DSL3

B. A. SEMINAR: **“The Strategies of Parody”**

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The seminar will focus on the genre of parody—on how it works and what it does in literary and social contexts. We shall begin by reflecting on the **history** of parody, from its origin in ancient Greece, and proceed by looking at its **theoretical** dimensions, considering several questions. How does parody both resemble and differ from other comic genres, including pastiche, burlesque, spoof, and satire? How does it underlie the modern idea of metafiction? (For instance, how is the film *Young Frankenstein* [1974] related to Shelley’s novel? [1818]) Or, how does parody both sanction and undermine the texts it imitates? This last question brings us to the problem of parody’s **function**. Does it legitimize or, on the contrary, censor and police the things it mocks? Finally, the question can be asked whether, now, AI can produce parodies in the same ways humans do? (Here we arrive at the problem of *intentionality*—the question of whether a parodist aims to express admiration, disgust, criticism, or merely perform a comic exercise). During the seminar, we will discuss various **types** of parody. (They include playful parody, satirizing parody, double or two-level parody, parody as paraphrase, and self-parody.) We will also look at a variety of its **objects**: from a specific work to various authors to a whole aesthetics (with cultural “decadence,” for example, being one of parody’s favorites) to a particular genre (with *Shrek* movies parodying the conventions of the gerne of the fairy tale).

These theoretical considerations will prepare students to analyze the relationships between a chosen parody and its object—which can be derived from literature and/ or from literature and film—and explain (1) how the parody repeats and alters the features of the original, (2) what effect is produced by this alteration, (3) and what purpose it serves.