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Molly, therefore, having dressed herself out in this Sack, with a new laced Cap, and some other Ornaments which *Tom* had given her, repairs to Church with her Fan in her Hand the very next *Sunday*. The Great are deceived, if they imagine they have appropriated Ambition and Vanity to themselves. These noble Qualities flourish as notably in a Country Church and Church-yard, as in the Drawing-Room, or in the Closet. Schemes have indeed
5 been laid in the Vestry, which would hardly disgrace the Conclave. Here is a Ministry, and here is an Opposition. Here are Plots and Circumventions, Parties and Factions, equal to those which are to be found in Courts.

Nor are the Women here less practised in the highest feminine Arts than their fair
10 Superiors in Quality and Fortune. Here are Prudes and Coquettes. Here are Dressing and Ogling, Falshood, Envy, Malice, Scandal; in short, every Thing which is common to the most splendid Assembly, or politest Circle. Let those of high Life, therefore, no longer despise the Ignorance of their Inferiors; nor the Vulgar any longer rail at the Vices of their Betters.

Molly had seated herself some time, before she was known by her Neighbours. And
15 then a Whisper ran through the whole Congregation, "Who is she?" But when she was discovered, such sneering, gigling, tittering, and laughing, ensued among the Women, that Mr *Allworthy* was obliged to exert his Authority to preserve any Decency among them.

Chapter Eight — A Battle sung by the Muse in the Homeric style, and which none but the classical Reader can taste.

Mr *Western* had an Estate in this Parish; and as his House stood at little greater
20 Distance from this Church than from his own, he very often came to divine Service here; and both he and the charming *Sophia* happened to be present at this Time.

Sophia was much pleased with the Beauty of the Girl, whom she pitied for her
25 Simplicity, in having dressed herself in that Manner, as she saw the Envy which it had occasioned among her Equals. She no sooner came home, than she sent for the Game-keeper, and ordered him to bring his Daughter to her; saying, She would provide for her in the Family, and might possibly place the Girl about her own Person, when her own Maid, who was now going away, had left her.

Poor *Seagrim* was thunderstruck at this; for he was no Stranger to the Fault in the
30 Shape of his Daughter. He answered, in a stammering voice, "That he was afraid *Molly* would be too awkward to wait on her Ladyship, as she had never been at Service." "No matter for that," says *Sophia*; "she will soon improve. I am pleased with the Girl, and am resolved to try her."

Black George now repaired to his Wife, on whose prudent Counsel he depended to
35 extricate him out of this Dilemma; but when he came thither, he found his House in some Confusion. So great envy had this Sack occasioned, that when Mr *Allworthy* and the other Gentry were gone from Church, the Rage, which had hitherto been confined, burst into an Uproar; and, having vented itself at first in opprobrious Words, Laughs, Hisses, and Gestures,

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40 betook itself at last to certain missile Weapons; which, though from their plastic Nature they threatened neither the Loss of Life or of Limb, were however sufficiently dreadful to a well-dressed Lady. *Molly* had too much Spirit to bear this Treatment tamely. Having therefore — But hold, as we are diffident of our own Abilities, let us here invite a superior Power to our Assistance.

45 Ye Muses then, whoever ye are, who love to sing Battles, and principally thou, who whilom didst recount the Slaughter in those fields where *Hudibrass* and *Trulla* fought, if thou wert not starved with thy friend *Butler*, assist me on this great Occasion. All Things are not in the Power of all.

50 As a vast Herd of Cows in a rich Farmer's Yard, if, while they are milked, they hear their Calves at a Distance, lamenting the Robbery which is then committing, roar and bellow; So roared forth the *Somersetshire* Mob an Hallaloo, made up of almost as many Squawls, Screams, and other different Sounds, as there were Persons, or indeed Passions, among them: Some were inspired by Rage, others alarmed by Fear, and others had nothing in their Heads but the Love of Fun; but chiefly Envy, the sister of *Satan*, and his constant Companion, rushed among the Crowd, and blew up the Fury of the Women; who no sooner came up to *Molly*,
55 than they pelted her with Dirt and Rubbish.

Molly, having endeavoured in vain to make a handsome Retreat, faced about; and laying hold of ragged *Bess*, who advanced in the Front of the Enemy, she at one Blow felled her to the Ground. The whole Army of the Enemy (though near a hundred in Number) seeing the Fate of their General, gave back many Paces, and retired behind a new-dug Grave; for the Church-yard was the Field of Battle, where there was to be a Funeral that very Evening. *Molly*
60 pursued her Victory, and catching up a Skull which lay on the Side of the Grave, discharged it with such Fury, that having hit a Taylor on the Head, the two Skulls sent equally forth a hollow Sound at their Meeting, and the Taylor took presently measure of his Length on the Ground, where the Skulls lay side by side, and it was doubtful which was the more valuable
65 of the two. *Molly* then taking a Thigh-bone in her Hand, fell in among the flying Ranks, and dealing her Blows with great Liberality on either Side, overthrew the Carcass of many a mighty Heroe and Heroine.

70 Recount, O Muse, the Names of those who fell on this fatal Day. First, *Jemmy Tweedle* felt on his hinder Head the direful Bone. Him the pleasant Banks of sweetly-winding *Stour* had nourished, where he first learnt the vocal Art, with which, wandring up and down at Wakes and Fairs he cheered the rural Nymphs and Swains, when upon the Green they interweav'd the sprightly Dance; while he himself stood fiddling and jumping to his own Music. How little now avails his Fiddle?

Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, Book four, Chapters 7 & 8 (extracts), London: Penguin, 2005, p.132-135. First published 1749

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The disappearance of the individual subject, along with its formal consequence, the increasing unavailability of the personal style, engender the well-nigh universal practice today of what may be called pastiche. This concept, which we owe to Thomas Mann (in *Doktor Faustus*), who owed it in turn to Adorno's great work on the two paths of advanced musical experimentation (Schoenberg's innovative planification and Stravinsky's irrational eclecticism), is to be sharply distinguished from the more readily received idea of parody.

To be sure, parody found a fertile area in the idiosyncracies of the moderns and their "inimitable" styles: the Faulknerian long sentence, for example, with its breathless gerundives; Lawrentian nature imagery punctuated by testy colloquialism; Wallace Stevens's inveterate hypostasis of nonsubstantive parts of speech ("the intricate evasions of as"); the fateful (but finally predictable) swoops in Mahler from high orchestral pathos into village accordion sentiment; Heidegger's meditative-solemn practice of the false etymology as a mode of "proof" . . . All these strike one as somehow characteristic, insofar as they ostentatiously deviate from a norm which then reasserts itself, in a not necessarily unfriendly way, by a systematic mimicry of their willful eccentricities.

Yet in the dialectical leap from quantity to quality, the explosion of modern literature into a host of distinct private styles and mannerisms has been followed by a linguistic fragmentation of social life itself to the point where the norm itself is eclipsed: reduced to a neutral and reified media speech (far enough from the Utopian aspirations of the inventors of Esperanto or Basic English), which itself then becomes but one more idiolect among many. Modernist styles thereby become postmodernist codes. And that the stupendous proliferation of social codes today into professional and disciplinary jargons (but also into the badges of affirmation of ethnic, gender, race, religious, and class-factional adhesion) is also a political phenomenon, the problem of micropolitics sufficiently demonstrates. If the ideas of a ruling class were once the dominant (or hegemonic) ideology of bourgeois society, the advanced capitalist countries today are now a field of stylistic and discursive heterogeneity without a norm. Faceless masters continue to inflect the economic strategies which constrain our existences, but they no longer need to impose their speech (or are henceforth unable to); and the postliteracy of the late capitalist world reflects not only the absence of any great collective project but also the unavailability of the older national language itself.

In this situation parody finds itself without a vocation; it has lived, and that strange new thing pastiche slowly comes to take its place. 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 and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists. Pastiche is thus blank parody, a statue with blind eyeballs: it is to parody what that other interesting and historically original modern thing, the practice of a kind of blank irony, is to what Wayne Booth calls the "stable ironies" of the eighteenth century.

It would therefore begin to seem that Adorno's prophetic diagnosis has been realized, albeit in a negative way: not Schönberg (the sterility of whose achieved system he already glimpsed) but Stravinsky is the true precursor of postmodern cultural production. For with the collapse of the high-modernist ideology of style — what is as unique and unmistakable as your own fingerprints, as incomparable as your own body (the very source, for an early Roland Barthes, of stylistic invention and innovation) — the producers of culture have nowhere to turn but to the past: the imitation of dead styles, speech through all the masks and voices stored up in the imaginary museum of a now global culture.

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50 This situation evidently determines what the architecture historians call "historicism,"
namely, the random cannibalization of all the styles of the past, the play of random stylistic
allusion, and in general what Henri Lefebvre has called the increasing primacy of the "neo."
This omnipresence of pastiche is not incompatible with a certain humor, however, nor is it
innocent of all passion: it is at the least compatible with addiction — with a whole historically
original consumers' appetite for a world transformed into sheer images of itself and for
pseudo-events and "spectacles" (the term of the situationists). It is for such objects that we
55 may reserve Plato's conception of the "simulacrum," the identical copy for which no original
has ever existed. Appropriately enough, the culture of the simulacrum comes to life in a
society where exchange value has been generalized to the point at which the very memory of
use value is effaced, a society of which Guy Debord has observed, in an extraordinary phrase,
that in it "the image has become the final form of commodity reification" (*The Society of the*
60 *Spectacle*).

Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke
UP, 1991, p. 16-18

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Cesar Santos, *The Three Graces*, 2013, oil on linen, 56 x 73 in., private collection