of that separation—of that distance—which makes *Lotte in Weimar* an ironic epilogue to *Werther*, an epilogue that may serve perhaps as a supplement: something like "The Prosperity of Old Werther."

# 39

I have already mentioned, it seems to me, the (obvious) part of mimetic hypertextuality that enters into the constitution of generic traditions: as a phenomenon of its time, which it always is, a genre does not respond solely to a historically specific situation or "expectation"; it proceeds equally (to reconcile here Emile Durkheim and Gabriel de Tarde) by contagion, imitation, the desire to exploit or modify a current of success and, as the vulgar phrase goes, to "jump on the bandwagon." The history (a very brief one, hardly more than a half-century long) of the picaresque Spanish novel is very much one of many imitations of a single initial model that took off like a meteor, *Lazarillo de Tormes*; the spread of the type throughout Europe, from *Moll Flanders* to *Gil Blas*, was largely due to this mimetic activity. But the phenomenon is even more obvious when, at several centuries' distance, an author decides to revive a long forgotten or deserted genre: this is for example what happened in the sixteenth century to the chivalric novel with *Amadis of Gaul* and *Orlando innamorato*. This latter case is more complex, however, because in melding the heritage of the Carolingian epic with that of the Arthurian romance, Boiardo induces a veritable *generic contamination*. And contamination, which is a double (or multiple) imitation, is also evidently a technique of transformation: thus it is something like a new genre that Boiardo (or some forgotten predecessor) creates when he introduces into Charlemagne's court the mores and passions of the Breton or courtly type of romance.

Generic reactivation is also evident in Cervantes' *Persiles* (1617), which takes up after more than ten centuries the themes and procedures (star-crossed loves, separations, kidnappings, shipwrecks, captivities, etc.) of the Greek novels of Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius; or again, in the high Victorian era, with William Makepeace Thackeray, whose *Barry Lyndon* (1844) was largely inspired by the picaresque model.[1]

The same model (clearly one of the most contagious, not least because its *type* is one of the most clearly defined in our literary tradition) reappears in Thomas Mann's *Felix Krull* (1937), whose complete title serves as a virtual generic contract: *The Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man* clearly announces the autobiography of a seductive and unscrupulous schemer (*Hochstapler*).[2] Felix is a modern picaro who discovers in his youthful days of truancy his talent for deception, which will permit him to escape

conscription and then to take on the personality of a young aristocrat with the latter's consent. To all of which he adds a gift for languages, the manual dexterity of a pickpocket, and amatory skills that allow him to live off vulnerable women, half true lover, half gigolo, likely to seduce mother and daughter at the same time. No one knows, I believe, where this unfinished novel might have taken us—except that one of the stages of this *rake's progress* would have been a prison.[3] But the wish to revive the picaresque novel is obvious, although sometimes submerged, as always in Thomas Mann, by more personal thematic material, which here suffuses the last pages he wrote.

The case of John Barth's *The Sot-Weed Factor* (1960) is more complex: the writing is a period pastiche (eighteenth century), but the thematic and narrative type is not at all picaresque. The narration is in the third person; the subject is the conjectural biography of an obscure (but real) poet of colonial Maryland who, throughout his numerous misadventures, remains honest, even naive, and a virgin until his eventual marriage; above all, in complete contrast to the happy-go-lucky succession of episodes in the picaresque novel, the plot is woven in the tightest possible way, which does not exclude—in fact the contrary is true—the most extravagant coincidences and surprises. As in *Henry Esmond*, the model here is Fielding, and Barth willingly admits that he tried to produce a plot that was even more complicated than that of *Tom Jones*. Moreover, the hero's poetic productions, in hudibrastic style (for the most part authentic, but in some cases fictitious and thus mimetic), are sprinkled throughout the narrative. Finally, the celebrated diary of Captain John Smith, in which generations of Americans have read the edifying story of his love affair with the young Indian Pocahontas, is subjected in various ways to a refutative rewriting that is fairly devastating to this pious founding myth. Barth thus undertakes (and amuses himself) to pastiche not one but several stylistic types in an exercise of literary acrobatics, which in no way detracts from the significance of this immense (and often poignant) philosophical farce.

In several instances, and notably in his article "The Literature of Replenishment," the author has given an account of his intentions in this novel and in his other works, and more generally of what he calls, not without reservations, postmodern fiction.[4] The pertinence of this concept is not in this instance very evident, and the frontier that Barth attempts to draw between modern and postmodern literature seems very fragile. From Joyce and Thomas Mann to Borges, Nabokov, Calvino, and Barth himself (and

many other American novelists such as Donald Barthelme, Robert Coover, Thomas Pynchon), a whole body of contemporary literature, which cannot be reduced to the practice of hypertextuality but shows a visible predilection for it, often defines itself by its refusal of the norms and types inherited from the romantic-realistic nineteenth century, and by a return to the "premodern" (or pre-postmodern?) manner of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.[5] We know the Russian Formalists' admiration for and delight in such works as *Don Quixote* and *Tristram Shandy*, which reappear in Barth's pantheon. Each new age indulges in its own characteristic (and highly ambiguous) "refusal to inherit" and chooses its own predecessors, preferably from an age older than that in which the detestable previous generation lived. The Formalists might have spoken of a refusal of the father (Balzac, Dickens) in favor of some uncle unknown until then (Henry James, Herman Melville, Lewis Carroll), or of the grandfather (Fielding, Laurence Sterne, Diderot) or great-grandfather (Ariosto, Cervantes, the baroque). The father's turn will come (again) perhaps, when the following generation has exhausted the joys of "postmodern" baroque and seeks new inspiration, or references, in the works of—who knows?—its naturalist forebears, for example. This post-postmodern age will thus be a "return" to the "discreet charms"—for us very discreet indeed—of a Zola or a Theodore Dreiser. This leapfrog evolution is well known, and there is little point in dwelling on it here. Its permanent motto being Verdi's quip *Torniamo all'antico, sarà un progresso*, however, it surely follows that the heyday of generic reactivation, and of hypertextuality in general, which is one of its chief resources, is hardly at an end. Which does not warrant the banal and simpleminded inference that certain ages have "nothing to say"; the work of John Barth, among others, is here to prove that the opposite is the case.

## 40

Serious transformation, or *transposition*, is without any doubt the most important of all hypertextual practices, if only because of the historical importance and the aesthetic accomplishment of some of the works that fall under its heading. Its claim also comes from the scope and variety of the procedures it calls upon. Parody can be characterized as a limited, even minimal, modification, or one reducible to a mechanical principle

such as that of the lipogram or the lexical permutation. Travesty is defined almost completely by a single type of stylistic transformation (trivialization). Pastiche, caricature, and forgery are only functional inflexions bearing on a single practice: imitation—one that is relatively complex but almost wholly prescribed by the nature of its model. With the possible exception of continuation, all these practices can produce only brief texts, for fear of losing the reader's interest. Transposition, on the other hand, can give rise to works of vast dimensions, such as *Faust* or *Ulysses*, whose textual amplitude and aesthetic and/or ideological ambition may mask or even completely obfuscate their hypertextual character, and this very productivity is linked to the diversity of the transformational procedures that it brings into play.

This diversity compels us to introduce here an array of internal categories that would have been completely useless—and in truth inconceivable—in dealing with the other types of hypertexts. This subcategorization, however, will not function as a hierarchical taxonomy for the purpose of distinguishing in the body of this class any subclasses, genera, species, and varieties: with very few exceptions, all specific transpositions (all transpositional *works*) depend upon several of these operations at once and cannot be reduced to any one of them except in terms of dominant characteristics, or for the purpose of accommodating the requirements of analysis and convenient presentation. Thus, Michel Tournier's *Vendredi* comes under several headings, among them thematic transformation (ideological reversal), transvocalization (the switch from first to third person), and spatial transfer (a shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific). I shall discuss it only, or mainly, in reference to the first, which is undoubtedly the most important, but it also illustrates the other two and could be just as legitimately subsumed under them; all the definitions that follow are bound to be more or less ill-fitting.

Here, therefore, it is a matter not of a classification of transpositional practices, in which each individual, as in the taxonomies of the natural sciences, is necessarily inscribed within one group and one group only, but rather of an inventory of their basic procedures, which each work combines in its own way and which I shall simply try to place in the order of their increasing importance—an order that will be determined only by my own personal appreciation and that anyone is welcome to contest—and to rearrange, at least mentally. I arrange these basic practices, then, according to their increasing impact upon the meaning of the transformed hypotext

or, more precisely, according to the increasingly manifest and conscious character of that impact, distinguishing therefore two fundamental categories: transpositions that are in principle (and in intention) purely *formal*, which affect meaning only by accident or by a perverse and unintended consequence, as in the self-evident case of translation (which is a linguistic transposition); and transpositions that are overtly and deliberately *thematic*, in which transformation of meaning is manifestly, indeed offically, part of the purpose: such is the case of Tournier's *Vendredi*, mentioned above. Within each of these two categories I have tried to progress again according to the same principle, so that the last types of "formal" transposition will already be very much involved, not always reluctantly, in the work with (the work on) meaning, and the line that separates them from "thematic" transpositions will seem very fragile, or porous. Which does not worry me in the least—in fact, the obverse is true.

## 41

The most visible form of transposition, and certainly the most widespread, consists in transposing a text from one language to another. This is, of course, *translation*, whose literary importance is hardly questionable, either because masterpieces must indeed be translated or because certain translations are themselves masterpieces: for example, and to mention only French translations, the *Quixote* of César Oudin and François de Rosset, Baudelaire's Edgar Allan Poe, Claudel's *Oresteia*, Valéry's *Bucolics*, Louise Servicen's Thomas Mann, not counting bilingual writers like Samuel Beckett and Vladimir Nabokov (and sometimes, I believe, Heinrich Heine or Rainer Maria Rilke), who do their own translations and produce, either simultaneously or with some delay, two versions of each of their own works.

This is not the place to go into the familiar "theoretical"—or other—problems of translation; there are good books and bad books on that subject, and everything in between. Suffice it to say that these "problems," broadly covered by a certain Italian proverb, exist, which simply means that languages being what they are ("imperfect in that they are many"), no translation can be absolutely faithful, and every act of translation affects the meaning of the translated text.

A minimal variant of *traduttore traditore* grants to poetry and withholds from prose the glorious privilege of untranslatability. The root of this holy

writ is buried in the Mallarmean notion of "poetic language" and in Valéry's analyses of the "indissoluble" union in poetry of "sound" and "sense." Reporting on a work that he was criticizing (severely) as a translation in prose of the poems of Mallarmé, Maurice Blanchot long ago articulated this rule of radical untranslatability:

> The work of poetry has a meaning whose structure is original and irreducible. . . . The primary character of poetic meaning is that it is linked, without any possible change, to the language that makes it manifest. Whereas in nonpoetic language we know we have understood the idea whose discourse makes it present to us when we can express that idea in different forms, mastering it by the very act of liberating it from any determined language, poetry on the contrary demands, in order to be understood, total acquiescence to the unique form that it proffers. The meaning of the poem is inseparable from all the words, all the movements, all the accents of the poem. The poem exists only in that total structure, and it disappears as soon as one attempts to separate it from that form it has received. What the poem signifies exactly coincides with what it is.[1]

I have no quarrel with this principle, except that it (seemingly) locates the threshold of untranslatability at the boundary (dubious in my view) between poetry and prose and ignores Mallarmé's own observation that there is "verse" as soon as there is "style," and that prose itself is an "art of language." In this regard, the most appropriate formula is perhaps that of the linguist E. A. Nida, who goes to the heart of things without distinguishing between prose and poetry: "Anything that can be said in one language can be said in another, unless the form is an essential element of the message."[2] The threshold, if there is one, would be rather at the border between "practical" language and language in its literary use. In truth, this border is also in dispute, and not without reason, but that is because there is often already some linguistic play (and thus art) in "ordinary language"—and because, all aesthetic effects aside, and as linguists since Wilhelm von Humboldt have abundantly demonstrated, each language has (among other things) its own notional distribution, which renders certain of its terms untranslatable in whatever context. It would be better, undoubtedly, to distinguish not between translatable texts (there are none) and untranslatable texts, but between those texts that are adversely affected by the inevitable flaws of translation (literary texts) and those that are unharmed by them:

i.e., all the other texts—although a blunder in a diplomatic dispatch or an international resolution can have very unfortunate consequences.

To explain this trap for translators more precisely, I should describe the two jaws of its mechanism as follows. Concerning the "art of language," all has been said by Valéry and Blanchot: literary creation is always at least partially inseparable from the language in which it occurs. Concerning "natural language," all has been said since Jean Paulhan's observation on the "explorer's illusion" with regard to the enormous quantity of "clichés"—i.e., catachreses, or figures that have passed into common usage—contained by all languages, whether "primitive" or not. The explorer's illusion, and therefore the translator's temptation, is to take these clichés literally and to render them in the translated version by figures that are not in common use. This "dissociation of stereotypes" *emphasizes* in the translation the figurative character of the hypotext. A classic example of this emphasis is the translation by Hugh Blair of an American Indian harangue: "We are happy in having buried underground the red axe that has so often been dyed with the blood of our brethren. Now, in this fort, we inter the axe, and plant the tree of peace. We plant a tree, whose top will reach the sun, and its branches spread abroad, so that it shall be seen afar off. May its growth never be stifled and choaked; but may it shade both your country and ours with its leaves! Let us make fast its roots and extend them to the utmost of your colonies," etc.[3] But the reverse practice (translating dead metaphors with abstract turns of phrase: here, e.g., "We have just concluded a good and true alliance, which we hope will endure") is no more to be recommended, because it makes short shrift of the virtual connotation contained within every catachresis, a sleeping beauty ever ready to be awakened. If *taratata* in a given language means literally "forked tongue" and in common usage "liar," neither of these two translations will be satisfactory; the choice is thus between a wrongful emphasis and a forced neutralization.

Paulhan saw only one way out of this logical impasse:

> It is not, of course, to substitute simple abstract words for the clichés in the original text (because the ease and the specific shade of meaning of the formula are lost thereby); nor is it to translate the cliché word for word (because in doing so one adds to the text a metaphor that it did not contain). One must rather get the reader to *understand the translation as a cliché*, just as the original reader or hearer did, and constantly *let*

> *go* of the image or the concrete detail rather than linger on it. This, I know, requires a certain education of the reader, and of the author himself. Perhaps it is not too much to ask of the man, if this effort will also allow him to make his way from the immediate thought to the authentic one; if it will enlighten us not only on the *Iliad* but also on that more secret text that each of us carries within. We have, in passing, recognized rhetorical *treatment.*[4]

I am not sure that this solution really is one, or more precisely, I don't believe it is anything but a formula, and I am very much afraid that here as elsewhere the cure (the "rhetorical treatment") may cost more than the result warrants. The wisest thing for the translator would no doubt be to admit that he can only do badly, and to force himself nevertheless to do as well as he can, which often means doing *something different.*

To these, as it were, horizontal (synchronic) difficulties raised by the passage from one language to another, we must add, in the case of ancient works, a vertical or diachronic difficulty that has to do with the evolution of languages. When one lacks a good period translation and wishes, for example, to produce in the twentieth century a French translation of Dante or Shakespeare, a new aporia presents itself: to translate into modern French is to erase the distance of linguistic historicity and to renounce placing the French reader in a situation comparable to that of the Italian or English reader of the original text; to translate into the French of the period is to condemn oneself to an artificial archaism, to engage in the "difficult and dangerous" exercise of what Mario Roques called "pastiche-translation," an exercise which is at one and the same time, in French scholastic terms, a *version* (from the Italian of Dante into French) and a *thème* (into Old French). This latter option may still be the least of all evils. André Pézard's Dante may serve as an example of that approach—which was preceded (one century earlier) by a less known and more radical attempt by Littré.[5] {See the Appendix for Pézard's and Littré's pseudo-medieval French versions of the *Inferno*'s opening lines.}

In these two cases, the historic parallelism of the languages is self-evident, for better or worse. But the translation of ancient texts—those preceding, for example, the very existence of the French language—raises a thornier problem: the *Iliad* obviously cannot be translated into any kind of period French. It is nevertheless a pity to deprive the modern French reader of the linguistic distance ("the murmur of distances traveled," Proust said) that

a Greek reader must experience, not to mention the stylistic and thematic analogies (formulaic style, epic content), which would argue in favor of a translation of Homer, for example, into the language of our *chansons de geste.* Littré, again, has pleaded this cause and preached it by example.[6] {Genette concludes by describing Littré's translation of the beginning of the *Iliad* into a mixture of nineteenth-century and medieval French. See the Appendix for Littré's text.}

## 42

A touching tradition going back to the *Phaedo* has it that Socrates, condemned to death, spent his last days in prison setting the fables of Aesop in verse. Evidently no trace of this uncertain prison pastime has come down to us, and we cannot know whether this work of *versification* (for once, the word is appropriate) was accompanied, as later in Phaedrus or La Fontaine, by more complex and ambitious operations. We may just as well credit Socrates with exemplary restraint, and therefore with a minimal transposition: pure versification at the least cost. In any language, a delicate task—and I would not take the risk of producing a fictitious example.

Besides, the gap is itself significant. Curiously, versification has left fewer traces in the history of texts than the reverse operation—to which we shall return. In the neoclassical age, when some authors wrote in verse under generic constraints (epics, tragedies) rather than out of poetic inclination, they must sometimes (often) have written first in prose and then done the versifying themselves afterward; but they discarded the telltale draft, and here we are without any hypotext in prose. With one exception.

In 1726, Antoine Houdar de la Motte, a neoclassicist of the modernist persuasion (as the word was used in the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns), wrote a tragedy on the theme of Oedipus, which we shall encounter again for different reasons, and which is one of the first tragedies in French prose. His motives, expounded in a "Discourse on Tragedy" that precedes this play,[1] were such as can be easily imagined: a concern with verisimilitude, naturalness, practicality. But two different motives, amounting to one, hindered him from "risking a performance": "the habits of the audience, who can only conceive of tragedies in verse; the habits of the actors themselves, who perform no other kind." In short: routine. Thus Houdar de la Motte, eager to innovate but also to be performed, hastened

(after an early rejection?) to versify his tragedy, which was performed in that new guise. But to his infelicitous attempt we owe the preservation of his prose text[2]—which was (and remains) the verse tragedy's hypotext—and the possibility of comparing them.

Both versions of the first scene, with Oedipus and his confidant Dymas, can thus be offered side by side for comparison {see the Appendix}. Self-versification, in this case, truly amounts to nothing more than a turning of prose into verse: the purpose consists, at the cost of minimal alterations (suppressions, additions, inversions), in adapting prose discourse to the rhythm of the alexandrine, and introducing—or singling out at the appropriate moment—the words (*larmes*, *pleurs* {tears}) on which the rhyme will be brought to bear. Nothing more, unless it be a slight intensification of the narrative, which in the second version is at times reminiscent of Racinian hypotyposes. La Motte evidently does not consider that tragic verse should go with any specific "poetic diction." He actually makes his argument quite clear in connection with a different operation, whose beneficiary, or victim, is none other than Racine himself. This inverse operation—as we shall see later—is a prosification of the first scene of *Mithridate*.

## 43

As I have already said, casting into prose, or *prosification*, is paradoxically more common than versification—if not in the moment of creation buried within the secret of lost drafts, at least as an overt and consumable cultural practice, destined as it is in fact and by nature for consumption—not counting the mass of (translinguistic) translations of poetic works into prose, like Paul Mazon's *Aeschylus*, which are at one and the same time translations and prosifications, and are no doubt more numerous than verse translations. The reverse practice is clearly not very plausible, though I have been apprised of the existence of English verse translations of Guilleragues's *Lettres portugaises*.

To the notion of cultural practice should be added the self-evident one of historical practice. There are, in the history of texts, moments that one might call *going over to prose*. As everyone knows since Giambattista Vico—as everyone has always known—all literatures begin with poetry, not because, as the eighteenth century was so fond of saying, sentiment precedes reason but quite simply (especially if one oversimplifies, as I am

doing here) because oral (or even sung) transmittal, which precedes written transmittal, requires for (mnemo)technical reasons a form of expression that is formulaic and versified. I shall spare you the vast bibliography on the subject, from Vico to Paul Zumthor by way of Milman Parry. But after those "archaic" periods of versified recitation come the more silent times, in which a different public prefers to read for itself. The elimination of the intermediary speaker or rhapsodist entails the elimination of poetic diction, because the average reader, sentiment or no sentiment, prefers prose when given the choice. Thus comes the age of setting into prose, and after the bards and jugglers come the prosifiers.

For the Homeric epic this happened, at least perceptibly, in the fourth century A.D. There appeared then, under the name of one Lucius Septimius, the purported Latin translation of the "Ephemerides of the Trojan War," written, it was said, in Phoenician by a Greek warrior, one Dictys of Crete, comrade-in-arms of Achilles and Diomedes. But for once the liar is perhaps not the Cretan. The "author" of this diary from the front, translated from Phoenician into Greek, then from Greek into Latin, might well have been the Ossian or the Sally Mara of antiquity, and his *Ephemerides* the work of his pretended translator. Whatever the case may be, this text is manifestly a prosification of Homer, or more exactly of the entire Trojan cycle, beginning with the capture of Helen and ending with the murder of Ulysses by his son Telegonos.

The idea of a diary kept by a combatant of the Trojan War, and published as such, is entirely captivating. Homer's relationship to what is for us his work would be neatly turned inside out: one of his anonymous characters, one among thousands from the rank and file, rises out of Homer's verses and undertakes to recount the story of that war which was his own, and to tell, as a witness and a little as Giraudoux's Elpénor was to do later, what the real story was behind the wrath of Achilles, the funeral rites of Patrocles, the death of Hector. For us, who still regard the *Iliad* as a fiction, such a situation has something irresistibly fantastic about it, as if some scholar out of Borges were today to discover Julien Sorel's diary or the memoirs of Prince Andrey, and invite us to compare these authentic documents with the dubious fabrications of Stendhal and Tolstoy.

The text of "Dictys" unfortunately is not quite in keeping with this imaginary description. The narrator is indeed from the Greek camp, and he does say "we" and "our ambassadors," and he calls the Trojans "those barbarians" (which Homer did not do), but his presence in the text ends

there.[1] He himself is never on stage, and his narration remains pedestrian and heterodiegetic. Its relative brevity (145 small pages in my French translation) makes this not only a prosification but also a *reduction* (we shall discuss this practice in its own right). It is therefore really a summary in prose of the Trojan cycle, adorned by certain inventions of his own (?), among them the concluding marriage of Telemachus and Nausicaa, which was to reemerge in later centuries. In the *Telegonia*, Telemachus married Circe: a somewhat more Oedipal epilogue (where the father came before . . . ), but a little less romantic.

Two centuries later another prose setting, even more condensed (twenty or so pages), was attributed to a Trojan soldier: this *De excidio Troiae historia* by "Dares the Phrygian" begins a little before Dictys (with the expedition of the Argonauts) and stops before he does, at the departure from Troad. These two strange texts were, along with the *Aeneid*, the principal sources of "information" about the Trojan War throughout the Middle Ages and until the rediscovery of Homer. They were the inspiration for the Trojan romances, from Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* (circa 1165) to Chaucer and to Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (I shall return to this work from another angle). And for a long time afterward they were held to be faithful, authentic, and original accounts. In 1670, Father Pierre Le Moyne, in his treatise *De l'histoire*, could state without turning a hair that "The *Iliad* of Homer, as everyone knows, is practically a copy in verse of what Dares and Dictys wrote in prose about the Trojan Wars." This is the hypertext made hypotext, and the original epic read in reverse as a derivative versification. Shades of Borges.

The medieval epic poem (*chanson de geste*) and especially the medieval romance underwent similar treatments: "In the fifteenth century," writes Paul Zumthor,

> the French epic had become extinct. Princes asked their men of letters to rejuvenate in prose a few cycles of the preceding age: thus it was that David Aubert presented the Duke of Burgundy with his *Cronicques et conquestes de Charlemagne*. These prose settings, the last and most distant avatar of the epic corpus, were to be the source of many French and European novels of the fifteen and sixteenth centuries, and beyond them of a whole body of popular literature which would circulate until the eighteenth century in the form of chapbooks in several regions of Europe.[2]

Here again, as we can see, the move to prose quite naturally goes for cyclic totalization: Aubert is to Turold what Septimius is to Homer. The same process applies to Celtic romances. We have already encountered several continuations of Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte du Graal*, such as that by Robert de Boron. Prosified as early as the end of the twelfth century, this cycle became, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the set later entitled *Didot-Perceval;* then (?), by contamination with *Le Chevalier à la charrette*, it became part of the immense monument known as the *Cycle de Lancelot* or *Lancelot en prose*, a vast totalization that encompasses the Celtic material (the *matière de Bretagne*) from the origins of the "grail" (the Crucifixion) to Arthur's death. Even the thirteenth-century prose *Tristan*, a compilation of Béroul and Thomas, will end up being tacked on to it somehow.

The scope and ambition of this undertaking obviously prevent us from considering these hypertexts as faithful prose translations of hypotexts, which would be, in any case, too multiple or too diffuse to allow a point-by-point comparison. The rare example of such a rigorous, even scrupulous, prosification will be provided by the obliging Houdar de la Motte. But perhaps we should first consider an intermediate performance, which ought more modestly to be called *unrhyming*: that is, getting rid of the rhymes without destroying the metric rhythm. A few word substitutions (one per couplet, neither more nor less) obviously suffice to meet the requirement. Here is how (and why) Voltaire, in the preface to his *Oedipe*, unrhymes four lines of Racine's *Phèdre*:

> Each language has its own genius, determined by the nature of the construction of its sentences, by the frequency of its vowels or its consonants, its inversions, its auxiliary verbs, etc. The genius of our language is in clarity and elegance; we allow no license to our poetry, which must proceed, like our prose, in the precise order of our ideas. We therefore have an essential need for the repetition of the same sounds so that our poetry will not be confused with prose. Everyone knows these lines:
>
> *Où me cacher? fuyons dans la nuit infernale;*
> *Mais que dis-je? mon père y tient l'urne fatale;*
> *Le sort, dit-on, l'a mise en ses sévères mains;*
> *Minos juge aux enfers tous les pâles humains.*

{Where can I hide? Let me flee into infernal night;
But wait! my father there holds the fatal urn;
Fate has placed it, they say, in his strict hands;
Minos in Hell judges all pale humans.}

Now put in their place:

*Où me cacher? fuyons dans la nuit infernale;*
*Mais que dis-je? mon père y tient l'urne funeste;*
*Le sort, dit-on, l'a mise en ses sévères mains;*
*Minos juge aux enfers tous les pâles mortels.*[3]

Poetic as this piece may be, will it give the same pleasure once stripped of the ornament of rhyme?

Readers will judge for themselves, but La Motte goes much further, prosifying an entire scene by Racine and offering the two versions on facing pages under the title "Comparison of the first scene of *Mithridate* with the same reduced to prose, from which spring certain reflections on the verses."[4] I can do no better than to reproduce here the first page. {See Appendix for the Racine speeches and La Motte's prose version.}

As can be seen, the hypertext here is even more literal than in the reverse exercise of versification: not much more is required than to suppress the Racinian inversions to do away with rhymes and break up the meter; a couple of substitutions (*important* → *considerable*, *demise* → *death*) put the finishing touches to the translation, illustrating (for such is La Motte's purpose as stated in the commentary appended to that exercise) the extent to which Racine's verse here merely amounts to rhythmic rhymed prose. Another kind of poetry, more lyrical and full of imagery, would no doubt have given him more trouble, and faced him with a dilemma similar to that encountered in translation: either retain poetic figures, but then they would clash with the surrounding prosaic discourse; or suppress them (translate them), but prosification would then become something more than mere deversification. Hence Houdar's care in choosing his hypotext: an expository scene that is exceptionally unadorned and devoid of imagery. Whatever he may say,[5] that literalness is not quite the constant norm of Racinian discourse.

Nor, presumably is it that of any poetic discourse. Prosification must either analyze images and become commentary, as it does in Damaso Alonso's translation into prose of Góngora's *Solitudes* (Madrid, 1927), or

else it must find a prose equivalent for the poem by resorting to entirely different means. Prosification then becomes the "prose poem," and that is what Baudelaire set himself to do at least twice, for "La Chevelure" (which becomes "Un hémisphère dans une chevelure") and for "L'Invitation au voyage." The comparison of the two states of each of these two poems is a ritual exercise in Baudelairean studies, which Barbara Johnson has recently brought to a point of remarkable, if occasionally overingenious, perfection.[6] For a detailed treatment I refer the reader to her work, retaining here only the essential and titular concept of "disfiguration"—which I would prefer to rename, according to a model that we shall encounter again several times (and with no regard for the received meaning of the term), *transfiguration*. In fact, and as Barbara Johnson herself convincingly demonstrates, Baudelaire is not content, in moving from poem to prose poem, to "dis-figure" the former: i.e., to suppress its implicit figurative system. What he does is displace it with another system: disfiguration + refiguration—it is this double operation that merits the term transfiguration, or figurative transposition. For "Chevelure," the shift is from a system that is essentially metaphoric (the beloved hair *is* a "fragrant forest," an "ebony sea," a "resounding port," or "darkest ocean"; it is a "shadowed pavilion," an "oasis" and a "gourd" from which to drink "long swallows of the wine of remembrance") to a system that is simply comparative ("*like* a thirsting man," "*like* the soul of other men," "it *seems* I eat memories") and metonymic (the hair *contains* a dream of vast seas where the poet glimpses a port, retrieves former longings, breathes certain odors). In the prose "Invitation" we find a proliferation of the modal *comme* and clichés of the period (*black tulip*, *blue dahlia*, *land of milk and honey*, *invitation to the waltz*), the substitution of a tame friendship ("with an old lady friend") for an incestuous passion ("my child, my sister"), and that of gastronomic, economic, and moralizing musings for the initial aesthetic ecstasy.

One would gravely misunderstand Baudelaire's thematic texture, in the *Petits poèmes* as in the rest of his prose work, if one were to read into these transpositions any hint of a degradation. There is in Baudelaire a *poetics of prose*—of a specific and equal, if not superior, aesthetic dignity, as in Flaubert, or later in Proust—which makes him a great prose writer. One of its major traits—and one of its virtues—is precisely that it is *prosaic*, like Dutch painting, which is explicitly referred to in "L'Invitation au voyage" in terms that closely evoke (down to the insistence upon bourgeois virtues) Hegel's famous pages on the Nordic taste for "the prose of life"—and some

other pages, by Proust, on the painter Chardin. It all seems as if Baudelaire had resolved not only to prosify these two poems but also—perceiving that the process could not be stopped halfway—to turn them into actual prose {*prosaïser*}. And right he was, since a prose poem must also be a poem *in* prose.

## 44

{The topic of this chapter is *transmetrification.* Borges, in "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*," ascribes to his indefatigable hero a transposition into alexandrines of Valéry's decasyllabic "Le Cimetière marin." Genette points out that the transposition of a poem from one meter to another is not merely a scholastic exercise, however; more significantly, it is one of the ingredients of burlesque travesty (e.g., the reduction of Latin hexameters into French octosyllabic verse in *Virgile travesti*). Showing that transmetrification as a mere exercise is no serious challenge, Genette humorously provides his own transposition of the beginning of Valéry's "Cimetière marin" into alexandrines (see the Appendix).

The next section is an account of Jean Prévost's transposition of Baudelaire's "L'Invitation au voyage" and "Recueillement"; in the former, each line has been lengthened by one foot; in the latter, alexandrines have been reduced to octosyllabic lines. Prévost's analysis of the results shows that in both cases the meter and meaning of the transpositions can stand on their own, but that the poetic charm characteristic of Baudelaire's pieces gets lost in the process; the metrical transposition is only "debris" of the original.[1] (See the Appendix for the relevant texts.)

Genette concludes with two observations concerning such experiments. The first is that, as games, they teach the educated reader useful lessons in poetic technique or aesthetics: "Nothing is more useful than games." The second is that transmetrification always proceeds through either an augmentation (e.g., from ten to twelve feet) or a reduction (e.g., from twelve to eight). This quantitative transformation is only the visible tip of a submerged hypertextual continent, which he intends to explore in greater detail after first reconnoitering another segment of the headland: that of *transstylization.*}

# 45

Transstylization, as the term itself clearly suggests, is a stylistic rewriting, a transposition whose sole function is a change of style. Journalistic and editorial *rewriting*[1] is evidently a specific example, one whose principle is to substitute a "good" style for one—less good: a stylistic correction, in other words. In the playful mode, as we have noted, Queneau's *Exercises in Style* are regulated stylizations in which the style of each performance is prescribed by the choice indicated in its title. In the serious mode, transstylization is rarely seen in its free state, but as we have seen, it inevitably accompanies other practices such as translation. Transmetrification is a form of transstylization as well, if one accepts as evident that meter too is an element of style. But one can also transstylize in prose, or transstylize a poem without transmetrifying it. I shall give an example of each of these two cases.

"Around 1892, Dr. Edmond Fournier found himself with Stéphane Mallarmé at the home of their common friend Méry Laurent. He skimmed through the *Tales* of Mary Summer, in which he found some charm, but whose style he deplored. Mme. Méry Laurent expressed the wish to have them rewritten by Mallarmé, who, delighted to so please his hostess, took the little volume with him and chose from it the best stories and rewrote them in his own manner."[2]

Mary Summer's *Contes et légendes de l'Inde ancienne*[3] thus became, partly, Mallarmé's *Quatre Contes indiens*—a typical exercise in stylistic correction. This exercise, as such, has already been examined by Claude Cuénot, and more recently and in a more systematic manner also by Guy Laflèche.[4] Here again, I can only refer the reader to these two studies, whose conclusions converge more or less along the following lines: Mallarmé shortens Summer's tales a little (by one-sixth)—his work is therefore secondarily also a reduction—but he also enriches the lexicon (by one-tenth), reducing the "stylistic" vocabulary (grammatical words, verbs of high frequency) and augmenting the "thematic" vocabulary (nouns and adjectives); he nominalizes nominal syntagmas and epithetizes relatives; he multiplies nominal sentences and reduces the total number of sentences by logically combining two or more of Summer's sentences. All of this, as one might expect, contributes to a richer and more "artistic," even if not quite yet "Mallarmean," style of writing, of which a brief comparison, taken from Laflèche, will give

some idea. {For the two excerpts from Summer and Mallarmé, see the Appendix.}

If, like Edmond Fournier, one deems Summer's writing to be "deplorable" or simply banal, one may describe Mallarmé's contribution as a *stylization*: he adds *style* (his *style artiste*) where there was hardly any, or what there was of it was very bland. Conversely, I would describe as *destylization* the memorable operation that one Colonel Godchot performed a long time ago upon the "Cimetière marin," decidedly a vulnerable target. His "Attempt at a translation into French (!) verse of Paul Valéry's 'Cimetière marin'" appeared in June 1933 in the review *L'Effort Clartéiste* {Striving for clarity} (! again). The colonel evidently sent his "translation" to Valéry, who answered in terms of ironic gratitude: "Your work interested me greatly for the visible scrupulousness with which it attempts to conserve as much as possible of the original. That you have been able to do this shows that my work is not as obscure as it is said to be." A month later he authorized, in the very journal edited by Godchot, *Ma Revue* (! yet once more), the publication of the two texts side by side, approving the disposition in these terms: "Very clever. People will compare." From this confrontation at the summit, I retain as an example the first and last stanzas, whose two states I present in the more brutal, and more telling, format of a crossed-out and corrected text {see the Appendix}.

As the title of Colonel Godchot's attempt indicates, its essential purpose is a transpostion of the "obscure" style of the original into a clearer style. Clarification here evidently means a substitution of "proper" terms for supposed metaphors. Destylization is thus indeed literally a disfiguration.

In the colonel's defense, I should add that *self-transstylization* is a common and well-attested practice. Valéry himself (waiting for Godchot) and many others have left us several versions of the same poem, each of which is a transstylization of the preceding one. The Pléiade edition of Mallarmé gives us three states of the "Faune," two each of "Le Guignon," "Placet futile," "Le Pitre châtié," "Tristesse d'été," "Victorieusement fui . . ." {see the Appendix for two combined (crossed-out and amended) versions of the "Sonnet en x"}.

I shall not go into a commentary of this process of Mallarméization; it is a job for geneticists, who have been at it already. Nor shall I theorize on the paratextual function of the foretext, or self-hypotext; this may be the topic of another inquiry. My purpose was only to use this new example to point out a fact so evident that it generally escapes notice: every transstylization

that cannot be equated with a mere reduction or a mere augmentation—and such is evidently and eminently the case when one endeavors, like Godchot correcting Valéry or Mallarmé correcting Mallarmé, to preserve the meter and thus the syllabic quantity—proceeds inevitably by means of *substitution*: that is, according to the Liégeois formula, by *suppression + addition.*[5] Clearly, it is high time we came to deal with *translongation*, or quantitative transformation.

## 46

A text, literary or not, can undergo two antithetical types of transformation, which I shall provisionally describe as *purely quantitative* and thus, a priori, purely formal and without thematic incidence. These two operations consist in one case of abridging the text—we shall call that *reduction*—and in the other of extending it: we shall call that *augmentation.* But there are certainly many ways to reduce or to extend a text.

One might claim as well—or better—that there are none: none, I mean, that would be purely quantitative in the sense that some mechanical, or other, device allows one to produce a "reduced model" of a material object, or even a work of art (a common practice, of which the Parisian version of Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty can offer a canonical example), or on the contrary an "enlargement" (a rarer practice, except in photography, but many works of art are nothing but later amplifications of their own initial models). Such a description doubtless ignores the inevitable imperfections of any "scale model" replica—although these imperfections may be more strictly linked to the act of "copying," even in "full size," than to the act of reducing or amplifying. But in the field of visual arts, one can at least *conceive* the notion of a purely reduced or enlarged version.

Nothing of the kind obtains in literature, or for that matter in music. A text, in the sense—perhaps decisive—in which this term designates a verbal production as well as a musical work, can be neither reduced nor enlarged without undergoing other changes more essential to its inherent textuality, and this for reasons that have to do with its nonspatial and immaterial essence: that is to say, its specific ideality. One can, without difficulties and almost without limits, enlarge or miniaturize the graphic presentation of a literary or musical text; it is already more difficult to enlarge or reduce its phonic presentation, but at least one can recite or play more or less quickly,

or more or less loudly (a difference of status is to be noted here already between the literary and the musical text: tempo and dynamic nuance are as much a part of the musical text as rhythm or melody, and are generallly prescribed by the score; this constraint is nonexistent in the literary text, whose ideality is in this regard more radical than that of music). But the text itself, in the structure and tenor of its sentences, is in no way reduced or amplified; as far as it is concerned, such spatial or temporal modifications have quite simply no meaning.

Yet texts are reduced or extended every day. We therefore mean something else by those terms than simple changes in dimension: more complex operations, or more diverse ones, which we crudely name reductions and augmentations only in view of their global effect, which is indeed to reduce or augment length—but at the cost of introducing changes that quite evidently affect not only length but also structure and substance. To reduce or augment a text is to produce another text, briefer or longer, which derives from it, but not without *altering* it in various manners, each of them specific, which we can attempt to arrange in a more or less symmetrical order according to two or three basic types of reductive or augmentative alterations.

This very symmetry excludes any fundamental precedence or priority between the two orders. But I have a vague notion that augmentations have been favored by literary expression much more often than reductions—although there is a sizable number of those—and I have an even vaguer hunch of their thematic repercussions. I shall therefore first gropingly explore the processes of reduction.

## 47

One cannot reduce a text without diminishing it or, more precisely, without subtracting from it some part or parts. The simplest, but also the most brutal and the most destructive to its structure and meaning, consists then of suppression pure and simple, or *excision*, with no other form of intervention. The assault does not inevitably include a diminution of value; it is possible to "improve" a work by surgically removing from it some useless and therefore noxious part. In any case, reduction by *amputation* (a single massive excision) is a very widespread literary, or at least editorial, practice. There exist—and have existed since 1719, three months after the publication

of the book—many editions for children of *Robinson Crusoe* that reduce this chronicle to the only part that is truly "Robinsonian" in the modern sense of the word: that is, the shipwreck and the desert island experience of Robinson. They involve a suppression of his first adventures (before the shipwreck) and his later ones (after he leaves), which are told in the original version, and *a fortiori* everything added to it by the second part. The vast tradition of the "Robinsonnade," from Campe to Tournier, was obviously constructed on this twice-amputated model. And there is no doubt, here and so often elsewhere, that this practice of rewriting is built upon (and in its turn reinforces) a practice of *reading*, in the strong sense: i.e., a choice of attention. Even in a complete edition, many are the readers who quickly pass (over) the pre- and post-island adventures of the hero. And this spontaneous infidelity, which is at least not without cause, alters the "reception" of many other works: how many readers of the *Rouge* or the *Chartreuse* (since amputation also quite easily applies to the titles) give as much attention to the "episodes" of Mme de Fervacques or of Fausta as they do to the rest of these works? And how many scrupulously read the *Recherche du temps perdu* from beginning to end? To read means to *choose*, for better or for worse, and to choose means to *leave out*. Every work is more or less amputated right from its true birth: that is to say, from its first reading.[1]

I am aware that in writing the foregoing, I have shifted from a more or less pure type of massive amputation to a much more frequent type, consisting of multiple excisions disseminated throughout the text. A last example of the pure type: the drastic suppression by Arrigo Boito, in his libretto for Verdi's *Otello*, of the first act set in Venice. This is obviously not the only alteration introduced by Boito but it is the most ostensible, and there are some of us, I suppose, who know the opera better than the play and who retroactively, and no doubt wrongly, regard the first act of the tragedy as a dispensable prologue: for us, the action of *Ot(h)ello* is set in Cyprus.

I had moved, then, from amputation to *trimming*, or *pruning*. It would take a lifetime simply to cover all the "editions"—actually versions—*ad usum Delphini* that make up the body of literature "for young people": *Don Quixote* relieved of its discourses, digressions, and incidental tales; Walter Scott and Fenimore Cooper of their historical details; Jules Verne of his descriptive and didactic ramblings—so many works reduced to their narrative plot, their succession or concatenation of "adventures." The very notion of an "adventure novel" is in large part an editorial artifact, an effect of pruning.

Its major originators almost all thought themselves engaged upon a much nobler, or more serious, task.

But the juvenile public is not the only one to have inspired such abridgments. In the eighteenth century, Houdar de la Motte produced a French version of the *Iliad* in twelve books (of the original twenty-four) that suppressed not half but a good two-thirds of the Homeric text—redundant and tedious speeches, battles not much to the neoclassical taste—revealing or confirming itself thereby as far removed from the epic spirit. Hunting down battles and repetitions in an epic poem displays a definite aversion to the very essence of its subject and style. But no age should be obligated to appreciate every genre, and the "*Iliad* in Twelve Books" is fairly good evidence of the taste of its time.

I wouldn't dare to defend in these same terms the drastically pruned version of *L'Astrée* that the present writer published several years ago. The principle of that selection was simple, although more difficult to execute: constrained by the limits of a paperback edition to present only one-tenth of this romance—whose typically "baroque" structure is overburdened with reported episodes and stories within stories that take up more than nine-tenths of the text—I resolved to keep only the central plot consisting of the loves of Astrée and Céladon. It was certainly the only way to produce a "reduction to one-tenth" offering any interest as a continuous narrative, but it is self-evident that such an interest itself constitutes an anachronism, and a betrayal of d'Urfé's narrative style that is as "serious" as the abridgments of Homer by Houdar de la Motte. That was clearly the judgment of the publisher, or his successor, who quickly withdrew it from the market, no doubt in preparation for a new—popular?—edition of the complete text.

*Self-excision* (I mean the amputation or pruning of a text not, of course, by itself—though that would be the ideal—but, failing that, by its own author) is obviously a special case of excision.

The texts of plays are known to be frequently cut for theatrical presentation. When these suppressions are purely for the convenience of performance, they usually remain tacit, even if the author has consented to them and helped make them, and since these "stage versions" do not go into writing, they escape, sometimes irremediably, the curiosity of historians and critics. At least one example is available, however, of theatrical self-excision duly recorded and legitimately included in the complete works of its author: the "stage versions" of Claudel's *Le Soulier de satin* (1943),

*Partage de midi* (1948), and *L'Annonce faite à Marie* (1948). In truth, these three theatrical versions do not share the same status. Only that of *Le Soulier de satin* is essentially a reduction, as is sufficiently attested by the difference in length between the 286 pages of the original version (written between 1919 and 1924 and published after a first series of corrections in 1929) and the 162 pages of the 1943 version that appears in the same volume of the Pléiade edition. It is also the case that only *Le Soulier* massively exceeds the dimensions then acceptable for the stage: "The essential aspect of the reworking," Jacques Petit informs us, "consisted in a tightening of the whole, obtained mostly by the suppression of almost the entire fourth day"; hence a "first part consisting of the *abridgment* of the first and second days of the original version," and a "second part and epilogue consisting of the abridgment of the third and fourth."[2] Claudel's feelings about this procedure were unmistakable, and he expressed them very clearly in a short address delivered in 1944, where he spoke of a "dismemberment" and of "pitiless cuts," calling himself "both perpetrator and victim" and the stage version "what is left of the play," "a single palpitating entrail," and "a single fragment."[3] The case of *Partage de midi* is a little different: the reduction of the 1905 version to that performed in 1948 is hardly noticeable (from 80 to 75 pages); it goes without saying that length is not always the only obstacle to performance, but the truth is rather that after forty-three years Claudel hoped to rework his drama profoundly (thematically), and that the requirements of the stage were merely a pretext. Jean-Louis Barrault himself secured the retention of "certain scenes that the poet hoped to rewrite. This version is, in a certain sense, a compromise. The performances reinforced in Claudel a desire to compose an entirely new version."[4] This third version, dubbed "new version" (86 pages), was written at the end of 1948 and is evidently considered the "definitive" version, the second having played the role only of a transition; it is also the version Claudel hoped to see performed from then on, although this wish has never yet been fulfilled. A version then that is both "definitive" and "for the stage," as is the second version of *L'Annonce* (or, if you prefer, the fourth of *La Jeune Fille Violaine*).[5] Here again, the differences in length are negligible: 1892, 76 pages; 1899, 86 pages; 1911, 102 pages; 1948, 83 pages. Even the last version can be seen to be slightly longer than the first, just as was the case with *Partage.* The same goes for *L'Échange* and for *Protée.* The only reductive reworkings, then, are the (purely scenic) one of *Le Soulier* and the much earlier one of *La Ville* (1891, 109 pages; 1898, 75 pages).[6] *Tête d'or*, between 1889 and 1894,

lost only five pages. It is thus an unwarranted claim on Jacques Madaule's part to state that in general, these later transformations "tend to prune the overly luxuriant lyrical vegetation. One could say that the poet, in his early stages, does not quite master his own verbal abundance. . . . The second versions are clearer, more suited to performance but less rich as reading," and to declare a final victory of the efficient playwright over the diffuse poet.[7] The only "victory" is that of the old Claudel over the young Claudel, and is more thematic than formal in nature.

But this prejudice, which is unfair to Claudel, does reflect reality, if not in his case, then in the case of several others. When a writer, for whatever reason, resumes and corrects one of his earlier works or simply the "first draft" of a work in progress, this correction can conform to a dominant tendency and aim primarily either at reduction or at amplification. Let us reserve until later the predominantly amplificatory revisions; Flaubert provides us with a very characteristic example of an essentially reductive revision.

The castrating effect of the usually severe advice of his mentors, Bouilhet and Du Camp, is well known and easy to measure; only compare the definitive text of *Madame Bovary* published in 1857 to the "original" version (re)constituted by Jean Pommier and Gabrielle Leleu.[8] Or else we can bring together the three (or four) successive versions of *La Tentation de saint Antoine*—a more legitimate comparison, because here the various states are indisputably authentic. More legitimate, but Demorest and Dumesnil did the job more than forty years ago, and for details I refer the reader to their study.[9] In 1849 Flaubert read the first *Temptation* to his friends, who advised him to "throw that thing in the fire and never mention it again." This first state must have closely resembled that of manuscript NAF 23.774 at the Bibliothèque Nationale, which consists of 541 manuscript pages. Now, this manuscript is marked with many intended cuts; the initial state is easily legible but gives evidence of an already severe first rereading. This text could be published with the indicated cuts.[10] We would then have a second *Temptation*, impossible to date, but clearly intermediate in time and in the process of reduction between that of 1849 and that of 1856, currently called "Second *Temptation*" (except when it is published, following the bad example given in 1908 by Louis Bertrand, under the fallacious title of "First *Temptation*"). This latter, which brings to its conclusion the work of reduction, constitutes manuscript NAF 23.665, which now contains only 193 manuscript pages. The drop is brutal, but differences in the handwriting

make it seem greater than it is: in fact, the *Temptation* of 1856 is just about half as long as that of 1849. Except for a few added transitions, it results from a process of pure and simple cutting. Here is how Demorest and Dumesnil describe the operation:

> [Flaubert] cuts and pares, crosses out whatever is redundant, untimely, risky, declamatory, useless; he removes metaphors that are overextended or too frequent, epithets, interjections; he relieves the text of everything that weakens it or weighs it down, everything that falsifies the local or historic color; he seeks measure, harmony, conciseness, clarity; he tries to bring out the structure of the work, to multiply preparations and connections, to develop the character of Anthony by giving him a more important place in the dialogue and the action.

The definitive version of 1874 gives evidence of a more complex process in which excision, while still present, no longer dominates and is offset by numerous additions and complicated by several permutations: whence an entirely new work, but one whose dimensions are very close to the 1856 version.

The "reception" of literary works undergoes a curious reversal of perspective here. Most often (this is clearly the case with Flaubert) the reader (historically, the public) first has access to the "definitive" version—that is to say, the self-reduced one—which durably determines his "vision," or his idea, of the work. Then, curiosity (or opportunity) leads him to read the primitive version of the work, which inevitably seems an amplification, more or less successful according to tastes. Between the proponents of the last and the first *Temptation* or *Madame Bovary* the debate goes on without respite—and without resolution. But nothing can erase the *effect of amplification* produced by the inversion of the temporal order in which they were written and read. Perhaps we should, in the spirit of Condillac, impose the experiment upon young people of having to read according to the order of the genesis of the work. But this would, among other undesirable things, deprive them of a beneficial illusion—for illusion can be beneficial when it is, as here, conscious, and when it procures thereby a double vision: the spontaneous and the schooled, or corrected. We shall soon encounter, by the way, the opposite illusion.

*Expurgation*, which obviously produces "expurgated versions," is among other things a type of excision (by amputation and by occasional trimming);

it is reduction with a moralizing or an edifiying function, again generally *ad usum Delphini*. What is suppressed in this case is not only anything that might bore young readers or exceed their intellectual ability but also and especially anything that might "shock," "trouble," or "upset" their innocence—i.e., anything that might provide them with information we prefer to withhold from them for some time still: information on sexual matters, of course, but also on many other realities (human "foibles") which it is not urgent to bring to their awareness or attention. I don't think there is much in this vein to be found in Jules Verne or Cooper, but in Scott, perhaps—and enough, certainly, in many other great authors to maintain a flourishing industry. Censorship is obviously the adult version of this same practice.

That Anastasia's scissors[11] have become the symbol of censorship and expurgation should not, however, induce us to think that these activities are carried out only through excision; it is sometimes more effective to add an explicatory, or justificatory, or somehow apotropaic commentary. A simple reprimand may suffice to exonerate the author and/or to avert the reader from the "faults of the hero." Stendhal, we know, sometimes amused himself this way under the pretext of misleading the police, and we shall find other examples on other occasions.

A particular case involves both expurgation and self-excision: *self-expurgation*, in which the author himself produces a censored version of his own work. I do not know whether this practice is widespread (in fact I doubt it), but everything is possible, and we know of at least one example: *Vendredi, ou La vie sauvage* by Michel Tournier. I shall say a few words about it a little farther on in reference to its original, which will be of more interest to us, and for completely different reasons.

## 48

A distinction must be made between excision, which can at a pinch dispense with any textual production and proceed by simple erasures or scissor cuts, and *concision*, whereby a text is abridged without the suppression of any of its significant thematic parts, but is rewritten in a more concise style, thus producing a new text which might, at a pinch, preserve not one word of the original text.[1] Thus concision enjoys, in what it produces, the status of a *work*, a status not attained by excision: we speak of an abridged version

of *Robinson Crusoe* without always being able to name the abridger, but we speak of the *Antigone* of Cocteau "after Sophocles."

Cocteau, then, performed this exercise three times (I confess that I know of no other example): in 1922 on *Antigone*, in 1924 on *Romeo and Juliet*, and in 1925 on *Oedipus Rex*. He himself designated his *Antigone* a "contraction" of that of Sophocles, and that term would do well enough if it didn't already designate a scholastic exercise that depends upon another technique.[2] Again on the subject of *Antigone*, Cocteau said he wanted to translate this piece in the way one "photographs Greece from an airplane." The image is a little vague, but it does connote the age, the manner, and the climate. Except for a few alterations (anachronisms, familiarisms in the tradition of travesty, a very marked reduction of the choral parts, a thematic addition in *Antigone* in which Haemon, according to the story of the messenger, spits into his father's face), *Antigone* and *Oedipe Roi* are indeed in essence stylistic contractions: almost every speech is kept, but in briefer and leaner style. Here are two or three typical examples, for which I juxtapose a modern translation of Sophocles and the concision by Cocteau.[3]

> WYCKOFF (Creon to Ismene): You, lurking like a viper in the house, who sucked me dry. *Cocteau*: Ah! there you are, viper.
> WYCKOFF (Antigone): Don't die along with me, nor make your own that which you did not do. My death's enough. *Cocteau*: Do not die with me and do not boast, my dear. It is enough that I should die.
> WYCKOFF (Creon): One of these girls has shown her lack of sense just now. The other had it from her birth. *Cocteau*: These two girls are raving mad.
> WYCKOFF (Creon): There is no greater wrong than disobedience. This ruins cities, this tears down our homes, this breaks the battle-front in panic-rout. If men live decently it is because discipline saves their very lives for them. So I must guard the men who yield to order, not let myself be beaten by a woman. Better, if it must happen, that a man should overset me. I wont be called weaker than womankind. *Cocteau*: Anarchy is the greatest evil. It ruins towns, breaks up families, infects the army—and a woman anarchist is the end of everything; better yield to a man. It shall not be said that a woman has led me by the nose.

As these quotations perhaps serve to indicate, the "contraction" carried out here (and in like manner in *Oedipe Roi*) by Cocteau only emphasizes, exaggerates, and at bottom updates Sophocles' own concision, which literal

translations have more trouble rendering. Cocteau pushes Sophocles to the limit, but in Sophocles' own direction; here is an unexpected example of a practice not found up to this point: rewriting as caricature, parody in a hyperpastiche. Sophocles rewritten by Cocteau is more Sophocles than the original. The effect is conclusive: this was perhaps the best way to translate him. The case of *Romeo* is very different; as Cocteau himself says, "I wanted to operate on a drama of Shakespeare, to find the bone beneath the ornaments. I have thus chosen the most ornate, the most beribboned, of the dramas." But since the essence of the play was precisely in these suppressed lyrical ornaments, the effect is quite obviously less happy: *Romeo and Juliet* reduced to the bare bones of action is a puny thing. Paradoxically, then, concision would seem to work best for those works that are already concise. But this paradox leads to an observation that can be made about other types of hypertextual practices: better push a text to extremes than tone down its character, which is tantamount to normalizing and therefore *trivializing* it. The deliberate dryness of Cocteau's style (which should be heard in his metallic, trenchant voice) serves Sophocles well and Shakespeare badly. To translate *Romeo* well, it might be necessary on the contrary to amplify it, overornament it, add more ribbons. It would have taken an Henri Pichette to do the job.

Just as self-excision is a special case of excision, so *self-concision* is a special case of concision. More frequent, no doubt because it is one of the most constant forms of stylistic elaboration. Consider, among others, Chateaubriand.

{Genette reproduces and compares two versions of Chateaubriand's description of Niagara Falls, and three (self-edited) of his description of "the American night," showing how the intensity of vision and freshness of style that characterized the youthful passages progressively give way to a more sedate and conventional tone. See the Appendix for these excerpts.}

## 49

However distinct they may be in principle, excision and concision nevertheless have in common the fact that they operate directly on their hypotext to subject it to a process of reduction, of which it remains the frame and the

constant support: even the most emancipated concision can only produce a new version of the original text. Such is not the case for the third form of reduction, which depends only in an indirect way upon the text to be reduced. It is mediated by a mental operation that is absent from the two others, a sort of autonomous synthesis produced, so to speak, from memory upon the body of the text, whose every detail—and therefore every sentence—must be forgotten so as to keep only the meaning or the movement of the whole, which remains the only object of the reduced text. The reduction, here, operates by *condensation*; its product is commonly called *digest*, *abridgment*, *résumé*, *summary*, or, more recently in French high school parlance, *text contraction*.

It might well be objected that concision, as I have described it, also proceeds by way of synthesis and autonomous condensation and is not subject to the literality of the hypotext. But it does so sentence by sentence at the level of stylistic microstructures, not at the level of the structure as a whole; one can crudely decribe concision as a series of sentences each one of which is the summary of a sentence of the hypotext, and thus as a series of partial summaries. The actual (global) summary, by contrast, could in principle condense the whole of that text into a single sentence. I once suggested, for the *Recherche du temps perdu*, "Marcel becomes a writer." Legitimately shocked by the hyperreductive character of this summary, Evelyn Birge-Vitz suggests this correction: "Marcel *finally* becomes a writer."[1] This, it seems to me, says it all.

Common usage takes the terms *digest*, *abridgment*, and *summary* to be virtually equivalent. But a few nuances, to say the least, may be in order here. Let us begin innocently by describing, as if it were the only one extant, the most frequent form of condensation, for which we shall reserve the term—which also happens to be the most common—*summary* {*résumé*}.

It is almost taken for granted that the practice of summarizing cannot generate any real literary works or texts—and naturally this quasi-evidence is partly deceptive: I shall come back to this as soon as possible.[2]

The chief functions of a summary, of course, are of a didactic order: extraliterary and metaliterary. Let us leave aside such extraliterary forms as administrative condensations or other synthetic reports, although this genre might well have its own aesthetic and produce its own masterpieces. I designate as metaliterary those summaries of literary works which the critical discourse on literature consumes and produces in great quantities.

Functionally, the metaliterary summary is a tool of metaliterary practice and/or an element of metaliterary discourse.

It is found in its more or less pure, uncombined—i.e., chemically *free*—state in specialized encyclopedias (if I dare to use this oxymoron) such as the Laffont-Bompiani *Dictionnaire des oeuvres*, which devotes to each featured work an article that is essentially informative or descriptive and often takes the form of a summary. The rate of reduction varies greatly, but the average would fall somewhere between 0.5 and 1.0 percent. Summary is again found—as part of a vaster didactic text—in the notices of academic or scholastic editions, where, by a strange but obviously self-aggrandizing antiphrasis that has passed into common usage, it parades under the name of *analysis*. In a similar context or in a more isolated format, summaries of plays often go by the name of *argument*. Like *analysis*, though by a different route (as if it were itself the script on which the playwright had worked), *argument* is a euphemism. The act of summarizing does not have a very good image; because it is inevitably subordinate (in the service of something else), it wrongly seems intellectually inferior and is always in search of a more flattering disguise, or camouflage. The practice itself of summarizing a play presents a peculiarity that will be "evident" once I have pointed it out but may not be as "natural" as it seems. It subjects the text it summarizes to two simultaneous transformations, one of which causes the other to be forgotten: to a reduction, certainly, but also to an "adaptation," as is said of a novel or a play when it is brought to the screen—that is to say a change of *mode*, here a shift from the dramatic to the narrative mode. This feature deserves (to begin with) some brief comment. To my knowledge, there does not exist—and I very much doubt that there can exist—a single example of a summary of a play in the form of a play (let alone a summary of a narration in dramatic form). The mode of utterance of the summary of a "representative" work (dramatic or narrative) is always narrative. That law (it is a law) does not rest upon a material impossibility; one could, now that someone has thought of it, go to the trouble of reducing a play to a few lines and obtain thereby a model that would be closer to a summary than to a Cocteau type of "contraction." But the difficulty comes rather from the didactic function of the narrative mode, or more precisely of a certain type of narrative mode, which the dramatic mode could not perform so well. I shall return to this very soon.

The third and (I hope) last type of metaliterary summary, the most frequent, in fact, is encapsulated within a discourse for which it constitutes

only a preliminary or more cleverly disguised utility. I am referring to "critical" discourse in general and under all its forms, from the most pedantic (academic: many doctoral theses are nothing but a series of summaries strung together in an "erudite" manner, including perhaps this very book) to the most popular: the newspaper review.

Except for a few nuances, all these varieties of didactic summary, or of the summary properly speaking, have in common certain formal features, all of which are pragmatic features: that is to say, the marks of the attitude that underlies the utterance. These features may all be subsumed under two main ones: narration in the present tense, even when the work being summarized was written in the past tense; and narration "in the third person" (heterodiegetic), even when the work being summarized was autodiegetic—not "I became a writer," but "Marcel becomes a writer." The copresence, and quite probably the convergence, here of the present tense and the third person clearly shows that the opposition between the narrative statement of the hypotext and that of the summary cannot accurately be reduced to the contrast established by Émile Benveniste between *story* and *discourse*: the marks of discourse (present tense and first person) are distributed equally between the two.[3] Another pair, proposed by Harald Weinrich, fits the situation better: the opposition between the world of *narration* (which easily accommodates the first person) and that of *commentary*, which has no need of it but does require the present tense. Here is how Weinrich himself applies this category to the didactic summary:

> The summary of a novel . . . is never presented in isolation. It is found in guides to reading in dictionary form; their alphabetical or chronological order give them an immediate context. A summary might well aspire to do no more than refresh the reader's memory, but in general it serves to support a *commentary* of the literary work. The author of such a condensation cannot be motivated by an ambition to reproduce more briefly and less well what has already been told better and in more detail. Summarizing the contents of a novel does not mean creating a *reader's digest*. What it does instead is comment upon a work or give others the possibility of doing so without the hindrance of a deficient memory. The summary is thus inserted into a broader commentative situation of which it forms one element.[4]

Weinrich notes the same pragmatic attitude in those preliminary summaries —sketches, scenarios, and other outlines—written out by novelists for

themselves as they map out their work progress, which show the same general attitude of the commentator. This categorization seems impeccable to me; however, while acknowledging that the didactic summary is always explicitly or implicitly contained within a critical or theoretical context, I would substitute for the notion of *commentary* that of *description*, which takes more precisely into account the barely narrative situation of the didactic summary, as opposed to the fully narrative one evoked by Weinrich under the {English} term *reader's digest*. Since these two types can be characterized only in contrast to each other, I must indicate at this point the fundamental features of the "digest"—a practice for which, having no sufficiently telling word in French, we must resort to this "franglism." I do not know whether all the condensations published in the *Reader's Digest* and its imitators systematically match the norms described here, but that is of no concern to me at this point: I am describing two *types* whose structural opposition is completely clear, whatever the accidents of their actual distribution. On the other hand, many a critic has been known to challenge all norms—and run the risk of ridicule—by summarizing the plot of a novel or a film in the style of a digest.

The *digest*, then, presents itself as a perfectly autonomous narrative, without reference to its hypotext, whose action it takes charge of directly. Consequently, it is free of the constraints that bear upon the utterance of the didactic summary. It can as it pleases keep the narrative situation (present or past, first or third person) or substitute one for the other. In short, the digest tells in its own way, necessarily more briefly (its only constraint), the same story as the narrative or drama it is summarizing, which it neither mentions nor concerns itself with. The summary, on the contrary, never lets it out of its sight or, so to speak, of its discourse; properly speaking, it does not recount the action of the work but describes its narration or its representation, without ruling out explicit mentions of the text itself: "In the first chapter, the author tells . . ."; "As the curtain rises, we see . . ." This descriptive attitude suffices to exclude any narrative form that is too lively (preterite), let alone any dramatic form, and it demands the use of the present, the obligatory tense in French for describing an object considered not as actually there but as intemporal. The agent behind such descriptions is obviously the author (real or putative) of the summary, which again suffices to exclude any of the characters from taking charge of the narration, and therefore rules out the autodiegetic narrative form. The *I* of a digest can be the hero; the *I* (or the academic *we*) of a summary,

even if he never appears, remains the exclusive property of the author of the summary.

The most appropriate term for designating this type of reduction would therefore be *descriptive summary*, so long as we clearly understand the object of the description to be the work as such. In practice, of course, this description can hardly be separated from a description of the text itself: in the case of Camus's *L'Étranger*, we expect not only "At the beginning of *The Stranger*, Meursault learns of the death of his mother," but also, for example, "*The Stranger* is written in the informal past tense {*passé composé*}."

As an instrument or an auxiliary form of metaliterary discourse, the descriptive summary clearly does not claim the status of a literary work. Which in no way excludes it from attaining that status, provided it is itself written by a great author (we do have innocent criteria sometimes) who has, intentionally or not, brought to it a share of his talent. Such is the case with the relatively extensive summary (somewhere between 5 and 10 percent) of *La Chartreuse de Parme*, which takes up about fifty pages of an article by Balzac devoted to this novel and which was published in *La Revue parisienne* in September 1840.[5] The summary is not in itself the most significant aspect of this study, which contains several important theoretical propositions (the distinction between a "literature of images," illustrated by the novels of Hugo, and a "literature of ideas," of which *La Chartreuse* is said to be the masterpiece) and several critical remarks on the composition of the novel, which Stendhal received with humility and gratitude and undertook for a time to observe for a later printing. The most interesting suggestion, and one very characteristic of the opposition between the sophisticated Balzacian construction and the spontaneous movement characteristic of the Stendhalian "chronicle," was to start the narrative at Waterloo and to abridge everything that came before into an analepsis assigned either to the narrator or to Fabrice. But what matters to us here is the summary itself. It is written, quite normally, in the present tense and contains numerous more or less literal quotations, some of them more copious than is usual for the genre. Contrary to what we might expect, Balzac does not undertake here any sort of transcription into Balzacian style; he seems on the contrary to have undergone a Stendhalian contagion and perhaps (we know his aptitude for caricature) to have deliberately overdone Stendhal's manner. On the other hand—and here is its principal interest—this summary gives evidence of a reinterpretation and even a very peculiar reorganization of the

action of *La Chartreuse*, which is also confirmed by some of its interspersed commentaries.

Balzac's summary is almost entirely focused not on Fabrice but on Gina, and incidentally on Mosca: a characteristic example of narrative *transfocalization*. Everything that comes before Gina's first marriage is cut out; Waterloo is dispatched in a few words; and the sum and substance concerns the intrigues at the court of Parma. Fabrice is relegated to the second rank, and all the last part (Fabrice as a preacher, his love affair with Clélia) is summarized in five lines as having been "rather sketched than completed" by Stendhal himself (which is perhaps true) and, especially, as secondary to the action; Balzac adds that it ought to have formed the subject of another book: the drama of "the love affair of a priest," something like Zola's *Faute de l'abbé Mouret* without the enchanted garden of Paradou.[6] In truth, Fabrice does not interest Balzac, whether as an amorous priest or not: young, insipid, without political caliber or ambition, he could not be made appealing to the reader except by being given a passion that would place him above the people around him; for Balzac, by all tokens, Fabrice's passion for Clélia is not such a feeling. Stendhal's novel should therefore have been "either shorter or longer"—and Balzac's summary in its own way carries out the former suggestion. The essential feature of that summary is this displacement of interest and point of view.[7] Proof, if one were needed, that no reduction can ever be a reduction pure and simple, can ever be transparent or insignificant—and thus innocent. Tell me how you summarize, and I'll tell you how you interpret.

An author producing a (self-)condensation of his own work can just as easily be the unwitting interpreter of it. The case is doubtless not exceptional, and we find some in embryo in the correspondence of many novelists. The most developed and most interesting is perhaps the summary of *Le Rouge et le noir* written by Stendhal in October or November of 1832 for his Italian friend Salvagnoli and very probably meant to serve as the draft of an article that was never completed.[8] The reduction is much greater than in the Balzac article (to about 2 percent of the whole), and the pretended author is not Stendhal but an Italian journalist addressing the Italian public, presenting the novel as an account of the rigid, suffocating morals newly established in France by the Revolution, the Empire, and the Restoration, and comparing them with the freer attitudes of the *ancien régime*. Hence the strong emphasis upon historical determinations (of Julien's character by

his reading of the *Confessions*, of Mme de Rênal's character by provincial moralism, of Mathilde's by Parisian life) and very insistent opposition between the "love of the heart" of the provincial woman (*asinus asinum fricat*) and the "cerebral love" of the Parisian (*asinus fricat se ipsum*): all in all, a brutal commentary—akin to some of the remarks he made in confidence to Mérimée or to some of the marginal notes in *Leuwen*—which imports from without, though by the author's own agency, a sort of indigenous, official or unofficial, interpretation very apt to both comfort and disturb the reader who rediscovers his own interpretation in it. But the most troubling thing about it—I have said it before and I can only repeat it here—is doubtless this "reduplication of the narrative, which at one and the same time contests and confirms it and most assuredly displaces it, not without a curiously 'blurring' effect in the coming together of the two texts." This troubling "coming together" of two autographic versions is far more frequent than I had once imagined. But the paradox here is that the condensed version is the later one, written after the fact (and not before, as is true of the scenarios and sketches whose hypertextual status we shall consider further on), as if under the influence of a sort of remorse, also paradoxical, for having been too finely shaded, too elliptical, and of a desire to clarify everything and settle every issue in a couple of sentences.

Another example of a self-written summary, with a somewhat analogous effect of eliminating ambiguity, is that of *Sylvie*, given by Nerval in a letter to Maurice Sand of 6 November 1853: "The subject is a youthful love: a Parisian, who at the moment of falling in love with an actress begins to dream of an earlier love for a village girl. He wishes to fight his dangerous Parisian passion, and betakes himself to a festival in the village where Sylvia lives, in Loisy near Ermenonville. He finds his love there, but she has a new suitor, who is none other than the Parisian's foster brother. It is a sort of idyll . . ."

Here is Flaubert's summary of *Un Coeur simple* in a letter to Mme Roger des Genettes, 19 June 1876: "*Histoire d'un coeur simple* is quite simply the story of an obscure life, that of a poor country girl, pious but mystical, devoted without exaltation and tender as fresh bread. She loves successively a man, the children of her mistress, a nephew, an old man whom she takes care of, then her parrot; when the parrot dies, she has it stuffed, and when she herself is dying, she confuses the parrot with the Holy Spirit. There is nothing at all ironic in this as you may suppose, but on the contrary it is

very serious and very sad. I wish to arouse pity, make sensitive souls weep, being one myself."

But the most striking example of the genre, perhaps because it is embedded within the work itself, is doubtless the very free synthesis of the Rougon-Macquart novels given in *Le Docteur Pascal* under the pretext of a revelation by Pascal to Clotilde of his file of observations on the family. It is an interpretive and explicative survey (in terms of heredity, of course) of the entire family lineage in the light of science. And in a very exceptional narrative mode: the imperfect tense of the free indirect discourse with which Zola takes charge of Pascal's exposé, and rewrites it in his own characteristic epic-lyrical style.

> First of all came the origin of the family—its founder, Adélaïde Foulque, the tall demented creature from whom had come the first nervous lesion. . . . Then the appetites of the family were let loose. . . . Then came Aristide Saccard, personifying the ravenous appetite for low enjoyment, in hot pursuit of money, woman and luxury. . . . And Octave Mouret, victorious, had then set to work to revolutionise the spheres of commerce, annihilating the little shops where old-fashioned traders plied their callings with so much prudence, and rearing in the midst of fevered Paris a colossal Temple of Temptation. . . . Later on began a gentle, tragic sketch of life: Hélène Mouret, living peacefully with her little girl Jeanne on the heights of Passy. . . . The bastard branch began with Lisa Macquart, . . . full of strength and life, with the plumpness born of prosperity. . . . And then came Gervaise Macquart with her four children," etc.[9]

Does it not seem that Zola is here describing his work under the guise of Doctor Pascal's discourse, as he describes elsewhere, with bold brush strokes, the market stalls at Les Halles or the garden at Paradou? This is really Zola revised and rewritten by Zola, Zola squared, or perhaps Zola to the power of Zola—which undoubtedly amounts to much more.

# 50

The digest certainly is hypertextual in its genesis, as much as the summary, since it also derives from a hypotext that it presents in a condensed version. But it is much less metatextual; strictly speaking, it is not metatextual at all, since it does not comment on its hypotext, which it mentions nowhere (except in its title) and makes no claim to describe. The silence at the core of this unreferenced relationship is precisely what makes of the digest a *condensed version*, more purely and rigorously so than the summary, and perhaps the closest thing to the inaccessible ideal of the scaled-down model.[1]

The digests in current usage do not claim literary status any more than descriptive summaries do. But here again, modesty in no way excludes potential achievements, and literary history has granted at least an honorable grade to two works that conform to the model of the digest (which they may have helped to create): these are *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807) and *The Adventures of Ulysses* (1808) by Charles and Mary Lamb. The first is the better known and the only one, it would appear, to have been translated into French; the second is obviously in the same vein, but its principle of reduction is simpler, since its hypotext is already in narrative form, whereas the *Tales*, for the purpose of condensing texts that were originally dramatic, turn them into narratives.

*The Adventures of Ulysses* are, as one suspects, a condensation of the *Odyssey*, in length approximately equal to 20 percent of the Homeric text; for obvious reasons the digest, which seeks to offer its audience an object for a shorter but substantial reading, uses a much less drastic rate of reduction than the summary. Like the *Tales*, this is a version intended for young people, and the Lambs are not aiming for absolute faithfulness in their condensation, which gives evidence of many changes in emphasis, proportion, and perspective. To concentrate interest, they do away with the Olympian opening and the entire Telemachus episode; symmetrically, and no doubt to get rid of details that are tedious or too brutal (the slaughter of the suitors), the last twelve books are reduced to four chapters (out of ten). As is usual in this genre, the adaptation tends to linger on the fantastical adventures of the first half, and Lamb vigorously defended his choice against the reservations of the publisher: "I cannot alter these events without enervating the book [he enervates it without scruple in other ways] and I will not alter them

if the penalty should be that you and all the London booksellers should refuse it."[2] Expurgations could not be avoided, but Lamb does not resist the opposite temptation of lingering, ever so lightly, upon the meeting of Ulysses and Nausicaa; the latter might indeed wish for a husband like this charming castaway. Besides the shift from poetry to prose (and from Greek to English), the style is clearly modernized: i.e., relieved of its formulaic repetitions. But the most remarkable formal intervention is the suppression of Ulysses' analepsis in books 9 to 12; this narrative returns to the order of the story, beginning at the fall of Troy, and all these early adventures predating the arrival in Phaeacia are related directly by the extradiegetic narrator. The principal and, in the history of Western narrative, most decisive narrative innovation of the *Odyssey*, in terms both of narrative time and narrative voice, is here sacrificed to the concern for simplicity inherent in a tale intended for young people.

This no doubt unavoidable effect of simplification is more noticeable still in the *Tales from Shakespear* (*sic*).[3] The preface clearly indicates the pedagogical project of this collection, written for young people and especially for girls, who must wait longer than their brothers for a direct contact with the often "virile" texts of Shakespeare and for whom these versions, adapted and therefore inevitably attenuated, will serve as a sort of stopgap and preparation. Expurgation is naturally on the agenda—all the more so since the Lambs conceive these readings as a school for virtue and especially (in Shakespeare!) of the following virtues: courtesy, kindness, generosity, humanity—and even before it distorts the condensation, this policy is already evident in the selection from the corpus: the elimination of the histories, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Troilus and Cressida* was to be taken for granted. But as is almost always the case, expurgation is marked here not only by what is taken out but also by positive intrusions meant to explain shocking or surprising conduct: thus Macbeth is impelled to ambition by his wife; Othello's jealousy is somewhat motivated, and excused, by Desdemona's lack of caution.

These moralizing effects are in some way independent of the practice of the digest; one could just as well obtain them by means of a corrected version of the play. What most concerns us here are the consequences directly linked to the process of narrative condensation. Despite a laudable effort to respect the purity of the Shakespearean lexicon, the passage from verse to prose inevitably eliminates or "attenuates" the entire poetic register of the diction: e.g., the lyrical ornamentation of *Romeo and Juliet* or the

lush "imagery" of *Macbeth*. The necessity to condense the action leads to the suppression of certain useful minor characters such as Rodrigo in *Othello*, and some picturesque ones such as Juliet's nurse. The theater of Shakespeare thus loses its baroque luxuriance and approaches the classical ideal of simplicity, sobriety, and dramatic efficiency. The chronological order jumbled by Shakespeare's expository scenes is straightened out by way of introductory paragraphs. But above all, the passage into the narrative mode brings with it a suppression of the dramatic plurality of voices; it is sacrificed to a univocal narrative that is usually focused by a dominant viewpoint—Hamlet's or Macbeth's or Othello's—and merges with the moralizing motives to eliminate the ambiguities, indeterminacies, or irrationalities characteristic of the Shakespearean world. This is renewed evidence of the inevitably corrective role inherent in the operation of reduction, its main effect here being that of classicalization—which is tantamount to saying, regarding a hypotext of that sort, an effect of *trivialization*.

## 51

In November 1915 Proust wrote, for Mme Scheikévitch, on the blank pages of her copy of *Swann*, a kind of summary of the sequel, then still unpublished, of the *Recherche*. A summary that is just barely retrospective for the author himself, since it concerns the pages most recently written, but altogether prospective for the recipient. The purpose of this text (as of the chapter headings of *Guermantes* and *Le Temps retrouvé* printed on the flyleaf of *Swann* in 1913) is to serve as an announcement—with the proviso that it is here intended for private use, and that such usage commands the specific tone of this very selective summary.[1]

That selection follows two principles. The first, indicated at the outset, is a request formulated by the recipient: "Madame, you wish to know what Mme Swann turned into as she grew older. It is rather difficult to sum it up for you. I can tell you that she became more beautiful!" There follow a few snatches from the *Jeunes filles* in reference to the new "style of beauty" of Odette and her social frivolousness. The second principle is more self-serving: "But I should rather present to you the characters you don't yet know, the one above all who plays the most important part and brings about the climax, Albertine." The sequel is indeed exclusively devoted to the story of Albertine, from the first encounter at Balbec to her death

and the final oblivion. Hers is indeed, to a point, the principal "part" after the Narrator's, although the climax she brings about may not be the most significant. The accompanying letter adds a purpose, or a pretext, to this choice: this episode may be "the only one that could find affinities of grief in your bruised heart (due no doubt to some bereavement)."[2] But the real reason might well be the fact that Proust was then "full" of that new topic, introduced between 1913 and 1915 and particularly close to his heart at the time.

This selective summary passes quickly over the first encounters with Albertine at Balbec to jump to the main revelation of Balbec II (past intimacies between Albertine and Mlle Vinteuil), then to her sequestration and its aftermath, then to the Narrator's feelings after the departure and death of the girl. The summary is here again interspersed with quotations—sometimes slightly distorted, or perhaps in keeping with what was then the state of the future text of *La Recherche*—quotations that make up the main body of the text. The actual summary, which is here no more than a leading strand or "connective tissue" between quotations, half-respects the discursive norm of descriptive summaries in that it is written in the present tense. By contrast, it diverges from the norm in very characteristic manner as regards the narrative person. The summary of an autodiegetic narrative—whether an autobiography or a novel in the first person—always switches it to the heterodiegetic voice. See for example the summaries of the *Confessions* or, precisely, of the *Recherche* in the Laffont-Bompiani dictionary of literary works. Here, by contrast, Proust always uses the first person and does so from the start: "You will see [Albertine] when she is just 'a young girl in bloom,' in whose shadow I spend such happy hours at Balbec. Then, when I become suspicious of her over nothing at all," etc.[3] The narrative stance here is thus a mixture of that of a descriptive summary, through the use of the present, and of the digest, through the use of the first person. But this mixture itself sheds light on Proust's attitude concerning his narrative. To assess it accurately, one must perceive, or perhaps conceive (because examples here are becoming scarcer), the difference between the summaries of autodiegetic narratives according to whether they are delivered by an outside commentator or by the author himself. For the outside commentator, the norm is indeed the completely objective one I have just described. As regards the author, it seems clear to me that the norm is modulated according to whether he is summarizing a "first-person (non-autobiographical) novel," such as *Gil Blas*, or a true autobiography:

Alain-René Lesage would surely respect the norm (see his titles); Rousseau would probably stick to the first person. And the form adopted by Proust is probably the most spontaneous mode for the autographic summary of an autobiography.

Two lateral constraints should be taken into account. The first is the very insistent and no doubt contagious presence of the quotations, the mode of which is naturally autodiegetic. But Proust, as we have just seen, uses "I" in his summary before any literal quotation. The second is the anonymity of the hero, which makes it impractical to designate him objectively and had already led the 1913 prospective tables of contents to use the autodiegetic voice ("Death of *my* grandmother"; "Why *I* left Balbec suddenly"), which was to be taken up again, by contamination or for the same reason, by the allographic summaries of the Pléiade edition. But here the cause is itself an effect: the anonymity of the hero of the *Recherche* is an autobiographical posture, and all contextual ambiguities notwithstanding, the only time Proust departs from that anonymity, he calls his hero "Marcel." The fact is, in any case, that Proust always spontaneously identifies himself with him (or him with himself)—even though he may at times correct himself in a manner itself ambiguous or partial and without impact on what follows, as in his article of 1920 about Flaubert: " . . . pages where a few crumbs of 'madeleine,' dipped into tea, remind me (or at least remind the narrator who says 'I' and who is not always I) of a whole period of my life, forgotten during the first part of the work." As can be seen, the corrective parenthesis does not prevent Proust from proceeding with a decidedly irrepressible first-person possessive adjective.

These repeated accidents seem revealing to me: the manner in which Proust designates and summarizes his work is not that of an author of a "first-person novel" like *Gil Blas*. But we know—and Proust knows better than anyone—that this work is not a true autobiography either. For the *Recherche* an intermediate concept should decidedly be adduced, one more closely in keeping with the situation subtly and indirectly but unequivocally revealed or confirmed by the "reading contract" of the Scheikévitch summary, one that goes more or less like this: "In this book, I, Marcel Proust, tell (fictitiously) how I meet one Albertine, how I fall in love with her, how I keep her a captive, etc. I ascribe to myself, in this book, those adventures which in reality did not at all happen to me, at least not in this form. In other words, I invent for myself a life and a personality that are not ('not always') exactly mine." What to call this genre, this form of

fiction, since fiction, in the real sense of the term, is what we have here? The best term would doubtless be that used by Serge Doubrovsky to designate his own narrative: *autofiction.*[4]

# 52

The *pseudosummary*, or fictive summary—i.e., the simulated summary of an imaginary text, as illustrated by Borges, for instance—no doubt belongs to the order of forgeries, since one of its functions is to substantiate the existence of a nonexistent text, like the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on Uqbar in his *Ficciones*, or the tale "The Approach to Al-Mu'tasim" by the so-called Mir Bahadur Ali. But the pseudosummary is not, strictly speaking, an apocryphal text, since the supposed text has not actually been *produced* but only *described*, with no attempt at stylistic imitation. Textually and formally, the pseudosummary does function like a descriptive summary, mixed with a commentary or intended to introduce and sustain a commentary: "The Approach to Al-Mu'tasim," typical in this respect, passes itself off as a canonical review, with a philological introduction, the summary proper, and a final commentary.

The origin of this practice, applied here to the disguised production of fictional texts, is probably Borges's early critical work, which predated his work as a storyteller. *Discusión* (1932) is after all a very classical collection of critical essays, with the mixture of "analysis" and commentary characteristic of that genre.[1] The sense of dizziness is chiefly due to the themes and ideas discussed in these essays under cover of discussing other authors, who are sometimes manipulated and co-opted but by no means always. That set of intellectually fantastic themes conjures up a vague sensation of uncertainty concerning the authenticity of the references, but that mistrust may proceed from the reader's ignorance, and above all from the fact that we are reading those ancient texts today in the deceptive light of more recent ones. *A Universal History of Infamy* (1935) marks the beginning of Borges's well-known play with apocryphal references and "erroneous attributions"; he himself later described that collection as "the irresponsible game of a shy young man who dared not write stories and so amused himself by falsifying and distorting . . . the tales of others."[2] We find the same procedure in some of the tales gathered under the title *El jardín de los senderos que se bifurcan* (1941; later incorporated into *Ficciones*), which the prologue describes thus: "The

composition of vast books is a laborious and impoverishing extravagance. To go on for five hundred pages developing an idea whose perfect oral exposition is possible in a few minutes! A better course of procedure is to pretend that these books already exist, and then to offer a résumé, a commentary. Thus proceeded Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus*. Thus Butler in *Fair Haven*. These are works which suffer the imperfection of being themselves books, and of being no less tautological than the others. More reasonable, more inept, more indolent, I have preferred to write notes upon imaginary books."[3] In "Theme of the Traitor and the Hero" (1944), the "timid" storyteller waxes bold enough to introduce his narrative as the summary of a tale that he will "doubtless develop," and he "dimly perceives it thus."[4] What he provides, then, is a pseudoscenario, or a pseudosketch. The other tales of that period, and those to follow, give up the attempt to mask their autonomy by an apocryphal attribution: Borges the teller of tales has at last broken free.[5]

The facile and common idea that Borges switched from criticism to fiction by means of the reassuring transition of fiction disguised into criticism[6]—that idea is thus essentially true, and the no less banal psychological explanation in terms of "timorousness" is Borges's own responsibility. We should perhaps not take that term too literally, or at least we should catch the touch of cuteness and sophistication that goes with it. More ambitiously, but doubtless also more judiciously, the prologue to the *History of Infamy* stressed the paradoxical superiority of reading over writing: "Sometimes I suspect that good readers are even blacker and rarer swans than good writers. . . . Reading, obviously, is an activity that comes after that of writing; it is more modest, more unobtrusive, more intellectual."[7] Do take note of the preposition "after": reading comes after writing; it is *therefore* superior to it, both more modest and more mature. There is as much pride as humility in describing one's own works as summaries of the works of others.

Let it be noted that this practice of fictitious hypertextuality[8] occupies a symmetrical and opposite position in relation to the performance ascribed by Borges to his hero Pierre Menard. In writing a rigorously literal *Don Quixote* from his own inspiration, Menard allegorizes the act of reading considered as, or disguised into, an act of writing. Conversely, when Borges attributes to others the invention of his tales, he presents his writing as reading, disguises his writing into reading. Needless to say, these two approaches are complementary; they mesh into a unifying metaphor of the complex and ambiguous relationships between writing and reading:

relationships—I shall get back to them as the need arises—that are quite evidently the very soul of hypertextual activity.

The pseudosummary was for Borges only a transitional practice, but it has left its permanent imprint on the totality of his work.[9] Overall, it seems as if his early habit of producing first real, then fictitious summaries ingrained in him a stylistic idiosyncrasy that became very manifestly and notoriously typical of his manner, characterized by a restraint, a terseness, an aloofness, that are difficult to analyze but that any reader of *El Aleph* or *Ficciones* must have experienced. I shall call this peculiarity the *summary effect.* It is due chiefly to the sense that Borges, even in those tales where he does not conceal his authorship behind the fiction of a review, is more engaged in describing—with a jaded critic's reserve and ironic detachment—a preexisting narrative than in telling a story himself.[10] He defined this sort of narrative through preterition as the "classical postulation of reality." He illustrates it with two texts by Edward Gibbon and Cervantes, whose writing he describes as "mediate" and as "generalizing and abstract to the point of invisibility."[11] The significant word for us is surely the adjective "mediate," which may be more literally appropriate to Borges's style than to that of any traditional narrator—although every historian has to lean on documents that inevitably mediate his narrative, and Cervantes does claim to be translating a narrative by Cid Hamet Ben Engeli. Of the three forms designated by Borges as characteristic of the "classical postulation," two evidently proceed from the technique of the summary or synthesis. The first "consists in a general review of important facts"; it is typically the "summarizing narrative" as practiced by the historian and the traditional novelist when they cover in a few lines a time lapse of several months or years. The second, not very different from the first, "consists in imagining a reality more complex than that which is being expounded to the reader and in reporting its outcome and impact"; the summary thus comprises a latent reserve of circumstantial details that the narrative must not disclose but leave to the reader's imagination. Here again we have a process of real or fictitious selection—which is perhaps best acquired through the practice of the summary.[12]

It would of course be presumptuous to reduce Borges's art to a kind of dissemination through all his works of the experience of the fictitious summary. I shall therefore abstain from doing so. Two reasons might be adduced for stating, with equal justification, that his genius lay in that direction: his steadfast adherence to the myth of the World as Library (and

Labyrinth), which gave him access to things and to beings only by way of books;[13] his stylistic etymon of brevity, which in no way excluded—any more than in Góngora or Quevedo—the preciosity of what he himself named his "laconic metaphors," and which was best expressed in the gesture of a deliberately condensed style of writing. But the art of Borges cannot be reduced to that dual feature. I am referring to it here, as the reader will have understood, not for what it owes to the practice of the summary, but for the opposite reason.[14]

## 53

Just as the reduction of a text cannot be a simple miniaturization, so its augmentation cannot be a simple enlargement; as one cannot reduce without cutting, one cannot augment without adding, and both operations involve significant distortions.

A first type of augmentation might be the exact opposite of reduction by massive suppression: augmentation by massive addition, which I propose to call *extension*. Thus, Apuleius, in the process of extending the *Metamorphoses* of Lucius (presumably), did not hesitate to add at least the myth of Amor and Psyche, an episode that was totally extraneous to the story of his hero, leaving it to future exegetes to find some sort of symbolic relationship between these two narratives—as they were sure to do.

It is in drama that extension is chiefly to be found, particularly French neoclassical drama: authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sought to adapt Greek tragedies to the "modern" stage. Those plays, admirable as their argument was thought to be, were too "deficient in matter" to fill the five obligatory acts. The most typical example is unquestionably *Oedipus Rex*, which (in addition to other reinterpretations and transformations) has been subjected, then as now, to all kinds of extensions that might more appropriately be called "padding."

Let it be remembered that Sophocles' tragedy dramatizes only the very end of the misfortunes of Oedipus: i.e., the inquiry regarding the plague in Thebes and the oracle demanding the chastisement of Laius's murderer. All the rest, the very subject of this inquiry, is only incidentally evoked through scraps of narrative. Once you take out the speeches of the Chorus, which were unwelcome on the neoclassical stage, there is hardly matter enough in

all this to fill in five acts. A few episodes and/or characters must therefore be added.

The first to try his hand at the job was apparently Corneille, in 1659. His "Avis au lecteur" and "Examen rétrospectif" of 1666 describe and explain his procedure very clearly. The insufficiency of the subject is for him not quantitative only: "Love having no place in this subject or women a role in it, . . . I have attempted to remedy these deficiencies as best I could." As can be seen, the incestuous relationship between Oedipus and Jocasta, which has been of such moment to us of late, did not count as "love" for Corneille, and the role of wife-mother did not appear to him an adequate feminine role. The addition he imagined consists of giving Laius and Jocasta a daughter and thus Oedipus a sister, Dirce, whom Oedipus believes to be his stepdaughter; for reasons of state, he wants to marry her off to her (their) cousin Haemon, son of Creon, though she is in love with Theseus, who happens to be here on a neighborly visit and who returns her love. Two characters have thus been brought in, one of whom carries all his prestige with him (*annexation* would be a fitting word in his case), and a long suspense ensues. Confrontations accumulate between Oedipus and Dirce, between Oedipus and Theseus, and even between Theseus and Dirce, when the oracle (the consulted soul of Laius) demands the death of a creature of Laius's blood: Oedipus himself, of course, but Dirce appears at first to be the designated victim. To save her, Theseus offers to die in her place, claiming against all likelihood to be the son of Laius and Jocasta, which by the same token turns him into Dirce's brother, whence a variety of mistaken identities and characters outdoing each other in self-sacrifice and baroque bantering ("O Prince, if it please you, be not my brother!"). When Oedipus turns out to be Laius's murderer, Theseus challenges him to a duel, in his double capacity as son of the victim and lover of his daughter. All this does fill the stage effectively enough, until the final revelation of Oedipus's identity and the denouement; the latter is congruent with the original, but in a typically Cornelian distortion of the tragic theme, the announcement of a "public healing" and the impending marriage of Dirce and Theseus add a piquant touch of the "happy end."

This optimistic *Oedipus* met with immense success, rivaled only, it seems, by the *Oedipus* of young Voltaire.[1] Like Corneille, Voltaire found the subject too light, or at least too brief: "They are," he wrote of antique subjects in general, "the most thankless and impractical subjects of all; they are subjects good enough for one or two scenes at most and not for a tragedy. . . . To

those events, passions must be added that provide for them" (such, after all, was to be Freud's opinion, and his contribution as well). Dissatisfied with Corneille's addition, however, Voltaire invented another one, which evidently seemed much better to him but again consisted in importing or annexing a hero from outside Thebes. Philoctetes was the choice this time, an "old" love of Jocasta who, having got wind of Laius's death, turned up to try his luck once more, only to find her remarried to Oedipus and to be himself charged by the populace with having murdered Laius. That contrivance, Voltaire observed, was much needed "to fill up the first three acts; I scarcely had matter enough for the last two. . . . Ha! what an insipid figure Jocasta would have cut, had she not had at least the memory of a legitimate love, and had she not feared for the life of a man she had once loved!" (Here again, the final revelation of her relation to Oedipus apparently was not enough to rescue Jocasta from her "insipidity.") As a consequence, Philoctetes was to be accused for three whole acts and detained by Oedipus, pending trial, until the "high priest" (as Voltaire was pleased to dub Tiresias) and the messengers began to unravel the truth. At that point, Philoctetes' trick was up. It obviously made for two successive heroes and, all in all, two different plays.[2]

The enormous success of that second version as well did not prevent yet another scoundrel from perceiving its no less enormous shortcomings and improving upon the first two with a third extension of *Oedipus Rex.* I am referring to our old friend Houdar de La Motte, who wrote a new *Oedipus* in prose, then turned it into verse and published it in 1726, preceded, like every other version, by an apologetic "discourse." It claimed to remedy the lack of matter in Sophocles' tragedy while avoiding the pitfall that had trapped both Corneille and Voltaire: namely, the dual focus of the dramatic interest.[3] The stage and the action must be filled, but without resorting to a second hero from outside Thebes. His solution: the expiatory victim exacted by the gods will have to be "of Jocasta's blood" this time, which apparently designates Eteocles or Polynices—hence a new suspense of confused identities, but one that has the merit of not stepping beyond the family circle, and of being as unbearable to Oedipus and Jocasta as the truth itself. La Motte has certainly not gone down in history as a theatrical genius, but I must confess that in dramatic efficiency and within the framework of classical values, his extension seems to me the least clumsy of all.

An addition it remains, however, whereas extending the action might have been done simply by moving backward into Oedipus's earlier history,

of which Sophocles showed only the denouement.[4] (One could also imagine grafting the action of *Oedipus at Colonus* on to that of *Oedipus Rex*, to serve as an epilogue, but I know of no example of such a contamination.) Moving backward is what Cocteau did, among other things, in *La Machine infernale* (1932). Its principle as an extension consists mainly in providing an analeptic followup—starting not from the origin of the drama (the oracle, the birth and exposure of Oedipus) but right after the death of Laius. Of the play's four acts, only the last coincides with the action of *Oedipus Rex*. It is a hypercondensation of the 1925 contraction, enriched with a single but impressive addition: the dead Jocasta comes back upon the stage; under the outward shape of Antigone, it is she—mother, wife, and daughter—who will henceforth accompany the blind hero. Act 3 is devoted to Jocasta and Oedipus's wedding night; this is the first piece of dramatic evidence of the modern interest in the incestuous relation (the second, in fact, after Hugo von Hoffmannsthal's *Oedipus und die Sphynx*, which dates back to 1905). Oedipus loves Jocasta with an almost filial love; Jocasta sees in Oedipus a disturbing likeness to her "dead" son; sleepy Oedipus (that night will remain a chaste one) mistakes Jocasta for his mother; Jocasta discovers the telltale scars on Oedipus's feet and shrieks in horror; Oedipus gives her a false explanation (ignorant as he is of the true one); Jocasta tells her own story, imputing it to her wardrobe keeper. "Might you have done it?" Oedipus asks. The plot of act 3 thus consists of a series of slips of the tongue, semiconfessions, and abortive revelations wherein truth is circled and skirted in a furtive manner reminiscent of Giraudoux.[5] The meeting between Oedipus and the Sphinx, in act 2, is even more in the manner of Giraudoux. The Sphinx is a young girl (in fact the goddess Nemesis, accompanied by the jackal Anubis) who is moved by Oedipus's beauty. Upon learning that he is coming to Thebes to defeat the Sphinx and marry Jocasta, she points out the difference in age: "A woman who could be your mother!" "That she isn't," Oedipus responds predictably, "is all that matters." Having resolved to save him, she reveals her identity and gives him the key to the riddle. He will thus have his answer ready when Anubis demands of the Sphinx that she should put Oedipus to the test like the others. Here as in Jean Giraudoux's *Elpénor*, *Judith*, and *La Guerre de Troie*, things turn out the way tradition has ordered them, but they do so by way of an unexpected detour, which will remain unknown to common mortals.

Only act 1 introduces an addition extraneous to the Oedipus legend—but what an addition it is! After the murder of Laius, his ghost appears on the

ramparts of Thebes to attempt to warn Jocasta of the fate that is threatening her. Jocasta and Tiresias come to the walls, but they can neither hear nor see the ghost, whose warnings remain fruitless. This is the burlesque act—in the manner of Offenbach—with the expected anachronisms and vulgarisms: modern slang, foot soldiers, fussy officers, Jocasta's foreign accent ("that international accent of the royalty"), Tiresias as the diviner-who-divines-nothing and whom Jocasta calls Zizi,[6] clowning premonitions ("This scarf is strangling me. . . . How can you think I'll leave that brooch behind? It catches everybody's eye"). But the most blatant wink at the audience is of course the reminiscence from *Hamlet*, with the dead king's apparitions and a bizarre crisscross of thematic patterns: in *Hamlet*, the ghost wants to inform his son of Claudius's murderous deed and "incestuous" relation with the queen; here, the king wants to inform Jocasta of his having been murdered by Oedipus so that she may avoid an incestuous relation with him. With or without any reference to Freud, this is not the only example of contamination between the two great tragedies. In Gide's *Oedipe* (1930), Tiresias comes back from Delphi: "What did the oracle say?" Oedipus asks. "That there is something rotten in the kingdom."

Whether it remains specific and allusive, as is the case here, or expands to encompass a whole act, as in Cocteau, that mixture in varying doses of two or more hypotexts is a traditional practice—one which, in the field of poetics, happens to be termed precisely *contamination*. We have already come across it in more openly playful forms (the cento, the Oulipo chimera). Both the word and the thing apparently derive from the Latin comic writers, more specifically from Terence, who sometimes thought fit to pack additional material into his plays by combining the plots of two Greek comedies. Thus two unknown plays by Menander are said to have contributed to *The Eunuch*, and *Andria* (*The Maid of Andros*) came from "The Maid from Andros" and "The Maid from Perinthos," both again by Menander, of whom Terence says in his prologue, "contaminavi fabulas"—but we cannot here appraise the process of contamination, since the originals have been lost. Theatrical history offers many other such instances: Jean de Rotrou's *Antigone* mixes Sophocles' plot with Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, and Boito's libretto for *Falstaff* borrows from both *Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The most canonical, and most blatant, example is no doubt Christian Dietrich Grabbe's *Faust und Don Juan* (1829), which exploits and crystallizes the characteristically Romantic kinship of both heroes, a kinship that had been promoted by E. T. A. Hoffmann's idealizing interpretation of

the Seducer (1813). The two stories intertwine, or rather alternate and cross each other on the stage, intersecting only through the character of Donna Anna, whom both heroes court. The contamination here is well balanced enough to make it impossible to decide which of the two actions serves to amplify the other. Outside the field of theater, some form of contamination may be read into the presence in Faust's legend (as early as the sixteenth-century *Volksbuch*) of a Helen brought over from distant Troy. Many a work thus comes into being thanks to the decisive spark struck by a felicitous encounter between two or more elements, borrowed from literature or from "life": thus for the Berthet trial and the *Confessions*, Vanozza Farnese and Angela Pietragrua, etc.[7] Thomas Mann himself claimed his Leverkühn, and therefore his *Doctor Faustus*, to have been modeled on Faust (for the protagonist's fate), Nietzsche (for his madness), and Schönberg (for his musical theory).

Those are contaminations between texts, or between texts and borrowings from "reality." More subtle or offbeat marriages could be imagined: e.g., between two styles—say, a chimera-type crossbreed of Mallarmé's diction and Proust's syntax, or a Balzac plot narrated in the style of Marivaux. I remind the reader that travesty is based on much the same principle, consisting as it does of a colloquial style grafted upon an epic action. So for musical variations and paraphrases: Beethoven's on Diabelli, Brahms's on Handel, Liszt's on Mozart, Ravel's on Mussorgsky, Stravinsky's on Pergolesi, etc.

The differences between those generic chimeras (two genres, or one text and one genre) and the contaminations of specific texts will not, I trust, go unnoticed. More examples can be imagined: a rewriting of *Hamlet* in Beckett's style—but the thing does exist, and will be discussed later; the contamination of a text (*Wilhelm Meister*, deemed overly bourgeois and in need of being rewritten in Romantic fashion) and a genre (the medieval romance of chivalric initiation): the result was *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*; contaminations between genres, a Carolingian epic mixed with an Arthurian chivalric romance, which was, as we know, Boiardo's formula, later taken up by Ariosto.

# 54

The second type of augmentation, the antithesis of concision, proceeds not through massive additions but through a kind of stylistic dilation. In grossly oversimplified terms, the procedure consists in doubling or tripling the length of each sentence in the hypotext. It is the familiar story of the frog trying to blow itself up to the size of an ox—a comparison that is not quite fortuitous. To keep within the paradigm of extension, let us call it an *expansion.*

Expansion is essentially what classical rhetoric practiced when it assigned its pupils the exercise that it more generally named "amplification" (but I prefer to reserve that term for a different purpose). A distinction was made—a somewhat specious one, as we will see—between amplification by "figures" (introducing figures of speech into a reputedly literal text) and amplification by "circumstances": i.e., singling out details that had been merely mentioned or implied in a supposedly concise or laconic text, and working them out through descriptions, animations, etc. The traditional victims of such scholastic, or other, exercises of expansion were the fables of Aesop. Georges Couton, in an article bearing the appropriate title "Du pensum aux *Fables*" [From impositions to *fables*], quotes a few lines from a model or a master's fair copy borrowed from the *Novus candidatus rhetoricae* by Father François Antoine Pomey (1659) and bearing on "The Wolf and the Lamb."[1] "To a brook a lamb had come, desiring to quench its thirst. A wolf rushed to the brook, driven more by a lust for loot than by thirst." So far, the amplification sticks fairly close to Aesop's text. "As it was drinking, the lamb saw in the water the terrifying shadow of the wolf. Its limbs shaking with terror, the poor little creature {*le pauvret*} was spellbound and dared not move either tail or head." Here we have, as Father Pomey himself pointed out, a case of expansion through *hypotyposis*: the wolf's intrusion vividly enacted and focalized according to the lamb's viewpoint; another hypotyposis concerning the sight of the terror-stricken lamb (but from the wolf's perspective); the fittingly colloquial tone of *le pauvret*, perhaps reminiscent of Marot; the enumeration of the physical effects of fear. "The while, the wolf, driven by his gluttonous appetite, was seeking to pick a quarrel with the lamb so as to have occasion to tear it to pieces" (original text). "How now, said he, impudent little creature! will you not cease, while I drink, to muddy the water with your slimy feet?—Is it me,

good Master Wolf, whom you are calling an impudent little creature, when I can hardly stand on my legs for respect and fear of you?" Here we have a *sermocination*, or a *dialogism*: i.e., straight dialogue without introductory statements, strongly characterized by the insolent brutality of the wolf and the respectful submissiveness of the lamb. In Aesop, the lamb was less timid, and did attempt to argue his case ("I am drinking downstream," etc.); here, he is pleading guilty in a manner that is supposedly more in character.

The excerpt quoted by Couton goes no further, but I take it to be going far enough: the distinction between "figures" and "circumstances" can be seen to be artificial, for the dominant figures here are precisely such as provide circumstantial details (descriptions, portraits, dialogues), all aimed at producing an effect of vivid realism. The good Father's performance is a paltry one, to be sure, but readers will be at no pains to substitute for it that of a later and better-known French fabulist, and to confront their Aesopian hypotext with another illustrious fable such as "The Grasshopper and the Ant," "The Crow and the Fox," or—an ideal case, perhaps—"The Oak and the Reed." I shall not indulge in that equally traditional exercise here and shall spare you the wearisome tirade on the art of La Fontaine, the sooner to come to my self-evident conclusion, which will also be kept mercifully brief: La Fontaine's art is (only) the perfect mastery, by a literary genius, of the modest hypertextual practice of stylistic expansion.

In its classical phase, expansion explored only one stylistic direction, which I have termed, for lack of a better word, "realistic animation." The hypertext, in this case, for all its colloquial or mischievous undertones, remains a *serious* text; the fable is after all a didactic and moralizing genre, even though its "moral" often happens to be somewhat down to earth. But other possible directions might be considered, among them a purely playful one.

Queneau's *Exercises in Style* provides some good illustrations of this hypothesis. If the version titled "Récit" is again to be taken as the neutral hypotext, several of the variations on that theme will appear as original forms of expansion: expansion through *hesitation* ("I don't really know where it happened . . . in a church, a dustbin, a charnelhouse? A bus, perhaps?"); through excessive *specificity* ("At 12:17 P.M., in a bus of the S line, 10 meters long, 3 wide . . ."); through *definitional* transformation ("In a large public transport vehicle designated by the nineteenth letter of the alphabet . . ."); through pseudo-Homeric bombast (already quoted);

or through *preciosity* ("It was in the vicinity of a midday July. The sun had engraved itself with a fiery needle on the many-breasted horizon. The asphalt was quivering softly . . ."); and even through a typically Quenellean *sermocination* under the title "Inattendu" {Unexpected}: "They were sitting around a café table when Albert joined them. René, Robert, Adolphe, Georges, and Théodore were there . . ."[2]

## 55

As one can see, these two notions of extension and expansion refer to simple practices that are rarely found in their pure state, and it stands to reason that no literary augmentation of any consequence limits itself to one or the other. Thematic extension and stylistic expansion should therefore be considered as the two primary paths of augmentation in general, which most often consists in their synthesis and convergence and for which I reserved the classical term *amplification.*

Amplification thus defined does not seem to correspond as symmetrically as I might have led the reader to believe with the third type of reduction, condensation, which did not proceed at all by way of a synthesis and convergence of the two others (excision and concision). We shall soon observe, however, that the hypotext of an amplification may easily stand—after the fact—as the equivalent of a summary, which could not so easily be said of an expansion (a fable by Aesop would be a little too long a summary for the La Fontaine fable that derives from it), and even less of an extension: the text of *Oedipus Rex* obviously does not contain *in nuce* the Cornelian role of Theseus, or the Voltairean one of Philoctetus, or the Shakespearean first act of Cocteau's *Machine infernale.* Amplification, then, is that which could least inaccurately be described as the obverse of a condensation.

Amplification is one of the basic resources of classical drama, especially of tragedy, from Aeschylus down to (at least) the late eighteenth century. Tragedy as we know it emerged from the theatrical amplification of a few mythic and/or epic episodes. Sophocles and Euripides (and a few others as well) in turn created their own amplifications of the same episodes or, to put it differently, contributed their own variations upon the themes of their predecessor. Original themes borrowed from history or entirely invented were extremely rare; of the first type I only know only Aeschylus's

*The Persians*, and of the second Aristotle knew only Agathon's *Antheus*. This peculiarity was to become one of the norms of neoclassical tragedy: Corneille and Racine always made a point of referring to their sources as requisite justifications. Classical poetics knew of the invention of dramatic subjects but conceded it to the minor genre of comedy—which in fact resorted to it sparingly.

The parallel and simultaneous treatment by Corneille and Racine, in 1670, of the theme of the separation of Titus and Berenice offers a good vantage point from which to observe that procedure at work. We know that the two rivals, with or without a common external incentive, took as their source of inspiration the same text—a text of exquisite brevity—by Suetonius {in De vita Caesarum}: after the Senate had reminded him that Roman emperors were forbidden to marry foreign queens, "Titus, who was said to have promised marriage to Queen Berenice, at once sent her away from Rome, against both his own wishes and hers [*statim ab Urbe dimisit invitus invitam*]."

Both poets assign roughly the same role to expansion: it consists in expanding to the length of a two-hour play those minimal hesitations, deliberations, contradictory pressures, and confrontations of all kinds that one can suppose Suetonius to have subsumed within his obviously hyperbolic "at once." Both Racine and Corneille use these delays and preparations to infiltrate into the suspense a specifically rhetorical element: i.e., a stream of political arguments and emotional blackmail. But neither poet dared reduce the issue to a simple choice for Titus between love and power, or respect for the law; the two shared a constant need to "flesh out the action," even Racine, who prided himself on his ability to "make something out of nothing." A need, therefore, to *extend* their original material by adding one or two characters designed to complicate the action, but with a difference in the choice of those additions. Racine, as everyone knows, added Antiochus, who is in love with Berenice, and whose fate is apparently hanging upon Titus's decision; this addition has no bearing upon Titus's choice (one cannot see him renouncing Berenice just to please Antiochus), and consequently does not *contribute* to the action but simply prolongs it. The fact that it is a (secondary) effect, and not a cause, is the main technical weakness of this addition from the strict viewpoint of neoclassical dramaturgy, which also stresses what is traditionally considered the overly elegiac character ("Alas!") of this amplification. Corneille made things more complicated, as could be expected, with two additional characters instead

of one: Domitian, Titus's brother, loves Domitie, officially engaged to his brother, who, of course, hesitates between her and Berenice.[1] In this more complex structure, it is no longer Berenice who finds herself between two men but Titus who is between two women, with the emotional pressure coming from Domitie paralleling that (political, surely, but weaker than in Racine) of the Senate. After having duly hesitated, in contrast to what happens in Racine, Titus chooses the love of Berenice and decides to abdicate for her sake. It is then Berenice who, in a typically Cornelian self-sacrificial gesture, renounces happiness and leaves. Titus resigns himself but refuses to marry Domitie, who consoles herself with Domitian. The same initial theme, then, undergoes two divergent amplifications. In Racine, Titus submits, with wrenching pathos, to the unavoidable law of the raison d'état. In Corneille, the obligation of love is as forceful as that of politics, even more forceful (Péguy has said everything there is to say on this subject); the Empire is for him a possession that Titus sacrifices for the love of Berenice, who succeeds in outdoing that sacrifice by declining it and returning Titus to his throne and his people. We recognize the recurrent theme of the *assault* of generosity, the great Cornelian potlatch—and the baroque taste for paradox and surprise. But we have come a long way from the original *invitam.*

These two amplifications are thus antithetical, faithful expressions of two "world views" as contrary as is imaginable: one is tragic (or, as here, in the absence of death, elegiac); the other is heroic, chivalrous, and, naturally, "optimistic." French readers are familiar with all of this, and my only purpose has been to demonstrate, with the help of that fairly typical double example, the *thematic power* of amplification.

I shall say as much of narrative amplification, which, on the other hand, raises a few more problems, evidently linked to the specific structures of the narrative mode. It is actually while studying an amplification that I formed an initial idea of these structures, and I must briefly refer here to the gist of those observations.[2]

Saint-Amant's *Moyse sauvé* (1653) amplifies into 6,000 lines the few lines devoted in Genesis to the exposure of the child Moses. That amplification proceeds chiefly through *diegetic development* (that is the role of *expansion*: distension of details, descriptions, multiplication of episodes and secondary characters, maximum dramatization of an adventure hardly dramatic in itself), through *metadiegetic insertions* (that is the main role ascribed to *extension*: episodes that are extraneous to the initial theme but whose incorporation

makes it possible to extend it and invest it with its full historical and religious significance—Jacob's life as told by an old man; Joseph's life represented in a series of scenes; Moses' future life seen in a dream by his mother, etc.), and through the narrator's *extradiegetic interventions*: this last device is not very productive in Saint-Amant, but it could become so, and in turn generate expansion and extension at will.

This is precisely what happens in a much more recent amplification, whose topic, however, has much in common with that of *Moyse sauvé*. I am referring to Thomas Mann's *Joseph and His Brothers*, the definitive masterpiece of this genre.[3] The main source, frequently evoked as the "original text," the "primitive text," or the "oldest version," is obviously the biblical narrative, which has to be considered—precisely by reasons of extension—as beginning with Genesis 25 (Esau and Jacob's birth) and ending with Genesis 50 (Jacob's funeral). Later texts, designated more vaguely as "tradition," are chapter 12 of the Koran; Firdusi's "Yussuf and Suleika" (early eleventh century) and Djani's (fifteenth century); and "Yussuf's Poem," by a Spanish Moor of the thirteenth to fourteenth century. I shall set aside this intermediary tradition, whose contribution is marginal, to discuss *Joseph and His Brothers* as a vast amplification (from 26 to 1,600 pages) of the biblical narrative, or as a transformation of a very sparse mythical narrative into a kind of vast historical *Bildungsroman*.

The specifically diegetic span of the four-volume novel extends from Joseph's childhood to Jacob's funeral: i.e., it covers the hero's life until that moment of maturity and fulfillment that coincides with the father's death. But that span is extended, in the last two-thirds of the first volume, by a metadiegetic analepsis devoted to "Jacob's stories," stories told to Joseph by Jacob himself about his childhood and tribulations before his arrival in Canaan.

That long flashback thus adds a very significant extension to the story (15 percent of the total text), but one whose metadiegetic status is at once canceled, or subsumed into the main narrative: the narrator states that the story is Jacob's, but he immediately takes charge of it himself, as the narrator of *Remembrance of Things Past* takes charge of *Swann in Love* (this is not a purely formal similarity; in both cases, whether in real or symbolic terms, the story deals with a father's past loves). It all seems as if Jacob's narrative were for Thomas Mann a simple pretext to look back into the past, as if his tetralogy began *in medias res* with Joseph's childhood and thereafter moved back to its true starting point: Jacob's birth. But such

a description would not account for the essential fact that the hero, the principal object and the quasi-unique *focus* (subject) of this narrative, is not Jacob but indeed Joseph himself: despite its pseudodiegetic reduction, Jacob's narrative remains one that is *addressed to Joseph* and is heard by him. It is included in the novel only as an element in Joseph's education, to be integrated into his own experience, as is confirmed by the sequel—just as Swann's experience permeates Marcel's, which it helps to bring about.

The diegetic expansion by itself is wedded to the extradiegetic "intrusions" of a verbose narrator, very much imbued with his didactic function and very ostensibly omniscient. Thus he complacently emphasizes that the first meeting, the "decisive first meeting," between Joseph and Potiphar had not been mentioned before by "any of the sources; none of the accounts, Oriental or Occidental. . . . It is in the same case as countless other corroborative details which this version may boast of bringing to light and embodying in the accepted tradition." The same assertion is made concerning Joseph and Pharaoh's first meeting: "It is well that this . . . famous and yet almost unknown conversation . . . has now been reestablished from beginning to end in all its turnings, windings, and conversational episodes" (979). He misses no opportunity to claim his right to amplify his predecessors' versions, especially that "primitive" text which he several times describes as "concise" and "lapidary" and "laconic" and even "excessively laconic." He also demands his right to restore in its entirety the story that tradition had omitted to pass on but that had nevertheless been told once upon a time, in that primary narrative which preceded even the earliest version and which is none other, according to a formula dear to Thomas Mann, than "the story telling itself"—a story of which he spares us this or that detail only by virtue of what he calls "the inexorable law of abridgement" (983),[4] without however denying himself the right to relate "what everybody already knows," or the pleasure of arousing and kindling his readers' interest, like a good Oriental taleteller, and holding them in his power until the very last sentence.

True to the good old rules of ancient rhetoric, the enormous extent of the amplification is thus justified by the significance of the story and the scope of the overall purpose. *Joseph and His Brothers* is also a historical novel, a fresco of the Oriental world around the fifteenth century B.C.: it covers Palestine and Mesopotamia at the time of the Patriarchs, the Egypt of the eighteenth dynasty (Joseph arrives there under the reign of Amenophis III and becomes prime minister under Amenophis IV);

it depicts pharaonic civilization, life (and death) in Thebes and Memphis, the confrontation between Judaism and polytheism, between the powerful clergy of Amon and the monotheistic attempts of Amenophis-Akhenaton, etc. All this requires many observations and explanations, and the narrator provides plenty of them; it also justifies immensely long dialogues and "beautiful conversations." But Thomas Mann's self-complacent verve is mostly reserved for those predictable set scenes that are already "known of all" but call for the fullest range of dramatic orchestration he can muster: Jacob's fraudulent blessing; the wedding night of Jacob and "Rachel" (in the silence of dawn, Jacob was the first to awaken: "He stirred and felt her hand, remembering everything and turned his mouth to kiss it. Then raised his head to see his dear one in her slumbers. With eyes heavy and sticky from sleep, still unwilling to focus, he looked at her. And it was Leah" [203]); the quarrel between Joseph and his brothers; Joseph's arrival at Potiphar's; Joseph's introduction to the ladies at court; Joseph's revelation of himself to his brothers; Jacob's testamentary blessing to his sons, etc.

But all of this, according to Mann's own formula, represents only the "how," the dramatic amplification of the "what" handed down by tradition. Also to be supplied is what has been withheld from us by the discretion of the original version—that discretion it shares with the other great archaic texts, myths or epics, which has fated them to become the favorite targets of amplification: namely, the "why," the psychological motivation. Why Joseph was disliked by his brothers. Why he was liked by Potiphar's overseer, by Potiphar, by the prison director, by Pharaoh himself. And above all—the two most momentous and tightly linked motivations. On the one hand, why Joseph was loved by Mrs. Potiphar (here more prettily called Mut-em-enet): his irresistible beauty and charm, inherited from his mother, the Loveliest of All; the sexual frustration of the Grand Eunuch's spouse; her quasi-maternal tenderness for the very young stranger; Potiphar's lack of foresight when he refuses to dismiss Joseph at the first sign of trouble; the incitements of the dwarf Dudu, who envies Joseph and welcomes this passion as a weapon against him; the birth and progress of love, under cover of mistrust and hostility, to the point of no return in an altogether Stendhalian crystallization; the three long years of futile resistance. For contrary to what is said, Mut did not say straight out "Sleep with me"—she reached that point only at the end of her tether: "Three years: in the first she tried to conceal her love from him; in the second she let him see it; in the third she offered it to him" (722). On the other hand, we need to know

why Joseph refused this love, to which he was by no means as averse by nature as we have been led to believe, and here comes the narrator with his explanation of that chastity whose seven motives, no more, no less, he coolly enumerates—but I must confess that their differences escape me: religious consecration, loyalty to Potiphar, rejection of feminine aggressiveness ("he wished to be the arrow, not the target"), adherence to his father's maxims, rejection of Egypt and of her death cult, the taboo of the flesh. None of this will prevent him from later marrying another Egyptian; we all know, and Mann knows better than anyone, what these infinitely flexible explanations are worth.

The inquiry into motives reaches even unto the deity: Jehovah struck Jacob in his love for Rachel—denying her to him for twice seven years, making her sterile at first, causing her to die on the way back—for one simple and (for once) single motive, which I barely dare name: jealous envy. And the last volume opens—in a parodic reference to the "Prolog im Himmel" in *Faust*—with a "Prelude in the Upper Circles" in which the scandalmongering celestial cohorts discuss these two grave issues: why did God create man (answer: upon the evil advice of Semael, and out of self-centered curiosity); and why did the immaterial and universal God turn himself, like all the others, into the God of a people? Answer: again upon the perfidious counsel of the demon, and out of—ambition, condescendingly, of course, and out of a desire to equal other gods by lowering himself to their level. "Nobody is perfect."

These few items are no doubt sufficient to illustrate the basic tonality of that work, which is evidently humor, Thomas Mann's well-known—and misunderstood—humor, which spares no one: neither his hero, who never loses his seductive charm or self-satisfaction; nor the hero's father, Jacob the Patriarch, shown as wily, sectarian, and always standing upon formality; nor even, as we have just seen, the Supreme Power; nor, of course, his own source, who otherwise would be nothing but a vulgar ironist (as his sworn enemy Bertolt Brecht stubbornly believed). Now humor, whose outward characteristics here are an affectation of official pompousness and the constant pastiche of biblical turns of phrase and of the formulaic style, is both a great producer and a great consumer of textual amplification; as Thomas Mann had already said concerning *The Magic Mountain*, "humor requires space." It requires text, a lot of text, to prepare and express itself (this type of humor, at least). The deliberateness and complacent prolixity of the amplification are here inseparable from their comic reversal, so it

would not do to define *Joseph and His Brothers* as a humorous amplification, for this would mean overlooking the profound identity, in the present case, of those two functions. This novel is rather an illustration and an implementation—the most spectacular, in my opinion—of the humorous potential of amplification.[5]

## 56

Reduction and amplification are not as separate as would appear from the two distinct examples discussed above. First, as has already been seen, textual transformations that cannot fall easily into either of those two categories generally result from their combination, according to the formula *addition* + *suppression* = *substitution* (thus did Godchot operate on Valéry, or Mallarmé on Mallarmé). The genesis or haphazard tribulations of a hypertextual work may also provide examples of an opposite movement resulting in a zero sum: *addition* + *suppression* (of the addition itself). Thus Verdi, in his original version of *Don Carlos* (Paris, 1867), added a first act (the Fontainebleau prologue) to Friedrich von Schiller's drama, and suppressed it in 1884 in the definitive version performed at La Scala.

Flaubert engaged in a similar—but much subtler—undertaking in *Hérodias* (1877), which amplifies the twenty lines of the Gospel narrative (Matthew 14 and Mark 6) into thirty-odd pages. Contrary to Joseph's story, that of John the Baptist's beheading is complete and sufficiently motivated in both Gospel texts. Out of religious rigor, John had condemned Antipas's marriage with his sister-in-law; Herodias thus wished for his death, but Herod, who knew him to be respected by the people and who respected him also, dared not have him executed and merely kept him imprisoned; to force his hand, Herodias played upon his fascination for Salome and had her dance for him at his birthday feast; Antipas fell under her spell and promised to grant her any wish; Herodias then suggested to her daughter that she ask for John's head, which he could not deny her, bound as he was by his word.

This story calls for no additional motivation, nor does Flaubert have to provide any, unless it is to account for the original motivations themselves (*overmotivation*) by a general political and religious survey of the Roman Orient under the reign of Tiberius. As in the case of the *Temptation* or *Salammbô*, the basic principle of his amplification is thus descriptive and

historical expansion. Hence his considerable documentary file—all the knowledge available at the time about the Jewish religion and its sects, the Roman colonization of the Orient, the various rebellions, court intrigues, etc.—which could fill out a 300-page novel with detailed, luminous, and exhaustive explanations of the whole chain of passions, ambitions, and machinations leading to that severed head on a platter. Indeed, Flaubert's drafts give every indication, through successive bits and scraps, that he had conceived and almost written such a novel. And then he undertook, no doubt just as laboriously, to *unwrite* it by dint of erasures, ellipses, allusive formulations, decontextualized phrases, incongruous details glinting amid the puzzling and murky muddle of a narrative that many a reader, even one acquainted with the story, has found, like *le bon* Sarcey {Francisque Sarcey, literary critic, 1827–99}. "Too demanding for him." Or, to quote Jules Lemaitre, "There is too much strain in that brevity: characters and plot are not sufficiently accounted for; there is too much terseness in that Asiatic shimmer."[1] These two characteristic reactions are, it seems to me, a telling illustration of the effect produced on the average "archireader" by that double process of amplification and self-reduction: what twenty lines of Mark or Matthew had made crystal clear—for once and quite exceptionally, given the usual laconic beckonings of the biblical text—becomes obscure in thirty pages by Flaubert. But then, as we know, that obscurity is the very stuff of Flaubert's art in its last phase.

Now for a rather infrequent—exceptional, even—effect of *demotivation.* Oscar Wilde is said to have written his *Salomé* (1892) after reading Flaubert's tale. And yet he is in no way indebted to him. Beyond the shift to the dramatic mode, his purpose is quite different; his practice, which we shall later have to discuss at greater length, is that of *transmotivation*, or one motivation displacing another: Salome has Jokanaan beheaded not at her mother's instigation but on her own account, because she loves him and he has rejected her. That idea may have been borrowed from Heine, who attributes the same motive to Herodias herself: "Otherwise that lady's wish would be inexplicable. Would a woman ask for the head of a man she did not love?"[2] I have to confess that such a generalizing motivation, be it the mother's or the daughter's, delights me. Once perceived, it preempts all others, and it may well have occurred separately to both Heine and Wilde, as it actually had in the meantime (1881) to the librettist of Jules Massenet's *Hérodiade.* That libretto went even further afield than the other two in distancing itself from the evangelical text and its decorum: John did not reject

Salome's love—and thus died for some other cause, with which I am not here particularly concerned. Richard Strauss (1907) wisely stuck to Wilde's version, which his libretto follows very closely. Thanks to the popular dance of the seven veils and its throbbing music, Strauss's opera has imposed on Western audiences, perhaps definitively, that passionate motivation and characteristically tragic version—not without reminiscences of such pictorial interpretations as those of Gustave Moreau, Aubrey Beardsley, and Gustav Klimt, who contributed to turning the princess of Idumea into the emblem of what Eugenio d'Ors calls the *Barocchus finisecularis*, or fin-de-siècle baroque.

Mallarmé, as we know, had anticipated all the others with *Hérodiade* (1864–67), whose untouchable heroine, under that deceptive name, was the daughter, not the mother. But Laforgue went furthest of all by striking out Herodias altogether and turning Salome into Herod's own daughter.

His version in *Moralités légendaires* (published posthumously in 1887) could be read as a neoburlesque travesty of Flaubert's tale, with the naming of its tetrarch, Emeraude-Archetypas;[3] with its labyrinthine and suspended palace; with that nephew of the satraps of the North who, like Bonaparte before the legislative body, calls Iokanaan "an ideologue, a scribbler, a conscript declared unfit for service, a low-grade hack, a bastard of Jean-Jacques Rousseau"; with those visitors tempted by Salome's trances to pull out their watches and ask the appropriate question "When are they putting her to bed?"—and on Salome's part that casual request: "And now, father, I should wish you to have Iokanaan's head brought up to me on some platter or other. That's an order. I'll be up in my room, waiting." "But child, you cannot be serious! That stranger . . ."[4] Having once obtained and duly kissed that illustrious head, Salome hurls it from the top of her tower; but having poorly calculated her parabola, she falls with the head, tumbling from rock to rock down to the sea—dead, of course.

Such a description, however, does scant justice to that enigmatic work, which came before its time; its fancifulness is more untrammeled—by any ties to psychology, among other things—than was fitting for a genre that it transcends with all its proto-Surrealist strangeness (to put it mildly).

Finally, the status of some reductive or augmentative texts may appear ambiguous, or more precisely *double*, according to whether they are seen from the viewpoint of their genesis (the author) or their reception (the reader). I have already mentioned the amplifying effects produced by

original versions which are more extensive than the corresponding final text, but which most readers discover only later, as amplified versions of a text they had first known in its reduced state. The opposite effect—the *effect of reduction*—occurs when, after reading a text, we become acquainted with some preliminary drafts, outlines, or rough sketches that can be considered as so many *prospective summaries.*

The preparatory files ("rough drafts"), of course, comprise not only texts of this type but also partially written-out drafts, which may be found (or not found, and if found, found more or less transformed) in the final version. Sometimes also (as is almost certainly the case with Flaubert) there are outlines that were laid down after an ultimate, or penultimate, draft in order to gain a clearer overall view and appraise the soundness of the whole structure; those are critical summaries, then, or surveys, not prospective summaries. Conversely, such embryonic states of a text—involuntary scripts this time—can be detected in places other than the rough drafts, particularly in previous works of the same author: the subject of Stendhal's *Lucien Leuwen* in his *Racine et Shakespeare*, or that of Camus's *Malentendu* in a news item read by Meursault in *L'Étranger.*

Almost any work of some scope is bound at some moment to go through that stage, of which it does not always leave us a trace. Characteristic examples can be found in Flaubert, Zola, James, and many others. Generally, these prospective scripts take the minimal form of a schematic outline (mere jottings of successive noun phrases, juxtaposed, most often even superposed, rather than strung together into a proper narrative); they are thus in no position actually to compete with the final work, or even to stand in true textual counterpoint to it. Whatever their chronological placing in the work's genesis, some outlines such as those of Flaubert's *Un Coeur simple* (I. Félicité's face and Mme Aubain's house. / II. Her story. / Arrival at Mme Aubain's. The children. Secondary characters . . . ) or of his *Hérodias* (Machaerous / Antipas on his terrace. His political situation. He hears a voice: he is frightened . . . ) tellingly illustrate that stage, and that manner, which already smacks of the Table of Contents.[5]

Some outlines, however, adopt from the very start a more elaborate format, which bestows upon them an unmistakable literary status. I shall adduce the examples of two authors who, though near-contemporaries, are otherwise poles apart: Emile Zola, Henry James.

Zola's preparatory files have not yet been published as a single volume, but many excerpts from them are provided in Henri Mitterand's notes

for the Pléiade edition of the Rougon-Macquart novels, together with a very suggestive analysis. They contain documents of all types, schematic or detailed outlines usually dating to a later phase but also, for almost every novel, a written-out draft in several pages, sometimes several dozens of pages, which is always the earliest stage of the work. The earliest but not necessarily the most embryonic or nuclear, in the microscopic sense suggested by that word. A more appropriate metaphor, though not a more original one, would be that of the nebula. Zola starts with an initial idea which, true to the design of the whole series, is almost always the depiction of a social milieu or activity. In a spirit that is more didactic or descriptive than novelistic, he first conjures up that background—for example, the mine or the world of large-scale commerce—and then starts looking for the characters or the narrative plot that will turn that survey into a novel. He can be seen probing, testing, giving up, coming up with a different idea, making progress, spurring himself on, giving himself advice and guidelines, so that the draft turns out to be nothing less than the transcription from life of what Mitterand calls his "creative monologue."[6] A monologue of creation it truly is—creative labor turned monologue; that great prattler could very likely not have carried it through in any other manner or any other form. The typical verbal tense of those inceptive summaries seems to be the future rather than the present, or some kind of optative or volitive mode, sometimes even a first-person imperative conveyed by the infinitive: "I want *Au bonheur des dames* to be the poem of modern business. So, on to a completely different approach: no more pessimism, to begin with; not to harp on the stupidity or bitterness of life. In short, go with the age, express the age. . . . Not to forget his (Octave's) imaginativeness in commerce, his boldness. . . . Yet I would not have any too sensual episodes. Avoid overly vivid scenes." Or again, for *Germinal*: "That inspector is the one who will be killed, and the screaming band of women may even tear off his genitals. . . . I should like to have the pit collapse with everything engulfed into the abyss. . . . That would make a strong impression. But where is it to be placed?"[7] That manner of a monologue, or internal dialogue, rather, is evidently closer to a kind of private diary out of which the novel progressively emerges (like the sonorous mist that little by little shapes itself into Ravel's *Valse*) than to the narrative properly speaking: hence the aesthetic interest of those drafts. A kind of pastiche of that genre can be found in some pages of Edouard's journal, in Gide's *The Counterfeiters* {3:18}: "Without attempting to explain anything specifically, I should wish

to proffer no fact without sufficient motivation. Which is why I shall not make use of little Boris's suicide; I have trouble enough understanding it myself."

James's *Notebooks* (1878–1911) are much more self-consciously the journal of a novelist, and of one who is apparently less methodical and orderly than Zola in the elaboration of his works. During the years 1892–96, in particular, the various projects and drafts (for *What Maisie Knew*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Awkward Age*, *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors*, *The Golden Bowl*) overlap and intersect like the entangled traces of an almost simultaneous ripening process. It thus often happens that James jots down the initial idea one day, only to forget it seemingly for two or three years; then he comes back to his project, which in the meantime may have subconsciously matured, gives it an elaborate form in a few pages, drops it again for another project, and so forth over a period of several years. Another difference from Zola is that the starting point here is always a "story," most often an anecdote that James happens to have overheard; he at once—and invariably—perceives it as a fit subject for a short story, which in turn will grow of its own momentum to the proportions we know. The first jottings will thus appear to us, in retrospect, as a half-page summary, a very condensed note that already contains the basic features of the plot: a little girl whose divorced parents remarry finds new parents in the two new spouses; sentimental and financial intrigues unfold around a dying young lady of means; a remarried father and his married daughter grow so close together that they allow the son-in-law and the stepmother to console each other, unless the reverse be the case; against his own best interests and "duties," an aging man unexpectedly takes the side of a breakaway young man, etc.[8] (This almost exclusively narrative first phase is missing in the early stages of Zola's works and appears only much later.) What follows, whether immediate or delayed, consists in a progressive elaboration of the psychological motives and chain reactions.[9] Motivation is the overriding concern here, and the action becomes little by little weighed down with typically Jamesian garlands of subtleties and ambiguities—although some of the preliminary scenarios quite clearly spell out what the final text will conceal behind a thick smoke screen: e.g., that the writer in *The Figure in the Carpet* did have a secret, or that the children in *The Turn of the Screw* are indeed persecuted by the ghosts of their former servants.[10] These intermediary stages are therefore far different in their objective from those of the typical Zolaesque draft,

but the two are often very close in tone or turn of phrase. In both cases, research is in progress, with hesitations, tentative hypotheses, trials and errors: *I seem to see a little subject in this idea. . . .* Mettons *that he mentions. . . . Say (yes), I'm the only person he tells. . . .* Voyons, *then. . . . A point to be settled, but I think not. . . . Yes, that's the way I'll have it. . . . There it is, there it is.* The creative process is here so vividly dramatized that one might be inclined to detect in it a touch of what Valéry called "the comedy of the intellect." But James certainly did not experience the process in this fashion, his humorous undertones notwithstanding. The synopsis was for him a necessary stage and a decisive technical implement, and he occasionally speaks of it with extraordinary emotional intensity.[11]

Through those successive outlines the Jamesian elaboration of the initial —and often haphazard—narrative scheme pieces itself together and functions as the narrative's hypotext. A somewhat oversimplified description of it might, in most cases, pinpoint a phase of motivation, followed by a phase of "ambiguification" and refraction through the famed "splendor of indirection," which could often be described as a phase of demotivation (through subtilization). But the most important feature of the final elaboration is lacking: i.e., the "scenic method," consisting in detailed action and, above all, dialogue.[12] Here as elsewhere, scene is opposed to summary—a purely narrative mode that the synopses stick to with constant faithfulness. James once specified that "those wondrous . . . preliminary statements . . . don't really exist in any form in which they can be imparted."[13] The possible exception is a notably extensive summary of *The Ambassadors* (20,000 words) which he had carefully written out as a project to be submitted to Harper, the publisher; James states that that version preceded the final version of the novel by more than a year. We are thus dealing indeed with a prospective summary; but a comparison with the novel reveals the high degree of intimate elaboration to which it corresponds and, of course, *contributes.* Almost no trace of hesitation is perceptible in it (understandably, given the circumstances: James evidently wants to show Harper that his novel is "all but finished in his head"), and the final version will follow almost all the directions in the synopsis. James is here no longer expressing himself within a hypothetical or volitive mode but opting for the descriptive present of a genuine (but overwhelming) critical summary; only occasionally does he slip into the future tense in connection with this or that scene, to promise that "the passage between them is full of interest" or "it will be brushed . . . in its order and proper

light." Hence the several instances of pure narrative merging into scene, with snatches of dialogue or internal monologue that could be read as so many quotations from an already available final version. It is a stunning performance; that scenario in itself almost amounts to a Henry James novel, complete with stylistic mannerisms, and one might well raise an eyebrow at such a considerable investment for the sole benefit of a publisher who obligingly reciprocated by showing no interest whatsoever, were it not that the whole endeavor concurrently testifies to some sort of haste, to a manner of triumphant anguish that signals the imminence of the final achievement; were it not also that this strange project provides us with the most fascinating instance of an autograph summary that in actual fact summarizes nothing, but initiates and launches into an immense labor of amplification.[14]

The examples of Zola and James, among others, are good illustrations of a fact too often overlooked: amplification is one of the "paths of creation," part of the genesis of many a work that, in principle, nothing would designate as being in any way hypertextual. In fact, the "subject" of a work, whether it be an overheard anecdote or a true incident (for Stendhal, the Berthet trial or "Love with Métilde," together with the Farnese chronicle), always introduces itself as a minimal text, which then slowly grows in the writer's mind by way of germination or crystallization. The terms used by Henry James in his prefaces almost always pertain to one or the other of those metaphors: *germs*, *seeds* calling for a *necessary crystallization*, *growing grain*, the *growth* of an oak from a little *seed*, etc. Earlier on, we had a glimpse of the genetic role of reduction in Flaubert and a few others. That of amplification is no less significant, and writers might be divided into two broad families: those for whom reduction prevails and for whom every fresh reading calls for more erasures (Flaubert, Chateaubriand, Mauriac, Buffon); and those for whom it brings ever more additions, in the margins, between the lines, on paste-ons and paper strips, even on the galley proofs and, after publication, on the interfoliated blank pages: Proust, of course, is in this category, but also Balzac, or Montaigne.[15] But most often both movements coexist and operate together or by turns. The work ceaselessly oscillates, in its search for "perfection" and the right balance, between the "too little" and the "too much"—until the final decision is made, often imposed arbitrarily, soon after to be consecrated or even enshrined (turned into a fetish) by the critics and posterity.

It may also happen that the writer has lacked time, and that both critics and posterity will have to be content with a draft or a whispered intimation: this is true for Novalis's *Ofterdingen* and Stendhal's *Lucien Leuwen*. But in the latter case, what "definitive" version could top that denouement which, however elliptic, nevertheless delights us (here the fetishism is mine)?

> Outline for the end.—Mme de Chasteller gets Lucien to marry her, Leuwen believing her to have had a child. In Paris, after the wedding: "You are mine, says she, covering him with kisses. Go you to Nancy, Sir, at once! You know, alas, how my father hates me. Question him, question everybody. Then write to me. When your letters show conviction (and you know me to be a good judge), then you will return to me, but not till then. I shall know without fail how to distinguish between the philosophy of a man who forgives an error predating his tenure, or the impatience of the love you naturally bear me, and the sincere conviction of that heart which I adore." Leuwen came back at the end of a week. End of the novel.[16]

## 57

Our last type of purely formal transposition (at least in principle) will be *transmodalization*: i.e., any kind of alteration in the mode of presentation characterizing the hypotext. At issue, then, is a change of *mode*, or a change *within the mode*, but not a change of *genre* in the sense in which the *Odyssey* may be said to pass from epic to novel with Giono or Joyce, or the *Oresteia* from the tragic to the dramatic with Eugene O'Neill, or *Macbeth* from the dramatic to the farcical with Eugène Ionesco: *these* transformations are openly thematic, which is true, by and large, of the notion of genre itself. We shall discuss them later within that category and from that very perspective.

I designate as transmodalization, less ambitiously, a transformation bearing on what has been termed, since Plato and Aristotle, the mode of presentation of a work of fiction, which can be *narrative* or *dramatic*. Modal transformation can, on the face of it, be one of two sorts: *intermodal* (involving a shift from one mode to another) or *intramodal* (involving changes within the internal functioning of the mode). This twofold distinction affords us four variations. Two are intermodal: the shift from the narrative

to the dramatic, or *dramatization*, and the reverse shift from the dramatic to the narrative, or *narrativization*. And two are intramodal: variations within the narrative mode and within the dramatic mode.

The dramatization of a narrative text, which generally goes with an amplification (as is tellingly illustrated by Corneille and Racine in their handling of *Bérénice*), is to be found at the fountainhead of our theater: i.e., in Greek tragedy, which almost systematically borrows its subjects from the mythic-epic tradition. This practice has persisted along the course of history, with the medieval Mystery Plays (based on the Bible) and Miracle Plays (based on the lives of the saints), the Elizabethan theater, neoclassical tragedy, down to the modern device of dramatic "adaptation" (mostly filmic nowadays) of popular novels, including those "self-adaptations" so often practiced in the nineteenth century (by Zola with *Thérèse Raquin* and *Germinal*) and again in the twentieth century by Giraudoux, who transferred his novel *Siegfried et le Limousin* to the stage in 1928.

Here again, we are dealing with a significant cultural practice, with self-evident social and commercial implications. I shall address only briefly its specifically modal characteristics, referring—*faute de mieux*—to analytic categories already adduced in my *Narrative Discourse*, my purpose being to describe the impact of dramatization on the modalities of a discourse that is originally narrative (the hypotext).[1] Narratological categories, it will be remembered, bear essentially on the temporality of narrative, on the mode of regulation of narrative information, and on the selection of the narrative agent itself.

In the temporal order, one of the more frequent and more evident consequences of dramatization—at least within the neoclassical convention of "unity of time," which dates back to Greek tragedy and extends far beyond the boundaries of French neoclassicism—is the need to compress the duration of the action so as to bring it as close as possible to that of the performance. Such a constraint may entail the displacement of the factual denouement by a mere announcement (e.g., Rodrigue's marriage to Chimène in *Le Cid*, the enactment of which has to be put off to an uncertain future, in compliance with the demands of decorum), or the foreshortening of a natural or historical time lapse: the shift to the theatrical mode is apparently what caused Alcmene's pregnancy to be reduced to a few hours; it also caused King Alfonso to die immediately upon Ines de

Castro's execution, whereas a twelve-year historical interval separated the two events in the narrative hypotext.

This latter example deserves special notice, for it demonstrates how a purely technical constraint can bring about a significant thematic transformation. The first dramatic adaptation of this subject, Antonio Ferreira's *Ines de Castro* (1558), ended with Ines's death and Pedro's vows to avenge her—which could be considered as foreshadowing the ulterior denouement (involving King Alfonso's death, Pedro's rise to the throne, and the posthumous coronation of Ines). Some twenty years later the Spanish playwright Jeronimo Bermudez, in order to have that denouement represented on the stage, divided the story into two dramas separated by the aforementioned historical interval: *Nise lastimosa* (Ines the victim) and *Nise laureada* (Ines crowned). Another Spaniard, Luis Velez de Guevara (*Reinar despues de morir*, 1652), apparently thought of hastening Alfonso's death, which made for the spectacular ending whereby the curtain falls on the coronation of the dead queen: "Behold Ines crowned! Behold the unfortunate queen who deserved to reign over Portugal after her death! Long live the dead queen!"[2] But for Alfonso to die immediately after Ines, there must be a causal relationship between the two deaths; the king was thus made to condemn Ines for reasons of state and against his own better feelings, and the remorse caused by the execution of his decree drained him of the will to live: "With Ines's death, I feel my own death coming, too." Henry de Montherlant (*La Reine morte*, 1942) keeps to that same motivation but weighs it down with a more pervasive world-weariness and a wholesale pessimism—a typical example of a psychological motivation belatedly contrived to justify a technical device.

Moreover, it is quite evident that the temporal flexibility of narrative has no real equivalent on the stage. Its chief characteristic being representation, all that is seen there occurs by definition in the present, and it cannot easily accommodate flashbacks or anticipations, since it is hard to present markers of the past or the future. (Film, in this respect, is closer to verbal narration and makes abundant use of such markers: e.g., fade-ins and other coded signals that are current today and easily decoded by the audience.) Hence, drama resorts most often to narrative procedures when analepses are needed (expository narratives, or narratives of simultaneity of the type illustrated by Théramène in Racine's *Phèdre*). Drama is even more hemmed in where variations in pace and frequency are concerned, since the time

in which it functions is real time: by definition it knows only isochronic *scenes* and ellipses (between the acts); its own resources allow it neither summaries not iterative narratives, and here again its only recourse is narration, delivered by a speaker or by one of the characters. For the descriptive pause it obviously has no use, since it visibly displays its actors and setting, with no need for words.

In the specifically modal order, the same type of unavoidable reduction obtains: all speeches are in direct discourse except those reported by one of the characters, who is then placed in the position of a narrator and enjoys the freedom of choice inherent in narrative; no focalization is possible, since all actors are equally present on the stage and constrained to speak by turns. The modern device that consists in adopting the "point of view" of a character has no equivalent here; the only dramatic viewpoint is that of the audience, who may, of course, direct and modulate their attention as they wish, but in a manner not susceptible to being programmed by the text (except when stage business, sometimes dictated by stage directions, diverts the spectators' attention to the contrasting gestures or facial expressions of a mute participant in a scene, as frequently happens during the set speeches of Molière's *raisonneurs*). As for the category of narrative *voice* ("Who narrates?"), which is by definition entirely bound up with the existence of a narrative discourse, it disappears entirely on the stage, except when a speaker such as the Announcer in Claudel's *Le Soulier de satin* is present.

A considerable loss of textual resources can thus be observed whenever the narrative is transposed into dramatic performance. To put it in Aristotelian terms ("Which can do more? Which can do less?"), let us say quite simply that what the theater can do, narrative can do as well, whereas the reverse is not true. But that textual inferiority is outweighed by a considerable extratextual gain, afforded by what Barthes called *theatricality* properly speaking: "theater minus the text"—i.e., spectacle and play-acting.

Those diverse features of dramatization are not always easy to pinpoint, since the procedure is rarely to be found in its pure state and thus rarely lends itself to a rigorous comparison between a narrative hypotext and its dramatic hypertext. One of the more convenient examples may be Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, which is a fairly faithful dramatization of the Germanic *Volksbuch*. The following comparison, borrowed from André Dabezies, is a good enough illustration of the types of transposition I have been discussing:

> Marlowe's purpose was to transpose into a dramatic form a biographical narrative that hardly lent itself to that process. In fact, the poet has followed the outline of the *Volksbuch* quite closely. The reason why acts 3 and 4 are an incongruous medley and seem foreign to the main dramatic plot line is that they transpose—without in any way altering their place or function—the "anecdotes" that similarly broke the continuity of the primitive tale. Helen is the only one to be moved to act 5, thereby gaining a more forceful dramatic impact. Similarly, the long chapters devoted to discussions in the original . . . are reduced to a few swift dialogues, scattered over the first two acts; besides lightening the pace, this tones down their didactic value while underscoring their dramatic effect. What is left of the narrative is entrusted either to monologues that sum up the situation or to the chorus, whose reappearance at regular intervals marks the plot's progress and the beginning of every act. . . . All in all, those formal structures reveal a creative playwright, fully conscious of the possiblities of the stage.[3]

This dramatic version of the Faust legend is evidently not a dramatization in the thematic sense of the word, which is not our concern here. Marlowe in no way attempted to instill into that legend—a biographical chronicle—the tightly knit plot it lacked (and still lacks in Goethe's *Faust*), which the Elizabethan theater cared little about. But the necessity for such plotting would no doubt have forced itself on more exacting types of dramaturgy: e.g., that illustrated by the neoclassical stage, which lasted into the early decades of the twentieth century. When Zola adapted *L'Assommoir*—which again is only a biographical novel—for the stage, he endeavored to inject some kind of plot into it: Coupeau's fatal fall was induced by a woman whom he had wronged and who was seeking revenge, the purpose being, in Zola's own words, to "add some drama to the play, which lacks all dramatic interest."[4]

For Zola, the stage clearly demands a more textured plot than does the narrative (i.e., a plot in which successive incidents are linked by a tighter causal chain, with no room for the haphazard accidents of everyday life). Such is the case, at any rate, when the narrative is shaped as a chronicle, like *L'Assommoir*, for the action of a Balzac novel is often as rigorously plotted as that of a neoclassical tragedy or a comedy of manners. Aristotle and Boileau would no doubt have agreed with Zola; for them, the narrative model was the rather loose unfolding of an epic action, and the dramatic

model the relentless mechanism of the tragic trap. But this interrelation between modes of presentation and types of action no longer appears self-evident to us, and after Claudel or Brecht a narrative can cross over to the stage without automatically converting into a dramatic plot. Dramatization for us has come to mean little more than "scenification."

The inverse procedure, or narrativization, seems to be much less common, in spite of the aforementioned textual assets inherent in the narrative mode. Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* is an exception only in appearance, for its hypotext, as we shall see, is the narrative *Volksbuch* rather than Goethe's "tragedy." This asymmetry is probably due to the practical conditions referred to above: it is commercially more profitable to transfer a narrative to the stage (or screen) than the reverse. Narrativization, therefore, is seldom to be found except in connection with other transformational operations—reduction, in particular, an example of which has already been provided us by Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales.* All in all, and in spite of the part played in it by reduction, the text that illustrates narrativization at its clearest (if not its most rigorous) may well be Laforgue's "Hamlet."[5]

## 58

From a purely formal viewpoint, Laforgue's short story seems to fall into the same category as the Lambs' *Hamlet*, or any other "tale from Shakespeare," its characteristics being (a) reduction (it is a thirty-page digest), (b) narrativization, and (c) focalization of the narrative on the eponymous protagonist, who is constantly present (unlike the case in Shakespeare) and whose "point of view" and monologue, whether internal or not, provide the clearest part of the text (and the most obscure as well).

The first operation, as we know, necessarily entails the second, of which the third is the most typical modality (if not the most necessary), since the possibility of focalization and "internal monologue" ("To be or not to be" presented no longer as a declamation but as an intimate meditation) is one of the main advantages of the narrative over the dramatic mode. One might therefore think that the digest as a category satisfactorily accounts for the nature of this work. The reason it does not (as it evidently does not) is that the digest as a notion says nothing of the thematic intent of the transformation it designates (even in cases where that thematic intent

is nonexistent or neutral, which would be the case—theoretically at least—for a perfectly "faithful" digest). The thematic intent of the Lambs' *Hamlet* was, to all intents and purposes, edifying or moral. Laforgue's, on the other hand, could be described as destructive and demoralizing. In this respect it may not, to my mind, be far removed from Shakespeare's, which it may be said to modernize and weigh down with a fin-de-siècle nihilism: "To be no more, to be there no more, to be part of it no more" {Ne plus être, ne plus y êtra, ne plus en être}.

The core idea of the new "Hamlet" might well be a formula that appeared in an article titled "About *Hamlet*," published by Laforgue in the October 1886 issue of *Le Symboliste*: "The unfortunate prince, the master of us all" {L'infortuné prince, notre maître à tous}. Such an acknowledgment of indebtedness is first and foremost a ploy toward appropriation (as is always the case in such matters), and the "us all" in whose name Laforgue is making that ploy can be reduced here to the very small number of "sister-souls" sharing in his "decadence." Laforgue identifies with Shakespeare's hero, endows him with his own features ("of middle size and quite spontaneously cheerful") without much regard for tradition, and proceeds to inject his bitter verve and his own incongruous, grieving, and sarcastic soliloquy into the most famous of all monologues.

That ploy relates the "facts of the case" with casual indifference to their original arrangement. Ophelia, out of sight from the start, dies before the play-within-the-play. Hamlet is no longer Queen Gertrude's son but the late king's bastard and half-brother to Yorick the jester. He runs away with Kate, the actress, and nonetheless meets his death, not in a single fight but on the tomb of Ophelia, whom he has just gratified with this funereal ditty, borrowed from Laforgue's own *Complainte de l'oubli des morts*:

Les morts
C'est discret
Ça dort
Bien au frais.

{The dead
Are no trouble
They sleep
In cool shade.}

Laertes stabs him, not without having been provoked to the deed by a foul "F—— your sister!" These casual ways could be said to draw authority

from pre-Shakespearean sources: Claudius here is named Fengo, as in Saxo Grammaticus {*Historiae Danicae*}. Which is one way of stating, as Thomas Mann will do for Goethe (or rather against him), that the hypotext can be circumvented or undercut by being confronted with its own hypotext. Laforgue's text, in true burlesque fashion, is riddled with anachronisms (Bertel Thorwaldsen and Thomas Hobbes are mentioned, as is the piano-playing of posh young damsels; Hamlet offers cigarettes, invests his savings in Norwegian stock, quotes the minister François Guizot, comes across "proletarian herds"); with vulgarisms ("no kidding," and the "F—— your sister" quoted above); and with perverted or parodic quotations ("Words, words, words" repeated in and out of place; "Stability, thy name is woman"; "All is well that ends not"; "Hamlet has more of the same on his mind, more than can be held in five acts, more than our philosophy can survey between heaven and earth"). In fact, Laforgue's purpose is not to rewrite Shakespeare's tragedy in his own fashion; nor is it to contrive a new version of the unfortunate prince's story, which, by the way, he situates in 1601, the year it was first performed. His object, much rather, is to let the hero (or the author—they are one and the same) maunder about in philosophic-poetic musings, casually placed between the father's death and the son's, and waywardly tying up with the plot here and there. That the reader is manifestly expected to be familiar with the action is contrary to the norms of a digest, but without that knowledge the text would be unintelligible. The true formula underlying this highly rakish narrativization is less "We are all Hamlet" than the more narcissistic "*I* am Hamlet"—or, to ape his own ragamuffin-scholar style, *Bibi or not to be.*[1]

## 59

Dramatization and narrativization are the two antithetical types of inter-modal transmodalization (i.e., the shift from one mode to another). We now have to consider the various inner transformations to which each mode lends itself.

The relatively stark simplicity of the dramatic mode affords few occasions for transmodalization, for lack of parameters to be modified. Its most abundant and historically most significant occurrence concerns what might be termed vestigial remainders of narrativity—and the endeavor to do away with them. The progressive emancipation of drama from

its narrative origins has left its trace in the disappearance of the role of narrator and commentator that the Greek theater assigned to the Chorus. That suppression is the most marked modal feature of Racine's transpositions of ancient tragedies (e.g., *Andromaque* or *Phèdre*). Some contemporary transposers, however, are known to have chosen not to renounce that device but simply to modernize the Chorus's role and mode of utterance, as Jean Anouilh did with the prologue of his *Antigone*. This partial return to ancient Greek conventions is one of the signs, or one of the forms, of the modern rejection of dramatic illusion, itself a convention that probably reached its heyday in neoclassical tragedy, with all its "rules" aiming at "verisimilitude": i.e., at a maximum potential of illusion. The renunciation of that norm in modern theater has unavoidably entailed some degree of renarrativization of the dramatic mode, a gain of *diegesis* over *mimesis*. That partial return to narrative sources is, of course, what Brecht aptly termed "epic theater."

Another modal feature that lends itself to transformation is the distribution of dramatic discourse per se: i.e., the discourse assigned to the characters. Some characters might, for example, be deprived of a portion of their speeches to the benefit of others—which would imply a change in the "action" itself, since action on the stage textually comes about through speech. Or again there might be a redistribution of the relation between what is shown on the stage (i.e., the "scenes") and what is relegated to the wings, or elided during intermissions, or supposed to have occurred before the curtain rises and then only obliquely alluded to through narratives on the stage. A modern *Phèdre* might indulge in a horror-show rendition of the scaly monster devouring Hippolyte—Rameau already used that device in his *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733). In actual fact, the designated object of transpositional procedures turns out to be the specifically dramatic resource of "theatricality" itself: i.e., the nontextual part of the performance. The issue of theatricality is somewhat marginal to our concern; nevertheless, it must be discussed, even if only glancingly, for it is bound up with the essence of dramatic transposition, which presents the same play with a new cast, a new production, new settings, sometimes new stage music (the French call it a *reprise*). We are looking here at the very life of the theater, and we know to what lengths modern producers are prepared to go in taking advantage of that resource: Racine may be staged in dungarees, Shakespeare in tuxedos, Marivaux in monokinis—and all that follows. Even when used with discretion, such devices are always extremely effective, as

is their impact on the reception of the text. The first performances of Anouilh's *Antigone*, in André Barsacq's production at the Atelier Theater in February 1944, are still remembered for the leather jackets worn by the guards; the implicit allusion {to Gestapo uniforms} would have been transparent even had Anouilh left Sophocles' text unchanged. But modern costumes and settings do not always automatically modernize the text. For his film *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* (1945), Robert Bresson modernized the story of Madame de la Pommeraye, which he borrowed from Diderot's *Jacques le Fataliste*. In so doing, he actually dehistoricized it, lifted it out of its temporal framework and into a timeless and thus purely psychological register. I quote (from memory) André Bazin's startling formulation: "The sound of a windshield wiper gliding over Diderot's text was enough to turn it into a Racinian dialogue." True, Cocteau's dialogues also did their share.

The potential transformations of the narrative mode can be expected to be more numerous, given the very complexity of that mode and the multiplicity of its variables. The familiar categories of narrative time, mood, and voice will prove helpful here.

*Temporal order.* The hypertext may introduce anachronies (analepses or prolepses) into an initially chronological narrative: witness the advice Balzac gave Stendhal toward revising the *Chartreuse de Parme*: start *in medias res* at Waterloo and deal with Fabrice's childhood through an analepsis. Conversely, the hypertext may reorder the anachronies of its hypotext—thus Lamb for Ulysses' stories. But in these two cases the temporal reshuffling goes with a change of narrative agent, since the retrospective account recommended by Balzac would have had to be assigned to Fabrice (in a metadiegetic analepsis), while contrariwise, the narrative of Ulysses' adventures in Lamb was taken away from Ulysses and entrusted to the narrator.

*Duration and frequency.* The pace of a narrative can be modified at will: summaries can be turned into scenes and vice versa; ellipses or paralipses can be filled in or segments of the narrative deleted; descriptions can be deleted or introduced; singulative segments can be converted into iterative ones and vice versa. An instructive experiment of that type might be attempted on a rainy day with the first part of *Swann's Way*, whereby Marcel, for example, would be made to recount each one of his walks, each one of his Sundays, each and every lunch on every single Saturday.

Those readers who are still averse to narratology would learn at their own cost the usefulness of those categories.

*Mood/distance.* The proportion of direct to indirect discourse, or of "showing" to "telling," might be inverted: Benjamin Constant's *Adolphe* might be rewritten in the style of Ernest Hemingway, Albert Camus's *L'Etranger* in the style of Mme de la Fayette's *La Princesse de Clèves*, Raymond Queneau's *Zazie dans le métro* after the manner of Henry James . . . Lest I should seem to wander, be it remembered that Plato himself, in book 3 of the *Republic*, was not above rewriting in a purely narrative mode: i.e., was not above "telling," without any direct dialogue, a few lines of the *Iliad* that illustrated the technique of the mixed narrative.[1]

*Mood/perspective.* This is the crux of the matter and must be dwelt on at some length. We are dealing here with operations that modify the narrative "point of view" or, as the French now put it, the *focalization* of the narrative. An initially "omniscient"—i.e., nonfocalized—narrative could be focalized at will on one of its characters: *Tom Jones* on Tom, for example, or, more perversely, on Sophie, etc. Conversely, a focalized narrative such as *What Maisie Knew* could be defocalized so as to inform its readers of all that the hypotext kept hidden from them. Last, a focalized narrative can be *transfocalized.* For example, *Madame Bovary* might be rewritten and Emma's viewpoint displaced by extending to the whole novel the focalization on Charles found in the first few chapters; or by adopting Léon's or Rodolphe's viewpoint, or that of the child ("What Berthe Knew"), or that of some well-placed observer whose *Weltanschauung* might work wonders here: Homais comes to mind, of course, or Bournisien.

Such transfocalizations would inevitably entail profound alterations of the text and of narrative information; hitherto unknown chapters would crop up, for example, about Rodolphe's hunting parties, or Léon's studies in Rouen. Those alterations of the narrative content would be roughly equivalent to a paraleptic sequel, since the transfocalization here would afford opportunities of responding to questions left unanswered by the gaps in the hypotext, such as, "While this is happening to X, what is becoming of Y?"

I am speaking of *opportunities*, nothing more; the transfocalizing hypertext is of course under no obligation to effect such shifts (it might be content with transfocalizing only those scenes that exist in the hypotext), but it would probably be driven to introduce them by the sheer logic of things. Scenes that had to be canceled in the hypertext (e.g., Emma's life without

Léon) would have to be replaced by scenes that are inevitably missing from the hypotext (Léon's life without Emma)—they would be required by the construction or characterization of the new focal figure.

My use of the conditional is not without good cause, alas, for transfocalizing writing has been little practiced as yet, and Madame Bovary's "new versions," suggested above, still await their Pommier-Leleu {see chapter 47, note 8}. But something of the kind seems to have occurred in Giraudoux's *Elpénor*, which is, among other things, and especially in the chapter titled "Nouvelles morts d'Elpénor" {New deaths of Elpenor}, a transfocalization of the *Odyssey* through, shall we say, that eminently minor character.[2] Having been stranded on Phaeacian shores before Ulysses was, the sailor is made to inflict upon his listeners the tale of his "deplorable existence," which may also have been that of the dubious Dictys: nothing but setbacks, not a moment of glory. "Such was the tattered life that he was unfolding before the Phaeacians." But the latter were competent decoders of hypertexts and

> through the holes in the cloth they saw the lining of epic, and did not think him ridiculous. . . . "O! Alcinous! Thank the gods for having sent this stranger to our shores! He is the *Odyssey's* Charlie the Tramp! . . ." With epic, he had only had an intimate but mediocre affair. He was merely a sample of all those thousands of ignorant and anonymous creatures who make up the canvas of glorious ages. Of those heroes and tremendous feats he had known but the contemptible parts. He knew Achilles for having scraped his heel on a muddy evening. . . . On the day Troy was captured, he was cleaning Hecuba's washbasin. On the day of Achilles' wrath, he was on duty peeling onions. . . . The memorable dates of mythology only helped him to remember the contemptible facts of his own life: on the night of the Briseis incident, he had won two drachma from one Berios; on the night of Andromache . . . But he could not resign himself: he had to believe in that epic, as a man-servant believes in the existence of his master. His job was to flush out the swillings of the fable.[3]

Every epic has its Elpenor, spokesman for the eternal foot soldier. Some novels have theirs. I have already alluded to those in *Madame Bovary*, without even stooping so low as to bring in Lheureux, Binet, Maître Guillaumin, or the unfortunate Hippolyte. *Manon Lescaut* has its own, too: good old Tiberge, the moralistic but generous friend who is always ready to

sermonize to Des Grieux and lend him the 500 *pistoles* required to sustain his unseemly conduct. That inexhaustible accomplice remains an enigma: why—in spite of such strictness—so much "constancy" and forbearance? Friendship, no doubt.

Jules Lemaitre has a different view of things; what he effects is a *transmotivation*, and I shall have more to say about that. But the medium for his thematic manipulation is a piece of transfocalized rewriting about which he states in his epigraph, "I am not inventing the story of Tiberge; I am only extracting it from {Antoine-François} Prévost's novel, as it can be found there. I barely add a few details."[4] The story, then, is that of Des Grieux's love life as it is perceived and experienced—at his own cost—by Tiberge. In truth, this is not exactly a case of "internal focalization": Lemaitre follows Tiberge's every step and lets us know only what the hero knows. But for a long time we are not told one thing, which the hero may not be fully conscious of but which you must already have guessed, and which is revealed only on the last page: after Manon's death and the two friends' return to France, Tiberge reentered Saint-Sulpice "to complete his degree in theology. A few months later, the Chevalier [Des Grieux] came to Paris, and Tiberge went to visit him, to speak about Manon. The Chevalier remembered her with a feeling of sweet sadness, but Tiberge remained disconsolate. After Tiberge's departure, the Chevalier Des Grieux noticed that a miniature portrait of Manon that had lain on the table had disappeared."

It was thus not friendship—not only friendship. But "Tiberge" is not merely a transfocalization of *Manon Lescaut*, any more than "Nouvelles Morts d'Elpénor" is merely a transfocalization of the Homeric epic. As with the temporal alterations suggested by Balzac for the *Chartreuse de Parme* or Lamb's handling of the *Odyssey*, a transfer of the narrating instance is seen to occur here: Elpenor's narrative, though reported in free indirect discourse, is substituted for that of Ulysses, and Des Grieux's autodiegetic tale becomes a "third-person" narrative entrusted to an extradiegetic narrator. In both cases, then, we have something more than transfocalization; we have a shift in the narrative *voice* (from Ulysses to Elpenor, from Des Grieux to the anonymous narrator)—i.e., a *transvocalization*. Transvocalization is, among other things, one of the means or one of the prerequisites of transfocalization; Tiberge's viewpoint could not very well be adopted if Des Grieux were to be left in charge of the narrative. But that is no reason for confusing the two notions.

It is said that Henry James—and his preface of 1908 confirms it (albeit in his own roundabout fashion)—first began to write *What Maisie Knew* "in the first person," the narrator obviously being Maisie herself, and that the idea of having to adopt a childlike style and a limited vocabulary led him to abandon this approach and to *devocalize* his narrative without, however, defocalizing it, since it remains, as we know, rigorously focused on the little girl's perceptions and feelings. The birth of the Jamesian dogma (necessity turned into virtue?) of the absolute superiority of the focalized narrative "in the third person" might be symbolically seen as dating back to that episode. We may at least imagine that James, at that point, set about to rewrite a few pages of his manuscript, and we may see in this new approach an example of self-transvocalization.[5]

I can see another example, a symmetrical and inverse one, in Proust in the transition from *Jean Santeuil* to the *Recherche*, which is in some respects a transvocalization of the draft abandoned in 1899—or more precisely, a *vocalization*, since it substitutes an *I* or a *he* (i.e., a person, a narrating character) for the nonperson of a narrator who had previously been external to the story, impersonal and transparent.[6] Transvocalization can thus take on two basic antithetical forms: vocalization, a shift from the third to the first person; and devocalization, the opposite shift from the first to the third. It can also take on a synthetic form—transvocalization properly speaking—which is the substitution of a "first person" for another.

The first type could be illustrated by, say, a rewriting of *Madame Bovary* entrusted to Emma herself. For most of the narrative (from 1.5 through 3.9, where it is already focalized upon Emma), such a transcription would necessitate only alterations of a purely grammatical nature. The second type might be a transposition of Benjamin Constant's *Adolphe* into the third person; here again, and provided this heterodiegetic version remained focalized on the hero, it would entail merely a grammatical operation, and one that would not be terribly unwieldy except in the transposition of the narrator's comments on his own past conduct (Adolphe grown old): these would have to be either introduced by such clumsy formulations as "Later, Adolphe was to think that . . ." or attributed to the impersonal narrator, thus cheapening the hero by depriving him of his future lucidity. In these first two types, vocal transposition (the change of narrative instance) need not entail a modal transposition, or change of point of view; it only makes the change possible. *Adolphe* in the third person *could* be focalized on Ellenore, or alternate between the two protagonists; the heterodiegetic

voice *allows* Jules Lemaitre to focalize on Tiberge. But no obligation is involved. In the third type, however, transvocalization almost automatically entails a transfocalization: *Adolphe* told by Ellenore would of necessity be the story of their love as experienced by Ellenore and would therefore be focalized on her.

In actual fact, the attempt at such transposition has been made, not once but three times over. In 1844 Sophie Gay wrote an *Ellénore* whose title is a sure indication of its nature, although the transposition is somewhat remote from the original. More recently (1957), Stanislas d'Otremont published *La Polonaise* (the title evidently designates the heroine again), which is a more faithful transvocalization.[7] The latest of those operations is Eve Gonin's *Le Point de vue d'Ellénore: Une réécriture d'Adolphe.*[8] It is an original and engaging academic thesis, the first and third part of which are true to the genre and comment upon Constant's novel; but the second part is titled "Ellenore's revelations to the priest who assisted her in her dying moments," and it constitutes the specifically hypertextual aspect of the work.

In truth, it is not a very rigorous transvocalization. The author was quite obviously reluctant to retrace Constant's footsteps and retell the entire story through Ellenore's voice. Apart from a few scenes in which Adolphe is absent (and which could thus not be part of *Adolphe*), like her break with M. de P***, this text is a complement to *Adolphe*, and marginal to it, rather than a substitute for it; it is a commentary intended by Ellenore for a confidant who is supposed to be fully acquainted with the affair. That commentary is evidently an attempt at an explanation (a motivation) of Ellenore's character and conduct through references to her childhood, to the sacrifice of her adolescence, to her precocious initiation by an older man, etc.

The justification of that attempt, according to Judith Robinson's formula {in her preface to Gonin's book}, resides in the fact that *Adolphe* is a "question-novel," a riddle to which the key might well be the character of Ellenore: Constant made her mysterious by focalizing the story on Adolphe, who does not (or does not care to) understand her. A trans-focalizing transvocalization might give us that key. I confess to finding that approach not wholly convincing; I can see nothing very enigmatic in Ellenore's conduct and feelings and therefore remain unenlightened by the interpretation offered here. It is, much rather, Adolphe's own conduct that calls for an explanation, or an appraisal (to me, it seems commonplace and paltry rather than mysterious). The ambiguous, groping lucidity with

which he judges himself, several years later, is evidently the very soul of his narrative. Trying to discover secrets in Ellenore's conduct when it does not harbor any can only result in reading (injecting) commonplaces into it, pseudopsychoanalytic clichés on feminine psychology.[9]

*Adolphe* is thus hardly a "question-novel," and its transvocalization on Ellenore's behalf is a response to compassion, or to a sense of justice, more than to curiosity; it gives a hearing to the woman not as a mystery but as a *victim.*[10] *Manon Lescaut* or "Swann in Love" would provide quite different—and more challenging—instances: Manon and Odette (or, later, Albertine) truly remain for us what they were for their unfortunate partners, whose "point of view"—i.e., whose ignorance—we are constrained to share: unfathomable enigmas and "elusive beings." We know that for Proust that mystery is the very definition of passion, love being in fact reduced to a voracious and frustrated curiosity.[11] Rewritings of *Manon* or *Swann* that would give us the key to those enigmas would thus be more welcome than a rewriting of *Adolphe.*

Such transvocalizations are not yet extant. I am not quite sure the fact should be regretted, or rather, I am quite sure of the contrary; the potential solutions could only be disappointing, for the novelistic interest of those works lies in the riddle, not the key. A question-novel is intended not to provide an answer but to remain a question. The more so since, after all, those creatures are elusive beings only because, literally, being eludes them: surely the mystery and depth of Manon, Odette, Albertine, and a few others are but an artifact of writing—an effect of focalization.[12]

## 60

Let us revert to the theater to look at a special case: Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966). It is often described as a crossbreed between *Hamlet* and *Waiting for Godot*—and rightly so. But this formula should not be taken literally: *Godot* is evoked neither directly nor explicitly in the text; and the action of *Hamlet* enters the stage only by fitful snatches, although the *dramatis personae* of both plays are rigorously identical. It would be more accurate to define *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* as a paraleptic continuation or a transfocalization of *Hamlet* (they are often one and the same), written to a large extent in the manner of Beckett, more specifically the Beckett of *Godot.* Let us have a closer look at it.

Just as *Elpénor* partially retold the *Odyssey* as seen and experienced by a supernumerary, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* represents *Hamlet* as seen and experienced by the two supernumeraries of the title. But such a transfocalization, *stricto sensu*, is inconceivable on the stage, since the dramatic mode is by its very nature incapable of focalization. So this formula in turn must be taken more or less figuratively: the play might rather be described as a remake of *Hamlet* wherein the doings of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who alone are constantly present on the stage (with the exception of the denouement, since they are dead by then), take precedence over the rest of the plot, which is represented only by fits and starts (albeit with almost literal citations). What on earth can these two characters be doing offstage while *Hamlet* is in progress? Such is the question that generated the play. One is then free to imagine (in a genetic reconstruction which, needless to say, is purely imaginary and metaphoric) that the vaguely Beckettian character of that couple of interchangeable puppets must have struck Stoppard from the very start and provided him with the solution to the problem: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern will busy themselves, when alone, as two heroes of Beckett's (especially Vladimir and Estragon) might do in similar circumstances: with rambling conversations, dialogues at cross-purposes, idle ratiocinations, unfunny jokes, absurd or perverse games (heads or tails with a succession of eighty-nine heads, "tennis-questions"), etc. There is not much real "action" in any of this, as the two cronies are the first to deplore ("Words, words. They're all we have to go on. . . . Incidents! All we get is incidents! Dear God, is it too much to expect a little sustained action?!"), but their fate (assigned to them by the Shakespearean hypotext) is not exactly to be active, as we know. They are aware of the contents of the message Claudius sent to the King of England (they have broken its seal), and then of the second message substituted by Hamlet, which dooms them (they have broken its seal again), but they do not choose to put their knowledge to any practical and positive use. They go to their deaths resigned and relieved, and the play can end with the famous slaughter and the last speeches from *Hamlet*. What was, had to be. Playing heads and tails this way with a coin (or a play)[1] is a loser's game: heads it wins, tails you lose, and no lucky streak will undo destiny.

# 61

No great merit has been involved in stating, and no great effort in verifying, the plain fact that there is no such thing as an *innocent* transposition: i.e., one that does not in one way or another alter the meaning of its hypotext. True enough, the semantic alterations entailed by translation, versification, and most of the "formal" transpositions we have just been discussing generally result from unintended distortions inherent in those procedures, rather than from any deliberate purpose. The sole aim of a translator, a versifier, or the author of a summary is to say "the same thing" as the hypotext in another language, in verse, or in more compact form; such transpositions are thus *in principle* purely formal. In the various types of augmentation, however, or in transfocalization, the intent itself appears to be more complex, or more ambitious, since no one can boast of lengthening a text without adding text, and therefore meaning, to it; nor can "the same story" be told from a different viewpoint without modifying its psychological resonance at the very least. Such devices therefore pertain, at least in part, to transposition in the broadest sense of the term: i.e., transposition that is openly *thematic*. We shall now consider thematic transposition in its own right, as it operates in those procedures of which it constitutes the chief intent and the dominant effect.

Here again, several types or constitutive elements can be observed, which may come into functional or instrumental relationships with one another. The dominant effect that concerns me now is, as stated, a thematic transformation bearing on the very significance of the hypotext; to a transformation of that type I shall assign the term *semantic*, which speaks for itself. Such a transformation may at times (though rarely, but we shall find at least one example) occur in its purest form; most often, however, it resorts to two other transformational devices (or entails them as consequences—the causal relationship is not always univocal here): *diegetic* transposition, or a change in the diegesis; and *pragmatic* transposition, or a modification of the events and actions in the plot.[1]

This distinction between diegesis and action may seem surprising, for the two terms are often treated as synonyms—as was still the case, at least de facto, in the index of my own *Figures III*, where *action* was not listed, *diegesis* referred to *story*, and *story* was followed by "or *diegesis*."[2] On the other hand, the adjective *diegetic* provided more specific indications: "in current usage,

*diegesis* is the spatiotemporal world designated by the narrative." *Current usage* may have been an overly sanguine statement, but the specification *spatiotemporal world* seems to me today to be quite useful. The *story* told by a narrative or represented by a play is a concatenation, or sometimes more primitively a succession, of events and/or actions; the *diegesis*, in the meaning suggested by the inventor of the term (Etienne Souriau, if I am not mistaken), which is the meaning I shall be using here, is the world wherein that story occurs. The obvious metonymic relation between story and diegesis (the story takes place within the diegesis) facilitates the shift in meaning, deliberate or not; moreover, there is an easy derivation from *diegesis* to *diegetic*, an adjective that has sometimes come to mean "relating to the story" (which *historical* could not have done unambiguously). Narratological terminology may suffer somewhat from such polysemic drifts, but the harm is minimal, it seems to me, for the normal conditions of a narrative hardly require that one should distinguish between the action and its general framework. For our present purpose, however, this distinction is relevant and necessary, for transposition operates precisely (among other things) by dissociating action and diegesis: e.g., by transferring the same—or almost the same—action into another world. That term "world" is vague enough, to say the least, but empirically it is easy enough to distinguish between, say, the world where the action of a film is taking place and the world where that same film is being shown to an audience. Those two "worlds" are never wholly unrelated, and the technology of video makes it possible to merge them almost completely by means of a mirrorlike projection, wherein the screen merely reflects what is occurring "in front of it" (in front of a suitably positioned camera, of course). But aside from this extreme instance, it is generally possible—and necessary to the understanding of the show—to distinguish between the diegetic spatiotemporal framework of the film and the extradiegetic setting of the auditorium. Literary representation also rests on this kind of distinction: no reader of *War and Peace* can shake Prince Andrey's hand; no spectator of *Le Cid* can embrace Chimène—but only the actress who is playing her part. The actress is on the stage, which is contiguous to the auditorium within one and the same spatiotemporal continuum—just step over the footlights and the actress is yours, for better or for worse—whereas Chimène remains in the diegesis: i.e., at the very least in a bygone age wherein no one living can approach her.[3] For the video effect of identification between the diegetic and extradiegetic worlds, I can find no other equivalent in literature than the first chapter of *If on a winter's*

*night a traveler*: "You are about to begin Italo Calvino's new novel . . ." It will perhaps be admitted that we are dealing here again with a borderline case.

Whether it be fictional or historical, the action of a narrative or a play is aptly said to "unfold" usually within a more or less specific spatiotemporal framework: in archaic or legendary Greece, at King Fernando's court, or in the Russia of Napoleonic times. This historical-geographical setting is *inter alia* what I call the diegesis, and it is obvious enough, I hope, that an action can be transposed from one period to another, or from one location to another, or both. Such a diegetic transposition—let us call it, for brevity's sake (not beauty's), *transdiegetization*—can of course not occur without at least some changes in the action itself. Thus a Faust transferred to modern times could evidently not behave in all respects like Marlowe's Faust, and the author of that transposition would certainly not wish him to, for complete identity would render this undertaking purposeless and stale. Diegetic transposition thus inevitably and necessarily entails a few pragmatic transpositions, but we shall disregard those for the time being to concentrate on diegetic transposition as such. To characterize it, however, we shall no doubt have to resort to elements other than the historical or geographical setting. The change in social settings, which we have already seen operating in mixed parody, is yet another form of transdiegetization, which can combine with the others or function autonomously: *Agnès de Chaillot* takes place neither in the same country nor in the same period as *Ines de Castro*, but a contemporary parody could be imagined that would preserve the historical and geographical setting and be content with transposing the action into a lower-class milieu. That is not all: we shall come across several additional principles of diegetic transposition.

Whatever the mode of its functioning, a transformation may or may not touch upon the diegetic framework of a text. We must therefore distinguish between *homodiegetic* and *heterodiegetic* transformations. We have already seen how Victor Fournel, in less technical terms, drew an opposition between the homodiegetic character of the travesty—wherein Dido and Aeneas, despite the stylistic alterations affecting their speech and the narrative of their actions, remained queen of Carthage and Trojan prince—and the heterodiegetic character of a parody, in which Dido might for example be turned into an all too hospitable innkeeper and Aeneas into an ingenuous traveling salesman. The resulting changes in place, time, and setting would make it impossible to preserve more than the bare outlines of the plot (a

hostess falls in love with her guest, whom she fails to retain). This is an imaginary example, but we already know what happened to Telemachus, Mentor, and Calypso in *Le Télémaque travesti*, which in this respect turns out to be a parody rather than a travesty, and provides a typical instance of heterodiegetic transformation.

We shall concern ourselves here only with the serious transformations of that type, those in which diegetic transposition is seen to operate. But before dealing with them specifically, it might be well to contrast the two kinds (hetero- and homodiegetic) through a simple imaginary confrontation between a few transformational hypertexts. We may consider as homodiegetic all classical tragedies that take up mythological or historical themes, even if in other respects they significantly modify those themes; modern plays belonging to that same genre, often bearing on the same themes (Giraudoux's *Electre* or *Amphitryon*, Cocteau's *La Machine infernale*, and obviously his "contractions" of *Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex*, and *Romeo and Juliet*); Anouilh's *Antigone*; Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les Mouches*; Montherlant's *La Reine morte* (a remake of *Ines de Castro*); *Joseph and His Brothers* and by definition all quantitative transformations; Ionesco's *Macbett*; Tournier's *Vendredi*; and even Giono's *Naissance de l'Odyssée*, although this is a more complex case. An almost infallible sign of diegetic faithfulness is the preservation of the characters' names, which is a sign of their *identity*—i.e., of their inscription within a diegetic world: a nationality, a gender, a family background, etc.; we shall meet with those parameters again.[4] Conversely, *Ulysses*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Doctor Faustus* are heterodiegetic; the setting of the action changes, and so does the identity of the characters involved: Ulysses becomes Leopold Bloom, Agamemnon becomes Ezra Mannon, Faust becomes Adrian Leverkühn. In their diegetic treatment the former lean toward travesty, the latter toward parody. Let us not jump to any conclusion for the time being.

The age of the characters does not seem to carry much weight as a diegetic variable. One could imagine a transposition that would be content with aging the protagonists (Daphnis and Chloe in their fifties) or with rejuvenating them (Philemon and Baucis as adolescents) without modifying the pattern of their behavior, but such an operation seems on the face of it somewhat unwieldy and would probably yield little profit. Aging and rejuvenation as procedures are better fitted to continuations, whether analeptic (Parsifal's childhood) or proleptic (Helen's old age). Only film, bound as it is to the aging of its actors, seems in a position to explore

that formula: e.g., in *High Noon*, *Rio Bravo*, *El Dorado*. But there, identity of action is generic rather than singulative, and the audience perceives those performances as continuations—the story being less that of an aging sheriff in particular than of *the Sheriff* (in general) as an old man.

A change of sex, however, can be a significant element of diegetic transposition. In some instances, its sole object may be to adapt a work to a new audience: such was the case of *Le Robinson des demoiselles*, the title being a clear enough indication of its purpose.[5] Or the change of sex may be thematically more active and explore the hypotext's capacity for pragmatic variation. Such is indeed the case with various feminine transpositions of the picaresque theme. The first attempt was Francisco de Ubeda's *Picara Justina* (1605), which narrates the life of a rogue, a Lazarillo in petticoats—but not a prostitute; the heroine preserves her virginity until her marriage at the end. The thematic transposition of the rogue into a whore will have to await Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722). Zola's *Nana* (1879) may perhaps be seen as a remote offshoot of that motive, but by that time the literary figure of the prostitute had emancipated itself from its picaresque model. Perhaps Lulu should be described as a feminine counterpart to Don Juan.[6] But in both Nana's and Lulu's cases, the final punishment occurs without supernatural intervention, and here again the hypotext is of a rather generic kind. As for Charlotte Lennox's *Female Quixote*, it does not really fulfill the promises of its title.[7] It is a hodgepodge of adventures and discussions without much connection with *Don Quixote* except that the heroine, who has read too many romances, lets herself be borne along for a few years by the romantic imaginings of a bluestocking, until she comes to her senses and marries her cousin. This novel is of some interest, however, since it initiates the evolution that was to lead away from Quixoticism properly speaking toward the specific form of illusion that passes as feminine and was later to be called *Bovaryism*. But we have seen that something of the kind was already perceptible in Marivaux's *Pharsamon*.

The most interesting forms of transsexuation are, it seems to me, those in which a change of sex suffices to upset and sometimes to cast ridicule upon the whole thematic intent of the hypotext. Such is the case, for instance, with the masculinization of Pamela in *Joseph Andrews*, or the feminization of Robinson Crusoe in Giraudoux's *Suzanne et le Pacifique*.

*Joseph Andrews* (1742) is Henry Fielding's second hypertext inspired by Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740); the first had been *Shamela*, whose status

is entirely different and will be discussed in due course. In *Joseph Andrews* the critical intent is secondary, and soon abandoned in favor of another literary register, the celebrated "comic epic in prose" mentioned in the preface. Seven years before *Tom Jones*, it defines for Fielding the very essence of the novel. The critical function, on the other hand, is wholly contained in the change of sex: Pamela was (or rather, Fielding would say, passed herself off as) a virtuous young woman who resisted the advances of her master; *Joseph Andrews* tells the story of a virtuous young man (Pamela's own brother) who resists the advances of his lady. This masculinization of virtue, underscored by Joseph's emblematic first name, was evidently intended to ridicule virtue and show it up as a sham. But Fielding did not push that theme very far, choosing rather to launch his hero into other adventures before joining him up with his beloved Fanny. As a male Pamela, Joseph is hardly more than a concept, or a sketch. But the satiric point may after all have been made.

*Suzanne et le Pacifique* (1921) introduces itself in no way as a rewriting of *Robinson Crusoe* but only as a novel that has a thematic kinship with Defoe's. A young girl from Bellac, having set off to travel around the world, finds herself shipwrecked on a desert island in the Pacific, where she survives in expectation of the improbable coming of a ship, and without the assistance of the useless shipload of goods stranded a few cable lengths away. There is indeed no need to work and produce, to sow, reap, cook, build a shelter, or make clothes, baskets, pottery, sunshades, and what you will on an Edenic island, where delicious nourishment of all kinds is within arm's reach. No need for a canoe, since the nearest island is within swimming distance, and as empty of human presence as the first one. *Suzanne*'s message is evidently the obverse of *Robinson Crusoe*'s: it is about the vanity of any attempt to transplant Western needs and techniques into a Polynesia fortunate enough to ignore them. Nature in the Pacific is all *luxe, calme, et volupté*; it constitutes all by itself a civilization that is paradoxically more refined than ours, and one to which Suzanne, like a true Giraudoux heroine, finds herself spontaneously attuned: "All the luxury in the world was there, all the creature comforts that nature may grant herself out of personal pride, on little islands devoid of visitors; a little hot spring in an agate rock, next to a little cool spring oozing in the moss; a geyser of warm water, spurting every hour, next to an icy waterfall; fruit that looked like soap, pumice stones lying about, leaves for brushes, thorns for pins; golden quartz facsimiles of a large Louis XV mantlepiece and of an organ somewhat less pure in style."[8]

This description and this behavior in themselves stand as antitheses to the Robinson topos, and Giraudoux might have been content with that implicit critique. But he took pains to supplement it with an explicit one, which is articulated in two phases.

Phase one: Suzanne discovers the traces of a predecessor, of whom we shall not know whether he died or succeeded in escaping. These traces point to a Robinson type of activity, a laughable attempt at transforming the perfection of nature, which he should have been content to espouse—and a devastating attempt, to boot, each and every sign of which stands out like an ugly and degrading scar:

> Here, where fruit and shellfish abound, he had cleared the ground and sown rye; here, next to two caves, warm at night and cool in the daytime, he had cut down beams and built a hut; here, where climbing can be learned within two hours, he had built ladders, scores of ladders, lined up at the bottom of a vale as though on the eve of an assault or the gathering of olives; here, where streams would run at different speeds to quench the most diverse thirsts, he had brought water pipes of bamboo-sticks down to his cabin; here, where sea was everywhere, there was a cement swimming pool, a tub; here, where night equals day, and where the sun measuredly skips rope with the equator, there were sundials on every flat stone and the old skeleton of a clock with spiral springs. Like a woman who succeeds a man in a hotel room where he has been smoking, I felt the need to let some fresh air into that island, to throw a cover of ostrich feathers and a few down cushions over the stone bench and bamboo chair. There, where all is solitude and goodness, a warning had been engraved in Latin above the cave: Mistrust thyself.[9]

That ill-advised castaway is obviously a distant heir of Robinson's, but Defoe's work has so far not been named. It will be in phase two, some sixty pages later, when Suzanne discovers the book in the former islander's possessions, among other masterpieces consecrated by the enlightened few (which ten books would you take with you to a desert island?). Suzanne had no doubt already read Defoe's novel but had no very clear memory of it, and if a parallel between the two situations had occurred to her, she had always brushed it away: "It had never crossed my mind, until then, for selfish reasons, to compare my fate to Robinson's. I could not have acknowledged that his frightful solitude was mine as well. The sight of that

second island, round as an oxygen balloon, above my own island had kept up my hopes. But today I was leafing through that book as you leaf through a medical handbook dealing with the disease you suddenly believe to be your own. . . . It was indeed the same disease, . . . the same symptoms, the same words, . . . birds, beasts, a little earth surrounded by water on all sides. . . . Night was falling, I lit two torches. . . . Alone, alone on the rim of an archipelago, a woman was about to read *Robinson Crusoe*."[10]

Suzanne will soon be disappointed, for what she finds in Robinson's behavior, worsened by the technological resources of the providential shipload, is the absurd civilizing process already undertaken by her predecessor. Hence this repeated critique:

> I who was searching this book for precepts, advice, examples, was astounded at the inadequacy of my male forerunner's teachings. . . . I found him to be an incoherent whiner. That Puritan weighed down by his own reason, imbued though he was with the certainty of being Providence's pet pawn, did not confide in her for one minute. He spent every single moment of those eighteen years behaving as if he were still on his raft, tying strings, sawing stakes, nailing boards. That bold man was quaking with fear without cease, and only after thirteen years did he dare to reconnoiter his island in its entirety. It never occurred to that sailor to start toward that continent whose mists he could glimpse with his naked eye from his promontory, whereas I had swum across the whole archipelago after only a few months. He was clumsy; he would hollow boats in the middle of the island, and always walk along the equator with his parasols as on a tight rope. A fastidious man, he knew the names of all the most useless objects from Europe, and would not rest until he had learned all trades. To eat he needed a table, a chair to write; he needed wheelbarrows, ten sorts of baskets (and he despaired at not being able to manage an eleventh sort), more shopping bags than a housewife would want on market days, three kinds of sickles and scythes, and a riddle, and a grindstone, and a harrow, and a mortar, and a sieve. And jars, round and square, and bowls and a shaving mirror and pots and pans. He was already littering his wretched island, as his nation was soon to litter the whole world, with tinsel and tin. The book was full of engravings, and not a single one showed him at rest: nothing but Robinson digging, or sewing, or readying eleven muskets in a loopholed wall, or setting

up a dummy to scare the birds away. Always fretting, not as if he had been separated from his fellow humans but as if he had fallen out with them, and knowing neither of the two perils of solitude: suicide and madness. He was perhaps the one and only man—such a superstitious niggler did I find him—whom I should not have liked to meet on an island.[11]

The essential theme of Giraudoux's refutation of *Robinson Crusoe* is thus the vanity of a mechanistic civilization when applied to perfect nature, which has no need for it and which it can only degrade. With the exception of solitude—the only discomfort that ails Suzanne on her island—that same critical theme is to be found (and we have already found it) in the *Supplément au voyage de Cook*. The inevitable corollary of this critique of Robinson is a revaluation of Friday, the good innocent savage who knows how to live in harmony with nature: "All that Friday thought seemed to me natural, all he did, useful; he needed no advice from me. That taste for human flesh that lingered with him for a few more months, I did understand. The least step he might have taken away from Robinson's beaten path would have led, I felt, to a wellspring or a treasure trove."[12]

But Suzanne is not merely Giraudoux's spokesperson here. It is not a matter of indifference that the critic should happen to be a woman; the fact is mentioned several times. We have seen that Suzanne, when discovering the damage done by her predecessor, feels the need to mend it; she airs her island "like a *woman* who succeeds a man in a hotel room where he has been smoking." When she begins her reading in search of counsel from her "male forerunner," she specifies that "a *woman* was about to read *Robinson Crusoe*." That emphasis does confirm what the narrative as a whole suggests: that the civilizing obsession is a sickness proper to the masculine sex, and that among perverted Europeans, at least, only a woman may escape that temptation, or quickly overcome it: "After the first few months during which even the most trusting creature persists in living like a castaway, lingering on the seashore, eyeing the size of trees as of future boats, obstinately seeking fishhooks for trout that let themselves be caught by hand and traps for birds which, in order to avoid you, could only land—as they would in Europe on your rifle—on your very arm, I gave up trying to be anything but an idler and a billionaire."[13] Giraudoux's feminism, which was to find expression so often in his later works, is here playing its first scales. True, a barely disguised form of sexism can be read into it (women

are closer to nature, more passive, unable to act and create, etc.), but there is more subtlety to the message, for as we have seen, nature is here described as the acme of culture and sometimes of artifice. It provides necessities as a matter of course, and lavishes its care upon a superfluousness that is not Robinson's overequipment—a useless proliferation of tools designed for subsistence and self-protection—but its exact antithesis: the immediate, effortless, and straightforward gratification of needs pertaining to finery, decoration, ornament: "I had hundreds of enormous pearls that I would gather by merely diving for them. . . . I had perfumes of fresh resin mixed with pollens; lotions drawn from my sugar tree. . . . I had my eleven kinds of face powder." What this female Robinson teaches us is not exactly, as Baudelaire put it, that "woman is natural" but rather—and Suzanne is only an expansion and illustration of that typical paradox—that nature is woman and, as such, spontaneously prone to luxury and to artifice.

A castaway reading *Robinson Crusoe* on her desert island: what better example of infinite regress? Though *Suzanne* is an indirect refutation of *Robinson*, the persistently ignored hypotext (which for once is not at all suggested by the title) does surface at last, summoned at the appointed time to attend its own sentencing. The implicit relationship between the two texts is henceforth manifested unambiguously: as a female Robinson, and because she is a *female* Robinson, Suzanne stands indeed as an anti-Robinson. But let us rather phrase it in terms of textual relations: *Suzanne* is an *Anti-Robinson.* The earliest, perhaps, but as we already know, not the last. The only one, at any rate, I venture to believe, in which a change of sex suffices to effect the intended refutation.[14]

## 62

The change in nationality is generally a side effect of more encompassing diegetic transpositions. But it can be seen to operate frequently enough in the vast tradition spawned by the Robinson model, in which that change functions as a process of *naturalization* in the judicial sense of the term: the original Crusoe was English, so every nation wanted to have its own national Robinson—hence such works as Joachim Heinrich von Campe's *The German Robinson* (1779) and Johann Wyss's *Swiss Family Robinson* (1813). The latter in turn became a model, thanks to the stroke of genius that inspired the author to shipwreck an entire family, thus doing away with

solitude and Man Friday. Incidentally, the book's dominant theme no longer appears to be solitude but the appropriation and development of a virgin space. Such at least is the sole vestigial theme of the original work, a gratifying and euphoric one, to be sure, multiplied as it is by the plurality of heroes. Jules Verne was to make use of that device, notably in *The Mysterious Island* (1874), wherein—setting aside the final catastrophe—the Robinson topos tilts over into utopia.

As has just been indicated with reference to nationality, the habitual movement of diegetic transposition is a movement of proximization: the hypertext transposes the diegesis of its hypotext to bring it up to date and closer to its own audience (in temporal, geographic, or social terms). I know of no exception to this all-pervasive characteristic. True, one might conceivably entertain fantasies as to what would become of Emma Bovary if she were transferred to the Athens of Pericles or King Arthur's court, but such a distancing effect would be manifestly contrary to the "natural" bent of diegetic transposition, which always consists in moving from the remote to the proximate.

Spatial transposition is not always required by this process of proximization. When Thomas Mann modernized Faust's story, he evidently did not need to Germanize him, since the original Faust was already German. For Mikhail Bulgakov, on the other hand, modernization quite naturally involved a geographic transposition, since he was a Russian writer.

Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1929–31) is a typical example of integral diegetic transposition: it transfers the drama of the Atreides to New England, at the end of the Civil War. King Agamemnon (now Ezra Mannon) was murdered upon coming home by his wife Christine (Clytemnestra), helped by her lover Adam Brant (Aegisthus)—and so forth. That modernization inevitably entailed minor pragmatic transformations (Christine used poison, Orin/Orestes a revolver, etc.) and some significant psychological changes, which are to be discussed later. The same drama has more recently inspired yet another modernized version, in which social degradation is much more conspicuous and becomes dominant: Clément Lepidis's *La Main rouge* is a populist novel, set in the Paris working-class district of Belleville between World War I and World War II.[1] Agamemnon here is named *La Broche* {the pimp}; Clytemnestra, *La Culbute* {pushover}; Aegisthus, *La Pendule* {stool pigeon}; Orestes, *Totor*; Electra, *Juliette*. La Culbute having pressed La Broche's head into a bucket of water until he died, Totor gutted La Culbute with a hacking knife, and Juliette knocked

out her mother's brains with a hammer. As in O'Neill, the parallels in the plot that might escape the reader are underscored by paratextual pointers: instead of the title or the more or less transparent character names, we find an epigraph borrowed from Sophocles' *Electra* and an explicit blurb on the back cover—"What is more natural than to imagine the blood of the Atreides being shed in Belleville? And why not Electra in Belleville, in 1927?" "Natural" or not, the transposition is thus clearly specified by a contract in due form, which by the same token obligingly provides a reader's guide.

In Mann's *Doctor Faustus* (1947) the contract is less specific, since it does not announce a modernization, but it is more official, since it is embedded in a title that functions, as in O'Neill, as a reference to the hypotextual model of the hero, whose change of name it compensates for by inviting readers to read Faustus into Leverkühn, as they were to read Electra into Lavinia.[2]

The hypotext of *Doctor Faustus* is much less Goethe's *Faust* than the *Volksbuch*, or "popular tale" of 1587. The plot, which takes up again the *Volksbuch*'s denouement without a redemption, is set in modern Germany, between 1880 and 1940, and is narrated during the last months of the Nazi regime by one of the hero's childhood friends. That modernization entailed a high degree of naturalization (here in the proper sense of the term) of the Faust theme—unless the inverse is true, and the modernization serves as an alibi and pretext for the naturalization. The compact with the Devil became syphilis, which Leverkühn deliberately contracted with a prostitute, no doubt out of love but perhaps also because such was the price that he was willing to pay for the musical genius that the ailment would afford him—according to a myth of the time—before carrying him away into final dementia. But that decisive episode remains ambiguous, since Leverkühn was later to recount that he had received—or been deluded by a hallucinatory episode into believing that he had received—a visit from the Devil, come to "confirm" the compact. From that point onward, actually, Leverkühn was no longer merely a "new Faust" or a "modern Faust" but also—and increasingly so as his illness worsened—a madman mistaking himself for Faust and endeavoring to shape his existence after that of his model, as Don Quixote strove to imitate Amadis, or, even better, as Brideron strove to impersonate Telemachus. In that sense, *Doctor Faustus* is a modern revival of the antiromance, and within that genre the only bedfellow to *Télémaque travesti* as a singulative antiromance. Leverkühn set

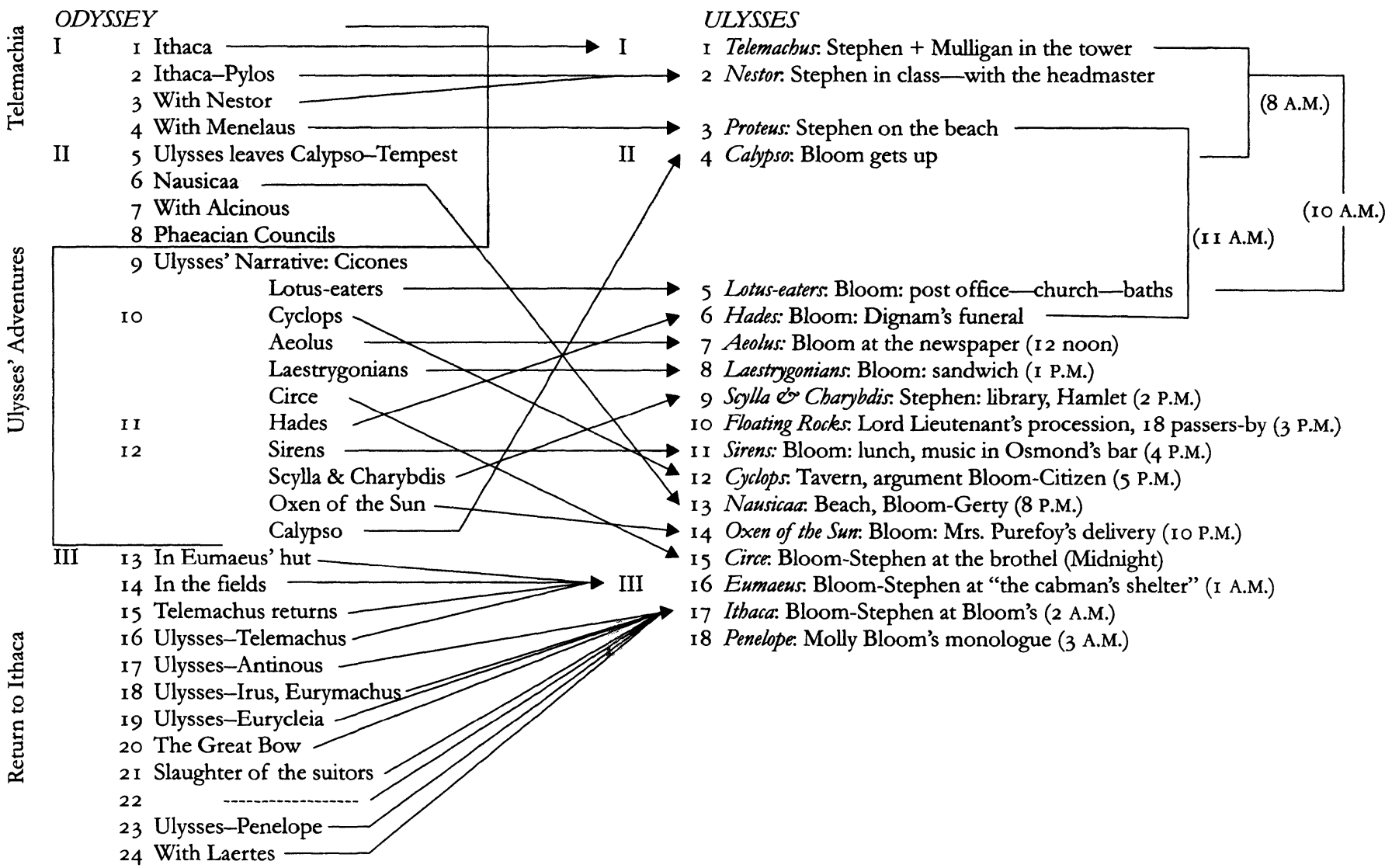
about speaking or writing in Old German; one of his works was devoted to the "Lamentation of Doctor Faustus," with a libretto drawn from the *Volksbuch*; and like that work's protagonist, he summoned all his friends in the end in order to confess his crime to them before sinking into an insanity that stands as a metaphor of damnation. The "parodic" tone of that destiny ("parodic" is Mann's term to designate the jarring hypertextuality of his book) is thus forcefully thematized by the hero himself—a cold, distant and sarcastic character who can ask, for example, "Why does everything seem to me like its own parody? Why must I think that almost all, no, all the methods and conventions of art today *are good for parody only*?" Or again, in this exchange with the demon as recounted by Leverkühn himself: "*He*: I know. I know. Parody. It might be fun if it were not so melancholy in its aristocratic nihilism. Would you promise yourself much pleasure and profit from such tricks?—*I* (retort angrily): No." Thus it is that this modern Faust is—and knows himself to be—a "parody" of Faust, whose only accessible greatness lies in that "dismal" parody. But the greatness here is that of sacrifice: the sacrifice of the artist to his art, and to his work.[3]

The status of Ulrich Plenzdorf's *New Sufferings of Young Werther: A Novel* (1973) is to a certain extent similar.[4] The contract of transposition is of course in the title, and the hero, who in his own fashion reenacts Werther's adventure, is constantly referring to Goethe's text, a copy of which he has come upon in a very private place. That young housepainter, a beatnik type infatuated with J. D. Salinger, falls in love with a kindergarten teacher, who is engaged to another man and is not named Charlotte, but whom he nicknames Charlie and pursues somewhat more brashly than did his model; he treats that model rather as a foil, having nothing but contempt for his timidity and his mushy style. Nevertheless he dies, probably by accident, while toying with a spray gun. Plenzdorf thus emancipates himself more from his hypotext than did Thomas Mann: he duly refrains from assigning motives—even "modern" ones—to the death of his hero, whose behavior is that of both a new Werther and an anti-Werther.

The process of emancipation is carried even further in Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Les Gommes*.[5] The novel's relation to *Oedipus Rex* is only hinted at by an epigraph borrowed from Sophocles and a few winks at the reader scattered through the text. But it is said that Samuel Beckett at once caught the hint, and a few weeks later the publisher issued an explanatory brochure, obviously inspired by the author, which was in part taken up in Bruce Morrissette's afterword to the paperback edition of the novel.[6]

The unobtrusiveness of the paratextual contract (the epigraph) is thus compensated for by the insistence of the unofficial metatext, as if the author had wished to make sure that his work would get a hypertextual reading without univocally claiming responsibility for it. The concept is obviously that of a riddle or a conundrum: it has to be deciphered by the reader, but the proper reception of it is dependent on that deciphering, which the author occasionally must help along in devious ways. The thematic relation to the Sophoclean hypotext remains indeed a partial and selective one. The story concerns a police detective, investigating an alleged murder, who ends up unintentionally committing that murder himself. There are various indications that the murderer-detective is probably the victim's son, unknown to himself, but the specifically "Oedipal" consequence in the Freudian sense (incest) is missing. Robbe-Grillet thus borrows from the legend only the double theme of the parricide by mistake and the fatal inquiry, both these elements being here articulated in a particularly perverse fashion, since the inquiry is contrived to bring about the murder. He therefore deliberately turns his back on the interpretation of Freud, for whom the trap of the oracle is but a mask for Oedipal desire. But that denial, I venture to think, will be read as a confession.

There is nothing new about setting up an unofficial contract. Joyce guided the hypertextual reception of *Ulysses* in this fashion, from afar. But the case of *Ulysses* is more complex. In the first place, and contrary to the case of *Les Gommes*, the title is in itself an official pointer, despite—or perhaps because of—the fact that this titular reference does not correspond to any character's name in the book. Moreover, the first edition of the novel in serialized form confirmed that indication through chapter headings that specified each chapter's relation to the corresponding episode in the *Odyssey* (Telemachus, Nestor, Proteus, Calypso, etc.). Joyce later canceled those headings, but concurrently, and with the help of critics such as Stuart Gilbert and Valery Larbaud, he organized a system of "leaks" designed to guide readers even more specifically than did the original headings—which are still used by specialists to refer to the book's eighteen chapters. That network of correspondences is now well known, as is the characters' table of equivalence (Leopold Bloom = Ulysses, Stephen Dedalus = Telemachus, Molly Bloom = Penelope, etc.). The appended table will spare me from going into lengthy and irksome detail. It clearly indicates, I hope, the process of displacements, inversions, and condensations which turned the twenty-


Telemachia
Ulysses' Adventures
Return to Ithaca
ODYSSEY
I
1 Ithaca
2 Ithaca–Pylos
3 With Nestor
4 With Menelaus
II
5 Ulysses leaves Calypso–Tempest
6 Nausicaa
7 With Alcinous
8 Phaeacian Councils
9 Ulysses' Narrative: Cicones
Lotus-eaters
10
Cyclops
Aeolus
Laestrygonians
Circe
11
Hades
12
Sirens
Scylla & Charybdis
Oxen of the Sun
Calypso
III
13 In Eumaeus' hut
14 In the fields
15 Telemachus returns
16 Ulysses–Telemachus
17 Ulysses–Antinous
18 Ulysses–Irus, Eurymachus
19 Ulysses–Eurycleia
20 The Great Bow
21 Slaughter of the suitors
22
23 Ulysses–Penelope
24 With Laertes
I
II
III
ULYSSES
1 Telemachus: Stephen + Mulligan in the tower
2 Nestor: Stephen in class—with the headmaster
3 Proteus: Stephen on the beach
4 Calypso: Bloom gets up
5 Lotus-eaters: Bloom: post office—church—baths
6 Hades: Bloom: Dignam's funeral
7 Aeolus: Bloom at the newspaper (12 noon)
8 Laestrygonians: Bloom: sandwich (1 P.M.)
9 Scylla & Charybdis: Stephen: library, Hamlet (2 P.M.)
10 Floating Rocks: Lord Lieutenant's procession, 18 passers-by (3 P.M.)
11 Sirens: Bloom: lunch, music in Osmond's bar (4 P.M.)
12 Cyclops: Tavern, argument Bloom-Citizen (5 P.M.)
13 Nausicaa: Beach, Bloom-Gerty (8 P.M.)
14 Oxen of the Sun: Bloom: Mrs. Purefoy's delivery (10 P.M.)
15 Circe: Bloom-Stephen at the brothel (Midnight)
16 Eumaeus: Bloom-Stephen at "the cabman's shelter" (1 A.M.)
17 Ithaca: Bloom-Stephen at Bloom's (2 A.M.)
18 Penelope: Molly Bloom's monologue (3 A.M.)
(8 A.M.)
(10 A.M.)
(11 A.M.)

four cantos of the *Odyssey* into the eighteen chapters of *Ulysses*. (A sign of inversion has been placed in the left-hand column to signal the fact that the events narrated by Ulysses in cantos 9 through 12 precede those recounted by Homer in the first eight cantos; Joyce did not heed that vast analepsis, or chose to ignore it.)

But to the reader, those tight relationships, made tighter still by many equivalences in details, are only indirectly suggested (or, as concerns the title, imposed) by the author, who posits *Ulysses* as the very type of the self-proclaimed hypertext. Uninformed readers having innocently purchased that novel in its current and final format might well have no inkling whatsoever—familiar as they might otherwise be with the hypotext—of those subtle correspondences, which escape even well-informed readers; they might see in *Ulysses* only its autonomous subject matter: the wanderings of one Leopold Bloom and one Stephen Dedalus in the Dublin of the early twentieth century, together with all the related historical, intellectual, erotic themes, and a formal orchestration that is every bit as independent of Homer (one "style" per chapter, one of them consisting, as is well known, in a series of pastiches). In the field of diegetic transposition, and of hypertextuality in general, *Ulysses* no doubt constitutes an extreme case of emancipation from the hypotext. And the fact that its "correct" reception should depend on an unofficial paratextual manifesto illustrates once again the impossibility of encapsulating a text within an illusory autonomy and "immanence." It is perfectly possible to read *Ulysses* as a self-enclosed work; such a reading would nevertheless be incomplete.

It would also be an erroneous reading, in one respect at least: readers of *Ulysses*, however innocent they may be, are not allowed to ignore its title, that "key title" (Larbaud), which foists upon them a minimal degree of hypertextual reading with the following question: "Why *Ulysses*? What relation with the *Odyssey*?" In this case a purely interrogative transcendence of this type may well be the most appropriate one.[7]

The clear-cut separation that I have effected between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic transpositions should not be taken to mean that mixed or intermediary treatments are impossible, even though most authors seem to have shunned them, out of concern for verisimilitude or some other motive. One might at least conceive of types of transposition that would straddle both procedures, that might involve, for example, a "modern" Ulysses or Faust, living today, who would nevertheless preserve his original identity.

It is not entirely absurd, as we shall see, to read Jean Giono's *Naissance de l'Odyssée* or Paul Valéry's *Mon Faust*[8] in this light, even if such a reading is not the most appropriate one. Nor is it impossible, within the fantastic code, to mix heterogeneous historical references; a time machine will do the trick and has often done so in science fiction since H. G. Wells. Such an invention may enable a character to leave his diegesis, temporarily or not, and penetrate another. That is what happens in Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), the title of which is perfectly indicative of its operating principle.

Transdiegetic transposition must not be supposed necessarily and automatically to entail a more intensive process of thematic transformation than homodiegetic transposition. Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, in spite of its modern diegesis, is in many respects more faithful to the spirit of the *Volksbuch* than is Goethe's *Faust*, and *The Swiss Family Robinson* is closer to Defoe than is Michel Tournier's *Vendredi*. Diegetic transposition is thus neither a necessary nor a sufficient but only an optional condition for semantic transformation, and it is quite often treated as an autonomous practice. One might even perceive some degree of incompatibility between the two approaches, owing perhaps to a double compensatory movement: heterodiegetic transposition emphasizes the thematic analogy between its plot and that of its hypotext ("my hero is not Robinson, but you will see that he goes through a very similar adventure"); conversely, homodiegetic transposition emphasizes its own freedom of thematic interpretation ("I am rewriting the story of Robinson after so many others, but let there be no mistake: I am giving it an entirely new meaning").

Finally, one must avoid confusion between diegetic modernization, which consists in a wholesale transfer of an ancient plot into a modern setting, and the circumscribed and occasional practice of anachronism, which consists in larding an ancient plot with modern stylistic or thematic details, as when Creon's guards are seen playing cards in Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*. The two procedures are evidently incompatible. Anachronism functions as an incidental dissonance in relation to the overall tone of the action; contrast is what makes it striking, surprising, amusing, or thought-provoking. In a wholly modernized diegesis, that contrast becomes simply impossible: there is nothing surprising in seeing Leopold Bloom take a cab. It would be more interesting to have him wear greaves. But it so happens that an anachronism has pungency only when it is proleptic, like a wink from the past at the present and not the obverse—which is why

it should really be called a *prochronism* (but that would be too much to expect). Diegetic transposition is a generalized prochronism, within which no isolated prochronism can create a contrast and meaning and thus find its legitimate place.[9]

Nikos Kazantzakis's novel *Christ Recrucified* (1954) differs from those various diegetic transpositions in one significant respect, which should be specified.[10] It tells of a shepherd in a contemporary Greek village who is designated to impersonate Christ in a ritual Passion play. His role wholly takes possession of him, and he sets about acting in a truly Christian fashion in all circumstances, thus arousing the indignation of the established Christian community. Having given assistance to refugees who had been mistreated by that community, he ends up having his throat cut by the Greek Orthodox pope in the village church. We thus have a diegetic transposition of Christ's Passion featuring an embedded repetition of the hypotext, much as Faust's story is evoked in *Doctor Faustus* by Leverkühn's cantata. But here the embedding comes first, and the modernizing transposition is supposed to be a consequence of it; Manolios begins by playing Christ and then becomes a modern Christ. Something similar seems to occur in some contemporary dramatic structures. Modern theater, from Luigi Pirandello to Jean Genet, likes to play with a dual representational register: in Jean Anouilh's *La Répétition, ou L'Amour puni* (1947),[11] a private performance of Marivaux's *La Double Inconstance* (*Double Infidelity*) conjures up between the two actors a situation similar to that of the eighteenth-century play—whence a delightful counterpoint between the two texts.

## 63

Pragmatic transformation, a change in the very course of the action and in its material support, is also an optional aspect of semantic transformation, with which it is frequently, though not necessarily, associated.[1] It is, however, an indispensable element, or rather an unavoidable consequence of diegetic transposition: one can hardly transfer an ancient story to modern times without modifying some of the action (the stab of a dagger will become a pistol shot, etc.). But its autonomy is much more restricted than that of diegetic transposition. Authors may well choose to modify the action of their hypertext according to their own fancy, but since such

modifications are bound to be perceived—rightly or wrongly—as the most brutal and most heavyhanded of all, no author seems willing to effect any without the alibi of a good "reason": i.e., a cause or a goal. The action of a hypotext is usually modified only *because* its diegesis has been transposed or *in order* to transform its message. It is therefore hard to find and observe transpragmatization operating in isolation; it is most often an integral part of a more encompassing diegetic and/or semantic operation. What might come closest to an isolated pragmatic transformation would be one inspired by the minimal intent of *correcting* possible errors or deficiencies in the hypotext, with a view to improving its effectiveness and its reception.

Such corrective attitudes and procedures are alien to us now but were familiar to neoclassical minds. A typical illustration is provided by the *Iliade en vers français* (already quoted) from the prolific pen of Antoine Houdar de la Motte.

Like most of his contemporaries, even those who were highly cultivated, that former pupil of the Jesuits knew no Greek. Nevertheless, he set about translating the *Iliad* into French verse, resorting for his first version to a Latin translation published in 1701 and limited to book 1. In 1711, Mme Dacier's prose translation was published, and this more accessible intermediary enabled him to resume and complete his task. His own translation was published in 1714, preceded by a "Discourse upon Homer" which was not without severe strictures and which rekindled for a time the Quarrel between the Ancients and Moderns: Mme Dacier rose to Homer's defense; La Motte's reply elicited new apologies for the *Iliad*, etc. La Motte's "Discourse" was indeed a critique of Homer explicitly intended to justify as improvements the alterations that the "translator" had worked upon his model.

La Motte differentiates between two kinds of translations. Translations properly speaking are *literal* (a perfect example being provided by Mme Dacier's) and must sacrifice all ornaments, including the versified form, to literal accuracy: "Only prose is capable of literal translations." Other kinds are "bolder" and "occupy a middle position between simple, literal translation and paraphrase"; those should rather be termed "elegant imitations." In addition to being useful (by giving readers as truthful an idea of the original as possible), they aim to be pleasurable, by conveying not only the meaning of a work but also "its full power and charm, be it even by adding to those charms when they are lacking." La Motte places his own work within the category of "elegant imitations" ("I translate him

less than I imitate him"). *Imitation* does not quite seem to be the fitting notion here, since the original is taken not as a model but as an imperfect object to be improved according to a model of perfection not its own but that of the perfecter and his audience: the *Iliad* might well have been faultless for the taste and morals of its age, but our morals and our taste are different, and *they* must guide an elegant translator in his work. Let us then consider La Motte's *Iliad* as what it is in actual fact: i.e., a *correction.* The strictures that were adduced by La Motte in his "Discourse" and inspired his corrections pertain to considerations of morality and taste. As to morality, the characters of the *Iliad* are not sufficiently edifying. The gods too often behave like mere humans: Zeus and Hera spend their time quarreling when they are not engaged in shameless lovemaking; Athena and Hera persecute the Trojans out of spite for Paris's judgment; the whole of Olympus keeps petty accounts of offerings and sacrifices. Heroes are riddled with insufferable faults: cruelty, vanity, anger, of course, and at times cowardice. As to taste, there are ceaseless repetitions, stereotyped adjectives, idle "descriptions,"[2] similes that are clumsy, vulgar, far-fetched, or obvious; the protagonists' speeches are frequently too long, at times out of place (as when they occur in the midst of single fights); the characters are "ill-sustained" (i.e., lack coherence); the action is poorly prepared for or else too explicitly outlined in advance, thus destroying suspense and the reader's interest; the general "design" lacks clarity. Did Homer intend to relate the story of the Trojan war? In that case, he stopped too early. Did he wish to write the praises of Achilles? That hero is so flawed that he serves as a foil rather than a model. Did he want to demonstrate, as Father René Le Bossu had claimed in his *Traité du poème épique*, the harm that comes from anger? If so, that motive is swamped by a host of actions that lack relevance to the purpose at hand. It seems, much rather, that Homer's intention—as he himself rather naively states it from the start—was to recount Achilles' wrath and its effects, and that he considered those sufficiently worthy of admiration in themselves.

As is always the case in the system of neoclassical poetics, offenses against morality come down to offenses against good taste, or rather against logical coherence: the immorality of a character who has been introduced as immoral (e.g., Thersites) is not a flaw; but a god or a hero must be flawless, simply because such is the definition of a god or a hero. A fallible god or a cowardly hero is a contradiction in terms and therefore a shortcoming. In

other words, infringements of morality are reprehensible not in the absolute but only in relation to the poetic status of the characters.

Those are the main defects of the *Iliad.* Let it be noted in passing that the neoclassical age was bound to find fault with that epic, which is so out of keeping with neo-Aristotelian decorum; even Homer's supporters were reduced to adopting a defensive posture, and their expostulations in no way rejected the principles that underlay the critique. La Motte himself often expressed awareness of Homer's resistance to any reduction to neoclassical norms. In that, he was more perceptive than his opponents. He fell short of our modern criteria only by failing to accept those discrepancies as specific qualities.

He therefore undertook to rectify them by three different methods. The first, which we have already encountered, consisted in simply suppressing those passages that were judged to be useless or ill-begotten. The twenty-four cantos of the *Iliad* were thus reduced to twelve. That leaner narrative was sure at all events to prove less tedious to the reader, and by being more narrowly focused on Achilles' wrath and its consequences, it would more clearly illustrate the edifying purpose assigned to it by Le Bossu: "To show how fatal discord can be to those whom it sets against one another. Homer may not have had this goal in mind; however that may be, I have endeavored to make that truth perceptible in my work. . . . To put it bluntly, I have only been shorter so that I could say more distinctly what Homer himself is claimed to have intended to say."

The second method was more subtle, if not more discreet. It consisted in motivating, by way of some comment assigned to the narrator or to a character, episodes in the action that might otherwise seem supererogatory, shocking, or unintelligible to the modern reader. Thus in canto 6, La Motte added his own justification to his narrative of Priam's sacrificial offering:

> L'ardeur par ces détails n'est point diminuée;
> Au travers du symbole un regard pénétrant
> Dans le culte des dieux trouve tout saint, tout grand.
>
> {These details in nothing diminish the fire;
> He who sees beyond the symbol
> In the worship of the gods finds all holy, all great.}

The motivation here is direct, or positive. The indirect, or negative, motivation consists in exculpating the poet by having him condemn

reprehensible deeds that were nevertheless left to stand in the translation. In La Motte's canto 11 (based on *Iliad* 22), Achilles, who has just killed Hector, inflicts upon his corpse the outrage of dragging it around the Trojan walls:

> *A quel excès alors la vengeance l'égare!*
> *Ce n'est plus un héros, c'est un tigre barbare.*
> *Il insulte au cadavre, il lui perce les pieds*
> *Qui de sa main sanglante à son char sont liés:*
> *La tête indignement traînait dans la poussière.*
> *Soleil, à tant d'horreurs, prêtes-tu ta lumière!*
> *Jupiter en frémit et ne voit qu'à regret*
> *S'accomplir du destin l'inflexible décret.*
>
> {To what excess does revenge then impel him!
> No longer a hero he, but a barbarous tiger.
> Insulting the corpse, he pierces his feet
> That his own bloody hand to the chariot had bound:
> Ignominiously did his head draggle in the dust.
> O! Sun, canst thou bear to shed thy rays upon such horrors!
> Jupiter shuddered, regretting to see
> Inflexible fate carry out its decree.}

Thus does the poet register his awareness of the temporary indignity of the hero who, for the time being, is emphatically *no longer a hero.*

The third procedure is pragmatic transformation properly speaking and consists in modifying an entire episode. La Motte dwells at length upon two "considerable changes," one inspired by purely aesthetic considerations, the other by a concern for moral verisimilitude. The first bears on an object: as is well known, the shield fashioned by Hephaestus for Achilles in book 18 of the *Iliad* represents two cities (one at peace and one at war), the labors of the fields, the course of the stars, and the vast ocean. La Motte observes, after many others, that those sights are too manifold to be perceptible on a shield, however gigantic; that some of the characters are supposed to move or speak, feats impossible for a carved figure to perform; and finally that none of this has "any bearing upon the Poem": i.e., upon the main action. "Thus I have imagined a shield that should be free of those flaws. I show only three actions, and they are, moreover, connected with one another: the wedding of Thetis and Peleus, which is cause for Achilles' nobility; the

judgment of Paris, which is cause for Minerva's and Juno's wrath against the Tojans; and the abduction of Helen, which is cause for the revenge of the Greeks. Those scenes, though pleasing, are all related to the object of the Poem; there is no confusion; and each action is depicted in only one of its stages, although the manner in which I depict it allows one to guess at its beginnings and its consequences. Unless I am mistaken, it seems a felicitous idea to have thus turned Achilles' shield into a sign of his greatness and in a manner of speaking into his emblem." Here then is the quintessential *hors d'oeuvre* brought back into line, back into classical (Heinrich Wölfflin would have said *baroque*) unity, wherein all parts cohere and *contribute* to the whole design.

The other defective piece is an incident: Hector's death. After Achilles' exploits on the banks of the Xanthus, all the Trojans have sought refuge within the walls of Troy—all but Hector, who decides to face Achilles alone. But when the latter appears, Hector takes fright and flees, and runs three times around the city with Achilles on his heels. Athena takes the shape of Deiphobus to encourage Hector, in his company, to resist. Hector then waits for Achilles and offers to fight him in an honorable duel. Achilles refuses and throws his javelin at him; though he misses, Athena brings him back his weapon. Undeceived, Hector throws his own javelin, which cannot dent Hephaestus's armor and bounces off in the distance. He then draws his sword, but Achilles strikes him with his spear at the joint in the breastplate, "all too easily triumphing over a defenseless enemy," says La Motte. "In truth, had Homer wished to debase both heroes, had he wished one to perish without fame, and the other to triumph without glory, he would not have proceeded differently. One is a coward, the other is aided; one gives in without demurring to his fear of danger, the other faces no danger at all." We have therefore changed all that "with no qualms, to restore to their glory the two heroes of the *Iliad*" (*restore* is worth its salt): Hector does not take flight at once but begins by offering his compact, which Achilles rejects; Hector breaks his javelin and then his sword upon the divine armor, and only then, weaponless, does he flee, seeking to expose Achilles to the arrows of the Trojans manning the ramparts (a pretty piece of after-the-fact motivation). Thus Hector's flight is no longer a reaction of fear but a warlike ploy, and Achilles' pursuit of him, since it is fraught with danger, becomes heroic again. Hector finally picks up one of the Trojan arrows, thrusts it at Achilles to no avail, and thus "succumbs in glory. . . . If those amendments are well taken," La Motte modestly adds, "I claim no praise

for them. The fault was so conspicuous that, short of idolizing Homer, one could but chafe at it; and perceiving him to be bad gives one at least a dim idea of the good; an idea which a little reflection suffices to clarify and perfect."

La Motte can be seen here to transform Homeric action—but solely for its own good, in order to tailor it to an aesthetic code that is admittedly alien to it but sees itself quite innocently as the best possible code, indeed as the only valid one, so that abiding by it can only improve the text of the *Iliad.* For us, of course, such a correction is unfaithful to the spirit of its hypotext, and it entails an undeniable semantic transformation—let us call it a forced *neoclassicization* of the Homeric text, intended to make it entirely acceptable. Here then is a telling illustration of an evident truth that we have frequently observed: no transformation is innocent, not even with the best intentions, and the letter of a text—let alone its action—cannot be altered without altering its meaning. The pragmatic transformation I have just discussed, and attempted to view as the most autonomous conceivable, is thus hardly autonomous; all that can be said about it is that it wishes itself to be so, and that it subjects the *Iliad* to no other changes than those that Homer (according to La Motte) would no doubt have desired, or at the very least *ought to have desired.* We shall encounter many more pragmatic transformations; those, however, will be constantly subsumed within semantic transformations from which they cannot be dissociated, or even distinguished.

## 64

Conversely, can the meaning of a text be modified without modifying the letter of it, leaving its action, for instance, untouched? Can one conceive of a purely semantic transformation unaccompanied by any pragmatic, diegetic, or even formal interference? Remember that such was Borges's wager when imagining Pierre Menard writing with his own resources a new version of *Don Quixote,* which was rigorously and literally identical with Cervantes' text but which two intervening centuries of history had invested with new complexity and depth and with an entirely different meaning; that wager, as I have already pointed out, is but a monstrous extension of the principle of minimal parody. A similar status can be ascribed, though less rigorously, of

course, to another rewriting of *Don Quixote*, one that is less famous today but can at least be granted the (sometimes dubious) merit of existing: *The Life of Don Quixote and Sancho according to Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra* (1905) by Miguel de Unamuno.[1]

In formal terms, and with the exception of a prologue titled "Don Quixote's Sepulchre," the book is a simple reworking of *Don Quixote* that scrupulously respects and follows the order and pattern of its hypotext, preserving even its chapter headings. The plot line remains identical, save for a few episodes that Unamuno suppressed or contracted—giving due notice of the fact each time—as not being perceptibly relevant to the essential plot, which evidently consists in the trials and tribulations of the knight and his squire.

But in the first place, the very fact that Unamuno was following a story so familiar to his audience, especially in Spain, delivered him of the obligation—and soon deprived him of the will—to repeat it in detail. The specifically narrative section of each chapter was thus inevitably reduced either to a brief summary or to an allusive reference to Cervantes' text or to a literal quotation, most often a mixture of all three. Contrary to Pierre Menard, who was reproducing *Don Quixote* from within, as it were, and who could thus naively and even unconsciously repeat it word for word, Unamuno was rewriting his *Don Quixote* while constantly eyeing Cervantes' text, which could but stifle his own narrative impulse. In fact, Unamuno could only *remind* his readers, in one way or another, of what they all knew had happened to Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. The rest, his chief contribution even in quantitative terms, can be said to fall under the heading of *commentary*.

*The Life of Don Quixote* might thus be described as a running commentary on *Don Quixote* affixed to a purely instrumental narrative summary, which could profitably be replaced by a chapter-by-chapter rereading of Cervantes. A different format could easily be imagined, such as an edition of *Don Quixote* in which each chapter would be followed by Unamuno's commentary, divested of its narrative support. Such an analysis and such a manipulation would be grossly unfaithful to that work's purpose—which is indeed to provide a new and more authentic account of Don Quixote's exploits—as well as to its originality, which precisely resides in the problematic relationship it develops between a conditioned narrative and a free commentary. But the very possibility of that dissociation points to an essential aspect of the work, which is that the transformational intent has

been brought to bear not on the events but on their *significance.* Contrary to La Motte, Unamuno faithfully and respectfully preserves the adventures of Don Quixote as Cervantes has narrated them, but he brings his own interpretation to them in that he claims to have laid bare their true motives or their true meaning. That interpretation is either *superadded* to the merely factual narrative of *Don Quixote* (when it is indeed factual), or it displaces Cervantes' own, not without creating problems in the process. This is of course where Unamuno's work most visibly fulfills its corrective function. The difference between facts and the interpretation of facts is affirmed with characteristic vehemence in connection with the episode of the caged lion (2.17). Cervantes tells how Don Quixote had the cage opened and how the lion, "more courteous than arrogant, took no note of this childish bravado, and after looking in all directions, as we have said, turned his back, showed Don Quixote his hindquarters. This done, he lay down in his cage with great calm and composure."[2] This narrative calls naturally enough for Cervantes' explanation of the lion's behavior, which he ascribes to sheer indifference toward Don Quixote's challenge. Unamuno rejects this degrading motivation and suggests another one: to wit, that the lion was frightened by Don Quixote:

> Ah, damnable Cid Hamete Bengeli [*sic*], or whoever it was that wrote up this feat, how vilely and pettily you understood it! One would think that the envious graduate Samson Carrasco was whispering in your ear as you wrote it down. No, it did not happen in this wise; what really happened is that the lion was frightened away, or rather was shamed to see the ferocity of our Knight, for God permits beasts to feel more vividly than men the presence of the invisible power of faith. Or might it not have been that the lion, dreaming of the lioness reclining under a palm tree in the sand of the desert, saw Aldonza Lorenzo in the heart of the Knight? Was it not his love that made the beast understand the man's love, and show respect and shame before it?

Unamuno not infrequently adopts Don Quixote's own viewpoint against Cervantes. His basic attitude can even be said to consist in setting the generosity of "Quixotism" over against the pettiness or reductive irony of "Cervantism." But here, he is rather overstating his case, since his hero was quite content with having demonstrated his own valor and did not bother to inquire into the reasons for the lion's apathy.

Unamuno's interpretation in this instance is thus not only anti-Cervantic but hyper-Quixotic as well. His protestations as to his respect for the facts are all the more emphatic:

> Let no one tell me that I deviate from the exact text of the story-teller; we must be entirely clear to what extent we cannot deviate without great temerity and even risk to our conscience and to what extent we are free to interpret according to our lights. As regards the facts, and apart from the copyist's obvious errors—all of them amenable to correction—there is no alternative but to respect the infallible authority of the cervantine text. And thus we must believe and confess that the lion turned its back on Don Quixote and lay down again in its cage. But that it did so from politeness or because it considered Don Quixote's gestures to be childish bravado, and not from shame at the sight of the Knight's valor or from a fellow-feeling for his unfortunate love, is a matter of liberal interpretation on the part of the story-teller, of no greater worth than the purely personal and human authority of the story-teller himself.

There is thus no temptation here—or if there is, it is severely held in check—to touch up the facts in the manner of La Motte, with whom the lion might perhaps have left his cage, entered the match, and lost it. The difference between the attitude underlying a neoclassical correction and one that we may without undue rashness term Romantic is no doubt partly accounted for by the very nature of Cervantes' text, which treats its hero with outright irony: Cervantes narrates and constantly explains Don Quixote's adventures by the protagonist's folly. Unamuno turns Don Quixote into a proper hero, and all it takes is for him to reject Cervantes' irony and to espouse, or even overstate, Don Quixote's interpretation; his adventures at once become, for himself as for Don Quixote and without the slightest change, so many heroic feats or marvels. In other words, he sees Cervantes as the one who *interpreted* (ironically) the knight's adventures. For his part, Unamuno is merely restoring them to their truth, and in this sense his transformation is tantamount to a restitution.

But such a restitution presupposes that one should in every case be able to contest Cervantes' explanation—i.e., his version of the motives—by referring to another version that could legitimately and victoriously be invoked against it. If the Don is only a figment of Cervantes' imagination, it is in the nature of things that Cervantes' version should always carry final

authority, or rather, as has often been said of fiction in general, that it cannot be held down to any test of truth. For that version to become accountable in terms of truth, it suffices to state (as Cervantes has done himself, by the way, according to a convention that would later be taken literally) that Don Quixote really did exist, and that Cid Hamete and Cervantes are but his historiographers—and stupid or malevolent ones at that, as Unamuno is pleased to add, who should be treated like simple chroniclers unable to understand the story they are conveying:

> Before going any further, it would be only right for us to say something —even though it be merely in passing, for the matter is unworthy of more—about those vain and petulant people who dare maintain that Don Quixote and Sancho themselves never have existed, or that they are no more than fictional beings. Their arguments, pompous and exaggerated, do not warrant refutation, for they are absurd and ridiculous. It is hard on one's nerves and stomach to hear them. But inasmuch as there are simple people who, seduced by the apparent authority of those who give vent to such a pestilential doctrine, lend them an attentive ear, it seems only fitting to warn them not to give credence to this old slander simply because it comes from grave and learned scholars. One day, with the help of God, I expect to write a book, for the consolation of simple people of good faith, proving with the help of sound arguments and the best and most numerous authorities—which is what counts in this type of argument—how Don Quixote and Sancho really and truly existed and how everything we are told about them came to pass just as it is set down for us.

For obvious reasons, Unamuno never came up with the demonstration he promises here, but further on in the text he offers an argument which, in any event, is not without charm: since in *Don Quixote* Cervantes evinces a genius that bears no relationship to the mediocre quality of his other works, this is proof that it was dictated to him by another, who can only have been Don Quixote himself.

> There is no doubt that in *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha* Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra displays a genius far above what we might have expected of him in view of his other works. He went far beyond his natural limitations and outdid himself considerably. So that we may well believe that the Arab historian Cid Hamete Benengeli is

> not purely a literary device, but encompasses a profound truth, which is that the history was dictated to Cervantes by another man, whom Cervantes harbored within himself, a spirit who dwelt in the depths of his soul, and with whom he never had any other dealings, either before or after writing this history. And the immense disparity between the story of our Knight and all the other works written by Cervantes, this most patent and splendid miracle, is the principal reason—if reasons, always poor things, were needed, which they are not—to make us think and admit that the account was a real and true one, and that Don Quixote himself, disguised as Cid Hamete Benengeli, dictated the narrative to Cervantes. And I even suspect that while I have been explaining and commenting [on] this Life of Don Quixote and Sancho, I have secretly been visited by the two of them, and that without my being aware of it they have unfolded and uncovered the innermost recesses of their hearts.

There is only one flaw in this hypothesis: if it accounts for Cervantes' factual accuracy, it makes the inadequacy of his interpretations all the more inexplicable. Besides, Unamuno at once goes on to strain his argument to the limit by suggesting that Cervantes might actually be a figment of Don Quixote's imagination: "And I must add here that though we oftentimes consider a writer to be a real, true, historic person because we see him in the flesh, and regard the characters he invents in his fictions as purely imaginary, the truth is exactly the reverse. The characters are real, it is they who are the authentic beings, and they make use of the person who seems to be of flesh and blood in order to assume form and being in the eyes of men." Might we read this as an invitation to apply Unamuno's hypothesis to himself, and see him—shades of the Borgesian vertigo—as a Quixotic invention?

The other form of interpretation, which is much more frequent and characteristic, entails fewer collisions with Cervantes' text. It no longer regards events as clues, as effects whose true causes must be detected, but as symbols whose deeper meanings must be worked out, since Cervantes himself remained simply unaware of them. Unamuno's hermeneutics here consist not in detracting from Cervantes' text but in overlaying it with a symbolic reading. The windmills-turned-giants thus embody the evils of the modern machine age; the invisible Dulcinea represents glory, "of which we are enamored without ever having seen or heard it"; the Cave

of Montesinos, into which Don Quixote descends after hacking a path through the thicket that blocked its entrance, is "the cave of true beliefs," which must be shorn clear of the clutter of false traditions; Master Peter's puppets symbolize the theater's lies, of which the world must be cleansed as Don Quixote cleanses the inn by striking at the pasteboard figures; the belated conversion to the pastoral demonstrates to the Spanish people, now dispossessed of their empire, that they must return to agriculture and settle their own territory; and Don Quixote's final abjuration, when he confesses to having been deluded by vacuous dreams, actually reveals that life is a dream from which one must sooner or later awaken, like Calderon's Segismundo.

Don Quixote himself must be interpreted as a symbolic figure. His challenge to the lion incites Unamuno to dub him "the new Cid Campeador." His choleric temper, his passion for chivalric romances, his blind adherence to the rules of his order, his night watch over his arms, his penitence in the Sierra Morena, his visions, his humility, and scores of other features of his personality denote a kinship to Ignatius of Loyola, whose biography Unamuno constantly refers to in his reading of *Don Quixote.* Don Quixote is thus a double of Saint Ignatius, and the imitation of chivalric romances, which Cervantes had made into the single motive of his behavior, conceals, or rather symbolizes, an imitation of Saint Ignatius, who had himself been "Christ's knight-errant," "a knight-errant of the divine." But other features directly evoke the figure of Christ himself: are not the harlots at the inn, who help to relieve Don Quixote of his armor "with disinterested kindness," reminiscent of "Mary of Magdala washing and anointing the feet of the Lord"? As for Sancho, "carnal Sancho," who hopes to obtain the governorship of an island and does not understand that it is not "temporal power but the glory of [his] Lord, eternal love, which is [his] reward"—is he not "the Simon Peter to our knight"? Would not the grave ecclesiastic who reprimanded Don Quixote in the name of common sense have treated Christ in the same fashion, accusing him of being "a madman or a dangerous agitator" and condemning him anew to an "ignominious death"? Is La Mancha not to Don Quixote what Galilee was to Jesus, and is Barcelona not his Jerusalem? When he is being paraded through the streets with the sign "This is Don Quixote de la Mancha," is he not bearing something like "his own *Ecce Homo* on his back"? Unamuno is here following, as if by a natural inclination, the inevitable course of Christian hermeneutics, which consists in reading into all things references to the

life and Passion of Jesus Christ. The text of *Don Quixote* must be read as Pascal read the Old Testament, as a system of figures. For those who can perceive its spiritual significance, this apparently simple text—which has been turned into a new *romancero*, a new life of Saint Ignatius and a veiled collection of spiritual exercises, a new Gospel—becomes invested with several layers of meaning that are not mutually exclusive but are arranged as a spiritual progression: Don Quixote stands for Ignatius, who stands for Jesus, who in turn stands for the divine Love that He bodies forth. Unamuno's text has been superposed upon Cervantes' like a decoding grid upon a coded text, one that knows nothing of the meaning it conveys.

In the words of Unamuno's French translator, Jean Babelon, "This is a most humorless reading of a most humorous book." A kind of equilibrium of hypertextuality may be discernible here. On the one hand, the great serious narratives such as the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* have elicited parodies and travesties: i.e., ironic paraphrases. On the other hand, the great ironic narrative of *Don Quixote* can be seen to elicit as it were of itself—but at several centuries' distance, too—its own antitext, which is a serious paraphrase of it and which consigns it again to the credit of chivalry, a chivalry that is "once more taken seriously" (as Hegel said of Romanticism), or even to the credit of that saga of spiritual chivalry that is the Passion of Christ. This law of equilibrium would thus seem to run as follows: *a serious text calls for an ironic hypertext; an ironic text, for a serious hypertext.* But let us not carry that symmetry further than it will go.

## 65

Unamuno's *Don Quixote* clearly illustrates the problem inherent in a purely semantic transformation: an interpretation that assigns to an event a cause differing from that given by the hypotext necessarily introduces a pragmatic transformation, for the cause of a fact—e.g., the motive of an action—is a fact in itself, even if only of a psychological order, such as the lion's supposed reason for declining to confront Don Quixote.

The substitution of a motive, or *transmotivation*, is one of the major procedures of semantic transformation. Like others that have been previously discussed, it can take three aspects, the third being merely the combination of the first two. The first is positive; it consists of introducing a motive where the hypotext offered, or at least stated, none. This is *motivation* in

its simplest state, and we have seen it operate in amplification: e.g., in *Joseph in Egypt*, the volume in *Joseph and His Brothers* which Thomas Mann said was an answer to the question *why*? (why does Mrs. Potiphar provoke Joseph, and why does Joseph turn her down?).[1] The second aspect is purely negative; it consists in suppressing or eliding an original motivation. This is *demotivation*, such as we have glimpsed in *Hérodias*, where the innocent reader no longer quite understands why Salomé is demanding Iokanaan's head. The third operates by way of a wholesale substitution—i.e., by a double process of demotivation and (re)motivation (by a new motive): *demotivation* + *remotivation* = *transmotivation*. That is what Wilde effected in his *Salomé*, when substituting an emotional motive for the political one of the biblical version. We shall now consider at closer range these three forms of psychological transposition (positive, negative, substitutive). But first I wish to make it clear that hypertextual transmotivation does not operate differently from the process of motivation that characterizes any psychological fiction ("Why *did* the Duchess leave at five?"),[2] and of which the Russian Formalists, who coined the term *motivation*, were legitimately suspicious. The ground for that suspicion is, of course, that in this darkling meadow where all cows are black, any "motive" may be invoked as cause for any kind of behavior. "The Russians," says Borges, "and their disciples have demonstrated, tediously, that nothing is impossible. A person may kill himself because he is so happy, for example, or commit murder as an act of benevolence. Lovers may separate forever as a consequence of their love. And one man can inform on another out of fervor or humility. In the end such complete freedom is tantamount to chaos. But the psychological novel would also be a 'realistic' novel, and have us forget that it is a verbal artifice, for it uses each vain precision (or each languid obscurity) as a new proof of verisimilitude."[3]

The most characteristic example of positive motivation is to my mind Freud's reading of the Oedipus myth. Such a statement, however, is open to two objections. The first is that like Unamuno's reading of *Don Quixote*, Freud's reading is not a transformation but a simple commentary on Oedipus (though we shall shortly see that things are not that simple). The second is that the commentary itself is not really an interpretation; this idea is brilliantly argued by Jean Starobinski in "Hamlet et Freud," his preface to the French translation of Ernest Jones's *Hamlet and Oedipus*.[4] Contrary to Hamlet, Starobinski explains, Oedipus is not an object of interpretation

for Freud, because he is the very principle of Freudian interpretation: "Oedipus, which is dramatized myth in its purest form, is the least touched-up manifestation of the drive. Oedipus, therefore, *has* no unconscious, because he *is* our unconscious: I mean, one of the capital roles assumed by our desire. He has no need to be possessed of his own inner depth, because he is our depth. However mysterious his adventure may be, the meaning of it is plain and without gaps. Nothing is concealed: there is no cause to probe into Oedipus's motives and hidden thoughts. It would be futile to assign a psychology to him: he already is a psychological agency. . . . There is nothing behind Oedipus, because Oedipus is depth itself."

This thesis seems to me to rest upon a surreptitious drift from *Oedipus* (the text of the myth, or Sophocles' tragedy) to Oedipus (the character, who is described throughout in terms not of the ancient hypotext but of the Freudian commentary). But a close reading of some of Freud's texts will show that Freud, far from taking the legendary or tragic story at face value, treats it from the start as a *deformed* version (Starobinski himself speaks of "the least touched-up manifestation") of Oedipus's true story, that of the parricidal-incestuous complex. Thus, in 1909, "The myth of King Oedipus, who killed his father and took his mother to wife, reveals, *with little modification*, the infantile wish"; in 1917, "The legend of Oedipus realizes, *with only a slight softening*, the two extreme wishes that arise from the son's situation—to kill his father and take his mother to wife"; in 1938,

> One may hear it objected . . . that the legend of King Oedipus has in fact no connection with the construction made by analysis: the cases are quite different, since Oedipus did not know that it was his father that he killed and his mother that he married. What is overlooked in this is that a *distortion* of this kind is inevitable if an attempt is made at a *poetic handling* of the material, and that there is no introduction of extraneous material but only a *skilful employment* of the factors presented by the theme. The ignorance of Oedipus is a *legitimate representation* of the unconscious state into which, for adults, the whole experience has fallen; and the coercive power of the oracle, which makes or should make the hero innocent, is a recognition of the inevitability of the fate which has condemned every son to live through the Oedipus complex.[5]

If words have a meaning, this is an interpretation if ever there was one. Though Freud indeed does not interpret "Oedipus" (as Starobinski

shrewdly points out, in the nature of things he could not)—i.e., does not interpret his own version of Oedipus's story, which he deftly claims to have been "provided by the theme"—he does interpret *Oedipus*, the legendary and tragic text, which he reads and presents as a *transformation* of unconscious truth, wherein unconsciousness has become ignorance and psychological fate has been disguised as an oracle. Thus he not only offers an interpretation of, say, the Sophoclean text but interprets it as a censored rewriting, while suggesting yet another rewriting of it; in this uncensored version the sequence of actions, which remains unmotivated in the hypotext, since it is determined from the outside by oracles that are orders, has become determined from the inside by an unconscious motive.

Freud, of course, provides only a suggestion and has not gone so far as to work it out in literary form. For various reasons, Freud did not write his *Oedipus* as Mann was to write his *Faust* or Anouilh his *Antigone*, but his *Oedipus* has ever since been rewritten every single day, for better or for worse, and this fact absolves me of any attempt at a reconstitution.

If Freud's *Oedipus* is only an indication (a potent one, to be sure!), Wagner's *Tristan* is a fully written work. The libretto was completed in 1857, and when set beside its hypotext (Gottfried von Strassburg's poem, written c. 1210 and itself inspired by Thomas the Rhymer's *Tristan*), it contains a superb effect of motivation. In Gottfried's version, Tristan brought to King Mark the king's betrothed Isolde, whose mother had prepared a love philter intended for the future spouses. By mistake, Brangane gave the girl and Tristan that philter to drink, and immediately they fell in love. In Wagner, Tristan and Isolde love each other spontaneously and naturally, prior to any magic drink, but they are held back by their loyalty to Mark from confessing that love to each other. In her despair at having to marry a man who is not the one she loves, Isolde asks Brangane for a death potion. To save her lady's life, Brangane substitutes the love potion for it, and both Tristan and Isolde drink it, thinking to put an end to their torment. As soon as they have drunk it—and because they believe themselves about to die and thus delivered of all restrictions—they confess their love and fall into each other's arms. Here as in Freud's amended *Oedipus*, an internal motive (love) has displaced the supernatural external cause (the oracle, the philter). Motivation functions as the *internalization* of an external cause.[6] It plainly leads to a psychologization that is most characteristic of modern transposition.

# 66

Contrary to motivation, *demotivation* pure and simple (i.e., purely negative) proceeds from a move toward depsychologization which is uncharacteristic of the prevailing tendency of our "modernity"—from Euripides to Anouilh.[1] It is thus practically absent from the corpus of real hypertextuality (as one might speak—alas!—of "real socialism"). Moreover, the circumambient semantic pressure is such that canceling one motive may be enough to suggest another irresistibly (by virtue of the formidable principle *no motive, no action*), without even having to identify it explicitly.

Eugene O'Neill's trilogy *Mourning Becomes Electra* illustrates that tendency in exemplary fashion. Greek tradition had already subjected the legendary theme to a number of variations. In his characteristically "laconic" way, Homer mentions the double murder of Agamemnon by Aegisthus and of Cassandra by Clytemnestra (*Odyssey* 3); Aegisthus, being Thyestes' son, was known to bear some understandable grudge against the lineage of Atreus, and Clytemnestra's motives were twofold: the wish to avenge her daughter Iphigenia, and her jealousy of Cassandra (Homer does not mention a third motive, which might have been her desire to eliminate a husband who stood in the way of her relationship with Aegisthus). Seven years later, Orestes killed Aegisthus, and probably Clytemnestra as well, without any motive being specified. Aeschylus (*Oresteia* 458) was more explicit, but the determining motive was external and once again of divine origin: Orestes acted under Apollo's order, according to the vendetta code (but in contravention of the more ancient law, defended by the Erinyes, which condemned matricide—hence the judicial conflict that had to be solved in the end by the Areopagus). Electra played no part in Orestes' decision, and both showed reluctance and precious little "motivation" (of the inner kind); Orestes finally resolved to act only after Pylades had reminded him of the divine command. Sophocles, however, made Orestes and Electra free agents, moved by an autonomous desire for revenge (*Electra* c. 415). The legal point was thus internalized and psychologized. Euripides (*Electra* 413) opted for the same pattern; he sketched in an effect of "parodic" degradation by having Electra marry a plowman and by inspiring in Clytemnestra feelings of remorse, thereby turning her into a more pitiable victim.[2]

O'Neill thus inherited from Greek tradition a plot that was clearly and completely motivated as concerned the behavior of Aegisthus, Clytemnestra, Orestes, and Electra. This network of motivations he endeavored to lay waste. Only Aegisthus/Brant preserved solid family reasons for wishing the demise of Agamemnon/Ezra. But Ezra had not sacrificed a nonexistent Iphigenia; nor had he taken for mistress the equally absent Cassandra. Clytemnestra/Christine had thus no *specific* reason to dislike her husband—and her affair with Brant occurred as a consequence, not as a cause. In fact, Christine had hated Ezra since their wedding, seemingly without a single stated motive, simply because he was her husband and according to the axiom that a wife needs no specific reason to hate her husband.[3] As for Electra/Lavinia, she had been favorable to her father and hostile to her mother prior to any motivating incident: i.e., before Christine acted against Ezra, and even before any affair was discovered between Christine and Brant (that affair merely added a supplementary motive of daughter-mother hostility and jealousy). Orestes/Orin felt no grief at the death of his father, for whom he had little love; on the other hand, he could not bear Christine's affair with Brant. Thus he acted not to avenge his father but seemingly to eliminate a rival. Moreover, only the latter was killed, and Christine's exit had to come about by way of suicide. Orin himself was to die of grief and remorse for having caused his mother's death, with the loss of his sister's love as a secondary motive.

Does the whole business need further clarification? Disappointed by his wife, Ezra transferred his love to his daughter, who was in love with her father and with her mother's lover as well on the side, and thus doubly jealous of her mother, who in turn quite spontaneously hated her husband, possibly because he had torn her away from her father; as for the son, he was, of course, in love with his mother and his sister. That charming family romance—which O'Neill felt the Greek tragedians had probably fashioned into a slightly toned-down version—is grounded on a pseudo-Freudian theory that O'Neill, without further explanation, calls "the complexes": these complexes provide, in his eyes, "a modern tragic interpretation of classic fate without the benefit of gods— . . . fate springing out of the family."[4] This secularization of tragic fate cannot be called quite novel in its principle (it was already present in Racine) but is of interest in that its mode of production is almost entirely negative: removing a few manifest motives—like removing a screen—is enough to lay bare a network of latent motives.

Demotivation is thus the implement here of a more "profound" motivation, which the elimination of a more "superficial" motivation reveals, or rather *uncovers* (as happens in a chess game when the removal of one piece opens the field for another piece hitherto concealed). Such an "uncovering" motivation is remarkably economical, since it requires only a negative operation. Transmotivation properly speaking is slightly more demanding, since it requires that the original motivation be displaced by a newly invented positive one: e.g., Oscar Wilde's substitution of an emotional reason for the political reasons of Jokanaan's execution. But the difference is a slight one: given the principle of semantic pressure (culture hates a vacuum), dislodging one motive almost always suffices to conjure up another. Not just any other, for the list is in fact limited, and the implicit rule of such moves (the uncovered piece must be more efficient than the displaced one) almost inevitably leads, in our current psychological dispensation, from the supposedly more superficial political plane to the reputedly more profound emotional plane, and not the reverse. The proposition "He thought he was killing his father out of self-interest or pride (a quarrel over the right-of-way at the crossroads); in fact, he killed him out of jealousy" will be found more often than its opposite ("He believed himself to be in love with his mother and jealous of his father; in fact, he was eyeing the throne"). Or again, "She thought she was obeying her mother in asking for Jokanaan's head; in fact, she was acting out of unrequited love" will occur more often than the obverse.[5] It might thus be suggested that on the theme of Salomé, Flaubert and Wilde split the work between them: Flaubert, by canceling (or blurring) Herodias's political motives, unintentionally exposed the emotional motive that his successors were to take advantage of; one of them (Wilde) ascribed it to the daughter, the other (Massenet) to the mother.

Wilde should at least be given credit for choosing. His option can be seen to operate as a remotivation, or counter-motivation, which combined with a demotivation to bring about a complete transmotivation, of which we shall proceed to discuss two or three examples.

## 67

Consider the story of Judith, as told in the biblical Apocrypha. The Assyrian general Holophernes was besieging Bethulia; resolved to save her city, Judith penetrated by a ruse into the Assyrian camp, pretending to wish

to help Holophernes defeat the Jews. Holophernes fell for her beauty and invited her to a feast; taking advantage of his drunkenness, she severed his head and took it back to Bethulia, thus depriving the enemy of their leader, hence of their victory. Now for a "modern" reading: patriotism *my foot*;[1] a male head cut off by a woman, does that not ring a bell? Elementary, my dear Sigmund; think of Salome: why should a woman demand (take) a man's head, etc.

In Friedrich Hebbel's *Judith* (1839), Judith yielded to Holophernes in a moment of weakness; then, to avenge or to redeem herself, she killed him. In Henry Bernstein's *Judith* (1922), Holophernes wanted to seduce Judith, who—let's not make things *too* easy—resisted him; understanding what she had come for, he offered to let her kill him; she was overwhelmed by his gesture and gave herself to him; in the morning she came to her senses and killed him. Heine's principle has been amended—to sever a man's head, a woman may choose between two motives: he must die either because he has disdained her or because he has had her; this leads one to wonder how so many heads can still stand on so many shoulders. Giraudoux, in *Judith* (1931), went one better: Judith fell in love with Holophernes, and not wishing to be cast back into the drabness of everyday life after that acme of love, she cut off his head (such being the preordained outcome, whatever else might happen beforehand) and resolved to join him in death. She was prevented from doing so by the sudden arrival of the Jews, who, much against her will, turned her into the presumptive instrument of their victory: "God reserves the right, one thousand years after the fact, to project saintliness upon sacrilege, and purity upon lechery. It is all a question of lighting" (act 3). "Judith the Whore" was to become "Judith the Saint": as is often the case with Giraudoux, fate (i.e., what is prescribed by the hypotext) finally comes to be enacted, but by means (i.e., through motives) that tradition had not imagined, which the modern hypertext takes it upon itself to disclose.

Consider another case, that of Rodrigo's marriage to Ximena, as reported at the beginning of the fourteenth century by the Chronicle of Castille. Rodrigo killed the count; then the count's daughter Ximena, with no indication of any particular motive, married Rodrigo: such are the naked facts in this "laconic" version. The *Cantar de Rodrigo* (end of the fourteenth century) and the *Romance* of 1550 provided a judicial motive that was apparently consonant with the law of those times: Rodrigo had to marry Ximena to replace the protector of whom he had deprived her by murdering

her father. That motivation probably soon became unacceptable, and the *Jimenes de Ayllón* (date unknown) and Juan de Mariana's *Historia general de España* (1592) imagined that Ximena married Rodrigo out of love—once again a typical substitution of an emotional motive for a judicial or political one. But that substitution soon raised a new problem, given the new rules of decorum: may a daughter love her father's murderer? In the *Romancero General* (1600), it was the king who decided to wed the youths to each other; but this led from one problem to another—from a shocking passion to a loveless marriage. Guillen de Castro (*Las Mocedades del Cid*, 1618) finally hit upon the proper solution, which Corneille was to retain in *Le Cid*: Ximena and Rodrigo loved each other, but the murder of the count stood in the way of Ximena's love; the royal decision lifted that obstacle, to everyone's satisfaction.[2] That compromise seems somewhat naive today; I am waiting for the "modern" version whose motive, of course, would be that Rodrigo killed the count *because* he loved Ximena, and that Ximena loved Rodrigo *because* he killed her father.

Though less caricatural, to be sure, Anouilh's *Antigone* (1944) is a typical example of modern transposition. It is typical, among other things, because Anouilh benefited from the heritage of a whole line of dramatic productions from before World War II, in which Giraudoux is the dominant figure. Anouilh's play trivializes and vulgarizes Giraudoux's manner to some extent: his Creon is much indebted to the Aegisthus of *Electre* (which we shall encounter again), and even his Antigone, "without whom they would all have had such peace and quiet," is in many respects a little sister of Electra, that "troublemaker" ("THE PRESIDENT: Oh my God! Here comes Electra. There goes our peace and quiet").

It is also typical by its heavy-handed use of anachronisms: the characters are in modern dress; Saturday night dancing is mentioned, as well as antique dealers, cigarettes, fast cars; and all that Creon's guards talk about is medals, citations, promotions, and doubled monthly wages. Nevertheless, this *Antigone* should not be seen as a diegetic transposition to the modern age; the historical status of the action and its characters has been preserved as in a travesty, and that is what gives its modernistic details their significance and flavor.

The play is typical again in the way it squeezes for pathos a situation that Sophocles had treated with his wonted restraint. Anouilh is not chary of tear-jerking effects. Pathos is the main purpose of the introductory

scenes, with the nanny and Haemon, that have been added to Sophocles. Antigone is seen asking her nanny to take good care of her little dog if she should come to harm; the nurse does not get the point, but the audience does and is moved to pity. Then Antigone informs Haemon that she can never be his wife; Haemon does not understand, but we do, and we shed a tear for him. Having been arrested and condemned to death, Antigone remains alone with a rude and self-absorbed guard who wearies her with his prosaic prattle, and this contrast and this indifference add to the pathos of the situation.

Finally, the play—standing as it does at the intersection of Giraudoux's lineage and Pirandello's heritage—is typical in its skillful displacement of the Chorus by a "Prologue," who introduces the characters on-stage before they assume their parts, returns to comment upon the action once it has begun ("Now the spring is taut, . . . tragedy is a clean thing, a reassuring thing, we may all rest easy"), and appears one last time to proffer a conclusion as the guards take up their card game again: "So there you are. Without little Antigone, they would all have had their peace and quiet."

But all these cutesy, ironic-pathetic trimmings conceal a process of psychological transmotivation that may not be as directly perceptible to the audience but is every bit as modernistic and, predictably enough, bears on the pair of antagonistic characters. The reasons given by Antigone to bury her reprobate brother are no longer chiefly of a religious nature (she remains silent on that issue); nor are they emotional (symptomatically, Sophocles' most famous line has been canceled: "I was born to share love . . ."). Anouilh, on the contrary, stresses Antigone's self-centeredness. For whom do you act like this? Creon asks her: "For no one, for myself." She is driven by a thirst for the absolute, by pure revolt, by the denial of hope and of common happiness ("You all make me sick with your talk of happiness")—in short, by her rejection of life. Her role consists in "saying no and dying." Creon acknowledges this much in the following terms, after having long endeavored to save her from herself: "It was in Antigone's nature to be dead. . . . Polynices was only a pretext. When she had to renounce it, she at once found another one. What mattered to her was to refuse and to die." Creon himself promulgates his edict without believing in the motives he adduces to justify it: he knows that Eteocles was no better than Polynices, and he does not even bother to identify either of the corpses before assigning one to the vultures and the other to a glorious funeral. The point is that order must be preserved; hence a law must be enforced,

no matter what law, as a purely arbitrary symbol and manifestation of the authority of the state. Once Antigone has been caught in the act, Creon's sole concern is to save her by hushing up the scandal, until Antigone herself ruins his stratagem: the fact is that he considers her behavior not at all as criminal but as setting a dangerous example. In Max Weber's terms, his morality rests not upon intentions but upon responsibility. On the other hand, Anouilh does away both with the character of Tiresias and with the final conversion in Sophocles, whereby Creon, convinced by the diviner and apprehensive of the wrath of the gods, renounces his conception of justice and attempts to save Antigone from her martyrdom, thus admitting his mistake—his tragic error. Here, Creon only attempts to save his son, and after the triple death of Antigone, Haemon, and Eurydice, his own wife, he expresses no remorse; he sticks to his statesman's job, with no illusions as to its moral worth but with no hesitation as to its practical necessity: "Someone has to be there to say yes, to steer the boat. . . . They say it's a dirty job, but if one does not do it, who will?"

The "eternal" conflict between Antigone and Creon is thus translated here into modern terms by a double and symmetrical transmotivation: we are faced with the conflict between individual rebellion and reasons of state, or, as is suggested by Creon himself, between the poetry of individualism and the prose of society: "You must find me quite prosaic." Used in this context, those terms unintentionally carry a Hegelian connotation ("prose," for Hegel, is predominantly the state)—a connotation that I purposefully underscore: it is well known that for Hegel, Greek tragedy, of which *Antigone* stands as the eidetic example, is to be defined by the confrontation of two morally equal principles. But such an equality is in no way affirmed by Sophocles' tragedy, wherein Creon ends up defeated and disavowed by the gods, even though his cause was at first identified with the equally sacred right of the city. The conflict modernized by Anouilh is in one sense a more balanced one and thus more consonant with Hegel's interpretation—itself a modernizing one already. There may be no sublimity to this equilibrium (Creon can be said to be a cynical politician, and Antigone an infantile nihilist), but it does exist: both protagonists are right, or, if you will, both are wrong in their respective positions as defined by their particular systems of *values*. The word had to be brought in sooner or later, for the whole operation indeed bears on the values at issue, with Antigone being perhaps slightly degraded and Creon slightly upgraded in relation to the Sophoclean text. What remains to be done, then, after the forthcoming interlude, is to

attend to an operation which is characteristic of serious transformation, which is perhaps its most significant expression, and toward which all others often converge: *transvalorization.*

## 68

Ulysses has returned to Ithaca. Telemachus has just turned twenty; the time has come to find him a wife. Quite naturally, Ulysses is thinking of Nausicaa, whose merits are many and who might not unreasonably be expected to find another Ulysses—but one of her own age—attractive. Menelaus offers to introduce the youngsters by inviting them both to Sparta. Telemachus, the first to arrive, spends several days in the company of Helen, whose beauty is all the more moving for being "slightly bruised." As a matter of course, he falls in love with her and responds to Nausicaa's youthful grace with an absentminded or even churlish welcome. Helen, who grasps the situation instantly, attempts in vain to bring the young man to his senses; she is, after all, only an aging woman, "surfeited with adventures" and definitively loyal to her deserving husband; this adolescent passion is leading nowhere. Faced with Telemachus's obstinacy, she pretends to give in and to organize an elopement. Once the ship is on the high seas, the fugitive removes her veil, and Telemachus recognizes Nausicaa, whom Helen had ordered to take her place. Furious at first, then moved by the young woman's tears, he ends up consenting to this forced happiness.

Such is the story of Telemachus's marriage as told by Jules Lemaitre in one of his tales written "in the margins of old books."[1] His plot is typical of a body of work that stands halfway between the coarse bourgeois irreverence of Meilhac and Halévy and the sophisticated humor of Giraudoux. Lemaitre's "margins" are not the margins so much as the blanks in the epic, where the poet's silence (whether due to oversight or to lack of interest) leaves room for some addition or variant. One trick consists in foregrounding a secondary character: thus Thersites' vain attempts at harming the heroes he envies; or Acamas, so blind drunk within the Trojan horse that the others have to strangle him to silence his ruckus; or the complicated love match between Euphorion, Ulysses' sailor, and a little siren whom Thetis, moved to pity, changes into a woman; or again "Anna soror," echoing Dido's passion for Aeneas with the faithful Achates.[2] Those promotions of sidekicks, which subject the epic diegesis to a slanted or

inverted focalization, foreshadow the strategy of Giraudoux's *Elpénor*. But had not Virgil already grafted his own epic in similar fashion (minus the humor) onto a third-rank actor of the *Iliad*? As for Telemachus, from the *Odyssey* onward he was to embody that second generation of heroes whose adventures, detached from the epic saga, would provide the material for an entirely different strand of inspiration, mostly of a tragic nature. (Only Pyrrhus, successively a victor over Troy and a tragic hero, rides astride the two series.) Telemachus's was a generation of "pale shadows," as the narrator of John Barth's *Anonymiad* calls them.[3] They could not repeat the feats of their fathers and were doomed to wistfully administering their heritage. The temptation at once arose to bind together those cursed or stunted offspring of the epic by new ties that would loop the loop: to couple Hermione with Pyrrhus, Hermione with Orestes, Electra with Pylades—with the foregone consequences that we know. Telemachus's heredity was of a more genial nature and allowed for Fénelon's didactic extrapolation. Marrying him off to Nausicaa was an idea for a typically romantic episode, which was to cap the *Odyssey* with the *finale giocoso* that it so conspicuously lacks.[4]

Most characteristic of Lemaitre's modernizing approach to the fable, however, is his endeavor to invest his heroes, and above all—and quite symptomatically—his heroines, with a psychological depth, or density, that had been of no concern to the epic as a genre. For Homer and Virgil, Achilles was violent, Hector was generous, Ulysses was cunning, Aeneas was pious—and that was that: "Achilles is what he is, and from the epic viewpoint, this is sufficient."[5] For a psychologizing interpretation, such a unidimensional creature is inadequate. "Psychology" necessarily entails "complexity"—such is the fundamental axiom of vulgar psychologism, the falsest among received ideas, the most widely received among false ideas: "*psychology: always complex.*"[6] The "modern" reconstruction of an epic figure will thus consist of complexifying a character that the epic had constructed all of a piece, by "disclosing" beneath each of them (I am improvising at random) an ingenuous Ulysses, a cruel Hector, a sentimental Achilles. In actual fact, and by virtue of a "natural" ideological bent, the women are here the favorite targets of such a treatment; their "feminine" ambiguity serves as a counterpoint to the simplicity of the heroes (accepted as typically virile): Penelope's faithfulness was not beyond suspicion, or not without tempations overcome; Dido, miraculously saved from the stake, might well find timely solace with Iarbas; Andromache had her own share

of coquettishness and allowed herself, in Trojan high society, to indulge in Helen's lessons in elegance.[7]

But Helen has evidently been the privileged object of fascination and of attempts at romantic reinterpretation: it was irresistible to invest the daughter of Zeus and Leda, the most beautiful woman in the world, the eternal symbol of feminine fickleness, with a complementary (and compensatory) discreet virtue, an unacknowledged honesty. Ever since classical times, the apology for and even eulogy of Helen has been a traditional theme of ornamental eloquence, which prized paradoxical arguments: Gorgias and later Isocrates successfully tried their hand at it. But the paradox remained as it were external to the character of Helen: the point of the demonstration was that the ills caused by Helen's unfaithfulness had been more than compensated for by Greece's and mankind's indebtedness to the revelation of her beauty. The romantic paradox is entirely psychological in nature; in the terms of a daring actantial oxymoron of Ronsard's, it could be named the *complex of Helen-as-Penelope.*[8] Already in Offenbach, before Helen even met Paris (but knowing that Venus had promised him the love of the most beautiful woman in the world, which left the issue in little doubt), she was blaming the "involuntary indiscretions of her youth" on the decrees of Fate—i.e., the spiteful gods: "Do you know, great augur, what I should have wished to be? I should have wished to be a peaceful housewife, married to a kind tradesman from Mitylene. Instead of which, see what destiny is mine." Lemaitre's Helen, within the walls of Troy, is "simple, reserved, a little timorous" and responds to the adventure that has been imposed on her by the gods with all the disapproval that could be expected from a young woman "brought up with Spartan sternness." She admires and wholeheartedly envies Andromache, that other symbol of conjugal virtue. Hector has understood her well enough: she was made "to live peaceably with a husband and children. . . . *Visibly, her destiny is at variance with her character*" (the surest, most spectacular, and most economical form of "complexity" being evidently contradiction). Once that destiny has taken its course and has been exorcised, as it were, we find Helen back again in Sparta, after the war, in her true vocation as a faithful wife and one who has sufficiently learned from experience to take a serene view of her past and remain in control of her present: "There was no doubt something flattering in all this, but I got over pride a long time ago. I am sated with adventures. My only wish is to lead a peaceful and steady life with my Menelaus, to whom I owe a lifetime's compensation. Truly, enough has

been said about me."[9] Telemachus's passion, she knows, is addressed not to herself but to that "evil charm" that her legend exudes in spite of her. So her final gesture will consist in redirecting that misdirected passion toward its natural object—not without that hint of a regret which inevitably comes with such gestures: just as the fickle Helen had been virtuous *deep down*, so the virtuous Helen is now vaguely experiencing, somewhere inside herself and predictably enough, the cost exacted by virtue. Her pious ruse is also a discreet sacrifice.

The Homeric text, in its own way, authorizes and anticipates those interpretations by juxtaposing the fateful adventuress of the *Iliad* with the sensible queen of Sparta in the *Odyssey*—without any comment on the poet's part, but not without a retrospective explanation from the concerned party herself, who is already foisting upon Aphrodite the folly that once made her "forsake [her] daughter, [her] bridal chamber, and a husband who had all one could wish for in the way of brains or good looks" (book 4).[10] But the goddess of love here should not be mistaken for the hypostatized symbol of a desire or a passion; Helen was in herself as virtuous as she was beautiful, and it was Aphrodite who threw her into Paris's arms as a reward for the famed judgment. For Homer, there is thus no ambiguity in the character but only a divine machination for which the victim bears as little responsibility as does Oedipus for the oracle's snare. Let it also be remembered that even in the *Iliad*, Helen protests her fate each time she appears; regrets having deserted "her house, her parents, her beloved daughter, and her sweet companions"; curses Paris for not having been felled by Menelaus, "that sturdy hero"; calls herself "a perverse bitch" who should have been exposed to the chill winds or thrown into the sea at birth to prevent her from unleashing so many evils—and she does not fail, in her fury, to recall that these afflictions were "brought to pass" by the gods themselves. There is no ambiguity there, and no reversal of any kind; for Homer, Helen is simply the victim of a divine whim.

A later tradition, which seems to date back to Stesichorus's *Palinode* (sixth century B.C.), delivered her from that curse by substituting a ghostly double to stay with Paris while the real Helen, transported to Pharos or to Egypt with Proteus, chastely awaited her husband's return. That return, eight years after the fall of Troy, and the ensuing reunion, as well as the stratagem allowing the two reconciled spouses to escape King Theoclymenos, was staged by Euripides in a most bizarre *Helen* (412 B.C.), which would in

turn provide Hoffmannsthal with the libretto of an opera in two acts for Richard Strauss, *Helen of Egypt* (1926). The composer himself saw it as belonging in the same category with *La Belle Hélène* (of which it was a kind of continuation), resolved as he was at the time to become "the Offenbach" of the twentieth century" (a most revealing statement in many respects). His ambition was less uncommon than might be supposed, as may perhaps be seen with Claudel's *Protée*, the satirical drama he invented to accompany his translation of the *Oresteia*, which was to inspire Giono to write his *Naissance de l'Odyssée*. Menelaus and Helen, having returned from Troy, visit Proteus, who has settled in Naxos, where the maenad-nymph Brindosier, under the guise of the youthful Helen, takes the other one's place with Menelaus and goes off with him to visit Bacchus in Burgundy or the Médoc, while the real Helen ascends to the heavens together with the isle where she has chosen to dwell.[11] Helen in Naxos: a contamination that already carries a Straussian overtone.

Splitting a person in two is only an extreme form of ambiguity, after all. Ovid inaugurated a more "modern" version of it in his exchange of letters between Helen and Paris (*Heroides* 16–17), which foreshadows on a smaller scale the slow and relentless epistolary conquests so dear to Pierre Choderlos de Laclos and Stendhal. Upon Menelaus's departure for Crete, Paris conveys to Helen an ardent—and bold—letter. Her response is a masterpiece of "psychological evolution," gradual but swift. She starts off with a tone of self-righteous outrage at the slighting of her virtue and the desecration of her hospitality, clears herself of all insinuations bearing on her past infidelities, and disdainfully repels all promised rewards, reminding him of her noble rank. Besides—here is the turning point—if she were to give in, which Zeus forbid, it would be to Paris himself and not to his insulting promises, for she willingly acknowledges his beauty and seductiveness. Had she met him before she met Menelaus (perish the very thought!), she would no doubt have chosen him for a husband, but alas, it is now and forever too late. Venus's promise must indeed be considered, but frankly I find it hard to believe that tale about an apple and a judgment; forgive my incredulity, but the whole thing sounds, as it were, too good to be true. So I would be for you the supreme reward? "I should have to be made of iron if I did not love such a heart," but such misbehavior gives me pause. "Happy those whom habit sustains. Ignorant of things as I am myself, I suspect the road to sin to be an arduous one." Arduous indeed! True enough, Menelaus seems to goad me into it, by his very blindness and

carelessness. How comical he was with his "Take good care of our guest"! "So I shall," answered I, barely containing my laughter. But beware! "Long is the arm of kings," and do not flatter yourself that I shall give in to you: "By violence only could I be torn away from my rusticity" (the humiliating word used by Paris to designate her virtue, which she has been irritatedly harping upon). But it would be sweet some day to discover the wonders of Troy. I shall stop here; further exchanges can be entrusted to my servants. See you soon, signed: Helen. (In thus abridging an epistle of 135 elegiac couplets, I am, of course, exaggerating its effect. But the summary is hardly a distortion, however high-handed.)

The most elegant version of that ticklish moment of the "elopement" was perhaps provided by Offenbach—I mean, of course, Meilhac and Halévy. Their tongue-in-cheek formula exculpates the heroine without relieving her of her offense. Helen is attracted by Paris's charm ("A handsome shepherd is a handsome sight indeed"). Having been informed of Venus's decision, she engages in the following dialogue:

> "Is it true that, to thank that shepherd, Venus should have promised him the love of the world's most beautiful woman?"
>
> "That seems to be the official truth."
>
> "But, the world's most beautiful woman . . ."
>
> "Assuredly, your Majesty, you are she."
>
> "Ah! hush, hush! for if that were to be the case . . ."

But she is determined to remain faithful to Menelaus, and thus to resist "fate" as much as is in her power. Paris, on the other hand, knows that to conquer, he can rely only on force, love, or ruse. Force, however, is beneath his dignity, and love is beneath that of his partner, so only ruse is left. The first ruse, then, is the most symptomatic in Freudian terms: convinced though she is of being the world's most beautiful woman, Helen is wary of a comparison with Venus herself; moreover, believing it all to be a dream, she agrees to undress in front of Paris to let him conduct his examination. The second ruse is almost superfluous: Menelaus returns home too early; Paris is driven away; Venus is irritated and persecutes the Greek husbands; they press Menelaus to consult Venus's augur, whose price is that Helen should travel to Cythera and that one hundred white heifers should be slain on Venus's altar; Helen embarks with the augur, who turns out to be none other than Paris in disguise. What we have here is an artfully deceptive and

pseudomoralistic accumulation of extenuating circumstances, from which the rakish Victorian audience could not fail to draw surreptitious pleasures (the more arduous the challenge, the more exquisite the fun), and by which fate—true to the eternal tragic myth (and to the forthcoming playfulness of Giraudoux)—came to pass in unexpected ways, and by the very means engaged to escape it.

In Giraudoux, however, Helen's ambiguity is subtler. An instrument and "hostage" of fate who is only half human, since she was fathered by a bird that was also a god, she is not beset by contradictory feelings; she simply has no feelings; she only takes pleasure in rubbing men against her "like big soap bars." She is passively subjected to her desires as to a magnetic flux: she does not love Paris; she is "magnetized" by him, and she inhabits this love like "a star in his constellation."[12] She gravitates and flickers there, her way of "breathing and embracing." Her relationship to humanity is of a symbolic order: she is not a woman but a "star," a myth incarnate. A sweet-natured one at that: not being bound by anything to anyone, she willingly lends herself to Hector's clumsy white lies (to the effect that Paris had not even come near her), which she already knows will be useless, and pretends to believe that this stratagem will make her virtue "as proverbial as her frailty might have been." *That* Helen cannot be imagined returning to Sparta, still beautiful, still faithful and respected; much rather, leaping to the opposite extreme, she has to be seen "aged, flabby, toothless, sucking on some candy while crouching in her kitchen." The reference to Ronsard is evident ("Vous serez au foyer une vieille accroupie" {You will be an old woman crouching by the hearth}). She is merely, for now, following his famous sonnet's concluding piece of advice {"Gather today the roses of life"}.[13] This Helen is no Penelope, despite her momentary (and hopeless) alliance with Andromache; she is without any "complex"—though she is anything but simpleminded, and prodded toward immorality by the certainty of that severest of punishments lying in wait for her: the forced virtue of ugliness and decrepitude. Her very greatness resides in her giddy awareness of the brutal shift to come: *everything today, tomorrow nothing.*

The last variation on the theme of the twofold Helen, John Barth's *Menelaiad* is by far the trickiest and most mind-boggling, at least in its form.[14] As is perhaps indicated by its title, Menelaus is here the focus of the narrative, and to a large extent its narrator too. More precisely, in this Russian

doll of a narrative, which carries to extremes the system of embedded stories inaugurated in the *Odyssey*, a primary, extradiegetic narrator tells us readers—and primary, extradiegetic narratees—how Menelaus is telling a second anonymous narratee how he told Telemachus and Pisistratos (during their visit to Sparta, already recounted in *Odyssey* 4) how he had told Helen, on the deck of the ship that was bringing them back from Pharos, how he had told Proteus (who had been mastered at last) how he had just been telling the naiad Idothea (whom he had met on the beach) how he had told Helen (whom he had torn away from Deiphobus on the night of the sacking of Troy)—but told "in the third person" this time, "as if I were not Menelaus and Helen not Helen"—how he had married her a long time since, how Paris had eloped with her while he, Menelaus, had gone to consult the oracle at Delphi, then the ten years of war, the Odyssean horse, the slaughter, the reunion, the attempted punishment warded off by Helen's beauty ("My sword went down. I closed my eyes, not to see that fountain of beauty; clutched at it, not to let her flee. 'You've lost weight, Menelaus,' she said"), the forgiveness, the seven years of forced continence, and finally the present moment of the innermost narrative closing up with its final quotation marks succeeded by five more pairs of the same—are you still with me? Unless I am much mistaken, these Russian dolls might be diagrammed as follows: Narrator 1 (Menelaus (Menelaus (Menelaus (Menelaus (Menelaus—Helen of Troy) Eidothea) Proteus) Helen of Sparta and of Pharos) Telemachus) Narratee 2) Narratee 1, each narrative necessarily coming after the narrative it encompasses (narrates). After the sacking of Troy, Menelaus tells "Helen" the bulk of their adventure down to that point; then narrates the narrative to Eidothea; then tells Proteus about the narrative to Eidothea, etc. That metadiegetic embedding is frequently broken into by the narratees, whose interruptions are deliberately introduced as metalepses: Idothea is allowed to "interrupt" the dialogue between Menelaus and Helen (i.e., Menelaus's narrative of it), and so forth—as if, in book 9 of the *Odyssey*, Alcinous, listening to Ulysses' speech, were to interrupt Polyphemus, the protagonist of that narrative. In other words, Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and Diderot's *Jacques le Fataliste* were there before and have left their mark.

At the core of this formidable narrative machinery, a question arises—a basic question: Why? (Why what?—Why did Helen marry Menelaus rather than another?). The question elicits an unexpected answer: " ' " ' " ' "Love!" ' " ' " ' ". Then another question: but wait, but wait, why did Helen, not long

ago, follow Paris to Troy? And less unexpectedly, that other answer (harking back to Stesichorus's second version): "Your wife was never in Troy. Out of love for you I left when you left, but before Paris could up-end me, Hermes whisked me on Father's orders to Egyptian Proteus and made a Helen out of clouds to take my place. All these years I've languished in Pharos, chaste and comfy, waiting for you. . . . Here I am. I love you." And back she goes to Sparta, where she "took up her knitting with never a droppèd stitch"—could Penelope herself have topped that?

That ultimate version dispels, at the same time as it is raising it, the central question that is coextensive with the very definition of the character: how could the world's most beautiful woman have been "virtuous"—i.e., impervious to love and meekly faithful to the spouse that had been assigned to her by some reason of state? The answer, as is often the case, is that the question was badly phrased; Helen was not virtuous but simply in love—with her husband. A most telling instance of transmotivation, this, sufficient unto itself in its elusive and provocative paradox.

## 69

By *transvaluation* I do not mean—at any rate, I do not necessarily and immediately mean—Nietzschean "transvaluation," the complete reversal of a system of values (as might be the case with an *Antigone* that unambiguously sides with Creon—but things have not come to that yet); rather I have in mind, more generally and thus less drastically, any operation of an axiological nature bearing on the value that is implicitly or explicitly assigned to an action or group of actions: namely, the sequence of actions, attitudes, and feelings that constitutes a "character." Just as transmotivation, in the broad sense of the word, can be analyzed in terms of motivation, demotivation, transmotivation, so axiological transformation can be broken down into a positive term (revaluation), a negative term (devaluation), and the complex notion of transvaluation in the strong sense of the term.

The revaluation of a character consists in investing him or her—by way of pragmatic or psychological transformation—with a more significant and/or more "attractive" role in the value system of the hypertext than was the case in the hypotext. Thus La Motte's pragmatic improvements of Achilles' fight with Hector were intended to give added value to both

heroes, and Unamuno's transmotivations and interpretations tended to raise Don Quixote above his surroundings and his own creator. In these two instances, the process of revaluation was brought to bear on central characters to whom the hypotext had already assigned a capital role, but one judged to be inadequately endowed with merit: Homer had not made Achilles and Hector sufficiently valiant; Cervantes had failed to realize Don Quixote's greatness. Thus, in these instances, revaluation consists not in increasing the importance of the hero but in improving his axiological status through a nobler behavior, nobler motives, or nobler symbolic connotations. We shall encounter that process again; the exemplary figures of Faust and Don Juan were affected by it in most typical fashion.

But revaluation can also bear, more discreetly, on a secondary figure to whose benefit the value scale of the hypotext may be altered. A more balanced axiological pattern can thus be gained, as in Sophocles' *Antigone* revised by Anouilh. In Euripides' *Alcestis* (438 B.C.), for example, Admetus allows his spouse to sacrifice herself for him; he begins to feel shame only after the sacrifice and prevails upon Heracles to resurrect Alcestis. Such outrageous behavior could hardly please the audience; it cast an unwelcome shadow even on the happy outcome. In his libretto for Gluck's opera (1767), Ranieri da Calzabigi imagined a more satisfactory ending: Admetus refuses Alcestis's sacrifice and attempts to precede her on the way to the nether regions. After vying with each other in generosity, they are both saved by Apollo's intervention, each having fully deserved the other's salvation. (Vittorio Alfieri, in a weaker version—*Alceste II* (1798)—was content with exonerating Admetus by imagining that Alcestis might sacrifice herself without his knowledge.)

Giraudoux's *Electre* (1937) provides a clear case of secondary revaluation (I shall use the phrase to designate any promotion of a secondary character), and one that seems to me to define the essence of the process: namely, the rehabilitation of Aegisthus, a character hitherto very much deprecated, or ignored. In this play he acts as the "regent" after Agamemnon's death (being Agamemnon's cousin) and is in charge of public affairs at Argos at a moment when the city is threatened by a Corinthian invasion. He wishes to marry Clytemnestra in order to become king officially and save the city. That promotion, evidently suggested by Sophocles' Creon, turns him into one of the first modern examples of the statesman as a man little concerned with principles but devoted to the cause: hence, as I said, Anouilh's Créon and Sartre's Hoederer in *Les Mains sales*. On the other hand, he reveals himself

little by little to be in love with Electra. Suspense in the play is entirely bound up with the debate between these two characters, and between the two causes they embody: justice and the *raison d'état.* Electra will not listen to Aegisthus's motives, whereas he fully understands hers and ends up promising her that he will expiate—i.e., allow himself to be killed—once Argos is saved; for the present, "there are truths that can kill a people." The outcome is all too familiar. At the end of the second and last act the Beggar is on stage, narrating the murders of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, which are taking place offstage. In spite of the audience's impatience, he makes a point of waiting till the deed has begun before he proceeds to describe it. The first cries are heard in the wings: "So here comes the end . . ." And the narrative begins, with the minimal delay required by any narration that is "retrospective," told in the past tense: Orestes' arrival, Clytemnestra's death, the resistance and death of Aegisthus—who falls, adds the Beggar, "crying a name that I shall not repeat." At that moment, Aegisthus's last cry reaches us: "Electra!" And the Beggar's comment: "*I have spoken too fast. He is catching up with me.*"

His utterance is, evidently, contradictory: when speaking "too fast," you cannot be overtaken; you increase your advance or you catch up with the person ahead of you. That is indeed what has been happening here, since the narrative, which started slightly later than the action, has come to coincide with it at the end. Having spoken too fast, the narrator has made up his delay and overtaken his protagonist. Logically, he should say: "*I have spoken too fast. I'm catching up with him.*"

But his slip of the tongue, no less evidently, is not without cause: the Beggar can narrate here an action taking place elsewhere only because he is known to be something of a divine, perhaps a god, but at any rate a spokesman for fate: he knew of that action long before it took place, which is why he had to give it a head start to begin with. His retrospective narration is thus truly a prospective one, a prediction artificially spoken in the past through sheer respect for protocol: on the starting line, he was not behind the event but ahead of it; accordingly, the faithful account of the episode should have run: "*I have spoken too slowly. He is catching up with me.*" The two comments have telescoped into each other, forming a kind of portmanteau statement that has condensed the manifest level (narration after the fact) and the latent level (prophetic foreknowledge).

What is here emblematically formulated is a situation Giraudoux delights in, the paradoxical situation of (almost) any modern reader or spectator of

(almost) any ancient story: we have *advance* knowledge of a *past* story; our cultural code prescribes the discovery after the fact of an event that was once inevitable only because it happens to be known today, and that has been subjected to no other fate than its own inability to escape what we now say and claim to be able to understand about it.[1] A knowledge that impels the occurrence of its object—such is the name of this game, and as chance will have it, such is also the definition of the tragic.

The play is indeed a tragedy, in the strongest sense of the term, and no doubt for the first time in the history of that theme. Giraudoux's drama is the first to set against each other two characters whose rights, in true Hegelian fashion, are equal: each one defends a just and capital cause, and the issue of the confrontation is no longer the avenging by his children of a father who was once bumped off, not without cause, but truly the fate of an entire city. In the series of works called *Electra* preceding Giraudoux's, the feeling sometimes prevails that the author had trouble getting the audience interested in such a shabby vendetta: in Aeschylus, the true religious-judicial debate is brought out into the open only in the *Eumenides*; Sophocles, Euripides, O'Neill endeavored to flesh out the psychological conflict between the two women. If truth be told, however, that quarrel is of concern to no one but them. Giraudoux is the only one, to my knowledge, to have succeeded in rising above the family backwaters and investing Electra's gesture with a broader significance. Such a promotion of the action and of the theme overshadows everything else in his play, including the confrontation between the two women (developed at length, but in terms that add nothing to O'Neill's interpretation, and hardly anything to the action), and including also the future fate of Orestes. But consider that such an amplification is made possible only by the revaluation of Aegisthus; from the mere stooge that he once was, he is raised here to the high dignity of a tragic figure, not far remote from the Eteocles of *Seven against Thebes.*

Sartre's *Les Mouches* (1943) supplies an entirely different kind of revaluation on the same theme. For the first time since Aeschylus, Electra fades out of the picture after having entrusted her brother with the task of revenge. Orestes is once again the hero; his true antagonist, however, is no longer Aegisthus, or even Clytemnestra, but Jupiter himself. He is present onstage (incognito at first), and as the overseer of human and divine order and of men's submissiveness to their masters, he intends to keep Argos steeped in the fear of the dead and in guilt. Men are free and do not know it. Orestes

guesses the truth and performs his murderous act to serve as an example, as a symbol of human freedom. In this philosophical fable, Orestes is of course the object of the revaluation, at the expense of all the others; the gods and kings are oppressors, and men are unaware of their own power—and their own value.

I am reverting to Giraudoux again for one last case of secondary revaluation —that of Alcmena in *Amphitryon 38* (1929). The subject (Heracles' conception), borrowed from mythology and its epic offshoots (Homer, Hesiod), dates back to Greek tragedy, for we know that Aeschylus and Euripides each wrote an *Alcmena* that certainly made use of it, and Sophocles an *Amphitryon* that may have done so too.[2] We know nothing of these tragic, or at least serious, versions, but one scholar, Franz Stoessl, has conjectured that Euripides' version may have gone along the following lines:

> Amphitryon, who has not come near Alcmena, finds her pregnant; he believes her to be guilty, and the more insistently she maintains that he had visited her—ignorant as she is of the fact that it was Zeus disguised as Amphitryon—the more indignant he becomes at her unfaithfulness and her shameless lie; he decides to punish her; as he is about to kill her, she seeks refuge upon the altar. That sacred asylum will not suffice to save her: the stake is being readied for her execution. At that moment of extreme peril, Zeus miraculously appears, a true *deus ex machina*; he reveals what has taken place, announces Heracles' birth, and reconciles Amphitryon with his fate and his spouse.[3]

This conjecture may give us a synthetic idea of the early status of *Amphitryon* as a tragedy. It is not known whether Plautus was the first to come up with a comic version of it (or rather, in his own words, a *tragicomic* version), or whether he drew inspiration from one or two Greek comedies. But the comic stems principally from the mind-boggling quid pro quos triggered by the double metamorphosis: Sosia's identity is contested by a Mercury who not only looks like him but also knows his most secret deeds; Sosia tells his master how he was beaten and driven out by another self; Alcmena proves to Amphitryon, returning from the war, that he has just left her, etc. Rotrou (*Les Sosies*, 1636) and Molière (*Amphitryon*, 1668) broadly follow Plautus's dramatic formula, while modifying some of its particulars. Rotrou develops the baroque potential of the dual identities and the final paradox of glorious cuckoldry. Molière spares Amphitryon

that dubious triumph; he extends the part of Sosia, whose relationship with his wife Cleanthis parallels, in a burlesque mode, the Amphitryon-Alcmena relationship; and his Jupiter's precious banter on the roles of the husband and the lover foreshadows for the first time the effects later found in Giraudoux.

Heinrich von Kleist's *Amphitryon*, subtitled "A Comedy after Molière" (1807), is characterized by a more serious and more dramatic inflection (leading back, to a certain extent, to the tragic phase of the subject), and by a revaluation of the figure of Alcmena, who is constantly onstage and plays a more active part. During the final scene—grander in tone than was the case with his predecessors—Alcmena is called upon to identify the true Amphitryon before the assembled Theban people, and she designates—Jupiter. Goethe sees in this the sign of some "confusion of feelings," or perhaps a quest for a quasi-divine heroism that might transcend her humanity.

Nothing could be more remote from Giraudoux's heroine, who by contrast embodies conjugal love and thus an attachment to earthly values that nothing or no one could ever dent or disturb. That revaluation of conjugality was obviously implicit in the legend, wherein Zeus assumed the shape of Amphitryon because nothing could have served him better to seduce the man's wife, but it seems that Giraudoux is the first to promote this theme and to place it unequivocally at the core of his play. In the process, he upsets the dramatic pattern inherited from Plautus by completely doing away with the effects of the Mercury-Sosia duplication and by multiplying the scenes between Alcmena and Amphitryon on the one hand, and between Alcmena and Jupiter on the other, thus turning Alcmena into the central character in the play. As Jupiter acknowledges in his final lines, "Alcmena and more Alcmena! There's nothing but Alcmena today!"[4]

But this revaluation does not bear only on marital feelings, or rather, those stand metonymically for a broader axiological disposition, one that is typical of Giraudoux: the disposition which—counter to all divine or heroic values—opts for a humble, homely, day-to-day humanity, unconcerned with transcendence. Alcmena's preference is less for the husband over the lover than for the man over the god. Her great scene with Jupiter (in 2.2), after their incognito night of love, hinges entirely upon that rejection, one that is most humiliating to the king of gods, to whom she will acknowledge neither that such a night as this should have been sweeter than other nights, nor that the whole of creation should be more admirable than Amphitryon's

meanest handicraft, nor that she herself might wish to be a goddess, "honored and revered by all" ("Isn't it better to be admired as a simple woman?") and immortal ("A delightful evening that would be! . . . The night air is not good for a fair complexion. How wrinkled I would be if I were immortal!"). Allegiance to the earthly condition, "faithfulness to this planet," is the rock-bottom foundation of Alcmena's ethics; for her, becoming immortal would mean a betrayal. When "Amphitryon" discourses upon the gods, she responds with her babble about housekeeping and servants; to the mention of her giving birth to a demigod, she responds with her preference for a weak baby "cooing gently" in its cradle. Nothing can distract her from her mortal essence, from siding with immanence, and as the dumbfounded Jupiter addresses to her the dispirited compliment "You are the first true human I've ever met," she proudly lays claim to that specialty: "You don't know how right you are. Of every one I know, I am the only one to accept and love my fate."

This paradoxical force is totally invincible for Jupiter, who leaves the scene with his first human wrinkle and confesses to Mercury: "Alcmena, tender Alcmena, gentle Alcmena, possesses a nature more resistant to our laws than stone. It's she who is the true Prometheus. . . . She has no imagination and perhaps not very much intelligence. That's just it; there is something limited but irreducible in her which remains out of reach and is the equivalent in human terms of our infinity."

This promotion of Alcmena as a symbol of the "human infinite" inevitably and logically demotes Jupiter and Mercury as symbols of divinity; Amphitryon himself is devalued by the famous quid pro quo that dispatches him to Leda's couch in Jupiter's stead: both spouses thus turn out to have been adulterous, unknown to either. But there is nothing brutal or polemical to this transvaluation, because Jupiter, renouncing his second night of love, finally agrees to enter a friendly relationship with Alcmena, a friendship that might well bode—let us dream awhile—a general reconciliation between the gods and humankind; because Giraudoux abundantly stresses the paradoxical character of his theme, which he constantly poises on the ambiguous dividing line between the serious and the playful; and because this subtle (and grandiose) banter, in the manner of Marivaux, does carry out the designs of fate (here again, what is prescribed by the hypotext): when Alcmena constrains Jupiter to accept her friendship, she does not know that the night of love which she believes she has warded off has already taken place, and that Hercules is already lodged within her womb.[5]

True enough, she is beginning to have her doubts, but that issue will remain clad in cautious ambiguity, as will the real nature of her feelings for Jupiter: her faithfulness may have been attributable to her human condition rather than to conjugal virtue per se. "Now the legend is suitably established": everyone—including posterity—will believe that she has indeed received Jupiter; Amphitryon will believe nothing of the kind; and Alcmena will "forget" that dubious night. But the spectator will not be fooled and will acknowledge the touch of irony in Jupiter's final speech: " . . . this couple who have never known and will never know adultery, who will never taste an illicit kiss." So be it, so be it. Happy marriages are known to thrive on beautiful fictions.

## 70

*Primary revaluation*, the revaluation of the hero and his deeds, which we have abundantly observed in Unamuno, cannot of course consist in investing that hero with a prominence that is his already in the hypotext. It consists, much rather, in heightening his merit or his symbolic value. Unamuno's Don Quixote does nothing more and nothing else than Cervantes', but what he does ceases to be—or to be described as—the ridiculous behavior of a dotty hidalgo and becomes the emblematic saga of a hero of Spain and Christendom. Within a completely different ideological framework, and by means of a few pragmatic transformations of some consequence, the character of Faust has benefited from an analogous—and better-known—rehabilitation.

The process took place during the time span between the *Volksbuch* of 1587, which can stand as the founding hypotext, and Goethe's drama. In that folktale, Faust is only a wayward former student, who has sunk into debauchery and witchcraft. His pact with Mephistopheles serves only to gratify his lowest instincts. He roams the world as an astrologer and necromancer who has won fame thanks to his conjuring tricks and other practical jokes, and thanks to his concubinage with Helen of Troy, with whom we now cross paths once more. After twenty-four years of such shenanigans, he summons his friends to confess his crime and his remorse; the following morning, he is found dead in his room, torn to pieces by the devil. What we have here is typically—in André Jolles's terminology—an *anti-legend*, or the cautionary life story of an anti-saint, a reprobate with no

excuses and no nobility of spirit.[1] Marlowe's *Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* was to endow the character with greater relief and punch, but without modifying his axiological status: "It is less the modern drama of a felled titan than the drama of damnation: i.e., of man's fall and failure."[2] The same mediocrity can be observed in Johannes Nicolaus Pfitzer,[3] and is even cheapened in the anonymous narrative of a "right-thinking Christian," wherein Faust sells his soul to pay his debts.[4]

The movement toward revaluation began with Gotthold Lessing's outline for a tragedy (c. 1755–67), which considers the possibility, apparently for the first time, of Faust's being saved: his guardian angel delivers him from his compact by putting him to sleep, and Faust wakes up to thank the heavens.[5] In Paul Weidmann's "allegorical drama," Faust signs the pact but is saved at the last minute by divine mercy; in Friedrich Maximilian Klinger's novel, characterized by a *Sturm und Drang* approach, Faust becomes an idealist, the unacknowledged inventor of the printing press and a free-thinking philosopher.[6] Faust travels the roads of Renaissance times, described in pessimistic and gloomy colors. Before being carried away by the demons, he protests and rebels against the order of the world and the existence of God.

Those early attempts at rehabilitation can thus be seen to waver between two slightly contradictory motives: on the one hand, we find extenuating circumstances and divine forgiveness; on the other, the revaluation of the compact as a symbol of titanic rebellion. Goethe attempted to reconcile these two motives by turning Faust into a true intellectual hero, for whom giving up his studies was no longer a betrayal but the expression of a superior mind's dissatisfaction with a knowledge grown barren and of a profound urge to embrace life.[7] The pact is much rather a wager on life (as it already was in Klinger), for Faust does believe in Mephisto's ability to gratify his true desires. The adventure with Margaret, a theme borrowed from Pfitzer, invests this destiny with a sentimental dimension, and the girl's final salvation announces and prepares for the hero's own. The affair with Helen becomes symbolic of a "classical" coming of age, before act 4 of the second part, which stages a Faust who has become a creator and "man of action." In the last act, a band of angels saves him from the demons that had come to carry him away; at the feet of the Virgin, Margaret intercedes on behalf of her seducer, who will finally be saved by the "eternal feminine." He is thus at one and the same time rehabilitated in his titanic aspiration and redeemed by love. With that symbol of self-transcendence toward the

superhuman, we have come a long way from the rascally quack of the initial hypotext.[8]

I shall certainly not be the first to detect a similar evolution in the history of the Don Juan theme.[9] The equivalent of the *Volksbuch* as the original welding of a group of folktales into a literary text is of course the *Burlador de Sevilla* by Tirso de Molina.[10] It tells the story of a vulgar rake who kills the father of one of his victims and is finally dragged into hell by the statue of the deceased, after a boastful invitation followed by a pitiful begging for mercy: an anti-legend again, but directly narrated in dramatic form. The subject is known to have been taken up again soon in Italy, where Giliberto, among others, adapted it to the repertory of the *commedia dell'arte*, not without an added touch of revaluation: Don Juan dies without asking for forgiveness and may thus appear as a symbol of revolt and bold impiety. Molière (*Dom Juan*, 1665) develops that feature of the philosophical *libertin* and the magnanimous grandee (in the episode with Don Carlos) and sets it off by a very marked contrast with Sganarelle's craven credulity. Contrary to widespread opinion, the episode of the hypocrite in no way devalues him, for that satirical pseudoconversion ranks him, together with Molière himself, among the censors of that "fashionable vice." As in Giliberto, he dies impenitent, in a gesture of heroic defiance.

On this point, Lorenzo Da Ponte's libretto for Mozart's opera (1787) does not alter the hero's image, but the lyrical sweep of the score and the development of the figure of Donna Anna (nonexistent in Molière) will suggest another—Romantic—motive of revaluation: Hoffmann's famed commentary, in his novella of 1813, emphasizes Anna's role and suspects a secretly shared passion between Anna and Don Juan. This is tantamount to opening the way, for Don Juan as for Faust, to the theme of redemption through love. Jean Rousset will provide us with a few examples. Alexander Pushkin, *The Stone Guest* (1830): once in the statue's grip, Don Juan calls out for Donna Anna, but in vain. Blaze de Bury (translator of Goethe's *Faust*), *Le Souper chez le commandeur* (1834): Don Juan is saved by Anna's love; together they will live in eternal love. José Zorilla, *Don Juan Tenorio* (1884): at the denouement, the dead Ines appears and says, "I have given my soul for you, and God, thanks to me, is granting you your undeserved salvation. . . . Love has saved Don Juan at the foot of my grave"; in 1845, Théophile Gautier writes, "Not only does Don Juan not go to hell, but he is received in heaven, and in the choicest place to boot." Alexei Tolstoy, *Don*

*Juan* (1862): Anna, in her despair at being unable to tear Don Juan away from his dissolute life, kills herself; the hero is overwhelmed, becomes converted, and dies a saintly death. That denouement occurs again in Joseph Delteil's novel *Don Juan* (1930); it obviously results from a contamination between the Don Juan legend and the story of Miguel Mañara, a former rake who became head of the Charity Hospital in Sevilla.[11]

Don Juan, like Faust, can thus benefit from two possible themes of revaluation, which are not incompatible: one is the *Aufklärer* theme, the boldness of the godless libertine; the other is Romantic, and involves not a commonplace repentance but the intercession of a woman who loves him. Such a situation justifies Gautier's parallel: "Nowadays, the character of Don Juan, made greater by Mozart, Lord Byron, Alfred de Musset, and Hoffmann, is interpreted in more generous, more humane, and more poetic fashion; he has become, as it were, the Faust of love; he symbolizes the longing for the infinite in voluptuousness."[12]

The bringing together of Faust and Don Juan, which is one of the commonplaces of Romanticism, had found its most characteristic expression in Grabbe's drama, *Don Juan und Faust* (1829), which we have already mentioned.[13] There the two heroes vie for Anna's love—in vain, however. Don Juan successively kills Ottavio and the Commendatore, but Faust has Anna kidnapped; she resists him, and he kills her. When the devil seizes him, Don Juan refuses to sink into despair; he challenges the statue and, before dying, exalts his own joyful and liberated existence. Symbolically, the confrontation is won by the seducer, valued for his indomitable vitality, whereas Faust is reduced to acting as a foil for him.

This small victory may foreshadow the present stage in the competition: with the exception of Valéry and Thomas Mann, who deftly succeeded in shifting the issue to the problematics of artistic creation, the Faustian theme no longer holds our interest, poorly served as it has been by the least digestible "masterpiece" of world literature and by musical illustrations that have been no match for *Don Giovanni.* Thanks to Molière and Mozart, Don Juan has had a more favorable—or less unfavorable—fate, but he has not really succeeded in perpetuating himself; it may be the case that the very success of classical models tends to discourage later attempts at renewal.

The most skillful—and certainly the most efficient—attempt may well be W. H. Auden's in his libretto for *The Rake's Progress* (1951). Its hero, Tom Rakewell, who is akin to both Faust and Don Juan, has been waylaid by

Nick Shadow, a Sganarelle-cum-Mephisto figure; and Igor Stravinsky cast his own famous score over the whole transaction, as the final and ironical achievement of one century of classical opera. The rest is silence.

## 71

The inverse thematic move is that of *devaluation.* The most brutal instance may be Fielding's *Shamela* (1741), which officially purports to be a "refutation" of Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and an "antidote to that poison"—as is clearly indicated by the heroine's change of name.

Richardson's epistolary novel told the story of a virtuous young servant's resistance to her master's advances and harassment. Overcome by that resistance, which was all the more meritorious because Pamela had little by little fallen in love with her persecutor, her master ended up marrying her. Unlike the general reader of the time, Fielding was not taken by that edifying tale, into which he read the triumph of a false and scheming self-righteousness. Such an interpretation evidently presupposed that the heroine's narrative should be held to be mendacious, at least in its motives. Hence the idea of that "refutation," which introduces itself as an edition of the genuine letters "falsified" by Richardson, an edition that reveals the truth concerning facts (e.g., Shamela had slept with Parson Williams before Mr. B.'s overtures and had had a child by him; she lured Mr. B. into her bed with the governess's complicity and enjoyed his embraces before simulating a virtuous fainting fit) and concerning feelings and designs: from the very start, Shamela manipulated her master into marrying her, without loving him in the least, in order to lay hold of his fortune, which she at once undertook to squander with her lover. In a vengeful denouement, the husband catches them in the act and repudiates the schemer.

Fielding thus effected upon Richardson's text what today would be called an act of "demystification." Such a move may also come as a reaction to a previous process of valuation, its effect being then to bring the theme back to its starting point. That is more or less what Brecht did with his adaptation (*Bearbeitung*) of Molière's *Dom Juan* (1952), which he berated for, as he put it, "voting in favor of Don Juan." Such a "vote" seemed to him to go against the interests of the toiling masses. Hence his attempt to "rework the part in such a way as to turn the hero into a negative figure: a sensualist who took advantage of his station and his wealth to seduce

women, a rake whose incredulity was neither rebellious nor progressive. Brecht claimed to lay bare the social parasite hiding behind the man of pleasure: *Wir sind gegen parasitäre Lebensfreude.*"[1] Political jargon aside, this is no different from Tirso's indictment of Don Juan, or from Sganarelle's "proto-Marxist analysis" of him as "a great lord who is a wicked man" {*un grand seigneur méchant homme*}.

But the devaluating action can also be brought to bear on a hypotext that is itself a devaluation, or one that is little concerned with heightening the value of the story it tells and of its protagonists. What the devaluating hypertext effects in such cases is less a "demystification" than something like an *aggravation*, which may only emphasize its hypotext's secret bent. Thus does Shakespeare proceed with the Homeric and post-Homeric text in *Troilus and Cressida* (1602). But the whole story no doubt deserves that we should begin at the beginning.

Troilus and Cressida in love are latecomers. Homer mentions Troilus, son of Priam, only once (*Iliad* 24.257), as a "mettlesome warrior standing valiant on his chariot." His role became slightly more significant in the Trojan Cycle, in which an oracle predicted that Troy would be saved if he reached the age of twenty. But that was not to be, and he died early in the war at the hands of Achilles, who captured and sacrificed him; or slew him at the foot of a horse trough; or again, love-stricken, pursued him as far as Apollo's temple and punished him for his resistance. Benoît de Sainte-Maure was apparently the first, in his *Roman de Troie* (c. 1160), which drew heavily upon Dictys and Dares, to imagine a love relationship between the adolescent and a young Trojan girl named Briseida (of Achilles' prisoner she had only the name, no doubt a result of confusion at a time when Homer's text was unknown). Foreseeing defeat, Calchas—Briseida's father and a Trojan soothsayer—went over to the Greeks and secured permission for his daughter to join him during an exchange of prisoners. Briseida then betrayed Troilus with Diomedes the Greek.

*The Roman de Troie* spawned an exceptionally rich medieval descent, especially in Germany and Italy. We shall ignore the German branch, which comprises Herbart von Fritzlar's *Liet von Troye* (early thirteenth century), Konrad von Würtzburg's *Trojanischer Krieg* (mid–thirteenth century), the anonymous *Trojaner Krieg* (late thirteenth century), and three later prose romances. In Italy, Guido delle Colonne wrote a Latin adaptation titled *Historia destructionis Troiae* (1287); Boccaccio made use of it in his poem

*Il Filostrato* (1339); which deals exclusively with the love between Troilus and the woman he renames Griseida (or Criseida). The plot brings in the new figure of Pandarus, the heroine's uncle and a pimp, and takes on the intense erotic coloring characteristic of the author of the *Decameron*. After Griseida's betrayal, Troilus pursues his rival into the thick of the battle and duly dies under Achilles' blows. At the end of the fourteenth century, inspired by Boccaccio and/or a French prose adaptation (Beauveau's *Roman de Troyle et de Criseida*), Chaucer wrote his *Troilus and Criseyde*, which shifted the focus to the heroine, whose honor the poet endeavored to salvage by accumulating excuses and extenuations: she yielded to Troilus only after a long period of chivalric courtship sustained by Pandarus's wiles; once delivered to Diomedes, she also proved commendably reluctant. Troilus himself was not spared that edifying improvement: after his death, he went up to seventh heaven and discovered mystic love. Robert Henryson went one step further in *The Testament of Cresseid* (1593), in which the gods punish the young girl by making her a leper; she dies repentant, and Troilus survives her.

Shakespeare inherited all that legacy, plus two fifteenth-century English rehashes of Guido (John Lydgate's *Troy Book* and William Caxton's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*). But above all, and for the first time in many centuries, the bard seems to have had some knowledge of the Homeric text. Unlike Boccaccio and Chaucer, he reintroduced the two heroes' loves into the historical context of the war—but a war that has retrieved its Homeric bearings. In act 1, Achilles is inside his tent, whence he will emerge in act 5 to enter the fray and slaughter Hector. The Atreidae, Ajax, Ulysses, Nestor, Patroclus, Priam, Paris, Aeneas fill the scenes, which alternate between the ramparts of Troy and the Greek camp. A spectator ignorant of the intermediate tradition might view this tragicomedy as Shakespeare's attempt to transfer the *Iliad* to the stage and enliven it for the occasion—and for the spectator's pleasure—with a supererogatory love affair. In actual fact, the contrary is likely to have occurred: Shakespeare borrowed the story of Cressida's betrayal from his predecessors, but the newly rediscovered *Iliad* caught hold of his imagination and forcefully invaded the love plot. *Troilus and Cressida* is the intrusion of the Homeric epic into a shabby love affair.

But the two elements thus combined—combined anew, since they had already coexisted, though in a different manner, in Benoît de Sainte-Maure's work—are in for a drastic revision. As concerns the love business, Cressida's

behavior loses all benefit of the excuses obligingly provided by Chaucer, but she is also spared all the purgative penitences inflicted by Henryson. Cressida loves Troilus passionately and takes their separation much to heart; she resists Diomedes for a whole scene, only to call him back as he is about to give up—all of this in the presence of the unseen Troilus. No motivation is given, no attempt at an explanation: that is simply how it happened, and the ambiguity, or the inconsistency, remains unsolved. *Così fan tutte?* Shakespeare denies us—or spares us—even the trite generalization of that apology, which might have proved paradoxically consoling, as is any recourse to a "law." *Così fa Cressida*: that is all we shall ever know about her. But even at the very beginning of the play—in the happy days of Troilus's seduction of Cressida within the walls of Troy—the haunting presence of Pandarus as a *terzo troppo commodo*, a somewhat shady Peeping Tom constantly offering cynical comments, contributes fatefully to spoiling the picture. Imagine Rameau's nephew between Romeo and Juliet, and try to catch the nightingale's trills.

As concerns the epic side of things, the Greek heroes do not fare any better, and the play's having once been staged with music borrowed from Offenbach would be understandable—were it not that such an accompaniment rather errs on the side of excessive goodnaturedness. The debunking witness here is Thersites, a cynical choryphaeus whose gloss is unadorned: "Nothing but lechery! all incontinent varlets!"; "All the argument is a cuckold and a whore." The reference is obviously to Menalaus and Helen, but there are in fact two cuckolds and two whores, one of each in either camp: it's a draw. Besides, "if the son of a whore fight for a whore, he tempts judgment." But Ulysses' or Nestor's view of things is not more gullible, and those three specialists of sarcasm set aside, the Danaan camp is but a bunch of braggarts, fools, and cowards. As often happens, only the Trojan heroes are spared: Aeneas, Hector. "Whereupon the Grecians begin to proclaim barbarism, and policy grows into an ill opinion." That *Iliad* as rewritten by Thersites is indeed a "parody" of the epic, and not unworthy perhaps of the *Deiliad* that Aristotle read. One characteristic trait says it all: Achilles does not kill Hector after disarming him in combat, as in Homer; he comes upon him by surprise and has him slaughtered by his Myrmidons: "And cry you all amain, / 'Achilles has the mighty Hector slain.' "

What would the edifying Houdar de la Motte have thought of such an improvement? Shakespeare's intent is evidently the opposite of his: it is not to "restore" a glory and a valor that had already suffered from Homer's

treatment, but to degrade them systematically. It is not to moralize the *Iliad* but to *demoralize* it by exposing his heroes as ruffians and naming his action a massacre. But let us compare the three texts and ask ourselves this: of La Motte and Shakespeare, which betrayed Homer—he who sought to amend him, or he who *took him to extremes*?

## 72

But one can demoralize Shakespeare himself, blacken him at his blackest, the Shakespeare of *Macbeth*, for example. Such was Ionesco's amiable aim in *Macbett* (1971).[1]

At first sight, this play belongs to the tradition of "dramatic parodies" (e.g., *Agnès de Chaillot* or *Harnali*), as is shown by the name transformations: Macbett for Macbeth, Macol for Malcolm. The original diegesis, however, is subjected to no social degradation; Shakespeare's characters preserve their rank and identity, and the action still takes place at the Scottish court. Some speech vulgarisms may smack of the burlesque travesty, but their main function is not to ridicule Shakespeare's text but only to update it and transpose it into the customary idiolect of Ionesco's theater. Those burlesque reminiscences notwithstanding, *Macbett* is actually a serious remake of *Macbeth*—provided, of course, allowances are made for the buffoonery inherent in Ionesco's seriousness; another way of putting it might be to say that *Macbett* is an Ionescan transposition of *Macbeth*, one that is neither more nor less "serious" than his *Les Chaises* or *Rhinocéros*.

This "deviation"[2] is obviously marked out by "stylistic" features: speeches become somewhat automated; two successive tirades by Macbett and Banco are rigorously identical; Candor's and Glamiss's vituperations against Duncan are repeated, again word for word, by Macbett and Banco; Duncan and Lady Duncan vie with each other in piling up dislocated clichés. Thematic transformations also occur, however; some are significant and others, it might seem, merely whimsical—which at least does carry the message "I'm adapting Shakespeare and I do as I please," and therefore functions as an index of transposition. The action begins at a time prior to that in Shakespeare and goes back to the first stirrings of Candor and Glamiss's rebellion. Duncan's putative son Macol is in fact Banco's son, and Banco is itching to supplant Macbett. Macbett and Banco murder Duncan onstage, with the active complicity of Lady Duncan, who will

become Lady Macbett. But that lady is actually none other than one of the three witches in disguise—or metamorphosed—and the real Lady Duncan, who has remained faithful to her deceased husband, reappears at the end of the play. After his victory over Candor and Glamiss, Duncan savagely executes the defeated and reneges on his promise to Banco. During that whole scene, Lady Duncan (the real one at that) makes blatant advances to Macbett. Last but not least, Macol, at the denouement, delivers a cynical speech, a literal but in this case truthful repeat of Malcolm's temptation speech to Macduff in Shakespeare, wherein he reveals his true nature, whose odiousness outdoes Macbett's, and announces the "confineless harms" that he will visit upon his own country:

> There's no bottom, none,
> In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,
> Your matrons, and your maids, could not fill up
> The cistern of my lust. . . .
> I should cut off the nobles for their lands," etc.

This minimal and parodic transformation (in the proper sense of parodic: same speech invested with a different function) sketches out the "pessimistic" and typically Ionescan theme of the ignominious tyrant succeeding an ignoble tyrant, who, in turn . . . etc.

*Macbett* is thus an aggravation of *Macbeth*, as *Troilus* was an aggravation of the *Iliad*, and as *Macbeth* itself, via Holinshed, had been an aggravation of the Anglo-Saxon chronicle. It is a darker *Macbeth*, with an evident (though undeclared) contamination with *Ubu Roi* thrown in for good measure. Yet that detour had in some way been mapped out in advance, if it be granted that *Ubu Roi* was already a kind of caricature of *Macbeth*. Ionesco only redirects toward Shakespeare the paroxystic buffoonery of infamy effected by Jarry, and rewrites *Macbeth* in the light of Jarry. The light he sheds on *Macbeth* is distorting but revealing: there is already much of Ubu in Macbeth and much of Mother Ubu in Lady Macbeth. Like all aggravations, moreover, this one only carries to extremes—to its *own* extremes of sound and fury—the truth of the hypotext. The very notion of hypertext takes on its intensive and superlative meaning: *Macbett* is an (even more) excessive *Macbeth*, a hyperbolic *Macbeth*, a hyper-*Macbeth*.

# 73

Concerning the hypertextual status of his *Aventures de Télémaque*—i.e., its relationship to Fénelon's text—Louis Aragon offered two apparently contradictory comments, forty-seven years apart. In 1922 he claimed, not very convincingly, that he had not meant to be critical: "The fact that no attempt has been made here to tackle the six books of moral adventures by which Fénelon continued his work implies no criticism of that venerable prelate. Nor does it imply a preconceived design (i.e., to displace that narrative with an account of daily life in Ogygia, a puerile improvement)."[1] In 1969, on the other hand, he wrote: "Undertaking to rewrite Fénelon in this fashion, to correct him (more precisely), was for me a return to my own beginnings, and the consequence of the powerful influence I was then subjected to, that of Isidore Ducasse, Comte de Lautréamont, whose *Poésies* I had just found out to be entirely conceived as a *correction* of several authors, particularly of that Vauvenargues who held me in thrall at the time."[2] These two seemingly contradictory appraisals are in the last resort converging, for the former clearly designates, under the guise of a denial, the purpose claimed by the latter: to "improve" or correct. Aragon's *Télémaque* corrects Fénelon's as Lautréamont's *Poésies* had corrected Vauvenargues's maxims (among others), and one of the most patent aspects of that correction is a "puerile" amputation, one that is consonant with the sensibility of the child readers we all were (hence still remain) of the *Adventures of Telemachus*. Just as Robinson's island adventure is all we retain (all that retains us) of *Robinson Crusoe*, so in *Telemachus* all that attracts us still is the sojourn in Ogygia, among Calypso's nymphs—and I venture to think that the Duke of Burgundy himself felt no differently. Aragon's "correction" thus begins with that reduction: the seven books of his story take place in Ogygia, and Telemachus's narrative of his previous adventures is reduced to four pages.

A second, no less brutal, feature of this book but one that functions as an amplification is the "collage" insertion of various texts lifted from "the most diverse works, from Fénelon to Jules Lermina," of whose presence there the reader is not informed, "so as not to spoil his pleasure at discovering them for himself, or at his own indignation, or at his own erudition." This provocative use of plagiarism also comes from Lautréamont, by way of *Maldoror*. Most of the pages inserted into *Télémaque*, however, turn out to be Dada texts and manifestos written by Aragon himself, some

previously published in *Littérature*; they are thus mere rehandlings of the same material. Or again, Aragon has Telemachus recite a parody of his famous "Persiennes": "Eucharis, Eucharis, Eucharis, etc." (over more than three pages).[3]

The action of the Ogygian sojourn is itself significantly altered, which is no doubt the most efficient way for the new *Telemachus* to achieve its "corrective" purpose. As the reference to Lautréamont would have led us to expect, that purpose is one of *devaluation*. Aragon has his characters behave in ways that hardly conform, to say the least, with the values of Fénelon's hypotext: Telemachus thus makes love to the nymph Eucharis (and gets her with child), and the exemplary Mentor (that is, Minerva herself, in case you had forgotten) yields to Calypso's charms: " 'You are squeezing me like a young man. Oh! Mentor!—Let's wander together, Madam, into the depths of this thicket.' And all that remained on the seashore was the polished pebble fallen from Minerva's mouth together with howling birds making love in full flight."[4] For an indeterminate period, Telemachus leaves the island in Neptune's company. Upon his return, Calypso and Eucharis share his bed: "They often met there without resentment; moreover, when Telemachus demanded a respite, they were not above reciprocating services which they found so much to their liking that they gradually managed to do without the son of Ulysses, and one fine day they advised their importunate lover to make himself scarce" (85). Telemachus and Mentor, thus forcefully restored to their original virtue, have no choice but to disappear. But instead of swimming their way to new and edifying adventures, they die, and die the grotesque death that befits two philosophers: while arguing about freedom, chance, and necessity, Telemachus hurls himself from a cliff to prove his free will. Mentor is pleased to deride him in the following terms: " 'Telemachus, the son of Ulysses, has died a fool's death to display his freedom; and his death, determined by sarcasms and gravity, is the denial of that chance which he wished to uphold at the price of his life. With Telemachus chance has perished. Now begins the reign of wisdom.' No sooner had he finished his speech than a tottering rock broke from the top of the slope and crushed, like an ordinary mortal, the goddess Minerva who had so playfully assumed the shape of an old man and who, thanks to this whim, managed to lose at the same moment her human and her divine existence" (101).

These ironic plot reversals evidently link Aragon's "correction" with Lautréamont's parodic refutations, but not without a knowing glance at the neoburlesque tradition inaugurated by Offenbach and perpetuated by

Lemaitre and Giraudoux. The erotic allurements of the Ogygian episode, the ironic debunking of the driveling moralist, fall straight into line with a "typically French" tradition, one as old as the genre itself. As for the philosophical extrapolation, it specifically evokes the Giraudoux of *Elpénor*, who provided the model for the debate on freedom and for a few other pages, down to the manifest pastiche that shows through the following introduction of Telemachus: "Luckily, a boat broke to bits at the feet of Calypso. Two abstractions issued from it. The first, not yet twenty, looked so much like Ulysses that the shrubs, by the very way he folded them, recognized Telemachus, his son, who had yet to bend a woman in his arms. . . . Calypso joyfully rediscovered her fugitive lover in that young castaway advancing toward her. Her foreknowledge of this body which she had never glimpsed before troubled her more than the shining spots of seaweed the surging waters had pasted on Telemachus's polished limbs. Feeling womanly, she gave a false display of anger" (12).

But the most specific and most valuable contribution of Aragon's *Adventures of Telemachus* does not lie with these generic or period features. Rather, it seems to me to reside in a fairly subtle stylistic trait: namely, the repeated shift from the kind of sentence that is characteristic of Fénelon, whether literal or mimicked—a kind of sentence, therefore, that most purely typifies classical elegance—to "that lyricism of the uncontrollable, which as yet had no name, and was through our common consent to take the name Surrealism in 1923."[5] The last page, true to its author's claim, is indeed one of the first performances of that style, whether or not we choose to grant it the status of automatic writing: "Winds rose out of joy and combed themselves with the teeth of mountains. Delivered at last, forests flowed down to the dwellings of man and ate them," etc. (101). But Fénelon, by then, has been left far behind. The stylistic metamorphosis, the *transstylization*, is more progressive, more insidious, and hence more delectable in the first pages, "starting from Fénelon's very text," as Aragon puts it, wherein "Calypso could not console herself for Ulysses' departure" becomes "Like a seashell on the beach, Calypso disconsolately repeated the name of Ulysses to the foam that carries ships afar, unmindful in her sorrow of her immortal self. The seagulls in attendance took flight when she approached for fear of being consumed by the fire of her lamentations. The laughter of the meadows, the cries of the fine gravel, all the caresses of the landscape made her miss more cruelly the absent lover who had taught her to perceive them." Or consider the description of the landscape

surrounding Calypso's cave. Here is Fénelon: "The goddess's cave was on the side of a hill. There the sea could be descried, at times clear and smooth as ice, at times wildly irritated at the rocks, where it would break with moans, and would raise its waves against mountains. On the other side, a river could be seen, whereon islands appeared, hemmed by blossoming lime trees," etc. And here is Aragon's Surrealistic version of the classical *locus amoenus*:

> The Goddess's cave opened on the slope of a hill. Its threshold dominated a sea more disconcerting than shifts of weather, multicolored among precipitous rocks streaming with foam, sonorous as sheet metal, and, on the back of waves, the great wing slaps of nightjars. The inland region brought many a surprise: a river descended from the skies and, in its passage, hooked on to trees blooming with birds. Villas and temples, unknown structures, metal scaffoldings, brick towers, cardboard palaces formed a heavy and twisted braid bordering lakes of honey, landlocked seas, triumphal ways; forests wedged into impossible towns while their hair vanished in the clouds; here and there the ground split open to the level of precious mines from which flashed forth the landscape light; the open air dislocated mountains and sheets of fire danced on the heights; pigeon-lamps sang in aviaries and, among the tombs, the buildings, the vineyards, strolled beasts stranger than a dream. The setting stretched to the horizon by means of maps and the deviant struts of a Louis-Philippe bedroom where angels slept, blond and chaste as the day. [13–14]

In all those cases, the two texts must of course be read together and, as it were, simultaneously. Between these two styles of writing, one of which originates in and slowly strays from the other, a strange consonance will then make itself heard, wherein the young Aragon's syncretism (or eclecticism) is beginning to operate. Aragon, the Surrealist who had learned to read, and thus indeed to write, with *Telemachus* and could never forget it.

## 74

Nowhere does Giono, to my knowledge, mention Aragon's *Telemachus* among the possible models or sources of inspiration of his *Naissance de l'Odyssée* (nor Giraudoux's *Elpénor* nor Joyce's *Ulysses*, but only Claudel's

*Protée*).[1] Nonetheless, the work was obviously in line with a literary period fad that had its remote origin in Offenbach and reached down via Lemaitre to Giraudoux's *La Guerre de Troie*—the fad of a "return to Homer." It also corresponds, coincidentally or not, with Stravinsky's and Picasso's neoclassical period. It was no less obviously intended at first as a devaluation, more specifically as a *refutation.* Giono stated in 1925, "It has become my intimate conviction that the wily one, on his journey back from Troy, lingered awhile on an island peopled by hospitable women, and that upon returning to Ithaca he warded off acrimonious Penelope's angry outpour with an array of splendid tales."[2] He proceeded a few days later: "I have started upon . . . the wily Odysseus's true story (according to me)." Fielding could have used the same language on the subject of *Shamela.* In both cases, a hypotext is declared to be mendacious, and the hypertext claims to restore the "true story." But here, an element in the hypotext itself provides legitimacy for the hypertext's suspicions: namely, the cunning personality of Ulysses, whose skill at weaving a web of lies is often described (and illustrated) by Homer. Thus the case may be that Giono is merely aggravating that trait—if Ulysses is often a liar, then the narrative of his adventures, for which we only have his own word (*Odyssey* 9–12), may itself be deceitful—and extending it to the bard himself: if Homer is recounting an untrue narrative, his own narrative (i.e., the rest of the *Odyssey*) might be doing so as well. And the "true story" might run thus, for instance . . .

The sequel is almost predictable: a man who takes ten years to come back to Ithaca from the Trojan War must surely have good reasons for doing so, and that the narrative of his wanderings should inadvertently drop names such as Circe, Calypso, and Nausicaa may indeed hint at the real nature of those motives. Giono was only following here a natural bent of the *Odyssey* itself, though in the later parts of his work he somewhat corrected that bent by renouncing Ulysses' original motivation: contriving a story to deflect the anger of a suspicious wife. The mythopoeic impulse now came to him in less facetious fashion: it was a matter for him of dispelling the even more fictitious rumor that he had died, and of killing that fib with an ornate, and therefore persuasive, version of the truth. That narrative, improvised in the course of a wake by Ulysses himself in disguise, was to be peddled from bard to bard and, reaching Ithaca shortly before Ulysses' return, was to become the great Odyssean fable: such was in truth the birth of the *Odyssey.*

That narrative is evoked ("For a long time, Ulysses' voice resounded against the walls . . .") but not reported, however, and Giono's reader

knows nothing of it except by tallying his conjectures with Ulysses' own narrative to the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey*. The story of the "birth of the *Odyssey*" is Ulysses' return as told in the last twelve books of the *Odyssey*, or rather as it remains untold in those books. Here precisely is where the hypertext refutes its hypotext.

The epic dimension disappears; Ulysses comes back from the Trojan War like his companions, Agamemnon and Menelaus, but there is nothing to evoke the war he waged there for ten years except one indirect and less than heroic allusion ("I was in the Asian war. I know Ulysses. How many times have I seen him harass the backs of the Trojans when the trumpet sounded, then be the last to return to the boats, covered in blood thicker than pitch?"—a war waged upon backsides) and the burlesque description (in the proper sense of the word) of Ulysses' gear as he is embarking one day: "From the mansion to the harbor they had taken the long way round through the narrow alleys, and he was covered in rattling iron . . ." Ulysses is no longer the king of Ithaca leading his army but a well-to-do farmer who tends vineyards and breed pigs, with the assistance of his family and a few male and female servants, in a folksy rural setting directly inspired by Giono's (future) Provence and spiced up with anachronisms worthy of the most unashamed Scarronian travesty. Above all, Ulysses is no longer a hero, not even a wily one, but an aging though still sprightly veteran who is not eager to challenge even an isolated "pretender." In the course of his half-tempestuous, half-cozy affair with Circe, he learns from Menelaus of Penelope's unfaithfulness with young Antinous; this piece of news arouses in him both the desire to go home and be restored to his farm and his rights, and the blue funk of the fear of undergoing Agamemnon's fate there. Hence the foolproof protection of his beggarly attire when he reaches Ithaca; he shuns every confrontation until the fortuitous scuffle that miraculously rids him of Antinous, his match in cowardice as it turns out; he even goes so far, he, Ulysses, as to strangle his dear old magpie, who has recognized him and whose affectionate outpourings might give him away: "He threw it, dead, into the high grass, next to the gravestone that proclaimed his generosity and valiance." As for Penelope, who was living it up with the young dandy {*freluquet*} and could have done without her husband's return, "she sensed confusedly that she would be the victor's mate, whoever he might be!" So much for exemplary bravery and conjugal virtue. The final reconciliation occurs in the good-natured mode, devoid of the grandeur or illusions that would later prevail in Giono's *Femme du boulanger*: all is

forgotten, and now back to work. Nothing indeed is left of the epic, not even that reminiscence of heroism that tinges the *Odyssey* with reflections from the *Iliad*; everything is here reduced to the so-called human scale, in the mediocre and inevitably deprecatory sense of the word as Aristotle uses it when referring to characters "akin to ourselves" (*kat'hemas*). We are indeed in the down-to-earth and "all-too-human" world of the early Giono—paradoxically, miles away from the sturdy souls and fierce energies of his later chronicles—a world that seems to originate quite spontaneously from the negation, or rather the inversion, of heroic values: the epic is gone, and the tragic is shunned; all that unavoidably remains is what we ordinarily mean by the inglorious "That's life!"

A devaluation it is, then, if ever there was one. But a countervaluation does come with it as well, harping on the timeworn theme of "true riches" and the humble deserts of common humankind: "A life is worth nothing," Malraux was to state in the heroic mode, "but nothing is worth a life." Not without cause did Giono choose in his first novel—for this disenchanted and, so to speak, debased *Odyssey* is indeed a novel—to identify himself with that jaded veteran who is weary of all save simple pleasures, and who "remembers nothing of battles past."

Simple pleasures, however, may not be as simple as they seem. After all, the contriving of a wondrous story, and the pleasure of repeating it every night, from tavern to tavern, can be said to stand here for the need of human beings to dream and to fancy themselves superhuman. The mediocre Ulysses is at least capable of inventing a larger-than-life Ulysses. He is also capable, as he walks night and day through the Peloponnesus and Arcadia, to experience what the author prettily calls the "transparency of the gods":

> A mild country wind, of the kind that nibbles sage as it goes, suddenly broke through the foliage, and Ulysses ran with tight buttocks into the bush. "I have wandered into silent Pan's wrath!" He would have wished to race straight through that wild land as far as the plains, but he had to linger breathless within the darkling net of trees. After this brush with the transparency of the gods, he kept aloof from the musical shade, lest he should meet with the faun and his flute, or with the centaur catching its fleas; he started at every rock fall, half expecting to be ravished by some nymph sprung out of the tree bark;

in the silence, he came in touch with the mystery of a thousand godly bodies chasing one another among men.

In noble parlance, this feeling is called *panic*, a word that aptly describes the awe lurking within fright. That ambivalence strikes the exact note of *Naissance de l'Odyssée*: seeing devaluation coupled with a symmetrical valuation, we are already touching upon the complex process of *transvaluation*, in the strong sense of the term.

## 75

Transvaluation: we have just seen it operating as a double movement of devaluation and (counter)valuation bearing on the same characters, Ulysses and secondarily Penelope, demoting them from their heroic grandeur yet investing them with a "texture" of common humanity (selfishness, tenderness, cowardice, imagination, etc.) that evidently belongs to a different value scheme. The incidental consequence of that process is a generic shift, characteristic of the *Naissance de l'Odyssée*, from the epic to the novel—or, rather, to *a certain kind of novel*, for there is probably only one sort of epic, but novels are of many sorts.

The substitution of values bears here on a hypotext that can be roughly described as axiologically homogeneous, as was the *Iliad* and perhaps every epic, in that it features confrontations—battles, single fights, or slaughters—that involve no real value conflicts, since all characters profess, or at any rate illustrate, the same axiological creed. But the process can also bear upon a text that does have a conflict of values, as in *Antigone*, and Anouilh has allowed us a glimpse into the ways in which transvaluation may operate in such a case: the hypertext takes the opposite side of its hypotext, giving value to what was devalued and vice versa. But this formulation is much too roughshod to do justice to Anouilh's operation; if it were accurate, Sophocles would have sided unabashedly with Antigone, and Anouilh in turn just as unabashedly with Creon. We are getting closer to such a state of affairs when Unamuno fanatically exalts Don Quixote against the cohort of priests and barbers who surround him, or when Brecht, in contradistinction (as he thinks) to Molière, undertakes to "vote" against Don Juan—and thus (as I think) for Sganarelle.

But setting up the comic in either case as a means to axiological discrimination is no doubt an oversimplification or an overly abrupt formulation of the issue. That Sganarelle should be ridiculous does not of itself entail that Don Juan, in Molière's eyes, is right to be against him; and Don Quixote's burlesque folly does not automatically invest his various antagonists with wisdom. The opposition between Robinson and Friday, however, seems to me to be less ambiguous, because it is constantly *serious*, and because Defoe clearly and explicitly sides against the young savage and with his good, industrious, Protestant, English master; his option is manifested in the process of integration (of Friday within Robinson's axiological system) that is Friday's education at the hands of Robinson. Hypertextual transvaluation, in this case, would consist in antithetically siding with (the supposed values of) Friday against (those of) Robinson, and consequently in substituting for Friday's education by Robinson the symmetrical and inverse education of Robinson by Friday. The reader may perhaps have guessed where I am headed; I am there already.

"A reader once asked me, not without a touch of ill will, why I had not dedicated this book to the memory of its first inspirer, Daniel Defoe. Was that not the least homage I should have paid him? I confess that I had not even thought of it, so blatant did the constant reference of each one of this book's pages to its model appear to me."[1]

Tournier is right: a dedication would have been quite useless. The "reference" as homage is embedded in the title, which sets up a most explicit and specific hypertextual contract and is an outright statement of the point: the substitution of Friday's "viewpoint" for Robinson's "viewpoint." But "viewpoint" must be understood here not in its technical sense (narrative focalization) but in the thematic and axiological sense. Is it more, is it less than that? I shall get back to this.

Defoe, it will be remembered, had not invented his hero: whether or not he had met Alexander Selkirk and made use of his report, it remains possible today to compare the action in *Robinson Crusoe* with the experience of its model, and to treat Defoe's novel as a transposition of Selkirk's adventures, by noting what Tournier calls the "discrepancies between history and the literary work." For example, the coast of Chile was transported to the mouth of the Orinoco; the length of the adventure was protracted considerably (from four to twenty-eight years); a shipwreck was substituted for a voluntary desertion; the character of Friday was invented. One could

therefore imagine a rewriting of *Robinson Crusoe* that would aim to restore, against Defoe, the original and genuine story of Selkirk's adventure. I know of no attempt of this sort, but I do observe that Tournier, like Giraudoux in *Suzanne et le Pacifique*, brings his hero back to the Pacific, and I fancy that not many readers have even noted that restitution, so automatic is the connection between the desert island theme and a certain "South Seas" stereotype that sticks in the memory despite Defoe's express indications. But Tournier's Pacific is not Suzanne's; his island, which is indeed closer than Defoe's to Selkirk's Mas a Tierra, and neither more nor less hospitable than Defoe's, is nothing like a paradise. The change in oceans thus has no real thematic function. Similarly, the shipwreck is delayed by one century and arbitrarily transferred to 30 September 1759, which does not prevent the insular stay from lasting as long as in Defoe: twenty-eight years, two months, and nineteen days. Or again, Defoe's Robinson was celibate; Tournier's left a wife and two children behind. But this detail has no impact on the sequel: Robinson once mentions his sister Lucy, elsewhere his mother, never his wife or children.

I would almost venture to say the same of another transformation, but a modal one this time: the switch from an autodiegetic narrative, constant with Defoe, to a heterodiegetic narrative interspersed with fragments from a diary. It all looks as if the thematic transformation had first caused a transvocalization, to signify that the author had detached himself from his inherited hero and wished perhaps to treat the narrative in the grand objective style of the classical adventure novel, even if he chose to spice it with an ironic pastiche in the first and last pages; thereafter, his urge to make room for Robinson's meditation may have led him to resort to the diary as a substitute for interior monologue. But this may be only a magnification of an effect already present in Defoe, when he has Robinson write his diary until the moment he runs out of ink. This narrative option at least affords Tournier the possibility, on one or two occasions, to transfocalize the narrative to Friday, in particular at the decisive moment when he is caught smoking by his master and casts the burning pipe into the ammunition reserve, thus blowing to smithereens years and years of Robinsonian civilization.

As Tournier himself reminds us in *Le Vent Paraclet*, Defoe's novel naturally fell into two parts corresponding to the two stages of Robinson's adventure: *before Friday*, or the experience of solitude; *with Friday*, or the experience of coexistence with and education of the savage, a prelude to the colonization

process that begins in the last pages, when Robinson and Friday are no longer alone and Robinson, having been promoted to governor, makes ready to welcome a sizable population of Spanish emigrants. Tournier's novel has a more complex thematic structure, not least because the *with Friday* period is itself divided into two phases—one of which, that before the explosion, is consonant with the model (Robinson is attempting to educate Friday), while the other, after the explosion, consecrates Robinson's conversion and Friday's mastery—but also because Tournier has been at pains to lay the ground for that conversion during the first phase of solitude by showing a Robinson already divided between his desire to civilize the island of Speranza on the one hand and, on the other, sundry temptations to revert to an elementary sensibility. Thus Robinson remains inactive for several months, fascinated by the ocean and waiting to be rescued, without undertaking any settlement work. His only purpose in using the ship's cargo will be to build a rowboat and leave the island. The failure of that attempt plunges him into yet another phase of inactivity, that of the wallow, when he identifies with the most degraded form of animal existence. It will take the hallucinatory vision of a ship and the sudden fear of madness to precipitate him into civilizing activity, which is here presented as a kind of gratuitous and purely therapeutic self-discipline ("a corset of conventions and prescriptions that he inflicted upon himself so as not to collapse"), no longer as the normal behavior of a creature saved by Providence and guided by his reading of the Bible. Hence the relapses that occur during this phase (a return to the wallow) and the renewed experiences of elemental fusion: a regressive spell in the alveolar crypt at the heart of the island—an umbilical limbo—which evidently stands for a return to the womb; copulations with a tree ("the vegetable way"), then with the island itself ("the telluric way") under the guise of the "rosy coomb" where mandragora is soon to grow as the offspring of that union. Robinson himself observes in his logbook the simultaneousness of those two modes of behavior: one aims at an artificial process of socialization through the administration of the island, the other at dehumanization pure and simple, as if the human being were incapable of preserving his selfhood in solitude and could survive only by faking sociality and/or reverting to animality.

Robinson's civilizing endeavor, relativized as it is by its purely symbolic function and its counterpoint of regressive experiences, is subjected to an implicit criticism in the form of a caricatured exaggeration. Defoe's Robinson was content with leading the decent and laborious life of an

honest Christian, under the respectful gaze of his animal companions. Tournier's Robinson sinks into a neurotic administrative simulation; writes a charter and penal code for Speranza; builds a court of law, a temple, and a conservatory of weights and measures; and dons a ceremonial habit to take a census of the turtles or to inaugurate bridges and roads. Defoe's Protestant ideology was expressed in the sublime and apologetic mode of Bible reading; the ideology of Tournier's Robinson is edicted and *indicted* in the form of Benjamin Franklin's productivist catechism, whose moralistic and down-to-earth maxims he inscribes in huge letters on the rocks of Speranza, and thus risks exposing himself to the attention of the savages. This degrading exposition is of course tantamount to a critique of the model, who was aware neither of the historical determination of his motives (capitalistic accumulation disguised as puritan morality) nor of their vanity.

Thus torn between two antithetical but equally hopeless postulations, Robinson becomes unwittingly predisposed to taking in Friday's lesson. Friday will turn out to be less a companion and assistant than a burden and rival at first (he engages in sabotage more than in work; he pollutes the rosy coomb with his black-striped mandragora), and later an example and a master. Friday's arrival itself significantly repudiates the hypotext. In Defoe, Robinson has been alarmed by a first landing of the savages and keenly desires to find a servant who might help him leave the island; he even dreams of Friday's rescue, which will not take him by surprise but, on the contrary, fulfill his expectations. In Tournier, there is no expectation and no intended rescue but quite the opposite: when Robinson sees the fugitive come toward him, he heeds only his own safety, and seeking to satisfy the pursuers in order to fend them off from his estate, he takes aim at the fugitive; it is only his dog's move that deflects the bullet's trajectory and has it strike the first pursuer. According to a trick often found in Giraudoux, fate comes about in spite of the character's intentions, and by way of an unforeseeable accident that sets him on the right path again. But the incident has been shorn of its original motivation in the process: in Defoe, Robinson delivered the savage to gain a companion; in Tournier, that action is purely accidental and answers no desire of Robinson's. He could well have done without Friday, whose presence as an intruder he will find offensive until the liberating explosion occurs.

From that point onward, Tournier's narrative takes a radically divergent path from Defoe's. Nothing in the latter could remotely foreshadow—even *a contrario*—the whole array of Friday's initiatives: the flying arrows,

the victory over the old he-goat and its metamorphosis into a kite and a wind harp, which were to open up Robinson to his solar and aerial vocation, his playful, circular, and cosmic sexuality, and free him of all human bonds. There is nothing of the kind in Defoe except one passage that Tournier may not even have noticed, for it belongs to the postinsular sequel to *Robinson Crusoe* and occurs during the crossing of the Pyrenees. A bear is threatening the safety of the group of travelers, and Friday begs them to let him deal with it: "Me shakee te hand with him; me make you good laugh. . . . Now you see me teachee the bear dance." He leads the beast to a tree, into which he climbs, followed by the bear; then he jumps to the ground, and the bear, deprived of its prey, slowly and clumsily comes down the tree, clasping the trunk with its four paws. The moment it reaches the ground, Friday shoots it dead through the ear: "So we kill bear in my country." "This was indeed a good diversion to us," is Robinson's comment. That seems to me to be the only instance in Defoe where Friday is allowed to show a native skill that can be of use to his master, as if only he had anything to teach Friday, without any conceivable reciprocity—an example of Defoe's extraordinary ethnocentric smugness. But the fact that this single occurrence, probably based on a real practice, should be staged within the register of "laughter" and "entertainment" is of notable significance. The Friday who is ready to "teachee the bear dance" obviously foreshadows for us the Friday of Tournier, when he announces that he will make the great he-goat Andoar "fly and sing." This most unexpected lesson shows how a great text can, unknown to its author, predict and anticipate some of its future metamorphoses.

*Friday*'s denouement is undoubtedly the high point of the book's radical emancipation from its hypotext. After having converted Robinson to the wild life, Friday departs on the English schooner, whereas Robinson, with the greater faith of a neophyte, chooses to remain on the island. But he chooses to stay without knowing that Friday has chosen to leave, and no one can tell what his decision would have been if he had known. The compassionate Tournier thoughtfully provides him with a second Friday in the person of the little ship's boy, whose countereducation he can then embark upon. This permutation—whatever its potential consequences—enacts Friday's ironic triumph: he is sufficiently emancipated to pursue his own game on board His Majesty's ship. His freedom and his mastery may be gauged by his capacity for betrayal. For Robinson, who remains tied to

his island as his long-ago model remained tied to his morality and religion, there is no doubt more to learn than to teach. To learn: i.e., to *unlearn.*

*Friday* does provide a transvaluation of *Robinson Crusoe,* as rigorous as that effected by Unamuno upon *Don Quixote.* In this respect the title clearly (very clearly) says what it means. But it is to my mind very significant that in this book titled *Friday* the narrative should for the most part remain focalized upon Robinson (I have pointed out one of the few exceptions). The apology of the noble savage is as ever assigned to the civilized character, and the author himself identifies in no way with Friday but with Robinson; his Robinson is fascinated and ultimately converted by Friday, but he remains the focus—I might say the *master*—of the narrative, and of a narrative that tells his story, not Friday's. Someone is here to say, "Friday was right," but that someone, despite a seeming devaluation, remains Robinson. The true *Friday,* wherein Robinson would be seen, described, and judged by Friday, has yet to be written. But no Robinson, however well-meaning, can ever hope to write that particular *Friday.*

Hypertexts, as is well known, generate hypertexts. The endless series of Robinson books does not end with *Vendredi, ou Les Limbes du Pacifique* {*Friday, or The Other Island*}, even in the case of Tournier himself. In 1971, Antoine Vitez turned it into a children's play, which he staged at the Palais de Chaillot. At the very same time, Tournier wrote a version of the book for children under the title *Vendredi, ou La Vie sauvage* {*Friday and Robinson*}.[2] This second *Friday* was intended for readers who were presumably unequal to the task of reading the first one, which he abridged, simplified, and expurgated of its overly philosophical aspects and those passages that might have been too disturbing for a youthful audience. I suppose this text causes the child reader no more discomfort than the innumerable adaptations of the original *Robinson Crusoe.* But when an adult reader reads this second *Friday* with the memory of the first in mind, an unforeseen reading takes place, not programmed by the adapter, which is properly speaking *inappropriate* and unavoidably causes uneasiness. I engage in a dual-focus reading of a text that lends itself to but does not anticipate it. I note explanations *ad usum Delphini,* instances of censorship, compromises, little cowardly betrayals. What must we think, for example, of that *Friday* without a rosy coomb, without mandragora, and castrated of its erotic dimension? I find it shocking that the author should have lent himself to or, rather, engaged in such an operation. What I see is that the capital scene

of Friday's arrival has been subjected to a curious defacement: this time Robinson Crusoe aims not at the fugitive but at the first pursuer. Tenn's move deviates the bullet toward the second pursuer, the first one stops to help him, and Friday is saved, but no longer against Robinson's wishes; the dog's intervention thus loses any pragmatic function. It all seems as if the author had wished to keep his bit of narrative cleverness while at the same time salvaging conventional morality by erasing Robinson's selfish motive and reverting, as it were, to Defoe's version. A little later, I see that Friday has gained a motive to confront Andoar, his touching and exclusive affection for the little goat Anda, and I wonder whether this retroactive motivation is beneficial or detrimental to the narrative. But above all I feel that these observations and questions are out of place, as is my curiosity concerning the relationship between these two texts, since the virtual reader of *Friday, or The Other Island* is not supposed to be acquainted with *Friday and Robinson.*

But who is to decide? In this sphere, of course, custom lays down the law, and where all texts or versions of a text are accessible, or have even been published by the author himself, as in the present case, every act of reading, even the most indiscreet, is legitimate. Hence it follows that every act of writing is responsible. *Friday and Robinson* is, in principle, a reserved version whose underlying writerly intent is clearly inscribed in its text as targeting one category of readers and excluding another. But this text, once published, can also reach an unwanted reader, as Robinson aims at Friday and kills his pursuer. That unforeseen and no doubt importunate reader becomes superimposed upon the intended addressee, and this double "reception" conjures up all by itself what might be termed a palimpsest of reading. I am alone with that text, and yet I feel myself to be two: the child it is intended for and the grown-up it reaches. Whence I infer that it squints.

Whatever the case may be, *Friday and Robinson* is a transposition of a transposition, and thus typically a hyper-hypertext that is in some respects closer to its hypo-hypotext, *Robinson Crusoe*, than was its own hypotext, *Friday, or The Other Island.* The implications are endlessly fascinating: from one correction to the next, from one moralizing improvement to another, one can imagine that Tournier might end up producing an exact copy of *Robinson Crusoe.* Thus did Borges's Pierre Menard proceed in relation to *Don Quixote*, which he retrieved by simply, as it were, taking the view opposite to Unamuno's. The history of hypertextuality, which can often

be equated with the history of literature, could thus be coming full circle. Only imagine an innocent reader (a rare species) of *Ulysses* or of *Naissance de l'Odyssée.* Innocent and idle. One fine day he undertakes to rewrite in archaic Greek (he may be innocent and idle, but he happens to be a Hellenist) either one of those texts, or both at once. And lo and behold, he reinvents the Homeric text word for word . . . and everything has to start all over again.

## 76

I do not wish to leave the subject of transvaluation without mentioning its most drastic and yet most enigmatic manifestation: Kleist's *Penthesilea* (1808).

The story of Penthesilea's death probably dates back to the first post-Homeric epic, the *Aethiopis*, in which it immediately succeeds Hector's funeral, the *Iliad*'s last episode: romance follows on the heels of the epic. According to Proclus's summary, the Queen of the Amazons runs to the Trojans' rescue and slaughters Greek warriors, then comes up against Achilles, who kills her in a duel. Thersites then throws insults at Achilles, who fells him with a single punch. The plot line thus summarized remains somewhat obscure and hardly accounts for Thersites' insults. Quintus Smyrnaeus (*Posthomerica* 1), who knew of the *Aethiopis* only through Proclus, sought to motivate them somewhat by filling out the character of Achilles and showing him to have fallen for Penthesilea's posthumous charms at Aphrodite's instigation:

> Achilles' very heart was wrung
> With love's remorse to have slain a thing so sweet,
> Who might have borne her home, his queenly bride,
> To chariot-glorious Phthia; for she was
> Flawless, a very daughter of the Gods,
> Divinely tall, and most divinely fair.[1]

Thersites then addressed him sharply as follows: "Achilles, thou depraved heart . . . to sleep with women is a coward's occupation." The Peleid's reaction made sense: after all, he was being charged with an act that he had put himself in no position to commit. But some scholia refer to "carnal union between Achilles and the dead Penthesilea," which would provide a better justification for Thersites' sarcasms.

The nuclear theme in all this evidently remains that of the beautiful woman warrior—it will recur in Virgil's Camilla, Ariosto's Bradamante, Tasso's Clorinda—and more specifically of the beauty of the dead woman warrior: hence Achilles' regrets, since he is at one and the same time responsible for that death and an indirect victim of it. One might take this as a starting point, and without violating the basic data (Penthesilea must die and Achilles, fated as he is to another death, must survive), one might imagine a more romantic and more gratifying amplification. For example, Penthesilea might only have fainted before being discovered by Achilles, and one might then imagine a requited passion and a love affair between them, Penthesilea being unaware that Achilles was her fond victor. But some incident—say, Thersites' intervention—might reveal his true identity to her, and Penthesilea, enraged by that double defeat, would challenge Achilles to a new fight and, seeing that she decidedly could not defeat him, might throw herself on his sword.

That is more or less the line adopted by Kleist: Penthesilea believes Achilles to be her prisoner; the two protagonists are given the time to fall in love and to glimpse a future of common happiness. Then, brutally, fate turns around and tilts over into horror: enraged by her discovery that she is Achilles' prisoner, Penthesilea throws herself at him, pierces his neck with an arrow, and devours him with her dogs while he is still alive and wondering: "Penthesilea! My betrothed! What have you done? Is this the Feast of Roses you promised me?" Coming to her senses shortly thereafter, she dies of remorse and, I hope, regret.

The pragmatic transformation is a bold one, since it does away with the hallowed tradition of Achilles' invulnerability and his subsequent feats until Paris's arrow, guided by Apollo, strikes him down. It amounts to a complete axiological inversion in relation to the data of the hypotext: it is no longer Achilles who experiences guilt and wretchedness after Penthesilea's death; the obverse occurs, and in the most atrocious manner. The victim becomes the executioner and the executioner the victim. Kleist is said to have drawn inspiration from an Alexandrine version, but none, to my knowledge, assigns the final victory to Penthesilea and death to Achilles. The chosen variant is at all events the sole responsibility of the poet, who is here letting himself be carried away by his inspiration with the most unfettered and, it would seem, the most gratuitous abandon: the triumph of a phantasm, perhaps in its purest form.

# 77

For reasons stated above, I have so far postponed the discussion of two hypertexts whose status is complex and which are characteristic, each in its own manner, of the genre that I was proposing to name the *supplement*.[1] A supplement, as we have seen, is an extrapolation disguised as an interpolation, a transposition in the shape of a continuation.

Such is roughly the status of Valéry's *Faust*, or at any rate of that unfinished "comedy" that makes up the greater part of it: *Lust: La Demoiselle de cristal* (1940–43).[2]

Valéry himself designates that work as a "third *Faust*," which might come as a sequel to the two parts of Goethe's *Faust*. But at the end of the second part, or second *Faust*, the hero dies and joins Margaret in some well-deserved—or undeserved—Heaven. The hero of a third *Faust* would thus have to be granted some kind of resurrection, or, according to Valéry's ambiguous term, a "reincarnation." He is a Faust living in modern times who has somehow survived his traditional adventures, who dubs that remote period "the time of my old age," and who preserves only an indirect memory of those adventures, mediated (a little as in the second *Don Quixote*, or even more so) by the reading of the famous narratives they inspired. He introduces himself as "Professor doctor Faustus, member of the Academy of the Dead Sciences, etc. The hero of several esteemed literary and musical works. . . . So much has been written about me that I no longer know who I am. True, I have not read all those numerous works . . . but those that I have come to know suffice to give me a singularly rich and multiple idea of my own existence. Have you seen the devil? Some have said, have written, that I have. Some have even sung of it, sung it abundantly. So often has it been said, written, and sung that I ended up believing it. . . . But now . . . I am beginning to believe it no longer."

What we have, then, is a continuation that is strongly proleptic (Faust four centuries later) but also quite *metaleptic*,[3] since the hero of a series of stories, dramas, and operas steps out of his paper and fiction world ("You are not content with being a book yourself . . ."), which he wisely only half-believes in, to enter a "real" life—i.e., a life that is every bit as fictional but one degree below: Valéry's Faust remembers that he was once the hero of Goethe's or Gounod's *Faust*.

With this "reincarnation," which may be only a primary (fictional) incarnation, the Faustian theme undergoes a significant transposition: Mephistopheles, in whom no one believes any longer, is but a "poor devil," fairly "outmoded," whose powers are reduced to a few insignificant conjuring tricks and who is a failure both with Faust and with his disciples. *He* now needs a rejuvenating cure and must therefore enter a compact with Faust—a reversal indeed.

As for the Faustian problematic, it is here transposed into an issue typical of Valéry: Faust hesitates between two projects, one of which—the intellectual project—pertains no longer to knowledge but to literary creation. His ambition is to write a book that would enact Mallarmé's dream of the supreme Book: "One will be able to take it up at any point, to leave it at any other. . . . No one will read it, perhaps, but those who will have read it will be able to read no other." His other temptation is, more simply (?), to renounce all writing and be content with living. Alone in the company of his tender secretary, Lust, Faust is enjoying the beauty of the evening. "Could it be that I am at the height of my art? I am living. And I do nothing but live. That is a work indeed. . . . I am the one I am. I am at the height of my art, in the classical period of the art of living. That is my opus: to live. Is this not everything?"

That contest, so typically in the manner of Valéry, will not be solved in *Lust* any more than it has been in "reality": act 3, a dialogue between Mephistopheles and the disciple, contributes nothing to a solution, and the fourth and last act will forever be missing. This is perhaps as it should be. The "prolonged hesitation" between Living and Writing will be prolonged indefinitely—no doubt because for "Faust" the real choice consists in that very refusal to choose.

The hypertextual status of Giraudoux's *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* (1935) is even more complex, or perhaps only more undecided.[4] The theme of the Greek delegation's "last chance" attempt to obtain the restitution of Helen and avoid war is in itself not unprecedented. A meeting of that kind probably found its way into the Cyprian poems, and Dictys devotes most of his book 2 to it: after the first skirmishes of the Trojan war, Ulysses and Menelaus came to plead the Greek cause before the Trojan council; Hector was in favor of giving Helen back, but Aeneas opposed the motion, and won. Giraudoux probably knew of it, but even if he did not, his play would still be in fact a dramatic transposition of that episode. The general public, however, is most often ignorant of it, and

perceives *La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* as an analeptic continuation of the *Iliad.*

Whether as a continuation of Homer or a transposition of Dictys (himself a continuator of Homer or a transposer of a continuator of Homer), *La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* {The Trojan War will not take place} provides in either case the clearest illustration of a favorite procedure of Giraudoux's, which we have already come across in *Électre* and *Judith* and which must now be considered separately. It consists here in conjuring up dramatic suspense by means of a question that the title poses under the guise of a paradoxical negation. Caught between the fallacious promise of that title and their knowledge of history, or of the legend, unwitting spectators may legitimately wonder whether, in this version, the Trojan War will take place or not and, according to their chosen alternative, whether Hector will succeed or fail in preventing it, and how.

This basic suspense could not carry the whole play if it were not given added resonance by making the issue a more fundamental one: such is the thematically essential function of Giraudoux's process of transvaluation. On the one hand, it consists in demoting the heroic values and in having them voiced by the ridiculous or odious characters of Priam and the jingoistic Demokos, who exalts war because war is his bread and butter; on the other hand, it consists in magnifying pacifist feelings by entrusting them to that ever likable couple, Hector and Andromache. As in *Naissance de l'Odyssée*, but in this case with much more gravity, since war is no longer a memory but a menace—and, for Troy, the absolute menace of total destruction—the axiological equilibrium is entirely reversed to the benefit of the "human" and antiheroic values of peace, whose metonymic equivalent, as in *Amphitryon 38*, is conjugal love: at the end of their last and decisive meeting, Hector asks Ulysses what is urging him to save the peace, and Ulysses answers, "Andromache's eyelashes dance as my wife Penelope's do." Hector's role is entirely devoted to the exaltation of that pacifism which, in 1935, provided the primary message of the play.

That valuation naturally wins the public's assent—an absolute prerequisite if Hector is to be set up as the hero, and if the spectator is to root for him. The whole plot will thus consist in a succession of tests and trials: getting Helen to agree to go; getting Paris and, with greater ado, Priam and the Trojan old men who dote on "Beauty" to give Helen up; getting Busiris, the international law expert, to solve the minor jurisdictional obstacles; closing the gates of war; quelling an early confrontation between

the Greek ruffian Ajax and Demokos; bearing with Ajax's slap in the face; persuading Ulysses to take Helen back and to renounce a profitable war. Hector wins each one of those tests, but he feels that "with each victory the prize escapes [him]." Even his allies—whether out of anguish (Andromache, Hecuba), clear-sightedness (Ulysses), or divination (Helen and, of course, Cassandra)—remain unconvinced by his endeavors to ward off a war that is inscribed within the will of the gods (Helen, Ulysses says, is a "hostage of fate") and within the very elements: "You're already living in the light of the Greek war." Ulysses, though without illusions, is leaving; war is receding but, says he, "I can't shake off the feeling that the road from here to my ship is a long way." Still 460 steps to go in a countdown that is interrupted by the slightest incidents. Then comes the truly tragic peripeteia: Ajax drunkenly attempts to assault Andromache. Hector lifts his javelin. Cassandra succeeds in dragging Ajax away. Enter Demokos, who has just learned of Helen's restitution and calls for war. He must be stopped; Hector slays him. All is saved. But Demokos, dying, cries out that Ajax the Greek has killed him. "The curtain, which had begun to fall, is lifted little by little." The Trojan crowd pounces upon Ajax: the irremediable incident has occurred; all is lost. The gates of war are open, and the curtain falls on Cassandra's famous line: "The Trojan poet is dead. And now the Grecian poet will have his word."

This tragic reversal, superbly symbolized by the curtain's hesitation, is clearly yet another case of self-defeating anticipation: it is by slaying Demokos to prevent him from provoking war that Hector provides him with the very means of triggering it. Hector's saving gesture has turned into a fateful gesture. The tragic trap, the "infernal machine," has once again done its job; the gods are satisfied.

But Cassandra's final line deserves particular notice, for it underscores the hypertextual character of the play and, more specifically, of the fate within it that is toying with men. What does that fate actually consist in for us modern spectators? It consists in the fact that the hypotext—the *Iliad*, naturally—says (narrates) that the Trojan War *did* take place. Fate, as everyone knows, is *what is written*. Written where? In heaven, no doubt, behind Olympus, on the Great Scroll of Jacques le Fataliste's captain. But more simply in the first (?) text that told this story, or rather, its sequel and outcome. Thanks to Homer, and to him alone, we know that Hector will fail and die. Giraudoux's text does not have much leeway: it offers a kind of spacious variation in the form of a prelude, which plays with its

*prescribed* end as the mouse, perhaps, thinks it is playing with the cat. It can invent all kinds of delays and false exits, and does so, but it cannot emancipate itself to the point of evading the deadline and would not even think of trying. Quite the obverse is true: the name of the game is to make it more cruel, and to introduce fate—death—where it was least expected, using the very means suggested by the belief that one could escape it. The sole purpose of that whole sequence of endeavors and illusions was finally to let "the Greek poet speak." Fate is the work of the Greek poet; fate is the hypotext, and it all seems as if Giraudoux, unlike thousands of his predecessors, had intended to write not a hypertextual tragedy (they nearly always are), but a tragedy whose tragic effect was organically linked with its hypertextuality, just as the comic effects of *Virgile travesti* and *La Belle Hélène* were essentially linked to their own hypertextuality.[5] But we already know how unstable those effects can be. *La Belle Hélène* also leads up to a disaster—the same one, of course. No one ever thinks of it. All it takes is for someone to do so.

## 78

Whatever the (highly variable) degree of their emancipation or their complexity, all the hypertexts discussed so far have presented themselves to us as transformations and/or imitations of previous works (whether singular or multiple) that were known to us, with which they could be compared so as to assess their difference and the nature of the hypertextual relation. But there are works that we know or suspect to be hypertextual whose hypotext is missing, temporarily or not. "Plagiarism," as Giraudoux again put it in *Siegfried*, "is the basis of all literatures except the first, which happens to be unknown to us." His statement may be excessive, but it is highly improbable that the *Iliad*, the *Song of Roland*, and *Lancelot, or The Knight of the Cart* should have had no models or antecedents. We are most likely faced here with hypertexts whose hypotexts are unknown; we are almost certain of their hypertextuality, but it remains beyond description for us and thus beyond definition.

That zero-degree—*epsilon*, rather—of a wholly enigmatic hypertextuality is not merely the vaguely fabulous or mythical privilege of very ancient texts, or of texts whose sources are lost in the sands of a poorly attested history. There is at least one modern example of it: all its data are well known to us, except one.

During one of his numerous leaves of absence in Paris, in 1833, the French consul {Stendhal} in Civitavecchia receives from one of his friends, Mme Jules Gaulthier, the manuscript of a novel she had written: *Le Lieutenant.* Back at his consulate, he reads the manuscript and on 4 May 1834 he mails a rather severe critique of it to its author. The style is too emphatic: "I have cruelly scrawled all over it." There are too many superlatives; he advises her to diet upon Mérimée "to cure you of the provincial bombast." The psychology is too descriptive, insufficiently acted out: "Never write *Olivier's burning passion for Hélène.* The poor novelist must endeavor to make burning passion credible, but never name it: that goes against modesty." The denouement is trite: "I have suggested another denouement on the manuscript." The characters are too often designated by their first names: "Leuwen or the student driven out of the École Polytechnique, I would adopt that title." Stendhal carried the emendation no further at the time, but he added: "I am all enthralled by the *Lieutenant*, which I have just finished. But how can I return this manuscript to you? I shall have to await an opportunity, etc."[1] Whether or not it was returned, the manuscript has vanished, together with the cruel scrawlings of its corrector. It is still being sought, but at the present time we are missing what we must take to be the first version of *Lucien Leuwen*, which was not yet—scrawlings excepted—by Stendhal's hand. What followed has come down to us through the drafts of *Leuwen*, which show that Stendhal set to work on the morrow of that letter, without any further reference to the *Lieutenant*, and with a much more ambitious outline, only the first part of which (Leuwen in Nancy) must have overlapped with Mme Gaulthier's novel. The fact most probably remains that like *Armance*, *The Red and the Black*, and *The Charterhouse of Parma*, *Leuwen* was born (if I may be forgiven an all too obvious analogy) in the manner of pearls that can take shape only around a foreign body. The first move was that of correction: a pen-in-hand reading, erasures, marginal notes. If Mme Gaulthier's novel is the first version, the second consists in those corrections, which vanished with it, and which may have already contained, with the "other denouement," the denouement of *Leuwen*: the heroine is exculpated, the two lovers unite. Even Leuwen's name seems to come from Mme Gaulthier, since Stendhal suggested it to her as a title after taxing her with an excessive use of the first name, which no doubt was not yet Lucien but Olivier. The first draft of *Leuwen*, as we know it, is only the third.

Here, then, is a genesis sorely deprived of its starting point. We know that *Leuwen* owes to *Le Lieutenant* its first part, located in Nancy, but we do not

know to what extent. From the wording of the letter of 4 May one could easily infer that the model provided the historical circumstances (a student of the Ecole Polytechnique expelled after a demonstration in 1832 or 1834) and the social setting (provincial garrison life). There is no indication of the part played by the love plot, nor do we know whether Stendhal had to alter it a little, a lot, or not at all to retrieve the emotional pattern, so utterly, so typically *Beyliste*, which he had sketched out ten years earlier in *Racine et Shakespeare*: "That is how a young man, whom the gods have graced with a delicate soul, should he chance to be made sublieutenant and to be dumped with his garrison in the company of certain women, would believe in good faith, seeing his comrades' success and the nature of their pleasures, that he is insensitive to love. One day, at last, chance has it that he is introduced to a simple, natural, honest woman, worthy of love, and he discovers himself to have a heart."

The hypertextual effect here takes on a somewhat subdued but—paradoxically—all the more vivid form. I am fully aware that most readers could not care less, or would miss that effect out of simple ignorance of the fact, which bothers only specialists (and not even them: they often excel only at raising pointless questions),[2] or amateurs of literary teratology. But for the latter, it may be surmised that the ever possible unearthing of Mme Gaulthier's manuscript would put an end to most of their concerns: they would know at last what that *Lieutenant* looked like, as well as the detail of what Stendhal held against it and, in the aftermath, the treatment that he subjected it to when writing his own *Leuwen*. The hypertextual relation would be *fixed*, and thus neutralized, and every reader could at every page measure the distance and define the transformation. As things stand, we are reduced to conjectures: i.e., to questions. Each sentence of the first part of *Leuwen* can conceal a trap: might it not be the pure, unadulterated text of Mme Gaulthier herself?—I cannot for one moment believe it. But why not impure? And to what degree? The curious (and ever frustrated) readers find themselves in the position of a paleographer who already knows that his text conceals another but does not yet know which one. This is the most irritating palimpsest of all, which reduces me to hunches and to questionings. What, in *Leuwen*, belongs to continuation, what to transformation? As a continuation, how faithful is it stylistically? (Hardly faithful at all, no doubt: Gaulthier improved by a "Mérimée diet"?) As a transformation, how much belongs to style (see above), how much to the handling of time, mood, voice, actions, motives? Which values have been

added, which deleted? Faced with a riddle that is insoluble (unqualifiable), I note that the "analytic method" suggested here results only in raising more unanswerable questions. Those are no doubt the most interesting, but I marvel at the fact that no amateur of literary hoaxes has yet come up with the idea of filling that gap and publishing that retrieved *Lieutenant*, complete with critical apparatus. Here the sophisticated imagination that is the pride (or shame) of our times might find a playground almost as rich as that of hypertextuality itself: the field of fictional hypotexts, or *pseudohypotexts*. Which Borges, which Calvino still to come will give us at last the first saga, the unknown source of the *Iliad*, the autograph manuscript of Chateaubriand's *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*?

## 79

Every object can be transformed, every manner imitated, and no art can by nature escape those two modes of derivation that define hypertextuality in literature and more generally define all second-degree artistic practices, or *hyperartistic* practices. For reasons yet to be discussed, I do not believe that we can legitimately extend the notion of the text, and thus of the hypertext, to all arts. After this longish survey of literary hypertextuality, I am not about to embark upon yet another survey of hyperartistic practices—which would be much longer and would, among other things, exceed my competence. But it seems useful to me to cast a brief glance at the subject, cautiously restricting it to painting and music, with a view to bringing to light, as we go along, some similarities or correspondences that reveal the transartistic character of derivational practices, but also a few disparities that point out the irreducible specificity, in this respect at least, of every art.

Pictorial transformation is as old as painting itself, but our contemporary culture, more than any other, has undoubtedly developed through its playful-satiric potential the pictorial equivalents of parody and travesty.[1] Disfiguring the portrait of the Mona Lisa in one way or another is a fairly common exercise, which received its credentials from Marcel Duchamp in 1919, when he exhibited his famous LHOOQ—a bewhiskered Gioconda.[2] Within the Dadaist-Surrealist context, the mustache irresistibly brings to mind another prima donna and suggests a contamination recently effected by Philippe Halsman: *Mona Dali*, a Mona Lisa who has Dali's face and is shown fingering a fitting quantity of green banknotes. True to his aesthetics

of repetition, Andy Warhol proposed *Thirty Is Better Than One*: thirty little copies of the Mona Lisa juxtaposed on one canvas. A more elaborate advertisement for a packet of ten flashbulbs (instead of five) shows nine failed takes of a pseudo-Mona, followed by the "good" picture—or that of Leonardo, at all events. The caption: "Now you have twice as many chances of getting her right." Another commercial shows Mona sporting stereophonic headphones, with a caption that she answers implicitly: "Ever wonder why she's smiling?"[3] Another pictorial celebrity, Jan van Eyck's portrait *Arnolfini and His Bride*, was subjected to an unexpected and thus effective minimal variation by Robert Colescott: the young lady turned out to be "colored," as they used to say. And in Peter Saul's *Liddul Gurnica*, the central bull's head was displaced by that of Picasso himself.

Those partial transformations can fairly be said to answer the playful mode of parody. But the specifically pictorial practice of the *replica* (an artist's or a workshop's copy) almost always entails an element of transformation that can be assigned neither to play nor, obviously, to satire but rather, I imagine, to the quite serious purpose of individualizing each replica by some variant. See, among others, Chardin's two *Bénédicités*, in the Louvre and the Hermitage.

The equivalent of travesty would be—in a manner both more massive and more subtle—the complete redoing of a painting whose subject and structural elements would be preserved but executed in a different pictorial style. Mel Ramos has turned himself into a specialist of such stylistic transformations by redoing in pop style Ingres's *Odalisque*, Manet's *Olympia*, and Velázquez's *Venus*. The stylistic characteristics of the resulting works quite naturally prompt one to view them as playful or satirical transformations, but the transforming gesture itself is not tied up with a specific mode, in painting any more than in literature. And it is evidently in his personal mode, whose ostentatious playfulness often conceals a fiercely serious pursuit, that Picasso has so often paraphrased in his own idiolect classical works such as Ingres's *Bain turc* (1907), Delacroix's *Femmes d'Alger* (1955), Velázquez's *Meninas* (1956), and the *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1961) by Manet, who in his own time . . .

Imitation in painting is an even more frequent practice than transformation. The very word *pastiche*, remember, came from the field of music and traveled through that of painting before becoming established in literature, and the practice of fraudulent imitation is much more common (because much more profitable) in painting than elsewhere. But here we must take

into account a fact that has already been pointed out, the existence of the *copy*, a practice specific to the visual arts, which is, as it were, the direct imitation of a work, i.e., its reproduction pure and simple, either by the same artist or his workshop (replica), or by another artist who engages in imitation for technical training purposes or for any other purposes, including fraudulent ones.[4] There is no equivalent for this practice in literature or music, because it would have no aesthetic value: to copy a literary or musical text is in no way a significant token of authorship or musicianship but a mere copyist's task. On the other hand, producing a good painting or sculpture in the manner of a master requires a technical competence that is, in principle, equal to the model's.

But painting is also familiar with indirect imitation, which is in all arts characteristic of the pastiche—the imitation of a master's manner in a new performance, one that is original and unlisted in his catalogue. In all ages, this type of competence has been directed toward the production of fraudulent apocrypha, or *fakes*, best exemplified by Van Meegeren's pseudo-Vermeers. But a skilled imitator may just as easily, and more honestly, sign his own name to canvases painted "in the manner of" a famous artist, thus providing the exact equivalent of the self-confessed literary pastiche. Jean-Jacques Montfort thus produces perfectly lawful imitations of Dufy, Picasso, Dali, and others; his paintings are not different from classical fakes except in openly declaring themselves to be imitations. Moreover, imitation here, as in literature or music, plays a positive part in the painter's apprenticeship: Goya started out by imitating Velázquez, and Picasso by imitating Lautrec, just as Mallarmé more or less consciously tried his hand at Baudelaire's expense, or Wagner at Meyerbeer's—and a few others'.

In music, the range of transformational possibilities is probably broader than in painting, broader than in literature certainly, given the complexity of musical discourse, which, unlike the literary text, is unhampered by the strict "linearity" of the verbal signifier. Even a single and isolated sound is defined by four parameters at least (pitch, intensity, duration, timbre), each of which can be modified separately by means of transposition, dynamic reinforcement or weakening, a lengthening or abridgment of the sound production, a change of timbre. A melody, or linear succession of single sounds, can be subjected to as many elementary alterations in its entirety or in each of its constituent parts. In addition, it lends itself to more complex transformations: inversions of intervals, retrogressive

movements, combinations of the two, changes of rhythm and/or tempo, and all the potential combinations of those various options. The harmonic or contrapuntal superimposition of several melodic lines multiplies this already considerable array of possibilities. Finally, song may append to the musical discourse an additional track—"words"—that brings along its own transformational potential: different words on the same tune, a different tune for the same words, etc. This mind-boggling transformational capacity is the very soul of musical composition, and not merely in its "classical" state, since the same principles are known to operate in jazz, for instance, or in serial music. What in literature still passes for a somewhat marginal diversion is almost universally considered as the basic principle of the musical "development": i.e., of musical discourse.

Studying the operative modes of transformation in music would thus be tantamount to describing exhaustively the forms of that discourse. I shall content myself with mentioning a few markers. *Parody* in the classical sense, or the alteration of only the verbal register of a melody: Bach, as we know, made use in his church cantatas of arias first composed for secular cantatas. *Transcription*, or the purely instrumental type of transformation, with its two antithetical varieties: *reduction* (from the orchestral version to one for a particular instrument, generally the piano; Liszt is known to have effected an impressive number of piano reductions upon orchestral scores, such as Beethoven's or Berlioz's symphonies) and *orchestration* (from the piano to the orchestra, as Ravel proceeded with Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, or his own *Ma mère l'oye*, not to mention the numberless reorchestrations or modifications of the instrumental distribution; Mahler, for instance, reorchestrated Schumann's symphonies, and Rimsky-Korsakoff did the same for many of Mussorgsky's works). But this procedure, and the obverse one of a "return" to the original score, has been the daily fare of musical interpretation for over a century. Orchestration and reorchestration lend themselves to more thorough rewriting, closer to what is called elsewhere an *arrangement*: e.g., Stravinsky's treatment in his *Pulcinella* of a few themes borrowed from Pergolesi, among others. I can do no better here than quote Stravinsky himself:

> I began by composing on the Pergolesi manuscripts themselves, as though I were correcting an old work of my own. I began without preconceptions or aesthetic attitudes, and I could not have predicted anything about the result. I knew that I could not produce a "forgery"

> of Pergolesi because my motor habits are so different; at best, I could repeat him in my own accent. That the result was to some extent a satire was probably inevitable—who could have treated *that* material in 1919 without satire?—but even this observation is hindsight; I did not set out to compose a satire and, of course, Diaghilev hadn't even considered the possibility of such a thing. A stylish orchestration was what Diaghilev wanted, and nothing more, and my music so shocked him that he went about for a long time with a look that suggested The Offended Eighteenth Century. In fact, however, the remarkable thing about *Pulcinella* is not how much but how little has been added or changed.[5]

The listener is sole judge in the matter (to me, at least, it seems that Stravinsky's presence, especially in harmonic terms, becomes more and more intrusive as the score progresses), but the fact remains that "stylish orchestration" is an apt formula here to designate a fairly accurate equivalent of literary transstylization, or of the manner in which Picasso (the analogy is a stale but inescapable one) translates, "in his own accent" as well, a canvas by Velázquez or Delacroix. Simple *transposition*, a change of key or a change of mode within the same key, is no doubt part of that complex practice, but we know how it can change, all by itself, the coloring or the mood of a work. *Variation*, whether it be brought to bear on an original theme (Bach's *Goldberg Variations*) or a borrowed one (Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*), constitutes a specific musical form or genre, containing within it all possibilities for transformation, whether canonical or not—and we know what creative use Beethoven made of those possibilities. With more freedom, or perhaps laziness, *paraphrase* embroiders one or more borrowed themes with a whole network of ad libitum improvisations (Liszt left forty or so paraphrases of every opera in fashion, from Mozart to Wagner). This is the form that most readily lends itself to playful, or even ironic, purposes; see for example the *Souvenirs de Bayreuth* by Fauré and Messager, whose subtitle—"a fantasy in the form of a quadrille (for two pianos) upon favorite themes of the *Ring of the Nibelungen*"—clearly states the procedure and the attitude underlying it. Roughly the same transformational principle, applied to rhythm, pervades Jacques Loussier's famous jazzy arrangements, whose punning title, *Play Bach*, signals their status as travesty. I cannot recall the no less irreverent title that Jean Wiener gave to his transcriptions of Chopin's waltzes and mazurkas into tangos, in the heyday of the *Boeuf sur le toit*.

Finally, contemporary composers such as André Boucourechliev (*Ombres*) and Mauricio Kagel (*Ludwig van*) have pushed the technique of manipulation to extremes that are beyond my descriptive powers but whose procedures and spirit seem to me fairly close to the spirit and procedures of the Oulipo in literature.[6] This should not be taken to mean that the classical ages knew nothing of the role of humor in musical composition. Mozart's *Musical Joke* {*Ein musikalischer Spass*}, a well-known example, plays on pointedly "false" notes, and in these winks at his audience he is never far removed from some of Haydn's serious works. Mozart's first "pastiche concertos" are in truth centones (additive contaminations) of movements from fashionable sonatas, and the synthetic contamination of the quodlibet—consisting in combining two heterogeneous themes into one improvised counterpoint—was much practiced in Bach's time, and by Bach himself. Diabelli variation 20 (*Allegro molto alla "Notte e giorno faticar" da Mozart*) again resorts to a kind of contamination, which takes advantage of the similarity between the first bars of the Diabelli waltz and Leporello's aria.

To all these specifically textual possibilities of transformation must be added those connected with interpretation. It goes without saying that two interpreters or groups of interpreters, even playing on the same instruments, never give identical performances of the same score, and here again the transformational capacity is multiplied by a virtually infinite factor; concert or record lovers know this only too well (for their pleasure and at their expense). And this capacity, in turn, can be channeled into the playful or the satiric mode: think of the burlesque performances of the Hoffnung Festival, or of Cathy Berberian's recital, where she interpreted the same song (by John Lennon, if I am not mistaken) in the manner of several other singers, among them Elizabeth Schwarzkopf—in truth an easy prey to caricature.[7]

*In the manner of* . . . This phrase introduces the chapter—an inexhaustible one as well—of imitation in music.[8] The same multiplicity of parameters makes things as complex, in principle, as in transformation: one can mimic an author or a genre by separately imitating the melodic or structural patterns, the harmony, the instrumentation, etc. But that virtual diversity is probably less systematically, or less analytically, exploited, and stylistic imitation is generally as synthetic here as in literature or painting.

When dealing with continuation, I alluded to a few serious examples of musical imitation, but what we are facing here once again is a type of complexity that is specific to music: when working on the *Requiem* or

on *Turandot*, Süssmayr and Alfano could refer to Mozart's and Puccini's drafts, and they could use them with greater freedom than can a literary continuator (Alfano went so far as to take up themes from acts 1 and 2 and make judicious use of them in the love duet in act 3). Cerha's contribution to act 3 of *Lulu* is said to have been limited to the instrumentation of a score that had already been wholly written out. But continuation is not the only serious function of musical imitation; as in literature or painting, youthful imitation is entirely serious, and some pastiches function like "homages": Bizet's *Symphony in C* and Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony* pay homage to classical style; Debussy's *Hommage à Rameau* and Ravel's *Tombeau de Couperin* honor Rameau and Couperin (but here imitation is freer and more emancipated from its models). A real or imaginary local style can also be the object of such homage, as again in Debussy and Ravel's "Spanish" works, or in the Chinese local color of *Turandot*, the Japanese in *Madame Butterfly*, the "Egyptian" in *Aida*, etc. Pastiche in the playful-satiric mode can be found in Ravel mimicking Chabrier and Borodin, or in Casella mimicking Ravel, or in the ironic reworkings of ancient forms or of forms alien to the imitator's own aesthetics. Such is evidently the case for the coloratura soprano's singing exercise in act 1 of *Béatrice et Bénédict*, where Berlioz is having fun with a traditional form that he excoriates elsewhere; or for the aria in a similar vein sung by Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, or for the Italian tenor aria in the *Rosenkavalier*, a homage-cum-challenge to the rival, Puccini, who came up with an excellent pastiche of himself in Lauretta's aria in *Gianni Schicchi*; I would venture to say the same for Nanetta's aria in the last act of *Falstaff*. In both those cases the effect of caricature is linked to the jarring presence of a serious aria in a comical context. Self-caricature is not absent either from Rameau's *Platée*, where burlesque words make fun of a serious score. That contrast between music and words is one of the most efficient tricks of musical caricature (it is the very soul of some of the numbers in *La Belle Hélène*) and thus also of self-caricature, the most extreme instance of which may be Rossini's "Duet for Cats": a typically Rossinian aria sung on "words" reduced to a variety of caterwaulings. Here again, music is privileged to work with a double register that literature could not even dream of.

Closer to us, the genre of the parodic song, favored by some comedians, essentially consists in changing the lyrics while keeping the tune (or even the orchestral track) of a popular song. Not long ago, Jacques Brel's *Valse à mille temps* {The thousand-beat waltz} was turned by Jean Poiret into *La*

*Vache à mille francs* {The thousand-franc cow}; more recently still, Francis Cabrel's sentimental "Je l'aime à mourir" {I love her so much I could die} gave the imitator Patrick Sébastien the opportunity of coining "Je l'aime à courir" {I love her so much I want to run}, a title that clearly reveals the song's mood.[9] But with this third track (the voice), we have a third type of performance that is rather akin to pastiche: the imitation (timbre, delivery, singing style) of the singer-author himself. The complexity of such a "minor" example sets off by contrast the relatively restricted range of the literary medium. One could debate at length the parallelism between musical performance and the reading of texts; I shall abstain from such an argument. But it should at least be remembered that interpretation, as the word indicates, introduces a mediator between the work and the listener (in all cases, at least, where the listener and the interpreter are not one and the same—but are they ever?), a mediator whose function may be diversely described and appraised, but who at any rate must be acknowledged to have no existence in literature. Or, rather, to have had no existence since the disappearance of public readings, except in the theater, where the part played by performance (in the English sense of *performing art*) is indeed more significant (voice, delivery, acting, production, setting, costumes, etc.) than it is in pure music—opera being evidently enough the combination and synthesis of all those elements, and thus on the face of it the most complex of all arts.

Derivational practices can thus be seen to be in no way the privilege only of literature but to apply also to music and the visual arts, for what is true of painting is true to a large extent of sculpture and architecture—architectural pastiche is a well-known feature of the cityscape. These practices apply, however, in modes that are specific in every case; it would be rash to attempt to fit them into the grid of the categories of literary hypertextuality. The materials and techniques that are open to transformation and imitation are not the same; there are differences, sometimes of a fundamental nature, in the modes of existence and reception, in the ontological status of the works (consider, for example, the capital part played in musical discourse by repetition, for which there is no equivalent in painting, and almost none in literature, at least before Robbe-Grillet; or consider the simple fact that literature is the only art that partakes of, or benefits from, the plurality of languages), and meaning comes about differently too. There is nothing in music that corresponds to the semantic transformations of the type found

in Tournier's *Friday*, nothing in literature that corresponds to so elementary and efficient an operation as a simple melodic line's shift from a major to a minor key. When pointing out or recalling the universal character of hyperartistic practices, my aim is in no way to extrapolate to all the arts the results—if any—of an inquiry into hypertextuality. Rather, I envision a series of specific inquiries concerning each type of art, where possible parallelisms and convergences should in no case be postulated beforehand but observed after the fact. I may therefore have been too incautious in all I have said or suggested above in this respect—although the fundamental distinction between transformational and imitative practices still seems to me to be of universal relevance.

That distinction may well become irrelevant, however, in the particular case of a practice that has already been pointed out as specific to the visual arts: the copy. Reproduction may on the face of it appear to be but an extreme form of imitation and unconnected to transformation. Not so: the operation of the copy has nothing in common with the art of pastiche; it does not entail a previously acquired competence in an idiolect, to be applied to a new performance, even though it might at times benefit from such a competence. A copyist of the *View of Delft* starts out not necessarily, as Van Meegeren did, with a general knowledge of Vermeer's art but with a perception of *that* particular painting in its singularity. His aim is to reproduce its appearance as faithfully as possible and by means that may differ considerably from those used by its author. He is concerned only with the *View of Delft*, and his approach is paradoxically closer to a transformation than imitation: like transformation, a copy is interested only in its particular object, and rather than viewing it as an absolute pastiche, it would be more accurate to define it as a *null transformation*. And since no copy, of course, is ever perfect, it should be defined as a *minimal* transformation, here giving the adjective its strongest (possible) meaning—not of a very minimal transformation but of a transformation as minimal as is humanly possible. The copy thus offers that paradox of an effect of (maximal) imitation obtained through an effort at (minimal) transformation. This apparent convergence may in fact confirm the antithetical character of the two practices, since the positive extreme of one merges with the negative extreme of the other.

A symmetrical countercheck would have to be devised: that of a minimal imitation, about which one would have to ask whether it would be tantamount to a maximal transformation. One would have to imagine a pastiche

of Vermeer so bad (as pastiche) that it would not remotely resemble any of Vermeer's paintings; nothing then would prevent one from considering it a maximal transformation of the *View of Delft*, or of any other Vermeer. Let us choose *Guernica* as an example: should you strain for a moment to view it as a pastiche of Vermeer, you would quite reasonably have to define it as a minimal pastiche (a failed one, if you will, but I prefer to retain a notion I find critically more stimulating, that of a *deliberately failed* pastiche); should you decide, through a no less meritorious effort, to perceive it as a transformation of the *View of Delft*, you would have to describe it symmetrically as a maximal transformation.

I hope I have not lost the reader thus far. One of the advantages of this countercheck is that unlike the case of the copy, it can be transposed to literature. Pierre Menard's *Don Quixote* is *not* a copy of Cervantes, as we know, but rather a minimal transformation, or a maximal imitation, produced by the canonical means of pastiche: the acquiring of a perfect competence through absolute identification ("*to be* Miguel de Cervantes"). But the weakness of that performance is that it is imaginary and, as Borges himself says, impossible. Minimal pastiche, on the other hand, fills our real libraries; it suffices to label it as such. Borges, desirous of "packing the most peaceful books with adventures," proposed to attribute the *Imitation of Christ* to Céline or Joyce. This type of attribution meets with formidable philological obstacles and with the ill will of historians. It seems to me more economical and more efficient, because less "falsifiable," to consider ever so briefly *Ulysses* or Louis-Ferdinand Céline's *Mort à crédit*, for instance, as two maximal transformations of the *Imitation of Christ*, or as two minimal pastiches of Thomas à Kempis's style. Such a relation might well be as relevant as the more accepted one (we know why) between *Ulysses* and the *Odyssey*, of which Borges wisely writes somewhere that it may not deserve all the fuss that is made over it.[10] And if some unpublished letter of Joyce's were one day to show up that would confirm that hypothesis (suffice it meanwhile that none is extant to disprove it), the Joyce critics would simply have a new—and fresher—morsel on their plate, which they would have to gulp down in one way or another. At any rate, a glimpse may be had of the potential field thus opening up for literary studies (*publish or perish*):[11] Beckett's *Molloy* as a (minimal) pastiche of Corneille, Robbe-Grillet's *La Jalousie* as a (maximal) transformation of the *Song of Roland*—in every case, a comparative study follows. Coming down to earth, or thereabouts, I shall recall footnote 17 of Jacques Derrida's *Pharmacie de Platon*, where he was

discreetly indicating—to the yokels' stupefaction and acute discomfort—that the bulk of that essay was "in itself nothing but a reading of *Finnegans Wake*, as was clear enough from the start." It is my turn now to confess what many a reader may have guessed long ago: that the present book—not *Finnegans Wake* but that which thou, indefatigable Reader, art supposedly holding in hand—is nothing other than the faithful transcription of a no less faithful nightmare, stemming from a hasty and, I fear, sketchy reading, in the dubious light of a few pages by Borges, of I know not what Dictionary of Works from All Times and All Countries.

## 80

The corpus mentioned above is as good as another (which may not be saying very much for it), but it can in no way claim to be exhaustive: this survey of the various types of hypertexts evidently owes much to the vagaries of my personal readings, and even more to a network of preferences that I would be in the worst position to judge.[1] It seems to me, however, that the taxonomic principle that has guided our inquiry will have served to avoid most serious gaps (those most damaging from a theoretical viewpoint), thanks to what I should like to call the heuristic virtue of the empty square. I am referring not only to the six squares of the initial tables but to a few other more localized combinations; some of their virtualities may well appear to be devoid of any actuality, but they are an incitement to inquisitiveness. This inquisitiveness will eventually come across some attested practice that would otherwise have escaped it, or some plausible hypothesis that requires only a little patience or leisure to be verified as well, by virtue of Buffon's munificent axiom "All that can be, is"—or will be one day, without any doubt. History has many faults, but it knows how to wait.

As to the general principle of that distribution, I have nothing more to add except to affirm once again the relevance of the distinction between the two fundamental types of hypertextual derivation: transformation and imitation. At the end (for me) of this inquiry, I am no more inclined to confuse them than at the outset, and I find no trace of evidence suggesting the existence of one or more additional types that might elude that simple opposition. I have sometimes wondered whether the relationship between the "definitive" text of a work and what is today appropriately termed the "foretext" might not pertain to another type of hypertextuality, or even of

transtextuality in general.[2] All things considered, I do not believe so; the few glimpses we have had of the genetic relationship show that it constantly proceeds from self-transformation through amplification, reduction, or substitution. However inexhaustible its field of study and however complex its operations, it is indeed but a particular case (yet another ocean in our pond . . . ) of hypertextuality as defined here: every successive state of a written text functions like a hypertext in relation to the state that precedes it and like a hypotext in relation to the one that follows. From the very first sketch to the final emendation, the genesis of a text remains a matter of auto-hypertextuality.[3]

On the other hand, the discrimination among modes—abundantly illustrated by the detail of our inquiry—is of a very relative character. It probably requires no further comment. I should merely like to suggest a possible distinction, within the serious mode, between two types of functions, one of which is of a practical or, if you will, a sociocultural order. That function is, of course, dominant in practices such as the descriptive summary, translation, prosification; it is still largely prevalent in the digest, in the various forms of transmodalization (e.g., theatrical or film adaptations), and in most sequels and continuations. It responds to a social demand and legitimately endeavors to draw a profit from the service it renders: hence its frequently commercial ("bread-and-butter," as they called it in the old days) aspect. It is often more akin, as Thorstein Veblen might have put it, to a drudgery than to an exploit. The other function of the serious mode, more nobly aesthetic, is its specifically creative function, whereby a writer leans on one or more preceding works to construct that which will give expression to his thought or his artistic sensibility. Such is evidently the main feature of most augmentations, of some ("unfaithful") continuations, and of thematic transpositions. I have deliberately formalized the survey of this field as much as possible, although it resists formalization more than others, in an attempt to "reduce" to a few "principles" or simple operations a kind of material whose treatment—under the auspices of "thematology" or *Stoffgeschichte*—often suffers from an overly empirical approach and maybe a touch of laziness of mind.

I must have stated somewhere—a needle in this haystack—that hypertextuality is a transgeneric practice that *includes* a few so-called "minor" genres—parody, travesty, pastiche, digest, etc.—and runs *across* all the others. The question may arise, from the "retrospective" vantage point that

is (generously) conceded to (provisional) conclusions, whether hypertextuality could not after all be classified according to its potential affinities, or compatibilities, with certain genres. It may no doubt be safely suggested—for practical reasons already noted—that it is more massively prevalent in the dramatic world ("onstage") than in the narrative world. For another equally obvious reason, it can also be stated that it is least found in genres that are most closely linked to a social or personal referentiality: history (although historians are used to "transforming" many documents), memoirs, autobiography, the journal, the realistic novel, lyrical poetry. But this evidence must not be made too much of; all those genres are strongly coded ones and pervasively bear the imprint of generic imitation—sometimes as pervasively as, say, pure novelistic fiction. Suffice it to mention, as regards lyrical poetry, for instance, the persistence for over two centuries of distinctive thematic conventions such as Petrarchism. The same might be said of Romanticism and its aftermath.

The most relevant classifying criterion is probably less generic than historical. The survey developed here has presented things in a synchronic and transhistorical manner but also disclosed a few evolutionary traits, instances of mutations, of appearances and disappearances, of historically privileged modes of expression. Here and there, according to times and places, a few lights gleam or vanish or flicker, at times significantly. History, then, emerges where it was not expected. Parody, for instance, belongs to all times, but travesty seems to have waited until the seventeenth century to make its appearance. Caricature apparently preceded pastiche but was not established as a professional genre until the end of the nineteenth century. The anti-novel began with *Quixote*. The continuation is a practice more ancient and classical than modern. Transposition, and perhaps hypertextuality in general, corresponds more to an aesthetic at once classical and modern, with a relative eclipse (in France, at any rate) during the Romantic and realistic first half of the nineteenth century.[4] But there are vestigial traces of the eighteenth-century turn of mind in authors such as Charles Nodier, Jules Janin, Prosper Mérimée, Stendhal, and often even in Balzac, and we have seen the reappearance in the second half of the nineteenth century of an attitude of cultural banter that is still not extinct today. I have had occasion to point out, in my discussion of John Barth's work, that hypertextuality is obviously one of the features that enable a certain modernity, or postmodernity, to turn its back on the age of Romantic-realistic seriousness and revive a premodern tradition: *Torniamo*

*all'antico* . . . I trust that the names Proust, Joyce, Mann, Borges, Nabokov, Calvino, among others, quite naturally come to mind. This is not to claim, however, that all our modernity is hypertextual; the French *nouveau roman*, for example, is so at times, but in ways that are no doubt incidental to its essence. Its modernity resorts to different devices, but those are also frequently defined in terms of their opposition to the realistic "father" ("Balzac" is a favorite bugbear) and the invocation of a few privileged uncles and ancestors—the same, very often, who provide others with their favored hypotexts.

Nor will any attempt be made to reduce to hypertextuality all forms of transtextuality, some of which may engage us tomorrow, or the day after. I shall not comment again upon the all too evident difference from metatextuality, which never pertains, in principle at least, to narrative or dramatic fiction, whereas the hypertext is almost always fictional—its fiction derived from another fiction or from the narrative of a real event. The difference, by the way, is purely factual, not legal; the hypertext can be nonfictional, especially when it derives from a work that is itself nonfictional. A pastiche of Kant or a verse transcription of the *Critique of Pure Reason* would surely be a nonfictional hypertext. But the metatext is by essence nonfictional. On the other hand, we have constantly observed that the hypertext to some extent functions like a metatext: a pastiche or a caricature is always "criticism in action"; *Friday, or The Other Island* is obviously (among other things) a commentary upon *Robinson Crusoe*. The hypertext is thus in several respects more potent than the metatext from an Aristotelian viewpoint: the former has more leeway and extends beyond the latter, without the converse being true.

Concerning the opposition already noted between hypertextuality and intertextuality, I wish to stress only the limited but decisive point that contrary to the case of intertextuality, as it has been so aptly described by Riffaterre, a simple understanding of the hypertext never necessitates resorting to the hypotext. Every hypertext, even a pastiche, can be read for itself without becoming perceptibly "agrammatical";[5] it is invested with a meaning that is autonomous and thus in some manner sufficient. But sufficient does not mean exhaustive. In every hypertext there is an *ambiguity* that Riffaterre denies to intertextual reading; the latter he prefers to define as an effect of "syllepsis." That ambiguity is precisely caused by the fact that a hypertext can be read both for itself and in its relation to its hypotext. Proust's pastiche of Flaubert is a text that is "grammatically" (semantically)

autonomous. But at the same time, no one can claim to have exhausted its function without having perceived and enjoyed it as an imitation of Flaubert's style. Quite evidently there are various degrees in that ambiguity: *Ulysses* can be read more easily without references to the *Odyssey* than can a pastiche without referring to its model, and there is room between those two poles for every possible gradation; hypertextuality is more or less mandatory, more or less optional according to each hypertext. But the fact remains that it cannot be overlooked without voiding the hypertext of a significant dimension, and we have often seen that authors went to great trouble—at the very least by means of paratextual clues—to guard against such loss of meaning or of aesthetic value. "The entire beauty of this play," Boileau said of *Chapelain décoiffé*, "consists in its relation to that other one (*Le Cid*)." "The entire beauty" may be overstating things a little in many cases—but in part, at least, the beauty of the hypertext always does consist in such a relation, which it legitimately wishes to be apparent.

The hypertext thus always stands to *gain* by having its hypertextual status perceived—even when that gain is assessed in negative terms, as can happen to certain quantities. One person's "beauty" may be another's "ugliness," but this feature is at least not to be disregarded. All that may now remain for me to do, by way of a conclusion, is to describe and to justify *in extremis* my "object choice," the type of merit (of "beauty") I see in hypertextual ambiguity, without denying that in so doing I shall have to engage in wholly subjective valuations.

Hypertextuality, in its own way, pertains to *tinkering*. This term {in French, *bricolage*} generally carries derogatory connotations but has been given some credentials by Claude Lévi-Strauss's analyses. I shall not dwell on the matter. Let me simply say that the art of "making new things out of old" has the merit, at least, of generating more complex and more savory objects than those that are "made on purpose"; a new function is superimposed upon and interwoven with an older structure, and the dissonance between these two concurrent elements imparts its flavor to the resulting whole. Visitors to San Francisco's old cannery, to the College of Humanities at Aarhus, or to the Théâtre de la Criée in Marseilles must have had that experience, to their own pleasure or displeasure, and everyone knows at least what Picasso could do with a bicycle's saddle and handlebars.

That duplicity of the object, in the sphere of textual relations, can be represented by the old analogy of the *palimpsest*: on the same parchment,

one text can become superimposed upon another, which it does not quite conceal but allows to show through. It has been aptly said that pastiche and parody "designate literature as a palimpsest."[6] This must be understood to apply more generally to every hypertext, as Borges made clear concerning the relation between the text and its foretexts.[7] The hypertext invites us to engage in a relational reading, the flavor of which, however perverse, may well be condensed in an adjective recently coined by Philippe Lejeune: a *palimpsestuous* reading. To put it differently, just for the fun of switching perversities, one who really loves texts must wish from time to time to love (at least) two together.

That relational reading (reading two or more texts *in relation* to each other) may be an opportunity to engage in what I shall term, with an outmoded phrase, an *open structuralism*. Indeed, two kinds of structuralism coexist, one of which is concerned with the closure of the text and with deciphering its inner structures: such is, for example, the structuralism of Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss's famous analysis of Baudelaire's "Les Chats."[8] The other kind may be exemplified by Barthes's *Mythologiques*, which demonstrates how a text (a myth) can, with a little help, "read another." That reference, perhaps an impudent one, requires neither elaboration nor comment.

But the pleasure of the hypertext is also a *game*. The porosity of partitions between genres is chiefly due to the contagious potential of the playful mode in this particular aspect of literary production. One could even go so far as to say that every form of hypertextuality entails some kind of game, inherent in the very practice of reusing existing structures; at bottom, whatever its urgency, tinkering is always a game, at least to the extent that it processes and uses an object in an unforeseen, unprogrammed, and thus "unlawful" manner—true play always entails some degree of perversion. Using and processing a (hypo)text for purposes foreign to its initial program is likewise a way of playing with it, of having fun with it and making fun of it. Thus the manifest lucidity of parody or pastiche, for instance, contaminates the operations of travesty, caricature, forgery, transposition, even though the status of these practices is in principle less purely playful than theirs, and this contamination accounts for much of their merit. Gradations are evidently to be observed here too, and works such as those of Racine, Goethe, O'Neill, Anouilh, Sartre, and Tournier do not elicit the same degree of playfulness as those of Cervantes, Giraudoux, Thomas Mann, and Calvino. Some hypertexts are lighter than others, and I need not specify which ones, on the whole, I prefer. Nor should I venture to state that preference if I

did not vaguely surmise it to relate to the essence or, as the neoclassics used to say, the "perfection" of the genre. This is not to say that ludicity is here being held forth as an absolute value (even in my own eyes); texts that are "purely playful" in their purpose are not always the most captivating or even the most amusing. Premeditated and organized games (those that are played with a deliberate "purpose") sometimes induce a deadly boredom, and the best jokes are often unintentional. The hypertext at its best is an indeterminate compound, unpredictable in its specifics, of seriousness and playfulness (lucidity and ludicity), of intellectual achievement and entertainment. This, of course, is called humor, as I have already pointed out, but the term should not be used indiscriminately; it inevitably kills what it pins down. Official humor is a contradiction in terms.

One would have to be deaf not to anticipate that this apology, however qualified, for literature in the second degree is bound to arouse the objection that this "bookish" literature, which leans on other books, is the means whereby—or the place where—contact is lost with "true" reality, the reality that is not to be found in books. The answer is a simple one: as we have already had occasion to find out, one does not preclude the other; *Andromache* and *Doctor Faustus* are not further removed from reality than *Lost Illusions* or *Madame Bovary*. But humankind, which is ever discovering new meaning, cannot always invent new forms; it must at times be content to invest old forms with new meanings. "The quantity of fables and metaphors of which the human imagination is capable is limited, but that small number of inventions can be all things to all people, like the Apostle." But those must be *attended to*, and the specific merit of hypertextuality is that it constantly launches ancient works into new circuits of meaning. Memory, they say, is "revolutionary"—provided, no doubt, that it is impregnated, made fruitful, and not reduced to *commemorating*. "Literature is not exhaustible for the sufficient and simple reason that no single book is."[9] That single book must not only be reread; it must be rewritten, even if à la Pierre Menard: literally. Thus does Borges's utopia come to be accomplished, the utopia of a Literature in a perpetual state of transfusion, a transtextual perfusion, constantly present to itself in its totality and as a Totality all of whose authors are but one and all its books one vast, one infinite Book. Hypertextuality is only one name for that ceaseless circulation of texts without which literature would not be worth one hour of exertion. And when I say one hour . . .

# APPENDIX

## CHAPTER 8

*Sonnet by Félix Arvers (1806–50)*

Mon âme a son secret, ma vie a son mystère,
Un amour éternel en un moment conçu:
Le mal est sans espoir, aussi j'ai dû le taire,
Et celle qui l'a fait n'en a jamais rien su.

Hélas! j'aurai passé près d'elle inaperçu,
Toujours à ses côtés, et pourtant solitaire.
Et j'aurai jusqu'au bout fait mon temps sur la terre,
N'osant rien demander et n'ayant rien reçu.

Pour elle, quoique Dieu l'ait faite douce et tendre,
Elle suit son chemin, distraite et sans entendre
Ce murmure d'amour élevé sur ses pas.

À l'austère devoir pieusement fidèle,
Elle dira, lisant ces vers tout remplis d'elle:
"Quelle est donc cette femme?" et ne comprendra pas.

{My soul has its secret, my life its mystery,
An eternal love within one moment born:
The pain is beyond help, hence it remained unspoken,
And she who was the cause has never known of it.

Alack! I shall have gone unnoticed of her who was so close,
Forever at her side, and yet ever alone.
And I shall have lived to the end of my days,
Without daring to ask, without ever receiving.

And she—though God made her gentle and tender—
Goes her own sweet absentminded way, not hearing
That whisper of love arising in her wake.

Piously faithful to her austere duty,
She'll say, reading these lines so full of her:
"Who can this woman be?" and will not understand.}

*First anonymous parody*

Mon âme est sans secret, ma vie est sans mystère:
Un déplorable amour en un moment conçu.
Mon malheur est public, je n'ai pas pu le taire,
Quand elle m'a trompé, tout le monde l'a su.

Aucun homme à ses yeux ne passe inaperçu,
Son coeur par-dessus tout craint d'être solitaire,
Puisqu'il faut être deux pour le bonheur sur terre,
Le troisième, par elle, est toujours bien reçu.

Seigneur! vous l'avez faite altruiste et si tendre
Que sans se donner toute elle ne peut entendre
Le plus discret désir murmuré sous ses pas.

Et, fidèle miroir d'une chère infidèle,
Elle dira, lisant ces vers tout remplis d'elle,
"Je connais cette femme . . ." et n'insistera pas.

{My soul is without secret, my life without mystery:
A deplorable love within one moment born.
My pain is common knowledge, I could not keep it hidden,
When she betrayed me, everyone knew.

No man can pass by her unnoticed,
Her heart's paramount fear is to stay solitary,
Since it takes two on earth to achieve happiness,
With her the third is ever welcome.

Good God! you made her unselfish and so gentle
That she cannot, without yielding all, hear
The slightest whisper of desire in her wake.

And in faithful likeness to her dear treachery,
She'll say, reading these lines so full of her,
"I do know that woman . . ." and will let the matter drop.}

*Second anonymous parody*

Vous m'amusez, mon cher, quand vous faites mystère
De votre immense amour en un moment conçu.
Vous êtes bien naïf d'avoir voulu le taire:
Avant qu'il ne fût né, je crois que je l'ai su.

Pouviez-vous, m'adorant, passer inaperçu,
Et, vivant près de moi, vous sentir solitaire?
De vous il dépendait d'être heureux sur la terre:
Il fallait demander et vous auriez reçu.

Apprenez qu'une femme au coeur épris et tendre,
Souffre à passer ainsi son chemin sans entendre
L'aveu qu'elle espérait trouver à chaque pas.

Forcément au devoir on reste alors fidèle.
J'ai compris, voyez-vous, ces vers tout remplis d'elle:
C'est vous, mon pauvre ami, qui ne compreniez pas.

{You amuse me, my dear, when you make such a mystery
Of your vast love within one moment born.
It is naive of you to have kept it a secret:
Before it was conceived, I do believe I knew.

How could you adore me and hope to pass unnoticed,
And living next to me, how could you feel alone?
It depended on you to be happy on earth:
You need only have asked, your wish would have been granted.

Know that a woman whose heart is fond and tender,
Grieves thus to go her own way without ever hearing
The confession she kept hoping for at every step.

Inevitably, then, one abides by one's duty.
I understood, you see, these lines so full of her:
You are the one, poor dear, who did not understand.}

*La Fontaine: "La Cigale et la fourmi" (first four lines)*

La cigale ayant chanté
Tout l'été,
Se trouva fort dépourvue
Lorsque la bise fut venue.

{"The Grasshopper and the Ant"
The Grasshopper having sung
All summer long,
Found herself quite at a loss
When the icy winter wind did blow.}

*Nadirpher's Oulipian experiment: "La ciboule et la fourchette"*

La ciboule ayant chambré
Tout l'état-major
Se trouva fort dépotée
Quand la bique fut vénérée . . .

{"The Chive and the Fork"
The Chive having roasted
The whole headquarters
Found itself quite decanted
When the nanny-goat came to be worshipped . . . }

*La Fontaine: "Le corbeau et le renard" (first four lines)*

Maître Corbeau, sur un arbre perché,
Tenait en son bec un fromage.
Maître Renard, par l'odeur alléché,
Lui tint à peu près ce langage . . .

{"The Raven and the Fox"
Master Raven, perched on a tree,
Held a cheese in his beak.
Master Fox, enticed by the smell,
Addressed him in roughly these words . . . }

*Nadirpher's Oulipian experiment: "Le cortex et le renom"*

Malin cortex, sur un archange percuté,
Tétanisait en son bedeau un furibard.
Malin renom, par l'oedipe alourdi,
Lui tissa à peu près ce larigot.

{"The Cortex and the Fame"
Wily cortex, smashed on an archangel,
Tetanized a rabid man in his beadle.
Wily fame, weighed down by oedipus,
Wove it roughly this flute.}

*Trans. Note*: If, availing ourselves of Lewis Carroll's proto-Oulipian example, we were to apply an Oulipian transformational scheme—say, *n*-4—to four lines of a similarly famous children's poem in English,

Twinkle, twinkle little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky,

the resulting experimental text would be as follows:

Twiddle, twiddle, little staphilococcus,
How I wolf down what you are!
Up above the work so hieroglyphic,
Like a dialogue in skulduggery.

## CHAPTER 18

*Two Proust pastiches of Goncourt*

Ce serait tout un émoi rageur . . .

{It would all be but one furious emotion . . . }
—from *Pastiches et mélanges*, in *Contre Sainte-Beuve* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1971), p. 24

C'est, de sa part, tout un récit où il y a par moments l'épellement apeuré d'une confession sur le renoncement d'écrire. . . . Et brusquement, les yeux enfiévrés par l'absorption d'une rêverie tournée vers le passé, avec le nerveux taquinage dans l'allongement maniaque de ses phalanges, du floche des manches de son corsage, c'est, dans le contournement de sa pose endolorie, comme un admirable tableau qui n'a je crois jamais été peint, et où se liraient toute la révolte contenue, toutes les

susceptibilités rageuses d'une amie outragée dans les délicatesses, dans la pudeur de la femme.—from *Le Temps retrouvé*, in *A la recherche du temps perdu* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1963), pp. 709–17

{He treats me to a long narrative, almost at moments a timidly stammered confession, about his renunciation of writing. . . . And of a sudden, her eyes feverish from her absorption in thoughts of the past, plucking nervously at the silk sleeves of her bodice as she frenziedly tenses her fingers, she presents, in the distortion of her grief-stricken pose, an admirable picture which has, I think, never been painted, a picture in which one would see portrayed all the restrained revolt, all the passionate susceptibilities of a female friend outraged in the delicate feelings, the modesty of a woman.—from *Time Regained*, in *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (London: Chatto & Windus, 1992)}

*A Proust pastiche of Michelet*

"Que de fois Orphée s'égarera avant de ramener au jour Eurydice! Nul découragement pourtant. Si le coeur faiblit, la pierre est là qui, de sa flamme fort distincte, semble dire: 'Courage, encore un coup de pioche, je suis à toi.' Du reste une hésitation, et c'est la mort. Le salut n'est que dans la vitesse. Touchant dilemme . . ."—"Faut-il le dire, cette étude m'attirait, je ne l'aimais pas. Le secret de ceci? Je n'y sentais pas la vie. Toujours ce fut ma force, ma faiblesse aussi, ce besoin de la vie. Au point culminant du règne de Louis XIV, quand l'absolutisme semble avoir tué toute liberté en France, durant deux longues années—plus d'un siècle—(1680–1789), d'étranges maux de tête me faisaient croire que j'allais être obligé d'interrompre mon histoire. Je ne retrouvai vraiment mes forces qu'au serment du Jeu de paume (20 juin 1789)."—from *Pastiches et mélanges*, in *Contre Sainte-Beuve* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1971), p. 27

{"How oft will Orpheus lose his way before bringing back Eurydice unto the light of day! Of despair, however, there is none. Should the heart come to falter, the rock remains which, with its distinct flame, seems to say: 'Take courage, one more stroke of the pick and I am yours.' Besides, a single moment of hesitation would spell death. In speed alone lies salvation. What a touching dilemma . . ."—"Need I confess it, that study fascinated me, though it repelled me. The secret of this? It held no life for me. This was ever my strength, and my weakness as well, this longing for life. At the apex of Louis XIV's reign, when absolutism seemed to have stifled all freedom in France, for two long years—over a century—(1680–1789), strange headaches led me to think that I might be compelled to discontinue my history. Only with the oath at the Jeu de Paume (20 June 1789) did I truly retrieve my strength."}

*A Proust pastiche of Saint-Simon*

Il était fils de T. de Montesquiou qui était fort dans la connaissance de mon père et dont j'ai parlé en son lieu, et avec une figure et une tournure qui sentaient fort ce qu'il était et d'où il était sorti, le corps toujours élancé, et ce n'est pas assez dire, comme renversé en arrière, qui se penchait, à la vérité, quand il lui en prenait fantaisie, en grande affabilité et révérences de toutes sortes, mais revenait assez vite à sa position naturelle qui était toute de fierté, de hauteur, d'intransigeance à ne plier devant personne et à ne céder sur rien, jusqu'à marcher droit devant soi sans s'occuper du passage, bousculant sans paraître le voir, ou s'il voulait fâcher, montrant qu'il le voyait, qui était sur le chemin, avec un grand empressement toujours autour de lui des gens de plus de qualité et d'esprit à qui parfois il faisait sa révérence de droite et de gauche, mais le plus souvent leur laissait, comme on dit, leurs frais pour compte, sans les voir, les deux yeux devant soi, parlant fort haut et fort bien à ceux de sa familiarité qui riaient de toutes les drôleries qu'il disait, et avec grande raison, comme j'ai dit, car il était spirituel autant que cela se peut imaginer, avec des grâces qui n'étaient qu'à lui et que tous ceux qui l'ont approché ont essayé, souvent sans le vouloir et parfois même sans s'en douter, de copier et de prendre, mais pas un jusqu'à y réussir, ou à autre chose qu'à laisser paraître en leurs pensées, en leurs discours et presque dans l'air de l'écriture et le bruit de la voix qu'il avait toutes deux fort singulières et fort belles, comme un vernis de lui qui se reconnaissait tout de suite et montrait, par sa légère et indélébile surface, qu'il était aussi difficile de ne pas chercher à l'imiter que d'y parvenir.—from *Pastiches et mélanges*, in *Contre Sainte-Beuve* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1971), p. 49

{He was the son of T. de Montesquiou who was a close acquaintance of my father's and whom I mentioned in his time and place, and he had a figure and a bearing that clearly bore the stamp of his status and his descent, with a body which was ever upright, nay, bending over backward, which stooped, in truth, when such was his fancy, to shows of great affability and curtsies of all kinds, but soon enough retrieved its natural posture, which was wholly one of pride, of haughtiness, of unrelenting refusal to give way to any man and yield on anything, to the point of walking straight ahead with no concern for those about him, pushing out of his way without seeming to see—or else, if he intended offense, showing that he did see—him, who was on his path, always surrounded by droves of people of greater quality and wit, to whom he sometimes curtsied right and left, but whom he most often left, as they say, high and dry, ignoring them, looking straight ahead, speaking loud and clear to those of his circle who laughed at all his jests, and with good reason too, as I said, for he was as witty as one could wish, with graces that were his alone and that all those who came near him have endeavored, often without intent and at times unwittingly, to copy and catch, but without any ever bringing it off, or succeeding in aught but displaying in their thoughts, in their speech, and

well-nigh in their manner of writing and the sound of their voices, which were with him—both writing and voice—most singular and comely, something like a veneer of him which could be noted at once and which proclaimed, through its thin and indelible coating, that it was as difficult not to seek to imitate him as to succeed in doing so.}

## CHAPTER 21

*Verlaine's self-pastiche: "À la manière de Paul Verlaine"*

C'est à cause du clair de la lune
Que j'assume ce masque nocturne
Et de Saturne penchant son urne
Et de ces lunes l'une après l'une

Des romances sans paroles ont,
D'un accord discord ensemble et frais,
Agacé ce coeur fadasse exprès;
O le son, le frisson qu'elles ont!

Il n'est pas que vous n'ayez fait grâce
À quelqu'un qui vous jetait l'offense:
Or, moi, je pardonne à mon enfance
Revenant fardée et non sans grâce.

Je pardonne à ce mensonge-là
En faveur, en somme, du plaisir
Très banal drôlement qu'un loisir
Douloureux un peu m'inocula.

{The moonshine is the cause
Of this nocturnal mask I wear,
And sent by Saturn tipping his urn
And by those moons that follow upon moons,

Romances without words have,
With chords at once discordant and fresh,
Purposely teased this jaded heart of mine;
O what sound, what thrill is theirs!

You have been known to show mercy
To one who had offended you:
Now, I forgive my childhood
As it returns all painted up, and not without grace.

I forgive that very lie, in short,
On behalf of the oddly banal
Pleasure that a—somewhat—painful
Leisure did infuse into me.}

## CHAPTER 27

*Excerpt from the fake Rimbaud prose poem,* La Chasse spirituelle

J'ai oublié des armes, des ruses, des charmes en cette chasse d'adorable magie. Je reviens aveugle, les mains glacées et mortes, sans proie étincelante à produire, sans trophées, aux clairières funèbres d'arbres déchus. Je me gorgerai de dégoûts—et que faire, rendu aux abrutissements magistraux, aux disciplines, aux nécessités de l'époque béante à ces pieds durcis.

Je me suis vu grelottant, accroupi au carrefour des inquiétudes anciennes, en main le sceptre, au front la couronne écarlate, accessoires exigeants des messies. Faut-il se lever aujourd'hui, courir? S'affairer? C'est la vieille mode.

Chairs ineffables, j'ai gagné dans le pur élan des vagabondages, vos surprises, vos chaleurs, vos impiétés radieuses, vos absolus maléfiques, vos écrasantes inepties, tel les vagues jusqu'au dernier homme.

Expérience figée au soir dérobé sur l'absence.

Ce ne fut qu'aimable complot d'enfance, un saccage d'innocence. Après les effrois extatiques, je vois franchement les draps blancs, l'escale rutilante de quelque fièvre, les plaies adorables, les tisanes mortuaires des vieilles balbutiantes, la miséricorde des injuriés de jadis.

Ni regrets, ni démence désormais.

La mort sanctifiée à leur manière. Ce n'était pas la mienne.

Certes il est d'autres rives.

{I have forgotten arms, ruses, and charms in this hunt of adorable magic. I return blind, my hands frozen and dead, without a dazzling prey to display, without trophies, to the funereal clearings of fallen trees. I shall gorge myself on disgusts—and what else to do, surrendered to magisterial drudgeries, to the disciplines, the necessities of the age that gapes at these hardened feet.

I saw myself shivering, crouching at the crossroads of old qualms, scepter in hand, the scarlet crown upon my brow, the exacting accessories of messiahs. Must one rise today, run? Busy oneself? That is the old way.

Ineffable flesh, I have won, in the pure thrust of wanderings, your surprises, your warmth, your radiant impieties, your maleficent absolutes, your crushing foolishness, such as the waves down to the last man.

A petrified experience in the evening plundered from absence.

It was only an amiable childhood plot, a sacking of innocence. After the ecstatic terrors, I can clearly see the white sheets, the crimson stopover of some fever, the adorable wounds, the mortuary herb teas of stammering hags, the mercy of the offended of yore.

Neither regrets, nor insanity henceforth.

Death sanctified in their manner. It was not mine.

Surely there are other shores.}

## CHAPTER 41

*Opening lines of Dante's* Inferno, *trans. André Pézard*

Au milieu du chemin de notre vie
je me trouvai par une selve obscure
et vis perdue la droiturière voie

Ha, comme à la décrire est dure chose
cette forêt sauvage et âpre et forte,
qui, en pensant, renouvelle ma peur!

Amère est tant, que mort n'est guère plus;
mais pour traiter du bien que j'y trouvai,
telles choses dirai que j'y ai vues.

*Opening lines of Dante's* Inferno, *trans. Émile Littré*

En mi chemin de ceste nostre vie
Me retrovai par une selve oscure;
Car droite voie ore estoit esmarie.

Ah! ceste selve, dire m'est chose dure
Com ele estoit sauvage et aspre et fors,
Si que mes cuers encor ne s'asseüre!

Tant est amere, que peu est plus la mors:
Mais, por traiter du bien que j'i trovai,
Des autres choses dirai que je vi lors.

*Opening lines of the* Iliad, *trans Émile Littré (1847)*

Chante l'ire, ô deesse, d'Achille fil Pelée,
Greveuse et qui douloir fit Grece la louée
Et choir eus en enfer mainte âme desevrée,

Baillant le cors as chiens et oiseaus en curée.
Ainsi de Jupiter s'acomplit la pensée,
Du jour où la querelle se leva primerin
D'Atride roi des hommes, d'Achille le divin.

D'entre les immortels qui troubla leur courage?
Apollons. Vers le roi si eut-il mautalent
Que mit la pest en l'ost et perissoit la gent,
Puisqu'Atride à Chrysès prouvere fit outrage.
Chrysès s'en vint as nefs qui font lointain voyage,
Jeter à raançon sa fille de servage,
Du dieu de longue archie entre ses mains portant
Bandel et sceptre d'or, et tous les Greux priant,
Surtout les deux Atrides, qui tant ont seignorage.

Atride, et vous, portant beaus jambars, Acheen,
Fassent li dieu qui sus ont manoir olympien,
Gastiez la cit Priam et repairiez à bien!
Mais prenez raançon, rendez ma fille amie,
Doutant le fil Latone, Phebus à longue archie.

*Trans. Note*: An English equivalent of these texts in pseudomedieval French would be a transposition of Dante's verses into Middle English.

## CHAPTER 42

*Example of versification (right) by Antoine Houdar de La Motte of his own prose version (left) of* Oedipus *(1726)*

DYMAS

Ah, Seigneur! quels terribles ordres!
Vous m'en voyez frémir. Non, je
n'aurai jamais la force de vous obéir.

{Ah, my Lord! What gruesome orders!
See me shudder at them. No, I shall
never have the heart to obey you.}

DYMAS

Quels ordres! Non, Seigneur, ce serait
vous trahir,
Non, l'horreur que je sens me défend
d'obéir.

{What orders! No, my Lord, this would
be a betrayal,
No, the horror I feel prevents my
obeying.}

OEDIPE

Rassure-toi, Dymas. Je te sais gré de tes
larmes, mais qu'elles ne l'emportent

OEDIPE

Rassure-toi, Dymas. Touché de tes
alarmes,

pas sur ta fidélité. Exécute avec courage les volontés de ton roi, et, ce qui est encore plus sacré, les dernières volontés d'une victime des dieux. Va, je te l'ordonne absolument, va avertir le Pontife de préparer l'autel et l'encens, et d'assembler le peuple dans le temple, où je vais me dévouer pour sa délivrance.

Ton roi, je l'avouerai, te sait gré de tes larmes.
Mais quelque trouble ici qui puisse t'émouvoir,
Peut-il un seul instant balancer ton devoir?
Va, ne perds point de temps, avertis le grand prêtre
De l'effort que le ciel exige de ton maître,
Qu'il prépare les voeux et l'autel et l'encens,
Et qu'au temple appelés, les Thébains gémissants
Viennent me voir calmer la céleste vengeance
Et des jours de leur roi payer leur délivrance.

{Take comfort, Dymas. I am grateful for thy tears, but let them not override thy loyalty. Bravely carry out the will of thy king, and, more sacred still, the last will of a victim of the gods. Go, obey my adamant order, go tell the Pontiff to prepare the altar and incense, and to gather the people in the temple, where I shall dedicate myself to their deliverance.}

{Take comfort, Dymas. Thy king is moved by thy fears,
And is, I do confess, most grateful for thy tears.
But whatever alarm may now bestir thy spirit,
Can it for one second outweigh thy duty?
Go, waste no time, inform the High Priest
Of the penance exacted from thy master by the gods,
Let him prepare the vows and the altar and the incense,
And let the wailing Thebans, called forth to the temple,
See me lay to rest the vengeance of the gods
And with the life of their king buy their deliverance.}

DYMAS

Eh quoi, Seigneur! Est-il possible
que vous soyez résolu à ce barbare
dévouement? Qui donc vous a
demandé une si précieuse victime?

{How now, my Lord! Can it be that you
are indeed resolved to such gruesome
dedication? Who in heaven might
be enjoining the sacrifice of such a
priceless victim?}

OEDIPE

Apollon lui-même. Trois fois cette
nuit il m'est apparu. Ce n'était point
un songe, le sommeil avait déjà fui
de mes yeux. Trois fois je l'ai vu, les
yeux ardents de colère, et ses traits
enflammés à la main. Je suis encore
frappé de sa voix . . .

{Apollo himself. Three times last
night he appeared before me. It was
no dream, sleep had already deserted
my eyes. Three times I saw him,
with wrathful fire in his eyes, and
flaming arrows in his hands. Still I am
awestruck by his voice . . . }

DYMAS

Ah! ne m'accablez pas de cet ordre
absolu!
Seigneur, ce dévouement est-il donc
résolu?
Quel dieu vous a parlé? Par quelle loi
suprême
Êtes-vous donc forcé . . .

{Ah! do not burden me with that
adamant command!
My Lord, are you indeed resolved to
this act of devotion?
Which god did speak to you? By what
supreme law
Are you thus compelled . . . }

OEDIPE

C'est Apollon lui-même.
Je l'ai vu cette nuit de ses flèches armé,
Le front terrible et l'oeil de courroux
enflammé,
Trois fois dans mes esprits répandre
l'épouvante.
Je suis encore frappé de sa voix
menaçante.
Ce n'était point un songe: à l'éclat qui
m'a lui
De mes yeux étonnés le sommeil avait
fui.

{'Tis Apollo himself.
I saw him last night armed with his
arrows—
With awesome brow and an eye with
wrath enflamed—
Three times strike terror in my soul.
Still am I stunned by his threatening
voice.
No dream it was: the light that shone
before
My startled eyes had driven sleep
away.}

## CHAPTER 43

*Racine's* Mithridate *(1673), 1.1.1–22 (left) prosified (right) by Antoine Houdar de La Motte (eighteenth century)*

XIPHARÈS

On nous faisait, Arbate, un fidèle rapport.
Rome en effet triomphe, et Mithridate est mort.
Les Romains, vers l'Euphrate ont attaqué mon père
Et tompé dans la nuit sa prudence ordinaire.
Après un long combat, tout son camp dispersé
Dans la foule des morts en fuyant l'a laissé,
Et j'ai su qu'un soldat dans les mains de Pompée
Avec son diadème a remis son épée.
Ainsi ce roi qui seul a durant quarante ans
Lassé tout ce que Rome eut de chefs importants,
Et qui, dans l'Orient balançant la fortune,
Vengeait de tous les rois la querelle commune,
Meurt, et laisse après lui, pour venger son trépas
Deux fils infortunés qui ne s'accordent pas.

XIPHARÈS

On nous faisait, Arbate, un récit fidèle. Rome triomphe en effet, et Mithridate est mort. Les Romains ont attaqué mon père vers l'Euphrate, et ils ont trompé dans la nuit sa prudence ordinaire. Tout son camp dispersé, et fuyant après une longue bataille, l'a laissé dans la foule des morts, et j'ai su qu'entre les mains de Pompée un soldat a remis son épée avec son diadème. Ainsi, ce roi qui durant quarante ans a lassé lui seul tout ce que Rome eut de chefs considérables, et qui, balançant la fortune dans l'Orient, vengeait la querelle commune de tous les rois, meurt, et laisse après lui, pour venger sa mort, deux fils malheureux qui ne s'accordent pas.

ARBATE

Vous, Seigneur! Quoi? l'ardeur de régner en sa place
Rend déjà Xipharès ennemi de Pharnace?

ARBATE

Vous, Seigneur? Eh quoi, l'ardeur de régner en la place de votre père vous rend déjà ennemi de Pharnace?

XIPHARÈS

Non, je ne prétends point, cher Arbate, à ce prix
D'un malheureux empire acheter les débris.
Je sais en lui des ans respecter l'avantage,
Et, content des États marqués pour mon partage,
Je verrai sans regret tomber entre ses mains
Tout ce que lui promet l'amitié des Romains . . .

XIPHARÈS

Non, Arbate, je ne prétends point acheter à ce prix les débris d'un malheureux empire. Je sais respecter en lui l'avantage des ans, et, satisfait des États marqués par mon partage, je verrai tomber sans regret entre ses mains tout ce que l'amitié de Rome lui promet . . .

{XIPHARES

Too true, Arbates, are these tidings dread.
Rome is triumphant, Mithridates dead.
Near the Euphrates, in a night attack,
Her troops surprised my father, though to lack
Care was unlike him. After a long fight
His army, routed, left him in their flight
Among the slain. A soldier, now hath word
Come, placed in Pompey's hands his crown and sword.
Thus he who had forty years, alone,
Baffled the ablest generals of Rome,
And in the East upheld, through varying
Fortunes, the common cause of every king,
Died, leaving to avenge him by ill chance
Two sons who are at hopeless variance.

{XIPHARES

Arbates, we were given an accurate report. Rome is triumphing indeed, and Mithridates is dead. The Romans attacked my father near the Euphrates, and they deceived during the night his wonted prudence. All his routed army, fleeing after a long fight, left him in the throng of the slain, and I have heard that in Pompey's hands a soldier placed his sword together with his crown. Thus, this king who during forty years, alone, wearied Rome's most formidable leaders, and who, offseting Fortune in the East, righted the common cause of every king, dies, leaving after him to avenge his death two hapless sons who do not agree.

ARBATE

What! hath desire to reign made Xiphares
Already, sir, the foe of Pharnaces?

ARBATE

You, my Lord? What! has the desire to reign in your father's place turned you into Pharnace's foe?

XIPHARES

Nay, good Arbates, never thus would I
The wreckage of this luckless kingdom buy.
I could respect his birth's priority
And, happy in the lands assigned to me,
See fall into his hands without regret
All that he e'er will through Rome's friendship get.
—from *Mithridates*, trans. Lacy Lockett (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 199}

XIPHARES

No, Arbates, I would not thus buy the wreckage of a luckless kingdom. I can respect his priority of birth and, satisfied with the lands assigned to me, I shall see fall into his hands without regret all that Rome's friendship promises him.}

## CHAPTER 44

*Paul Valéry's "Le Cimetière marin" (first stanza)*

Ce toît tranquille, où marchent des colombes,
Entre les pins palpite, entre les tombes;
Midi le juste y compose de feux,
La mer, la mer, toujours recommencée!
O récompense après une pensée
Qu'un long regard sur le calme des dieux!

{That quiet roof, where doves are walking,
Quivers among the pines, among the tombs;
Noonday the just composes out of fires
The sea, the sea, forever renewed!
O what a reward after thinking
Is a long glance at the calm of the gods!}

*Genette's transmetrification (decasyllabic lines into alexandrines)*

Ce *vaste* {vast} toît tranquille où marchent des colombes,
Entre les *sveltes* {slender} pins palpite, entre les tombes;
*Voyez* {See}, Midi le juste y compose de feux,
La mer, la mer, *la mer* {the sea}, toujours recommencée!
O *pleine* {fulfilling} récompense après une pensée
Qu'un *immense* {immense} regard sur le calme des dieux!

*Baudelaire's "L'Invitation au voyage" (first stanza)*

Mon enfant, ma soeur,
Songe à la douceur
D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble!
Aimer à loisir,
Aimer à mourir,
Au pays qui te ressemble!
Les soleils mouillés
De ces ciels brouillés
Pour mon esprit ont les charmes
Si mystérieux
De tes traîtres yeux,
Brillant à travers leurs larmes.

{My child, my sister,
Think of the sweetness
Of going there and living together!
To love at leisure,
To die of loving,
In the land that resembles you!
The rainy suns
Of those blurry skies
For my spirit have the charms
So mysterious
Of your treacherous eyes,
Shining through their tears.}

*Jean Prévost's transmetrification of Baudelaire (original heptameters into octosyllabic lines)*

Mon enfant, ma soeur,
Songe à la douceur
*De partir* là-bas vivre ensemble!
Aimer à loisir,
Aimer à mourir,
*Dans le* pays qui te ressemble!
Les soleils mouillés
De ces ciels brouillés
*Offrent* à mon esprit les charmes
Si mystérieux
De tes traîtres yeux
*Qui* brillent à travers leurs larmes.

*Baudelaire's "Recueillement"*

Sois sage, ô ma Douleur, et tiens-toi plus tranquille.
Tu réclamais le soir; il descend; le voici:
Une atmosphère obscure enveloppe la ville,
Aux uns portant la paix, aux autres le souci.

Pendant que des mortels la multitude vile,
Sous le fouet du Plaisir, ce bourreau sans merci,
Va cueillir des remords dans la fête servile,
Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main; viens par ici,

Loin d'eux. Vois se pencher les défuntes Années,
Sur les balcons du ciel, en robes surannées;
Surgir du fond des eaux le Regret souriant;

Le Soleil moribond s'endormir sous une arche;
Et comme un long linceul traînant à l'Orient,
Entends, ma chère, entends la douce Nuit qui marche.

{Be quiet, O my Grief, and lay yourself to rest.
You were begging for evening; here it is, descending:
A dusky atmosphere is enfolding the city,
To some bringing peace, and to others, concern.

While the wretched herd of mortals,
Under the lash of Pleasure, that merciless henchman,
Goes gathering remorses among the slavish feast,
My Grief, give me your hand; come this way,

Far from them. See the bygone Years leaning,
Over the sky's balconies, in obsolete dresses;
Smiling Regret emerge from the depth of the waters;

The moribund Sun fall asleep beneath an arch,
And like a long shroud trailing in the East,
Hear, my sweet, hear gentle Night walking.}

*Jean Prévost's transmetrification of Baudelaire (alexandrines into octosyllabic lines)*

Ma Douleur, tiens-toi plus tranquille.
Tu voulais le soir; le voici:
L'air obscur verse sur la ville
Plus de paix ou plus de souci.

Cependant que la foule vile
Que fouette un plaisir sans merci
S'écoeure à la fête servile,
Prends-moi la main; viens par ici.

Aux balcons du ciel, mainte année
Se penche en robe surannée;
Émerge un regret souriant;

Le Soleil s'endort contre une arche;
Un linceul traîne à l'Orient:
Entends la douce Nuit qui marche.

## CHAPTER 45

*Excerpt (left) from Mary Summer's* Contes et légendes de l'Inde ancienne *(1878), rewritten (right) by Stéphane Mallarmé in* Quatre Contes indiens *(1892)*

C'était l'heure du repos; les femmes de Damayanti s'empressaient encore autour d'elle. Les lampes venaient de s'éteindre et les oeils-de-boeuf laissaient pénétrer librement la fraîcheur du soir. La vierge royale était étendue sur une couche de soie et de duvet de cygne aussi légère que les nuées qui flottent dans l'air aprè les pluis d'automne. Les rayons de la lune caressaient doucement la gerbe dénouée d'une chevelure incomparable; les prunelles étaient cachées sous les pointes vacillantes des cils noirs et les deux grands yeux, fermés au milieu de cette tête charmante, semblaient un lotus dans la corolle duquel se serait endormie une abeille. Les lèvres brillaient comme des rubis; rien n'avait encore terni leur rougeur éclatante, et la bouche d'un vainqueur ne leur avait jamais fait sentir son avide passion. Le pâle contour des joues ressemblait au bouton du

Repos, éventails agités par les femmes de Damayanti, autour d'elle; les lampes éteintes, la fraîcheur du soir inonde librement chaque ouverture. Légère comme les nuées flottant après une nuit d'automne, la vierge royale ondule sur l'argent et la soie d'un duvet de cygne, on croirait la blancheur semée par l'envol du cher messager, dont la confidence la trouble encore. La lune infiltrait ses rayons dans l'ombre dénouée d'une chevelure incomparable et jusqu'à ses prunelles cachées sous les points vacillants de cils noirs: les yeux s'y ferment, au milieu de cette tête pâlie ils évoquent un lotus avec une abeille double endormie dans sa corolle. Seules brillent les lèvres avec un feu de rubis, sur leur chaste grenade la bouche d'un vainqueur n'a jamais désaltéré sa soif. Plutôt le bouton du Tchampaka avant de devenir vermeil, le contour clair des joues. Quelques gouttes de sueur, ingénu collier glissé,

Tchampaka avant qu'il ne soit devenu vermeil. Quelques gouttes de sueur glissaient çà et là sur les épaules, sur les bras et sur le sein que soulevait le feu de la jeunesse. Le corps souple reposait dans une attitude languissante et négligée.

{Time had come for rest; Damayanti's women were still surrounding her with care. The lamps had just been put out and through the bull's-eye windows the cool of the evening poured in freely. The royal virgin was lying on the silk and swan down of a bed as light as the clouds that float in the air after the autumn showers. The moonbeams were softly stroking the loose sheaf of her incomparable head of hair; her pupils were hiding under under the flickering tips of her black eyelashes and both her large eyes, closed at the center of that charming face, looked like a lotus flower in whose corolla a bee might have fallen asleep. Her lips shone like rubies; nothing had come as yet to tarnish their dazzling redness, and they had never been made to feel the greedy pressure of a conqueror's mouth. Her cheeks' pale contour resembled the Tshampaka's bud before it has turned vermilion. A few droplets of sweat were trickling down her shoulders, her arms and her breast, heaving with the flame of youth. The pliable body was resting in a casually languid pose.}

perlent aux bras, aux épaules; au sein, que soulève l'avenir.

{Rest, fans waved by Damayanti's women, around her; once the lamps are out, the cool of the evening freely floods each opening. Light as the clouds floating after a night in autumn, the royal virgin lies undulating on the silver and silk of swan down, the whiteness scattered, as it were, by the flight of the dear messenger, whose whispered confidence is still troubling her. The moon was letting its rays seep into the loose shadow of an incomparable head of hair and even into her pupils hidden by the flickering tips of black eyelashes: the eyes are closing, at the center of this pale face they evoke a lotus flower with a double bee asleep in its corolla. Her lips alone are burning with a ruby-like flame, never has a conqueror's mouth quenched his thirst on their chaste pomegranate. Much like the Tshampaka's bud before it turns vermilion is the fair contour of her cheeks. A few droplets of sweat formed like the beads of an artless necklace slid onto her arms, her shoulders; her breast, heaving with the future.}

*Valéry's "Cimetière marin" (first and last stanzas) rewritten by Colonel Godchot (1933)*

Cette eau glissent
~~Ce toit~~ tranquille où ~~marchent~~ des colombes,

Entre les pins palpite, entre les tombes;

d'aplomb apaise ses
Midi ~~le juste y compose~~ de feux

nouvelée
La mer, la mer toujours r~~ecommencée~~!

Ah! quel bonheur! détendre ma
~~O récompense après une~~ pensée

Dans ce tableau calme comme l
~~Qu'un long regard sur le calme d~~es dieux! . . .

vivre ma vie
Le vent se lève! . . . Il faut ~~tenter de vivre~~!

L'immensité remplit ma poésie
~~L'air immense ouvre et referme mon livre~~,

Le flot se brise sur l
~~La vague~~ en poudre ~~ose jaillir d~~es rocs!

dans les splendeurs, mes
Envolez-vous, pages ~~tout éblouies~~!

Et que la mer de ses joyeux tapages
~~Rompez, vagues! Rompez d'eaux réjouies~~

Rompent l'eau calme où vont danser l
~~Ce toit tranquille où picoraient d~~es focs!

*Mallarmé's two versions (1868, 1887) of his own "Sonnet en* x*"*

~~SONNET ALLEGORIQUE DE LUI MEME~~

Ses purs ongles très haut dédiant leur
~~La nuit approbatrice allume les~~ onyx,

L'Angoisse, ce minuit, soutient,
~~De ses ongles au pur Crime~~ lampadophore,

Maint rêve vespéral brûlé par le
~~Du soir aboli par le vespéral~~ Phœnix

Que ne recueille pas
~~De qui la cendre n'a~~ de cinéraire amphore

l crédences, au vide
Sur ~~des~~ ~~consoles, en le noir~~ Salon: nul ptyx,

Aboli bibelot
~~Insolite vaisseau~~ d'inanité sonore,

des pleurs au
Car le maître est allé puiser ~~l'eau du~~ Styx

ce seul Néant
Avec ~~tous ces~~ objets dont le ~~rêve~~ s'honore.

Mais proche
~~Et selon~~ la croisée au nord vacante, un or

Agonise selon peut-être le
~~Néfaste incite pour son beau cadre une rixe~~

Des licornes ruant du feu contre
~~Faite d'un dieu aui croit emporter~~ une nixe,

Elle, défunte nue en le miroir
~~En l'obscurcissement de la glace~~, Décor

Que, dans l'oubli fermé par le cadre,
~~De l'absence, sinon que sur la glace~~ encor

s sitôt
De scintillation le septuor se fixe.

*Translated final version of Mallarmé's "Sonnet en* x*"*

Her pure nails very high dedicating their onyx,
Anguish, this midnight, upholds, the lampbearer,
Many vesperal dreams by the Phenix burnt
That are not gathered up in the funeral urn

On the credences, in the empty room: no ptyx,
Abolished bibelot of sounding inanity
(For the Master is gone to draw tears from the Styx
With this sole object which Nothingness honours.)

But near the window void Northwards, a gold
Dies down composing perhaps a decor
Of unicorns kicking sparks at a nixey,

She, nude and defunct in the mirror, while yet,
In the oblivion closed by the frame there appears
Of scintillations at once the septet.

—from Stéphane Mallarmé, *Poems*, trans. Roger Fry
(New York: New Directions, 1951), pp. 105–7

## CHAPTER 48

*Chateaubriand's two versions (*Essai sur les révolutions, *1797;* Atala, *1801) of his description of Niagara Falls*

Elle est formée par la rivière Niagara, qui sort du lac Erié, et se jette dans le lac l'Ontario. ~~A environ neuf milles de ce dernier lac se trouve la chute~~; sa hauteur perpendiculaire est de cent quarante-quatre ~~peut être d'environ deux cents~~ pieds. ~~Mais ce qui contribue à la rendre si violente, c'est que,~~ D~~depuis~~ le lac Erié jusqu'au saut ~~à la cataracte~~, le fleuve accourt ~~arrive toujours en déclinant~~ par une pente rapide, ~~dans un cours de près de six lieues; en sorte qu'~~ et au moment de la chute ~~même du saut~~, c'est moins un fleuve ~~une rivière~~ qu'une mer impétueuse, dont les ~~cent mille~~ torrents se pressent à la bouche béante d'un gouffre. La cataracte se divise en deux branches, et se courbe en ~~un~~ fer à cheval ~~d'environ un demi-mille de circuit~~. Entre les deux chutes s'avance une île ~~un énorme rocher~~ creusé en dessous, qui pend~~,~~ avec tous ses arbres ~~sapins,~~ sur le chaos des ondes. La masse du fleuve, qui se précipite au midi, ~~se bombe et~~ s'arrondit en ~~comme~~ un vaste cylindre ~~au moment qu'elle quitte le bord~~, puis se déroule en nappe de neige et brille au soleil de toutes les couleurs ~~du prisme: c~~. C~~elle~~ qui tombe au levant ~~nord~~ descend dans une ombre effrayante~~, comme~~ ; on dirait une colonne d'eau du déluge. ~~Des~~ Mille arcs-en-ciel ~~sans nombre~~ se courbent et se croisent sur l'abîme, ~~dont les terribles mugissements se font entendre à soixante milles à la ronde~~. ~~L'onde, f~~F~~rappant~~ le roc ébranlé, rejaillit en tourbillons d'écume qui~~,~~ s'élèvent ~~levant~~ au-dessus des forêts, comme les ~~ressemblent aux~~ fumées

Des pins, des noyers sauvages, d
épaisses d'un vaste embrasement. ~~D~~des rochers ~~démesurés et gigantesques,~~ taillés en forme de fantômes, décorent la scène sublime; des noyers sauvages, d'un aubier rougeâtre et écailleux, croissent chétivement sur ces squelettes fossiles. On ne voit auprès aucun animal vivant, hors des aigles, qui, en planant au-dessus de la cataracte où ils viennent chercher leur proie, sont entraînés par le courant d'air, et forcés de descendre en tournoyant au fond de l'abîme. Quelque carcajou tigré, se suspendant par sa longue queue à l'extrémité d'une branche abaissée, essaie d'attraper les débris des corps noyés des élans et des ours que la remole jette à bord.

{It is formed by the Niagara River, which emerges from Lake Erie and empties into Lake Ontario; its perpendicular height is one hundred and forty-four feet. From Lake Erie to the great plunge, the river flows in rapid downgrade, and as it reaches the falls, it is not so much a river as a sea whose torrents surge into the gaping mouth of the chasm. The cataract is split into two branches, and bends in the form of a horseshoe. Between the two falls an island juts out, hollow underneath, and hanging with all its trees over the chaos of the waves. The mass of water hurtling down in the south curves into a vast cylinder, then straightens into a snowy sheet, sparkling iridescent in the sunlight. The eastern branch falls in dismal gloom; calling to mind some downpour of the great flood. A thousand rainbows arch and intersect over the abyss. As it strikes the shuddering rock, the water bounds back in foaming whirlpools, which drift up over the forest like the smoke of some vast conflagration. The scene is ornate with pine and wild walnut trees and rocks carved out in weird shapes. Eagles, drawn by air currents, spiral down into the depths of the chasm, and wolverines dangle by their supple tails from the ends of low-hanging branches, snatching the shattered corpses of elk and bears out of the abyss.
—from the Epilogue to *Atala*, trans. Irving Putter (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), pp. 78–79}

*Chateaubriand's successive versions (*Essai sur les révolutions, *1797;* Génie du christianisme, *1800, 1809;* Mémoires d'outre-tombe, *1822) of his description of* la nuit américaine.

*1797, corrected 1800*

monta peu à peu au zénith
La lune ~~était au plus haut point~~ du ciel; ~~on voyait çà et là, dans de grands intervalles épurés, scintiller mille étoiles.~~ t elle
~~T~~antôt ~~la lune~~ reposait sur un groupe de nuages qui
s tantôt elle
ressemblait à la cime de hautes montagnes couronnées de neige; ~~peu à peu ces nues~~
s'enveloppait dans ces mêmes nues, qui
~~s'allongeaient~~, se déroulaient en zones diaphanes ~~et onduleuses~~ de satin blanc, ~~ou~~

se transformaient en légers flocons d'écume, ~~en innombrables troupeaux errants dans les plaines bleues du firmament~~. Quelquefois un voile uniforme s'étendait sur ~~Une autre fois,~~ la voûte ~~aérienne paraissait~~ azurée ~~changée en une grève où l'on distinguait les couches horizontales, les rides parallèles tracées comme par le flux et le reflux régulier de la mer~~; mais soudain une bouffée de vent ~~venait~~ ant ce réseau, on voyait er s ~~encore~~ déchir~~er le voile et partout~~ se form~~aient~~ dans les cieux de ~~grands~~ bancs d'une ouate éblouissante de blancheur, si doux à l'oeil, qu'on croyait ressentir leur mollesse et leur élasticité.

La scène sur la terre n'était pas moins ravissante; le jour : bleuâtre ~~cérulée~~n et velouté de la lune ~~flottait silencieusement sur la cime des forêts et~~ descend~~a~~nt i dans les intervalles des arbres, et poussait des gerbes de lumière jusque dans l'épaisseur des plus profondes ténèbres. ~~L'étroit ruisseau~~ ; une rivière qui coulait devant nos huttes, tantôt ~~à mes pieds, s'enfonçant~~ se perdait dans le bois, tantôt ~~tout à tour sous des fourrés de chênes saules et d'arbres à sucre, et~~ i reparaissant ~~un peu plus loin dans des clairières tout~~ e brillant des constellations de la nuit, qu'elle répétait dans son sein ~~ressemblait à un ruban de moire et d'azur, semé de crachats de diamants et coupé transversalement de bandes noires~~. De l'autre côté de ~~la~~ cette rivière, dans une vaste prairie naturelle, la clarté de la lune dormait sans mouvement sur les gazons ~~où elle était étendue comme des toiles. D~~; d es bouleaux agités par les brises, et dispersés çà et là dans la savane, ~~tantôt selon le caprice des brises se confondaient avec le sol en s'enveloppant de gazes pâles, tantôt se détachaient du fond de craie en se couvrant d'obscurité, et~~ formaient comme des îles d'ombres flottantes sur une mer immobile de lumière. Auprès, tout était silence et repos, hors la chute de quelques feuilles, le passage brusque d'un vent subit, les gémissements rares et interrompus de la hulotte; mais au loin, par intervalles, on entendait les roulements solennels de la cataracte de Niagara, qui, dans le calme de la nuit, se prolongeaient de désert en désert, et expiraient à travers les forêts solitaires.

*1800, corrected 1809*

L'astre solitaire dans le : il suivait paisiblement sa course ~~La lune~~ monta peu à peu ~~au zénith du~~ ciel; tantôt ~~elle~~ reposait sur ~~un~~ des groupe s de azurée; tantôt il nues qui ressemblait à la cime des hautes montagnes couronnées de neige; ~~tantôt elle s'enveloppait dans~~ en C ploy ant et déployant leurs voiles, ces ~~mêmes~~ nues, ~~qui~~ se déroulaient en zones diaphanes

de satin blanc, ~~ou~~ se ~~transform~~dispersaient en légers flocons d'écume, ou ~~Quelquefois un voile uniforme s'étendait sur la voûte azurée; mais soudain une bouffée de vent déchirant ce réseau, on voyait se~~ former dans les cieux des bancs d'une ouate éblouissante ~~de blancheur~~, si doux à l'oeil, qu'on croyait ressentir leur mollesse et leur élasticité.

La scène sur la terre n'était pas moins ravissante: le jour bleuâtre et velouté de la lune descendait dans les intervalles des arbres, et poussait des gerbes de lumière jusque dans l'épaisseur des plus profondes ténèbres. La ~~une~~ rivière qui coulait à mes pieds tour à tour ~~devant nos huttes, tantôt~~ se perdait dans le bois, tour à tour ~~tantôt~~ reparaissait brillante des constellations de la nuit qu'elle répétait dans son sein. ~~De~~ D'autre côté de ~~cette~~ la rivière, ~~dans une vaste prairie naturelle,~~ savane : la clarté de la lune dormait sans mouvement sur les gazons; des bouleaux agités par les brises, et dispersés çà et là ~~dans la savane~~, formaient comme des îles d'ombres flottantes sur ~~une~~ cette mer immobile de lumière. Auprès, tout ~~était~~ aurait été silence et repos, ~~hors~~ sans la chute de quelques feuilles, le passage ~~brusque~~ d'un vent subit, les gémissements ~~rares et interrompus~~ de la hulotte; ~~mais~~ au loin, par intervalles, on entendait les ~~roulements solennels~~ sourds mugissements de la cataracte de Niagara, qui, dans le calme de la nuit, se prolongeaient de désert en désert, et expiraient à travers les forêts solitaires.

*1809, corrected 1822*

L'astre solitaire ~~monta~~ gravit peu à peu dans le ciel: tantôt il suivait ~~paisiblement~~ sa course ~~azurée~~; tantôt il ~~reposait sur~~ franchissait des groupes de nues qui ressemblaient ~~à la cime~~ au sommet d'une chaîne de ~~de hautes~~ montagnes couronnées de neige. ~~Ces nues, ployant et déployant leurs voiles, se déroulaient en zones diaphanes de satin blanc, se dispersaient en légers~~ flocons d'écume, ou formaient dans les cieux des bancs d'une ouate éblouissante de blancheur, si doux à l'oeil qu'on croyait ressentir leur mollesse et leur élasticité.

La scène sur la terre n'était pas moins ravissante: le jour bleuâtre et velouté de la lune descendait dans les intervalles des arbres, et poussait des gerbes de lumière jusque dans l'épaisseur des plus profondes ténèbres. La rivière qui coulait à mes pieds tout à tour se perdait dans le bois, tour à tour reparaissait brillante des constellations de la nuit qu'elle répétait dans son sein. Dans une savane, de l'autre ~~côté de la rivière, la clarté de la lune dormait sans mouvement sur les gazons;~~

~~des bouleaux agités par les brises, et dispersés çà et là, formaient des îles d'ombres flottantes sur une mer immobile de lumière. Auprès,~~ Tout aurait été silence et repos, sans la chute de quelques feuilles, le passage d'un vent subit, le gémissement de la hulotte; au loin, ~~par intervalles,~~ on entendait les sourds mugissements de la cataracte de Niagara, qui, dans le calme de la nuit, se prolongeaient de désert en désert, et expiraient à travers les forêts solitaires.

*Translations of the earliest (1797) and final (1822) versions of "the American Night"*

{The moon was at its highest point in the sky; one could see here and there, amid broad wind-swept spaces, the sparkle of a thousand stars. At times the moon rested on a clump of clouds that resembled the peak of tall mountains crowned with snow; little by little those clouds stretched out, unwound into diaphanous tracts of white satin, or turned into light flakes of foam, into numberless flocks wandering across the blue plains of the firmament. At other times, the aerial vault seemed changed into a shore where could be descried the horizontal layers, the parallel creases traced as it were by the regular ebb and flow of the sea; a gust of wind came to tear that veil asunder and, all over the sky, great fields of cotton wool took shape, dazzlingly white, and so fluffy to the eye that one could almost feel their softness and texture.

The view on the ground was no less enthralling, the cerulean and velvety light of the moon silently floated above the forest tree tops and, filtering through the spaces between the tree trunks, drove sprays of light into the innermost recesses of the dark. The narrow rivulet that ran at my feet, as it now plunged through thickets of willow and of sugar trees, to reemerge a little farther in the clearings all a-glimmer with the constellations of the night, looked like a ribbon of shimmering silk and azure, studded with diamond badges and streaked crosswise with black stripes. On the opposite bank of the river, in a vast natural meadow, the light of the moon slept motionless over the lawns whereon it lay stretched out like canvas. Birch trees that were scattered here and there across the savannah now merged with the soil, in compliance with the whims of the breeze, by wrapping themselves in pale gauze, now stood out against the chalky background by shrouding themselves in darkness, and formed seeming islands of floating shadows on a quiescent sea of light. Around about, all was silence and rest but for a few falling leaves, the abrupt blowing of a gust of wind, the rare and fitful screeches of the tawny owl; yet in the distance, one could hear at times the solemn rumblings of Niagara Falls, which, in the stillness of the night, echoed from desert to desert, and expired among the solitary forests.}

{The solitary star slowly rose in the sky: now it followed its course, now it passed through clumps of clouds that resembled the peak of a mountain range crowned with snow. All would have been silence and rest but for a few falling leaves, the blowing of a gust of wind, the screech of the tawny owl; in the distance, one could hear the muted rumblings of Niagara Falls, which, in the stillness of the night, echoed from desert to desert, and expired among the solitary forests.}

# NOTES

*Translators' Note:* Translations of quoted passages are ours unless an English-language source is cited here. English editions that appear in braces, however, are provided only for the reader's convenience.

## *Chapter 1*

1 Gérard Genette, *Introduction à l'architexte* (Paris: Seuil, 1979), p. 87. {In English, see *The Architext: An Introduction*, trans. Jane E. Levin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).}

2 The term *architext*, as I notice somewhat belatedly, was proposed by Louis Marin, "Pour une théorie du texte parabolique," in Claude Chabrol, *Le Récit évangélique*, Bibliothèque des Sciences Religieuses (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1974), and was meant to designate "the primary text of all possible discourse, its 'origin,' and its foundation." This is closer, in sum, to what I am going to call *hypotext*. It is high time that some High Commissioner of the Republic of Letters be appointed to enforce a coherent and consistent terminology.

3 Julia Kristeva, *Séméiôtikè* (Paris: Seuil, 1969).

4 On the history of the practice of quoting, see Antoine Compagnon's inaugural study *La Seconde Main, ou Le Travail de la citation* (Paris: Seuil, 1979).

5 *Trans. Note:* "Broach" (as in broaching a cask of wine as well as a subject) stands for "propose."

6 I borrow the first example from the article on *allusion* in César Chesneau Dumarsais's treatise *Des tropes* (Paris: J.-B. Brocas, 1730), and the second from Pierre Fontanier's *Les Figures du discours* (1821–27; Paris: Flammarion, [1968]).

7 Michael Riffaterre, "La trace de l'intertexte," *La Pensée*, October 1980; and "La Syllepse intertextuelle," *Poétique* 40 (November 1979). Cf. Riffaterre, *La Production du texte* (Paris: Seuil, 1979) {*Text Production*, trans. Terese Lyons (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983)}; and *Semiotics of Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).

8 Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), and later works.

9 The word *paratext* must be understood in the ambiguous, even hypocritical, sense that operates in adjectives such as *parafiscal* or *paramilitary*.

10 The term *pact* is evidently somewhat optimistic with regard to the role of the reader, who has signed nothing and must either take it or leave it. But the generic or other markings *commit* the author, who, under penalty of being misunderstood, respects them more frequently than one might expect. We shall encounter several examples of this.

11 I should perhaps have specified that transtextuality is only one transcendence among others; it does at least differ from that other transcendence which unites the text to the extratextual reality, and which does not interest me (directly) for the moment—though I know it exists: I do sometimes go out of my library (I do not have a library). As for the word *transcendence*, which has led me to be suspected of having undergone a mystic conversion, it is purely technical here: it stands for the opposite of immanence, I believe.

12 The first hint of such a development can be found in Michel Charles, "La Lecture critique," *Poétique* 34 (April 1978).

13 The term *hypotext* is used by Mieke Bal in "Notes on Narrative Embedding," *Poetics Today*, Winter 1981, but naturally in an entirely different sense—one similar, more or less, to what I previously meant by *metadiegetic narrative*. Confusion worse confounded has decidedly befallen the realm of terminology. The point will surely be made,: "Why don't you talk like everybody else?" Alas, that would only make matters worse, because common usage is paved with words so familiar, so deceptively transparent, one often tends to use them in long theoretical volumes or at symposia without even stopping to question the meaning of what one is saying. We shall soon encounter a typical example of this fallacious parroting of a term with the notion—if one can call it that—of *parody*. Technical "jargon," at least, has the advantage that all its users generally know and indicate the meaning they assign to each of its terms. Postscript (13 April 1983): I should have mentioned the model of the term *hypotext* (hence of the symmetrical *hypertext*), even though it is evidently the *hypogram* coined by Ferdinand de Saussure—who did not, however, go so far as to forge *hypergram*.

14 Naturally, *Ulysses* and the *Aeneid* cannot be *reduced* to a direct or an indirect transformation of the *Odyssey* (I shall return to this at a later point), but this feature is the only one to concern us here.

15 Honoré de Balzac, *Un Début dans la vie* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade, vol. 1], 1951), p. 771. {In English, see *A Start in Life* (Montreal: H. T. Thomas, 1897).}

16 I need not bother to invent the proverb; I borrow it from the same text by Balzac.

## *Chapter 3*

1 Aristotle, *Poetics* 1; cf. Genette, *The Architext*, chap. 2.

2 See Herman Kohler, "Die Parodie," *Glotta* 35 (1956); and Wido Hempel, "Parodie, Travesti und Pastiche," *Germanische Romanische Monatschrift*, 1965.

3 Atheneus of Naucratis, *Deipnosophistes* 15 (2d-3d century A.D.).

*Chapter 4*

1 Octave Delepierre, *Essai sur la parodie chez les Grecs, les Romains et les modernes* (London: N. Trübner, 1870).
2 Claude Sallier, "Discours sur l'origine et sur le caractère de la parodie," in *Histoire de l'Académie des Inscriptions* (1733), vol. 7.
3 Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Poetics* (1561), 1.42.
4 *Suidae Lexicon, Graece & Latine* (Cantabridgiae: Typis Academicis, 1705), s.v. *parodia.*
5 Antoine Houdar de la Motte, "Discours sur Homère," preface to his "translation" of the *Iliad* (1714).
6 Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* (1906–11; Paris: Payot, 1967), p. 159. Saussure uses the analogy of a sheet of paper to describe the solidarity that binds sound to sense: you cannot cut into the front without cutting the reverse side as well: "Language is a system whose terms are all interdependent," and "the value of one results only from the simultaneous presence of the others."

*Chapter 5*

1 Jean Baptiste Racine, *The Litigants*, trans. Samuel Solomon (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 227.
2 Pierre Corneille, *Sertorius* (February 1662), line 1868; Molière, *Ecole des femmes* (December 1662), line 642. {In English, see *Most Plays of Corneille*, ed. and trans. Lacy Lockert (Nashville TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1959); and Molière, *The School for Wives*, trans. Richard Wilbur (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1975).} The following is another example of parodic application of a line from the same *Sertorius*, but with the substitution of one word: "Ah, pour être Romain, je n'en suis pas moins homme! {Ah! for being Roman I am no less a man!}" (line 1194) becomes the familiar line in Molière's *Tartuffe*, "Ah! for being devout I am no less a man!" (line 966).
3 Michel Butor, *Répertoire III* (Paris: Minuit, 1968), p. 18; Jorge Luis Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*," trans. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby, in *Ficciones* (New York: Grove Press, 1962). Menard's performance is evidently, in its imaginary (and unfinished) outcome, a minimal, or purely semantic, parody: he literally rewrites *Quixote*, and the historical distance between the two identical texts invests the second one with a meaning entirely different from that of the first. This fictitious example clearly shows that the "minimal" character of such a parody is dependent not upon the extent of the text but upon that of the transformation itself. The same could be said of a perfect pastiche (say of Bizet's *Symphony in C* with regard to the classical-Schubertian style), but once again, there is in pastiche only a stylistic, not a textual identity.
4 Théophile de Viau, *Pyrame et Thisbé* (1617); Edmond Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897). {In English, see *Edmond Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac*, trans. Charles Marowitz (Lyme NH: Smith & Kraus, 1995).}
5 Nicolas Boileau, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1966), p. 292.
6 Edmond Brua's spoof in *pied-noir* style, which does bear the title *Parodie du Cid* (November 1941; Paris: Charlot, 1944), belongs to travesty or, better yet, to what I

would call *mixed parody*. The tirade of Don Diego (who has become Dodièze {C sharp}, as Rodrigue becomes Roro, Chimène Chipette, etc.), reads as follows: "Qué rabia! Qué malheur! Pourquoi c'est qu'on vient vieux?"

## *Chapter 6*

1 The only notable exception is that of Louis-Simon Auger, *Mélanges philosophiques et littéraires* (Paris, 1828), 2:151, whose term "parody of the epic" encompasses the antithetical forms of burlesque travesty and mock-heroic pastiche. Pierre Larousse, s.v. *burlesque*, does seem to identify parody and travesty when he states that "the burlesque style, fit only for parody, should not be confused with the mock-heroic style"; but his aforementioned article on *parody* corrects this apparent exception by illustrating his definition with one eminently restrictive example: *Chapelain décoiffé*.

2 Edmond and Jules Goncourt, *Germinie Lacerteux* (1864), chap. 48. {In English, trans. Leonard Tancock (New York: Penguin Books, 1984).}

3 To cull only from the best of their kind, see the work of Mikhail Bakhtin; Michael Riffaterre; H. Markiewicz, "On the Definition of Literary Parody," in *To Honor Roman Jakobson* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967); Geneviève Idt, "La parodie: Rhétorique ou lecture?" in *Le Discours et le sujet* (Nanterre: Université de Paris X, 1972–73); Claude Bouché, *Lautréamont, du lieu commun à la parodie* (Paris: Larousse, 1974); Claude Abastado, "Situation de la parodie," *Cahiers du XXe siècle*, 1976; Lionel Duisit, *Satire, parodie, calembour*, Stanford French and Italian Studies (Saratoga CA: Anma Libri, 1978); Linda Hutcheon, "Modes et formes du narcissisme littéraire," "Ironie et parodie," and "Ironie, parodie, satire," *Poétique* 29 (1977), 36 (1978), and 46 (1981). In this general confusion, the paradoxical use of *pastiche* for "parody" can also be found: thus in "Sciascia's Pastiche of Voltaire" (*Le Monde*, 5 June 1978), the obvious reference is *Candido*, which is a modern travesty of *Candide*.

4 Michel-Antoine Burnier and Patrick Rambaud, *Parodies* (Paris: Balland, 1977). An earlier English collection had already borne that title. The use of *parody* to designate satirical pastiche has no doubt long been current in English, where *pastiche* remains a foreign import. Our French vulgate thus bears the imprint of English usage.

5 I sometimes wonder whether the confusion that prevails in the vulgate is not due partly to the muffled lexical association of the adjectives *parodic*, *satiric*, and *ironic*, which readily echo one another.

6 Very crudely indeed, for the neatness of a chart can hardly suit such imprecise usage. Thus satiric imitation corresponds both to one of the meanings of *parody* and to one of the nuances of *pastiche*, which the *Robert* dictionary defines as "a literary or artistic work wherein the author has imitated, counterfeited the manner, the style of a master . . . most often with a playful purpose, as a stylistic exercise, or with a parodic, satiric aim." Only when they are set in opposition, with a view to distinguishing them, do *pastiche* and *parody* fall into the categories of playful and satiric imitations. I have had several opportunities to request groups of students, both French and American, to write a definition of those terms. The average results of these surveys have proved strikingly stable: 5 percent of the answers were correct (according to me), 40 percent were too

confused to be significant, and 55 percent conformed to the vulgate. At this point, it may be in order for me to confess that I am also guilty of having conformed to the vulgate in my use of *parody*: *Figures II* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), p. 163; and *Mimologiques* (Paris: Seuil, 1976), pp. 10, 428). {In English, see *Figures of Literary Discourse*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982); and *Mimologics*, trans. Thaïs E. Morgan (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).}

## *Chapter 7*

1 *La charge* rather than *caricature*, which might cause misunderstandings, due to the word's graphic connotations. Graphic caricature is at the same time an "imitation" (a representation) and a satirical transformation. The operation of caricature is of an entirely different order, both as regards its means and as regards its objects, which are not texts but persons. {*Trans. Note*: We have found no English equivalent for the French word *charge*. The term *caricature* has thus been kept, despite the author's distinction between the two meanings.}

2 *Trans Note*: Max Beerbohm's pastiches would be a close equivalent in English literature.

3 Being neutral and extensive is the only real merit of "transposition," but all the other possible terms (rewriting, rehandling, remake, revision, refection, recasting, etc.) would pose even more problems; moreover, as we shall see, the presence of the prefix *trans-* does have certain paradigmatic advantages.

4 Given (a) the frequently paraliterary status of some of these classes and (b) their transgeneric extension, I prefer to avoid the word *genre*. *Practice* seems to me here to be the handiest and most appropriate term to designate what is, after all, a *type of operation*.

5 To illustrate the category of *forgery*, I have chosen a little-known but quite canonical work: Quintus of Smyrna's *Posthomerica* (Sequel to Homer), which is a continuation of the *Iliad*. I shall come back to it, of course. {English translations are *The War at Troy: What Homer Didn't Tell*, trans. and intro. Frederick M. Combellack (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968); and *The Fall of Troy*, trans. Arthur S. Way (London: Heinemann, 1913; Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1955).}

6 None of the "practices" listed on the chart is actually of an elementary type, and each one—particularly transposition—would have to be broken down into simpler operations; conversely, we shall have to look at more complex genres, hybrids composed of two or three fundamental practices, which for this very reason cannot appear here.

## *Chapter 8*

1 *Trans. Note:* La Fontaine's fable begins "La Cigale, ayant chanté / Tout l'été, / Se trouva fort dépourvue / Quand la bise fut venue: / Pas un seul petit morceau / De mouche ou de vermisseau. / Elle alla crier famine / Chez la Fourmi sa voisine." (The Grasshopper having sung / All summer long, / Found herself quite at a loss / When the icy winter wind did blow. / Not the least morsel of a fly or worm around. / She went to cry hunger to her neighbor, the Ant.) {For a rhymed version in English, see *The Complete Fables of*

*Jean de la Fontaine*, trans. Norman B. Spector (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988).}

2 *Trans. Note:* The popular song "Le Temps des cerises" (Jean-Baptiste Clément and A. Renard) begins "Quand nous chanterons / Le temps des cerises, / Les gais rossignols, / Les merles moqueurs / Seront tous en fête. / Les belles auront / La folie en tête, / Et les amoureux / Du soleil au coeur." (When the time comes to sing / The season of cherries, / The merry nightingales, / The mocking blackbirds / Will all be rejoicing. / Girls will have / Wild thoughts in their heads, / And lovers sun in their hearts.)

3 The sequel can be found in *Collages: Revue d'Esthétique* (1978), p. 366.

4 Kojiro Yoshikawa, *An Introduction to Sung Poetry* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 41.

5 Jean-Luc Nancy, "Jeune Carpe," in *Haine de la poésie* (Paris: Bourgois, 1979).

6 *Trans. Note:* The implicit models are "Pas d'argent, pas de suisse" (No tip, no beadle); "Les petits ruisseaux font les grandes rivières" (Little streams make great rivers); "L'ennui naquit un jour de l'uniformité" (Boredom was once born from uniformity); "On a vu des rois épouser des bergères" (Kings have been known to marry shepherdesses).

7 See Honoré de Balzac, *Pensées, Sujets, Fragmens*, ed. Jacques Crépet (Paris: Blaizot 1910).

8 *Trans. Note:* The implicit models are "Qui trop embrasse mal étreint" (Grasp all, lose all); "Partir c'est mourir un peu" (To leave is to die a little).

9 *The Barber of Seville*, 4.1; *The Marriage of Figaro*, 1.2. {In English, see Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, trans. John Wood (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1964).}

10 André Breton, *Manifestos of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), p. 3.

11 Raymond Queneau, *Le Dimanche de la vie* (Paris: Galllimard, 1951), p. 223; Georges Perros, *Papiers collés* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 3:3.

12 In 1925. Paul Eluard, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1968), 1:153–61.

13 *Trans. Note:* The implicit models are "La musique adoucit les moeurs" (Music soothes the savage breast), and "A quelque chose malheur est bon" (It's an ill wind that blows nobody good).

14 *Trans. Note:* The originals are "Quand le chat n'est pas là, les souris dansent" (When the cat is away, the mice will play); "A chaque jour suffit sa peine" (Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof).

15 *Trans. Note:* The implicit model is "Qui dîne avec le diable doit avoir une longue cuiller" (He who dines with the devil must have a long spoon).

16 *Trans. Note:* The implicit models are "Cordonnier, pas plus haut que la chaussure" (Shoemaker, not higher than the shoe); "Les absents ont toujours tort" (The absent are always in the wrong); "Il faut battre le fer quand il est chaud" (Strike while the iron is hot); "Il n'y a pas de fumée sans feu" (There is no smoke without fire).

17 I am citing here only autodiegetic first-person novels in the picaresque tradition. Once assigned to novels narrated in the third person, titles such as *Tom Jones* and *Eugénie Grandet* no longer carry the same connotation, which soon dissolved in any case (there is nothing picaresque about *David Copperfield*).

18 *Trans. Note:* The contemporary French poet Francis Ponge wrote *Le Parti pris des choses* (Siding with things) and *La Crevette dans tous ses états* (The shrimp in all its various states).

19 Something like an irrepressible need for *saturation* can also be found in operation. Thus two famous titles in American criticism, *Against Interpretation* by Susan Sontag (1964) and *Beyond Formalism* by Geoffrey Hartmann (1966), inevitably imposed the chiastic *Beyond Interpretation* by Jonathan Culler (1976) and *Against Formalism* by W. B. Michaels (1979).

20 Lautréamont, *Poésies*, vol. 2. {In English, see *Maldoror, together with a Translation of Lautréamont's Poésies*, trans. Guy Wernham (New York: New Directions, 1965).}

21 *Trans. Note:* Pascal's Pensée is "Cleopatra's nose: had it been shorter, the whole face of the earth would have changed." [In English, see *Pensées*, trans. A. J. Kraislhaimer (New York: Penguin Books, 1995).]

22 *Trans. Note:* The original quotations are from Vauvenargues ("Great thoughts come from the heart"); Pascal ("Man is but a reed, the weakest in nature, but he is a thinking reed"); and Jean de La Bruyère ("Everything has been said, and we have come too late, now that men have been living and thinking for over seven thousand years"). {In English, see Jean de La Bruyère, see *Characters*, trans. Jean Stewart (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970).}

23 See Paul Reboux and Charles Muller's anthology *A la manière de . . .* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1964).

24 *Trans. Note:* La Rochefoucauld's actual maxims are "It is a sign of great folly to wish to be wise alone"; "There are good marriages, but there are no delightful ones"; "A fool does not have character enough to be good." {For English translations, see *Maxims*, trans. Constantine Fizgibbon (London: A. Wingate, 1957); *Maxims*, trans. Louis Kronenberger (New York: Random House, 1959).}

25 *Trans. Note:* Lamartine's line is "Un seul être vous manque et tout est dépeuplé" (One sole being is missing and the world is a desert). {For an English version of Lamartine's *Méditations poétiques*, see *Poetical Meditations*, trans. Gervase Hittle (Lewiston NY: Mellen Press, 1993).}

## *Chapter 9*

1 My corpus of Oulipian or para-Oulipian texts consists essentially of Oulipo, *La Littérature potentielle: Créations, re-créations, récréations* (Paris: Gallimard, Idées, 1973); "Transformer, traduire," *Change* 14 (February 1973); Raymond Queneau, *Exercices de style* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947, 1976) [*Exercises in Style*, trans. Barbara Wright (New York: New Directions, 1981)], and *Cent mille milliards de poèmes* (Paris: Gallimard 1961); *Mots d'Heures, Gousses, Rames*, ed. Luis d'Antin van Rooten (London: Angus & Robertson, 1968); Georges Pérec, *La Disparition* (Paris: Denoël, 1969) {*A Void*, trans. Gilbert Adair (London: Harvill, 1994)}; Léonce Nadirpher, "Malle de mots" (unpublished). {For an overview in English, see *Oulipo: A Primer of Potential Literature*, trans. and ed. Warren F. Motte Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).}

2 Casanova, *Histoire de ma vie*, 10.10.

3 *Trans. Note:* Rimbaud's "Voyelles" reads "A noir, E blanc, I rouge, U vert, O bleu: voyelles, / Je dirai quelque jour vos naissances latentes. (A black, E white, I red, U green, O blue: vowels, / One day I shall tell your latent births.) {In English, see *Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters*, trans. Wallace Fowlie (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).}

4 *Trans. Note: Traducson* is literally "transsound"; a functional equivalent could be "transphonation."

5 *Trans. Note:* The line from Keats is evidently "A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

6 *Trans. Note:* Mallarmé's lines read "Tel qu'en Lui-même enfin l'éternité le change, / Le Poëte suscite avec un glaive nu / Son siècle épouvanté de n'avoir pas connu." (Such as into Himself at last eternity changes him, / The Poet arouses with a naked sword / His century, dismayed at not having known.) {In English, see Stéphane Mallarmé, *Collected Poems*, trans. Henry Weinfield (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).}

7 *Trans. Note:* "Qui est-ce qui a mangé l'omelette au rhum?" (Who ate the rum omelet?); "Où qu'est la bonne Pauline?" "Elle pisse et fait caca." "Où ça?" "À la gare à Passy." (Where is Pauline, the maid? She's pissing and shitting. Where? At the station in Passy [a posh district in Paris]). *Saint-Cloud Ménilmuche* evokes an imaginary *métro* line between two Parisian districts, Ménilmuche being the slangy version of Ménilmontant.

8 *Trans. Note:* Nerval's famous sonnet "El Desdichado" begins "Je suis le ténébreux,—le veuf,—l'inconsolé, / Le prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie: / Ma seule *étoile* est morte,—et mon luth constellé / Porte le soleil noir de la Mélancolie." (I am the gloomy one, the widower, the unconsoled, / The prince of Aquitaine whose tower has been abolished: / My only *star* is dead, and my star-spangled lute / Bears the black sun of Melancholy.)

9 *Trans. Note:* Rimbaud's "Bateau ivre" begins: "Comme je descendais des Fleuves impassibles, / Je ne me sentis plus guidé par les haleurs: / Des Peaux-Rouges criards les avaient pris pour cibles, / Les ayant cloués nus aux poteaux de couleurs." (As I descended impassive Rivers, / I no longer felt guided by the haulers: / Screaming redskins had taken them as their targets, / And nailed them naked to the colored stakes.)

10 Queneau, *Cent mille milliards de poèmes*. Nerval himself indulged in "combinational literature" by contaminating his two sonnets "Myrtho" and "Delfica": the Dumesnil de Grammont manuscript shows the quatrains from "Myrtho" followed by the tercets from "Delfica," and vice versa. Hence, four sonnets are made possible by only twenty-eight lines.

11 Paul Valéry, *Oeuvres* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1965), 2:696. {*Trans. Note:* Pascal's pensée is "Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie." (The eternal silence of those infinite spaces frightens me.)}

12 *Trans. Note:* See *Change* 14 (1973). Mallarmé's "L'Azur" begins "De l'éternel azur la sereine ironie / Accable, belle indolemment comme les fleurs, / Le poëte impuissant qui maudit son génie / A travers un désert stérile de Douleurs." (The serene irony of eternal azure / Overpowers, with its haughty flowerlike beauty, / The helpless poet who curses his own genius / Through a sterile desert of Pains.)

13 Intermediary states do exist, however, as in the following parodic line aimed at a bad

poet (but potentially applicable to a few good ones), which inverts the meaning of the hypotext by switching two words: "Même quand l'oiseau vole, on voit qu'il a des pattes" (Even when the bird is flying, its paws can be seen), quoted in Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry*.

14 *Trans. Note:* Mallarmé's sonnet begins "Ses purs ongles très haut dédiant leur onyx, / L'Angoisse, ce minuit, soutient, lampadophore, / Maint rêve vespéral brûlé par le Phénix / Que ne recueille pas de cinéraire amphore." (With pure nails on high dedicating their onyx, / Anguish, that midnight, sustains, like a lamp-bearer, / Many an evening dream consumed by the Phoenix / Whose ashes are not gathered into a funeral amphora.)

15 *Trans. Note:* Du Bellay's sonnet begins "Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau voyage, / Ou comme cestui-là qui conquit la toison." (Happy the man who, like Ulysses, went on a beautiful voyage, / Or like him who conquered the fleece.) {In English, see *Sonnets Translated from "Les Regrets" of Joachim du Bellay*, trans. August Heckscher (New York: Uphill Press, 1972.)}

16 *Trans. Note:* A surrealist sticker (1925) reading "Le presbytère n'a rien perdu de son charme, ni le jardin de son éclat" (The presbytery has not lost any of its charm, nor the garden any of its luster) took the phrase from Gaston Leroux, *Le Mystère de la chambre jaune* (1907), {In English, see *The Mystery of the Yellow Room* (1908; Cutchogue NY: Buccaneer Books, 1993).} Leroux is also the author of *Phantom of the Opera*.

17 *Trans. Note:* Lefebvre, a contemporary Marxian sociologist; Sollers, a contemporary writer and Parisian intellectual; Lecanuet, a contemporary Christian Democrat politician.

18 *Trans. Note:* This example is a conflation of two lines from Victor Hugo.

19 *Trans. Note:* Two lines from Boileau and Victor Hugo are conflated here.

20 *Trans. Note: Glace* can mean both "mirror" and "ice."

21 *Trans. Note:* The fables are La Fontaine's "The Crow and the Fox" and "The Grasshopper and the Ant."

22 *Trans. Note:* Verlaine's poem "Gaspard Hauser chante" begins "Je suis venu, calme orphelin, / Riche de mes seuls yeux tranquilles, / Vers les hommes des grandes villes: / Ils ne m'ont pas trouvé malin." (I came, a tranquil orphan, / With tranquil eyes as my sole wealth, / To the men in big cities: / They did not find me clever.) On Nerval's "El Desdichado," see note 8.

23 *Trans. Note:* In Molière's comedy *Amphitryon* (1668), Jupiter assumes Amphitryon's physical appearance to seduce the king's wife, Alcmena. The textual source of Genette's mixture is Racine's line from *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1674): "Oui, c'est Agamemnon, c'est ton roi qui t'éveille" (Yes, 'tis Agamemnon, 'tis thy king awakening thee). "Longtemps je suis sorti à cinq heures" conflates two sentences: (a) the famous incipit of Proust's *Recherche*: "Longtemps je me suis couché de bonne heure" (For a long time I went to bed early); (b) "La marquise sortit à cinq heures" (The marchioness went out at five)—a sentence that Paul Valéry, asked why he would not try his hand at a novel, is reputed to have said he could not bring himself to write.

24 The foregoing inventory lays no claim to having exhausted the list of actual Oulipisms or para-Oulipisms, which I suppose to be growing by the day. Just to make it longer,

Nadirpher composed a sequence of thirty-six variations on the first words of Louis-René des Forêts's *Le Bavard* (which makes it three more than Beethoven's on Diabelli's waltz).

## *Chapter 10*

1 The playlet was first performed at Agnès Capri's theater in 1951, and published in *Théâtre de chambre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966). Tardieu was a "guest of honor" at the Oulipo.

2 I would willingly use *hologrammatic* to designate such a state. But it is no doubt preferable to reserve this term to those texts—if there be any such—that subject themselves to the *anti*lipogrammatic constraint of using all the letters of the alphabet, as a twelve-tone sequence must use all of the twelve notes. This note is thus not a hologram, for its French text contains, as far as I am aware, neither *k* nor *w* nor *y*. It is, in this respect, like many other texts, an involuntary lipogram.

3 It is not a hypertext as things now stand, at any rate. But if a "normal" version of this novel were to make its appearance tomorrow, together with Pérec's statement that it was its first version, that publication would somewhat modify the situation, after the fact, even though there would be no certainty that we were not faced with a hoax: i.e., a hypertext fraudulently presented as a hypotext. Which goes to show that a textual status is not an absolute essence but always a structural effect.

4 This goes even for multiple hypotexts, as in the case of the three Greek *Electras* on which (at the very least) the author of a modern *Electra* could base his play; or for nebulous hypotexts, as in the case of a mythological tradition; or for generic hypotexts, as in the case of a genre pastiche, etc. We shall encounter these variants in due course.

5 "To put it simply, a poem says one thing and means another" (Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry*, p. 1). That is precisely the notion that André Breton indignantly rejected. I shall not attempt to referee the debate between those two heavyweights.

## *Chapter 11*

1 For more on Chateaubriand's two versions, see chapter 48.

2 Michel Butor, *6 810 000 litres d'eau par seconde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965); quotations and page numbers cite *Niagara: A Novel*, trans. Elinor S. Miller (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1969).

3 In Georges Charbonnier, *Entretiens avec Michel Butor* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), pp. 144–45.

## *Chapter 12*

1 Paul Scarron's entire *Virgile travesti*, with its continuation by Moreau de Brasei, was published with an important preface (already referred to) by Victor Fournel (Paris: Delahaye, 1858).

2 There are twelve books, not twenty-four, because its true hypotext is the very much abridged translation of the *Iliad* by Antoine Houdar de la Motte (which we shall consider for its own sake). Marivaux's *Oeuvres de jeunesse* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1972) reprints the first six books of *Homère travesti.*

3 Pierre Marivaux, preface to *Homère travesti*, in *Oeuvres de jeunesse*, p. 961.

## *Chapter 13*

1 Voltaire's *La Pucelle* (1755–62) may be another exception. It is not, as might have been hoped, a travesty of Chapelain's work but a much more complex buffoonery that mingles medieval-Christian transpositions of Homeric *topoi* (battles between gods become single fights between Saint George and Saint Denis) with travesties of Ariosto (Joan of Arc rides a winged donkey) and with sacrilegious ribaldry, which seems to be Voltaire's only innovative contribution to that tradition.

2 Georges Fourest, *Carnaval des chefs-d'oeuvre*, in *La Négresse blonde* (1909), itself reissued together with *Le Géranium ovipare* (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1964).

3 *Trans. Note:* Drumont was a well-known anti-Semitic ideologue.

4 *Trans. Note:* "Qu'il mourût!" (He should have died!).

5 Reprinted in Alfred Jarry, *La Chandelle verte* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1969), p. 356.

6 Guillaume Apollinaire, "Zone," in *Alcools* (1912). {In English, see *Zone*, trans. Samuel Beckett (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1972); and *Alcools: Poems*, trans. Donald Revell (Hanover NH: University Press of New England for Wesleyan University Press, 1995).}

7 *Trans. Note: Aequo pulsat pede*—literally, "knocks with equal foot"—alludes to Horace's line "Pale Death, with impartial step, knocks at the cottages of the poor and the palaces of kings."

8 *Trans. Note:* "Not hunger but the end." Genette puns on the homophony of *faim* and *fin.*

## *Chapter 14*

1 Pierre Fontanier, *Les Figures du discours,* pp. 288ff.

2 Since it denotes imitation and affectation (or *artifice*), the suffix *-ism* carries a potential derogatory connotation, which is ever ready to be actualized; thus the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* (1762) opposes *néologisme* to *néologie*: "*Néologie* is an art, *néologisme* is an abuse."

3 *Trans. Note:* Genette puns on the verb *s'altère*, meaning "becomes thirsty" and "changes for the worse."

4 Letter to Robert Dreyfus, 23 March 1908, in Marcel Proust, *Correspondance générale* (Paris: Plon, 1935), 4:229.

5 The term *norm* is a little weak here, but I can find no other to designate what the neoclassical theorists viewed as conditions not of the existence but of the "perfection" of a literary work (e.g., some of the Aristotelian criteria of the tragic). The run-of-the-mill pastiche, or rather the vulgar caricature, is content with borrowing actual idioms. The high-quality pastiche (in Proust, for example) aims for a transcendent idiom.

6 Quoted in Marcel Proust, *Contre Sainte-Beuve, Pastiches et Mélanges, Essais et articles* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1971), p. 270. {This edition is cited hereafter simply as *Contre Sainte-Beuve.*} {In English, see *Against Sainte-Beuve and Other Essays*, trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1994).}

## *Chapter 15*

1 *Trans. Note: Version* and *thème* are the names used in the French educational system to specify translations from (*version*) and into (*thème*) another language.
2 Proust, *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, p. 303.
3 Letter to Robert Dreyfus, 18 March 1908. In still another Proustian testimony on this indefinite productivity, here transferred to the reader, he writes, "It little matters that a pastiche should be extended, provided it contains general features which, by enabling the reader to multiply its similarities ad infinitum, spare one the trouble of piling them up" (letter to Jules Lemaitre, in Proust, *Correspondance générale*, 3:101).

## *Chapter 16*

1 *Trans. Note:* Henri Bergson's theory of laughter (*Le Rire*, 1899) defines it as caused by "the mechanical encrusted upon the living" (*du mécanique plaqué sur du vivant*). Imitation, in his view, brings out what can be "mechanically" reproduced, and is thus potentially laughable, in the imitated person or style.
2 See Yury Tynyanov, "Destruction, Parody" (1919); and Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929), trans. R. W. Rotsel (Ann Arbor MI: Ardis, 1973).
3 "Ruskin and Others," in Marcel Proust, *Pleasures and Days*, trans. Louise Varese, Gerard Hopkins, and Barbara Dupee (New York: Howard Fertig, 1978), pp. 199–200. {*Trans. Note:* Proust's wording for "it is shown in Homer, the Grecian poet" is "il appert d'Homérus, poète grégeois"—a more archaic turn than the translation quoted here.}
4 *Trans. Note:* In the Reboux and Muller anthology, see "À la manière de Racine": "Et vingt fois dans son sein son fer a repassé" (And twenty times into her breast his iron blade did plunge). The pun is on *fer a repassé*, which is homophonic with *fer à repasser*, a laundry iron.

## *Chapter 17*

1 Salon de 1767.
2 Jean Marmontel, "Pastiche," in *Éléments de littérature* (1787).
3 Letter of 3 June 1675, in Boileau, *Oeuvres complètes*, p. 776. The common theme is a eulogy of the Duke of Vivonne.
4 I refer to Ernest Sturm's critical edition of Crébillon, *L'Écumoire* (Paris: Nizet, 1976), chaps. 4–6. The targeted work is obviously Marivaux's *La Vie de Marianne* (1731–41), ed. Frédéric Deloffre (Paris: Garnier, 1957). {In English, see *The Virtuous Orphan; or, The Life of Marianne, Countess of* ***, reissue of an eighteenth-century English translation

by Mary Mitchell Collyer (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965).} Marivaux is not named but his style was recognizable to all his readers, as is confirmed by a letter written years later by Diderot to Sophie Volland (20 September 1765), in which Diderot, too, has a go at it: "After the first lapse, we secretly know that the rest will follow in like manner, and we are irked to await without end that this lapse, which should relieve us of a painful struggle and afford us a succession of consummate and uninterrupted pleasures, should have occurred and not be occurring." He goes on to add the names of his two models by way of commentary (for we are dealing, as Henri Lafon tells me, with something like the *pastiche of a pastiche*): "Well! dear friend, don't you find that since Crébillon's fairy Mole no one has been able to 'out-Marivaux' me to this day?"

5 Jean le Rond D'Alembert reports that a certain member of the Academy proposed electing Marivaux to the Academy of Sciences as the "inventor of a new idiom."

6 Honocé de Balzac, *Un Prince de la bohème* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade, vol. 7], 1955), pp. 812–16. Balzac is obviously a habitué of mimetic writing: the *Contes drôlatiques* are in medieval style, and the first of Lucien's articles in *Illusions perdues* is a pastiche of Jules Janin, inspired precisely by his review of *La Peau de chagrin* in *L'Artiste*, 14 August 1831. {For English translations, see *Droll Stories*, trans. James Lewis (1873; Franklin Center PA: Franklin Library, 1978); *Lost Illusions*, trans. Kathleen Rain (New York: Modern Library, 1985); *The Wild Ass's Skin*, trans. Ellen Marriage (1906; New York: Dutton, 1919).}

7 Quoted from Honoré de Balzac, *A Prince of Bohemia*, trans. James Waring and John Rudd (Philadelphia: Gebbie, 1899), pp. 8–13.

8 Edouard Delprat, *Les Frères d'armes* (a pastiche of the *Légende des siècles*), published anonymously (1865) by La Librairie des Bibliophiles; Charles Monselet, *Une Chansonnette des rues et des bois*, published anonymously (1865) in Chaillot; André Gill, *V.H. corrigé à la plume et au crayon: Les Chansons des grues et des boas*, published in Paris (1865). {*Trans. Note:* The third title uses *grues* (cranes) and *boas* to pun on *rues* (streets) and *bois* (woods) in the second.}

9 The best known is Max Beerbohm, *A Christmas Garland* (1912).

10 Among those numberless performances we may cite Robert Scipion, *Prête-moi ta plume* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946); Georges-Armand Masson, *À la façon de . . .* (Paris: LLC, 1949); Michel Perrin, *Monnaie de singe* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1952); Jacques Laurent and Claude Martine, *Dix perles de culture* (Paris: Table Ronde, 1952); Sylvain Monod, *Pastiches* (Paris: Lefebvre, 1963); Burnier and Rambaud, *Parodies*. The titles can be seen to be as many variants—felicitous or not—of the generic contract.

11 Michel-Antoine Burnier and Patrick Rambaud, *Le Roland Barthes sans peine* (Paris: Balland, 1978).

12 André Maurois, *Le Côté de Chelsea* (Paris: Trianon, 1929), was a single long pastiche of Proust, its length dictated to a large measure by the prolixity of the model. (Reboux and Muller took another line: they had their model dash off a "note" several pages long.)

13 *Trans. Note:* In French, the definite article often precedes the name of a language: "Il écrit bien *le* français."

14 Conversely, the answer of the accused, when he has the inclination or the opportunity to defend himself, is always negative (I do not claim that he is always right). Thus Marivaux, in response to the charge of having coined neologisms: "The number of words, or of signs, among each people, corresponds to the quantity of its ideas. . . . If France had a generation of men with a greater subtlety of mind than there has ever been in France or elsewhere [*Here I am, gentlemen, setting aside all vanity*], we would need new words, new signs in order to express the new ideas of which this new generation would be capable: the words we have would not suffice." (*Le Cabinet du philosophe*, 6th installment, in *Journaux et oeuvres diverses* [Paris: Garnier, 1969]).

*Chapter 18*

1 See Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 928–30 and 1285–95 for Euripides' cento and pastiche of Aeschylus; 1309–63 for Aeschylus's response in the same vein.

2 Jean de La Bruyère, "On Society and Conversation," sec. 30 in *Characters*, pp. 88–89.

3 Gustave Flaubert, *Over Strand and Field* (Akron: St. Dunstan Society, c. 1904), pp. 107–8. A little later in the chapter, the visit to Combourg elicits a new evocation of that author ("I thought of that man who began there and who filled half a century with the din of his grief") which shows some contamination, but in a manner less conspicuous and intentional.

4 It includes, besides "L'Affaire Lemoine"—published (except for the Saint-Simon portion) in the literary supplement of *Le Figaro*, February–March 1908, and reprinted in 1919 in the volume *Pastiches et Mélanges* (the Saint-Simon, which appears here for the first time in its entirety, expands a "Party at Montesquiou's in Neuilly," from *Figaro*, 1904—several other pages previously unpublished or scattered in the *Correspondance*, in *Les Plaisirs et les jours*, and in the *Recherche*. The best presentation is to be found in the critical edition of *Pastiches de Proust*, assembled by Jean Milly (Paris: Armand Colin, 1970). The introduction, except for a few omissions and additions (mostly biographical and historical), reproduces the article "Les Pastiches de Proust" (*Le Français Moderne*, January–April 1967). This study and Yves Sandre's notice for the Pléiade edition of *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, which deals with it extensively, will spare me many commentaries. Milly's introduction (pp. 14–15) provides a list of the scattered pastiches.

5 *Marcel Proust: A Selection from His Miscellaneous Writings*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (London: Allan Wingate, 1948), p. 236.

6 Marcel Proust, *Pastiches et Mélanges*, in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, p. 285.

7 Ibid., pp. 607, 31–38 (on Renan), 196-97 (on Chateaubriand).

8 Ibid., pp. 21–23 (on Regnier). I remind the reader that the subject of "L'Affaire Lemoine" is a swindle with synthetic diamonds: a diamond pastiche, so to speak.

9 *Essais et articles*, in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, p. 642.

10 *Trans. Note:* Close equivalents to these examples from Proust could be Max Beerbohm's pastiches of Henry James, *The Mote in the Middle Distance* and *The Guerdon.*

1 On Goncourt, see Proust, *Essais et articles*, in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, p. 642; on Flaubert, see *Proust: A Selection*, p. 234. The letter to Ramon Fernandez, published in *Le Divan*, October–December 1948, is quoted in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, p. 690.

2 Letter to Robert Dreyfus, 17 March 1908, in Marcel Proust, *Selected Letters*, ed. Philip Kolb, trans. Terence Kilmartin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 2:355.

3 Proust, "Sur le style de Flaubert" (About Flaubert's style), in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*.

4 Letter to Louise Colet, 15 August 1846, in *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert, 1830–1857*, ed., and trans. Francis Steegmuller (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

5 Albert Thibaudet, *Gustave Flaubert* (1922), rev. ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1935), p. 272. The chapter on style takes up and develops the article of November 1919 and a reply to Proust written in March 1920.

6 *Trans. Note:* Out of sheer charity, he proceeds to invite young men to keep them company; to facilitate those visits, he ends up hanging a red light above the house door.

7 *Proust: A Selection*, p. 217 (emphasis added).

8 Marcel Proust, *The Guermantes Way* (1920–21), in *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: Random House, 1981), pp. 338–39.

9 Marcel Proust, preface to Paul Morand's *Tendres Stocks*, in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, p. 607.

10 Ibid., p. 615.

11 Ibid., p. 645.

12 Proust, "Sur le style de Flaubert," pp. 586, 616.

13 Gérard Genette, "Métonymie chez Proust," in *Figures III* (Paris: Seuil, 1972).

14 Proust, preface to Morand's *Tendres Stocks*, p. 616 (emphasis added).

15 Marcel Proust, *On Art and Literature, 1896–1919*, trans. Sylvia Townsend Warner (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957), pp. 169–70 (emphasis added).

16 Letter to Madame de Noailles, in Proust, *Correspondance générale*, 2:86. Other formulations of this stylistic fusion appear in the 1920 article: "vision conveyed absolutely, with not a single witticism in between, not a hint of personal sensibility" ("Sur le style de Flaubert," p. 588); and, in a 1910 sketch titled "To Be Added to Flaubert": "a style smooth as porphyry, without a seam, without additions." But these formulas describe what is not yet Flaubert's style, or not yet in *Madame Bovary*, from which "not everything that is not really Flaubert has been completely eliminated." That is, witticisms, sententious statements, and last, "images that still have about them something of lyricism or wit, images that are not yet crushed, done in, absorbed into the prose, and are not the mere apparition of things" (*Contre Sainte-Beuve*, p. 300). This they will never really become, according to Proust, and the instrument of homogenization will in fact be quite different.

17 Another trait inherited, via Goncourt, by the Naturalists is the abstract noun without epithet preceded by the indefinite article: "A torpor seized her" (Emma at the Vaubyessard). Proust doesn't mention this in his article, but he puts it into the pastiche: "A sweetness invaded her." He neither mentions nor uses another pre-Naturalist turn,

*it was* . . . , immortalized by the "It was like an apparition" of *L'Éducation sentimentale.* He is right not to, perhaps, and I am wrong to mention it. That was to become one of Zola's least bearable tics (*And it was* . . . ; *then it was* . . . ), and nothing distorts the description of Flaubert's style more than amalgamating it with its naturalist derivation.

18 Gustave Flaubert, *Herodias*, in *Three Tales*, trans. Arthur McDowall (New York: Knopf, 1924), p. 132.

19 *The Captive* in *Remembrance of Things Past*, p. 385.

20 Proust, *Within a Budding Grove* in *Remembrance of Things Past*, p. 703.

21 Proust, "Gérard de Nerval," in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, p. 234; and "Sur le style de Flaubert," p. 593.

22 I have not dealt with the use of the present participle, which Proust does mention as one of Flaubert's definite peculiarities but to which he does not refer again in his article and scarcely at all in his pastiche. Thibaudet discusses it at greater length, pointing out its abnormal frequency. He finds the reason for it in a concern to avoid relative clauses. Perhaps a closer look should be given to its characteristically ponderous effect.

23 Proust, "Sur le style de Flaubert," pp. 592–93.

24 Ibid., p. 590.

25 "I should have to be in a complete immobility of existence in order to be able to write. I think best lying on my back with my eyes closed. The least noise repeats itself within me in prolonged echoes which take a long time to die out. And the older I grow, the more this infirmity develops. Something thickens in me more and more, which is at pains to flow" (Flaubert to Louise Colet, 15 April 1852). This thickened, slowed-down secretion is in any case Flaubert's way of writing, which was becoming more and more clotted, and threatened, like its master, by the final thrombosis.

26 Proust, *Jean Santeuil* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1971), p. 486. {In English, see the translation by Gerard Hopkins (New York: Penguin Books, 1985).}

27 Proust, "Sur le style de Flaubert," p. 594. Cf. the letter to Fernandez, quoted in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, p. 690.

28 Proust, *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, p. 304.

## *Chapter 20*

1 See Raymond Queneau, *Exercises in Style*, trans. Barbara Wright (New York: New Directions, 1981), for the quotations in this chapter.

2 The first twelve versions were written in May 1942, and "Récit," which is the sixteenth, dates from either August or November.

3 This is indeed the equivalent of the musical variation, which is achieved either by a mechanical transformation (change of tempo, of tonality, of rhythm, etc.) or by a stylistic transposition: *maestoso*, *espressivo*, in the manner of (*alla* . . . ).

## *Chapter 21*

1 "It was in vain that Andrew Lang, back in the eighteen-eighties, attempted a burlesque of Pope's *Odyssey*; the work was already its own parody, and the would-be parodist was

unable to go beyond the original text" (Jorge Luis Borges, preface to the 1954 edition of *A Universal History of Infamy*, trans. Norman Thomas di Giovanni [London: Allen Lane, 1973], p. 11).

2 Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1955–56), 3:129–31. The automimetic character of this passage is pointed out by Milly in the 1967 article "Les Pastiches de Proust," p. 137.

3 Proust, *The Captive*, pp. 124–25.

4 Marcel Proust, *Morceaux choisis*, ed. Ramon Fernandez (Paris: Gallimard, 1928).

## *Chapter 22*

1 The apocryphal and the false are not without their contracts as well ("This is a Vermeer, a Rimbaud"). It is simply that the contract is fraudulent.

2 Maurois's *Côté de Chelsea* is a text of about ninety pages, presented as an unedited chapter of the *Recherche*, in which Marcel tells about a trip to England, after Albertine's death, in the company of Andrée.

3 "The hose-pipes admired the splendid upkeep of the roads . . . which set out every five minutes from Briand and Claudel" (Proust, *The Guermantes Way*, p. 375). Cf. Jean-Yves Tadié, "Proust et le nouvel écrivain," *RHLF*, January–March 1967.

4 Henri Beauclair and Gabriel Vicaire, *Les Déliquescences: Poèmes décadents d'Adoré Floupette*, was reprinted under their names in 1911, in 1923, and in a critical edition by S. Cigada (Milan, 1973).

## *Chapter 23*

1 I don't know if we ought to follow Father René Rapin where he may not actually be going when he suggests, deliberately or not, that the fourth book of the *Georgics* should be read as a mock-heroic poem: "Talking about honeybees, in order to elevate the baseness of his material, [Virgil] speaks of them only in metaphoric terms: of the court, of legions, armies, combats, battlefields, of kings, captains, soldiers. And by means of this admirable artistry he paints a magnificent picture of a very lowly subject, for after all they are only flies." (*Poétique* [1674], 2:123).

2 See Nicolas Boileau, *Le Lutrin* (1674), 4.54–58, in *Oeuvres complètes*.

3 See Boileau, *Le Lutrin: An Heroick Poem, Made English by N.O.*, Augustan Reprints No. 126 (1682; Los Angeles: University of California, 1967), for quotations from the poem.

4 Dido to Aeneas in *Aeneid* 4; Andromache to Hector in *Iliad* 6; Pauline to Polyeucte in Corneille, *Polyeucte* 4.3; Hermione to Pyrrhus in Racine, *Andromaque* 4.5.

5 Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, *Défense du poème héroïque* (1674), sixth dialogue.

6 Charles Perrault, *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes* (1692), 3:291.

7 Auger, *Mélanges philosophiques et littéraires*, vol. 2, "Boileau."

*Chapter 24*

1 Gustave Lanson, "La parodie dramatique au XVIIIe siècle," in *Hommes et livres* (1895).
2 Antoine Houdar de la Motte, *Troisième discours à l'occasion de la tragédie d'Inès de Castro* (1723).
3 In fact, the situation of dramatic parodies of the eighteenth century is more complicated. According to Lanson ("Parodie"), "The opera parodies usually (not always) keep the names and qualities of the heroes (thus conforming to the canons of burlesque travesty); the parodies of tragedies attach ridiculous names and lowly occupations to the characters."
4 Jacques Voisine, "Amphitryon, sujet de parodie," *CAIEF*, May 1960.

*Chapter 25*

1 Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (1742). The first part of *Don Quixote* dates from 1605 and the second from 1615.
2 *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554); Mateo Alemán, *Guzman de Alfarache* (1599–1604); and (after-Quixote) Francisco Gómez de Quevedo's *La vida del buscón* (1626).
3 The primary texts are Jacopo Sannazar, *Arcadia* (1502); Jorge de Montemayor, *Los siete libros de la Diana* (1559); Miguel de Cervantès Saavédra, *Primera parte de la Galatea* (1585); Honoréd Urfé, *L'Astrée* (1607–27); in the dramatic mode, Gian Battista Guarini, *Il Pastor Fido* (1590).
4 *Don Quixote*, part 1, chaps. 21 and 50.
5 Ibid., part 1, chaps. 48–49; part 2, chap. 1.
6 Cf. Madame de Scudéry, *Clélie* (1654–60).
7 Marivaux's *Telémaque travesti* was written in 1714–15, published in 1736.
8 Ibid., in *Oeuvres de jeunesse*, p. 730.

*Chapter 26*

1 *Trans. Note:* Genette uses the term *farcissure*, which literally means "stuffing" but also echoes the word "farce."
2 *Trans. Note:* "Tough," "hard-boiled," and the final quotation appear in English in Genette's text.

*Chapter 27*

1 Bruce Morrissette, *The Great Rimbaud Forgery: The Affair of "La Chasse spirituelle"* (St. Louis MO: Washington University Press, 1956). My historical information and my familiarity with the text itself—as published in an appendix with other pastiches of Rimbaud—are drawn from this book. *Postscript, 13 April 1983*: Morrissette's book has indeed been translated into French (*La Bataille Rimbaud* [Paris: Nizet, 1959]). This oversight says much about the quality of my "erudition."

2 Some opponents, among them Jean Marcenac (*Lettres françaises*, 26 May 1949), put forward another argument based on internal criticism which—if confirmed—would practically carry the weight of material evidence: the presence in the text of linguistic anachronisms. But the example quoted is *gas lamps*, which may actually not be one.

3 In June 1949, Akakia and Bataille were monitored as they wrote a new text in the same vein, titled *Amours bâtardes*, which demonstrated that they were capable of having written *La Chasse* but not that they actually wrote it.

4 Nobody, still to my knowledge, has defended yet a third thesis—a little far-fetched, I confess—according to which that text would be neither by Rimbaud nor by Akakia and Bataille but, for example, by Saillet, Pia, or—Breton.

## *Chapter 28*

1 I am spontaneously referring to elements that pertain to narrative or dramatic fiction; I know of no examples of literary continuation in any other domain. Ronsard's *Continuation* (1555) and *Nouvelle continuation* (1556) of his *Amours* are really sequels, and not only because they are autographic—the piquant twist being that we switch here from one muse (Cassandre) to another (Marie).

2 Excerpts from Maurice Magendie's "Notice" for the selections he edited for the *Classiques Larousse* (1955).

3 One could actually imagine the case of a continuation that would be both apocryphal and inspired by the sketches of the continued author: it would be enough for a Baro or a Süssmayr to conceal his share of the work completely and claim to offer to the public a book that had been entirely written by the dead author. Such cases must exist, but—no doubt for lack of a serious inquiry—I am aware of no indisputable example: nothing to go on but hunches.

## *Chapter 29*

1 Nicolas Lenglet-Dufresnoy, *De l'usage des romans, avec une bibliothèque de romans* (1734).

2 See Marivaux, *La Vie de Marianne*, p. 584.

3 Anonymous foreword to *Suite de Marianne*, in *ibid.*, p. 583.

4 *Trans. Note:* "Happy end," used in French to signify the typical Hollywood film ending, appears in English in Genette's text here and elsewhere.

5 *Suite de Marianne*, p. 615.

6 Henri Coulet, *Marivaux romancier* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1975).

7 *Trans. Note:* These combinations would involve (1) Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le noir*, *Lamiel*, and *La Chartreuse de Parme*; (2) Balzac's *Le Père Goriot* and Hugo's *Les Misérables*; (3) Homer's *Odyssey* and Joyce's *Ulysses*.

## *Chapter 30*

1 Novalis, *Henry von Ofterdingen*, with afterword by Ludwig Tieck (1802). {In English, see the translation by Palmer Hilty (Prospect Heights IL: Waveland Press, 1964).}

2 Laurent, Avertissement, in *La Fin de Lamiel* pp. 183–84.

3 Preface to Laurent and Martine, *Dix perles de culture.*

4 *Trans. Note:* "Happy end" and "happy few" are both in English in the original.

5 *Trans. Note:* Guilbert de Pixérécourt was a prolific author of melodramas (1773–1844).

6 *Trans. Note:* Octave is the impotent hero of Stendhal's first novel, *Armance* (1827).

7 As for the completion of Alban Berg's *Lulu*, we know little of the obstacles that had to be overcome before its creation could take place in 1979, but those obstacles were not of a musical order; Friedrich Cerha's main contribution had to do with the instrumentation.

## *Chapter 31*

1 The case of the continuations of *Guzman*—and, even more, of *Don Quixote*—is different and will be dealt with later.

2 Goethe's translation and the Brière edition of Diderot's *Le Neveu de Rameau* were based on a faulty copy; the autograph manuscript was discovered and published by Georges Monval only in 1891.

3 The Janin continuation was reprinted in book form (345 pages) the same year, 1861. The text of that edition was republished, edited by Joseph Marc Bailbé (Paris: Klincksieck, 1977).

4 A purely imaginary ending, of course; of the real nephew's real death, neither the date nor the circumstances are known.

5 Quoted from Bailbé's edition (see note 3), pp. 95–96.

6 Albert Séveryns, *Le Cycle épique dans l'école d'Aristarque* (Liège-Paris, 1928), p. 410. This critic does not seem to glimpse, in that "degeneration of the epic," the gestation (however freakish) of the romance. And yet his own selection of the greatest pages of the Greek epic is imbued with a wholly modern taste, unmistakably laced with a romantic flavor, and hardly consonant with the epic soul.

7 The same operation of cyclical totalization will be brought to bear, in the sphere of romance, on Chrétien de Troyes's *Lancelot* and *Perceval.* I shall get back to them later.

8 The rhapsodic patchwork and the probable interpolations of later periods must have contributed to those effects, which might be accounted for by a conjectural genetic study. But here I am taking the text as tradition has established it, adopted it, and then swept it along in its own drift.

9 G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 2:1088. The "forward" and "backward" extensions are, of course, our own proleptic and analeptic continuations, and the "interpolations" are our elleptic and paraleptic continuations. We may admire, in passing, the self-confidence with which Hegel "compares" Homeric poems with texts that vanished two thousand years ago; that strictly theoretical assurance, for which things are unfailingly what they should be, is the privilege of the philosopher. My own preference goes to the aberrant but innocuous hypothesis that beauties of sorts or instances of "partial magic" might be found in Arctinus's *Aethiopis* or Lesches's *Little Iliad*: the episode of Penthesilea, for example.

*Chapter 32*

1 The only lively epic of the classical age, Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (*Jerusalem Delivered*), actually owes most of its vigor (and grace) to the influence of the still fresh medieval example, which inured it against the neoantique model.

2 Fenélon's *Telemachus* was written in 1694–96, published in 1699. Fénelon had already written for the Duke of Burgundy, his pupil, *Précis de l'Odysée*, which included a summary of books 1–4 and 11–24, and a translation of books 5–10.

3 This psychological fixedness is characteristic of the genre rather than of a culture; it will be found in the medieval epic as well. Tragedy, in a sense—and within the time span of its plot—is less rigid: Oedipus, Creon, and Xerxes are at least "taught a lesson" they are unlikely to forget, should they survive.

*Chapter 33*

1 Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 2:1062.

2 Ibid., p. 1061.

3 Pierre Vidal-Naquet, "*L'Iliade* sans travesti," preface to the Folio edition of the *Iliad* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).

4 *Illustrations de la Gaule et singularités de Troie*, 1512–13.

5 *Trans. Note:* These are the first words of the poem "Le Cygne" in Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal.*

6 Leo Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax: Character and Desire in Literature* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976).

7 *Little Iliad*, fragment 19 A, quoted in Pausanias 10.25.9 and by a scholiast of Lycophron 1268.

8 Anonymous Greek *Chrestomathia* 108.

9 Apollodorus *Epitome* 5.23; Quintus *Posthomerica* 13.251–53; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 13.

10 Manuscripts T and V of the scholium, commenting on the *Iliad*, book 24, line 735. See *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem*, 5 vols., ed. Hartmut Erbse (Berlin: De Grüter, 1969).

11 Manuscripts M, O, and A of the scholium commenting on *Andromache* 10. See *Scholia in Euripidem*, 2 vols., ed. Eduard Schwartz (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1887–91).

12 Séveryns, *Le Cycle épique*, p. 369.

13 Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. E. V. Rieu (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1950), 24.732–36.

14 Virgil respects and prolongs that silence. He makes no mention of Astyanax during the sack of Troy; then in book 3, Andromache, now wife of Helenus, reigns near the "false Simois" of a new Troy—but we are not told whether or not it shelters Hector's son. In the *Aeneid*, as we know, Trojan survival takes another course, and Astyanax's fate loses significance.

15 See Paul Bénichou, "Andromaque captive puis reine," in *L'Écrivain et ses travaux* (Paris: José Corti, 1967).

16 *Trans. Note:* This is the last line of Baudelaire's "Le Cygne" (cf. note 5).

## *Chapter 34*

1 Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval*, trans. Jean-Pierre Foucher and André Ortais (Paris: Gallimard [Folio], 1974), p. 121 (emphasis added).

2 I am referring specifically to the Grail and the blood-weeping spear, which Chrétien borrowed from Celtic legends. As Julien Gracq firmly puts it in the preface to his *Roi pêcheur* (Fisher King), "the two great myths of the Middle Ages, that of Tristan and that of the Grail, are not Christian; they are rooted in pre-Christian times; their story material bears the mark of concessions that clearly reveal their essential function: that of serving as alibis. The absolutely outlandish character of *Tristan*, which stands in sharp contrast with the ideological background of such a resolutely Christian age, was brought to light by Denis de Rougemont. The cycle of the Round Table offers an even greater resistance, if possible, to all attempts at belated Christenings and pious frauds" (Mr. Armand Hoog has been scandalized by that assertion [see the Folio edition of *Perceval*, p. 18], which makes it even more convincing to me). I am certainly not claiming that Chrétien was no Christian, or even that he might not himself have given a Christian answer to his questions, after leading Percival through penitence and communion; had he not already described the Grail as "holy," and specified that it was used to bring a host as food to the Fisher King's father? I am merely noting that he did not do so, and that it was done for him.

3 The parallel between the relationship binding the first *Romance of the Rose* to the second and "that which binds the *chanson de geste* to the 'courtly' romances of the twelfth century, and then the latter (more evidently still) with the prose romances of the thirteenth century" was suggested by Paul Zumthor in *Langue, Texte, Énigme* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), p. 264. He adds: "The manner in which Jean de Meun deconstructs Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose* into an explanatory discourse barely differs from that in which Robert de Boron reinvents the theme of Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte del Graal*, a theme that was then subjected to reinterpretation in the two prose cycles derived from that humble author's tale." The first continuator may have been humbler still, but he was already a brazen interpreter.

## *Chapter 35*

1 Despite its title, Georges Courteline's *Conversion d'Alceste* (1905) is a corroborating continuation of the *Misanthrope*. Stylistically, it too is a faithful imitation: Alceste, having become converted to society's laxity and hypocrisy, reaps only frustration from his conversion. Célimène cuckolds him with Philinte (why hadn't anyone thought of it before?), and he definitively retires from the world in disgust.

2 Jules Lemaitre, "Le tempérament de Saint-Preux," in *La Vieillesse d'Hélène: Nouveaux contes en marges* (Paris, 1914).

3 Pär Lagerkvist's *Barrabas* (1950) is more purely a continuation. It tells of the life and death of the pardoned thief, who, haunted by his too happy fate, also ends up on the cross; his grace was thus only a reprieve.

*Chapter 36*

1 Italo Calvino, *The Non-Existent Knight*, trans. Archibald Colquhoun (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1962).

*Chapter 37*

1 In Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres philosophiques*, ed. Paul Vernière (Paris: Garnier, 1956), pp. 445–516.
2 Denis Diderot, *Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville*, trans. Francis Birrell (1927; Port Washington NY: Kennikat Press, 1971).
3 *Supplément au Voyage de Cook*, scene 4, in Jean Giraudoux, *Théâtre complet* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1991), pp. 557–58.
4 Among these, for example, is Renan's "philosophical drama" *Caliban* (1878—and its sequel, *L'Eau de jouvence*, 1880), in which the action of *The Tempest* is prolonged in a political fable that is very clear in its optimistic skepticism: Caliban, again rebelling, overthrows Prospero, takes power in the name of the popular masses—and without hesitation proceeds to govern pretty much as did his predecessor, whom he takes under his protection. A reconciliation of the masses with the intellect: such was clearly Renan's wish in those early days of the Third Republic. To ask oneself what sense such a wish might have made to Shakespeare is no doubt a senseless question in itself.

*Chapter 38*

1 The second part of *Guzman of Alfarache* does in fact present a somewhat analogous case: the first, actually entitled "first part," had appeared in 1559. In 1602 there appeared an insipid "second part" signed Sayavedra (pseudonym of Juan José Martî). Mateo Aleman picked up the challenge and in 1603 published his own sequel, which features the so-called Sayavedra in the guise of a thief.
2 *Postscript, 13 April 1983:* I have been late in discovering the *New Adventures and Misadventures of Lazarillo de Tormes* by Camilo Jose Cela, which the title presents as a continuation but which is in fact (like the *New Sufferings of the Young W.*) a transposition, whose hero is not the true Lazarillo but a modern homonym and imitator. Since the historical transposition is very discreet and the style somewhat archaic, the work constantly hesitates between the status of transformation and that of imitation; hence, as in the mixed parodies of the eighteenth century, there is a disappointing lack of contrast, not counting the fact that this new Lazarillo is not roguish enough to make a good picaro. To my present knowledge, this is the most utterly hybrid hypertext of all; its indecisiveness sheds light, *a contrario* and because of its shortcomings, on the difference between the two types.
3 *Trans. Note:* The three *romans fleuves* are, respectively, by Roger Martin du Gard, Jules Romains, and Georges Duhamel.
4 They could be signed by a pseudonym, of course. But Walter Scott for a long time preferred a craftier form of signature, "the author of Waverley," which is relevant to

our argument, since it contributed, deliberately or not, to consecrating the unity of the Waverley novels.

5 Fielding's is a very brief one (*Tom Jones*, 18.13), but in 1750 an amplification appeared, *The History of Tom Jones the Foundling in His Married State*—an allographic sequel, therefore, but more moralizing than romantic.

6 Tournier's short story is in the collection *Le Coq de bruyère* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978).

7 Blurb for the French translation by Louise Servicen of Thomas Mann's *Lotte in Weimar* (1939; Paris: Gallimard, 1945).

## *Chapter 39*

1 Thackeray was a great practitioner of hypertextual writing: *Henry Esmond* (1852), a fictitious autobiography, is written in the language of the eighteenth century, and *Rebecca and Rowena: A Romance upon Romance* is, as its superb title indicates, a continuation of *Ivanhoe*. Even *Vanity Fair* is broadly reminiscent of the narrative attitudes that were dear to Fielding.

2 Thomas Mann, *The Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man*, trans. Denver Lindley (New York: Vintage Books, 1969).

3 *Trans. Note:* "Rake's progress" is in English in the original text.

4 John Barth, "The Literature of Replenishment: Postmodernist Fiction," *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1980. I shall have a word to say later about Barth's novella *Menelaiad*. His later book *Letters: An Old Time Epistolary Novel* (New York: Putnam, 1979) is (among other things) a new genre pastiche, this time of the epistolary novel; its seven letter-writers include Barth himself and various heroes or descendants of heroes from his preceding novels. *Letters* thus functions partly as a sequel.

5 One or two (or three) rungs lower on the scale, but with an even more manifest intent, we find another reactivation of eighteenth-century ways in Erica Jong's *Fanny Hackabouts-Jones* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1979), a crossbreed, if you will, between *Tom Jones* and *Fanny Hill*. French publishing being what it is, this is the book that has been translated, and not *The Sot-Weed Factor*.

## *Chapter 41*

1 Maurice Blanchot, "La poésie de Mallarmé est-elle obscure?" in *Faux Pas* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943).

2 Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Poetics of Translation* (Leiden: United Bible Societies, 1969), p. 4.

3 Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783; New York: Evert Duyckinck, 1817), p. 61.

4 Jean Paulhan, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1970), 2:182.

5 Dante, *Oeuvres complètes*, trans. André Pézard (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1965); Dante, *L'Enfer*, trans. Émile Littré (Paris, 1879).

6 Émile Littré, "La poésie homérique et l'ancienne poésie française," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, July 1847.

*Chapter 42*

1 Antoine Houdar de la Motte, *Oeuvres* (Paris: Prault, 1745), vol. 4,
2 Ibid., vol. 8.

*Chapter 43*

1 I should perhaps confess that I am reading Dictys, or Septimius, in a sixteenth-century French translation whose faithfulness I have not verified. This hyper-hypertext is titled *Les Histoires de Dictys crétensien, traitant des Guerres de Troye et du Retour des Grecs en leurs Païs après Ilion ruiné, interprétées en Français par Ian de La Lande* (Paris: Groulleau, 1556).
2 Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), p. 466.
3 *Trans. Note:* To keep the meter but destroy the rhyme, Voltaire replaces *fatale* with *funeste* (dire) in line 2, and *humains* with *mortels* (mortals) in line 4.
4 See Houdar de la Motte, *Oeuvre*, 4:397–420.
5 "By poetry, I mean bold expressions, hyperbolic figures, all that language removed from ordinary usage, and specific to such writers as trade in conceits and vivid depictions. Were such poetry to be sought in Racine, it would be found much less frequently than expected, and his great merit indeed is to have made such scant use of it. He has given utterance to characters pursuing diverse interests and moved by violent passions. He had to follow nature, and assign them only speeches befitting their dignity and station: with much nobility and elegance, since the condition of the actors (= characters) so requires, but without any strain, any striving after ostentatious ornament."
6 Barbara Johnson, *Défigurations du langage poétique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979), chaps. 2, 4. {In English, see "Disfiguring Poetic Language," in Mary-Ann Caws, ed., *The Prose Poem in France: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).}

*Chapter 44*

1 Jean Prévost, *Baudelaire* (Paris: Mecure, 1948), p. 329.

*Chapter 45*

1 *Trans. Note:* "Rewriting" is in English in the original.
2 Stéphane Mallarmé, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1965), p. 1606.
3 Mary Summer, *Contes et légendes de l'Inde ancienne* (Paris: Leroux, 1878).
4 Claude Cuénot, "L'Origine des *Contes indiens* de Mallarmé," *Mercure*, 15 November 1938; Guy Laflèche, *Mallarmé: Grammaire générative des "Contes indiens"* (Montreal: Montreal University Press, 1975).
5 *Trans. Note:* "Liegeois formula" refers to the "Ecole de Liège," or Groupe μ," poeticians who sought to develop a new "general rhetoric," integrating traditional concepts with new ones, to account for the forms and figures of modern poetry (see Groupe Rhetorique et poetique; see Groupe μ, *Rhétorique et poétique* (Paris: Larousse, 1970).

They described the figurative process in terms of substitution: i.e., of suppression and addition.

## *Chapter 47*

1 In his introduction to the Folio edition of *War and Peace*, Boris de Schloezer notes that during Tolstoy's lifetime, and with his permission, his wife published an edition that deleted his philosophical and historical "digressions."

2 In Paul Claudel, *Théâtre* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1964), 2:1469.

3 Ibid., p. 1476.

4 Jacques Petit in ibid., p. 1335.

5 These may be the third and fifth, if one takes into account a stage version of 1938, which involved only a reworking of act 4 and was taken up again in 1948.

6 A case similar to these "stage versions" is that of the "reading versions" of some Dickens novels, intended for the public readings the author started giving in 1858 (see Philip Collins, ed., *Charles Dickens: The Public Readings* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975]). These are heavily abridged, mainly by means of pruning—thus *Great Expectations* is reduced to about fifty pages. But this is a more complex operation, and I shall return to it.

7 In Claudel, *Théâtre*, 2:xiv.

8 Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary: Nouvelle version*, ed. Jean Pommier and Gabrielle Leleu (Paris: Corti, 1949). Despite my quotation marks (of precaution, not citation), it is I who describe this version as "original," and not the editors, who present it, without downplaying the heterodoxy of the procedure, simply as a selection made from the drafts to extract "a continuous text" and one "which offers, in a form sufficiently achieved" and legible, "a state prior to the corrections and sacrifices" noted above.

9 Don Louis Demorest and René Dumesnil, *Bibliographie de Gustave Flaubert* (Paris: Giraud-Badin, 1937).

10 No one has done this, but the "Club de l'Honnête Homme" edition indicates the cuts and thus allows us to appreciate this version number 2, or 1 *bis*.

11 *Trans. Note:* "Anastasie," armed with a huge pair of scissors, is the emblematic goddess of censorship in the Parisian world of arts, letters, and journalism.

## *Chapter 48*

1 The term *concision* commonly designates only a *state* of style: we speak of the concision of Tacitus or Jules Renard. The opposition between its prefix and that of *excision* affords me the opportunity to have *concision* designate a process, obviously that by which a text that was not concise to begin with is made to be so.

2 Jean Cocteau's *Oedipe Roi* is described simply as a "free adaptation after Sophocles" and his *Romeo* as "pretext for a dramatization after William Shakespeare."

3 *Trans. Note:* The French translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* used by Genette is that of Paul Mazon. Ours is by Elizabeth Wyckoff, in *Sophocles I*, ed. David Grene and

Richmond Lattimore (New York: Washington Square Press, 1954). Jean Cocteau's *Antigone* is quoted from his *Five Plays*, trans. Carl Wildman (New York: Hill & Wang, 1961).

## *Chapter 49*

1 Evelyn Birge-Vitz, "Narrative Analysis of Medieval Texts," *MLN* 92 (1977). The English adverb here expresses the fact that the hero, after countless difficulties, errors, or disappointments, "finally" becomes *what he wanted to become.* Birge-Vitz's general thesis is that a *story* is "an utterance in which an *awaited* (or desired) transformation occurs." This is a strong definition, and one that raises some objections. But it undeniably applies to the *Recherche.*

2 The principle of the "indissolubility" of form and meaning generally induces the assertion that a poem cannot be summarized any more than it can be translated. "A poem," said Valéry, "is that which cannot be summarized. You do not summarize a melody." This argument, in the present instance, is rather feeble; a poem is not a melody, and besides, a melody can almost always be summarized, or at least reduced, by concision: that is, by keeping only its principal notes, the rest being omitted as transition or ornament. Likewise, almost all poems can be reduced, in the same way (we have already encountered several examples of that process) or in another, more synthetic, manner, and I am a bit distrustful of those poems that show the most resistance to it—those, for example, that are a cloud of incoherent "images." Conversely, one can always augment (develop) a poem, or a melody—all of classical music is there to prove it. The *intangibility* of poetry is a "modern" idea that it is time to shake up a little. It is one of the merits of the Oulipo movement that it does this, in the playful mode.

3 Emile Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), vol. 1, chap. 19.

4 Harald Weinrich, *Tempus: Besprochene und erzählte Welt*, quoted from the French translation: *Le Temps* (Paris: Seuil, 1973), pp. 41–42.

5 Honoré de Balzac,"Études sur M. Beyle: Analyse de *La Chartreuse de Parme.*" This little-known text is found at least in the appendix to the edition of *La Chartreuse* brought out by Françoise Gaillard, in the collection "L'univers des livres" (Paris: Presses de la Renaissance, 1977).

6 Such a notion is obviously foreign to the Stendhalian vision: the fact that Fabrice is a "priest" (can a Del Dongo archbishop be a "priest"?) has nothing to do with the outcome—indeed a dramatic one—which is much more affected by Clélia's remorse, not for making love with the Monsignor and certainly not for deceiving her husband but for violating her vow to the Madonna and therefore betraying her father.

7 Just in passing, let me note a couple of significant misreadings: according to Balzac, Fabrice "makes love with Clélia" during his first stay at the Farnese tower; this might designate a simple amorous ploy, but he seems not to notice, by contrast, the passionate abandon with which Clélia gives herself to Fabrice upon his return. He also claims that Gina avoids carrying out her promise to Ranuce-Ernest V, thereby indicating that he

has not grasped the meaning of the ellipsis of chapter 27. These betray an almost physical difference between the two writers' rhythms of action, and perception.

8 Stendhal's summary is published in an appendix to the Martineau edition of *Le Rouge et le noir* (Paris: Garnier, 1957).

9 Emile Zola, *Doctor Pascal*, trans. Ernest A. Vizetelly (London: Chatto & Windus, 1927), pp. 114–19.

## *Chapter 50*

1 The long summary of *Gradiva* by Freud (1907), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey et al. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74), vol. 9—nearly 50 percent of the hypotext's length but with verbatim quotations and snatches of commentary—is a hybrid: it is fundamentally descriptive, but not without some occasional itch to become a digest in the preterite tense.

2 Charles Lamb to William Godwin, 11 March 1808, in *The Adventure of Ulysses* (Boston: Ginn, 1898).

3 These are twenty tales averaging fifteen pages in length: ten tragedies, ten comedies, none of the histories.

## *Chapter 51*

1 It was not only for private but for exclusive use: "I am asking you not to show it to anyone as long as the work has not been published." The text and the accompanying letter are in Proust, *Correspondance générale*, 5:233.

2 *Letters of Marcel Proust*, trans. and ed. Mina Curtiss (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950), pp. 233–34.

3 Ibid.

4 Blurb for Serge Doubrovsky, *Fils* (Paris: Galilée, 1977).

## *Chapter 52*

1 I imagine that the same could be said of *Inquisiciones* (1925), which Borges suppressed from his catalogue and which is now unobtainable.

2 Preface to the 1954 edition of Borges, *A Universal History of Infamy*, pp. 11–12.

3 In Borges, *Ficciones*, trans. Anthony Kerrigan, p. 15. The history of the publications and translations of Borges's works is itself, as could be expected, a temporal labyrinth.

4 Ibid., p. 123.

5 "Streetcorner Man" (reprinted in Borges, *A Universal History of Infamy*), which was the first narrative to proclaim its own autonomy, still donned the mask of a pseudonym (Francisco Bustos) and of a heavy-handed gutter-style pastiche.

6 This shift is also mimicked in the second degree (or third, or fourth—I've lost count) by Nabokov in *Pale Fire* (1962), a novel ironically—and how!—disguised as a commentary on a (fictive) poem; it is thus in its own way a self-caricature of Nabokov's own proliferating commentary on *Eugene Onegin* (1964).

7 Borges, *A Universal History of Infamy*, p. 13.

8 Fictitious *hypertextuality* and/or fictitious *metatextuality*, since the summary is contaminated by commentary, or is at the very least implicitly directed toward, and open to, a potential commentary, as is every fictitious summary.

9 There are few summaries in the *Chronicles of Bustos Domecq*, written with Adolfo Bioy Casares and published in 1967. They are indeed chronicles rather than reviews.

10 These remarks were partly inspired by the still unpublished thesis of Raphaël Lellouche, "Jorge Luis Borges ou l'expression littéraire de l'infamie" (*EHESS*, Paris, June 1981).

11 Borges, *Discusión* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1957), pp. 49–58 ("generalizadora y abstracta hasta lo invisible").

12 The third procedure mentioned by Borges apparently pertains to amplification; he names it "circumstantial invention," but it is in fact akin to reduction in that it presupposes the judicious choice of what Borges amusingly describes as "long-range laconic details" (*pormenores lacónicos de larga proyección*).

13 For Borges, the valuation of reading not only impinged on the act of writing, but, as we know, on the act—if such it be—of living: "I have lived little. I have read much" (*The Author*), or, literally, "Few things have happened to me"—"timidity" once more.

14 It goes without saying that Borges is here creating or consolidating a genre that is hypertextual in several respects: the *pseudometatext*, or imaginary critical review, which can accommodate (among other things) the simulated reduction, the pastiche of a genre (literary criticism), and the mediatized apocrypha. Jean-Benoît Puech presented his *Bibliothèque d'un amateur* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979) as a collection of studies bearing on "narratives not yet written" (as in "Theme of the Traitor and the Hero," implementing that clause of the contract is entrusted to the future); his technique further complicates the network of echoes and implications linking one "article" to another, out of which a personal mythology eventually emerges, suggesting something like an autobiography that has been poorly disguised on purpose. Indeed, we know every mask to be also a mirror (and vice versa).

## *Chapter 53*

1 Voltaire's *Oedipus* was performed in 1718 and published—with seven justificatory letters, from which the quotations in this paragraph are taken—in 1719.

2 For a psychoanalytic interpretation, see the ingenious José-Michel Moureaux, *L'Oedipe de Voltaire* (Paris: Minard, 1973). According to him, the conflict between the two heroes stands for an amorous rivalry (over the mother, of course) between the two Arouet brothers, the writer identifying with Philoctetes, the younger brother (though older in age—such is the logic of the unconscious) being unjustly accused of having murdered the father and ending up triumphant, or at least vindicated.

3 "The unity of interest therein lies in having developed the circumstances which serve to clarify his [Oedipus's] fate; and . . . that development would not by itself suffice to fill up three acts."

4 Aeschylus may actually have done this in the first tragedy of his trilogy *Laius*, *Oedipus*, and *Seven against Thebes*, of which only the last has survived.

5 The Jocasta-Oedipus duo again nearly fills up the whole space of Hélène Cixous's *Le Nom d'Oedipe* (Paris: Des Femmes, 1978). It is a love duo in the lyrical sense of the word (it was actually in part intended as a libretto for André Boucourechliev), and it is a superb piece of writing through and through. But rather than the wedding night, its focus is the night of death wherein all is revealed (to Oedipus, though not to Jocasta who—as was already the case, to some extent, in Sophocles—has always *known* with a knowledge "beyond knowledge"), and everything comes crashing down. For the author, of course, Jocasta is all women, who are "banned in their bodies, in their speech, banned from being women," and who are the true victims of the true tragedy, which lies in the "unlivable dimension of the 'couple.'" No doubt; but on page 9, in the list of characters, there is a slip (?) which says a little (a lot) for the opposite case: *Jocastra.*

6 *Trans. Note: Zizi* is a children's word for a bird and for the male genital organ.

7 *Trans. Note:* The references are to Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le noir* and *La Chartreuse de Parme.*

## *Chapter 54*

1 Georges Couton, "Du pensum aux *Fables*," in *La Poétique de La Fontaine* (Paris: PUF, 1957).

2 Queneau, *Exercises in Style.*

## *Chapter 55*

1 This addition, like that of Antiochus in Racine, is based on a complementary text by Dion Cassius, which Segrais had already made use of in his romance *Bérénice* (1648).

2 Gérard Genette, "D'un récit baroque," in *Figures II.*

3 Thomas Mann, *Joseph and His Brothers*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Knopf, 1948). Passages quoted in the text of this chapter are cited by page number from this edition.

4 Abridgment (or excision), which is here a reduction within the amplification, "is useful and even necessary," says Mann. "In the long run it is quite imposible to narrate life just as it flows. What would it lead to? Into the infinite. It would be beyond human powers. Whoever got such an idea fixed in his head would not only never finish, he would be suffocated at the outset. Entangled in a web of delusory exactitude, a madness of detail. No, excision must play its part at the beautiful feast of narration and recreation" (979–80).

5 All other things being equal, Michel Tournier's *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980) belongs in the same category of generalized augmentation. Extension is evidently represented here by the fourth magus Taor, borrowed from the Russian tradition by way of Edzard Schaper's novel *Der vierte König* (Cologne: J. Hegner, 1961), as Tournier himself has pointed out, and expansion by the evocation of Herod's reign, and chiefly by the biographies ascribed to each of the four kings—biographies intended

to shed light on their motivation and to answer the implicit question, what were they all doing in Bethlehem? Answer: one was was traveling out of disappointed love, one out of aesthetic curiosity; the third had been deprived of his throne by a coup d'état; the last was in search of a recipe for pistachio Turkish delight.

## *Chapter 56*

1 Jules Lemaitre, "Les Romanciers contemporains," *Revue Bleue*, 11 and 18 October 1879.

2 Heinrich Heine, *Atta Troll*, (1847).

3 *Trans. Note:* There is an irreverent consonance with *Hérode-Antipas* as pronounced in French.

4 Jules Laforgue, "Salomé," in *Moralités légendaires* (1887; Paris: Mercure de France, 1964), p. 150.

5 See Gustave Flaubert, *Trois Contes* (Paris: L. Conard, 1910), pp. 65–71.

6 In Emile Zola, *Les Rougon-Macquart* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1964), 3:1827; elsewhere, Mitterand calls it a "programmatic soliloquy" (*Essais de critique génétique* [Paris: Flammarion, 1979], p. 195).

7 Zola, *Rougon-Macquart*, 3:1679–80 (*Au bonheur de dames*); 3:1830 (*Germinal*).

8 *The Notebooks of Henry James*, ed. F. O. Matthiessen and K. B. Murdoch (New York: George Braziller, 1955): *Maisie*, 12 November 1892; *Dove*, 3 November 1894; *Bowl*, 28 November 1892; *Ambassadors*, 31 October 1895.

9 Ibid., *Dove*, 3 and 7 November 1894; *Bowl*, 14 February 1895; *Maisie*, 26 August 1893, 22 December 1895, 26 October 1896.

10 See ibid., 24 October 1895, 12 January 1895. Concerning *The Turn of the Screw*, James adds: "The story will have to be told—tolerably obviously—by an outside spectator, observer." That observer will be the governess, whose narrative will lack essential credibility. It goes without saying that the synopses should not be used as contraptions to strip the works of their ambiguities; the final versions often appear years later than the synopses, and James's elaboration precisely consists in the process of *increasing* "ambiguification."

11 See ibid., 14 February 1895, 26 October 1896.

12 "I realise—none too soon—that the *scenic* method is my absolute, my imperative, my *only* salvation" (ibid., 21 December 1896).

13 James to H. G. Wells, autumn 1902, in *Notebooks*, p. 370.

14 Ibid., pp. 372–415. When sending that statement (in 1902 or 1903), James announced that the novel itself was to be 120,000 words long: i.e., only six times the length of the simple short story originally intended in 1895. He was not grossly underestimating his own prolixity—which eventually led him to a mere 150,000 words.

15 Montaigne's case is in truth a little different, for his adjunctions (quotations, new examples, etc.) operate through extension rather than corrective expansion. La Bruyère is an even more blatant case: from one edition to the next, he simply inserts new observations (*remarques*) between the existing ones.

16 Stendhal, *Romans et nouvelles* (Paris: Gallimard [Pleiade], 1952), 1:1527.

*Chapter 57*

1 Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1980).
2 Literally, "Let the dead woman be queen." In the Portuguese chronicle, once Pedro had become king, he ordered Ines's corpse—after ten years—to be exhumed and crowned, after which he graced her with a magnificent tomb.
3 André Dabezies, *Le Mythe de Faust* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1972), pp. 35–36.
4 Zola, quoted in Pierre Martino, *Le Naturalisme français* (Paris: Armand Colin), p. 72.
5 "Hamlet," published in *La Vogue*, 15 November 1886, reprinted in Laforgue, *Moralités légendaires*.

*Chapter 58*

1 *Trans. Note: Bibi* is a slangy French substitute for the first-person singular pronoun, meaning something like "number one," "yours truly."

*Chapter 59*

1 Plato, *Republic*, 3.393e. See Genette, *Figures of Literary Discourse*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), p. 128.
2 Jean Giraudoux, *Elpénor* (Paris: Grasset, 1919). The book opens with the following epigraph borrowed from Homer: "Then it was that the sailor Elpenor died, whose name I shall have no more occasion to utter, for he never stood out either by his valor, or by his prudence" (*Odyssey* 10). But to my knowledge, this epigraph is apocryphal; the only two references to that character, in *Odyssey* 10 and 11, have been considered since ancient times to be interpolated. But by whom? In Dictys, the daughter of Polyphemus (?) is in love with one Alphenor. The whole business definitely looks suspicious.
3 The other chapters of *Elpénor* stand in a more distant relationship to the Homeric hypotext, but the first one ("The Cyclops") sketches out a type of interpretation that is characteristic of Giraudoux: seeing that Neptune would heal Polyphemus without fail, Ulysses gives up the idea of blinding him physically and instead undertakes to blind him psychologically, or rather philosophically, by dint of sophisms, Eleatic paradoxes, and lectures on subjective idealism. Having thus been persuaded that the Greeks are but empty images, the Cyclops lets them go.
4 Lemaitre, "Tiberge," in *La Vieillesse d'Hélène*. This tale also happens to be a pastiche of Prévost. But let us not jump to the conclusion that Lemaitre is both transforming and imitating the same thing; he imitates the style of the text, while transforming its narrative mood.
5 Such a conversion is known to have been effected by Dostoyevsky with *Crime and Punishment* and by Franz Kafka with *The Castle*. In his preface to *The Ambassadors*, James mentions a similar hypothesis concerning that novel, but rejects it much more adamantly, which would lead one to infer that no attempt was made here at an autodiegetic narrative.

6 This is a gross oversimplification, since on the one hand, the narrative status of *Santeuil* is more complex and also less coherent than I have made it out to be (some passages are written in the first person); and on the other hand, "Swann in Love" sticks out in the midst of *Remembrance* as the vestigial mound of an earlier (intermediate?) heterodiegetic version.

7 See Paul Delbouille, *Genèse, structure, et destin d'Adolphe* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1971).

8 Eve Gonin, *Le Point de vue d'Ellénore* (Paris: José Corti, 1981), with a preface by Judith Robinson.

9 This recourse to psychoanalysis—or rather, to a modern psychological vulgate and its Koine—introduces clumsy anachronisms into a text which also, and quite naturally, purports to be a pastiche of Constant.

10 Something of the kind is to be found in *Lui et elle*, Paul de Musset's retort to George Sand's *Elle et lui,* the presumably partial account of her stormy affair with his brother (1859). But I mention that mediocre hypertext only because its title so transparently refers to the contract of transfocalization.

11 The situation where the love story is focalized on one of the partners is obviously the most frequent one. Examples can be found in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, with the enigmatic character of Rochester as seen by Jane, or in the heroine of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night.* But there are quite a number of narratives in which a strategy of external focalization turns the hero into an enigma: see Jim and Kurtz in Joseph Conrad, for instance, or Langlois in *Un roi sans divertissement.*

12 Without going so far as to offer a true transvocalization, the "reading version" of *Great Expectations*, already referred to in connection with the issue of self-abridgment, presents a more subtle case of an altered narrative approach: Dickens reduces the importance originally granted (by way of free indirect discourse) to the young hero's thoughts in favor of the adult narrator's comments—comments that are ironic or more enlightened, and thus work to greater effect in the author-reciter's public performances. See W. Bronzwaer, "Implied Author, Extradiegetic Narrator, and Public Reader," *Neophilologus* 62 (January 1978).

## *Chapter 60*

1 *Trans. Note:* The French word *pièce* can mean both a coin and a play.

## *Chapter 61*

1 My adjective "pragmatic" is derived from the Greek *pragma*, which, in Aristotle and elsewhere, designates any kind of event or action; the meaning is in fact the common one, but restricted to its specifically literary field (narrative or dramatic action).

2 *Trans. Note:* A substantial section of Genette's *Figures III* has been translated into English and published as *Narrative Discourse.*

3 The fact that Prince Andrey is a "fictional" (imaginary) character and Chimène a "real" (historical) character plays no relevant part here—that is why the term *fiction* cannot,

alas, be substituted for diegesis. The diegesis of historical narratives or dramas is as distinct from the world of their readers or spectators as the most fantastic fiction.

4 On the other hand, the *title* of a transposition is no sure indication of its diegetic status: *La Machine infernale* and *Les Mouches* are homodiegetic despite their evasive titles; *Ulysses* and *Doctor Faustus* are heterodiegetic despite the nominal references of their titles, which function as contracts of hypertextuality over and above the autonomous identities of their protagonists (Bloom, Leverkühn). An intermediary case is provided by mixed parodies, where the names are only distorted (Ines → Agnes, Hernani → Harnali); this device can be found in *Shamela* (← Pamela), and in *Mourning Becomes Electra*, where Agamemnon → Ezra Mannon, and Orestes → Orin.

5 Catherine Woilliez, *Robinson des demoiselles* [The young ladies' Robinson Crusoe] (Paris, 1835) tells the story of a shipwrecked young girl who is stranded with her dog on a deserted but well-provided island. The first year is merely a feminine transposition of the Robinson theme. In the second year, also after a shipwreck, a little girl of seven becomes Emma's companion. Emma undertakes her education, and later finds her father again. They all go back to France to live happily ever after.

6 Lulu is the heroine of Frank Wedekind's two dramas *Erdgeist* (1895) and *Die Büchse der Pandora* (1902). She is better known today as the protagonist of Alban Berg's opera, inspired by those works.

7 Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote, or The Adventures of Arabella* (London, 1752).

8 Jean Giraudoux, *Suzanne et le Pacifique* (1921), chap. 4.

9 Ibid., chap. 6.

10 Ibid., chap. 9.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., chap. 4.

14 I do not know whether Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* (1940), trans. Mirra Ginsburg (New York: Grove Press, 1967), may be considered as a feminization of *Faust*, to which it is officially connected by the title and by an epigraph borrowed from Goethe. We meet with Mephisto again, turned into Woland, and with Faust turned writer, transposed into Soviet society. But the compact occurs between Woland and—Margaret, who turns herself into a witch in order to find her beloved Master again. She is therefore not exactly a female Faust, such as may exist here and there (Faustinas or Faustas); rather, the book is a diegetic transposition of *Faust* with a transfer of the compact from Faust to Margaret.

## *Chapter 62*

1 Clément Lepidis, *La Main rouge* (Paris: Seuil, 1978).

2 Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Knopf, 1948).

3 Ibid., pp. 134, 241.

4 Ulrich Plenzdorf, *New Sufferings of Young Werther*, trans. K. P. Wilcox (New York: Ungar, 1979).

5 Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Les Gommes* (Paris: Minuit, 1953). {In English, see *The Erasers*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1964).}

6 Bruce Morrissette, "Clefs pour *les Gommes*," trans. and rpr. in *The Novels of Robbe-Grillet* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971).

7 *Ulysses* is not the only instance of a title imposing all by itself a hypertextual status that might otherwise have escaped the reader. George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* is also a case in point; its relation to the fable of the sculptor enamored of his creation may not be self-evident to the first comer. Here again, the title, which refers to none of the characters in the play, raises at the very least one question, the answer to which is obvious (much more so than for *Ulysses*), but only *upon condition that the question be asked.* It might incidentally be conceivable that the thematic relation Higgins : Eliza :: Pygmalion : Galatea had not been originally intended by Shaw but only spotted after the fact, or even pointed out by a friend, etc. In that case, the title would at least indicate that the hypertextual relation, once perceived, has been claimed by the author, who has contrived its *inscription* in a manner that is as imperious as it is minimal: O! ye powers of the paratext.

8 *My Faust*, in *Collected Works of Paul Valéry*, ed. Jackson Mathews, Bollingen Series 45 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956).

9 Borges apparently did not avoid that confusion in the severe condemnation of diegetic transposition that he inserted in his "Pierre Menard": "One of those parasitic books which situate Christ on a boulevard, Hamlet on La Canebière or Don Quixote on Wall Street. Like all men of good taste, Menard abhorred these pointless masquerades, fit only—as he would say—to provide the plebeian pleasure of anachronism or (what is worse) to amuse us with with the primitive idea that all ages are alike or all different." But the charge of vulgarity may not be entirely unjustified, with regard to both anachronism and transposition.

10 Nikos Kazantzakis, *Christ Recrucified*, trans. Jonathan Griffin (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1954).

11 Jean Anouilh, *The Rehearsal; or, Love Punished*, trans. Jeremy Sanes (London: Methuen Drama, 1991).

## *Chapter 63*

1 *Pragma* luckily happens to mean both "event" and "thing," and an object—say, a vehicle, a weapon, a message—can be a medium for the action and thus a constituent part of it.

2 At the time, the term "descriptions" designated episodes that were in fact narrative in nature, but judged to be of merely incidental interest, such as the funeral games in honor of Patroclus or, more generally, any passage wherein the poet chose to dwell on the details of the action. The only truly descriptive passage in the *Iliad* is the delineation of Achilles' shield, about which we shall have more to say.

*Chapter 64*

1 Miguel de Unamuno, *The Life of Don Quixote and Sancho according to Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*, trans. Anthony Kerrigan, intro. Walter Starkie, Bollingen Series LXXV.3 (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967).
2 Cervantes, *The Adventures of Don Quixote*, trans. J. M. Cohen (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1950), p. 576.

*Chapter 65*

1 Diegetic transformation, on the other hand, might be said to bear on the questions *Where?* and *When?* and pragmatic transformation on the questions *What?* and *How?*
2 *Trans. Note:* André Breton, in the first Surrealist Manifesto, quotes Paul Valéry as stating that he could never write a novel, for he could not bring himself to write the sentence "La marquise sortit à cinq heures."
3 Jorge Luis Borges, prologue to Adolfo Bioy Casares, *The Invention of Morel*, trans. Ruth L. C. Simms (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964). Borges obviously means the Russian novelists, and particularly Dostoyevsky. His works, riddled as they are with a paradoxical and cumbersome psychology, may well have had a significant impact on Formalism. But a more banal and more predictable type of motivation is not necessarily more inspiring; quite the opposite is the case. In these matters, "nausea" is never very far removed.
4 Jean Starobinski, preface to Ernest Jones, *Hamlet et Oedipe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967).
5 Freud, *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, in *Standard Edition*, 11:47; *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, 15:207; *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, 23:191–92 (emphasis added).
6 In both these cases, the external cause was designated by the hypotext. In Joseph's story, and in many other biblical—or, more generally, archaic—episodes, the hypotext simply makes no mention of any kind of cause. But in most cases, the absence of natural causes barely conceals some divine intent.

*Chapter 66*

1 We may occasionally—and with some effort of the imagination—detect it in Mallarmé's *Hérodias*.
2 This tendency to psychologize and to familiarize, which is characteristic of Euripides' dramas and is the feature that most clearly designates him as the initiator of our literary "modernity," is also perceptible in the other two extant tragedies whose theme he borrowed from Aeschylus: *Orestes* 408, where the hero is no longer pursued by the Erinyes but is simply ill and delirious; and *Phoenissae* 410, where the onstage confrontation between Eteocles and Polynices in Jocasta's presence quite effectively reaches for family pathos.
3 We find the same significant omission in Giraudoux: "From the very day he came to drag me out of my (paternal) home with that curly beard of his, and with that hand whose little finger he kept perpetually raised, I have hated him" (*Electre* 2.8).

4 Eugene O'Neill, "Working Notes," in *O'Neill and His Plays: Four Decades of Criticism*, ed. Oscar Cargill (New York: New York University Press, 1961). The notion of an "Electra complex" as symmetrical with the Oedipus complex was suggested by Carl Jung in 1913 (*The Theory of Psychoanalysis*) but rejected by Freud, who further specified, "It is only in the male child that we find the fateful combination of love for the one parent and simultaneous hatred for the other as a rival" (*Female Sexuality*, 1931, in *Standard Edition* 21:229). You had better take my word for it . . .

5 In evolutionary terms, that supposed primacy of the emotions is conveyed by antecedence: "One often moves on from love to ambition, but one hardly ever moves back from ambition to love" (La Rochefoucauld, *Maxims*, 490).

## *Chapter 67*

1 *Trans. Note:* "My foot" appears in English in the original.

2 See Paul Bénichou, "Le mariage du Cid," in *L'Écrivain et ses travaux*. Borges, in his "Three Versions of Judas" (in *Ficciones*, 1956; trans. James E. Irby in *Labyrinths* [New York: New Directions, 1964]), attributes to one Nils Runeberg a treatise—*Kristus och Judas*—which discusses anew the case of the famous betrayal, whose pointlessness has often been noted, and whose motive as stated in the Gospel (thirty pieces of silver) may seem unconvincing whence three attempts at a transmotivation. The first is a theological interpretation: the debasement of Judas is a reflection of God's incarnation. The second is a psychological transmotivation: Judas chose betrayal as a means of mortification, and therefore of moral ascesis. The third is a more brutal pragmatic transformation: God did not wish to incarnate himself in a deserving victim; he wished to become "totally a man but a man to the point of infamy, to the point of reprobation and the abyss." He thus chose to be incarnated not in Jesus, who was a kind of screen-messiah, but in Judas. That triple performance, however, should perhaps be held to be apocryphal.

## *Chapter 68*

1 Jules Lemaitre, *En marge des vieux livres*, 1905; in 1910, he turned it into a libretto for Claude Terrasse. The character of Helen had already inspired him in 1896 to write *La Bonne Hélène*, a play he dedicated, not without good reason, to Meilhac and Halévy. The action is set in Troy during the duel between Menelaus and Paris (*Iliad* 3) and unashamedly exploits the theme of Helen's promiscuousness: she sleeps with the whole city, Astyanax only excepted, he being a little too young.

2 Respectively in Lemaitre's "Thersite," "Dans le cheval de bois," "La sirène," and "Anna soror."

3 See John Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse* (New York: Doubleday, 1968).

4 That marriage, as we have seen, is already in Dictys. The same Lemaitre, in a previous tale entitled "Nausicaa" and included in the collection *Myrrha*, deals in less gratifying fashion with the relationship between the two youngsters: Telemachus, having left

Ithaca, spends twenty-five years in various adventures; he is finally stranded upon the Phaeacian shores, like his father before him, only to find a tiresome hag there: who else but Nausicaa in her fifties?

5 Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 8:1.

6 The popularity of the Freudian term, rooted in a misunderstanding, could only reinforce the impact of that cliché, which pays little heed to the extraordinary power of simplification (sometimes to the point of caricature) of neurosis, psychosis, perversion—of all those determinisms that sway us; it is a power that had been clearly perceived by a Molière, a Balzac, or a Proust.

7 Respectively, Lemaitre's "La confession d'Eumée," "Anna soror," and "L'innocente diplomatie d'Hélène." In a later tale bearing a truly typical title, "Le secret de Pénélope" (in *La Vieillese d'Hélène*), the exemplary spouse, having been told of her seafaring husband's infidelities, becomes slowly infatuated with one of her pretenders and, having hastily completed her tapestry, makes up her mind to marry him. At that point Ulysses comes back. The happy pretender is to die like all the rest, and Penelope buries her secret forever. Giono's *Naissance de l'Odyssée* was to take up parts of that subject as well, whether by direct influence or not: such psychological transpositions have been floating around the *Zeitgeist* of all ages, and have taken on the status of canonical variations.

8 Pierre de Ronsard, *Sonnets pour Hélène* (1578): 1.3: "Who could ever have thought that I might have retrieved / Within one and the same Helen another Penelope?"

9 Lemaitre, "L'innocente diplomatie d'Hélène."

10 Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. E. V. Rieu (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1946), p. 71.

11 Paul Claudel, first version of *Protée*, 1912; second version ("lyrical farce"), 1926.

12 *Trans. Note:* The root of the French word for "magnet," *aimant*, is the verb *aimer*, "to love."

13 In *La vieillesse d'Hélène*, Lemaitre was already anticipating that painful future: an aging and frustrated Helen (never having suffered, she has never loved) is seen disguising herself as a shepherdess and making advances to a very young shepherd; but at the last moment, unable to bear the thought of revealing her age, she stabs herself in the heart.

14 In Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse.*

## *Chapter 69*

1 *Trans. Note:* Genette uses the verb *entendre*, which means both "to understand" and "to hear."

2 See Peter Szondi, "Fünfmal Amphitryon," in *Schriften II* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978), and "L'Amphitryon de Kleist," in *Poésie et poétique de l'idéalisme allemand* (Paris: Minuit, 1975).

3 Franz Stoessl, "Amphitryon, Wachstum und Wandlung eines poetischen Stoffes," *Trivium*, 1944.

4 This and the subsequent quotations in this chapter are from Jean Giraudoux, *Amphitryon*

*38*, trans. Phyllis La Farge with Peter H. Judd (New York: Hill & Wang, 1964). {*Trans. Note:* The translation's spelling of the heroine's name is Alkmena.}

5 Here as elsewhere, Giraudoux allows himself a few humorous anachronisms, winking at the reader in the manner of Meilhac and Halévy. Thus Jupiter, in front of Alcmena's palace, exclaims like Gounod's Faust: "Hail, thou pure and chaste abode" {*Salut, demeure chaste et pure*}.

## *Chapter 70*

1 André Jolles, *Einfache Formen* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1930).

2 Dabezies, *Le Mythe de Faust*, p. 44.

3 Johannes Nicolaus Pfitzer, *Das ärgerliche Leben und schreckliche Ende des viel berüchtigen Ertz-Schwarzkünstler Dr J. Fausti* (1674).

4 *Von einem Christlich-Meynenden* (1725).

5 Gotthold Lessing, Letter 17 of his "Letters on Literature" (*Briefe, die Neueste Literatur betreffend*, 1758–59).

6 Paul Weidmann, *Johann Faust: Ein allegorisches Drama* (1775); Friedrich Maximilian Klinger, *Fausts Leben: Thaten und Höllenfart* (1791).

7 The writing of Goethe's *Faust* spans fifty-seven years, from 1775 (*Urfaust*) to the second part of the tragedy (1832).

8 The modern history of Faust does not stop there, of course, but the process of valuation will progress no further. Bulgakov is too remote to allow for a comparison, and Valéry's Faust, whom we shall encounter again, may be more "attractive" (to us); but the absence of the last act of *Lust: La Demoiselle de cristal* deprives us of any overall view of his destiny. Thomas Mann is the gloomiest—not for nothing is the *Volksbuch* his chief reference.

9 For the references in the rest of this chapter, I am indebted to Jean Rousset, *Le Mythe de don Juan* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1978).

10 Tirso de Molina's *Burlador de Sevilla* dates from the early seventeenth century; it was first published in 1630.

11 Mérimée had already effected such a contamination in *Les Âmes du purgatoire* (1834), whose hero is named Don Juan de Maraña.

12 Théophile Gautier, review of Molière's *Dom Juan* (1847), rpt. in *Histoire de l'art dramatique en France* (Paris, 1859), 5:16. Musset's contribution is to be found in a few enthusiastic stanzas in *Namouna* (1831). Byron's is his vast poem *Don Juan: An Epic Satire* (1819–24), which in truth preserves nothing of the theme except the hero's name and his seductiveness. And as Rousset shrewdly observes, the presence of a seducer is not enough to make up a version of Don Juan; an appointment with the dead father is also a prerequisite, whatever its outcome. As to the character of Anna, I would be less positive: Molière does well enough without her, and Hoffmann's infatuation may be weighing too heavily upon our own perceptions.

13 See Dabezies, *Mythe de Faust*, pp. 116–17, for a list of works that unite the two heroes. Two parallel works by Nikolaus Lenau can be added to the list: *Faust* (1840) and *Don*

*Juan* (1844); their protagonists embody, each in his own fashion but both with an intensity that drives them to suicide, the morbid disenchantment of their author.

## *Chapter 71*

1 See Rousset, *Le Mythe de don Juan*, p. 176.

## *Chapter 72*

1 Eugène Ionesco, *Macbett: A Play*, trans. Charles Marowitz (New York: Grove Press, 1973). See Claude Leroy, "Si ce n'est toi . . . ou Macbett contre Macbeth," in *Le Discours et le sujet* (Nanterre: Université de Paris X, 1974).
2 "Deviation," *détournement*, is Claude Leroy's term.

## *Chapter 73*

1 Louis Aragon, notes written at the time of the first edition of *Aventures de Télémaque*, appended to a collector's copy and reprinted in the 1966 edition (Paris: Gallimard), p. 106.
2 Louis Aragon, *Je n'ai jamais appris à écrire ou les incipit* (Paris: Skira, 1969), p. 20. "The person who taught me how to read had chosen to have me decipher Fénelon's *Télémaque*, day after day, as if I had been the Duke of Burgundy" (p. 19).
3 *Trans. Note:* Aragon's Surrealist "poem" called "Persiennes" consists of a repetition of the one word *persiennes*.
4 Louis Aragon, *The Adventures of Telemachus*, trans. Renée Riese Hubert and Judd D. Hubert (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), p. 37 (hereafter cited by page number in the text).
5 Aragon, *Je n'ai jamais appris à écrire*.

## *Chapter 74*

1 Jean Giono's *Naissance de l'Odyssée* was written between 1924 and 1928, published in 1930, and reprinted in *Oeuvres romanesques complètes* (Paris: Gallimard [Pléiade], 1981), vol. 1.
2 Giono to Lucien Jacques, 2 January 1925, quoted in *Oeuvres romanesques complètes*, 1:819.

## *Chapter 75*

1 Michel Tournier, *Le Vent Paraclet* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), p. 229. The book in question is obviously *Vendredi, ou Les Limbes du Pacifique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967). {In English, see *Friday, or The Other Island*, trans. Norman Denny (New York: Doubleday, 1969).}

2 Michel Tournier, *Vendredi, ou La Vie sauvage* (Paris: Flammarion, 1971). {In English, see *Friday and Robinson: Life on Speranza Island*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (New York: Knopf, 1972).}

## *Chapter 76*

1 Quintus Smyrnaeus, *The Fall of Troy*, trans. Arthur S. Way (London: Heinemann, 1913).

## *Chapter 77*

1 See chapter 37.
2 Paul Valéry, *Lust: La Demoiselle de cristal*, in *Oeuvres* 2:278–379. The other fragment (*Le Solitaire*), whose only connection with the Faust theme is its hero's name, is of no relevance to our discussion.
3 By "metalepsis" (see Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 234), I mean any kind of transgression, whether supernatural or playful, of a given level of narrative or dramatic fiction, as when an author pretends to introduce himself into his own creation, or to extract one of his characters from it. There may have been something metaleptic in Thomas Mann's *Lotte in Weimar*, whose heroine was also that of *Werther* and had stepped out of her novel to confound its author.
4 Jean Giraudoux, *Tiger at the Gates*, trans. Christopher Fry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).
5 One should keep in mind the following definition of tragedy, which occurs in Giraudoux's *Siegfried*, 3.3: "It is the moment when the stage hands are silent, when the prompter prompts in hushed tones, and when the spectators, who have naturally guessed everything before Oedipus, before Othello, are thrilled at the idea of learning what they have known from the beginning of time."

## *Chapter 78*

1 Stendhal, *Correspondance* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 643.
2 I am not referring to Stendhal specialists, of course—only to specialists in general, perhaps.

## *Chapter 79*

1 I owe some of my expertise to the work of Jean Lipman and Richard Marshall, *Art about Art* (New York: Dutton and the Whitney Museum, 1978).
2 *Trans. Note:* A phonetic reading of the letters LHOOQ in French produces the phrase *Elle a chaud au cul*: "She has a hot ass."
3 A thick volume—and one fated to be immediately outdated—would be needed, as I have pointed out, merely to list the hypertextual practices of the modern advertising industry. As a mix of parody and travesty, and an equivalent to transsexuation of the

*Joseph Andrews* kind, let us mention the following poster for a brand of men's socks, which inverts the famous *Seven Year Itch* poster: a fake Marilyn Monroe is ogling a fake Tom Ewell whose trouser leg is being lifted by the draft from an airshaft, uncovering an elegantly socked and thus supposedly sexy calf.

4 See chapter 15, final paragraphs.

5 Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), pp. 127–28.

6 See Françoise Escal, "Fonctionnement du texte et/ou parodie dans la musique de Mauricio Kagel," *Cahiers du XXe siècle*, 1976.

7 The "jest" may also be played out in the title alone or, rather, in the relationship between the title and the score. Erik Satie loved to clothe his most innocuous pieces with impertinent titles such as *Airs à faire fuir* [Tunes to run away from] or *Trois morceaux en forme de poire* [Three pear-shaped pieces]. A contemporary composer whose name escapes me has given the title *Water Music* to a piece of *musique concrète* based on leaking faucets.

8 I am taking up the term *imitation* here in its general sense; in musical theory it is often used in the sense of transformation.

9 *Trans. Note:* An American equivalent could be the 1960s spoof of Frank Sinatra's "Strangers in the Night" sung on the radio as "Strange Things in My Soup."

10 Borges: "The repeated, but insignificant, contacts of Joyce's *Ulysses* with the Homeric Odyssey continue to enjoy—I shall never know why—the harebrained admiration of critics" (*Ficciones*, trans. Anthony Kerrigan, p. 42).

11 *Trans. Note:* "Publish or perish" appears in English in the original.

## *Chapter 80*

1 My personal readings were often complemented, I am pleased to say, by those of the various audiences who were kind enough to contribute in different ways to the completion of this study. My thanks go to them all, but especially to Michèle Sala for her patient research and chores of various kinds.

2 Jean Bellemin-Noël coined the term *avant-texte* (foretext) in *Le Texte et l'avant-texte* (Paris: Larousse, 1972).

3 True to the principle stated in chapter 2, this hypertextual aspect of the genetic relationship in no way excludes other transtextual aspects: the foretext also functions like a paratext; among its potential uses, the fact that it operates as a commentary—and thus as a metatext—in relation to the definitive text is as obvious as it is embarrassing, since it often informs us very clearly of intentions or interpretations that might well have been tentative and then completely abandoned at the moment of writing the final version (as is the case, for example, with Henry James's drafts).

4 A similar eclipse (or latency period?) has been observed (and somewhat overstated) by Robert Alter in his study of the "self-conscious novel," *Partial Magic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). The *same* eclipse, in actual fact, for the "self-consciousness" he analyzes in, for example, *Don Quixote*, *Jacques le Fataliste*, or *Pale*

*Fire* obviously has much in common with hypertextuality. The novel's playfully managed hyperconsciousness of its own artifices and conventions is at the same time a hyperconsciousness of its relationship to a genre and a tradition.

5 I should perhaps specify that I mean without an agrammaticality internal to the text. But the intrusive paratextual indices often impose such an agrammaticality; once again, *Ulysses* could easily enough be read as a slice of Dublin life were it not for its title, which resists any such co-optation.

6 Ruth Amossy and Elisheva Rosen, "La dame aux catleyas," *Littérature* 14 (May 1974).

7 Borges: "I have reflected that it is permissible to see in this 'final' *Quixote* a kind of palimpsest, through which the traces—tenuous but not indecipherable—of our friend's 'previous' writing should be translucently visible" (*Ficciones*, rpr. in *Labyrinths*, p. 44). The "friend" referred to is of course our friend—and colleague—Pierre Menard.

8 See *L'Homme* 2 (January–April 1962).

9 Borges again (who else?), in *Otras inquisiciones*, rpr. in *Labyrinths*, pp. 213–14.

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. . . à Thelonious,
qui s'y entendait,
17 février 1982

. . . for Thelonious,
who knew what it was all about,
17 February 1982

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# Index


Achilles Tatius, 210
*Aeneid* (Virgil): burlesque travesties of, 11, 21–22, 56–57, 151, 296–97, 324; as continuation of Homer, 5–7, 181–82, 335–36, 449 n.14; and medieval foundation myths, 190, 221; mock-heroic caricatures of, 134–39; romance in, 186–87, 376. See also *Le Lutrin*: and Virgil's *Aeneid*; *Virgile travesti*
Aeschylus, 98, 219; *Alcmena*, 347; *Oresteia*, 277, 328, 339, 346; *The Persians*, 262–63; *Seven against Thebes*, 346
Aesop, *Fables*, 72, 218, 260–61, 262
Agathon, 98; *Antheus*, 263
Agias, *Nostoi*, 177
Akakia-Viala. *See* Allevy, Marie Antoinette
Alcibiades, 98
Aleman, Mateo, *Guzman de Alfarache*, 7, 36, 451 n.1
Alfano, Franco, continuation of Puccini's *Turandot*, 174, 390
Alfieri, Vittorio, *Alceste secunda*, 344
Allen, Woody, *Play It Again, Sam*, 156–58
Allevy, Marie Antoinette (pseud. Akakia-Viala), and Nicolas Bataille, *La Chasse spirituelle*, 86–87, 158–61, 409–10, 447 n.2
Alonso, Damaso, 223
Alter, Robert, *Partial Magic*, 470 n.4
Amossy, Ruth, 399
Anouilh, Jean, 328, 399; *Antigone*, 285, 286, 297, 310, 327, 332–35, 344, 367; *La Répétition*, 311
Apollinaire, Guillaume, 15, 71
Apollodorus, 190
Apuleius, Lucius, *Metamorphoses*, or *The Golden Ass*, 148, 254
Aragon, Louis: *Adventures of Telemachus*, 360–63; "Persiennes," 361
Arctinus: *Aethiopis*, 133, 177, 179, 181, 375, 448 n.9; *Destruction of Ilium*, 177
Ariosto, Lodovico, *Orlando furioso*, 184, 212, 376, 439 n.1; as continuation of Boiardo, 196–97, 198, 200, 202, 259
Aristophanes, *The Frogs*, 98
Aristotle: and definition of parody, 10–12, 27; list of parodies given by, 10–12, 133, 134; *Poetics*, 5, 10–12; and rules of epic, 63, 65, 177, 366; on tragedy, 439 n.5; and transmodalization, 277–78, 280, 281–82, 397, 461 n.1
Arvers, Félix, 32, 401–3
Atheneus of Naucratis, 12
Aubert, David, *Cronicques et conquestes de Charlemagne*, 221–22
*Aucassin et Nicolette*, 205
Auden, W. H., *The Rake's Progress*, 353–54
Auger, Louis-Simon, *Mélanges philosophiques et littéraires*, 138, 432 n.1
Austen, Jane, *Northanger Abbey*, 156
Aymé, Marcel, *Uranus*, 187–89

Babelon, Jean, 324
Bach, Johann Sebastian, 123–24, 387; *Goldberg Variations*, 388
Bakhtin, Mikhail, 87
Bal, Mieke, "Notes on Narrative Embedding," 430 n.13
Balzac, Guez de, 90

Balzac, Honoré de: caricatures by, 92–93, 441 n.6; plotting of, 259, 281, 286, 289; Proust's pastiches of, 88, 95, 101–2, 119, 121, 127; psychology of, 466 n.6; reputation of, 212, 397; style of, 78–79, 96, 98, 110–11, 276; titles of, 37; wordplay of, 7, 18, 396. Works: *Contes drôlatiques*, 130, 441 n.6; *Un Début dans la vie*, 7, 33; "Études sur M. Beyle," 242–43, 455 n.6, 455 n.7; *Eugénie Grandet*, 434 n.17; *The Human Comedy*, 33, 207; *Lost Illusions*, 33, 400, 441 n.6; *La Muse du département*, 88; *Père Goriot*, 170; *Un prince de la bohème*, 92–94; *La Rabouilleuse*, 33; *Ursule Mirouet*, 33
Barbey d'Aurevilly, Jules, 105
Barbin, Claude, 38, 135
Baro, Balthazar, *L'Astrée*, 162, 163–65, 198, 447 n.3
Barrault, Jean-Louis, 232
Barrès, Maurice, 187
Barsacq, André, 286
Barth, John, 180, 396; *Anonymiad*, 336; *Letters*, 452 n.4; "The Literature of Replenishment," 211–12; *Melelaiad*, 341–43; *The Sot-Weed Factor*, 211–12, 452 n.5
Barthelme, Donald, 212
Barthes, Roland, 280; pastiches of, 95–96. Works: *Fragments d'un discours amoureux*, 95; *Mythologiques*, 399; *Writing Degree Zero*, 58
Bataille, Henry, 97
Bataille, Nicolas. *See* Allevy, Marie Antoinette, and Nicolas Bataille, *La Chasse Spirituelle*
*Batrachomyomachia (Battle of the Frogs and Mice)*: and Boileau's *Le Lutrin*, 20, 22–23, 135, 136, 139; and Homer's *Iliad*, 12, 129, 133–34, 142; and La Fontaine's *Fables*, 72
Baudelaire, Charles Pierre, 214, 386; "Les Chats," 40, 399; "La Chevelure," 224; "Le Cygne," 192; *Les Fleurs du mal*, 129, 186, 187; "L'Invitation au voyage," 224–25, 417; *Petits poèmes en prose*, 224–25; "Recueillement," 225, 418–19
Bazin, André, 286
Beardsley, Aubrey, 271
Beauclair, Henri, and Gabriel Vicaire, *Les Déliquescences*, 130, 132
Beaumarchais, Pierre-Augustin Caron: *The Barber of Seville*, 33–34; *The Marriage of Figaro*, 34, 162; *La Mère coupable*, 162
Beauvau, Louis de, *Roman de Troyle et de Criseida*, 356
Beckett, Samuel, 214, 259, 306; *Molloy*, 393; *Waiting for Godot*, 292–93
Beerbohm, Max, 94, 128, 442 n.10
Beethoven, Ludwig van, 55, 119, 259, 387; *Diabelli Variations*, 388, 438 n.24
Bénabou, Marcel, 43–46; "La Gueule," 43
Benoît de Sainte-Maure, *Le Roman de Troie*, 186, 221, 355, 356
Bens, Jacques, 123
Benveniste, Émile, 240
Berberian, Cathy, 389
Berg, Alban, *Lulu*, 200, 390, 448 n.7
Bergson, Henri, 113; *Le Rire*, 85–86, 440 n.1
Berlioz, Hector, 387; *Béatrice et Bénédict*, 390
Bermudez, Jeronimo, 279
Berni, Francesco, *Rifacimento dell'Orlando innamorato*, 197
Bernstein, Henry, *Judith*, 331
Béroul, *The Romance of Tristan*, 222
Bersani, Leo, 188
Bertrand, Louis, 233
Biancolelli, Pierre-François (pseud. Dominique): *Agnès de Chaillot*, 21, 145–47, 150, 296, 358, 462 n.4; *Arlequin Phaéton*, 144
Bible: passion of Jesus (Matt. 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19), 70–71; story of Herodias (Matt. 14, Mark 6), 269–71, 330; story of Joseph (Gen. 25–50), 264–65, 269, 464 n.6; story of Judith (Apocrypha), 330–31
Bioy Casares, Adolfo, and Jorge Luis Borges, *Chronicles of Bustos Domecq*, 131
Birge-Vitz, Evelyn, 238, 455 n.1
Bizet, Georges, *Symphony in C*, 390, 431 n.3
Blair, Hugh, 216
Blanchot, Maurice, 215, 216

Bloom, Harold, 3
Boccaccio, Giovanni: *Decameron*, 356; *Il Filostrato*, 355–56
Bogart, Humphrey, 156–58
Boiardo, Matteo Maria, *Orlando innamorato*, 210. *See also* Ariosto, Lodovico, *Orlando furioso*: as continuation of Boiardo
Boileau, Nicholas, 2, 46, 90, 94, 281–82. See also *Le Lutrin*
Boileau, Nicholas, and Jean Racine, *Chapelain décoiffé*: and burlesque, 20–21, 146; and Chapelain, 19–20, 90, 99; and Corneille's *Le Cid*, 18–19, 52, 82, 150, 398; as parody, 15–16, 19–22, 25, 28, 31, 143–45, 432 n.1
Boito, Arrigo, 230; *Falstaff*, 258
Bompiani, Valentino, and Robert Laffont, *Dictionnaire des oeuvres*, 239, 249
Borges, Jorge Luis: and continuations of Homer, 220, 221; and Genette's *Palimpsests*, 394; hypertextuality of, 211–12, 397; pseudosummaries by, 251–54, 457 n.14. Works, *The Aleph and Other Stories*, 253; "The Approach to Al-Mu'tasim," 251; *Discusión*, 251, 253, 457 n.12; *Ficciones*, 251–54, 393; *El jardín de los senderos que se bifurcan*, 251; *Otras inquisiciones*, 400; prologue to Adolfo Bioy Casares, *The Invention of Morel*, 325, 464 n.4; "Streetcorner Man," 456 n.5; "Theme of the Traitor and the Hero," 252, 275 n.14; "Three Versions of Judas," 465 n.2; *A Universal History of Infamy*, 251, 252. *See also* "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*"
Borges, Jorge Luis, and Adolfo Bioy Casares, *Chronicles of Bustos Domecq*, 131
Borodin, Aleksandr Porfiryevich, 390
Bossuet, Jacques, 124
Boucourechliev, André, 458 n.5; *Ombres*, 389
Bougainville, Louis Antoine de, *Voyage autour du monde*, 202–4
Bouilhet, Louis, 233; *Dernières chansons*, 116
Bracciolini, Poggio, *Scherno degli dei*, 56, 66
Brahms, Johannes, 259
Braque, Georges, 107, 131
Brecht, Bertolt, 268, 282, 285; *Don Juan*, 354–55, 367
Brel, Jacques, *Valse à mille temps*, 390–91
Bresson, Robert, *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*, 286
Breton, André, 141–42, 438 n.5, 447 n.4; *Flagrant délit*, 159; *Surrealist Manifesto*, 34, 464 n.2
Broch, Hermann, *The Death of Virgil*, 209
Brontë, Charlotte, *Jane Eyre*, 461 n.11
Bronzwaer, W., "Implied Author, Extradiegetic Narrator, and Public Reader," 461 n.12
Brua, Edmond, *Parodie du Cid*, 18, 72, 431 n.6
Buff, Charlotte, 208–9
Buffon, Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de, 70, 276, 394
Bulgakov, Mikhail, *The Master and Margarita*, 304, 462 n.14, 467 n.8
Burnier, Michel-Antoine, and Patrick Rambaud, 127; *Parodies*, 23, 95; *Le Roland Barthes sans peine*, 95–96
Bury, Blaze de, *Le Souper chez le commandeur*, 352
Butler, Samuel, *Fair Haven*, 252
Butor, Michel, 54–56; *Répertoire III*, 17; *6 810 000 litres d'eau par seconde*, 53–54; "Temps des Cerises," 31–32
Byron, George Gordon, Lord, *Don Juan*, 467 n.12

Cabrel, Francis, "Je l'aime à mourir," 391
Callimachus, 141
Calvino, Italo, 211–12, 384, 397, 399; *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, 295–96; *The Non-Existent Knight*, 200–202
Calzabigi, Ranieri da, 344
Campe, Joachim Heinrich von, *The German Robinson*, 230, 303
Camus, Albert: *L'Étranger*, 123, 242, 272, 287; *Malentendu*, 272
*Cantar de Rodrigo*, 331–32
Carelman, 124
Carlyle, Thomas, *Sartor Resartus*, 252
Carroll, Lewis, 212, 405; *The Hunting of the Snark*, 79
Casanova, Giacomo, 40

Casella, Alfredo, 390
Castro, Guillen de, *Las Mocedades del Cid*, 332
Catullus, 136
Caxton, William, *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, 356
Cela, Camilo José, *New Adventures and Misadventures of Lazarillo de Tormes*, 451 n.2
Céline, Louis-Ferdinand, 123; *Mort à crédit*, 393
Cerha, Friedrich, 390, 448 n.7
Cervantes, Miguel de, 399; *Novelas Ejemplares*, 206; *Persiles*, 210. See also *Don Quixote*
Cézanne, Paul, 119
Chabrier, Emmanuel, 390
Chaix d'Est-Ange, Gustave, 101
Chapelain, Jean, 19–20, 90, 99; *La Pucelle*, 19–20, 439 n.1. *See also* Boileau, Nicholas, and Jean Racine, *Chapelain décoiffé*
Chardin, Jean-Baptiste-Siméon, 225; *Bénédicité*, 385
*La Chasse spirituelle. See* Allevy, Marie Antoinette
Chateaubriand, François-Auguste-René, vicomte de: erasures by, 54–56, 276, 423–28; pastiche of, by Flaubert, 100, 442 n.3; pastiche of, by Proust, 101, 102; transformation of, by Butor, 53–56. Works, *Atala*, 54, 237, 424; *Essai sur les révolutions*, 54–56, 237, 423–28; *Génie du christianisme*, 424–27; *L'Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*, 69; *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, 56, 384, 424–28
Chaucer, Geoffrey, *Troilus and Criseyde*, 221, 356, 357
Chopin, Frédéric, 388
Chopinel, Jean (known as Jean de Meun), *The Romance of the Rose*, 148, 192–93, 195, 196, 198, 202, 450 n.3
Chrétien de Troyes: *Lancelot*, 222, 381, 448 n.7; *Perceval*, 161, 193–95, 196, 198, 222, 448 n.7, 450 n.2 n.3
*Le Cid* (Corneille): diegetic framework of, 295, 296, 462 n.3; dramatization of, 278; modern travesties of, 69–70, 72, 431 n.6; sources of, 331–32. *See also* Boileau, Nicholas, and Jean Racine, *Chapelain décoiffé*: and Corneille's *Le Cid*
Cixous, Hélène, *Le Nom d'Oedipe*, 458 n.5
Claudel, Paul, 214, 231–32, 339; *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, 232; *L'Échange*, 232; *La Jeune Fille Violaine*, 232; "Ode au Général," 33; *Partage de midi*, 232; *Protée*, 232, 339, 363–64; *Le Soulier de satin*, 231–32, 280; *Tête d'or*, 232; *La Ville*, 232
Cleland, John, *Fanny Hill*, 452 n.5
Cocteau, Jean, 160, 239, 286; *Antigone*, 236, 297; *Le Boeuf sur le toit*, 388; *La Machine infernale*, 257–58, 262, 297, 462 n.4; *Oedipe Roi*, 236–37, 297, 454 n.2; *Romeo and Juliet*, 236, 237, 297
Colescott, Robert, 385
Collins, Philip, 454 n.6
Condillac, Étienne Bonnot de, 234
Conrad, Joseph, *Lord Jim*, 461 n.11
Constant, Benjamin, 461 n.9; *Adolphe*, 287, 290–92
Conti, Noel, *Mythologie*, 56
Cooper, James Fenimore, 207, 230, 235
Coover, Robert, 212
Corneille, Pierre, 4, 16, 65, 146, 393; *Don Sanche d'Aragon*, 140; *Horace*, 67; *Oedipus*, 255–56, 262; *Pulchérie*, 140; *Sertorius*, 17, 431 n.2; *La Suite du Menteur*, 161, 162; *Tite et Bérénice*, 140, 263–64, 278. See also *Le Cid*
Correggio, Antonio Allegri, 172
Coulet, Henri, *Marivaux romancier*, 170
Courteline, Georges, *Conversion d'Alceste*, 450 n.1
Couton, Georges, "Du pensum aux *Fables*," 260–61
Crébillon, Claude Prosper Jolyot de, 96, 99, 124, 127; *L'Écumoire*, 90–92, 94, 167, 440 n.4
Cuénot, Claude, 226
Culler, Jonathan, *Beyond Interpretation*, 435 n.19
Curtiz, Michael, *Casablanca*, 156–58
*Cycle de Lancelot*, 195, 222
*Cyprian Poems*, 177, 378
Cyrano de Bergerac, Savinien, 93

Dabezies, André, *Le Mythe de Faust*, 280–81, 351, 467 n.13
Dacier, Anne, 312
D'Alembert, Jean Le Rond, *Dictionnaire des synonymes*, 161, 207, 441 n.5
Dali, Salvador, 384, 386
Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, 4, 217
Da Ponte, Lorenzo, 352
Dares the Phrygian, *De excidio Troiae historia*, 186, 221, 355
Daudet, Alphonse, 121
Daudet, Léon, *Le Voyage de Shakespeare*, 208–9
Debussy, Claude, 98, 390; *Hommage à Rameau*, 99, 390
Defoe, Daniel, *Moll Flanders*, 36, 210, 298. See also *Robinson Crusoe*
Delacroix, Eugène, 388; *Femmes d'Alger*, 385
De la Roche, Mazo, *Jalna* series, 35, 207
Delepierre, Octave, *Essai sur la parodie*, 12–13, 20, 21
Delille, Jacques, 74
Delprat, Edouard, 94
Delteil, Joseph, *Don Juan*, 353
Demorest, Don Louis, 233–34
Deniaud, Yves, 72
Derême, Tristan, 44–45
Derrida, Jacques, *Pharmacie de Platon*, 393–94
Des Forêts, Louis-René, *Le Bavard*, 47, 437–38 n.24
Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, Jean, *Défense du poème héroïque*, 136–37, 139
Diabelli, Antonio, 55, 259, 388, 389, 438 n.24
Diaghilev, Sergei Pavlovitch, 388
Dickens, Charles, 98, 121, 212; *David Copperfield*, 434 n.17; *Great Expectations*, 454 n.6, 461 n.12
Dictys of Crete (pseud. Lucius Septimius), "Ephemerides of the Trojan War": additions to Homer in, 191, 465 n.4; reduction of Homer in, 220–21; successors to, 186, 222, 288, 355, 378–79, 460 n.2
Diderot, Denis, 37, 89, 94, 124, 212, 441 n.4; *Encyclopédie*, 20–21; *Jacques le Fataliste*, 286, 342, 380, 470 n.4; *Rameau's Nephew*, 4, 80, 175–76, 357; *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*, 202–4
Dion Cassius, 458 n.1
*Doctor Faustus* (Mann): hypertextuality of, 52, 400; and parody, 26, 145; sources of, 259, 284, 353; as transposition, 27–29, 462 n.4. See also *Volksbuch* (Faust): and Mann
Dominique. *See* Biancolelli, Pierre-François
*Don Quixote* (Cervantes): and *Bovaryism*, 149, 298; as generic prototype, 148–52, 396, 399, 470 n.4; and Montalvo's *Amadis of Gaul*, 148, 152, 157, 305; narration of, 63, 253, 319, 321–22; part 2 of, 151, 162, 206–7, 377; reputation of, 212; versions for children of, 230. *See also* "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*"; Unamuno, Miguel de, *The Life of Don Quixote*
d'Ors, Eugenio, 271
Dostoyevsky, Fyodor Mikhailovich, 116–17, 118, 464 n.4; *Crime and Punishment*, 105–6, 460 n.5
d'Otremont, Stanislas, *La Polonaise*, 291
Doubrovsky, Serge, 251
Dreiser, Theodore, 212
Du Bellay, Joachim, 44–45
Du Camp, Maxime, 100, 233
Ducasse, Isidore-Lucien (pseud. Comte de Lautréamont), 2; *Maldoror*, 130, 360; *Poésies*, 38, 43, 360, 361
Duchamp, Marcel, *LHOOQ*, 384
Dufy, Raoul, 386
Duhamel, Georges: 159; *Chronique des Pasquier*, 35, 207
Dumarsais, César Chesneau, 2, 18, 19; *Des tropes*, 16
Dumas, Alexandre, 18; *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, 206; *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*, 162, 206; *Vingt ans après*, 162, 206
Dumesnil, René, 233–34
Durand, Gilbert, 187
Durkheim, Émile, 210
Duvert, Félix-Auguste, and Augustin-

Duvert, Félix-Auguste (*cont.*)
Théodore de Lauzanne, *Harnali*, 21, 147, 358, 462 n.4

Éluard, Paul, and Benjamin Péret, *Cent cinquante-deux proverbes mis au goût du jour*, 34–35
Epaminondas, 93
Estang, Luc, 160
Eugammon of Cyrene, *De Telegonia*, 177–78, 221
Eumolpus, 98
Euripides, 98, 185, 187, 262, 328; *Alcestis*, 344; *Alcmena*, 347; *Andromache*, 186; *Electra*, 328, 346; *Hecuba*, 186; *Helen*, 338–39; *Orestes*, 464 n.2; *The Phoenician Women*, 258, 464 n.2; *The Trojan Women*, 145, 186, 190
Eyck, Jan van, *Arnolfini and His Bride*, 385

Fabre, J. H., 97
Fabre d'Églantine, P. F. N., *Le Philinte de Molière*, 198–99
Fauré, Gabriel, and André Messager, *Souvenirs de Bayreuth*, 388
Fénelon, François de Salignac de La Mothe-, *Précis de l'Odyssée*, 449 n.2; *Télémaque*, 144, 152–55, 180, 181–83, 336, 360–63, 449 n.2
Fernandez, Ramon, 104, 128
Fernández de Avellaneda, Alonso, *Segundo Tomo del ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*, 206–7, 377
Ferreira, Antonio, *Ines de Castro*, 279
Fielding, Henry, 212, 452 n.1; *Joseph Andrews*, 148, 298–99, 470 n.3; *Shamela*, 29, 298–99, 354, 364, 462 n.4; *Tom Jones*, 208, 211, 287, 299, 434 n.17, 452 n.5
Fitzgerald, F. Scott, *Tender Is the Night*, 461 n.11
Flaubert, Gustave, 37, 181, 224, 272, 276, 444 n.25. Works: *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, 106, 112, 118; *Un Coeur simple*, 112, 113–14, 244–45, 272; *L' Éducation sentimentale*, 83, 106, 108, 110, 115, 117, 444 n.17; *Hérodias*, 83, 114–15, 269–70, 271, 272, 325, 330; *Par les champs et par les grèves*, 100, 442 n.3; *Salammbô*, 106, 110, 117, 269; *La Tentation de saint Antoine*, 52, 233–34, 269. See also *Madame Bovary*; Proust, Marcel: pastiche of Flaubert, "Sur le style de Flaubert," "To be Added to Flaubert"; Thibaudet, Albert, *Gustave Flaubert*
Fontanier, Pierre, 2, 73–77
Fougeret de Monbron, Louis Charles, *La Henriade travestie*, 21
Fourest, Georges, *Carnaval des chefs-d'oeuvre*, 67–70
Fournel, Victor, 23, 145, 146–47, 153, 296; "The Burlesque in France," 21–22
Fournier, Edmond, 226, 227
France, Anatole, 97, 107
Franklin, Benjamin, 371
Freud, Sigmund, 256, 258, 325–27, 329, 466 n.6; *Female Sexuality*, 465 n.4; summary of Wilhelm Jensen's *Gradiva*, 456 n.1; *Totem and Taboo*, 198

Galsworthy, John, *The Forsyte Saga*, 35, 207
Gary, Romain, 130–31
Gaulthier, Mme Jules, 382–84
Gautier, Théophile, 88, 352, 353; *Le Capitaine Fracasse*, 88
Gay, Sophie, *Ellénore*, 291
Genet, Jean, 311
Genette, Gérard, 36; abridgment of d'Urfé's *L'Astrée*, 231; *Figures II*, 264, 433 n.6; *Figures III*, 109, 294; *Mimologiques*, 433 n.6; *Narrative Discourse*, 278, 469 n.3; *Palimpsests*, 394; transmetrification of Valéry's "Le Cimetière marin," 416
Geoffroy de Lagny, 193
Gide, André: *Anthologie de la poésie française*, 45; *The Counterfeiters*, 273–74; *Oedipe*, 258; *Les poésies d'André Walter*, 130
Gilbert, Stuart, 307
Giliberto, Onofrio, 352
Gill, André, 94
Giono, Jean, 180, 277; *Angelo*, 86; *Bonheur fou*, 4; *Femme de boulanger*, 365; *Mort d'un personnage*, 4; *Naissance de l'Odyssée*, 297, 310, 339, 363–67, 379, 466 n.7; *Pour saluer Melville*, 208–9; *Un roi sans divertissement*, 461 n.11

Girart de Roussillon, 178
Giraudoux, Jean: playfulness of, 29, 67, 180, 200, 335, 399; plotting of, 189, 333, 371; style of, 131. Works: *Amphitryon 38*, 297, 347–50, 379, 467 n.5; *Électre*, 26, 297, 332, 344–46, 379, 464 n.3; *Elpénor*: 220, 257, 288, 289, 336, 362, 460 n.2 n.3; *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*, 39, 186, 187, 205, 257, 341, 364, 378–81; *Judith*, 257, 331, 379; *Siegfried et le Limousin*, 278, 469 n.5; *Supplément au voyage de Cook*, 204, 302, 381; *Suzanne et le Pacifique*, 204–5, 298, 299–303, 369
Gluck, Christoph Willibald, 66; *Alceste*, 344
Godchot, Simon, "Attempt at a translation into French (!) verse of Paul Valéry's 'Cimetière marin,'" 227–28, 269, 421–22
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 102, 175, 348, 399; and Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, 268, 282, 284, 305, 310; and Valéry's Faust, 377. Works: *Dichtarten*, 29; *Faust*, 213, 281, 297, 350–52, 353, 462 n.14; *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, 208–9, 306, 469 n.3; *Wilhelm Meister*, 259
Goldberg, Johann Gottlieb, 388
Goncourt, Edmond de, 121
Goncourt, Edmond de, and Jules Goncourt, 101, 102, 103, 104, 405–6, 443 n.17; *Germinie Lacerteux*, 23
Góngora y Argote, Luis de, *The Solitudes*, 223
Gonin, Eve, *Le Point de vue d'Ellénore*, 291–92
Gottfried von Strassburg, 327
Gounod, Charles, *Faust*, 377, 467 n.5
Goya y Lucientes, Francisco José de, 386
Grabbe, Christian Dietrich, *Faust and Don Juan*, 258–59, 353
Gracq, Julien, *Roi pêcheur*, 450 n.2
*Les Grandes et inestimables chroniques du grand et énorme géant Gargantua*, 197–98, 200
Grimm, Friedrich-Melchior, Baron von, 202
Guido delle Colonne, *Historia destructionis Troiae*, 355–56
Guillaume de Lorris, *The Romance of the Rose*, 4, 450 n.3. *See also* Chopinel, Jean, *The Romance of the Rose*
Guilleragues, Gabriel Joseph de Lavergne, vicomte de, *Lettres portugaises*, 219
Guizot, François, 284

Halévy, Elie, 66, 335
Halévy, Ludovic. *See* Meilhac, Henri, and Ludovic Halévy
Hals, Frans, 117
Halsman, Philippe, *Mona Dali*, 384
Handel, George Frideric, 259
Hardy, Thomas, 105
Harsdörffer, G. P., 43
Hartmann, Geoffrey, *Beyond Formalism*, 435 n.19
Haydn, Franz Joseph, 389
Hebbel, Friedrich, *Judith*, 331
Hegel, Georg Friedrich Wilhelm, 196, 208, 224, 324, 346; *Aesthetics*, 179, 180–81, 183–84, 185, 187, 334, 336, 448 n.9; *The Phenomenology of the Mind*, 4
Hegemon of Thasos, 10–12
Heine, Heinrich, 214, 331; *Atta Troll*, 270
Heliodorus, 182, 210
Hemingway, Ernest, 287
Henryson, Robert, *The Testament of Cresseid*, 356, 357
Hesiod, 347
Hoffmann, Ernst Theodor Wilhelm, 258–59, 352, 353, 467 n.12
Hoffmannsthal, Hugo von: *Helen of Egypt*, 339; *Oedipus und die Sphynx*, 257
Hoffnung Festival, 389
Holinshed, Raphael, 359
Homer, 5–7, 11, 12–15, 82, 135, 177–92, 347; style of, 14–15, 75, 79, 88, 261. See also *Iliad*; *Odyssey*
Horace, 69, 137
Houdar de la Motte, Antoine: "Discourse on Tragedy," 218–19; "Discourse upon Homer," 15, 312–14; *Iliade en vers français*, 66, 231, 312–17, 319, 320, 343–44, 357–58; *Inès de Castro*, 21, 144, 145, 150, 278–79, 296, 297, 462 n.4; prose version of Racine's *Mithridate*, 222–23, 414–16; prose version of Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*, 256, 411–13.

Houdar de la Motte (*cont.*)
*See also* Biancolelli, Pierre-François, *Agnès de Chaillot*
Hugo, Victor, 21, 46, 94; *Les Chansons des rues et des bois*, 102; *Contemplations*, 17; *Hernani*, 21, 147, 462 n.4; *Les Misérables*, 170
Humboldt, Wilhelm von, 215

Ignatius of Loyola, 323, 324
*Iliad* (Homer), 287, 324, 384; burlesques of, 20, 57, 58, 66–67, 142, 439 n.1; description in, 463 n.2; Helen of Troy in, 335–43, 465 n.1, 466 n.13; as hypotext, 183–87, 191, 344, 355–58, 367; translations of, 217–18, 312–17, 410–11; and the Trojan cycle, 177–81, 206–7, 220–22, 355, 375; and Virgil's *Aeneid*, 182, 336. See also *Batrachomyomachia*; Giraudoux, Jean: *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*; Houdar de la Motte, Antoine: *Iliade en vers français*; Marivaux, Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de: *Homère travesti*
*Ilioupersis*, 190
Ingres, Jean-Auguste-Dominique, 131; *Bain turc*, 385; *Odalisque*, 385
Ionesco, Eugène, 277; *Les Chaises*, 358; *Macbett*, 297, 358–59; *Le Rhinocéros*, 358
Isocrates, 98, 337

Jakobson, Roman, 107, 399
James, Henry, 212, 272, 287, 442 n.10, 470 n.3; *The Ambassadors*, 275–76, 459 n.14, 460 n.5; *Notebooks*, 274–76; *The Turn of the Screw*, 274, 459 n.10; *What Maisie Knew*, 287, 290
Janin, Jules, 396, 441 n.6; *La Fin d'un monde et du Neveu de Rameau*, 175–76
Jarry, Alfred, 67; *Canard Sauvage*, 70–71; *Ubu Roi*, 68, 359
Jean de Meun. *See* Chopinel, Jean
Jimenes de Ayllón, 332
Johnson, Barbara, 224
Jolles, André, 350–51
Jones, Ernest, *Hamlet and Oedipus*, 325
Jong, Erica, *Fanny Hackabouts-Jones*, 452 n.5
Joyce, James, 211–12, 396–97; *Finnegans Wake*, 394. See also *Ulysses*
Juan de Mariana, *Historia general de España*, 332
Jung, Carl, *The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, 465 n.4

Kafka, Franz, *The Castle*, 460 n.5
Kagel, Mauricio, *Ludwig van*, 389
Kant, Immanuel, 37, 111; *Critique of Pure Reason*, 397
Kazantzakis, Nikos, *Christ Recrucified*, 311
Keats, John, 41
Kleist, Heinrich von, *Amphitryon*, 348; *Penthesilea*, 375–77
Klimt, Gustav, 271
Klinger, Friedrich Maximilian, *Fausts Leben*, 351
Klossowski, Pierre, 141
Kristeva, Julia, 1

La Bruyère, Jean de, 38, 89, 117; *Characters*, 98–99, 459 n.15
Laclos, Pierre-Ambroise-François Choderlos de, 339
Lacy, Jerry, 157
La Fare, Charles-Auguste, 31
La Fayette, Marie-Madeleine, comtesse de, *La Princesse de Clèves*, 287
Laffont, Robert, and Valentino Bompiani, *Dictionnaire des oeuvres*, 239, 249
Laflèche, Guy, *Mallarmé*, 226–27
La Fontaine, Jean de: "The Crow and the Fox," 42, 404–5; *Fables*, 61, 111, 218, 261, 262; "The Grasshopper and the Ant," 31, 42, 71–73, 404
Laforgue, Jules, 10; "About *Hamlet*," 283; *Complainte de l'oubli des morts*, 283; "Hamlet," 26, 282–84; *Moralités légendaires*, 271
Lagerkvist, Pär, *Barrabas*, 450 n.3
Lalli, Giambattista, *Eneide travestita*, 56, 57
Lamartine, Alphonse-Marie-Louis de Prat de, 39
Lamb, Charles and Mary: *The Adventures of Ulysses*, 246–47, 286, 289; *Tales from Shakespeare*, 246–48, 283

La Motte. *See* Houdar de La Motte, Antoine
*Lancelot en prose*, 195, 222
Lanson, Gustave, "La parodie dramatique au XVIIIe siècle," 144–45, 446 n.3
Larbaud, Valery, 307, 309; *A. O. Barnabooth*, 130
La Rochefoucauld, François, duc de, *Maxims*, 38–39, 465 n.5
Larousse, Pierre, 20, 23, 89, 432 n.1
Laurent, Jacques, 130–31, 173–74; "Éloge du pasticheur," 172; *La Fin de Lamiel*, 172
Laurent, Méry, 226
Lautréamont, comte de. *See* Ducasse, Isidore
Lauzanne, Augustin-Théodore de. *See* Duvert, Félix-Auguste, and Augustin-Théodore de Lauzanne, *Harnali*
Lawrence, D. H., "The Man Who Died," 199
*Lazarillo de Tormes*, 7, 36, 175, 207, 210, 298, 451 n.2
Le Bossu, René, *Traité du poème épique*, 313, 314
Lecanuet, Jean, 46
Leconte de Lisle, Charles-Marie-René, 141
Lefebvre, Henri, 46
Leiris, Michel, 123; *Glossaire j'y serre mes gloses*, 51
Lejeune, Philippe, 3, 128, 399
Leleu, Gabrielle, and Pommier, Jean, *Madame Bovary: Nouvelle Version*, 233, 288, 454 n.8
Le Lionnais, François, 39, 40–41, 45–48
Lemaire des Belges, Jean, 186, 191
Lemaitre, Jules, 67, 94, 362; and Homer, 289, 335–38, 364, 465 n.1 n.4, 466 n.7 n.13. Works: *La Bonne Hélène*, 465 n.1; "L'innocente diplomatie d'Hélène," 336–38; *En marges des vieux livres*, 200, 335, 465 n.1; "Nausicaa," 465 n.4; "Les romanciers contemporains," 270; "Le secret de Pénélope," 466 n.7; "Le tempérament de Saint-Preux," 199; "Tiberge," 289, 291, 460 n.4; "La vieillesse d'Hélène," 466 n.13
Le Moyne, Pierre, *De l'histoire*, 221
Lenau, Nikolaus, 467 n.13
Lennox, Charlotte, *The Female Quixote*, 298
Lenôtre, André, 97
Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, 384–85
Lepidis, Clément, *La Main Rouge*, 304–5
Lermina, Jules, 360
Leroux, Gaston, *The Mystery of the Yellow Room*, 45, 437 n.16
Lesage, Alain-René, *Gil Blas*, 36, 210, 249–50
Lesches, *Little Iliad*, 177, 181, 190, 448 n.9
Lescure, Jean, 42
Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, "Letters on Literature," 351
Levasseur, Thérèse, 176
Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 398, 399
Liszt, Franz, 259, 387, 388
Littré, Émile, 20, 161–62, 410–11; "La poésie homérique et l'ancienne poésie française," 217–18
Longus, *Daphnis and Chloë*, 297
Loti, Pierre, 97
Loussier, Jacques, *Play Bach*, 388
Lucan, 98; *Pharsalia*, 183
Luna, Juan de, *Lazarillo de Tormes*, 175
*Le Lutrin* (Boileau): and burlesque, 66; and mock-heroic, 130, 134, 135, 136–41, 146–47, 151; and parody 20, 22–23; and pastiche, 82–83, 120; and Virgil's *Aeneid*, 82, 120, 135–38, 146–47, 151
Lydgate, John, *Troy Book*, 356
Lysias, 98
Lysimachos, *Nostoi*, 190

Macpherson, James, *The Poems of Ossian*, 129, 132, 220
*Madame Bovary* (Flaubert): diegetic transposition of, 304; and *Don Quixote*, 149, 298; original text of, 233, 234, 454 n.8; Proust's opinion of, 106, 110, 443 n.16; realism of, 400; transfocalization of, 287–88, 290
Madaule, Jacques, 233
Madières, Paul, *Les Poètes parodistes*, 20–21, 31

Magendie, Maurice, 164
Mahler, Gustav, 387
Malebranche, Nicolas, 38
Mallarmé, Stéphane: and Baudelaire, 129, 386; reduction of, by Queneau, 44; transstylizations by, 226–28, 269; and Valéry, 214–15, 378. Works: "L'Après-midi d'un faune," 227; "L'Azur," 43; "Le Guignon," 227; *Hérodiade*, 271; "Le Pitre châtié," 227; "Placet futile," 227; *Quatre Contes indiens*, 226–27, 419–20; "Sonnet en x," 227, 421–23; "Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe," 41; "Tristesse d'été," 227; "Victorieusement fui . . . ," 227
Malraux, André, 118, 366
Mañara, Miguel, 353
Manet, Édouard: *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 385; *Olympia*, 385
Mann, Thomas, 211–12, 397, 399; *The Confessions of Felix Krull*, 210–11; *Joseph and His Brothers*, 29, 265–69, 297, 325, 458 n.4; *Lotte in Weimar*, 29, 208–9, 469 n.3; *The Magic Mountain*, 268. See also *Doctor Faustus*
Marcenac, Jean, 447 n.2
Marin, Louis, "Pour une théorie du texte parabolique," 429 n.2
Marivaux, Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de: and burlesque travesty, 15, 58, 65–66, 143–44, 148; continuations of, 165–71, 174, 206; Crébillon's caricature of, 90–92, 96, 99, 124, 440 n.4; style of, 259, 349, 441 n.5, 442 n.14. Works: *Le Cabinet du philosophe*, 442 n.14; *La Double Inconstance*, 311; *Homère travesti*, 58, 65–66, 143–44; *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard*, 148; *Le Paysan parvenu*, 167, 169–71; *Pharsamon*, 149–52, 298; *Le Télémaque travesti*, 144, 153–56, 157, 297, 305; *La Vie de Marianne*, 165–69, 170–71, 174, 206, 440 n.4
Marlowe, Christopher, *The Tragical History of Dr Faustus*, 280–81, 296, 351
Marmontel, Jean François, 21, 89; *Éléments de littérature*, 99; *Essais de littérature*, 20
Marot, Clément, 74–75, 76, 80, 90, 92, 260
Martí, Juan José (pseud. Mateo Lujan de Sayavedra), *Segunda parte de la vida de Guzman de Alfarache*, 207, 451 n.1
Martin du Gard, Roger, *Les Thibault*, 35, 207
Martineau, Henri, 172
Massenet, Jules, 330; *Hérodiade*, 270–71
Masson, Georges-Armand, *À la façon de . . .*, 96
Maupassant, Guy de, 97; "The Necklace," 121–22
Mauriac, François, 159, 276
Maurois, André, 160; *Le Côté de Chelsea*, 129, 161, 441 n.12, 445 n.2
Mazon, Paul, *Aeschylus*, 219
Meegeren, Han Van, 386, 392
Meilhac, Henri, and Ludovic Halévy, 335, 465 n.1, 467 n.5; *La Belle Hélène*, 66–67, 340–41; *Orphée aux enfers*, 66
Melville, Herman, 212
Menander, 258
Mercier, Louis-Sébastian, 176–77
Mérimée, Prosper, 174, 244, 382, 383, 396; *Les Âmes du purgatoire*, 467 n.11; *Théâtre de Clara Gazul*, 132
Meyerbeer, Giacomo, 66, 386
Michaels, W. B., *Against Formalism*, 435 n.19
Michelet, Jules, 83, 101, 102, 406
Mies Van Der Rohe, Ludwig, 90
Milhaud, Darius, *Le Boeuf sur le toit*, 388
Milly, Jean, 97–98
Mirbeau, Octave, 97
Mitterand, Henri, 272–73; *Essais de critique génétique*, 459 n.6
Molière, 17, 48, 93, 97, 111, 280, 466 n.6; *Amphitryon*, 48, 147–48, 347–48, 437 n.23; *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, 147; *Dépit amoureux*, 147; *Dom Juan*, 352, 353, 354–55, 367–68, 467 n.12; *Le Misanthrope*, 198, 450 n.1; *Tartuffe*, 199, 431 n.2
Monfort, Jean-Jacques, 386
Monselet, Charles, 94
Montaigne, Michel de, 38, 89, 99, 276, 459 n.15
Montalvo, Juan. *See* Rodríguez de Montalvo, Garci

Montesquieu, Baron de La Brède et de, 115, 117
Montherlant, Henry de, *La reine morte*, 279, 297
Morand, Paul, 107–8; *Tendres Stocks*, 105, 110
Moreau, Gustave, 271
Morin, Edgar, *Solécismes ou barbarismes*, 36
Morrissette, Bruce, *The Great Rimbaud Forgery*, 158, 160, 306
Moureaux, José-Michel, *L'Oedipe de Voltaire*, 457 n.2
Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, 259, 353, 388; *Così fan tutte*, 148; *Don Giovanni*, 352, 353, 389; *A Musical Joke*, 389; *Requiem*, 162–64, 171, 389–90
Muller, Charles, 24
Musset, Alfred de, *Namouna*, 353, 467 n.12
Musset, Paul de, *Lui et elle*, 461 n.10
Mussorgsky, Modest Petrovich, 259, 387; *Pictures at an Exhibition*, 387

Nabokov, Vladimir Vladimirovich, 125, 211–12, 214, 397; *Pale Fire*, 456 n.6, 470 n.4
Nadeau, Maurice, 158–59
Nadirpher, Léonce, 40, 42, 46–47, 404–5, 438 n.24. See also *Oulipo*
Nancy, Jean-Luc, "Jeune Carpe," 33
Nerval, Gérard de, 47, 116–17, 118; "Delfica," 436 n.10; "El Desdichado," 42, 45; "Myrtho," 436 n.10; *Sylvie*, 244
Neufgermain, Louis de, 19
Nicochares, *Deiliad*, 11, 134, 357
Nicole, Pierre, 38
Nida, E. A., 215
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 259, 343
Noailles, Anna Elisabeth de Brancovan, comtesse, 102
Nodier, Charles, 396
Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, 171–72, 174, 259, 277

*Odyssey* (Homer): as hypertext, 179–80, 191, 207, 277, 338, 366; as hypotext, 5–7, 177, 181–82, 186, 328, 335–43. *See also* Fénelon, François de Salignac de La Mothe-: *Télémaque*; Giono, Jean, *Naissance de l'Odyssée*; Giraudoux, Jean: *Elpénor*; Lamb, Charles and Mary: *The Adventures of Ulysses*; Lemaitre, Jules, and Homer's *Odyssey*; Marivaux, Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de: *Le Télémaque travesti*; *Ulysses*
Offenbach, Jacques, 56, 66, 94, 258, 337, 357, 361, 364; *La Belle Hélène*, 339, 340–41, 381, 390
O'Neill, Eugene, 399; *Mourning Becomes Electra*, 145, 277, 297, 304–5, 328–30, 346, 462 n.4
Orwell, George, 9
Oudin, César, 214
*Oulipo (Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle)*, 39–53, 258, 389, 404–5, 435 n.1, 437 n.24, 455 n.2. *See also* Queneau, Raymond: *Exercises in Style*
Ovid, 57, 67, 136, 190; *Heroides*, 69, 339–40

Parnasse poets, 69–70
Parry, Milman, 220
Pascal, Blaise, 30, 37–38, 43, 93, 245, 324; *Pensées*, 193
Paulhan, Jean, 160, 216–17
Pausanius, 190
Pavlowitch, Paul, 130–31
Péchin, Pierre, "The Grasshopper and the Ant," 71–73
Péguy, Charles, 45, 109, 264
*Perceval* (Mons manuscript), 193–95, 198
Pérec, Georges, 44, 45–46, 47; *La Disparition*, 39–40, 51–52, 438 n.3. See also *Oulipo*
Péret, Benjamin, and Paul Eluard, *Cent cinquante-deux proverbes mis au goût du jour*, 34–35
Pergolesi, Giovanni Battista, 259, 387–88
Perrault, Charles, 61, 137–38, 140
Perros, Georges, 34
Perse, Saint-John, 132
Pessoa, Fernando, 131
Petit, Jacques, 232
Petrarch, 396
Petronius, *Satyricon*, 98, 148
Pézard, André, 217

Pfitzer, Johannes Nicolaus, 351
Pia, Pascale, 158, 159, 447 n.4
Picasso, Pablo, 131, 364, 385, 386, 388, 398; *Guernica*, 385, 393
Pichette, Henri, 237
"Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*" (Borges): and creativity of reading, 252–53, 400, 457 n.13; and minimal parody, 17, 122, 317, 318, 374, 393, 431 n.3, 463 n.9; as palimpsest, 399, 471 n.7; and transmetrification, 225
Pirandello, Luigi, 311, 333
Plato, 76, 94, 161, 277; *Cratylus*, 50–51; *Gorgias*, 337; *Phaedo*, 218; *Phaedrus*, 98; *Republic*, 287; *Symposium*, 98
Plautus, Titus Maccius, *Amphitryon*, 347–48
Plenzdorf, Ulrich, *New Sufferings of Young Werther*, 306, 451 n.2
Poiret, Jean, *Vache à mille francs*, 390–91
Pomey, François Antoine, *Novus candidatus rhetoricae*, 260
Pommier, Jean, and Gabrielle Leleu, *Madame Bovary: Nouvelle Version*, 233, 288, 454 n.8
Ponge, Francis, 37
Pope, Alexander, 15, 134; *The Rape of the Lock*, 140–41
Pradon, Nicolas, *Hippolite*, 53
Prévert, Jacques, 33
Prévost, Jean, 118, 225, 417, 418–19
Prévost d'Exiles, Antoine-François, *Manon Lescaut*, 288–92, 460 n.4
Proclus, 190, 375
Prokofiev, Sergey Sergeyevich, *Classical Symphony*, 390
Proust, Marcel, 101–20; and hypertextuality, 397; ideas on pastiche of, 8, 79, 81, 440 n.3; list of pastiches by, 442 n.4; nonsatirical pastiches by, 24, 25, 97, 160, 439 n.5, 443 n.16; pastiche of Balzac, 78–79, 95, 101–2, 110–11; pastiche of Chateaubriand, 101, 102; pastiche of Flaubert, 95, 102, 103–20, 397–98, 444 n.22; pastiche of Gautier, 88; pastiche of Goncourt brothers, 101, 102, 103, 104, 405–6, 443 n.17; pastiche of Leconte de Lisle, 141; pastiche of Michelet, 406; pastiche of Régnier, 102; pastiche of Renan, 77–78, 83, 102, 104; pastiche of Sainte-Beuve, 101, 120; pastiche of Saint-Simon, 83, 101, 102, 104, 407–8; pastiche of Stendhal, 101, 105, 108; prose style of, 224–25; Proustianisms of, 37, 47, 48, 80, 124, 161, 259; psychology of, 169, 466 n.6; revisions by, 276; satirical pastiches by, 101–2; self-pastiche by, 125–27. Works: "L'Affaire Lemoine," 25, 28, 94, 101–2, 103–20, 121, 125, 442 n.8; *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, 104, 120, 443 n.16; "Gérard de Nerval," 116–17, 118; *Jean Santeuil*, 119, 290, 461 n.6; "Mondanité et mélomanie de Bouvard et Pécuchet," 105, 106; *Pastiches et mélanges*, 103; *Les Plaisirs et les jours*, 105, 106; preface to Moran's *Tendres Stocks*, 105, 107–8, 110; "Sur le style de Flaubert," 104–5, 106, 109, 111, 117, 118, 119, 250, 443 n.16, 444 n.22; "To Be Added to Flaubert," 443 n.16. See also *Remembrance of Things Past*
Puccini, Giacomo: *Gianni Schicchi*, 390; *Madame Butterfly*, 390; *Turandot*, 171, 174–75, 390
Puech, Jean-Benoît, *Bibliothèque d'un amateur*, 457 n.14
Pushkin, Alexander: *Eugene Onegin*, 456 n.6; *The Stone Guest*, 352
Pynchon, Thomas, 212

Queneau, Raymond, 34, 42, 44, 45, 127; *Cent mille milliards de poèmes*, 43; *Exercises in Style*, 122–24, 130, 141, 226, 261–62; *Les oeuvres complètes de Sally Mara*, 220; *Zazie dans le métro*, 123, 287. See also *Oulipo*
*Queste del Saint-Graal*, 195
Quinault, Philippe, *Phaéton*, 144
Quintus of Smyrna, *Posthomerica*, 28, 133, 178–79, 181, 190, 206–7, 375

Rabelais, François, 75, 131; *Gargantua*, 198; *Pantagruel*, 197–98, 200

Racine, Jean, 48, 286, 329, 399; *Andromaque*, 67, 68, 186, 187–91, 285, 400; *Bérénice*, 67, 68–69, 263–64, 278, 458 n.1; *Britannicus*, 140; *Iphigénie en Aulide*, 48, 69, 437 n.23; *Mithridate*, 219, 222–23, 414–16; *Phèdre*, 53, 67–68, 222–23, 279, 285; *Les Plaideurs*, 16. *See also* Boileau, Nicolas, and Jean Racine, *Chapelain decoiffé*
Radcliffe, Ann, 156
Rambaud, Patrick. *See* Burnier, Michel-Antoine
Rameau, Jean, 98, 390; *Hippolyte et Aricie*, 285; *Platée*, 390
Ramos, Mel, 385
Raoul de Cambrai, 178
Raphael, 172
Rapin, René, *Réflexions sur la poétique d'Aristote*, 445 n.1
Ravel, Maurice, 259, 387, 390; *Ma mère l'oye*, 387; *Tombeau de Couperin*, 99–100, 390; *La Valse*, 273
*Reader's Digest*, 241
Reboux, Paul, preface to Georges-Armand Masson's *À la façon de . . .*, 96–98, 122
Reboux, Paul, and Charles Muller, *À la manière de . . .*: influence on Proust, 94; pastiche of La Rochefoucauld, 38–39; pastiche of Maupassant, 121–22; pastiche of Proust, 441 n.12; "Rédemption" (pastiche of Tolstoy), 105; and the satirical pastiche, 24, 25, 28, 43, 96–98, 128
Régnier, Henri de, 101, 102
*Remembrance of Things Past* (Proust): Elstir the painter in, 116–17; pastiche in, 67, 103, 131, 141, 405–6; summaries of, 44, 45, 230, 238, 240, 248–51; transvocalization in, 265, 290. *The Captive*, 116; *The Guermantes Way*, 106–7, 131, 248; *The Prisoner*, 125–27, 128; "Swann in Love," 461 n.6; *Swann's Way*, 248, 265, 266, 286, 292; *Time Regained*, 102, 104, 127, 248, 405–6; *Within a Budding Grove*, 116, 248–49. *See also* Maurois, André: *Le Côté de Chelsea*
Renan, Ernest, 77–78, 83, 101, 102, 104, 131; *Caliban*, 451 n.4; *L'Eau de jouvence*, 451 n.4
Renard, Jules, 454 n.1
Renéville, Rolland de, 159–60
Riccoboni, Marie Jeanne de Heurles, *La Suite de Marianne*, 165, 167–69
Richardson, Samuel, *Pamela*, 29, 298–99, 354, 462 n.4
Richelet, Pierre, 13
Riffaterre, Michael, 2–3, 8, 53, 397, 438 n.5
Rilke, Rainer Maria, 214
Rimbaud, Arthur, 86–87, 158–61; "Le Bateau ivre," 42–43; *Illuminations*, 160; *A Season in Hell*, 159, 160; "Voyelles," 40
Rimsky-Korsakoff, Nikolay Andreyevich, 387
Robbe-Grillet, Alain, 141, 156, 391; *Les Gommes*, 306–7; *La Jalousie*, 393
Robel, Leon, 41
Robert de Boron, *Didot-Perceval*, 195, 222, 450 n.3
Robinson, Judith, 291–92, 461 n.6
*Robinson Crusoe* (Defoe): and Alexander Selkirk, 368–69; feminization of, 204, 298, 299–303; hypertextual versions of, 229–30, 236, 303–4, 310, 360, 368–75; part 2 of, 162, 206. *See also* Tournier, Michel: "La Fin de Robinson Crusoe," *Friday and Robinson, Friday, or The Other Island*
Rodríguez de Montalvo, Garci (pseud. Juan Montalvo), *Amadis of Gaul*, 148, 150, 152–53, 157, 210, 305
Rohmer, Eric, *Perceval le Gallois*, 195
Romains, Jules, 132; *Hommes de bonne volonté*, 207
*Romance of Rodrigo*, 331–32
*Romancero del Cid*, 183
*Romancero General*, 332
Ronsard, Pierre de, 65, 75, 191, 447 n.1; *Franciade*, 186, 190; *Sonnets pour Hélène*, 337, 341
Roques, Mario, 217
Rosen, Elisheva, 399
Rosset, François de, 214

Rossini, Giacchino Antonio, 66; "Duet for Cats," 390
Rostand, Edmond, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, 17
Rotrou, Jean de: *Antigone*, 258; *Les Sosies*, 347
Rougemont, Denis de, 450 n.2
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 176, 271; *Confessions*, 9, 244, 249, 250, 259; *Lettre sur les spectacles*, 198; *La Nouvelle Heloise*, 176–77, 199
Rousset, Jean, 352, 467 n.12
Ruwet, Nicolas, 53

Sade, Marquis de, 46, 141, 205
Saillet, Maurice, 159, 447 n.4
Saint-Amant, Marc-Antoine Girard, sieur de: *L'Albion*, 139; *Moyse sauvé*, 264–65; *Passage de Gibraltar*, 139–40
Sainte-Beuve, Charles Augustin, 92–94, 96, 101, 104, 108, 121; *Vie, poésies, et pensées de Joseph Delorme*, 130
Saint-Simon, Louis de Rouvroy, duc de, 83, 101, 102, 104, 172, 407–8
Salinger, J. D., 306
Sallier, Claude, 13, 14, 19, 20
Sand, George, *Elle et lui*, 461 n.10
Sand, Maurice, 244
Sarcey, Francisque, 270
Sarrasin, Jean-François, 19
Sartre, Jean-Paul, 399; *Les Mains sales*, 344; *Les Mouches*, 297, 346–47, 462 n.4
Satie, Erik, 470 n.7
Saul, Peter, *Liddul Gurnica*, 385
Saussure, Ferdinand de, 430 n.13; *Cours de linguistique générale*, 15, 431 n.6
Saxo Grammaticus, *Historiae Danicae*, 284
Sayavedra. *See* Martí, Juan José
Scaliger, Julius Caesar, *Poetics*, 13–15
Scarron, Paul, 15, 71, 72, 93, 144, 365; *Recueil de quelques vers burlesques*, 140; *Typhon*, 56, 66, 140. See also *Virgil travesti*
Schaper, Edzard, *Der vierte König*, 458 n.5
Scheikévitch, Marie, 248, 250
Schiller, Friedrich von, *Don Carlos*, 269
Schlegel, Friedrich, 171
Schloezer, Boris de, 454 n.1
Schönberg, Arnold, 200, 259
Schubert, Franz, 431 n.3
Schumann, Robert, 387
Schwarzkopf, Elizabeth, 389
Scott, Sir Walter, 207, 230, 235, 451 n.4; *Ivanhoe*, 452 n.1
Scudéry, Madeleine de, *Clélie*, 153
Sébastien, Patrick, "Je l'aime à courir," 391
Segrais, Jean Regnauld de, *Bérénice*, 458 n.1
*Segunda parte del Lazarillo de Tormes*, 175, 207
Selkirk, Alexander, 368–69
Septimius, Lucius. *See* Dictys of Crete
Servicen, Louis, 214
Séveryns, Albert, *Le Cycle épique dans l'école d'Aristarque*, 190, 448 n.6
Sévigné, Marie de, marquise, 116–17
Shakespeare, William, 217, 285; *Antony and Cleopatra*, 247; *Hamlet*, 248, 258, 259, 262, 282–84, 292–93; *Henry IV* plays, 258; *Macbeth*, 247, 248, 277, 358–59; *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 258; *Othello*, 230, 247, 248; *Romeo and Juliet*, 236, 237, 247, 248, 297, 357, 454 n.2; *The Tempest*, 451 n.4; *Troilus and Cressida*, 185, 221, 247, 355–58, 359
Shaw, George Bernard, *Pygmalion*, 463 n.7
Sollers, Philippe, 46
*Song of Guillaume*, 178
*Song of Roland*, 178, 183, 381, 393
Sontag, Susan, *Against Interpretation*, 435 n.19
Sophocles, 262, 454 n.2; *Amphitryon*, 347; *Antigone*, 236, 258, 286, 297, 310, 332–35, 343, 344, 367; *Electra*, 304–5, 328, 346; *Oedipus at Colonus*, 257; *Oedipus Rex*, 5, 236–37, 254–58, 262, 297, 306–7, 326, 411–13, 458 n.5
Sorel, Charles, *Le Berger extravagant*, 56, 149–52
Souriau, Etienne, 295
Starobinski, Jean, "Hamlet et Freud," 325–27
Stendhal, 86, 169, 235, 267, 339, 396; pastiche of, by Proust, 101, 105, 108. Works: *Armance*, 174, 382; *The Charterhouse of Parma*, 170, 230, 242–43, 259, 276, 282, 286, 289, 455 n.6, 455

n.7; *Lamiel*, 170, 172–74; *Lucien Leuwen*, 3, 173, 244, 272, 277, 382–84; *Racine et Shakespeare*, 272, 383; *The Red and the Black*, 170, 207, 220, 230, 243–44, 259, 276, 382; *La Vie de Henri Brulard*, 130, 196
Sterne, Laurence: *A Sentimental Journey*, 93; *Tristram Shandy*, 212, 342
Stesichorus, 343; *Palinode*, 338
Stoessl, Franz, 347
Stoppard, Tom, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, 292–93
Strauss, Richard: *Ariadne auf Naxos*, 390; *Helen of Egypt*, 339; *Der Rosenkavalier*, 390; *Salomé*, 271
Stravinsky, Igor, 131, 259, 364; *Pulcinella*, 387–88; *The Rake's Progress*, 354
Subligny, sieur de, *La Fausse Clélie*, 153
Suetonius, *De vita Caesarum*, 263
Suidas, *Lexicon*, 14
Summer, Mary, *Contes et légendes de l'Inde ancienne*, 226–27, 419–20
Süssmayr, Franz Xaver, 162, 163–64, 390, 447 n.3
Swift, Jonathan, 131

Tacitus, Cornelius, 454 n.1
Talleyrand-Périgord, Charles Maurice de, 90
Tarde, Gabriel de, 210
Tardieu, Jean, *Un Mot pour un autre*, 49–53
Tasso, Torquato, *Jerusalem Delivered*, 184, 187, 376, 449 n.1
Tassoni, Alessandro, 15, 134; *La Secchia Rapita*, 135–36, 139, 140
Terence: *Andria*, 258; *The Eunoch*, 258
Terrasse, Claude, 465 n.1
Thackeray, William Makepeace: *Barry Lyndon*, 210; *Henry Esmond*, 211, 452 n.1; *Rebecca and Rowena*, 452 n.1; *Vanity Fair*, 452 n.1
Thibaudet, Albert, *Gustave Flaubert*, 104–5, 111–13, 117, 444 n.22
Thomas (Anglo-Norman poet), *The Romance of Tristan*, 222
Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, 393
Thomas the Rhymer, *Sir Tristrem*, 327
Tieck, Ludwig, 171–72, 174
Tirso de Molina: *El Burlador de Sevilla*, 352, 355, 467 n.10
Titian, 117
Tolstoy, Alexei Konstantinovich, Count, *Don Juan*, 352–53
Tolstoy, Lev Nikolayevich, Count, 105; *War and Peace*, 208, 220, 295, 296, 454 n.1
Toscanini, Arturo, 174–75
Toulouse-Lautrec, Henri de, 131, 386
Tournier, Michel, 230, 368–75, 399; "La Fin de Robinson Crusoe," 208; *Friday and Robinson*, 235, 373–74; *Friday, or The Other Island*, 26, 213–14, 297, 310, 368–75, 391–92, 397; *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*, 458 n.5; *Le Vent Paraclet*, 369
Trojan Cycle, 177–78, 181, 190, 220, 355, 378. *See also* Arctinus; Dictys of Crete; *Iliad*: and the Trojan cycle; Quintus of Smyrna
Turold, 222
Twain, Mark, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, 310
Tynyanov, Yury, 87

Ubeda, Francisco de, *Picara Justina*, 298
*Ulysses* (Joyce): and Homer's *Odyssey*, 5–7, 171, 180, 213, 277, 297, 310–11, 375; as parody, 26, 145; as pastiche, 98, 125, 129, 393, 398; suppressed chapter titles of, 3, 8, 52, 307–9; title of, 307, 309, 462 n.4, 463 n.7, 471 n.5
Unamuno, Miguel de, *The Life of Don Quixote*, 29, 317–24, 325, 344, 350, 367–68, 373, 374
Urfé, Honoré d', *L'Astrée*, 152, 153, 231. *See also* Baro, Balthazar, *L'Astrée*

Valéry, Paul, 24, 43, 269, 275, 437 n.23, 464 n.2; on poetic language, 215, 216, 455 n.2. Works: "Le Cimetière marin," 81–82, 225, 227–28, 416, 421; "La Jeune Parque," 33; *Lust*, 377–78, 467 n.8; *My Faust*, 205, 310, 353; *Traduction en vers des Bucoliques de Virgile*, 214
Van Rooten, Luis d'Antin, ed., *Mots d'Heures, Gousses, Rames*, 41

Vauvenargues, Luc de Clapiers, marquis de, 38, 360
Veblen, Thorstein, 395
Velázquez, Diego Rodríguez de Silva, *Las Meninas*, 385, 386, 388; *Venus*, 385
Velez de Guevara, Luis, *Reinar despues de morir*, 279
Verdi, Giuseppe, 66, 212; *Aida*, 390; *Don Carlos*, 269; *Falstaff*, 390; *Otello*, 230
Verlaine, Paul, 101, 158; "À la manière de Paul Verlaine," 127, 408–9; *À la manière de plusieurs*, 129; "Art poétique," 127; "Gaspard Hauser," 44, 47
Vermeer, Jan, 386; *View of Delft*, 84, 392–93
Verne, Jules, 230, 235; *The Mysterious Island*, 304
Vian, Boris, 132
Viau, Théophile de, 17
Vicaire, Gabriel, and Henri Beauclair, *Les Déliquescences*, 130, 132
Vico, Giambattista, 219, 220
Vidal-Naquet, Pierre, 184–86
Virgil, 7, 13, 71, 82, 131; *Bucolics*, 83; *Georgics*, 83, 445 n.1. See also *Aeneid*
*Virgile travesti* (Scarron): as burlesque travesty, 23, 25, 28, 59–66, 67, 137–38, 225; hypertextuality of, 8–9, 381; and parody, 20–22, 23, 26, 145; as pastiche, 120
Vitez, Antoine, 373
Voisine, Jacques, 148
Voiture, Vincent, 2, 19, 90
*Volksbuch* (Faust): and Goethe, 350–52; and Helen of Troy, 259; and Mann, 282, 297, 305–6, 310, 311, 467 n.8; and Marlowe, 280–81
Voltaire, 38, 75, 76, 92, 97, 102; *Dictionnaire philosophique*, 193; *La Henriade*, 21, 183; *Oedipus*, 222–23, 255–56, 262, 457 n.2; *Philosophical Letters*, 37–38; *La Pucelle*, 439 n.1

Wagner, Richard, 386, 388; *Parsifal*, 195; *The Ring of the Nibelungen*, 388; *Tristan und Isolde*, 327
Warhol, Andy, *Thirty Is Better Than One*, 385
Weber, Max, 334
Wedekind, Frank, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, 462 n.6; *Erdgeist*, 462 n.6
Weidmann, Paul, *Johann Faust*, 351
Weinrich, Harald, 240–41
Wells, H. G., 310
Wiener, Jean, 388
Wilde, Oscar, *Salomé*, 270–71, 325, 330
Woilliez, Catherine, *Le Robinson des demoiselles*, 298, 462 n.5
Wölfflin, Heinrich, 316
Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, 194, 195, 297
Wyss, Johann, *Swiss Family Robinson*, 303–4, 310

Yoshikawa, Kojoro, *An Introduction to Sung Poetry*, 32–33

Zola, Émile, 121, 212; amplifications by, 272–76; dramatic adaptations by, 278; style of, 113, 444 n.17; summary by, 245. Works: *L'Assommoir*, 281; *Au bonheur des dames*, 273; *Le Docteur Pascal*, 245; *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret*, 243; *Germinal*, 273, 278; *Nana*, 298; *Les Rougon-Macquart*, 35, 207, 245, 272–74; *Thérèse Raquin*, 278
Zorilla, José, *Don Juan Tenorio*, 352
Zumthor, Paul, 220; *Essai de poétique médiévale*, 221–22; *Langue, Texte, Énigme*, 450 n.3

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