Lindvall, Terry. "Recasting *Snow White*: Parodic animated homages to the Disney feature." *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs: New Perspectives on Production, Reception, Legacy*. Ed. Chris Pallant and Christopher Holliday. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. 163–176. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781501351198.ch-009>>.

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Recasting *Snow White*: Parodic animated homages to the Disney feature

Terry Lindvall

Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (David Hand, 1937) premiered on 4 February 1938. Just three months later, on 4 May, Hollywood columnist (and future television host) Ed Sullivan quoted Mae West's quip from a vaudeville routine: 'I used to be Snow White, but I drifted.'¹ The throwaway line not only drew laughs, but it marked a moment when a great work of art had reached its apotheosis: it had been found worthy of burlesque. This chapter charts the cyclical journey of a fairy tale, from cinematic tour de force to follow a path meandering down to parody. If it is good enough, or popular enough, a celebrated text can eventually be transformed into a Fractured Fairy Tale. Cited and spoofed by other animators, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* would become as iconic as the pope, with each new riff acknowledging the genius of the original.

As film scholar Ronald Gottesman so aptly put it in his study of film parody, parody functions as a sign 'that a culture is simultaneously maintaining continuity and making something new and valuable out of the eternal tension between imagination and reality'.² Parodic form demonstrates a delight that a culture has with its past and an ongoing creativity that can play with 'something old, something new; something borrowed, something *blue*' (i.e. transgressive). In this chapter I open up the ludic extensions of Walt Disney's successful folly, showing how several animation artists working

within different national contexts and filmmaking traditions have borrowed from, paid homage to and ultimately parodied *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. These playful works inspired by Disney's cel-animated adaptation showcase the nature of parody and intertextuality as organic adaptations of folklore itself and, in doing so, create a larger and more global community of shared pleasure.

Parody

Parody itself is etymologically derived from classic Greek sources *παρωδία* (para – alongside or parallel, and oido – song), as a burlesque song. The term *parodia* appears in Aristotle's *Poetics* (ii: 5) and suggests more of a comic, or even carnivalesque, mask, making men look worse than they are.³ Parody seeks to be funny, employing a fresh use of gags, especially old and running gags. With these gags, it can interrupt its imitation with a tactic of anomalous surprise, an unpredicted violation of audience expectation with anachronism and absurd logics. One such tactic would be in breaking the 4th wall and becoming self-reflexive, directly addressing the spectators. This Brechtian interruption can delve into a meta-cinematic commentary on film and filmmaking itself or appropriate what Steven Seidman has labelled 'Comedian Comedy'.⁴ Parody can contain elements of satiric discourse, challenging the original even while honouring it.⁵ Finally, and crucially, parody must, at its best, possess a playful affection, as it helps to be a fan of the target. Fleet Street wit, G. K. Chesterton argued, is 'mere derision, mere contempt, never produced or could produce parody'.⁶ Admiration, even reverence, is necessary. Unlike much satire, one must love the object of parody. Unless one has understood and exulted in the ingenuity of a work, unless one has loved and embraced the form and the style, one cannot fully parody it. If imitation is, as Oscar Wilde quipped, the 'sincerest form of flattery that mediocrity can pay to greatness', we may assert that parody is the purest form of flattery that wit can play to greatness. For it innovates as it iterates; it creates while it copies; it emulates as it imitates.

As Martha Bayless observed about medieval parody, it is not invariably critical, even when it satirizes. While 'medieval satire on drinking and gluttony often regards these vices affectionately, with explicit or implicit indications that the satirists are drinkers and gluttons themselves'.⁷ The animators who take Disney animation to task are likewise not engaged in critical assessment but as devotees of an art they cherish. As such, parodies are more entertaining than polemical. An essential characteristic of parody is additionally that it requires both an original narrative based on familiar work and one that simultaneously *imitates and exaggerates* the tropes of that work.⁸ As such, to use French critic Gérard Genette's categories, parody offers a hypertextuality that directly transforms the hypotext in a

playful way. Genette explains that the ‘former is grafted onto the earlier in either transformative and imitative ways, with parody fitting more in the transformation technique marking difference over similarity, and pastiche being primarily imitative, stressing similarities rather than differences’. It often functions as an educational tool to define not only the recognizable codes of the hypertext but also to show forth the invisible qualities of that text’s form and motive.⁹

In arguing how a text might be interpreted, Genette’s primary neologism is transtextuality, which encompasses elements of imitation, transformation and classification of types of discourse; it is ‘all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed with other texts’.¹⁰ Two key sets (out of five) that impact this study are intertextuality and hypertextuality. In his concern to understand the ways in which signs and texts function, Genette defined intertextuality as that relationship ‘between two texts or among several texts’ and as ‘the actual presence of one text within another’, consisting of homage, quotation, allusion and plagiarism of the original cinematic text, the hypotext.¹¹ Intertextual homages and burlesques offer shadows of parody. They quote and reference the original, often with an off-hand tribute or a cameo.

Abundant Snow Whites

Such intertextuality between Disney’s *Snow White* and popular culture are ubiquitous. Quotations from the original appear in television shows (e.g. *M*A*S*H** [Larry Gelbart, 1972–83]; *Mystery Science Theatre 3000* [Joel Hodgson, 1988–99]). In feature films, *The Dark Knight* (Christopher Nolan, 2008) lists the Joker’s seven dwarfs; Lily Tomlin appears as the eponymous heroine in *9 to 5* (Colin Higgins, 1980); *What’s Up, Tiger Lily?* (Woody Allen, 1966) identifies sailors with the names of the dwarfs; and *Annie Hall* (Woody Allen, 1977) features an animated segment in which Alvy fantasizes about the Evil Queen. Animated series like *Veggie Tales* (Phil Vischer and Mike Nawrocki, 1993–) and *The Simpsons* (Matt Groening, 1989–) spoof it, with Lisa’s Snow White forced to eat an apple by the witch – who is then mauled by the friendly animals and decapitated by a deer.¹²

Various films recycle and foreground certain tropes, such as the dwarfs, poisonous apples, the evil stepmother’s mirror and Snow White’s signature costume.¹³ Two unique animated films tip the hat to several of these Disney tropes. In Monique Renault and Gerrit van Dijk’s *Pas à deux* (1988), rotoscoped pop culture characters proliferate and metamorphose: Bardot and Popeye morph into Betty Boop and Mickey Mouse. As Tarzan swings with Tina Turner, a Disneyfied dwarf suddenly walks by, stops and gazes as Tina becomes Snow White in Tarzan’s arms. However, the gyrating

iconic character quickly transmogrifies through Grace Jones, Mona Lisa and finally into our animators Renault and van Dijk.

Osamu Tezuka's environmental short *Legend of the Forest* (1987) doubles as a clever history of the animated film, from early nineteenth-century cinematic toys through the excessive violence of television cartoons into computer animation and an environmental parable. Tezuka emulated Disney's use of classical music in *Fantasia* (James Algar et al., 1940) with Tchaikovsky's 4th symphony, while playing homage to various styles and directors: John Stuart Blackton, Émile Cohl, Winsor McCay, the Fleischers and the Zagreb studios, including fleeting allusions to Disney's *Flowers and Trees* (Burt Gillett, 1932). Two curiously juxtaposed scenes, symbolizing non-violent resistance and more sinister attempts, are derived from *Snow White*. Trying to keep one flower alive, seven dwarfs carry lantern bulbs through the beleaguered forest to an evil tyrant. In contrast, the old Disney witch offers an apple to destroy the human invaders. The dwarfs naively present the one last rose to a military-industrial Hitler-like authority who smashes it and the dwarfs with machinery. These two animated films incorporate allusion, repetition, pastiche and quotation and point back to the cultural production and practice of our hypotext, but they do not contribute any salient imitation suggested by the original.¹⁴

Almost parodies: The Italian connection

Parody fits most snugly in Genette's category of hypertextuality, a relationship that involves the connection 'uniting a text B (which I shall call *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'.¹⁵ This particular relation will modify, elaborate, extend or transform with such results as producing a sequel, spoof or parody. Four animated films function as approximate parodic asymptotes of Disney's *Snow White*, exploiting its tropes and imitating its narrative structure for comic effect.

Although Italian animator Bruno Bozzetto would describe himself as an avid Disney fan, his admiration would be expressed through outrageous humour. His feature *Allegro Non Troppo* (1976) took on the high-brow *Fantasia* (1940) with authentic low-brow humour, a coarse and unpolished style with unrestrained slapstick and sexual imagery (breasts are ubiquitous). With a half-dozen classical pieces of music (including Ravel's Bolero) interspersed with live action farce, *Allegro non Troppo* parodies the overall cinematic form and elitist style of the Disney prestigious roadshow compilation. A pompous producer announces that audiences will experience classical music in marvellously novel ways. When an associate tries to explain that a 'Mr. Grisney' has already accomplished this feat, he ignores him. With a slight satiric social commentary on the labour-intensive work

of animators, a poor artist is released from a dungeon to frantically animate symphonic pieces performed by an orchestra of old women (one of whom is later knocked out with a champagne cork). He brings Stravinsky's 'Firebird Suite' to life as his cartoons castigate a culture of consumerism. Disney's dignity is merrily subverted into an imaginative and carnivalesque work in its own right.

The allusion to the character of Snow White occurs with a scullery maid who works unceasingly to feed the women and tend to the onerous errands of the host producer and an overbearing conductor. The animator tries, vainly, to romance the girl, but is interrupted by the conductor. He rebels against his authority with escalating Laurel-and-Hardy slapstick violence. Ultimately, romance culminates as the maid with her bucket and animator with his easel are transformed via animation into Snow White and prince Charming, flying off together, leaving a frustrated producer behind. The action returns to the host and the conductor discussing their next project. After a bit of brainstorming the host reveals his latest 'original' idea of an asymmetrical love story of seven little men who work in a mine and one woman with the title 'Sleeping Beauty'. But the host warns him not to advertise, as 'some screenwriter hack might steal the idea. You can't trust anyone these days. He'll change the title, play up the sex. And give it some crazy name like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. And then, we'll be screwed.'

Bozzetto's co-writer, Guido Manuli exhibits a perversely erotic obsession with the Disney film. He is the Italian Tex Avery to Bozzetto's Disney, fulfilling the task of erecting 'something borrowed, something *blue*' (i.e. risqué) in his aesthetic parodies. He invests Disney with libidinous sexuality. In his sci-fi version of the Bible, *Fantabiblical* (1977), he constructs a quick homage to *Snow White*'s cackling witch, who shows up with a puppet snake offering Adam and Eve an apple. After a bite, they turn into Mickey and Donald Duck. In his *S. O. S.* (1979), Manuli inserts an image of the prince leaning over Snow White's bier to kiss the dead, smiling princess. Suddenly, he screams, spits and scrams away on his horse, leaving the seven dwarfs kneeling beside the coffin. In Manuli's *Just a Kiss (Solo un Bacio)*, 1983), an artist even falls in love with the Disney version of Snow White (after first sitting at his drawing board doodling out large-breasted and assed women). He breathes heavily over his rendition of the Disney heroine, feeling her pencil drawn face. With colour paints and a hypodermic needle, he transforms himself into a sexist cartoon character who enters the drawing where she comes to life. However, when he kisses her and grabs her butt, she slaps him and kicks him in the groin. He offers her an apple and she screams. As Paul Wells has pointed out, Manuli's 'desire to debase and abuse is an intrinsically human quality'.¹⁶ As the cartoonist continues to assault her, seven angry dwarfs with axes emerge out the Italian book, *Biancaneve e I Sette nani*.¹⁷ As they bully the cartoonist, a witch shows up with an apple of death. He begs for his life, holding up posters declaring 'I love Mickey

FIGURE 9.1 The transgressive animator lusts after Disney's fantasy only to be rewarded with the wages of his sin in *Solo un Bacio* (Guido Manuli, 1983).

Mouse and W. Disneyland.' The witch shoves the apple in his mouth and he comes out of the cartoon, dead (Figure 9.1).

In Manuli's later *Casting* (1997), a director, hiding behind a paper-bag face, interviews candidates to play the role of Snow White. The first aspirant holds an apple and a blue bird, then bites the apple. A second applicant eats the blue bird and sings. Other contenders, from a big-breasted Eve to a bald transvestite, play out their own riffing gags, until a final candidate appears pregnant, with photos of the seven dwarfs as possible fathers. Odd male candidates for the Prince fare no better, as an American tries to kiss Snow White while chewing bubble gum, a Hamlet-like character examines Snow White's head like Yorrick's skull and a doctor operates to extract the apple. Finally, a psychopath hides a chain saw and bloody axe under his raincoat. Auditioning for the Witch, characters exhibit large buttocks, muscular arms or an old, wrinkled face. The dwarfs, Goopy, Sabby, Snappy, Crabby, Blabby and Sneezzy, are all too short. When they see the live-action animator, they chase him to the iconic cliff of the Disney film. The animator tries to push a rock on them, only to be struck by lightning. The dwarfs laugh.

The very funny and naughty Italian animators follow the great literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin's conception of parody only in the most superficial

of ways, de-familiarizing the text and eliciting carnivalesque laughter. One recognizes a transgressive, even Dionysian tone to their allusions. As both Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes interpreted parody as a 'new anti-traditional and anti-bourgeois conception of literary discourse', these animating rascals do create dynamic play of two texts that manifest quotations and heteroglossia.¹⁸ The latter is linked to a festive spirit by a common, vulgar laughter, with roots harkening back 'deep into pre-class folklore'. Bakhtin's carnival evokes clownishness, where slave and jester supplant king and priest; a riotous confusion mixes all varieties of discourses; and merry rogues follow their most basic instincts. Their films treat those once-taboo topics like sex and death with abandon and hilarity.¹⁹

Bakhtin examined the carnivalesque literature as parodic, revealing his definition of the 'double-voiced discourse'. When the voice becomes travesty, a fresh text can secede from such classification and simply celebrate the comic intertextual deformation of the original text. Essentially, parody can become an end in itself, a hybrid of incongruity and caricature, composed of deforming images. Bakhtin sees parody as a 'dialogic interaction between two utterances, two languages' and one that allows 'grading various types and stages of parodicity: [as] merely superficial, shallow, rhetorical or deep'.²⁰ This consists of two languages: the language being parodied and the language that parodies (using low, familiar, conversational language). The parody of these two Italian animators remains wonderfully shallow. The analysis of the next film shows us how parody enables us to 'read the social context, society's conventions, positions of utterance, discourse, and the distribution of power from the text'.

In parody's double-voiced words or images, expressed by two speakers or texts, the second appropriates the utterance of the former and uses it 'for his own purposes by inserting a new semantic orientation into a word which already has – and retains – its own orientation'. We hear both points of view in the parody. For Gary Morson, a double-voiced view is best pictured as 'a special sort of palimpsest in which the uppermost inscription is a commentary on the one beneath it, which the reader can know only by reading through the commentary that obscures in the very process of evaluating'.²¹ The Italians flourish in the realm of rude burlesque, which 'fools around with the material of high literature and adapts it to low ends'.²² Where parody of *Snow White* becomes, what Linda Hutcheon called, a 'constructive principle in literary history' erupts out of another animated text from the unlikely confines of Termite Terrace.²³

Playful parody: American and Dutch

Director Bob Clampett's hilarious, but controversial Warner Bros. Merrie Melody cartoon, *Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs* (1943), offers an

apotheosis of Snow White parodies. Its working title, *So White and De Sebben Dwarfs*, was changed as its similarity to Disney came too close for litigious comfort.²⁴ A Warner Bros. sheet announced it as a 'dusky satire on *Snow White*', while Warren Foster, writing with Clampett on *Porky in Wackyland* (1938), scripted the manic and demented Grimm Brothers' story, with brazen connections to Disney's work.²⁵ Clampett and Foster envisioned their cartoon as a spoof of Snow White, but also as a tribute to the jazz musical features of the era. A fan of Duke Ellington's music (such as *Jump for Joy*), Clampett researched the 1940s black musical culture with visits to various Los Angeles clubs.²⁶ The former lead singer for the Spirits of Rhythm quartet, Leo Watson (nicknamed 'Zoot' Watson) gave his personality to Prince Chawmin'. Animator Virgil Ross, who worked on the Prince, recalled going downtown to nightspots like Club Alabam 'to watch the latest dances and pick up some atmosphere. Some of it was pretty funny stuff that we actually used in the picture: real tall guys dancing with real short little women, and they'd swing their legs right over the tops of their heads!' Ellington suggested that Clampett direct a musical cartoon that celebrated 'black' music.²⁷ The *Motion Picture Herald* reviewed the cartoon as 'a satire on *Snow White* done to black-face, set in modern swing' with some rotoscoped jitterbugging integrating black culture and marginalized jazz music from lowbrow culture into a celebration. In fact, Clampett tried to draft Eddie Beal and His Orchestra, an all-black musical group, to secure a more authentic jazz score, but producer Leon Schlesinger blocked the funding and forced Clampett to rely on the company's Carl W. Stalling, ironically a former Disney employee who had pioneered the innovative 'Mickey-Mousing' scoring of the *Silly Symphonies*. Beal's musician Roy Elderidge was used only for the gag finale, with Prince Chawmin's desperate kissing sequence of 'Waking-up-So-White' amid soaring trumpet blasts.

Opening with the warm glow of the hearth, a crackling fire silhouettes a large woman cuddling a young child in her lap. The child asks her 'Mammy' to tell the story of 'So White an' de Sebben Dwarfs'. Mammy's earthiness, both in warmth for her 'Honey Chile' and with unpredictably bawdy wit, creates an engrossing storyteller, like a Black Wife of Bath compelling her audience to listen and be taken for a ride. She ain't no Uncle Remus and she ain't gonna whitewash no children's story. As she begins amidst the tranquil setting, some lively jitterbug beats soon wake the hearer with a dazzling fanfare: 'Well, once there was a *mean* ol' queen. And she lived in a gorgeous castle. And was that ole' gal rich! She was just as rich as she was mean! She had *everythang*!'

A sly dig against affluent 'hoarders' depicts the Wicked Queen storing all manner of war-rationed goods: sugar, rubber tires, coffee and Eli Whitney's Cotton Gin (along with some Chattanooga Chew-Chews). Her gorgeous castle looks a lot like Xanadu from Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941), previewing a later allusion. Historian Michael Barrier noted that Disney's

original queen was to be a comic foil, caricatured as a 'fat, batty, cartoon type, self-satisfied' Queen.²⁸ Disney did not crown such a grotesque for his villain; Clampett did. The heavy-set Queen orders the magic mirror to send her a 'prince about six feet tall'. Up drives the monocle stud of Prince Chawmin' in his flashy limousine wearing a white Zoot suit and holding a long, thin cigarette holder, presumably an effete phallic symbol and the epitome of a civilian shirking his wartime duty. On seeing the two ladies, he exclaims with a brazen grin flashing two diced teeth, a four and a three, 'that mean ol' queen sho' is a fright / but her gal So White is dyn-a-mite!' But he only has words and eyes for the Queen's scullery maid, So White.

Bent over a large pot washing the clothes all day (and getting the blues at night), So White sways her curvaceous behind like an unleashed Tex Avery Red. Disney would have had a coronary. Its excess is what makes it delightfully parodic. Clampett's extreme sexualized caricature fleshes out the original wholesome archetype. So White is the object of sexual desire for every male character in the picture. As a bouncy fry cook, she moves and wiggles with a rubber elasticity, shaking her booty. The implicit attraction of Disney's dwarfs to Snow White, especially Dopey who returns for a kiss, is hyperbolically exaggerated with the uninhibited libido of American soldiers. Its sheer flamboyance earned the film much of its notoriety.

The Warner Bros. humour 'played havoc with all human types, offering equal-opportunity burlesque'.²⁹ Parallels to the original regularly pop up. In an exquisite spoof of Snow White dreaming into the well, So White belts out, 'Some folks think I's kinda dumb, but I know some day my prince will come.' Prince Chawmin magically appears in the reflection, then leads her in a delicate minuet that suddenly swings into an ecstatic jitterbug. Seeing the 'sickening sight' of her potential lover with her maid, the scowling Queen phones Murder Inc. and demands they 'Black out So White!' Equal opportunity derision includes an ad on their van announcing 'We rub out anybody for \$1.00; Midgets: 1/2-price; Japs: free.' As the thugs kidnap the damsel, the Prince falls on his face, revealing a yellow streak down his back, a stigma of those not fighting in the war. Like the huntsman, they take her into the dark woods, where she seemingly bestows lipstick 'favourites' upon them. She wanders about stumbling until when a pair of eyes howls 'Whooo? ... who goes there, friend or foe?' Seven little jive-talking army men, looking like 5 Fats Wallers dwarfs, a Stepin Fetchit and a potent 'Dopey' sing with swing-style rhythms, 'We're in the Army now; we're not behind the plow.' She kisses her rescuers who faint right down. She contrasts the boys in uniform with the zoot suits and opts for the former, becoming 'wacky of khaki nowwww!'.

White finds work as the mess hall cook, 'fryin' up eggs an' pork chops too' (to the tune of Ella Fitzgerald's 1941 hit, 'Five O' Clock Whistle'). As a quick pun on the Second World War slogan 'Keep 'em flying,' a sign reading 'Keep 'em frying' hangs on the pipes of her makeshift stove. The egg eyes

and bacon smile from the pan at the sizzling cook. Meanwhile, the queen has learned that So White is still alive, so pumps an apple full of poison. Driving a little cart, looking like a cross between Jimmy Durante and the wolf from the Three Little Pigs, the Queen pedals her Candied Apples on a Stick' treats. Disguised as an old peddler with a huge nose, the queen arrives at the Sebben Dwarfs' camp where she finds So White looking like the American flag herself, wearing red shoes, blue short skirt and white blouse. Identifying herself as a friend, with Durante's trademark 'ha cha cha cha', she offers So White the poisoned fruit. The 'Dopey' alerts the others that the queen has caused So White to 'kick the bucket', and the entire squad hops into its vehicles (a Jeep, a 'Beep' and, for 'Dopey', a 'Peep'). As the queen makes her escape over the hills, the dwarfs load a cannon with both a war shell and 'Dopey'. The shell sails over to the queen, stops in front of her in mid-air, opens and 'Dopey' appears, knocking the crone out with a mallet.

Even though the queen has been defeated, So White is still dead to the world. The dwarfs note, in spoken rhyme: 'She's outta this world! She's stiff as wood! She's got it bad, and that ain't good! There's only one thing that'll remedy this and dat's Prince Chawmin' and his Dynamite Kiss!' Chawmin' offers to 'give her that kiss, and it won't be a dud. It'll bring her to life with my special'. With an extreme close-up on his lips, Clampett delivers a reverberating anomalous gag: 'Rosebud.' Unfortunately, the Prince's slobbering kisses become desperate. Nothing he does can stir her. Frantic, with Eddie Beal's trumpet solo underscoring his impotence, he transforms into a pale-white, withered, old, balding dude who has lost it all and shrugs away. Moseying into the task, the Dopey dwarf unleashes an earth-shaking kiss that snaps her eyes wide open and causes her pigtails to spring to life twirling, launching her into the air. The effete Prince asks the potent dwarf, 'Man, what you got that makes So White think *you* so hot?!' He responds, 'well, *dat* is a military secret', kissing his lady again, making those pigtails fly erect with unfurled flags to a rousing leitmotif from John Philip Sousa's 'The Stars and Stripes Forever' soldier and his gal grin at each other.

Bakhtin defined parody as the 'creation of a decrowning double'.³⁰ In other words, it is a hybrid that both conserves and transforms the primary text, and a form of parody that 'celebrates bi-directionality by challenging the discourse that contains it'. The parody of *Coal Black* approximates Bakhtin's view of an author speaking in someone else's discourse 'with a semantic intention that is directly opposed to the original one'. The text thus becomes 'an arena of battle between two voices', namely Walt Disney and Robert Clampett. Norman Klein puts the cartoon in historical perspective as an anarchic wartime cartoon for the troops, especially black men in uniform. He writes how the humour for GIs in the animated *Private SNAFU* cartoons was 'racier and blunter' than regular theatrical releases that Disney distributed. No doubt, Clampett's cartoon addresses the mood, patriotism, anxieties and prejudices of the era, but it did so with an unleashed libido.

Both Klein and, indeed, Paul Wells saw *Coal Black* not only reflecting 'white anxiety about modernity' but also about 'big-band anarchy as a raunchier alternative to Disney'.³¹

Parody trumps racism in the sense that Clampett showed just how white Disney's fairy tale was. *Coal Black* was its cultural antithesis. Beyond racial caricature, it mocked the status quo aesthetic of Hollywood.³² Wells articulated it cogently that 'Clampett used Warner Bros' more self-conscious dramatization of social tensions to release the stereotypes from their static, marginalized and naturalized condition.' The aggressive jazz, jitterbugging, violent, sexual humour (as well as the enthusiastic, embodied Pentecostal religion of *Tin Pan Alley Cats*) subverted the passive, conservative cultural aesthetic principles practiced by Disney. *Coal Black*, read against the grain, presented otherness with vitality and virility. *Snow White*'s polite kiss (as if Prince Charming had simply applied a napkin to his beloved's face) offered no sexual desire. *Coal Black* showed every GI what the passion of the little guy could offer. Even in vulgar caricatures, 'otherness' and 'difference' stood out as distinct and desirable. The parody worked to reconstruct the fairy tale according to young male imaginations. And, to top it off, against the stigma of short men, *Coal Black* presents Dopey as more sexually potent than the six-foot-tall prince that the Queen wants, a merry swipe at the ideal height of romantic leads. Ironically, the most passionate virile hero will be a miniature, a Tex Avery-sized dwarf, not your standard prince. Such parodic animation offers an exaggerated reality, exuberant and fully expressive, hyperbolic, especially in the world of Bob Clampett, with the characters just as overstated as any other Clampett cartoon character. In understanding the hypertext of *Coal Black*, it is key to recognize Genette's transtextual purpose, namely to help interpret this later text through its relation to the earlier hypotext. Clampett's cartoon must be seen as this elaboration and parody of the original, existing in its historical context and against the Disney classic.³³

Conclusion

While animated parodies of *Snow White* draw upon its recognizable forms, characters and costumes, ultimately each bows in appreciation of its classic status. From the Italian masters of animated parodies, Bruno Bozzetto and Guido Manuli to hilariously controversial work of Bob Clampett's *Coal Black and the Sebben Dwarfs*, *Snow White* lives on, kissed by comic princes and animators. And with those parodic kisses, the classic is bestowed with immortality. Parody produces a resurrection of affectionate laughter for an old masterpiece. Film parodies provide a way that 'Western cultures have devised for talking to themselves about change – how difficult yet how unavoidable it is. ... [It] is a sign, in fact, that a culture is simultaneously

maintaining continuity and making something new and valuable out of the eternal tension between imagination and reality.³⁴ Transformations of the fairy tale offer an opportunity to look back and see ‘with fresh eyes, enter an old text from a new critical direction’.³⁵ And parodies give us fresh, twinkling and laughing eyes.

Notes

- 1 Ed Sullivan, ‘Hollywood’, *Augusta Chronicle* (4 May 1938): 4; See ‘Mae’s Famous Sayings Are Part of Nation’s Folklore’, *Life Magazine* (23 May 1949): 105.
- 2 Ronald Gottesman, ‘Film Parody: An Immodest Proposal’, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 12, nos 1–2 (1990): 1
- 3 Aristotle, *Poetics* (USA: Dover, 1997), 3.
- 4 Steve Seidman, *Comedian Comedy* (USA: UMI Research, 1981).
- 5 Terry Lindvall, Dennis Bounds and Chris Lindvall, *Divine Film Comedies* (London: Routledge, 2016), 150–9.
- 6 G. K. Chesterton, *Varied Types* (Charleston: BiblioLife, 2009), 184.
- 7 Martha Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1996), 7.
- 8 Michael Teuth, *Reeling with Laughter: American Film Comedies – From Anarchy to Mockumentary* (Plymouth: Scarecrow, 2012).
- 9 It takes other artists to parody it *and* to endow it with a cultural afterlife. This work does not deal with remakes or adaptations, many of which are clever and even allude to the original. Mere adaptations of the Grimm story do not count as parodies. The live-action screwball comedy *Ball of Fire* (Howard Hawks, 1941) also presents a variation of the *Snow White* tale, in which a gangster’s moll (Barbara Stanwyck) on the run from the law seeks refuge with eight professors (teaching Cary Grant how to ‘yum yum’). *Snow White* was never so promiscuous. Other works reflect Disney, but have no direct connection: Gottfried Kolditz’s *Schneewittchen* (1962), Rupert Sanders’s *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and Joe Nussbaum’s very clever *Sydney White* (2007) (with the immortal sing-song, punning parodic moment by one of the campus nerd dwarfs addressing the sinister sorority queen: ‘Hi, Ho!’). Thomas Inge examines how Disney adapted the original tale in ‘Walt Disney’s *Snow White*: Art, Adaptation, and Ideology’, *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 32, no. 3 (2004): 137–42.
- 10 Gérard Genette, *The Architect: An Introduction* (trans. Jane Lewin) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 84.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 1–2.
- 12 Various catchphrases or allusions to the magic mirror, the poisoned apple, the music of Whistle While you Work, find their way into media. A poster of Dopey in *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980) or a nursery wall picture of

Seven Dwarfs mourning at Snow White's coffin in *Akira* (Katsuhiro Otomo, 1988) attest to the international intertextuality. The *Gremlins* (Joe Dante, 1984) terrorize a movie theatre, but pause to watch Snow White's dwarfs singing on the screen; in *Gremlins 2: The New Batch* (Joe Dante, 1990), they take over the movie projector, interrupting the movie as they just want to see *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Robin Williams turns himself into several dwarfs from *Back to Neverland* (Jerry Rees, 1989). In *Enchanted* (Kevin Lima, 2007) many scenes are spoofed, where the queen disguises herself as an old crone and offers Giselle an apple. Prince Edwards mistakes a television for a magic mirror and Giselle offends an old man with dwarfism thinking he is Grumpy.

- 13 Snow White sings in *Shrek 2* (Andrew Adamson, Kelly Asbury and Conrad Vernon, 2004) and fights in *Shrek the Third* (Chris Miller and Raman Hui, 2007). Even Disney's *Ralph Breaks the Internet* (Rich Moore and Phil Johnston, 2018) alludes to the original. Here Snow White gets a 3-D animation makeover and appears when Vanellope von Schweetz, the little friend of video game character Ralph, goes into a restricted area of the internet and meets all the Disney princesses. She claims to be a princess, but Snow White challenges her: 'Were you poisoned?' Other princesses ask, 'Do people assume all your problems were solved because a big strong man showed up?' She responds, 'YES! What's up with that?' All the princesses respond: 'She is a princess!' and Snow White trills a warbling chirp.
- 14 See Simon Dentith, *Parody* (London: Routledge, 2000), 9.
- 15 Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 5.
- 16 Paul Wells, *Understanding Animation* (London: Routledge, 1998), 81.
- 17 See Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Animation: A World History: Volume II* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).
- 18 Heteroglossia rests upon his conception of language not as a static, communicable representation of the speaker's intention but as a system bearing the weight of centuries of intention, motivation and implication. See also Marko Juvan, 'The Parody and Bakhtin', in *Bakhtin and the Humanities*, ed. Miha Javornik, Marko Juvan, Aleksander Skaza, Jola Škulj and Ivan Verč (Ljubljana: Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 1997), 193–209.
- 19 Ibid., 198.
- 20 Juvan, 'The Parody and Bakhtin', 202.
- 21 Gary Morson and Caryl Emerson (eds), *Rethinking Bakhtin: Extensions and Challenges* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 66.
- 22 John Gross (ed.) *Oxford Book of Parodies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), xi.
- 23 Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (London: Methuen, 1985), 36.
- 24 Clampett's *Beany and Cecil Show* (1962) revived the fairy tale with his television parody version of 'So What and the Seven Whatnots' (ABC, 1962) in

Lost Wages (Las Vegas) show in a Dixieland Dive. He caricatured the ‘dwarfs’ with such diverse characters as Dizzy R. Nez (Desi Arnaz on the conga), Elfiz (Elvis Presley on guitar) and Stash-Do (Louis ‘Satchmo’ Armstrong on the trumpet), a blonde pig-tailed So What, impersonating nightclub singer Squeely Smith (Vegas performer Keely Smith) singing ‘Scooby doo’ (A ‘French Review’ show slyly features ‘Take Me to your Lido’). Dishonest John delivers some poison apple juice and a martini to So What, who is laid out flat, until the Sea-serpent gives her a super-slurpy kiss, and her pigtails lift. And Cecil goes parading out to the tune of ‘When the Saints Go Marching In’.

- 25 Christopher P. Lehman, *The Colored Cartoon: Black Representation in American Animated Short Films: 1907–1954* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2007).
- 26 Another significant, if overlooked, influence was Clampett’s commandeering of Al Hirschfeld’s Harlem caricatures, with gold-toothed bucks, slinky chanteuses and Zoot-suited blacks. Hirschfeld, Al (and William Saroyan) *Harlem as Seen by Hirschfeld* (New York: Hyperion Press, 1941).
- 27 Trying to fill out an authentic casts of voices, Clampett hired singer Vivian to express ‘So White’ and her mother, Ruby Dandridge, to play the wicked Queen. He also scooped up Lou ‘Zoot’ Watson to become ‘Prince Chawmin’.
- 28 Michael Barrier, *Hollywood Cartoons: American Animation in Its Golden Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 125–6.
- 29 Terry Lindvall and Ben Fraser, ‘Darker Shades of Animation: African-American Images in the Warner Bros. Cartoon’, in *Reading the Rabbit*, ed. Kevin S. Sandler (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 130–1.
- 30 Jeffrey S. Rush, ‘Who’s in on the Joke: Parody as Hybridized Narrative Discourse’, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 12 (1–2) (1990): 5–12.
- 31 Norman M. Klein, *Seven Minutes: The Life and Death of the American Animated Cartoon* (London: Verso, 1993), 187.
- 32 Paul Wells, *Animation and America* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 57.
- 33 Even the OWI described the cartoon as ‘a vulgar parody’ [with] ‘some excellent boogie-woogie background music’. Michael Shull and David Wilt, *Doing Their Bit: Wartime American Animated Short Films, 1939–1945* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1987), 90.
- 34 Ronald Gottesman, ‘Film Parody: An Immodest Proposal’, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 12, nos 1–2 (1990): 1–3. One other exceptional parody deserves mention: Paul Driessen’s *3 Misses* (1998).
- 35 Stella Bolaki, ‘Four Times upon a Time: “Snow White” Retold’, in *Beyond Adaptation*, ed. Phyllis Frus and Christy Williams (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010), 182.