

The Use of the Grotesque in *Middlemarch*

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A Synopsis of "The Use of the Grotesque in *Middlemarch*"

In preparing the present essay, what continued to be inspiring was the following passage in Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*: "The entire field of realistic literature of the last three centuries is strewn with the fragments of grotesque realism, which at times are not mere remnants of the past but manifest a renewed vitality." This paper is mainly concerned with the implicit use of the framework of the grotesque realism employed throughout *Middlemarch*, especially in the delineation of Casaubon and Dorothea.

The "fragments of grotesque realism" are actually palpable in the abortive production of Casaubon's lifework. Accordingly, the focus of the following passages will fall on the parts enacted by the death-symbolizing Casaubon under these headlines: i) Casaubon is created as a fool king in which his comic character as a gay monster is foregrounded. ii) Casaubon, the degenerated fool king, reigns over Rome, the city of the dead. iii) Casaubon is a "pregnant hag", who is to be unable to deliver his baby "Key to All Mythologies." iv) Dorothea is an old girl, typical trait of the grotesque realism which binds two contradictory features in one. v) In the last section I would like to suggest the fragments of the "grotesque realism" are finally extinguished by Will, an angel of light.

The present paper is mainly concerned with the implicit employment of the framework of "grotesque realism"² throughout *Middlemarch*, especially in the representation of Casaubon, Dorothea and Will. As to the relevance of applying "grotesque realism" originally devised to explicate the European folk culture of the Middle Age and the Renaissance to the modern literature, Mikhail Bakhtin replies affirmatively as follows:

To ignore grotesque realism prevents us from understanding correctly not only its development during the Renaissance but also a series of important phenomena belonging to its later manifestations. The entire field of realistic literature of the last three centuries is strewn with the fragments of grotesque realism, which at times are not mere remnants of the past but manifest a renewed vitality.³

With the advent of the Romantic age, Bakhtin points out, the vigour of grotesque realism underwent certain changes: instead of the carnivalesque spirit, full of festive laughter, arose "the gloomy, terrifying tone of the grotesque world."⁴ Although the grotesque might be frequently encountered in Meredith and

Dickens,⁵ both Rebelaisian laughter and the Romantic terror seem to be alien to the “sympathetic and homely realism”⁶ of George Eliot. However, Harpham affirms that “Grotesque is a word for that dynamic state of low-ascending and high-descending,”⁷ and if the essence of the grotesque lies in the inversion of order, which exemplifies the revolt of the lower against the upper in a system to which the regeneration image is central, then the alienation of Casaubon and the awakening of Dorothea could be discussed in the grotesque tradition as well.

Bakhtin’s handling of life and death in the grotesque context is highly paradoxical, asserting that death is not a negation but a renewal of life. In his words, “Death is. . . always related to birth. . . . Death is included in life, and together with birth determines its eternal movement.”⁸ Incidentally the titles of books five and eight show *Middlemarch* as a narrative organized around the concepts of procreation, Dorothea, and death, Casaubon. Above all, it is the story of a girl who reaches her awakening only after enduring a number of heartrending disillusionments. That this process underlies Eliot’s major works was successfully shown by Barbara Hardy and by David Carroll,⁹ who sums up the motif in this way: “The main character, usually the heroine, through lack of self-knowledge embraces an illusory way of life; the illusions are stripped from the character by means of successive disenchantments which lead finally through a realistic knowledge of self to regeneration.”¹⁰ Accordingly, what occupies the first place in Eliot’s morality is the recognition that “[w]e are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves. . . .”¹¹ The successive disillusionments enable the heroines to see the real world as it is, thus to live “without opium.”¹² “Sunrise and Sunset” is, in this sense, the most appropriate epithet to be attached to represent this modern St. Theresa.

Besides the awakening of the heroine in *Middlemarch*, there is the abortive production of Casaubon’s lifework, the pursuit of the “Key to All Mythologies.” Actually, “the fragments of grotesque realism” could be sought in this amateur scholar more than in any other character, first in his characterization as a fool king, and then in his degeneration. The importance of Rome as the grotesque city of the dead is made clear. Thirdly, he is equated with a “pregnant hag,” symbolic of the grotesque union of contradictions in a single body. Though gravid, he is unable to deliver his baby “Key to All Mythologies.” In the next section, Dorothea’s grotesquery is duly paid attention to. How Will, “an angel of light”, manages to overcome Casaubon, a king of darkness is to be our last interest.

1. Casaubon is created a fool king.

Crowning / decrowning (or uncrowning) is one of the most fundamental features that define the carnivalesque action. To use Bakhtin’s phrase, “The primary carnivalistic act is the *mock crowning and subsequent decrowning of the carnival king*.”¹³ Decrowning is relevant to degeneration, which is “[t]he essential principle of grotesque realism.”¹⁴ In the context of grotesque realism, degeneration entails rejuvenation, thus ensuring the revival of the world. This was the case, in the folk culture of the Renaissance, with the traditional Feast of Fools, and its secularized version, the custom of the Lord of Misrule.¹⁵ The successor of this kind of festivity is embodied in the figure of the weaver of Raveloe.¹⁶ Silas, once king with his hoard of gold, is decrowned with Dunstan’s theft. His characterization is entirely dependent on the tradition of the fool king, who, by being abused and dismissed, helps achieve the revival of a community. With the decrowning, “all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract”¹⁷ becomes low, crude, vulgar. In *Middlemarch*, Casaubon’s role is actually that of a fool king who is to be made high in order to be lowered later. The identification of this scholar, with Locke (16), Bossuet (24), Augustine (24), Pascal (28), Thomas Aquinas (209) stresses his spiritual superiority, which however is counterbalanced by these comments which criticize his physical defects: “How very ugly Mr Casaubon is!” (20); “Mr Casaubon is so sallow.” (20); “Really, Dodo. can’t you hear how he scrapes his spoon?

And he always blinks before he speaks. I don't know whether Locke blinked, but I'm sure I am sorry for those who sat opposite to him if he did." (48) This is one version of the lower's victory over the upper.

The comic character of Casaubon is, then, established through this abuse, which incidentally is closely connected with the expression of the grotesque. This abuse brings death upon Casaubon, only to revive him.¹⁸ Not only is he comic, he is also equated to a monster who dominates over the land of the dead.

2. Casaubon the fool king reigns over Rome.

Rome in *Middlemarch* is represented exclusively as the city of the dead, the ruins of the history.

. . . Rome, the city of visible history, where the past of a whole hemisphere seems moving in funeral procession with strange ancestral images and trophies gathered from afar. (187)

Ruins and basilicas, palaces and colossi, set in the midst of a sordid present, where all that was living and warmblooded seemed sunk in the deep degeneracy of a superstition divorced from reverence; the chiller but yet eager Titanic life gazing and struggling on walls and ceilings; the long vistas of white forms whose marble eyes seemed to hold the monotonous light of an alien world: all this vast wreck of ambitious ideals, sensuous and spiritual, mixed confusedly with the signs of breathing forgetfulness and degradation, at first jarred her as with an electric shock, and then urged themselves on her with that ache belonging to a glut of confused ideas which check the flow of emotion. (188)

Rome is a hellish city where Dorothea *qua* Persephone is transported and imprisoned. That is why she is sobbing so bitterly at the beginning of chapter twenty. There is an interesting relation between this city and Casaubon, for we are told he feels a special interest in the world of the dead: "I live too much with the dead. My mind is something like the ghost of an ancient. . . ." (17) And again Celia speculates: "There was something funereal in the whole affair, and Mr Casaubon seemed to be the officiating clergyman. . . ." (49) His life as a living death is suggested in the passage describing Lovick Manor: "the house too had an air of autumnal decline." (72) One of his feet is said to be in the grave. (57) Will's imagination goes further to compare Casaubon to the dragon who carried off the virgin. (203) All these point unanimously to the mythological implication of the situation: as is justly imagined by Will, the relation of Dorothea and Casaubon invites us to interpret it in terms of the Minotaur myth, except that this Minotaur-Casaubon is no longer a terrible, but a gay, comic monster already "defeated by laughter."¹⁹ Like the human sacrifice to Minotaur, Dorothea is imprisoned in Casaubon's inner labyrinth: ". . . Dorothea had not distinctly observed but felt with a stifling depression, that the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding in her husband's mind were replaced by anterooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhither?" (190)

The unnamable melancholy Dorothea experienced in Rome is to be repeated about a century later by Marian Taylor in Iris Murdoch's *The Unicorn* (1963). In *On the Grotesque* Harpham asserts that the dolmen Marian encounters in Ireland evokes what adumbrates the fusion of reality and the mythical phase, calling it grotesque. The panic Dorothea underwent in Rome can be equated with Marian's: "Marian was suddenly overcome by an appalling crippling panic. She was frightened at the idea of arriving. But it was more than that. She feared the rocks and the cliffs and the grotesque dolmen and the ancient secret things."²⁰ It was an encounter with the grotesque.

With the fusion of the ecclesiastical and pagan elements, Rome could reasonably be called grotesque ("sensuous and spritual, mixed confusedly").²¹ Furthermore, considering that from the moment of its rise in Western culture the grotesque was familiar to Rome, it is no wonder Dorothea should be overcome in the very place of the birth of the grotesque. It is noteworthy that what is stressed is the absence of the unifying principle: ". . . this stupendous fragmentariness heightened the dream-like strangeness of her

bridal life." (187) Since the grotesque could be defined largely as "a species of confusion," and so is characterized by "the destruction of order" and "utter unorganizability."²² In some level the "unorganizability" of Rome becomes hazardous not only for Dorothea but for the unifying principle by which the four narratives in *Middlemarch* are integrated. But the grotesque mode is soon to be abated with the extinction of Casaubon.

The situation the protagonists are involved in could be called so far simply mythical, nameny, a virgin in the heart of the mysterious sanctuary, waiting for the help of the hero. The grotesque characterization of Casaubon, however, deprives him of the horror proper to the dominator in the hell. In the carnival, "All that was frightening in ordinary life," Bakhtin argues, "is turned into amusing or ludicrous monstrosities."²³ Instead we find in him the comic implication formerly ascribed to Silas Marner. The metamorphosis of Silas from the terrible to the funny monster occurs in a Rainbow scene where Silas *qua* fool king is decrowned with the theft of his hoard of gold by Dunstan. While carnivalesque festivity thus evoked runs through this charming masterpiece and the narrative ends with the impression of resurrection and rejuvenation, Casaubon's decrowning, though not as dramatic as Silas's is radical enough.

3. Casaubon was "a pregnant hag," and he miscarried.

Bakhtin points out the grotesque embodied in the terracotta figurine of "a pregnant hag," which represents "pregnant death, a death that gives birth."²⁴ What characterizes Casaubon most is his dryness, which implies his barrenness. We know that there were the dried-up insects and the specimens of mineral in the drawers of the table in the library of the Transome Court, and Casaubon comes directly from the line Mr. and Mrs. Transome tread. Abuse of him is directed chiefly at his lack of vital energy as follows:

a dried bookworm (22)

"He is no better than a mammy!" (57)

"A great bladder for dried peas to rattle in!" (57)

"He has got no good red blood in his body." (69)

"He has certainly been drying up faster since the engagement." (89)

"And then his studies——so very dry. . . ." (89)

". . . such capacity of thought and feeling. . . had long shrunk to a sort of dried preparation, a lifeless embalment of knowledge." (191)

a Bat of erudition (199)

this dried-up pedant (199)

Simultaneous dryness and pregnancy is one of the indices by which the grotesque characterization can be discerned, representing opposites in one figure, like the "pregnant hag." Actually the world of George Eliot is not lacking in figures that declare themselves to be spiritual ancestors of this old scholar, namely Silas Marner and the inhabitants of the Transome Court. They were no better than dead: "Strangely Marner's face and figure shrank and bent themselves into a constant mechanical relation to the objects of his life, so that he produced the same sort of impression as a handle or a crooked tube, which has no meaning standing apart."²⁵ In a metaphorical sense, they are all pregnant with their own child: Silas's bag corresponds directly to the womb.²⁶ His agony, therefore, could be said to be the birth pangs that result in the acquisition of Eppie. All this is made possible through his decrowning, which ultimately ensures his rebirth.

This process is repeated in another comic monster in *Middlemarch*, Peter Featherstone, who is a double of Casaubon with more comic attributes added. Like Silas, he has a belly pregnant with

money: his maxim is "that money was a good egg, and should be laid in a warm nest." (296) Here lies the grounding metaphor of Featherstone's pregnancy. As a pregnant hag, he looks like a comic monster to Mary Garth, whose eyes penetrate into the true character of the old miser. She realizes: "people were so ridiculous with their illusions, carrying their fool's caps unawares, thinking their own lies opaque while everybody else's were transparent, making themselves exceptions to everything, as if when all the world looked yellow under a lamp they alone were rosy." (307) In a word Featherstone is not fearful but exclusively comic to her, and this recognition is indicative that the grotesque in Featherstone has undergone some drastic metamorphosis. Neither sublime feeling nor pity is evoked by that old man: "Her thought was not veined by any solemnity or pathos about the old man on the bed: such sentiments are easier to affect than to feel about an aged creature whose life is not visibly anything but a remnant of vices." (307f.) That is felt most impressively when he, dying in his bed, asks Mary to bring his last will from the safe with the intention of leaving ten thousand pounds to Fred. "Warm nest" proves not to exist in him. (His very name is suggestive of this ironic consequence, 'a bird with a stone. but not with an egg.')

It is almost the same with his duplicate, Mr Casaubon. It is not going too far to imagine a similar model working in the futile labour of Casaubon's search for the Key to All Mythologies, which will not come out. Again a childbirth image is consistently employed throughout the episode. As with Silas's hoard and Featherstone's money, an enormous amount of the fragmentary documents of mythologies are crammed into Casaubon's belly. What really concerned him was its delivery as the narrative invites us to suppose so: we must remember the last wish of Casaubon was for Dorothea to complete his otherwise abortive work. Marriage with Dorothea did not help deliver his Key for it was already dead. As justly imagined by Dorothea, his documents were "what might be called shattered mummies, and fragments of a tradition which was itself a mosaic wrought from crushed ruins." (469) It is the negative side of the grotesque that is focused on here.

"Doubtless a vigorous error vigorously pursued has kept the embryos of truth a-breathing. . . . But Mr Casaubon's theory of the elements which made the seed of all tradition was not likely to bruise itself unawares against discoveries. . . ." (469) This passage is suggestive of how the positive side of the grotesque in Casaubon is suppressed. "A vigorous error" keeping "the embryos of truth a-breathing" could be identified with the regenerative power of grotesque realism: that is a death as "not negation of life seen as the great body of all the people but part of life as a whole—its indispensable component, the condition of constant renewal and rejuvenation."²⁷ With the possibility of renewal cut off, another trait of the grotesque comes to be foregrounded when he realizes the failure in completing his search for the Key. Casaubon's last attempt to persuade Dorothea to continue his search for the Key, which could be interpreted as an attempt to transplant his dead child into Dorothea's womb, proves futile. This marks the beginning of the ominous influence over Dorothea as symbolized by the title to the fifth book "The Dead Hand."

The grotesque in the "pregnant hag" consists in its having two apparently contradictory features. This occurs again in the case of Dorothea.

4 . Dorothea a puer senex.

The narrator of *Middlemarch* casts his critical eyes on those Therasas who "found for themselves no epic life wherein there was a constant unfolding of far-resonant action." (3) Instead, their lives seem "mere inconsistency and formlessness." (3) Whether the narrator intended it or not, this phrase fits the grotesque characterization of the heroine: Dorothea is a fusion of contradictions.

From the beginning of the story, she is torn into the two opposites of Puritan self-abnegation and

pagan enthusiasm. With perfect mature resignation, she controls her sensuous pleasures: "Riding was an indulgence which she allowed herself in spite of conscientious qualms; she felt that she enjoyed it in a pagan sensuous way, and always looked forward to renouncing it." (10) As Celia points out, in spite of her love of "intensity and greatness" (8), Dorothea "likes giving up." (18) In Rome, she is criticized by Naumann as "a sort of Christian Antigone—sensuous force controlled by spiritual passion." (185) This reminds us of the eponymous heroine in *Romola*, in whom fought the Christian and the pagan.²⁸ Dorothea could be called grotesque in the same sense Rome could be called so, with two opposites fused in it.

In order to repress her pagan inclinations she apparently hurries into maturity. She seems to choose to forget her youth voluntarily and shun those pleasures that a youth characteristically indulges in. On the other hand the narrator insistently stresses her childlike passion, her "love of extremes." Thus she is an old girl. This is the passage depicting her inverted youth:

Her blooming full-pulsed youth stood there in a moral imprisonment which made itself one with the chill, colourless, narrowed landscape, with the shrunken furniture, the never-read book, and the ghostly stag in pale fantastic world that seemed to be vanishing from the daylight. (268)

Here the imprisonment image is strengthened by narrowness, cold, and darkness. Will, perceiving Dorothea's over-maturity, points out her inverted growth: ". . . it is an anachronism for you to have such thoughts. . . . You talk as if you had never known any youth. It is monstrous—as if you had a vision of Hades in your childhood, like the boy in the legend." (215) He was right. She did descend into the hell-like Rome, to see its grotesqueness, and into its labyrinth where the Minotaur-like Casaubon reigns. Dorothea's growth is, then, "anachronic," a passionate love following a dried-life. To call her love with Will tempestuous would be no exaggeration but literally actual. When they take refuge in the library and hugged each other it happens that sudden tempest blesses their union: ". . . they stood, with their hands clasped, *like two children*, looking out on the storm, while the thunder gave a tremendous crack and roll above them, and the rain began to pour down." (799, italics mine) It may sound paradoxical, but in her case sterile youth succeeds futile senility.

This confusion of age has a close resonance to the concept of "the world upsidedown," which was sanctioned in E. R. Curtius's *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. It has a close relationship to the grotesque in its basic principle of "stringing together impossibilities."²⁹ In one of the early apocalyptic writings, Curtius finds an allegorical figure representing the "Church." She gradually rejuvenates as the story goes and thus embodies the redemption of human kinds.³⁰ Dorothea's maturity from senility to youth corresponds to this movement of the old-young female figure. At the base of this lies the crucial concept of "the mysteries of the fatality / fertility complex," which, as Harpham says, is the origin of the grotesque.³¹

When the narrator says, "Every limit is a beginning as well as an ending," (818) he is more familiar with the notion of the grotesque probably than he realizes. Her descent into the hell-like Rome with Casaubon was indispensable to Dorothea's rebirth. One more conscious with the grotesque would have written straight "every death" in place of "every limit."

In chapter eighty, after overcoming her ego-centrism, Dorothea asks Tantripp to prepare for a lighter mourning. If Tantripp, who "would never have found the clue to this mystery" (788), had had more insight, she would have found that Dorothea's new clothing symbolized the moment of death being overcome by life. It was the sign that the uncrowning of the fool king Casaubon was completed.

5. Will is "an angel of light."

The hero-dragon structure is palpable under the opposition of Will and Casaubon. This old scholar, Will imagines, is a dragon holding the sacrifice between his jaws: ". . . if Mr Casaubon had been a dragon

who had carried her off to his lair with his talons simply and without legal forms, it would have been an unavoidable feat of heroism to release her and fall at her feet." (203) The motif of a hero rescuing a heroine from an enemy is embodied in Will, Dorothea and Casaubon. The light / dark dichotomy insistent throughout the narrative characterizes the conflict between Will and Casaubon. Casaubon, being no longer a comic monster with regenerative power, undergoes a kind of metamorphosis to become a fearful, demonic dragon in the darkness.

"Casaubon the king of darkness":

With his taper stuck before him he forgot the absence of windows, and in bitter manuscript remarks on other men's notions about the solar deities, he had become indifferent to the sunlight. (192)

Mr Casaubon. . . stood rayless. (203)

"Will the angel of light":

The first impression on seeing Will occasionally was one of sunny brightness. . . . (203)

. . . the mere chance of seeing Will was like a lunette opened in the wall of her prison, giving her a glimpse of the sunny air. (352)

This Zoroastrian dichotomy shapes Dorothea's behaviour: she insists, "That by desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don't quite know what it is and cannot do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil—widening the skirts of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower." (382) Life with Casaubon was, for Dorothea, "to live more and more in a virtual tomb, where there was the apparatus of a ghastly labour producing what would never see the light." (466) In the grotesque context there exists no simple negation. Everything, high and low, is inexorably united so that there is no absolute negation. Dorothea's recognition of this static dichotomy, contrary to the dynamic upside-down movement of the grotesque, is a crucial sign the narrative of *Middlemarch* swerves from the line the grotesque realism realized itself on, and this change is wholly caused by the angel of light. To her, Will is nothing less than an angel bearing light. In spite of his Bohemian features, Will is alien to the grotesque. Rather, Dionysus-like, he advises Dorothea to enjoy herself while she can, while criticizing her "fanaticism of sympathy." (214)

Above all Will seems to play the roles Savonarola in *Romola* and Felix Holt in *Felix Holt* took and Daniel Deronda, a severe angel, in *Daniel Deronda* was to take. They all serve for heroines to awake from their illusory ego-centrism and move toward altruism. He is no friend to such grotesqueries as a fool king or a *puer senex* and duly attempts to extinguish them. The "Quixotic enthusiasm" (411) of Dorothea is an alien feeling to him. With more common-sense than Celia, he criticizes Casaubon's paranoiac study and Dorothea's "love of extremes," (9) and this act prevents the grotesque, which they are an expression of, from taking the lead. All the events and the characters in the novel, Will seems to think, should serve for the narrative's telos: the heroine's awakening. Those which do not serve for that purpose are all dismissed as a marginal, a surplus. What Bakhtin attempted in his book was to revalue this marginal, this surplus in the historic context of the Renaissance.

This paper began by exploring the grotesque features in *Middlemarch* but closes by concluding that what interests in *Middlemarch* is not so much the fragments of the grotesque realism it is strewn with as the way in which the grotesque feature comes to be rendered powerless.

The feeling of regeneration Silas Marner fully experienced did not happen to the following heroes. After Silas, George Eliot's novels are characterized by the dichotomous light / dark structures. Regenerative feeling is experienced successively by Romola, Esther, Dorothea and Gwendolen under the disguise of the moralistic awakening. On the other hand each story has a kind of hell and a fool king in it, Tito, Mr and Mrs Transome, Casaubon and Grandcourt, who are the inhabitants of Kayser's grotesque rather than

Bakhtin's. The ambivalent death / life image is irretrievably divided there.

The dark side of the grotesque is exclusively retained by such demonic characters as Grandcourt and the regenerative powers inherent in the grotesque are transformed into a moralised victory. The more this division is stressed, the less attractive the protagonists become. It is, then, no wonder that Daniel Deronda, the successor to Will, loses reality, being criticized by one of the characters of Henry James as having "no blood in his body."; "He is not a man at all."³² Bakhtin traces the fate of the once festive grotesque of the Renaissance through the seventeenth century and deplors:

. . . in the process of degeneration and disintegration the positive pole of grotesque realism (the second link of becoming) drops out and is replaced by moral sentimentousness and abstract concepts. What remains is nothing but a corpse, old age deprived of pregnancy, equal to itself alone; it is alienated and torn away from the whole in which it had been linked to that other, younger link in the chain of growth and development. The result as a broken grotesque figure, the demon of fertility with phallus cut off and belly crushed.³³

This was exactly the case with George Eliot. The "positive pole of grotesque realism", which was strongly retained in *Silas Marner*, came to degenerate in the later heroes of George Eliot's novels. With this in mind, Pulcheria's phrase "He is not a man at all" has a peculiar relevant ring to our discussion. "A corpse, old age deprived of pregnancy" is particularly apt for Casaubon and Featherstone. And Dorothea's rebirth is "replaced by moral sentimentousness and abstract concepts," and is transformed into a moralised awakening. Finally, Will, devoid of the regenerating power proper to the grotesque, is no longer "a man at all" with his "phallus cut off."

※This is a revised and enlarged version of the paper read at the 59th General Meeting of the English Literary Society of Japan held at Chuo Univesity on May 24, 1987. The original title was "Middlemarch ni okeru Grotesque Realism."

Notes

1. In a paper in which such an ambiguous concept as the grotesque occupies the core of the discussion, it would be necessary first to specify at what level the term is used. Starting from the original notion employed to explain the decorations of Emperor Nero's Domus Aurea, the grotesque seems to have proliferated into almost all genres of art. Geoffrey Galt Harpham, referring to the difficulty of defining the protean nature of the grotesque, lists its relevant fields: the decadent, the baroque, the metaphysical, the absurd, the surreal, the primitive; irony, satire, caricature, parody; the Feast of Fools, Carnival, the Dance of Death . . ." (*On the Grotesque*, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982, xvii) As for the process of the grotesque's modulation from the Renaissance, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Cambridge: The M. I. T. Press, 1968), 1-58; Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *On the Grotesque*, 23-47. The basic sources I referred to with regard to the nature of the grotesque in this paper are Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* and Wolfgang Kayser, *The Grotesque*, trans. Ulrich Weisstein (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1981). As for the application of the grotesque for the literary analysis I owe much to the works of Richard Pearce, *Stages of the Clown* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1970) and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *On the Grotesque*, which respectively dealt with Dostoevsky, Kafka, Dickens, Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, Burroughs, Bellow, John Hawkes, Ralph Ellison, Samuel Beckett (dealt by Pearce), and Emily Brontë, Poe, Thomas Mann, Conrad (by Harpham).
2. This phrase was coined by Mikhail Bakhtin to specify the aesthetic principle underlying Rabelais's fictional world. In his *Rabelais and His World* Bakhtin denotes the most fundamental of "grotesque

- realism" as the material bodily principle which opposes definitively to that of "naturalist empiricism." See *Rabelais and His World*, 18, 52.
3. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 24.
 4. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 47.
 5. For example, see Eiichi Hara, "Dickens Carnival: Bernaby Rudge Saidoku," *The Rising Generation*, 129 (1983 / 4): 470-4; Graham McMaster, "Harry Richmond: Meredith's Unwritten Attack on Victorian Legitimacy," *Poetica*, 24 (1986): 64-85. In the latter article Richmond Roy's claim to the crown is interpreted as the mock-crowning of a fool.
 6. David Garroll, ed. and introd., *George Eliot: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 16.
 7. Harpham, 74.
 8. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 50.
 9. Barbara Hardy, "The Moment of Disenchantment in Eliot's Novels," *RES*, NS 5 (1954): 256-64; David Carroll, "An Image of Disenchantment in the Novels of George Eliot," *RES*, NS 11 (1960): 29-41.
 10. Hardy, 29.
 11. *Middlemarch*, ed. David Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 205. All references to this edition will be hereafter incorporated within the text, with page number given in parentheses.
 12. *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954), III, 366.
 13. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. and ed. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984), 124.
 14. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 19.
 15. As for the incorporation of the festive custom into comedy, see C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1959).
 16. My essay "Silas Marner ni okeru Grotesque Realism," *Mukogawa Literary Review*, 23 (1987), 23-35 treats Silas as a fool king in the context of "grotesque realism."
 17. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 19.
 18. As for the regenerating nature inherent to the abuse, see Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 197f.
 19. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 39.
 20. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1966), 15. Cited in Harpham, 49.
 21. The fusion of the pagan and Christian elements is strongly embodied in the figure of Romola. See Felicia Bonaparte, *The Triptych and the Cross: The Central Myths of George Eliot's Poetic Imagination* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1979).
 22. Harpham, xv, 6, 8.
 23. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 47.
 24. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 25.
 25. *Silas Marner* ed. Q. D. Leavis (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1967), 69.
 26. A man pregnant with something is not so fantastic. According to Bakhtin, a scene in commedia dell'arte where a strutter cannot speak out a difficult word corresponds to the scene of childbirth: "He is pregnant, bearing the word that he is unable to deliver. . . . Harlequin's gesture is also quite obvious: he helps to deliver the word, and the word is actually born." (*Rabelais and His World*, 308f.) Silas Marner also was assisted by a midwife-like Dolly Winthrop.
 27. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 50.
 28. See note 20.
 29. Trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), 95.

30. See Curtius, 101—5.
31. Harpham, 58.
32. Henry James, "Daniel Deronda: A Converstiaon," reprinted in F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972), 293, 288.
33. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 53.

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