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The Eyre Affair as a Postmodern Parody of Jane Eyre

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ABSTRACT

Although being a term that has been used since the ancient times, parody has always been a controversial subject, and it has been defined by a good number of critics in different ways throughout the periods. While some critics see it as a low form of literature, some others have tried to raise it to a higher status, this time stripping it off from its humour which they considered to be dragging parody down. This paper will examine the main controversies over the term, referring to leading critics' views on the subject and then will analyse The Eyre Affair by Jasper Fforde in this sense. It aims to show how Fforde's book can be read as a postmodern parody and how it carries the main characteristics of postmodernism and parody alike.

INTRODUCTION

Published in 2001, *The Eyre Affair* is Jasper Fforde's first novel and also the first instalment of his Thursday Next novels. In the writer's own words, it is "a literary detective thriller with romantic overtones, mad inventor uncles, aunts trapped in Wordsworth poems, global multinationals, scheming evildoers, an excursion inside the novel of Jane Eyre, dodos, knight-errant-time-travelling fathers and the answer to the eternal question: 'Who really wrote Shakespeare's plays?' (Fforde, 2002a). To open up this description more, it can be said that this is a novel which is set in an alternate 1985; and in this parallel world, the Crimean war still continues between Russia and England, dodos can be kept as pets since cloning kits are over-the-counter products and time-traveling is an ordinary thing. Literature is also taken very seriously and literary figures are like celebrities; children swap bubble-gum cards of Henry Fielding on the street, a group called Baconians go from door to door trying to convince people that it was Francis Bacon, not Shakespeare, who penned the greatest plays in English history, and there are vending machines called Will-Speak machine which dispense a short snippet of Shakespeare for ten pence. The main character of the book is a 34-year old woman named Thursday Next – a LiteraTec, i.e. a detective working for the Literary Detection Division of the Special Operations Network, where crimes of literary forgery, be it stolen manuscripts of important works or copyright infringement, are handled. Thursday's own family is also quite unusual; her father can travel in time and her brainy uncle Mycroft invents a machine called Prose-Portal which enables his wife Polly to visit Wordsworth's poem 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' and even do a bit of flirting with Wordsworth by the lake. However, things turn serious when a villain called Acheron Hades steals the Prose- Portal in order to kidnap characters from books. He kidnaps a minor character from the original manuscript of Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit,* and kills him which causes this character to disappear from all the copies around the world.

With all of these events in the background of the story, an important part of the novel is actually about *Jane Eyre*; hence the title of the book. Using *Jane Eyre* both as a source and the subject of the novel, Fforde uses this text to create something new. Although Jamie James wrote in *The Los Angeles Times* that "Readers who accept the principle of pastiche that underlies the novel's conception will be rewarded with a clever entertainment" (James, 2012); it is actually not pastiche that Fforde deals with, but rather a postmodern parody. This paper will examine how *The Eyre Affair* parodies *Jane Eyre* in a postmodern sense; however, since the term 'parody' is a somewhat controversial term to some extent and it is often confused with burlesque, satire or pastiche (as seen in the aforementioned review); an analysis of the term itself needs to be given first.

1. A Look into Parody

As said above, it is difficult to define parody due to the fact that it is used to refer to different things by various critics. Its vagueness even lies under its etymological root. The ancient Greek word *parodia* is the word where the modern term derives from, and here *parodia* can be literally translated as 'counter-song', *para* meaning 'counter' and *odos* meaning 'song' (Hutcheon, 2000:32). Yet, in *A Theory of Parody,* Linda Hutcheon also points out that the Greek prefix *para* actually has two meanings; the first meaning is 'counter' or 'against' but it can also mean 'beside' in Greek (Hutcehon, 2000:32). Looking at various definitions of parody, it can be clearly seen that it is the 'counter' part that critics have usually focused on. To give an example; in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms,* parody is defined as "a mocking imitation of the style of a literary work or works, ridiculing the stylistic habits of an author or school by exaggerated mimicry" (parody, 2001) and *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines parody as "the imitative use of words, style, attitude, tone and ideas of an author in such a way as to make them ridiculous" (parody, 1999). It is obvious from these definitions that parody is thought to have a negative attitude towards its target by ridiculing and making fun of it. Parody is also often seen as parasitic, which is reflected in the definition given by *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*, which says that parody "searches out, by means of subversive mimicry, any weakness, pretension or lack of self-awareness in its original" and that "parody may be considered parasitic or creative, and is often both" (parody, 2006). So, the editors claim that parody lives using the target text's weaknesses which it deliberately searches out in order to feed on them in a parasitic way. Although they mention the creative aspect of parody, they also suggest that it is often *both* creative *and* parasitic since, in their opinion, even when parody creates something new, it is through attacking and exploiting another text or texts. It is true that parody imitates by its nature, but it should also be noted that not all imitation has to be negative. Here, one can think of neoclassical authors who imitated the classical texts as they admired and wanted to rewrite them in a contemporary sense, thinking that they could attain excellence only by following the classical rules. The imitation of parody is not different from this; for instance, according to F.J. Lelievre, Aristophanes was able to parody and admire Euripides at the same time in *Frogs* (Lelievre, 1954 as cited in Rose, 1993:24); so it would be misleading to claim that parody's main purpose is to attack.

In claiming that parody does not need to have a negative attitude towards its target or that it should not be associated with ridicule, one of the most influential works has been *A Theory of Parody* by Linda Hutcheon. In this work, Hutcheon objects the opinion that regards parody as parasitic, saying that parody is a "double-voiced discourse" and that "it is not parasitic in any way. In transmuting or remodelling previous texts, it points to the differential but mutual dependence of parody and parodied texts. Its two voices neither merge nor cancel each other out; they work together, while remaining distinct in their defining difference" (Hutcheon, 2000:XIV). Hutcheon also disagrees with the critics who attribute ridicule to parody; instead,

she even argues that parody does not have to be comic at all. According to Hutcheon, the pleasure of parody's irony does not come from humour, but "from the degree of engagement of the reader in the intertextual "bouncing … between complicity and distance" (Hutcheon, 2000:32). So, in order to define parody, she avoids using ridicule or comic and defines parody as "repetition with critical distance" (Hutcheon, 2000:6). However, she is also criticised, especially by Margaret Rose who addresses different approaches to parody in another extensive work on the subject, *Parody: Ancient, Modern and Post-Modern*. Rose claims that the late-modern separation of parody from the comic is related to the critics' attempt to raise parody to a higher status by disengaging it from the comic, which is often regarded to be associated with lower forms such as burlesque. Referring to Hutcheon's argument, she says that one of the reasons for Hutcheon to separate parody from the comic is "her laudable, if not novel, criticism of the reduction of parody to the negative and one-dimensional form of ridicule with which the modern definition of parody as burlesque has been associated" (Rose, 1993:239). Here, Rose points out that there is no need to separate parody from the comic; on the contrary, parody should have *both* comic and intertextual elements together. So, she defines parody as "the comic refunctioning of preformed linguistic or artistic material" (Rose, 1993:52). In Rose's opinion then, parody should include the intertextual or meta-fictional elements that late-modern critics give importance to, but most importantly, it should also add some comic elements to it in order to be called parody.

The modern reduction of parody's function to ridiculing, as Rose also says, is because it is often confused with burlesque. Burlesque is a word that came into French and English in the seventeenth century, deriving from the Italian *burla* meaning ridicule or mockery (Dentith, 2000:190) and is described as the "comic imitation of a serious literary or artistic form that relies on an extravagant incongruity between a subject and its treatment" (burlesque, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2016). As burlesque is related to comic and imitation just like parody, these two terms have often been used interchangeably and have been regarded as synonyms. For example, in *A Survey of Burlesque and Parody in English*, George Kitchin points out that it is difficult to make a distinction between the two terms (Kitchin, 1931). Rose argues that burlesque is not "able to describe the way in which the parody (or '*para*-ode') imitates and then comically transforms other works in ambiguous and often complex meta-fictional ways" and referring to Householder, she adds that some burlesque does not even require a specific literary model (Rose, 1993:24). A similar confusion goes with pastiche and parody as well. Pastiche implies that a work, or a part of it, is "made up largely of phrases, motifs, images, episodes, etc. borrowed more or less unchanged from the work(s) of other author(s)", or to put it shortly, is a "mosaic of quotations" as defined by *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (pastiche, 2006). Although they both borrow from other works, pastiche and parody have different purposes and techniques which makes them two different terms. While pastiche builds up a mosaic of quotations, it does so in a much more neutral way than parody. In order to define pastiche, Fredric Jameson contends that "Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter", calling pastiche also "blank parody" (Jameson, 1991:17). In other words, pastiche does not have the comic elements of parody, the only purpose of pastiche is to imitate, not transform. So, to put it in a nutshell, it can be said that parody, burlesque and pastiche are quite different terms although they share some common characteristics. Both pastiche and burlesque are far from comically transforming a text, which is the main genius of parody, and in fact they do not have to have this purpose in the first place.

Although Hutcheon and Rose agree on the transformation process of parody, they differ in their view of the role of laughter in this process. Rose's definition seems to give a more grounded

explanation, though; since Hutcheon's definition may be considered too broad and it includes other examples of intertextual/metafictional texts which diverge from parody. So this paper will examine how *The Eyre Affair* may be read as a postmodern parody in accordance with Rose's definition rather than Hutcheon's, showing the ways which Fforde uses *laughter* in order to transform *Jane Eyre* in a humorous manner.

2. Postmodern Parody and *The Eyre Affair*

Historically, originality used to be one of the most important qualities of a work. However, this view changed with the arrival of the late-modern and postmodern eras. Many critics; including Roland Barthes, Gerard Genette and Jacques Derrida, have argued that it is actually not quite possible to write a truly original work of art because there is always a relationship with other texts. After Julia Kristeva coined the term 'intertextuality' in "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (1966) to refer to the interrelationship of all texts as every text is a transformation of other texts; many other critics have also followed her. For example Foucault said that "the frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network" (Foucault, 1972:23) who was followed by Barthes who asserted that "any text is intertext: other texts are present in it, at varying levels" (Barthes, 1981 as cited in Korkut, 2005). Here, it must be noted that although many critics have tried to apply the term intertextuality back to parody, the term was derived from the analysis of parody in the first place as a result of Kristeva's interest in Bakhtin's views on the workings of parody (Rose, 1993:185). It is not difficult to see the relationship between parody and intertextuality at this point as parody's main function is to borrow from other texts, which caused Hutcheon to even call parody "a perfect postmodern form" (Hutcheon, 1988:11). Hutcheon is right in saying that parody is a perfect form to see the workings of postmodernism; however, this is not because parody is specifically a postmodern form, but rather it is because the way they both work overlaps in their hybrid natures. Postmodernism is different from modernism which was elitist by trying to break free from the consumer culture in that it actually tries to break down the distinctions between high and popular culture. In one of his interviews, Fforde explicitly explains this postmodernist aim of his by saying that he decided to use *Jane Eyre* because he thinks that it is "fun to mix highbrow and lowbrow humor" (Fforde, 2005). He makes use of a literary classic and blends this high work of art with popular culture elements like Buffy the Vampire Slayer; and in a way, using Fiedler's famous phrase on postmodernism, he 'closes the gap' between the high and the low in a perfectly postmodernist way. Additionally; it must be noted that unlike modernism, postmodernism also does not turn its back on the past, instead it revisits it. However, this visit is not only about inspiration from previous works, because as Umberto Eco says "The postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognizing the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, since its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently" (Eco, 1985:17). So the past should be visited with irony - this is actually what postmodern parody does and *The Eyre Affair* is a very good example of this. Fforde revisits *Jane Eyre* in this book, but he does not just take parts from *Jane Eyre* and paste them as in pastiche; rather he adds irony and humour to intertextual and metafictional elements which also matches up with Rose's definition of parody.

There are of course many ways to make use of intertextuality; however, as Brian McHale says in *Postmodernist Fiction*, none of these is "more effective than the device of 'borrowing' a character from another text – 'transworld identity'" (McHale, 1987:57). Fforde does so in *The Eyre Affair,* borrowing Jane Eyre herself from the original work, and he does this literally as Jane is kidnapped from the book into his own fiction. The lines between the fiction and real life, the worlds of different fictional works get quite blurred as the characters move into and out

of books. As Mr Analogy, one of the characters, says, this travelling into works of fiction is actually considered to be normal, even an ordinary thing:

> "Over the last hundred years there has been an inexplicable crossfertilisation between works of fiction and reality. We know that Mr Analogy has been investigating the phenomenon for some time, and we know about Mr Glubb and several other characters who have crossed into books. We knew of no one to have returned so we considered it a one-way journey. Christopher Sly changed all that for us" (211).

Apart from Christopher Sly mentioned here, Thursday also changes this belief. During her visit as a child to Haworth House where Brontës used to live once, she finds herself in *Jane Eyre* with the help of a Japanese tourist. Here, Fforde combines intertextuality and metafiction so as to parody *Jane Eyre*. In *The Eyre Affair*, every character in *Jane Eyre* seems to be aware that they are all characters in a book and they are living in a world of fiction. When Thursday finds herself in the pages where Jane and Mr Rochester meet for the first time, both Mr Rochester and his dog Pilot are aware that a new person has just appeared in their story, although Jane does not notice Thursday. Mr Rochester winks at Thursday before he falls "back into a character" (68) and Pilot runs toward Thursday while also trying not to interrupt the flow of the story. In the following pages where he meets Thursday again, Mr Rochester also makes it clear that he is completely aware of his situation as a character in a world's classic. The other characters Thursday encounters seem to be aware of the story and their places in it as well. When Hades' friend Hobbes goes into the book in order to kidnap Jane, he tells Grace Poole that he wants Jane; and in return, gets the humorous reply of "So does Mr. Rochester … But he doesn't kiss her until page one hundred and eighty-one" (294). So, although the world in *Jane Eyre* appears to be a real place which can be visited for Thursday, it is not real as we know it but it is rather a false reflection of a fictional world. As in Baudrillard's concepts of hyperreal and simulacrum, this is a world where everything seems real while nothing is so. The only difference between these postmodern concepts and the world where Rochester lives is that, here, characters actually know that what they are going through is not the reality but fiction.

How this seemingly real world is a work of fiction gets even much clearer when Thursday visits the town in *Jane Eyre*. Walking around the town, Thursday thinks that "Apart from the faint odour of ink that pervaded the scene, it might have been real" (324). She knows that this is pure fiction carrying even the odour of ink with it; however, it is also notable that the world she lives is not the real world, either. As a result, the line between the fictional world and so-called real world of Thursday intermingles as characters jump from one of the books to the other. This travelling gets even a more ordinary look with the Japanese couple that are "dressed in period costume but with one of them holding a large Nikon camera" (324), walking around in the world of Jane Eyre, disguised to fit in the setting. Thursday later also finds out that in addition to having been informed about these people, Mr Rochester also gets profit out of these touristic tours organised by the Japanese woman. So, in addition to being aware that he lives in one of the world's classics, Rochester also knows how to make use of the book's popularity among the modern readers and even earn money from it as "country homes are not cheap to run … even in this century" (331).

The visits of these new people in *Jane Eyre* also have an effect on the novel itself as a text. Another postmodern concept of "death of the author" which holds that an author's intentions or his background is not important in interpreting a text gets a new turn in Fforde's world. Here, the author Charlotte Brontë is literally dead but this does not prevent the story, whether its small details or important parts like the ending, to be changed. Although it is known by everyone in Thursday's world that Brontë wrote the book; characters themselves and even outsiders such as Thursday, Hades or Hobbes can change the course of events dramatically. In this parallel world, *Jane Eyre* is a book that was really written by Charlotte Brontë; however, the ending is

different from what we have read so far and "No one likes the ending" (38). When Thursday is at the Haworth House with her uncle and aunt, an American visitor raises his hand and complains about the ending, and here we learn that in this alternate universe, Jane "agrees to go with this drippy St John Rivers guy and to marry him, they depart for India and that's the end of the book" (65). He complains that there is no happy ending and the reader does not find out "what happens to Rochester and his nutty wife" (65). He is not alone thinking in this way, the tour guide thinks that his point is a valid one as "she herself had often pondered the diluted ending, wishing, like millions of others, that circumstances had allowed Jane and Rochester to marry after all" (65). Mr Rochester is not content about the ending either, and says that "I *hate* the ending. The thought of my sweet Jane travelling to India with that poltroon St John Rivers makes my blood turn to ice" (319). As Bowden also complains to Thursday, "We try to make art perfect because we never manage it in real life and here is Charlotte Brontë concluding her novel—presumably something which has a sense of autobiographical wishful thinking about it—in a manner that reflects her own love life. If I had been Charlotte I would have made certain that Rochester and Jane were reunited—married, if possible" (270). So apparently everyone is discontent about the ending, but what is remarkable here is that it is actually possible to make alterations in the novel with the help of Uncle Mycroft's Prose-Portal. In other words, it can be said that in this alternate universe, Charlotte Brontë loses her control over her text as an author and her novel takes a different turn than she originally intended. Her own characters, and also the characters of other books can change the flow of the story. When Jane is kidnapped, the narrative stops abruptly "halfway down page one hundred and seven after a mysterious 'Agent in Black' enters Rochester's room following the fire" (298), because it is Jane who is narrating the events going on in the book. As a result, when she is taken out of the book, there is no narrator and no other events to be told to the reader. It can only continue again when Thursday jumps into the novel and prevents Jane to be kidnapped. This is not the only occasion when Thursday and others interfere with the narrative. When Thursday goes into *Jane Eyre* for the first time as a child and causes Rochester's horse to slip, she actually causes the events to change into current situations. The book 'originally' does not have the fall but instead, the horse falls here because it gets afraid of the sudden appearance of Thursday. Rochester says to Thursday that "When the horse slipped to avoid you it made the meeting more dramatic" and even "*improved* the narrative" (190). So Thursday's intervention 'improves' the story, transcending the authorship of Brontë and making the story even better. Thursday also causes changes in the parts that readers were unhappy about such as the vague endings of Mr and Mrs Rochester or the fact that Jane and Mr Rochester do not unite in the end. While fighting with Hobbes who wants to learn the password for exit from Thursday, Bertha falls down the roof of Thornfield Hall and dies. Thursday also changes the ending completely by going to find Jane at Rivers' house. Once Thursday makes these changes, readers in Thursday's world can also follow how the narrative is written all over again to everyone's surprise:

> "There, as the words etched themselves across the paper, was a new development in the narrative. After Jane promised St John Rivers that if it was God's will that they should be married, then they would, there was a voice – a *new* voice, Rochester's voice, calling to her across the ether. But from where? It was a question that was being asked simultaneously by nearly eighty million people worldwide, following the new story unfolding in front of their eyes.
> 'What does it mean?' asked Victor.
> 'I don't know,' replied Plink. 'It's pure Charlotte Brontë but it *definitely* wasn't there before!" (345).

This new voice which is thought to be Rochester is actually Thursday who is imitating his voice under Jane's window and calling her. As a result, she causes Jane to return to Rochester in panic and be united with him later. As Jane breaks the previous chain of events because of Thursday,

the narrative also changes as a result in every copy of *Jane Eyre* around the world. Ultimately, Thursday takes over the writing process from Charlotte Brontë, and causes the book to be rewritten according to the common readers' taste in a professional way, which even causes The Brontë Federation expert Plink to call it even "pure Charlotte Brontë". So from this point on, Charlotte Brontë has no control over *Jane Eyre* but it is Tuesday who makes alterations and changes it to the last form that is being read in our world.

While Thursday changes the book in a "pure" Brontëan way, the characters in *Jane Eyre* can also affect Thursday's story in a similar way. Just like Thursday's prevention of Jane getting married to St John Rivers and marrying Rochester instead, Rochester also causes Thursday to change her mind and marry Landen whom she really loves. Before Thursday returns to her world, Rochester says to her, "Farewell, Miss Next! You have a great heart; do not let it go waste. You have one who loves you and whom you love yourself. Choose happiness!" (346). This definitely has an effect on Thursday, causing her to go back to Landen as she decides to "choose happiness". Besides Mr Rochester; Mr Briggs, the solicitor who prevented the marriage of Jane and Rochester at the church, visits Thursday's world with the help of the Japanese tour guide and helps her get married to Landen as well. Just like he prevents Mr Rochester and Jane's marriage saying that Mr Rochester is married to Bertha, here he stops Landen getting married to Daisy by asserting that Daisy has already been married (353), bringing about the unity of Thursday and Landen. This parallelism between Thursday and Jane's stories are remarkable as Fforde actually parodies Jane's story in Thursday's life, which Berninger and Thomas call a "paralellquel" of *Jane Eyre* in their work (Beninger and Thomas, 2007). Fforde says that "The marriage question was important to the plot because it mirrored Jane and Rochester" (Fforde, 2002b), so by adapting Jane and Rochester's story into his own novel in a humorous way, he reuses the story and comically transforms it in order to create Thursday and Landen's relationship. In addition to the last minute prevention of Landen's near marriage, there are other notable similarities between Jane and Thursday's stories. Both women ultimately marry disabled men, Bowden's marriage proposal to Thursday is similar to St John Rivers' in that both marriage proposals involve working together in some other place and they both see this unison as a marriage of convenience, and lastly, Thursday's changing of jobs and places corresponds to Jane's changing of locations in *Jane Eyre* (Anderson, 2012). Thursday also sees some similarities between herself and Jane when she sees her for the first time:

> "When she turned I could see that her face was plain and outwardly unremarkable, yet possessed of a bearing that showed inner strength and resolve. I stared at her intently with a mixture of feelings. I had realised not long ago that I myself was no beauty, and even at the age of nine had seen how the more attractive children gained favour more easily. But here in that young woman I could see how those principles could be inverted. I felt myself stand more upright and clench my jaw in subconscious mimicry of her pose" (66).

Thursday knows that she is plain just like Jane and she identifies herself with her. She is right in doing so since in *Jane Eyre,* Bessie and Abbot favour Georgiana over Jane as Georgiana has "long curls and blue eyes, and such a sweet colour as she has" unlike Jane, and they say that "if she [Jane] were a nice, pretty child, one might compassionate her forlornness; but one really cannot care for such a little toad as that" (Brontë, 2008:26). A nine-year old Thursday apparently has encountered similar reactions which causes her to say that attractive children gain favour more easily. These similarities correspond to the reflections of Jane's life into Thursday's as Fforde uses her story to comically and ironically transform her into Thursday in a way.

Here, it should be noted that what makes the comic elements in parody different from the one in irony is that the author's revealing of humour and the recognition of it by the reader changes considerably in these two styles. It is true that both irony and parody have a second message to

be conveyed that lies under the text itself; however, as Rose suggests, in irony, the real message is usually left concealed for the recipient to decode whereas in parody, the parodist usually combines the messages and contrasts a quoted work with a new context in order to produce laughter from the recognition of this (Rose, 1993:88-89). Thus, unlike irony which hides its real intention to be decoded, parody actually has a function of revealing it to the reader in order to make the reader laugh as he recognizes the second message. In other words, a reader who is familiar with the target text and who is able to understand the references to it is the ideal audience of parody. In one of his interviews, Fforde says that the reason he chose *Jane Eyre* in the first place is the fact that it is known by a lot of readers:

> "What's important for me with *Jane Eyre* is that even if you have not read the book or seen the movie, you still known her [sic]. She is already there in people's minds. If *The Eyre Affair* was about obscure characters in a babbler novel, there's no gag. The fact that it's Jane Eyre, like Dickens, is kind of rock solid and when you go through the looking glass, when you start shifting them and wobbling them, then that's the gag" (Fforde, 2005).

So Fforde bases his novel upon this popularity of *Jane Eyre* and uses it as the target text for his parody. In case there are readers who have not read the book or have forgotten the plot, he reminds the plot of *Jane Eyre* in his book; because as Hutcheon says, "Parody depends upon recognition and therefore it inevitably raises issues of both the competence of the decoder and the skill of the encoder… then, parody is indeed in the eye of the beholder. But beholders need something to behold; we need signals from the text to guide our interpretation, and the degree of visibility of these signals determines their potential for assisting us" (Hutcheon, 2000:XVI). In order to give the reader something to behold, Fforde gives some background information about *Jane Eyre* in various parts of *The Eyre Affair,* and to explain his aim, he says "I considerately put in a précis of Charlotte Brontë's work for anyone who hasn't read it. Thursday explains it to Bowden on a car journey - hopeless exposition, I admit, but for the different ending plot device to work, the reader had to know what was going on" (Fforde, n.d.). As the humour of *The Eyre Affair* comes from the fact that it is a parody of *Jane Eyre*, its humour depends on the recognition of this relationship between two texts by the reader, so Fforde agrees that the reader should be able to read *The Eyre Affair* as a parody of *Jane Eyre* so as to grasp the intended humour.

CONCLUSION

Although parody has been a controversial term throughout different periods and it still looks rather far from reaching a consensus over the subject, Rose's definition seem to give a more clear and specific idea of parody with its focus on parody's two main elements which are intertextuality/metafictionality and comic. Both of these characteristics can be seen clearly in *The Eyre Affair* since Fforde uses *Jane Eyre* as a target text, borrowing from it and using it to create a new text with the addition of humour. What is important here - since that is what makes a parody – is that the borrowing process is different from pastiche or burlesque. Unlike pastiche, which is a rather neutral mosaic of quotations, Fforde uses parts from *Jane Eyre* ironically and comically, and instead of pasting large chunks of texts from the book, he makes alterations and adapts them to fit into his story. The parts like Jane and Rochester's meeting for the first time or the ending are stretched and turned into a new world which can be visited by Fforde's own characters. In other words, Fforde does not rest his book on *Jane Eyre* in a parasitic way; instead, he uses it as a basis to his novel and then transforms it. Another important factor in this transformation process is the addition of comic elements into the book. Although some late-modern critics such as Hutcheon tried to separate parody from comic, what makes *The Eyre Affair* a parody in contrast to any other metafictional or intertextual works is actually this use of humour. Thus, as a conclusion, it can be said that the book can be read as a good example to address the main points that Rose points out in her definition of parody.

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