

SHIRON 試論

Essays in English Language and Literature

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Synopses

Theatrum Mundi Resurrecta:
Shakespeare and
W. B. Yeats in 'Easter 1916'
and *The Dreaming of*
Bones

MIKI IWATA
Page 1

As the words 'A terrible beauty' well illustrate, W. B. Yeats's 'Easter 1916' is an extremely tense poem in which conflicting ideas are tightly compacted. The poem oscillates between admiration for and doubts about the Easter Rising, as well as between extroverted commitment to and introverted mystification of the event. What condenses these two different attitudes into a poem is the idea of the theatre of the world, a literary convention in which the whole world is regarded as the equivalent of a stage and all humanity as players.

However, histrionic metaphors in 'Easter 1916' are not necessarily used to resolve these contradictions, but rather function to reveal the poet's divided mind. Yeats's assumption in the first verse that life is a farce provides a good example: on the one hand, after facing the catastrophic Rising, he is made to change his opinion and find a new meaning in human life thanks to the nationalists' activism. On the other, the metaphor of life as a 'casual comedy' also rebounds from the poet's side onto the activists', especially John MacBride in the second verse, and consequently, casts a dark shadow on the justification for the Rising. Divided between these two positions, offering no resolution in the last stanza, the poet leaves judgment to 'Heaven' and contents himself with murmuring the names of the executed, as if heaven were the author and the poet merely an actor reading given lines. What is emphasized here is the generative process of the antinomic 'terrible beauty' rather than an opinion about the rights and wrongs of the matter.

Yeats's lifelong attachment to Shakespeare seems to have helped put the *Theatrum Mundi* convention to good use. Yeats was dissatisfied with the utilitarian interpretation of Shakespeare of his time and rejected attempts to attach morals to *King Lear* or *Richard II*. According to Yeats, what *King Lear* describes is not merely the tragedy of each individual: beyond the tragic fates of Lear, Gloucester, and many other characters, the play generates a more pervasive tragicity in which all humanity must suffer. Calling this all-

encompassing atmosphere 'the emotion of multitude', Yeats associates Shakespeare with ancient magician-poets who also functioned as shamans in the pre-modern world. Writing is, as it were, a magical art by which a poet burns out every particular and extracts a 'pure, unmixed passion' that can epitomize the whole world. This process of alchemical transformation is at the heart of Yeats's *Theatrum Mundi* as represented in 'Easter 1916'. Importantly, while Yeats regarded his ideas on Shakespeare and drama as a rejection of the ideas of his contemporaries, they are in fact forerunners of Shakespeare criticism in the mid-twentieth century, including those of writers such as Frances Yates who rediscovered the social importance of Elizabethan occult philosophy in *The Theatre of the World* (1969).

These ideas are more clearly expressed in Yeats's *The Dreaming of the Bones*, a Noh play which has the same theme as 'Easter 1916'. The play apparently contrasts a fugitive nationalist who took part in the Easter Rising with a ghostly couple who in life unintentionally triggered off Ireland's subordination. However, the magical atmosphere of the play dissolves any ostensible confrontation between them, and the play focuses instead on a nightmarish process of eternal recurrence in which the offending transform themselves into the offended, without any final or absolute value.

Yeats's dramaturgy is reminiscent of Jan Kott's reading of Shakespeare. Comparing *King Lear* and Beckett's plays, Kott points out the *Theatrum Mundi* convention and the absurd can be seen in Shakespeare. His argument is true of *The Dreaming of the Bones* as well. Mid-twentieth century readings of Shakespeare retrospectively discovered an absurdity in Shakespeare's plays similar to that of Beckett's. I conclude that Yeats's inheritance from Shakespeare functions in fact as a bridge between the two playwrights.

Gaze and Counter-Gaze
 Inside a Pyramidal
 Structure in William
 Golding's *The Pyramid*

YASUNORI SUGIMURA
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In *The Pyramid* by William Golding, patriarchy aided by technology pervades a community named Stilbourne as a power of surveillance, with its voyeuristic eyes upon whoever threatens the stability founded on the discriminatory structure of patriarchy and technocracy. However, these eyes are confronted with other eyes gazing back. In the pyramidal caste-structure of Stilbourne, which depends for its stability on discrimination, those regarded as a menace to the structure are unreasonably oppressed. These victims' privacy is wholly exposed to the public even though they are confined to their own houses. The one-way gaze, however, necessarily meets with a dark spot which refuses symbolization by adversely gazing back at the subject. The inquisitive townspeople in Stilbourne, who pry into others' affairs, are gazed back at by others through the curtains. Oliver's voyeuristic scrutiny of Miss Dawlish's dark hall is met by 'two disparate eyes of faint light,' by the furious eyes of a bust of Beethoven, and by the red eye of the fire. Oliver's father, who has been observing the lovemaking between Oliver and Evie, is peeped at from behind by Oliver standing in a blind corner. On stage, Claymore and Imogen are met by the gaze of the audience below in the darkness. In Stilbourne, monitoring activities are eventually baffled by a 'counter-gaze' from an invisible dark spot.

The physical disruption of the viewers' gaze is what Jacques Lacan calls 'the real,' which resists symbolization. The 'real' assumes the character of 'the semiotic,' which, Julia Kristeva argues, has its origin in the pre-Oedipal phase when the child is not yet separated from the mother. She further argues that music is constructed mainly on the basis of the semiotic. The symbolic based on patriarchal and technocratic ideologies often represses both femininity and musicality as 'defilements,' but they react against this symbolic order. The dark and un-symbolizable spot is concealed or invested with ghosts. However, this spot occasionally threatens those who exorcize the ghosts and consolidate the symbolic system of the social pyramid of Stilbourne. The dark spot and the counter-gaze chase the narrator wherever he may go and however much he tries to concentrate on symbolically ascending the technocratic pyramid in his technologically-advanced car.

Dining with Dickens in
Trinidad : Meals and
Meaning in V. S. Naipaul's
A House for Mr Biswas

PAUL VLITOS
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'I might adapt Dickens to Trinidad', the young V.S. Naipaul wrote, 'but it seemed impossible that the life I knew in Trinidad could ever be turned into a book.' This essay focuses on the Nobel Prize-winning author's best-known novel, *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961). The essay explores the ways in which the anxieties Naipaul describes are reflected in the novel, which is often described as his most 'Dickensian'.

Naipaul read the novels of Charles Dickens as a young man growing up in Trinidad and his account of doing so describes the difficulties he encountered in adapting the novels to his own frame of reference. It is the material content of Dickens's work which proves the greatest obstacle to Naipaul's attempts to reconcile Dickens and Trinidad, and which therefore provides the focus of my essay. The essay concentrates on Naipaul's representations of food, and suggests that these are particularly revealing both about Naipaul's relationship with Dickens, and about his relationship to Trinidad.

I want to claim two roles for food in *A House for Mr Biswas*. Firstly, that it is through food and what people eat that the novel explores the racial heterogeneity of Trinidadian society and the often fraught questions of ethnic and national identity in this setting. Secondly, it is the act of writing about food by which the novel engages with the difficulties of adapting Dickens to such a society. I must also, of course, establish what it means (at least for Naipaul) to write like Dickens. I will illustrate my argument by comparing the role of food in *A House for Mr Biswas* and in *Great Expectations*.

The essay is in three parts. The first section looks at the role of food in *Great Expectations* in order to explore more closely the question of what it might mean for Naipaul to try to write like Dickens. The second section offers a brief outline of Trinidad and its history, as well as Naipaul's non-fictional comments on this topic. Having looked at the role of food in *Great Expectations*, the essay will then be in a position to ask where the mismatch Naipaul perceives between writing like Dickens and writing about Trinidad comes from, and what conclusions can be drawn from it. I will ask these questions in the third section of the essay, which

will furthermore attempt to demonstrate my claims for the importance of the role of food and eating in *A House for Mr Biswas*.

Theatrum Mundi Resurrecta:
Shakespeare and W. B. Yeats in
'Easter 1916' and *The Dreaming of the Bones*

Miki Iwata

Despite his repeated assessments of the importance of his plays to an understanding of his work as a whole, present-day critics of W. B. Yeats are just as likely to ignore this aspect of his writing as were those who in 1923 awarded Yeats the Nobel Prize in Literature not for his drama but 'for his always inspired poetry, which in a highly artistic form gives expression to the spirit of a whole nation'.¹ Nevertheless, Yeats's drama in fact bridges the apparent opposition in his poetry between introvert mysticism and extrovert nationalism. Readers and critics, confounded by the complicated relationship between mysticism and politics in Yeats, may be tempted to conclude, with Edward W. Said, that 'Yeats's whole system of cycles, pernes, and gyres in any case seems important only as it symbolizes his understandable attempts to lay hold of an extremely distant and extremely orderly reality felt as a refuge from the colonial turbulence before his eyes' (93). Said's interpretation divides the two clearly into the means and the end and, consequently, subordinates Yeats's spiritualism to his commitment to the political reality of contemporary Ireland. However, this classification does not always hold good in his works. For example, *The King's Threshold*, in which Seanchan, a legendary bard in ancient Ireland, starves himself to death in protest against the neglect of poets' rights at Court, can be accounted a demonstration of cultural nationalism in opposition to Britain's rule by force. But actually Yeats himself declared that the theme of the play was the defence of pure art as distinct from the madness of contemporary politics.² To take another instance, if we regard the nightmarish silhouette of the Old Man's dead mother in *Purgatory* solely as a symbol of the Irish

Ascendancy's eugenic fears after independence, the play's significance as a precursor of Samuel Beckett's theatre will be lost. Also in 'The Second Coming', which Said probably had in mind in the previous quotation, the poet's apocalyptic tremor is in fact an Eliotian attempt to create a collage using images from Virgil, Shakespeare, and P. B. Shelley's 'Ozymandias'. Thus, it is manifestly wrong to explain away Yeats's occultism as a tool for expressing voices from his colonized island. I would like to show, in the following argument, that the fundamental antinomy between mysticism and politics in Yeats can best be described in terms of *Theatrum Mundi*, 'the Theatre of the World', and that his integration of Shakespearean dramaturgy into his work constitutes an important undercurrent in the history of Modernist drama, although this has not been given due recognition by critics. The focus of this paper will be on two works from late 1910s, 'Easter 1916' and *The Dreaming of Bones*.

'Easter 1916' is contained in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921) and was one of the primary causes for Yeats's winning the Nobel Prize. The interrelationship between politics and occultism in the poem is especially intimate and intricate. What acts as a bridge between these two apparently dissonant notes is the idea of 'the theatre of the world' inlaid in the poem. The topos that the world is but a stage and that a stage can therefore stand for all the world is neither infrequent nor new in the traditions of literature. The idea was widespread in Elizabethan drama and evoked distinctively by Shakespeare. *Theatrum Mundi* is a highly comprehensive idea and, by epitomizing the whole world as a stage, can be used to hold a variety of contradictions magically together. Shakespeare was a lifelong favourite of and even a model for Yeats, who often referred to *Hamlet* or *King Lear* in his critical essays and letters. It appears that Yeats adapted the idea of the *Theatrum Mundi* for his own use in the poem. Histrionic metaphors in 'Easter 1916' help represent the fundamental antinomy in the poet's mind which is succinctly expressed in the phrase '[a] terrible beauty'. In *The Dreaming of the Bones* (1919), a play that also has the Easter Rising as its theme, the divided voice of the poet, one a public figure who feels social responsibility for the uprising and the other a private individual, is more fully articulated. The inheritance from Shakespeare functions powerfully in some of Yeats's works, and it anticipates, or is rather an undercurrent in, the rediscovery of Shakespeare in connection with the rise of the absurd drama that occurred a generation later, in the mid-twentieth century.

I: Histrionic Metaphors in ‘Easter 1916’

‘Perhaps the English committees would never have sent you my name’, said Yeats, at the lecture in commemoration of his winning the Nobel Prize in Literature 1923, ‘if I had written no plays, no dramatic criticism, if my lyric poetry had not a quality of speech practiced upon the stage [...]’ (*Autobiographies* 559). As I have mentioned before, his speculation reveals an interpretative gap between the giver and the receiver of the award; while the selection committee appreciates his poetry and its sophisticated cultural nationalism, the poet himself rather holds that the quintessence of his art, including poetry, is linked to its dramatic elements. However, it should be noted that Yeats’s idea of drama is far more comprehensive than what modern people usually assume drama to be. Juxtaposing ‘plays’ and ‘lyric poetry’ which has ‘a quality of speech practiced upon the stage’, Yeats seems to imagine Elizabethan playwrights as his model, who were always called not ‘playwrights’ but ‘poets’ and who observed no clear distinction between plays and poems. In the days when the bardic tradition persisted, they were more or less the same in that both poems and plays were to be heard rather than to be read and were therefore naturally accompanied by a performative element. Yeats’s speech shows that his work aims at reclaiming this performative element for modern poetry.

Thus, ‘Easter 1916’ represents the shock of the Easter Rising in theatrical terms: an apparently binomial opposition of a shift away from the comedy of everyday life towards the tragedy of a catastrophic moment in history. At the beginning of the poem, the poet recollects the calmer days when he kept moderate company with his Dublin friends, who have turned out to be full-blooded participants in the Rising. The life before the Rising depicted in the first verse is full of ‘polite meaningless words’ and the repetition of the phrase makes its meaninglessness still more conspicuous.

I have passed with a nod of the head
 Or polite meaningless words,
 Or have lingered awhile and said
 Polite meaningless words,
 [.....]
 Being certain that they and I
 But lived where motley is worn:

All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born. (5-8 & 13-16)³

The poet assumed that he and 'they' belonged to the same sphere, that is, life like a commonplace farce with hackneyed phrases. The deterministic and static tone used to describe the past acts as an induction into the dynamic of a 'terrible beauty' born at that present moment. The stillness of the past is in such striking contrast with the motive energy of the verb 'is born' in the present tense that the poet appears forced to alienate himself from them, to reconsider his own idea of the world as a comic theatre. However, at the same time, the apparent binary opposition of tragedy replacing comedy is dissolving itself, for the poet's idea that man only 'lived where motley is worn' is strongly reminiscent of *King Lear*. When deserted, Lear comes across the blind Gloucester who has just attempted suicide in Act IV Scene vi, and in grim despair he says to the earl, 'When we are born, we cry that we are come / To this great stage of fools' (180-1). The echo of *King Lear* casts a dark shadow on the poet's remark about the world as a farce and undermines the binarism of comedy and tragedy. The poet's pessimistic resignation that a life is no more than a poor comedy can be tragic in itself.

Just as Yeats deconstructs his assumption of the world as comic theatre, the tragic epiphany brought about by the Easter Rising is also given a contrary connotation. Listing the names of Irish nationalists such as Patrick Pearse and Thomas MacDonagh, who both took part in the Rising, the poet finally and reluctantly comes to John MacBride, the first husband of Maud Gonne. Although complaining that he was a drunken thug who did wrong to Maud and her daughter Iseult, the poet nevertheless explains why he includes the man's name:

He, too, has resigned his part
In the casual comedy;
He, too, has been changed in his turn,
Transformed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born. (36-40)

The lines have a double meaning, just as in the first verse: 'the casual comedy' parallels the poet's understanding of the world 'where motley is worn'. Therefore, the lines apparently suggest that even MacBride, who had been only a lout in the comedy of quiet days, transformed himself into a heroic figure when a catastrophic and tragic moment of

history called for him. Nevertheless, the very same lines also indicate that MacBride was just one of fortune's fools, made to play an unsuitable role in the dysteleological course of history. In this reading, 'the casual comedy' stands for the Easter Rising. One might consider the fact that Yeats draws an analogy between a nationalistic activist and a comic figure in other poems as well. In the fifth part of 'Meditations in Time of Civil War' (1928), 'The Road at My Door', for instance, the poet portrays an irregular of the volunteer army as 'A heavily-built Falstaffian man', who seems to think 'to die by gunshot were / The finest play under the sun' (2 & 4-5). Here, by taking a *miles gloriosus* figure into the poem, the poet deprives the Civil War of its righteousness not only because he is completely different from a Cuchulain-like heroic soldier, but also because Falstaff's famous definition of honour as a mere word casts a skeptical shadow on the idealistic view of the War of Independence. The same is true of MacBride; he is another *miles gloriosus* who reveals the dubiousness of idealism by his own defects. Actually, compared with the rather flat homage to Pearse or MacDonagh, the ambiguous attitude towards MacBride creates a stronger tension between praise and condemnation. A similar effect is achieved in the lines depicting Constance Markiewicz.

Countess Constance Markiewicz, who in fact received a reprieve from execution because of her sex, is treated with much lamentation by the poet. He grieves that a noble woman should degrade herself by espousing the 'unwomanly' movement and associating with political activists beneath her. Regretting her younger days which were lost in her 'ignorant good-will', he contrasts a graceful girl with an obstinate liberationist woman in rather misogynistic tones.

That woman's day were spent
 In ignorant good-will,
 Her nights in argument
 Until her voice grew shrill.
 What voice more sweet than hers
 When, young and beautiful,
 She rode to harriers? (17-23)

It is noteworthy that the poet chooses to emphasize her voice as the distinct characteristic of her change in the following two points: for one thing, whereas the change of the worldview as a commonplace comedy into a terrible beauty is subtly insinuated, the change of her sweet voice into a shrill one is given more clearly negative implica-

tions. This functions to lessen the force of the refrain, 'A terrible beauty is born', when it returns in the second stanza. For another, this voice is importantly connected with the poem's concern with passing on and immortalizing the names of compatriots, after the model of the bardic tradition in ancient Ireland. Thus, the political orator and the poet are bound together by their common office of addressing themselves to the public. However, at the same time, the woman's shrill voice reveals a fundamental conflict between the two as the poet shows in the last stanza that poets' voice should take a way other than that of stump orators.

O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild. (59-64)

Poets are not to speak loudly and bellicosely like radical activists, but to speak softly like a mother talking to her child. Comparing the messenger of the executed to the bewildered mother of a wild child indirectly reveals a viewpoint that regards the Easter Rising no better than a boys' blustering uproar—hardly unqualified admiration for their achievement. The tone becomes unmistakably more skeptical towards the end of the poem. After entrusting Heaven with the answer to that unanswerable question, 'O when may it suffice?', the poet offers another three interrogatives: 'What is it but nightfall?' (65), 'Was it needless death after all?' (67), and 'what if excess of love / Bewildered them till they died?' (72-3). Among these four, the poet can only answer the second question about nightfall or death; he answers, 'No, no, not night but death' (66). His clumsy, even obsessive repetition of the monosyllabic 'no' and 'not', suggests that he is uncertain of his own words at bottom, and trying to persuade himself. When it comes to the last question, he appears to lose not only the means but also the will to answer. Immediately after he mentions the last question, he abruptly changes the subject and enumerates the names of the executed. In this context, the third refrain in the final lines of the poem has still less power as the slogan for a new era. As the description of the poets' duty to 'murmur' their names effectively controls the following lines, the tone of the last stanza must be low and confused. Thus, as Declan Kiberd points out, the last two lines

‘would be voiced hesitantly by a skilled reader’ (216).

Nevertheless, importantly, the skeptical atmosphere effused from ‘Easter 1916’ should be described not so much as criticism or denunciation as the product of puzzlement. The poet can no more criticize the participants in the Rising than praise them, and merely hands over the problem of judgment to heaven. To resolve the fearful doubts about what will be the consequences of the event, or whether their blood was shed in vain is, in his words, ‘Heaven’s part’, and the poet’s ‘part’ is just to whisper their names. Here, his mode of expression is again histrionic; he compares himself to an actor reading his part. History is an enormous play written by heaven and the poet is an actor who should speak its lines to the audience or all people: this is Yeats’s version of ‘the theatre of the world’ inscribed in ‘Easter 1916’.

As is suggested by a letter to Sean O’Casey, dated on April 20, 1928, Yeats may have taken this idea from Shakespeare and maintained it as the prop for his dramatic movement. Though he took O’Casey’s side when the Dublin audience rioted against *The Plough and the Stars* in 1926, he confesses in this letter that he is not happy with O’Casey’s new play, *The Silver Tasse*, and then implies that the Abbey Theatre would reject the play for performance.⁴ O’Casey seemed to him to be indulging too much in the expression of his ‘opinions’ about World War I. According to Yeats, *The Silver Tasse* has nothing substantial beyond the theme’s novelty and some experimental passages. He says that he has perceived O’Casey’s earnest endeavour to declare his views about the matter of political importance as well as to search for an innovative production of drama, and goes on to declare that it is these very things which detract from the play. Good drama should be produced, as Shakespeare’s plays are, more naturally and spontaneously:

Dramatic action is a fire that must burn up everything but itself; there should be no room in a play for anything that does not belong to it; the whole history of the world must be reduced to wallpaper in front of which the characters must pose and speak.

Among the things that dramatic action must burn up are the author’s opinions [...]. Do you suppose for one moment that Shakespeare educated Hamlet and King Lear by telling them what he thought and believed? As I see it, Hamlet and Lear educated Shakespeare, and I have no doubt that in the process of that education he found out that he was an altogether different man to what he thought himself, and had altogether different beliefs. [...] [A]nd that is why the ancient philosophers thought a poet or dramatist Daimon-possessed. (*Letters* 741)

Yeats defines literature as the accumulation of a vast range of things—such as history, politics, technical matters in writing, and even the author's self—which remain unburned through the spiritual flame of the act of writing. He recapitulates the process of this artistic transformation with the word 'Daimon-possessed'. While his model is the transformation that Shakespeare would have experienced while writing *Hamlet* or *King Lear*, he concludes his reasoning by emphasizing poets' position as a shaman in ancient Europe. In Yeats's argument, Shakespeare is directly connected with the pre-modern magician-poet. Unfortunately O'Casey, who could not get along with these ideas about the magic of self-effacement and transformation, left Dublin for London and never returned to the Abbey. It is true that Yeats's literary belief is hard to accept, but the key to the antinomies in his works lies here. Writing is a trancelike action in which every aspect of life—including political cataclysms or the writer's private thoughts—is merged and sublimated into a work of art. Yeats attaches more importance to that act itself than to any one of the elements.

II: The Alchemy of the Theatre of the World

Such literary alchemy works well in 'Easter 1916' to metamorphose everyday life into the 'terrible beauty', with the help of the philosopher's stone represented in the poem. It was natural for Yeats to adapt the occult arts to symbolize the impact of the Easter Rising. The revolt reminded him of Maud Gonne with whom he had been renewing his intimacy through their psychic sympathies. She frequently saw visions at the time and was active in holding spiritual intercourse with him. A letter from London to Lady Gregory dated May 11, 1916, just about two weeks after the Rising, relates the circumstances of the time, including his first response to the Rising and the seeds of 'Easter 1916', his beliefs about literature, and complicated relationship with Maud Gonne. Above all, the letter is important because it is here that the words 'terrible beauty' appear for probably the first time:

I am trying to write a poem on the men executed—'terrible beauty has been born again.' If the English Conservative party had made a declaration that they did not intend to rescind the Home Rule Bill there would have been no rebellion. I had no idea that any public event could so deeply move me—and I am very despondent

about the future. At the moment I feel that all the work of years has been overturned, all the bringing together of classes, all the freeing of Irish literature and criticism from politics. Maud Gonne reminds me that she saw the ruined houses about O'Connell Street and the wounded and dying lying about the streets, in the first few days of the war. I perfectly remember the vision and my making light of it and saying that if a true vision at all it could only have a symbolized meaning. This is the only letter I have had from her since she knew of the Rebellion. I have sent her the papers every day. I do not yet know what she feels about her husband's death. Her letter was written before she heard of it. Her main thought seems to be 'tragic dignity has returned to Ireland.' (*Letters* 613)

In the early part of the letter, Yeats expresses his frank opinion about the Rising, which is not favourable. He fears that the activist uprising would blot out intellectual and artistic independence from politics and reduce his efforts to nothing. This has badly disturbed his confidence in what he had been doing. Wondering that 'any public event' should shake him so much, he betrays his doubts not only about the justification of the Rising but of his own principles.

The ambiguity in his assessment of the event increases when he refers to Maud Gonne, who had confessed her spiritual marriage to him in her vision, but interpreted the Rising in a different way from him. His ideas seem to flounder around his mental identification with and concurrent alienation from her. She regards the uprising as a psychic epiphany, for, though she was in Paris at the time when the Easter Rising began, she had a vivid vision of the war breaking out in Dublin. Her belief was that the Rising would trigger a revival of the heroic age in Ireland. It was this kind of identification of the executed with the ancient legendary heroes of Ireland that the Irish public came to hold ever more firmly after their initial antipathy to the leaders of the Rising. This fervent attitude led the nationalists to the Civil War and made Oliver Sheppard's statue 'The Death of Cuchulain', which had actually been made around 1912, being moved into the Dublin GPO as a memorial to the executed.⁵ Yeats is rather dubious about such an occultist interpretation as Gonne's, commenting 'that if a true vision at all it could only have a symbolized meaning'. However, while he dismisses her dream as too directly realistic for an esoteric vision, his concern over the Rising in connection with her is actually highly realistic. He is deeply anxious about how she would feel at the death of MacBride and diligently sending her newspapers in response to her request for news. One of the factors that induced Yeats to write

'Easter 1916' was undoubtedly an attempt to express his sympathy with her at this crucial juncture. As Elizabeth Butler Cullingford points out, ' "Easter 1916", a political elegy, is also a poem about love' (121). The work is deeply shadowed with Gonne behind the description of Markiewicz. Translocating the problem of gender hierarchy into that of the political disturbance, Yeats tries to reorganize the appropriate relationship between himself, Maud, and Iseult in the poem. This motive exerted a considerable influence on the style of 'Easter 1916' at the initial stage.

The sentence 'terrible beauty has been born again' seems to have derived from Gonne's words, 'tragic dignity has returned to Ireland', and, consequently, takes over its political principles.⁶ The adverb 'again' indicates that the terrible beauty had already existed once and now has come once more, which follows the above-mentioned idea of assimilating the Volunteers with the Irish legendary heroes. The present-perfect tense is so syntactically natural that the impact of the oxymoron is rather dissipated. Nevertheless, the Cornell Yeats edition of *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* shows that, when he began writing the poem, he adopted 'A terrible beauty is born' from the first draught. This astonishing development gives the 'terrible beauty' the sense of nowness and of timelessness at once so that the line creates the foundation of the *Theatrum Mundi*. For, the present tense of 'is born' focuses on the act of the generation of the terrible beauty—the alchemical integration of terror and beauty—rather than the 'terrible beauty' itself. What the poet sees behind the catastrophic change is the act itself by which a particular event at the contemporary period should be identified with the war in the heroic age, and further, transferred to eternity. In 'Easter 1916', a variety of ideas such as the policies of the activists, the artistic principles of the poet, and the troubles of love, comes and goes in a fugal manner, but they all converge at the refrain into the main theme: the wonder at the act of transformation. The idea of the theatre of the world that brings all the world to the stage is the best means for Yeats to pursue his theme.

The subject of alchemical transformation is expressed by the image of a stone in the poem. The indomitable hearts of the nationalists are compared to 'a stone' in the third verse, which works as a symbol of magical transformation.

Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter seem

Enchanted to a stone
 To trouble the living stream.
 The horse that comes from the road,
 The rider, the birds that range
 From cloud to tumbling cloud,
 Minute by minute they change;
 A shadow of cloud on the stream
 Changes minute by minute;
 [.]
 Minute by minute they live:
 The stone's in the midst of all. (41-50 & 55-6)

By using an elaborate paradox, the poet ingeniously indicates the antinomy of 'A terrible beauty' in this stanza as well. As he repeatedly insists, the stream of life will never stop by its nature. That things should change is the only unchanging thing in this world. However, the hearts of the political activists bid defiance to the natural law, chasing 'one purpose alone', and pay no attention to seasonal changes nor the transience of this world. It is ironic that their persistence against any change finally leads to the catastrophe that made the poet mutter, 'All changed, changed utterly'. Importantly, he depicts the mind hardened by radical idealism as 'Enchanted'. His expression of the hearts' crystallization in magical terms can also be seen in the last verse. The fearful doubt 'if excess of love / Bewildered them till they died' insinuates that the Volunteer's action was not so much heroic bravery as a confusion of emotions. In these two lines, the love that would bewilder them seems detached from their general selves. They are victims rather than victors in history, who are not self-directing subjects but the objects of the alchemy of excessive love. Thus, the image of the stone sung in the verse gradually transforms itself as well. Though it first appears as a metaphor for the nationalists' obstinate heart, the stone that is in the midst of all living things in line 56 connotes much more. It finally becomes the philosopher's stone, to use alchemical diction, which is said to have a power of projection, power to change base metals into a precious one. Here it makes every particular matter converge in the idea of the *Theatrum Mundi*. The executed are not makers of history; they are actors who played a frenzied farce given by history in the same way as the poet himself is a player, and it is immaterial to this great act whether each of the players is Pearse, Connolly, or MacBride.

III: Yeats and Shakespeare Criticism in the Mid-Twentieth Century

The attempt to epitomize the whole world in a piece of work is based on pre-modern thought and conflicts with the Cartesian *cogito* which exercised such an inestimable influence on the modern history of ideas in Europe. Yeats, who was among the pioneers who cast doubt on the logo-centrism in western literature, took over the idea of the theatre of the world from Shakespeare. Yeats recollects in *Reveries over Childhood and Youth* (1915) the strong impression made on him by Henry Irving's performance as Hamlet, and, even in 1932, the name of Shakespeare heads Yeats's list made at the request of a publisher to enumerate the writers who had an influence on him. Shakespeare was a model throughout Yeats's literary career. In 1903, when he was launching forth into establishing a national theatre, he analyses his idea in an essay named 'Emotion of Multitude':

I have been thinking a good deal about plays lately, and I have been wondering why I dislike the clear and logical construction which seems necessary if one is to succeed on the modern stage. It came into my head the other day that this construction, which all the world has learnt from France, has everything of high literature except the emotion of multitude [...]. The Shakespearean drama gets the emotion of multitude out of the sub-plot which copies one's body in the firelight. We think of *King Lear* less as the history of one man and his sorrows than as the history of a whole evil time. Lear's shadow is in Gloucester, who also has ungrateful children, and the mind goes on imagining other shadows, shadow beyond shadow, till it has pictured the world. (*Essays* 215)

Yeats in this passage describes the comprehensive worldview that covers *King Lear* as a form of *spiritus mundi*, 'the emotion of multitude'. The tragic fate of Lear is not just his own. It calls for the tragedy of his faithful subject, Gloucester, then for his wronged son Edgar, until each character's tragedy converges on the wholly tragic atmosphere itself. What really matters in *King Lear* is the machinery of 'a whole evil time' in which every one should fall regardless of his virtue or vice.

Yeats deliberately counterposes the Elizabethan worldview with the rise of Cartesian individualism in the seventeenth century in 'The Tragic Theatre', which first appeared in 1910. Admitting that even persons in Shakespeare's plays, especially comic ones like Falstaff,

have their individual characteristics, Yeats argues that it is merely the nature of comedy. While comedy essentially depends on differences among the characters, tragedy is its exact opposite. In tragic scenes like Hamlet asking Horatio, 'Absent thee from felicity awhile', all should be sublimated into 'unmixed passion, "the integrity of fire"' (*Essays* 240).

Tragic art, passionate art, the drowner of dykes, the confounder of understanding, moves us to reverie, by alluring us almost to the intensity of trance. The persons upon the stage, let us say, greatness till they are humanity itself. (*Essays* 245)

According to Yeats, the quintessence of tragedy is that a person on stage should transcend the dykes that separate each individual and become 'Everyman'; and, therefore, the stage should become the whole world. He frequented Stratford-on-Avon in the 1900s and spent much time in the library of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, but contemporary Shakespeare criticism was not satisfactory to him. He felt that the utilitarian Victorian viewpoint tarnished the value of the Bard. For instance, he detested the idea that Shakespeare depicts Richard II as a bad example and gives a moral warning to the audience, maintaining that his theme in *Richard II* is 'the defeat that awaits all, whether they be artist or saint' (*Essays* 106). Yeats thought of his own literary principle as a resistance against the dominant discourse of the European literature of the day. This was indeed an insightful opposition that anticipated the revision of Shakespeare criticism in the mid-twentieth century by critics like Frances Yates.

In *The Theatre of the World* (1969), Yates analyses how the Elizabethan culture and political system were sustained by Renaissance occult philosophy. A human being is a similar figure to the whole universe or the macrocosm, and is, therefore, regarded as the microcosm. The famous drawing of a human body in a circle by Leonard da Vinci illustrates the idea well: a man stretching his limbs exactly fits inside a perfect circle and a square at the same time, both of which are analogues to the macrocosm for their mathematical perfection. The construction of the Elizabethan public theatre was based on this idea, she suggests, so that it became a theatre-in-the-round with a square apron stage. The aim of this kind of theatre is not only to represent the macrocosm in a theatre but also to get the maximum out of the players' abilities to show they also have the microcosm in themselves. In short, the London public theatres 'were actors' theatres,

depending entirely for their effect on the actors, with few or no visual aids' (Yates, *Theatre* 124). The Shakespearean type of theatre, which was 'a predominantly aural theatre, suited to be the vehicle of a great poetic drama', reflects a time when poets, dramatists and actors were yet to be separated and specialized (124). She summarizes the meaning of this kind of theatre by saying: 'The Globe Theatre was a magical theatre, a cosmic theatre, a religious theatre, an actors' theatre, designed to give fullest support to the voices and the gestures of the players as they enacted the drama of the life of man within the Theatre of the World' (189).

Renaissance England must have seemed to Shakespeare as much out of joint as Denmark seemed to Hamlet. To epitomize the world on a stage is paradoxically to sense the crisis of the world's falling asunder; it is also, then, the acrobatic feat of tying up the collapsing world. Taking an instance among others, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* also functions by means of its Neoplatonism as a prop for the reign of Elizabeth I, whose position could be seen as irreconcilable with the establishment in that she was, despite being a woman, the head of a male-oriented, patriarchal hierarchy. Yates concludes that occult philosophy in the Elizabethan age was not an antisocial cult but played an important role in politics and culture during times of public disturbance.

It is curious that the Shakespearean occult philosophy rediscovered in the 1960s by Yates's positivist study of Renaissance history is very similar to what W. B. Yeats had sought for in his dramaturgy more than half a century before. Thinking that a tragedy should dissolve the individualism of modern philosophy into 'unmixed passion', Yeats came to attach great importance to the reinstatement of actors' body in the same way as on the Elizabethan stage. 'Certain Noble Plays of Japan' (1916) shows his attempting to simplify his stage productions when he was engaged on early dance plays like *At the Hawk's Well* and *The Dreaming of the Bones*:

And yet this simplification is not mere economy. For nearly three centuries invention has been making the human voice and the movements of the body seem always less expressive. I have long been puzzled why passages that are moving when read out or spoken during rehearsal seem muffled or dulled during the performance. (*Essays* 222)

In his endeavor to curtail theatrical excess so as to make human voices

and movements richly expressive, he virtually declares that his model is the theatre of three centuries before, that is, the theatre of the English Renaissance. He was introduced to a Japanese dancer, Michio Ito, through Ezra Pound around that time and assigned him the role of the Guardian of the Well in *At the Hawk's Well*, for he was attracted by Ito's dance which seemed 'to recede from us into some more powerful life' (*Essays* 224). His admiration of Ito is based on an atmosphere of esoteric transition from this world into another kind of world.

Yeats's dramatic investigation of Shakespeare and the Japanese Noh makes an important contribution to his poetry and prose as well. Experiencing the fear of the world's disintegration through the great disturbance of the Easter Rising, his idea of the Theatre of the World has restructured itself with regard to contemporaneity, which 'Easter 1916' very well illustrates. While Yeats's worldview in the poem directly goes back to Shakespeare, skipping the rise of individualism in modern Europe, it concurrently confesses a highly contemporary awareness of these issues; much more, it reveals itself to be a harbinger of Shakespeare criticism in the mid-twentieth century.

IV: From Shakespeare—through Yeats—to Beckett

The Dreaming of the Bones plays a correlative part with 'Easter 1916' in relation to the Easter Rising and the *Theatrum Mundi*. Though the play is based on *Nishikigi*, a Noh play by Motokiyo, it sets the scene in Ireland on the night of the Rising so that the same theme as 'Easter 1916', coping with the anxieties of the contemporary world using a pre-modern dramaturgy, can be represented more clearly. As a matter of fact, the play was not performed on stage until 1931; nevertheless, Yeats was convinced of the value of the play. He says to Lady Gregory in a letter dated June 11, 1917, 'I have almost finished my Dervorgilla play [*The Dreaming of the Bones*], I think the best play I have written for years', his only fear about the play being that it may be 'too powerful politically' (*Letters* 626).

In this play, the Young Man who joined the Easter Rising comes across the ghosts of Diamuid and Dervorgilla escaping from Dublin to Co. Clare. The lovers once brought the Normans into Ireland for their love's sake and consequently led Ireland into subordination, and their souls have still lingered in this world by deep remorse for as many as seven centuries. Their souls will be relieved if any living Irish people

should pardon them, but the Young Man rejects the idea, crying 'O, never, never / Shall Diarmuid and Dervorgilla be forgiven' (442). The Young Man, who cuts into the ghost's talk and just repeats the same words of rejection, is an exaggerated caricature of the radical nationalists of the day. According to Harold Bloom, he embodies an evil example of idealism. His mind is full of remorse and hatred for the past, which is the very thing that prevents Ireland from achieving true independence.⁷ However, he is unpleasant rather than evil, and he is even comical at times. He is also interrupted in his speech by the ghost of Diarmuid. The Young Man's declaration of his nationalistic principle is ungenerous to the couple: 'when a man / Is born in Ireland and of Irish stock, / When he takes part against us—' (436). Just as he is about to elaborate on this theme, however, the ghost abruptly offers to show him the way to the hiding place on the hill.

It should be noted here that this stage is constructed according to the manner of Noh and Kyogen, so that the stage is bare without any sign of a hill and the change of places are indicated by the actors' walking around in circles on the empty stage. Their movement may seem ritualistic and magical to the eyes of the audience.⁸ The ghosts are not only the poor souls that plead for help, but also the dangerous spirits that would bewitch human beings. Thus, a utilitarian approach is insufficient to separate good from evil. The youth is a wrongheaded idealist from the viewpoint of the ghosts, but for him, the situation is the opposite, as he cries in the last scene: 'Terrible the temptation and the place!' (444).

Just before the dawn—the time when the ghosts should disappear—they begin their magical dance before the Young Man. Their dance is fundamentally different from that of *Nishikigi*, in which the ghost lovers show the priest a dance of joy celebrating the salvation of their souls. At the climax of their dance, the Young Man cries again his rejection in exactly the same words—'O, never, never / Shall Diarmuid and Dervorgilla be forgiven'. Then, the ghost couple leaves the stage without any satisfaction. Now morning comes, but the encounter will not lead to a future either for the Young Man or for the ghost lovers. He will find a boat of accomplices from the hill and after his escape will pursue the same ideal as before. The ghosts are left to wander around the field, just adding another day to seven hundred years. The ending of *The Dreaming of the Bones* is already suggestive of the obsession with eternal recurrence seen in *The Words upon the Window-Pane* or *Purgatory*. The last song of the Musicians foresees

this tendency in later Yeats:

What finger first began
 Music of a lost kingdom?
 They dream that laughed in the sun,
 Dry bones that dream are bitter,
 They dream and darken our sun. (445)

Distinct from the music in *Nishikigi* or the music of spheres sounding at the climax of romances such as *Pericles* and *The Tempest*, which symbolize reconciliation and harmony, the music of *The Dreaming of the Bones* is that of the dead, the ominous music that bewitches the ears of the living. Nevertheless, the living and the dead are not binary opposites. The dead that ‘are bitter’ now were also the living ‘that laughed in the sun’ once. The connection of the living with the dead helps the audience anticipate that the Young Man too will be dead someday, and then will trouble future generations with his ardent nationalism. The fear of this vicious cycle is correlatively expressed in ‘Easter 1916’, reversing the position of the political activists.

We know their dream; enough
 To know they dreamed and are dead; (70-1)

Whereas the nationalist Young Man is disturbed by the dream of Diamuid and Devorgilla in *The Dreaming of the Bones*, the poet in ‘Easter 1916’ is troubled by the executed who embraced their deaths cherishing the same dream of Irish independence as the volunteer in the play. Though the persons may change, the process itself will never change. What Yeats consistently reflects on through the poem and the play is that, ultimately, ‘what if excess of love / Bewildered them till they died?’ However, there is no answer to this question. The world converging in the two works just demonstrates a relentless process without any judgment that could be a guide for the poet.

Yeats’s ideas about drama are reminiscent of Jan Kott’s interpretation of Shakespeare. Kott’s argument seems also true of *The Dreaming of the Bones*. In *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (1964), Kott investigates the forms of the absurd that Shakespeare and Samuel Beckett have in common. He also points out that ‘Gloucester is Everyman, and the stage becomes the medieval *Theatrum Mundi*’ (146). He maintains, however, that the world epitomized in *King Lear* is not a medieval one in which an Ultimate God sees all. This empty stage of the world in *King Lear* is the earth without heaven: ‘there is nothing,

except the cruel earth' (146).

The blind Gloucester falls over on the empty stage. His suicidal leap is tragic. Gloucester has reached the depths of human misery; so has Edgar, who pretends to be mad Tom in order to save his father. But the pantomime performed by actors on the stage is grotesque, and has something of a circus about it. The blind Gloucester who has climbed a non-existent height and fallen over on flat boards, is a clown. A philosophical buffoonery of the sort found in modern theatre has been performed. (147)

King Lear is a grim apocalypse without God in which everyone turns out to be no more than a clown, playing a philosophical farce. In that it shows an ending to a world devoid of Providence, *King Lear* parallels *Endgame* (1958)⁹. Based on this analogy between the two playwrights, Kott compares Gloucester and Edgar to Didi and Gogo and, further, to Pozzo and Lucky in *Waiting for Godot* (1956). Having fallen down on a bare stage with Lucky in the second act, Pozzo repeatedly cries for help. Gogo, who confused the crier with Godot and is still uncertain of his identity, calls out to him in the names of 'Abel' and 'Cain'. Taking his desperate cry as an answer to his call, the vagrant says to his mate, Didi, 'He's all humanity' (78). As he puts it, Pozzo here is Everyman, as is Gloucester, though Pozzo's situation is focused more on buffoonery than on tragedy.

As Kott rightly points out, many of Beckett's philosophical lines, in fact, follow Shakespeare. However, it is important that the Shakespeare he followed is the Shakespeare Yeats inherited directly from the Elizabethan age and revived in the early twentieth century. It has been known that the shadow of Yeats can be seen, though not obviously, in Beckett's drama in various ways: for example, Hamm's bitter cry at the opening of *Endgame*, 'Can there be misery—(he yawns)—loftier than mine?' (93), is a parody of Yeats's version of *King Oedipus* whose performance he saw during the last two years of his student days, and ... *but the clouds...* (1977) is titled after the last verse of 'The Tower' (1926). Beckett, who was a regular visitor to the Abbey Theatre in his college days at Trinity, especially favoured Yeats's later plays including *At the Hawk's Well* and *The Words upon the Window-Pane*.¹⁰ More importantly, according to James Knowlson's biography, the years Beckett frequented the Abbey were also the times when he 'completed two full years of English literature,' and 'laid the groundwork for his close knowledge of Shakespeare's major plays' (69). As studying

classics and watching contemporary plays occurred to him concurrently, it is no wonder that he could take in the latter's interpretation of the former.

Gogo's words, 'He's all humanity', are, as it were, Beckett's version of 'the emotion of multitude'. The mid-twentieth rereading of dramatic tradition from Shakespeare to Beckett retrospectively discovered the absurdity in the Bard's plays; but it is misleading to think that the two had been directly connected over three hundred and fifty years. Yeats's response to Shakespeare and his works during the politically turbulent years of 1916 through 1919 had revitalized a dramatic tradition and definitely set the course which this undercurrent dating from the Elizabethan era was to take in the history of Modernist drama.

Notes

¹ The quotation is from *Nobelprize.org*, <<http://nobelprize.org/literature/laureates/1923/index.html>>.

² In the notes to *Plays in Prose and Verse*, Yeats comments on *The King's Threshold* as follows: '[i]t was written when our Society was having a hard fight for the recognition of pure art in a community of which one half was buried in the practical affairs of life, and the other half in politics and a propagandist patriotism' (*Variorum Plays* 315). Notwithstanding Said's favourable interpretation of Yeats poems as working for decolonization, Yeats's emphasis is sometimes clearly laid on the separation, rather than the harmony, of art and life.

³ Unless otherwise indicated, all further references to Yeats's poems are to 1950 edition of *Collected Poems* and line numbers are included parenthetically in the text.

⁴ *The Plough and the Stars* also takes up the Easter Rising as its theme. The main reason for the riot was the disparity between the audience's idealized view of the Rising and the sheer violence represented in the play. For a detailed account for Yeats's conduct towards the disturbance, see Foster 304-9.

⁵ Yeats mentions Sheppard's statue in his last play, *The Death of Cuchulain* (1939). In the very last lines of the play, the Singer chants: 'A statue's there to mark the place, / By Oliver Sheppard done. / So ends the tale that the harlot / Sang to the beggar-man' (705). Ever since *On Baile's Strand* (1903), Yeats's version of the most famous hero in Ireland is always balanced with images of beggars, the blind, and harlots.

⁶ Yeats's quotation is in fact a little different from her own words. What Gonne's letter says is: 'I am overwhelmed by the tragedy & the greatness of the sacrifice our county men & women have made. They have raised the Irish cause again to a position of tragic dignity' (MacBride White 372). However, this argument concerning the perfect tense holds good in the case either of her original or Yeats's adaptation.

⁷ In a comparative analysis of Yeats and P. B. Shelley, Bloom holds that Yeats regards this kind of obstinacy as the blight to his love, Maud Gonno, and his country. This is partly the reason Yeats is interested in Shelley's revolutionary Romanticism that insists on throwing away any remorse. See Bloom 306-9.

⁸ Richard Allen Cave gives some interesting information about productions of this scene. 'Though Yeats does not specify this, in productions the circular movement is almost invariably anti-clockwise about the stage, the direction traditionally known as "widdershins" in black magic, which is reserved for the darkest of enchantments' (Cave 325).

⁹ The year in parenthesis attached to Beckett's works shows the first publication of English version of the play. *Endgame* was originally written in French in 1952 and first performed in Paris in 1953.

¹⁰ Anthony Cronin reports that Beckett was in the auditorium on the very day of the riot against *The Plough and the Stars*, and that Yeats came on stage in defense of O'Casey. For more details, see Cronin 56-57.

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The Gaze and Counter-Gaze Inside a Pyramidal Structure in William Golding's *The Pyramid*

Yasunori Sugimura

In *The Pyramid*, Oliver's various experiences in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood are autobiographically narrated. His hometown, Stilbourne, provides the backdrop for the novel's events. Stilbourne is dominated by a patriarchal and pyramid-shaped caste-system. Of central importance in the novel is the annual performance of the Stilbourne Operatic Society, which displays the pyramidal caste-structure of the town in miniature, and which is described in detail. The crude patriarchal beliefs tied up with this caste-structure are reflected in the novel's depiction of the unreasonable treatment of Evie Babbacombe by Robert, Oliver, Captain Wilmot, and even by her father Sergeant Babbacombe. Looked upon coldly by almost all the inhabitants of Stilbourne and hounded out of the town, Evie degrades herself in London. The male-dominated society of Stilbourne causes irretrievable damage to Miss Dawlish. Mr. Dawlish's ruthless programme of education for his daughter deprives her of musical sense and suppresses her humanity. On top of that, Henry Williams, a motor-mechanic, who undertakes to expand his business, exploits Miss Dawlish's affection and expropriates her father's estate. Miss Dawlish, demented and isolated in her later years, dies in utter despair, whereas Oliver, who was regularly given music lessons by Miss Dawlish in his childhood, embarks on his career as a technocrat, having mixed feelings about her death.

Most readers' initial evaluation of *The Pyramid* is far from favourable. At first sight, this work is lacking in depth of thought and characterized by comical wit and the depiction of carnality. On closer scrutiny, however, the novel is both 'one of the most pessimistic of all Golding's works,'¹ and laden with ingenious literary devices. The

critic Avril Henry, who has noted these devices, makes several important observations, and attention should be drawn to two of them in particular. Henry's first key observation is about a fragment of Ptah-Hotep's instructions cited on the first page: "If thou be among people make for thyself love, the beginning and end of the heart".² Ptah-Hotep, the guardian God of Memphis, may seem to be preaching importance of love and humanity, but actually the instruction is based on sheer self-interest: it advises us to make use of love for the purpose of obtaining wealth. According to Avril Henry, this quotation has been detached from the sentence that comes just before it: "He that ordereth himself duly becometh the owner of wealth; I shall copy this conduct".³ The second discovery concerns 'the crystal pyramid' (178) which has supposedly been installed in the senses of the citizens of Stilbourne. This 'crystal pyramid,' Henry notes, derives from a piezo-electric crystal, which is closely related to Mr. Dawlish's metronome in terms of their shape (quadrangular pyramid) and their supremely accurate oscillation (Henry 26-29).

I should like to add to Avril Henry's observations my own claim: that in this novel the paternal law, which is central to the townspeople's way of life, is so exclusive and discriminatory as to make itself illegal, and that the patriarchy aided by technology pervades the community as a power of surveillance. The space of surveillance is expanded throughout the community, with its monitoring eyes turned upon whoever threatens the community's stability. This stability is founded on the discriminatory structure of patriarchy and technocracy. However, this one-way observation is necessarily confronted with other eyes gazing back.

In the following discussion, it is argued that Stilbourne's social structure with its ubiquitous monitoring eyes is undermined by this counter-gaze.

I

The first part of this story mainly focuses on the representation of patriarchal power. Evie suffers incestuous abuse from Sergeant Babbacombe, as well as taking part in sadomasochistic relations with Captain Wilmot, a wounded veteran, in the name of discipline. Through binoculars, Oliver's father closely watches his son's love-making with Evie. Oliver's father, a dispenser, suspects that Evie will infect his son with venereal disease. Dr. Ewan's son Robert and even

Oliver treat Evie as nothing more than a means of indulging their sexual desire, regarding her as a threat to their social status. Since Oliver has all of his lovemaking watched and the danger of infection with disease hinted at by his father, he no longer lives according to his own desires but rather according to his father's wishes.

One doubts whether he has ever followed his own desires. His liaison with Evie starts abruptly, when he is requested to help pull a two-seater car out of a pond. In doing so, he discovers evidence of lovemaking between Evie and Robert Ewan. As Bernard F. Dick observes, Oliver's sexual desire is 'aggravated when he finds Ewan's mud-caked trousers, which his imagination transforms into a love trophy.'⁴ Oliver lives Robert's desire for Evie rather than his own desire for her. Oliver desires the object of the other's desire. For that matter, Oliver's first and unrequited love for Imogen Grantley is probably caused by the medium of her lover and now her husband, Mr. Claymore. Moreover, Oliver is in stiff competition with Robert and Claymore. He scuffles intensely with Robert, while forced into a kind of musical contest with the Claymores.

René Girard observes that we desire something we lack and which some other person possesses. According to Girard, desire is essentially mimetic, directed toward 'some object already desired by the model,' and it brings rivalry.⁵ However, Oliver's case is much more complicated. When the law of the father ceases to be a law or makes itself hollow and meaningless, it is unqualified to act as a third term that irrupts against the dual relation between self and its other at 'the mirror stage' and introduces the subject to the symbolic order.⁶ As is typically noticed in human relationships in *Stilbourne*, a closed dual relation between the two terms at the mirror stage produces not only love but also hatred, aggressiveness and violence toward each other. The self excludes its other as an evil object or a scapegoat.⁷ It has a competitive relation with its other and entertains a strong desire for the object of the other's desire.⁸ The lawlessness of patriarchy is found almost everywhere in *Stilbourne*. Hence spreads the phenomenon of dual mirroring without a third term.

For Oliver, the paternal law is represented by his father's 'watchtower', equipped with optical instruments that reinforce the power of eyes: pebble glasses, binoculars, and a microscope. The frequency of references to the eye is a remarkable characteristic of this novel. It is depicted in every detail. Oliver refers to the retina that accurately records the scene of his early childhood: '[A] child's retina is such a

perfect recording machine that given the impulse of interest or excitement it takes an indelible snapshot' (165). The eyes of Henry Williams, a motor-mechanic, supervise the negligent lads behind him: 'As if he had four eyes instead of two, Henry wheeled on them' (38). This one-way observation, however, inevitably meets with another gaze from a dark spot as if the voyeurs were watching each other. Oliver, who has his lovemaking observed by his father, accidentally witnesses from a blind corner the evidence of his father's voyeurism: 'My father was standing by the long bench under the window. The top half of the window was open to the clump. He had not yet bothered to replace his binoculars in the leather case that hung behind the door.[...] My father was turning his head from side to side as if it had been tied with elastic ropes and he an animal, not knowing how he had been caught' (99-100). His father does not act as a third term or a law that intervenes between Oliver and Evie but finds himself entangled in the dual relation with his son.

Similar acts of counter-gaze from the dark spot are implied in various places. Oliver's surreptitious scrutiny of Miss Dawlish's dark brown hall is met by 'two disparate eyes of faint light; one, a dull red spot low down, the other a blue bud, high up' (166): by the furious eyes of a bust of Beethoven, or by the red eye of the fire.

II

In Stilbourne, gazes come from above, from below, and from all sides. Oliver, a dispenser's son, continually peeps with his 'X-ray eyes' (85) into the premises of Dr. Ewan who ranks above his father in Stilbourne's social hierarchy. Evie, ranked among the lower classes, commands the whole town from a vantage point. The Ewans, although ranked socially above Oliver's family, give him a present at Christmas, since the eyes of Oliver's mother send out 'a kind of radar emission' (177) from the 'crystal pyramid' (178).

She is a genius at peeping. The site from which she peeps at things takes the shape of a little triangle formed by a lifted corner of the curtain. The triangle is the shape of each side of the 'crystal pyramid,' a metaphor which is discussed later in this essay. This 'radar' is installed especially in the senses of the inquisitive people of Stilbourne. They assume that they can pry into others' affairs without being themselves seen, but are in fact being seen in turn through the curtains by others. Indeed, the 'radar emission' of their eyes is able to pierce even curtains:

They, the women, were not satisfied with the railed-off enclosure before each house, nor with the spring-locked doors. They curtained the windows impenetrably. Standing back about a yard inside these curtains, they sent out what I should now call a kind of radar emission which was reflected from each other's business. A curious element appears in this; that to a certain extent the emission was capable of piercing a curtain, so that to a woman, each family was dimly visible, while each thought itself protected.

(177)

The metaphor of the 'crystal pyramid,' Avril Henry observes, derives from a piezoelectric crystal. As for the pyramidal shape, the natural form of the mother-crystal is a cuboid with each end tapering to a four-sided pyramid. Some piezoelectric crystals were used in underwater sound transducers and radars during the Second World War (Henry 26-27). As is commonly known, if an electric field is externally applied to a piezoelectric crystal, its strain changes, thus producing anew an electric oscillation with an extremely constant frequency. This electric oscillation is converted into a supersonic wave, or 'radar emission,' with which are analogized the inquisitive eyes that menace each family in *Stilbourne*. Oliver's mother's peep reasserts itself when she looks up at the cast on stage rehearsing for the *Stilbourne Operatic Society* from her position below them in the darkness. One of the most ingenious methods of peeping she adopts is to use Oliver as 'a kind of interplanetary probe' (177) by extracting every piece of information he can gather when he takes bottles of medicine or packets of pills to the neighbours. Oliver is not less ingenious than his mother in his methods of observing hidden information. Besides spying into Miss Dawlish's house, he applies his eyes to a convenient hole and sees 'how the cast, stage hands, musicians and friends [stand] about, drinking coffee' (156) after the performance.

The performance itself includes eyes looking both from the top and from the base of the social pyramid. The cast of the operetta titled 'King of Hearts,' in which Claymore plays the hero and Imogen the heroine, is pervaded by a pyramidal social hierarchy. An unusual adherence to the hierarchy is found in the quarrel between Claymore and Oliver's mother over the role her son is to play on stage. Moreover, as a cyclorama suggests, the spot where the hero and the heroine fall in love with each other, sweetly whispering amorous words, is located on the top of the pyramid, which commands a

panoramic view of the kingdom and its subjects. However, the audience below in darkness can also gaze back at the royalty on stage.

As Michel Foucault notes, since the middle of the eighteenth century, a clinical gaze has surveyed the truth of the object to the utmost limit, and the gaze penetrating the truth has turned into that which dominates things. This one-way gaze has sovereign power.⁹ Julia Kristeva observes that 'the bourgeois technocratic era' imagines itself carrying out the reunion between the signifier and the signified.¹⁰ On the other hand, Laplanche and Leclaire, along with Lacan, point out that the signifier and the signified are in a floating rapport and never coincide with each other except at certain anchoring points. Lacan argues that the anchoring points or what he terms the *points de capiton* are 'mythical' and that 'they do not finally pin down anything.'¹¹ The final signified is what Lacan terms 'the real' or 'the Real', which is 'inassimilable to symbolization.'¹² The real is that which 'resists symbolisation absolutely.'¹³ The voyeurs, who fail to see 'a shadow behind the curtain,' feel themselves 'under surveillance.'¹⁴ The shadow is that which cannot be seen nor symbolized. This 'physical disruption of their [the viewers'] visual field' is regarded as pertaining to the real (Krips 179). As a result, the subject's gaze necessarily meets with a dark spot which rejects symbolization by adversely gazing back at the subject.

Evelyn De Tracy, who is invited from London to act as stage director for the Stilbourne Operatic Society, constantly shakes his body and legs mechanically. His very existence seems to vibrate in time to the mechanical vibration of the 'crystal pyramid' of Stilbourne as it sends out 'radar emissions.' The evidence suggests he is a homosexual and a transvestite: he abruptly massages Oliver's shoulder, shows him some photographs in which he wears a ballerina's costume, and meaningfully alludes to the 'back passage' (152). The monitoring eyes of Stilbourne regard him as a threat to the social order, and he suffers from the town's hostility to those who practise homosexuality and transvestism. This is why De Tracy disappears even before the close of the performance. His eyeballs, in stark contrast to those of Henry Williams, hardly move, and his pupils appear quite narrow because the irises round them merge into the yellow of his eyeballs. It seems as if his eyes were concealed by a host of other monitoring eyes. The yellow of his eyeballs is so depicted as to suggest weird reptiles, his horn-like tuft of hair resembles a 'minor devil' (Crompton 59-60). His existence is deemed horrifically defiling. Like Oliver, he is a victim of

the monitoring eyes, which is why he feels sympathetic toward Oliver, whose lovemaking with Evie has been supervised by his father with binoculars.

It is to be noted, however, that De Tracy's eyes are also described as a pair of billiard balls with minute dark spots [pupils] (121). This means that his eyes also refuse the one-way gaze of surveillance. In the photographs he casually shows Oliver, he and his partner genially gaze at each other: 'The ballerina's costume with its frilly white skirt fitted him closely and his lean legs led down, knees supporting each other, to pumps on his enormous feet. [...] In some of the photographs he was supported by a thick, young man; and in each of these, they gazed deep into each other's eyes' (149).

Both Oliver and De Tracy are equally exposed to a mechanical one-way observation: the former to his father's binoculars, the latter to someone's camera. However, these mechanical eyes are qualitatively different. In Oliver's case, his counter-gaze baffles his father's monitoring activity and deprives the binoculars of their symbolizing function. The monitoring binoculars are thus unqualified for a third term that irrupts against the dual relation between Oliver and Evie. On the other hand, De Tracy does not turn any counter-gaze on the camera, since it is not used for surveillance. This camera, which as a third term intervenes between De Tracy and his partner, introduces him to the symbolic world, part of which is the photograph he treasures. When De Tracy advises Oliver to be 'perceptive' (148-49), he suggests the existence of a perceptive eye, which is the very opposite of a monitoring one.

Unfortunately, Oliver is not perceptive enough to understand De Tracy's meaning. Laughed away by his assumed true friend, De Tracy makes up his mind to leave Stilbourne without delay. He lies in the seat of the Barchester bus, curled close as if to protect himself from the attack of the eyes outside and, like Evie, is driven out of Stilbourne. His body shuddering to the movement of the engine is no different from his body and legs shaking in time to the mechanical vibration of the 'crystal pyramid.' In short, he is extremely nervous of the monitoring eyes of this town.

III

In the social pyramid of Stilbourne, which depends for its stability on the discriminatory practices of patriarchy and technocracy, those

regarded as a menace to the established structure are unreasonably oppressed. The lesbianism of the two ladies who seclude themselves in their mansion, as well as De Tracy's homosexuality, is first and foremost abhorred by society because they are seen as a threat to the social order. Similar victims, who are deemed eccentrics and regarded as a menace to Stilbourne's stability, include a deformed psychotic in a wheelchair and 'a strange lady wearing many skirts and a vast hat full of dead leaves' (163). The two women, Evie and Miss Dawlish, are typical victims. As discussed before, Evie is ejected as a defiled object, as an absolute menace to the society of Stilbourne. Oliver, all too obedient to his father, avoids Evie as though she were 'one of the diseases' his father mentions (101). Her world is for Oliver 'a heap of dung' (100), 'an earth that smelt of decay, with picked bones' and 'life's lavatory' (91). Even her musical ability is dismissed as defiling by the Stilbourne Operatic Society. Femininity and musicality are both presumed to be a danger to Stilbourne's social pyramid. Oliver himself feels the '*obscenity*' of music (193), although he was taught music by Miss Dawlish in his childhood.

Patriarchy in Stilbourne tries to vitiate both female sexuality and musical talent in the name of discipline. Mr. Dawlish's patriarchal power over his daughter is a case in point. His original intention to make her a leading pianist by training her hard results in depriving her of musical passion. His eyes, like those of the Beethoven bust on the mantelpiece over the fire, keep supervising her and imposing an outrageous discipline. Her father hits her across the knuckles with a ruler whenever she makes a mistake in the fugues. Meanwhile, she is past marriageable age, and music is only a means of sustenance for her. She lives out an apathetic life as a spinster. Mr. Dawlish suppresses his daughter's femininity as well as musicality. The same pattern of suppression is repeated by the motor-mechanic Henry Williams. He exploits her affection, and then her father's legacy, with which he expands his business, finally expropriating her premises by moving into her house with his wife and children. Her musical instruction to young Oliver is often interrupted by mechanical noises made by Henry working late. Henry's rationalism and obsession with technology, linked with Mr. Dawlish's patriarchy, alienate Miss Dawlish's femininity, musicality, and even her life. Like Evie, she is positioned as 'life's lavatory,' which is suggested by the details of the closet of brown earthenware in her house that young Oliver sees by candlelight.

As Paul Crawford points out,¹⁵ both Evie and Miss Dawlish are

associated with scatological images. Evie farts at the beginning of the story (14). Her father, whose jobs include collecting the pennies from the locks in public lavatories, pronounces the Latin words ‘Amor vincit omnia’ inscribed on her necklace as ‘Hamor vinshit Homniar’ (25), and the place where Evie makes love with Oliver is described as ‘brown earth’ among ‘dry pellets of rabbit dung’ (96). Oliver’s father prescribes ‘opening medicine’ to cure his son of his obsession with Evie, and Oliver fancies his father will prescribe the same for Evie as well (94). Oliver, like his father, identifies Evie with ‘filth,’ or rather treats her body as if it were filled with ‘filth.’ The same image is used to depict Miss Dawlish’s surroundings. Everything in her house is a ‘fetid brown’ colour, and her deserted windsor chair in particular is fouled by birds. Henry Williams’ ‘glycerine eyes’ are ‘sharp’ at purging ‘filth,’ since glycerine has the effect of an ‘opening’ medicine.¹⁶ After having appropriated Miss Dawlish’s estate, he undertakes to purge her of the ‘filth’ that he believes poses a challenge to his attempts to ascend the patriarchal and technocratic pyramid: the ‘filth’ of female sexuality and musicality.

Kristeva argues that the music is constructed mainly on the basis of ‘the semiotic’¹⁷ because of its irregular vibration. She likens the semiotic to the irregularly shaking receptacle or womb that nurtures the constituents of the universe.¹⁸ From the point of view of human development, the semiotic has its origin in the pre-Oedipal phase where the child is not yet separated from the mother. The symbolic based upon patriarchy and/or technocratic ideologies often represses the semiotic as ‘defilement.’ Kristeva attributes any image of ‘defilement’ to the maternal.¹⁹ This is why musical passion and female sexuality are consistently repressed in this novel by patriarchal fathers and future technocrats.

However, these elements excluded as ‘filth’ are to revolt before long. As René Girard notes, a cathartic has the effect of purging the body of toxins, but ‘a too powerful *pharmakon*’ can increase the defilement it is supposed to prevent. (*Violence and the Sacred* 290). Oliver’s father and Henry Williams attempt to eliminate ‘filth,’ but in effect they make it more harmful or even lethal. Jean Baudrillard refers to these phenomena and explains: ‘Any structure that hunts down, expels or exorcizes its negative elements risks a catastrophe caused by a thoroughgoing backlash. [...] Anything that purges the accursed share in itself signs its own death warrant. This is the theorem of the accursed share.’²⁰ It is such inhabitants as Oliver’s father

and Henry Williams that have made Stilbourne 'stillborn.'

Henry Williams rises from mechanic to manager at the cost of sacrificing Miss Dawlish's affection, property, femininity, and musicality. His shrewd eyes pierce everything and his social antennae vibrate so that he may take whatever opportunity is available to build his career. Of course, he is also peeped at by Oliver's mother through the curtains. Certainly, she expresses bitter disdain for his using 'a sprat to catch a mackerel' (179). But her contemptuous eyes are directed not so much toward him as toward Evie and Miss Dawlish.

Thus Stilbourne always produces those who are the most susceptible to the violence of the eyes. The gaze/counter-gaze of this transparent pyramid, in which innumerable gazes come from every direction, is doomed to self-destruction, as will be discussed later, but for the present it is an extremely oppressive structure fraught with the danger of producing victims who suffer the violence of other members' eyes. As if by an illegal monitoring system based on modern information technology, these victims' privacy is wholly exposed to the public even though they are confined to their own houses.²¹

IV

Miss Dawlish becomes more and more eccentric. She pretends to have a car accident, deliberately leaving the front wheels of her two seater dropped in a ditch to wait for Henry's rescue. As a result she is charged for dangerous driving and her license suspended for five years. On top of that, her sexuality, which has been repressed under her father's discipline and afterwards under Henry's rationalism, ultimately asserts itself: 'Bounce pacing along the pavement with her massive bosom, thick stomach and rolling, ungainly haunches; Bounce wearing her calm smile, her hat and gloves and flat shoes—and wearing nothing else whatsoever' (207). Her nude striding along the pavement of Stilbourne temporarily subverts the dominance of men over women and revolts against the counterfeit decency of the town. Evie does something similar in her open lovemaking with Oliver.²² These women discover the hypocrisy of patriarchy and prove its law utterly ineffective. Oliver is, however, insensitive to these implications.

This insensitiveness lasts until after he has become middle-aged. He follows in Henry Williams' footsteps, aiming for the summit of the social pyramid. After the fashion of his parents' voyeurism, he starts surveying the late Miss Dawlish's dilapidated premises. He is curious

to see the bottom of her garden. Against the long wall is a surround of brick, where there are traces of an extraordinary bonfire. Despite the rain of two or more winters, the covers of various pieces of sheet-music can still be deciphered. Among the debris are the wreckage of old Mr. Dawlish's metronome, plaster fragments of a smashed Beethoven bust, and a splinter of a frame that held a photograph of Mr. Dawlish. All Miss Dawlish could do to escape the eyes that had been constantly supervising her life is smash both the Beethoven bust and the photograph of her father. This is why she was impatient even with blazing 'ferocious eyes' of her cat (211). The act of shattering and burning her father's metronome is of special significance: 'I saw a glint of metal, picked out a steel strip and my guess became certainty. The lead bob had melted away, but the knife-edge and the sliding weight that adjusted the ticking of the metronome to an unbearable accuracy were identifiable' (215). As Avril Henry observes, the pyramidal metronome that keeps time with extreme accuracy has much in common with the crystal pyramid (a piezoelectric crystal) that vibrates with precise regularity (Henry 27). Moreover, this metronome is cased with crystal. Further features in common are that both of them act as a most suitable metaphor for the combination of patriarchy and technocracy, since they both use precision technology and their forms are reminiscent of an Egyptian pyramid, which can be seen as a symbol of patriarchy.

Thus Miss Dawlish's destruction of her father's metronome suggests her passionate revolt (a) against her father's patriarchy, (b) against Henry's technocracy, which oppresses and drives out her music in order to expand his business, (c) against the 'crystal pyramid' with which her privacy is probed, and (d) against the strict rules of a frequency of oscillation that harms the musical vibration. Her smashing and burning of the metronome further suggests the possibility of breaking a linear mode of time and inventing quite a new one. There are common causes behind both Miss Dawlish's smashing of the metronome and Oliver's self-hatred. Oliver's self-hatred has its roots in his suppression of the music that he could have created with Evie but for his father's watching, as well as in self-contempt at his own attempts to ascend the social pyramid as a technocrat after the fashion of Henry Williams. In fact, Oliver the narrator adopts a new mode of time distinct from clock time in Section Three, the final part of the novel, where time becomes retrograde, repeats itself, or moves in a cycle. Oliver, as well as Miss Dawlish, seeks to be liberated from the linear progress of time that represses musicality. Actually, even in

Sections One and Two, time does not necessarily progress along the lines of clock time. As Bernard F. Dick notes, 'the second episode takes place before the first has ended. Oliver sees Evie for the last time shortly before he begins his third year at Oxford; the operetta is staged at the end of his first term.' According to Dick, these two modes of time 'intertwine, run parallel to each other, and even intersect' (Dick 86) in *The Pyramid*.

However, Oliver cannot or will not recognize his similarity to Miss Dawlish. In front of her grave, he neither feels sympathy nor expresses his condolences but confesses his long-standing hatred for her. But the metaphorical significance of a marble rhomboid carved into a harp that might be 'vibrating in sympathy with the organ' (162) is not to be overlooked. According to Avril Henry, 'the usual explanation of the Rhomboidal Pyramid's shape is that shortage of materials necessitated change of design,' thus providing a visual image of incompleteness (Henry 25). Given the smashed pyramid of the metronome, the marble rhomboid could be construed as the warped pyramid of the tomb. It is of great significance that the marble strings of the harp appear to vibrate. Their vibration is a musical one rather than that of a machine. It is as if the vibration of Miss Dawlish's musical passion, even after her death, warped the pyramid of her marble tomb. As previously mentioned, Miss Dawlish smashes the pyramid of the metronome, thus revolting against the pyramid of piezoelectric crystal that plays almost the same role in the novel as the metronome. The mechanical vibration is a means by which so called technocrats seek to reach the top of the social pyramid, as Oliver and Henry Williams vibrate their social antennae (159). One of the clues to the elucidation of this novel is to distinguish between the two qualitatively-different vibrations mingling with each other in the text.

Considering her miserable life, the inscription 'Heaven is Music' is bitterly ironic, although it is Mr. Dawlish's motto and Henry Williams dedicates it to her on behalf of her bereaved family. Oliver irreverently looks down on the inscription between his feet and laughs at the thought of her repressed sexuality. He feels her psyche—possibly her repressed sexuality and musicality—rising from the place, and shudders as if they were 'filthy.' Driven by revulsion and horror, he cries aloud: "I never liked you! Never!" (213) His exorcistic attitude is no different from that which her father and Henry Williams assumed toward her musical passion and female sexuality.

Oliver is even more merciless than Henry Williams in the sense in

which he dares to ignore the marble strings of the harp-carving that do appear to him to be vibrating or when he laughs at the repressed sexuality that seems to him to be rising from her grave. He feels ‘the peace of exorcism’ (185) when Henry’s family moves into her house.

Having wrapped up his endowment of absolute pitch in the ‘cocoon of imperceptiveness’²³ of his car and suppressing his feeling that if he might only lend her his own ‘power of choosing the future,’ he would ‘pay anything’ (217), he smartly and pitilessly charges towards the summit of the technocratic pyramid without running the risk of ruining himself: ‘I could roll through it, detached, defended by steel, rubber, leather, glass’ (158). Here is the fundamental problem of the persecution of musical passion and female sexuality by the eyes of technocratic surveillance.

Although there is a necessary dialectic between the semiotic and the symbolic; between ‘the two modalities of the signifying process, which is constitutive of the subject’ (*Revolution in Poetic Language* 24), the semiotic disturbs ‘the symbolic order and the technocratic ideologies that [have] been built over this [semiotic] violence to ignore or repress it’ (ibid. 83). Since the semiotic resists symbolization, it assumes the character of Lacan’s ‘the real.’²⁴ Thus the dialectic not only ascends toward symbolic sublimation but abruptly turns into degeneration.²⁵ In fact, patriarchal fathers like Sergeant Babbacomb, Captain Wilmot, and Mr. Dawlish, who have mentally and physically outraged Evie or Miss Dawlish, are now dead or have virtually perished. The future technocrats like Oliver and Henry Williams, so long as they regard these women as ‘filth,’ might be affected by the semiotic in some form or other. Furthermore, the semiotic might disturb the pyramid of Stilbourne that drove out or killed these women, and further disturb the pyramid of the Stilbourne Operatic Society (SOS) nested inside the greater one of Stilbourne and sending an SOS. Such disturbances range from Miss Dawlish’s nudity and her bonfire to Evie’s open lovemaking with Oliver, from De Tracy’s ballerina’s costume to the frenzy and turbulence that accompany the performance by the SOS.

Oliver’s musical talent revolts in spite of himself against the reign of petty technology and mean money when he unwittingly forgets to wedge a penny as a mute between the bridge and the tail of his violin. The result is that he is a great success on stage, which destabilizes the SOS pyramid. For when Imogen and Claymore sing the Great Duet immediately after Oliver’s performance, her song is so out of tune that the ridge line of the pyramid, on top of which they play, might be worn

down (154). Moreover, this pyramid of the SOS always suffers from inner strife, caused by the 'jealousies and hatreds, meannesses and indignations we [are] forced to conceal in ordinary life' (114), which may ruin the pyramid of Stilbourne as well as of the SOS at any moment.

Oliver, who is now a promising technocrat and a father of two children, may seem to regenerate himself by shaking off the ghosts of Evie and Miss Dawlish, but this is not necessarily the case. His soul still fluctuates between regeneration and degradation. This symptom first appears when he and his children visit Miss Dawlish, who now lives a secluded life. His child's casual behaviour reminds him of repressed sexuality: 'Mark—for God's sake, child! Not in public! Here—you'd better run along home' (210), since this scene suggests not so much 'an attempt to urinate' as 'childish masturbation' (Henry 14). For that matter, when Sophy, his daughter, 'nuzzle[s] into [his] trouser leg,' he is oversensitive to her gesture and becomes fiercely determined that she will be 'a fulfilled woman, a wife and mother' (212).

Oliver's fluctuation between progress and setback is attributable to the un-symbolizable gap that has opened under his feet. This spot is excluded from his symbolic system and thus regarded as the real, which is often invested with ghosts.²⁶ He taps with his toe the pavement, where he feels Miss Dawlish's invisible footsteps, to confine her psyche back to the earth and consolidate the foundation of the technocratic pyramid he is going to ascend in his technologically advanced car. In the last scene where he looks Henry Williams in the eye and sees his own face reflected in its pupil (217) like a reflection in a mirror, he is trapped again in the counter-gaze. The dark spot and the counter-gaze chase him wherever he may go and however much he tries to concentrate on his driving.

Notes

¹ Don Crompton, *A View from the Spire: William Golding's Later Novels* 70.

² William Golding, *The Pyramid* 9.

³ Avril Henry, 'William Golding: The Pyramid,' *Southern Review* 29.

⁴ Bernard F. Dick, *William Golding* 84.

⁵ René Girard, *Oedipus Unbound: Selected Writings on Rivalry and Desire* 96. See also Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* 146.

⁶ At the mirror stage, the subject lives the dual relation with 'every other, all

the others of the primary narcissistic identification,' as well as with the mother. See Louis Althusser, 'Freud and Lacan,' *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory* 54-55. Concerning the law of the father that introduces the subject to the symbolic order, Jacques Lacan argues: 'It is in the name of the father that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law.' See Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection* 74.

⁷ Philippe Julien, *Le retour à Freud de Jacques Lacan: L'application au miroir* 50-56.

⁸ As for the competitive dual relation between ego and its objects at the mirror stage, Lacan observes that 'this form will crystallize in the subject's internal conflictual tension, which determines the awakening of his desire for the object of the other's desire: here the primordial coming together (*concoirs*) is precipitated into aggressive competitiveness (*concurrence*) [...]'. See Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection* 21.

⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* 39.

¹⁰ Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* 81.

¹¹ Martin Thom, 'The Unconscious Structured as a Language,' *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory* 62. See also Roland Barthes, *Le degré zéro de l'écriture* 122.

¹² Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* 159.

¹³ Jacques Lacan, 'Discourse analysis and ego analysis,' *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book I Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954* 66.

¹⁴ Henry Krips, 'Extract from *Fetish. An Erotics of Culture*,' *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory* 171.

¹⁵ Paul Crawford, *Politics and History in William Golding: The World Turned Upside Down* 141-42.

¹⁶ Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor, *William Golding: A Critical Study of the Novels* 233.

¹⁷ Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* 24.

¹⁸ Whether Kristeva's association of the semiotic with Plato's *chora* is appropriate or not, the semiotic *chora*, or simply the semiotic, she argues, derives from the name *chora* which means in Plato's *Timaeus* the 'receptacle [...] nourishing and maternal, not yet unified in an ordered whole because deity is absent from it.' See *Revolution in Poetic Language* 26. '[T]he four basic constituents' [fire, water, earth, and air], Plato has *Timaeus* observe, 'were shaken by the receptacle [*chora*]' and 'came to occupy different regions of space' even before the deity arranged them into an ordered universe. See Plato, *Timaeus and Critias* 72-73.

¹⁹ Menstrual blood and excrement, Kristeva argues, 'stem from the maternal and/or the feminine, of which the maternal is the real support.' The latter defilement is under the mother's control when infants receive sphincter training. See *Powers of Horror* 71.

²⁰ Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena* 106.

²¹ Golding himself refers to the terror of modern information technology and observes that our modern 'ant-like persistence in building a pyramid of information' discounts 'the possibility of the potentialities of the human spirit which may

operate by other means in other modes to other ends.' See William Golding, *A Moving Target* 54-55. See also Avril Henry 24.

²² Lawrence S. Friedman, *William Golding* 111.

²³ Kenneth C. Russell, 'The Vestibule of Hell: A Reflection on the "No-Risk" Morality of W. Golding's *Pyramid*,' *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 453.

²⁴ See John Lechte and Mary Zournazi, Eds., *The Kristeva Critical Reader* 217.

²⁵ Dialectics is, Theodor Adorno remarks, 'not only an advancing process but a retrograde one at the same time.' See Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* 157.

²⁶ Miran Božovič, 'An Utterly Dark Spot,' *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory* 269-70.

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Dining with Dickens in Trinidad:
Meals and Meaning in
V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr Biswas*

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Introduction

The outlines of V.S. Naipaul's career are well known, both from his own writings and from the vast amount of critical attention paid to his work.¹ Vidhiadar Surajprasad Naipaul was born in 1932 in Trinidad (a British colony from 1802 to 1962). As the biographical note to his novels puts it, Naipaul is 'of Indian ancestry.' He attended Queen's Royal College in Port of Spain, and in 1950 won a Government scholarship to read English at University College, Oxford. After four years at Oxford, Naipaul moved to London to write full-time and became a contributor to the BBC's *Caribbean Voices* radio programme. His first novel, *The Mystic Masseur*, was published in 1957. He has since published ten other novels, two collections of short stories, and sixteen works of non-fiction, including a history of Trinidad and eight books of travel writing. Awarded a Knighthood in 1990, Naipaul was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2001.

In his essay 'Jasmine', first published in 1964, Naipaul reflects on his earliest encounters with the novels of Charles Dickens, which he read as a boy in Trinidad. 'To open a book was to make an instant adjustment', Naipaul writes, and explains that:

All Dickens's descriptions of London I rejected; and though I might retain Mr Micawber and the others in the clothes the illustrator gave them, I gave them the faces and voices of people I knew and set them in buildings and streets that I knew. The process of adaptation was automatic and continuous. Dickens's rain and drizzle I turned into tropical downpours; the snow and

fog I accepted as conventions of books. Anything—like an illustration—which embarrassed me by proving how weird my own reaction was, anything which sought to remove the characters from the made-up world in which I had set them, I rejected.²

The difficulties he experienced as a reader, Naipaul continues, would be difficulties he was forced to confront more directly when he himself was attempting to become a novelist. Again, Dickens is the focus of these anxieties.

‘I might adapt Dickens to Trinidad’, Naipaul writes, referring to his inventive but flawed early readings:

But it seemed impossible that the life I knew in Trinidad could ever be turned into a book. [...] It was embarrassing to be reminded by a Dickens illustration of the absurdity of my adaptations; it was equally embarrassing to write of what I saw.³

This essay will explore the ways in which Naipaul's novel *A House for Mr Biswas* (1962) responds to these anxieties. The novel follows the eponymous Mr Biswas, a Trinidadian of Indian descent, from his birth in a rural Indian community in Trinidad to his death in the late 1940s, by which time he is a householder and journalist in racially-heterogeneous Port of Spain. Naipaul's best-known novel, *A House for Mr Biswas* is often described as ‘Dickensian’, and I want to examine what such a claim might mean in the context of Naipaul's comments on Dickens in ‘Jasmine’. Rather than arguing that Naipaul succeeds in *A House for Mr Biswas* in reconciling Dickens and Trinidad, I will argue that the novel instead stages a series of demonstrations of the failure of such attempts, demonstrations of the incongruity and even impossibility of writing like Dickens about Trinidad. Furthermore, I think that this failure is telling for what it reveals about Naipaul's fiction and its relationship both with Trinidad and with the question of literary influence.

Such an argument is not altogether new. Perhaps the most perceptive previous attempt to explore the relationship between Naipaul and Dickens is that of Sara Suleri. While praising the ‘Dickensian verve’ of *A House for Mr Biswas*, Suleri adds the qualifying comment that Naipaul's work must be understood as being produced by the tension between ‘the excessive novelty of postcolonial history and the excessive anachronism of the canon.’⁴ Homi Bhabha makes a similar point less concisely in his assault on critics who have praised *A House for*

Mr Biswas for its ‘universality’—that is, as a novel which rises above or ‘transcends’ its content to become a timeless, placeless masterpiece.⁵ Bhabha argues that in discussions of Naipaul’s novel:

Universality is achieved by introducing a split in the text such that the signification of the colonial *content* is set as *fact* against a retrospective literary or *fictional value* which is represented in the progress of the narrative, its ability to transcend or resolve the colonial contradictions of cultural heterogeneity, racial mixedness, historical and social anomie.⁶

According to Bhabha, *A House for Mr Biswas* pointedly and creditably refuses to offer this kind of transcendence or resolution. Indeed, it is the problematic relationship between content and form that Naipaul identifies as the greatest difficulty he faced in trying to write. Likewise Naipaul’s comments on his early reading experiences might lead us to reconsider the ways in which claims about the universality of Dickens’s novels can be made.

It is the particularity, and more precisely the materiality, of Dickens’s novels that gives Naipaul as reader the greatest difficulty. It is buildings, weather, faces and voices that puncture his fantasy that *David Copperfield* takes place in Port of Spain. I want to focus in this essay on an aspect of cultural particularity which Naipaul does not mention in his essay, but which plays an important part in *A House for Mr Biswas*: food. I have already claimed that *A House for Mr Biswas* repeatedly stages the breakdown of attempts to adapt Dickens to Trinidad. It does so, I will argue, through Mr Biswas’s repeated failures within the novel to tell a story about eating.

I want to claim two roles for food in *A House for Mr Biswas*. Firstly, that it is through food and what people eat that the novel explores the racial heterogeneity of Trinidadian society and the often fraught questions of ethnic and national identity in this setting. Secondly, it is through its depictions of the act of writing about food that the novel engages with the difficulties of adapting Dickens to such a society. Here I break with Suleri and Bhabha by claiming that it is primarily through food that *A House for Mr Biswas* again and again reflects on these questions. I must also, of course, establish what it means (at least for Naipaul) to write like Dickens. I will illustrate my argument with reference to *Great Expectations*. Although it is rarely commented upon, *Great Expectations* (like *A House for Mr Biswas*) can be seen as a novel structured around a series of meals.

The essay is in three parts. The first section looks at the role of food in *Great Expectations* in order to explore more closely the question of what it might mean for Naipaul to try to write like Dickens. The second section offers a brief outline of Trinidad and its history, as well as Naipaul's non-fictional comments on this topic. Having looked at the role of food in *Great Expectations* we will then be in a position to ask where the mismatch Naipaul perceives between writing like Dickens and writing about Trinidad comes from, and what conclusions can be drawn from it. I will ask these questions in the third section of the essay, which will furthermore attempt to demonstrate my claims for the importance of the role of food and eating in *A House for Mr Biswas*.

What is Food? (Or, 'If You Want a Subject, Look at Pork!')

The richness and frequent obscurity of references to food and drink in Dickens can be illustrated by looking at the notes provided to an annotated edition of any one of his novels. In Angus Calder's Penguin Classics edition of *Great Expectations* there are 109 explanatory notes, 11 of which are dedicated to food and eating. How big, for example, is a 'jorum of tea'? Where is the 'liver wing' of a chicken, and is to be hoped for or avoided? What, exactly, is in a 'small salad'?⁷ Of course, these are only a small proportion of the specific period allusions with which Dickens's novel is peppered, alongside its 'dutch-clocks', 'shark-headed screws' and 'Hammercloths'.⁸ As literary critics, and as general readers, we do not feel that we are missing much when we are momentarily puzzled by a reference to 'Hardbake' or 'Flip'⁹, or at least that we have missed less than we would have done if we had failed to observe the teasing biographical reference to the 'blacking ware'us', or the allusion to phrenology when Magwitch tells Pip and Herbert about the jailors measuring his head, or the literary references to Lillo's *George Barnwell* and Collins's *Ode to the Passions*.¹⁰ As general readers our curiosity may be briefly raised (and quickly sated); as literary critics our professional competence is rarely put at stake over the specifics of what people are eating.

For Naipaul, however, it is precisely such specificities that cause the difficulties. It could be argued that all readers of Dickens have to go through some similar procedure of adaptation and translation. Why does it cause Naipaul such particular anguish? Perhaps part of the answer is found in a peculiarity of the way Naipaul describes his attempts at

adapting Dickens. It is ‘Mr Micawber’ who needs adaptation, not the novel from which he is taken. Later Naipaul comments that, for the purposes of translation to Trinidad, ‘Mr Murdstone worked; Mr Pickwick and his club didn’t.’¹¹ This is in contrast to Naipaul’s observations about the difficulties posed for him by any other writer than Dickens. For every other writer he discusses in the essay, it is the novels, not the characters, which are his focus: ‘*Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* worked; *Pride and Prejudice* didn’t.’¹² Naipaul engages not with a series of novels, but with an imagined world.

The leap this essay is asking the reader to make with me is in arguing that food plays a particularly large, or at least a particularly revealing, part in Naipaul’s sense of being excluded from this world. There is much more at stake for Naipaul, I think, than being puzzled by a ‘liver wing’ or a ‘small salad’. I think this leap is justified by the repeated and insistent way in which Naipaul writes about food in *A House for Mr Biswas*. In order to suggest why food plays such an important part in Naipaul’s responses to Dickens, we should begin by asking: what is food?

‘For what is food?’ is also the question Roland Barthes asks, in his essay ‘Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption’, and his answer is a helpful one for us:

It is not only a collection of products that can be used for statistical and nutritional studies. It is also, and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of uses, situations and behaviour.¹³

‘Proceeding step by step,’ Barthes claims, it would be possible to ‘make a compendium of the differences in signification regulating the system of our food.’ Rather grandiosely, he suggests the possibility of ‘a veritable grammar of foods.’¹⁴ For Barthes, food itself is a kind of text.

In *Cooking with Mud*, a study of the ideas of waste and mess in nineteenth-century art and fiction, David Trotter playfully suggests that those anthropologists who have regarded food as a system of communication—he cites Barthes, Mary Douglas and Claude Lévi-Strauss—can be included among the ‘heirs’ of those nineteenth-century fictions in which: ‘Each meal is potentially a feast, a ceremony, in so far as it expresses an [...] understanding of the basic requirements for social and moral order.’¹⁵ Trotter’s claim could be taken as the starting-point for a reading of Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations* (1860-1), a novel which, as Maud Ellmann has noted,

‘consists of a series of repasts, each revelatory of the class and character of its participants.’¹⁶ Indeed, almost every event in *Great Expectations* is either marked by, or takes place over, a meal. Throughout the novel every stage of Pip’s rise and fall is reflected in the food he eats, symbolically measured against Miss Havisham’s mouldering and unconsumed wedding breakfast at (the inappropriately named) Satis House.

Early in the novel Mr Pumblechook, searching during dinner for the subject of an improving moral lecture to deliver to young Pip, seizes upon their meal itself. Describing his dinner as a ‘text’, Pumblechook declares: ‘If you want a subject, look at Pork!’¹⁷ Pumblechook’s ludicrous mental exertions take the form of an exploration of the religious significance of swine—‘the companions of the prodigal’ [58]—and a reminder to Pip to be grateful he is not a pig—‘If you had been born such would you be here now?’ [58]. However, the meal is also a ‘text’ for Pip himself, a text in which can be read the unequal social ordering of the dining table: ‘I was regaled with the scaly tips of the drumsticks of the fowls, and with those obscure corners of pork of which the pig, when living, had had the least reason to be vain’ [56]. In contrast, when at the height of Pip’s career as a gentleman he again encounters Mr Pumblechook over the dining-table, Pumblechook helps him to ‘the liver wing and the best slice of tongue (none of those out-of-the-way No Thoroughfares of pork now)’ [180]. Mr Pumblechook is ridiculous not because he takes food as his text, but because his reading of the meal ignores what is so clearly inscribed there in *Great Expectations*: class.

What happens to meals in the process of attempting to ‘adapt’ the nineteenth-century England of Dickens’ novels to the twentieth-century Trinidad of V.S. Naipaul’s? Do they remain legible ‘texts’? If so, what is written in them? The experience of reading Dickens that Naipaul describes in ‘Jasmine’ is paralleled by that of Mr Biswas in *A House for Mr Biswas*. Biswas is a great fan of Dickens, in the ‘grotesques’ of whose novels ‘everything he feared and suffered from was ridiculed and diminished’.¹⁸ But in order for this effect to be achieved, Biswas must first have ‘transferred’ Dickens’s ‘characters and settings to people and places he knew’ [374]. The novel makes explicit what difficulties and anxieties are attendant upon such a transferral. In ‘Jasmine’, Naipaul commented upon the embarrassment he faced when confronted (by an illustration, say) with the ‘absurdity’ of his adaptations; but he also claims it was ‘equally embarrassing to write of what I saw’.

I have already suggested that I think *A House for Mr Biswas* chronicles the repeated failure of Biswas's attempts to transfer Dickens's meals to Trinidad. I now want to go further. For Dickens it has been argued that, in David Trotter's words, each meal 'expresses an [...] understanding of the basic requirements for social and moral order'. Biswas's attempts to write about meals fail, I suggest, because (according to Naipaul) Trinidad lacks just such an understanding. Naipaul's embarrassment, when reading Dickens, is not only for his failings as a reader. It is an embarrassment on behalf of his society. Reading Dickens, Naipaul writes, 'made me despairingly conscious of the poverty and haphazardness of my own society.'¹⁹ The next section of this essay will explore what it is about Trinidad that proves so embarrassing to Naipaul, as well as his non-fictional attempts to explain why.

V.S. Naipaul and Trinidad: 'Plantations, Prosperity, Decline, Neglect'?

Like Naipaul himself, Mr Biswas is an Indo-Trinidadian, a descendent of the indentured Indian labourers brought from to the Caribbean in the nineteenth century. As Naipaul explains, 'After the abolition of slavery the Negroes refused to work on the estates, and the resulting labour shortage was solved by the importation of indentured labour from Madeira, China and India.'²⁰ The majority of these labourers came from India, 134,000 being brought to Trinidad between 1834 and 1917. 'Most of them were from the provinces of Bihar, Agra and Oudh,' Naipaul records.²¹ This community was mainly Hindu, with a small but distinct Muslim minority. The labourers were offered five-year contracts, housing, medical care and clothing. At the end of five years they were to be offered the choice of a small grant of land or a return passage to India. Many of these promises were not honoured, and the scheme was denounced as a return to slavery by other means. It was ended in 1917 following agitation by Gandhi, among others. This essay follows Viranjini Munasinghe's work on race and the cultural politics of identity Trinidad in its use of the terms "Indo-Trinidadian" and "Afro-Trinidadian" to indicate Trinidadians of Indian and Trinidadians of African descent respectively. As Munasinghe observes, "Although *East Indian* is the more common term, it signifies a greater degree of marginality than the term *Indo-*

Trinidadian.' The use of these terms is intended not to reify the existence of these groups as "natural categories", but rather to reflect the role they play in the debates around Trinidadian racial and national identity in which Naipaul's texts are located.²²

Despite the praise Naipaul's work has attracted, it remains hugely controversial. Indeed, the readiness of some European and American critics to lionize him as 'exceptional, unique and painfully truthful'²³ in his fictional and non-fictional depictions of the Caribbean and India has often been seen as suspicious in itself. Aijaz Ahmad brusquely dismisses Naipaul as a writer whose success is based on a readiness on the part of his admirers to hear their prejudices about the postcolonial world confirmed. While Naipaul is 'now fully established as a major English novelist' and as a cultural and political commentator, Ahmad acknowledges, it is 'a different matter' whether this canonisation is 'well deserved.' He deplores the 'flip confidence' with which Naipaul presumes to judge India and the Caribbean for an implied Euro-American audience.²⁴ In *The Middle Passage*, his "Impressions of Five Colonial Societies" on a return to the Caribbean in 1960, Naipaul notoriously writes of racial tension in Trinidad that:

Like monkeys pleading for evolution, each claiming to be whiter than the other, Indians and Negroes appeal to the unacknowledged white audience to see how much they despise one another.²⁵

Naipaul turns to Caribbean history to explain how such a situation might have come about, but concludes that 'History is built around achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the West Indies [...] There were only plantations, prosperity, decline, neglect.'²⁶

Critics including Rob Nixon, Chris Searle, Wimal Dissanayake and Carmen Wickramagamage have explored the ways in which Naipaul's judgements adopt colonial and neo-colonial 'discourses of power, empire, ideology, postcoloniality and subjectivity.'²⁷ These analyses engage not only with the often unacknowledged ideological commitments of Naipaul's own work, but those of the critics who praise it. This essay's response to such a charge, in the particular instance of *A House for Mr Biswas*, hinges on its claim for the distinctness and complexity of the novel's response to the challenges of exploring identity in a colonial society.²⁸ Naipaul's fictional depiction of Trinidad will be read against his comments in *The Middle Passage* and his other travel writing in order to suggest how Naipaul's novel complicates the claims of his non-fiction.

Looking back in his non-fiction at his Indo-Trinidadian childhood, Naipaul reflects that:

It was easy to accept that we lived on an island where there were all sorts of people [...]. We ate certain food, performed certain ceremonies and had certain taboos; we expected others to have their own. We did not wish to share theirs; we did not expect them to share ours.²⁹

George Lamming, the Barbadian critic and novelist, has taken issue with Naipaul's depiction of the relationship between Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians. In a review of *A House for Mr Biswas* entitled 'A Trinidad Experience' Lamming argues that Naipaul's fictional 'world leaves us with the impression of one race surviving in isolation [...] He is particularly careful to avoid that total encounter which is the experience of any Trinidadian, whatever his race may be.'³⁰ According to Lamming, Naipaul's novels focus on the Indian community to the detriment of a more balanced portrayal of Trinidad as a whole. In *An Area of Darkness*, his 1964 travel book about India, Naipaul responded to Lamming in the following terms:

The confrontation of different communities, he said, was the fundamental West Indian experience. So indeed it is, and increasingly. But to see the attenuation of the culture of my childhood as the result of a dramatic confrontation of opposed worlds would be to distort the reality. To me the worlds were juxtaposed and mutually exclusive. One gradually contracted. It had to; it fed only on memories and its completeness was only apparent. It was yielding not to attack but to a type of seepage from the other. I can speak only out of my own experience.³¹

What Lamming imagines as a 'total encounter', and Naipaul as a 'seepage', is the process referred to as creolization.

Kamau Brathwaite, arguing primarily from Jamaican examples, defines creolization as:

A cultural process [...] which [...] may be divided into two aspects of itself: ac/culturation, which is the yoking (by force and example, deriving from power/prestige) of one culture to another (in this case the enslaved/African to the European); and inter/culturation, which is an unplanned, unstructured but osmotic relationship proceeding from this yoke. The creolization which results (and it is a process not a product) becomes the tentative cultural norm of the society.³²

Sidney Mintz, an anthropologist who has written a history of the relationship between sugar and power in Britain and its Caribbean colonies and is a key theorist of creolization, uses food as an example of such a process. In *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom* Mintz notes that the food the slaves ate came from all over the world. It included 'aboriginal New World cultigens' such as cassava, maize and peanuts, which had already been transported to Africa and then returned, 'Africanized', to the Caribbean; foods imported from Europe including swine and eggplants; salted codfish and herrings imported from Canada; and foodstuffs from the American mainland including papaya, potatoes and tomatoes. Mintz argues that Caribbean cuisine has its origins in the food of the slaves, and is a distinctly new 'bricolage' reflecting their ingenuity and ability to improvise.³³ Neither African nor European, this creolized cuisine furthermore began to be taken up by the European masters themselves in one of the osmotic movements Brathwaite describes as typical of creolization. While not attempting to play down the enormous suffering caused by slavery, or deny that slaves were often starved or underfed, Mintz offers this cuisine as an improvised and distinctly new cultural creation. Such valorization of creolized cultural products challenges Naipaul's assertion in *The Middle Passage* that because of its history (or lack of one) 'nothing was created in the West Indies.'

Where Brathwaite describes a process with two poles, European and African, Lamming and Naipaul's dispute is over the place of Indo-Caribbeans in such a society. Later in *An Area of Darkness* Naipaul offers food as his main example of the 'seepage' he writes about:

Black pudding and souse, favourite street-corner and sport-ground dishes of the Negro proletariat, were regarded by us with fascinated horror. This might suggest that our food remained what it had always been. But this was not so. It is not easy to understand how communication occurred, but we were steadily adopting the food styles of others: the Portuguese stew of tomato and onions, with which almost anything might be done, the Negro way with yams, plantains, breadfruit and bananas.³⁴

Naipaul's word 'seepage' seems close to Brathwaite's osmosis, but for Naipaul the process is entirely one-way. The seepage of 'food styles' is from the Portuguese and Afro-Trinidadian population into that of the Indo-Trinidadian population, rather than vice versa. Creolization is imag-

ined as a one-way process through which the distinctness of the Indo-Trinidadian community is slowly eroded. While his non-fiction simply observes that ‘It is not easy to understand how such communication occurred’, in contrast Naipaul’s fictional presentation of the relationship between food and identity is more complex. In *A House for Mr Biswas*, other Trinidadians are shown valuing and coveting Indian food.³⁵ The very distinctions Naipaul uses food to imagine are undermined by this supposedly subterranean and mysterious process of cultural exchange. This disjuncture is precisely the source of the ‘fascinated horror’ that colours Naipaul’s fictional depiction of food and eating.

Where food was tied to class in *Great Expectations*, in Naipaul’s non-fictional depictions of Trinidad, food primarily reflects race. But it is necessary to emphasize a further difference between meals in *Great Expectations* and *A House for Mr Biswas*. In Dickens’s novels, as we have argued, Pip’s meals with Pumblechook restate the social order, revealing the relative social positions of the participants. They do so against a background of shared understanding as to what a meal means—one which both author and reader understand. It is this understanding that marks for Naipaul the greatest difference between Dickens’s society and his own. Food in Naipaul’s non-fiction, rather than restating the social order, is used to present the absence of a set of shared values that can transcend race. As he puts it in ‘Jasmine’, his experience of reading Dickens in Trinidad was one of encountering not only a different society, but a more ‘elaborately ordered’ society. ‘Such a society’, he writes, ‘was more than alien; it was excluding.’³⁶ When Naipaul writes of the ‘made-up world’ in which he tries to set Dickens’s narratives, it is revealingly difficult to tell whether he is talking about the ‘world’ he imagines in his head, or Trinidad itself.

Naipaul draws his fullest (and most provocative) conclusions from this experience in *The Middle Passage*. ‘The West Indian is incapable of comedy’, Naipaul argues there. ‘A literature can only grow out of a strong shared framework of social convention’, a framework that Trinidad (according to Naipaul) lacks.³⁷ The ‘West Indian’, Naipaul claims ‘knowing only the values of money and race, is lost as soon as he steps out of his own society into one with more complex criteria.’³⁸ By extension, a form like the novel developed in a more ‘complex’ society is inappropriate for the society about which Naipaul writes. How does Naipaul respond to this problem in *A House for Mr Biswas*?

'Secret Eating Never Did Him Any Good': *A House for Mr Biswas*

For obvious reasons, critics of V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961) have tended to focus on houses as the central metaphor of the novel. Naipaul himself has described the novel as 'the story of a man's search for a house, and all that a house implies'.³⁹

As critics including Homi Bhabha and Selwyn Cudjoe have argued, Biswas's search for a house is also a search for identity. As a young man, Biswas marries into the extended Tulsi family, a family of Hindu Brahmins who consider themselves to be holding firm to traditional Indian ways, despite their new location in the Caribbean.⁴⁰ Among these ways is the assumption that members of the family will live in one of the various communal Tulsi dwellings. Biswas's search for a home of his own, a house for the nuclear family consisting of his wife Shama and their two children, Anand and Savi, is contrasted with the various houses of the extended Tulsi clan. These houses, Hanuman House, Shorthills, the old plantation house in Arwacas, and the Tulsi house in Port of Spain, represent, as Homi Bhabha puts it, the Hindu Indo-Trinidadian

rural or provincial petty bourgeoisie, protecting their fragmented, traditional, migrant culture in the face of a growing Caribbean Creolization. This ascriptive realm is also called the world of 'women', where there are only congealed nameless collectivities and statuses, such as the Hindu joint family confers.⁴¹

Similarly, Selwyn Cudjoe locates Biswas's search for identity against the background of this wider crisis: 'Caught up between the demise of the old feudal order and the rise of nascent capitalist relations, Mr Biswas is forced to articulate a sense of self within the context of these two contradictory movements of social organization.'⁴² The Tulsi's Hanuman House embodies this isolationist feudal order: 'The House was a world, [...] everything beyond its gates was foreign and unimportant and could be ignored,' [188]. In contrast the house Mr Biswas acquires at the end of the novel can be read as the guarantee of his escape from the 'nameless collectivity' of the Tulsi clan and its dependents, but an escape into the less certain and more unsettling wider society of multi-racial Trinidad.

I would like to suggest that the (understandable) critical emphasis on houses has overlooked the importance played by eating in the novel. Biswas's relationship with the Tulsis is negotiated through food:

The husbands, under Seth's supervision, worked on the Tulsi land, looked after the Tulsi animals, and served in the store. In return they were given food, shelter and a little money; their children were looked after; and they were treated with respect by people outside because they were connected with the Tulsi family. Their names were forgotten; they became Tulsis. [97]

To marry into the Tulsi collectivity, as Biswas has done by marrying Shama, is to become nameless. The exchange is one of food in return for renouncing identity as an individual. This exchange is made against a background in which hunger and lack of food are present and vivid threats. Childhood malnutrition gives Biswas 'eczema and sores [...] the shallowest of chests, the thinnest of limbs; it stunted his growth and gave him a soft rising belly,' [22]. 'Is the first time in your life you eating three square meals a day,' Shama reminds Biswas at Hanuman House [118]. 'You must complain only when you start providing your own food' she tells him [132].

Throughout the novel Biswas's relationship with the world is expressed through eating. Meals of varying degrees of awkwardness and hostility mark every major event in the novel: the end of Biswas's apprenticeship to Pundit Jairam [52-7], his reunion with his mother [57], his marriage to Shama, his strained relationship with his sister Dehuti and her husband Ramchand [69-74], his rivalry with Owad at Hanuman House [133] and with the other Tulsi husbands at Shorthills [421] and his meetings with his journalist mentor Burnett [367-8].

Unsurprisingly, Biswas's rebellion against the Tulsis begins with what he eats. The 'fascinated horror' which Naipaul depicts in *An Area of Darkness* as typical of Indian-Trinidadian attitudes to the food of the 'negro proletariat' is attributed to the Tulsis:

Mr Biswas bought a tin of salmon and two loaves of bread. The bread looked and smelled stale. He knew that in his present state bread would only bring on nausea, but it gave him some satisfaction that he was breaking one of the Tulsi taboos by eating shop bread, a habit they considered feckless, negroid and unclean. [...] As he ate, his distress increased. Secret eating never did him any good. [140]

While in *An Area of Darkness* Naipaul refuses to engage with the actual process of how food moves between ethnic groups in Trinidad, here it is his focus. But if the metaphorical and actual search for a

house marks an escape for Biswas from the 'old feudal order' of the Tulsis, into a society of 'nascent capitalist relations', focussing our attention upon this rebellion through food presents a much more ambiguous process.

'To see the attenuation of the culture of my childhood as the result of a dramatic confrontation of opposed worlds would be to distort the reality,' Naipaul argues in *An Area of Darkness*. We should note the word 'world', which echoes the apparent stability of Hanuman House, also described in *A House for Mr Biswas* as a 'world'. But Biswas's rebellion through food does not present two worlds in collision—rather, it emphasises the 'seepages' between them. Biswas's act of self-fashioning carries significance not in the wider creolized society, but only in relation to the world of Hanuman House. Biswas's self-assertion only has meaning from within the framework of Tuli prejudice. Equally, however, the novel keenly observes the elements of creolization that have entered even Hanuman House. The Tulsis keep pigs [168], the boys of the family wear crucifixes to their exams [125], and Biswas gleefully calls Mrs Tuli the "Roman Cat" (holic) [117]. What Selwyn Cudjoe describes as 'two contradictory movements of social organization' are seen to have interpenetrated each other. By focussing on the slippages between Indo-Trinidadian and other foodways, the novel undermines Naipaul's attempt to ignore the implications of such movements in *An Area of Darkness*.

One inviting way of analyzing Biswas's rebellion would be to use Mary Douglas's classic discussion of disgust and pollution in *Purity and Danger*. Discussing the dietary regulations laid down for the Israelites in *Leviticus*, Douglas argues that it is a mistake to treat 'bodily margins in isolation from all other margins'.⁴³ Instead, she argues, we can see in *Leviticus*'s anxiety about diet and pollution a reflection of the anxieties of a minority culture under threat: 'The threatened boundaries of their body politic would be well-mirrored in their care for the integrity, unity and purity of the physical body.'⁴⁴ It is those creatures that transgress the boundaries of *Leviticus*'s attempts to categorize and classify the natural world that are declared abominable, and moreover inedible: shellfish, winged insects that move on four feet, creatures that swarm on the ground, creatures that crawl on their stomachs, and so on. However, as David Trotter has noted in an excellent account of the implications of Douglas's work: 'it most enthusiastic exponents have not always taken full account of Douglas's remark that the "pollution behaviour" which concerns her is only likely to arise in

circumstances “where the lines of structure, cosmic or social, are clearly defined.”⁴⁵ Despite the Tulsis’ assertions to the contrary, this is not the case in *A House for Mr Biswas*. The ‘lines of structure’ Biswas thinks of himself as transgressing are already blurred and confused. Rather than rebelling against the Tulsis, Biswas can be seen as joining them in the unacknowledged but ongoing process by which the Hindu rules governing food and behaviour that they pay lip service to are eroded. To give this process another name: creolization.

Mr Pumblechook may have *Leviticus* partly in mind when he discourses on the Biblical significance of the pig, but there are two vital distinctions to be made between Pip’s eating and Mr Biswas’s. The first is that rather than a transgression, Pip’s dinners instead reaffirm the social ordering of the novel. The second is that the rules which govern dining (who serves who, which bits of food they get) remain stable throughout the novel. It is Pip and Pumblechook who change relative positions in a novel where the ‘lines’ of ‘social ordering’ remain ‘clearly defined’. Unlike the ‘world’ of Hanuman House, or even the ‘world’ of Trinidad itself, the ‘world’ Naipaul discovers in Dickens is complete, self-contained and stable.

If transgressive eating is one way in which Biswas tries to rebel against his circumstances, the other is through narrative. Here, as we have observed, his explicit model is Dickens, in whose novels he finds everything ‘everything he feared and suffered from [...] ridiculed and diminished.’ Significantly, the novel depicts Biswas attempting to narrate a meal in such a way as to produce the same ridiculing diminishing effect. Equally significantly, he is shown repeatedly failing to achieve it.

As a boy, Biswas is apprenticed to Jairam, a Hindu pundit, who performs religious rituals for the Indo-Trinidadian community. In return for his services, Jairam has been given a bunch of ‘Gros Michel bananas’ [52]—long ‘bananas cultivated for export’ with ‘brown stained yellow skin’.⁴⁶ Biswas steals and eats two of the bananas, and is punished by the pundit, who forces him to eat the rest of the bunch. It is a pivotal moment, both for Biswas and the novel itself. The punishment:

marked the beginning of his stomach trouble; ever afterwards, whenever he was excited or depressed or angry his stomach swelled until it was taut with pain. [55]

More directly, the punishment triggers Biswas’s expulsion from the

pundit's house, ending the possibility that he too would become a pundit. Forced in the night to relieve himself, and doing so in his room out of fear of disturbing the Pundit, Biswas manages to deposit his excreta over Jairam's oleander tree. Its flowers are no longer suitable for use in the puja ceremony as a result, and Biswas is sent back to his mother in disgrace.

Food marks their eventual reconciliation:

Her rage spent itself and she became as understanding and protective as he hoped she would have been right at the beginning. But it was not sweet now. She poured water for him to wash his hands, sat him down on a low bench and gave him food—not hers to give, for this was the communal food of the house, to which she had contributed nothing but her labour in the cooking—and looked after him in the proper way. [57]

Like the young Pip in *Great Expectations* Biswas is vividly aware of the social ordering underlying eating arrangements. In *Great Expectations*, however, Pip is allowed the final word: his narration, among other things, shows up as ludicrous the meanings Mr Pumblechook attributes to food. Indeed, it is by exposing the hypocrisy and absurdity of Mr Pumblechook's little narrative about pork that Pip 'ridicules and diminishes' him.

Unlike Pip, Biswas does not narrate the novel itself. But within *A House for Mr Biswas* Biswas is given three opportunities to narrate these childhood incidents. He does so differently each time, but in each attempt he fails to achieve the 'ridiculing and diminishing effect' to which he aspires. His first account of what happened is told to his aunt Tara:

He told about the bananas, blusteringly at first, but when he noticed that Tara was giving him sympathy he saw his own injury very clearly, broke down and wept, and Tara held him to her bosom and dried his tears. So that the scene he had pictured as taking place with his mother took place with Tara. [58]

The narrator observes that the behaviour of Biswas's mother is simultaneously 'absurd and touching' (57). In contrast, each of Biswas's attempts to retell the story of these events attempts to render it either as comedy or tragedy. In this first attempt, Biswas's narrative slips uncertainly from one to the other.

Biswas's second attempt to tell the story is narrated to his son

Anand, many years later. Anand has fouled himself at school [235-6], and Biswas tells his son of the ‘misadventure at Pundit Jairam’s, caricaturing himself and ridiculing Anand’s shame’ [236]. In this version of events, Biswas becomes ‘the buffoon’ [236]. Like the Pip who narrates *Great Expectations*, Biswas is distanced by time from the events he narrates. What *A House for Mr Biswas* emphasizes, however, is not the similarity between Biswas’s stories and Dickens’s, but their difference. Biswas’s discomfort and embarrassment, his return home in shame and the subsequent disappointing behaviour of his mother, must all be excluded from this comic version of the story. To paraphrase Homi Bhabha, what happens in this story is that Biswas can only achieve ‘a retrospective literary value’ by excluding its uncomfortable content. The content that Biswas feels forced to exclude - the eating arrangements Biswas shares with his mother, the transgression of pollution taboos that underlie the Pundit’s outrage at Biswas’s theft of his bananas, the religious significance of the tree Biswas befouls - is also that content which emphasises that the story is neither unproblematically ‘universal’, nor taking place in Dickens’s England.

Biswas’s third attempt to tell the story comes thirty years after the event, when he writes a prose poem about his return from Jairam’s house to his mother:

To do honour he had no gifts. He had no words to say what he wanted to say, the poet’s words, which held more than the sum of their meanings. [...] He addressed his mother. He did not think of rhythm; he used no cheating abstract words. He wrote of the coming up to the brow of a hill, seeing the black forked earth, the marks of the spade, the indentations of the fork prongs. He wrote of a journey he had made a long time before. He was tired; she made him rest. He was hungry; she gave him food. He had nowhere to go; she welcomed him. [484]

Here, it would seem, Biswas has finally resolved the problem of how to write about Trinidad. He explicitly rejects literariness (‘rhythm’, ‘cheating abstract words’) although we might note the ways in which the poem, supposedly free of literary influences, echoes Matthew’s Gospel: ‘For when I was hungry you gave me food; when thirsty you gave me drink.’⁴⁷

It could be argued that Biswas’s poem reflects the kind of short fiction called for and written by a number of Trinidadian writers in the 1930s (including V. S. Naipaul’s own father, Seepersad Naipaul), and

published in the literary magazine *The Beacon*. In an attempt to steer Caribbean writing away from over-reliance on foreign literary models, such writers 'put into practice their theoretical demands that West Indian writers should utilize West Indian settings, speech, characters and conflicts.'⁴⁸ Biswas's story would seem to meet these criteria exactly. It is at the meeting of a literary group closely modelled on those held by the *Beacon* writers at this time that Biswas reads his poem:

He disgraced himself. Thinking himself free of what he had written, he ventured on his poem boldly, and even with a touch of self-mockery. But as he read, his hands began to shake, the paper rustled; and when he spoke of the journey his voice failed. It cracked and kept on cracking; his eyes tickled. But he went on, and his emotion was such that at the end no-one said a word.
[484-5]

While this time Biswas slips from comedy into tragedy, his attempts to diminish the events about which he writes have advanced little from his first attempt to tell the story to his Aunt Tara thirty years before. The attempt to disentangle colonial content (in Bhabha's phrase) from literary value has again been unsuccessful. Indeed, such attempts fail precisely because each of Biswas's narratives becomes entrapped 'the colonial contradictions of cultural heterogeneity'. The contrast between what Sara Suleri has called the 'excessive novelty of post-colonial history' (that history which Naipaul traces in his non-fiction, and to which he ascribes the problems he diagnoses in Trinidadian society) and the 'excessive anachronism of the canon' (the problems Naipaul encounters when reading Dickens) is repeatedly demonstrated in Biswas's attempts to narrate his own story. Nor does *A House for Mr Biswas* itself resolve these 'contradictions'. Instead, it stages them over and over again. It does so primarily, I have argued, through food and through writing about food.

Conclusion

Both *Great Expectations* and *A House for Mr Biswas* follow their protagonists from childhood on, and both mark key incidents with a 'series of repasts'.⁴⁹ But in Dickens's novel, in which ridicule and resolution triumph over the forces of the past, meals locate and contain

the diners. They demonstrate class, greed, and snobbery, for example. In Naipaul's depictions of Trinidad, there is no shared or stable code of behaviour that will allow this process to take place. As a result, food undermines Biswas's attempts to narrate the events of his life. For the novel itself, neither the colonial society nor the literary canon can be rejected, and Naipaul disrupts attempts to disengage one from the other. Rather than transcending or resolving the difficulties Naipaul found in his early encounters with the novels of Charles Dickens, *A House for Mr Biswas* enacts them. Paying close attention to the meals and attempts to ascribe meaning to meals in *A House for Mr Biswas* suggests the ways in which Naipaul's novel engages with the anxieties but also the possibilities he first encountered as a young man reading Dickens in Trinidad.

Notes

¹ Selwyn R. Cudjoe's full-length study, *V.S. Naipaul: A Materialist Reading* records that 'at least nine books, thirteen doctoral dissertations, and ten master's theses have been devoted to Naipaul's work' (Cudjoe, *V.S. Naipaul*, 4). Helen Hayward's *The Enigma of V.S. Naipaul* is a recent attempt to engage with Naipaul's work as a whole.

² Naipaul, 'Jasmine', 46. Naipaul also discusses Dickens in his essay 'Reading and Writing', in the same collection. 28-9.

³ Naipaul, 'Jasmine', 47.

⁴ Suleri 150, 151.

⁵ Bhabha has in mind, to a certain extent unfairly, Landeg White's *V.S. Naipaul: A Critical Introduction*.

⁶ Bhabha, 'Representation and the Colonial Text', 114

⁷ A 'jorum' is a large drinking bowl, usually used for punch. The name of the 'liver wing' alludes to the practice of serving the right wing of a chicken 'with the bird's liver tucked under it', and it was considered a delicacy. A 'small salad' contained mustard and cress. See Angus Calder's notes to *Great Expectations*, 507, 503 and 511. These terms appear in the novel in Chapters 37, 19 and 54.

⁸ For more on which see Calder 499, 502 and 504, and *Great Expectations*, Chapters 2, 15 and 20.

⁹ 'Hardbake': almond toffee (see Calder, p.502; *Great Expectations*, Chapter 13); 'Flip': 'A mixture of beer, spirits and sugar, heated with a red-hot poker' (see Calder 503; *Great Expectations*, Chapter 19).

¹⁰ The reference to a 'Blacking Ware'us' comes in Chapter 28 of *Great Expectations*, and is explained at length by Calder on 506. Calder puts Magwitch's mention of having his head measured into cultural context on 508. It occurs in Chapter 42. Calder explains the reference to William Collins's *Ode* (in Chapter 7), on 501. For the *George Barnwell* reference see Calder 502 and *Great*

Expectations, Chapter 15.

- ¹¹ Naipaul, 'Jasmine', 46-7.
¹² Naipaul, 'Jasmine', 47.
¹³ Barthes, 167.
¹⁴ Barthes, both quotations 168.
¹⁵ Trotter, *Cooking with Mud*, 239.
¹⁶ Ellmann, 24.
¹⁷ Dickens, *Great Expectations*, 58 and 57.
¹⁸ Naipaul, *A House for Mr Biswas*, int. Ian Buruma (London: Penguin, 1992), 374. All subsequent page references are to this edition.
¹⁹ Naipaul, 'Jasmine', 47.
²⁰ Naipaul, *The Middle Passage*, 49.
²¹ Naipaul, *The Middle Passage*, 49.
²² Munasinghe, xi, x.
²³ As Cudjoe glosses their responses. *V.S. Naipaul*, 9.
²⁴ Ahmad, *In Theory*, 111.
²⁵ Naipaul, *The Middle Passage*, 49.
²⁶ Naipaul, *The Middle Passage*, 20.
²⁷ Dissanayake and Wickramagamage, vii. Rob Nixon indicts Naipaul on similar grounds in *V.S. Naipaul: Postcolonial Mandarin*. Chris Searle's 'Naipaulcity', accuses Naipaul of 'cultural imperialism', 45.
²⁸ Unfortunately there will not be enough space to consider the role of food in Naipaul's other novels in depth in this essay, although I do refer to its significance in some of his early non-fiction. For a fuller discussion of Naipaul's work see Paul Vlitos, *Eating and Identity in the Novels of V.S. Naipaul, Anita Desai, Timothy Mo and Salman Rushdie* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Cambridge, 2004).
²⁹ Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 25.
³⁰ George Lamming, 'A Trinidad Experience', 1657. Born in 1927, Lamming is the author of novels including *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953) and *Of Age and Innocence* (1958) as well as works of criticism including *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960).
³¹ Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 30.
³² Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens*, 6. Brathwaite is developing the insights of his seminal earlier work *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820*.
³³ Mintz, 40. Jeffrey M. Pilcher agrees with this hypothesis in "The Caribbean from 1492 to the Present", in *The Cambridge World History of Food*.
³⁴ Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 28.
³⁵ Naipaul, *A House for Mr Biswas*, 409.
³⁶ Naipaul, 'Jasmine', p. 47.
³⁷ Naipaul, *The Middle Passage*, 66.
³⁸ Naipaul, *The Middle Passage*, 13.
³⁹ Naipaul, 'Foreword to *A House for Mr Biswas*', 131.
⁴⁰ The word 'Tulsi' itself, the Hindi for 'basil', appears in the text in the context of the puja ceremony [51], highlighting the Tulsi's much vaunted Brahmin status and traditionalism.
⁴¹ Homi Bhabha, 116-7.
⁴² Selwyn R. Cudjoe, 'V.S. Naipaul and the Question of Identity', 91.

⁴³ Douglas, 121.

⁴⁴ Douglas, 124.

⁴⁵ David Trotter, *Paranoid Modernism*, 73. Trotter quotes Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 113. My argument here is strongly indebted to Trotter's elegant and thought-provoking comments on Douglas's work and Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror* (Trotter, 71-3), although Trotter's remarks are made in relation to a very different context. Of Kristeva, it is interesting to note that *Powers of Horror* actually uses Naipaul's *An Area of Darkness* as a case study in its psychoanalytical approach to disgust.

⁴⁶ Robuchon, *Larousse Gastronomique*, 73.

⁴⁷ Matthew 25: 35, *The New English Bible* (Swindon: Bible Society, 1988).

⁴⁸ Sander, 9. Contributors to *The Beacon* included V.S. Naipaul's father, Seepersad Naipaul. See V.S. Naipaul's 'Foreword to *The Adventures of Gurudeva*'. V.S. Naipaul's relationship to his father's work is discussed by John Thieme (26-45), and in White's *V.S. Naipaul* (92-7). See also Hayward, 6-38.

⁴⁹ Ellmann, p.24.

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研究会会則

第1章 総則

- 第1条 本会は「試論」英文学研究会と称する。
 第2条 本会は、事務局を東北大学文学部英文学研究室内に置く。

第2章 目的及び事業

- 第3条 本会は、英語英文学研究の発展と向上を旨とし、同時に会員相互の親睦交流をはかる。
 第4条 本会は、第3条の目的を達成するために次の事業を行なう。
 1. 研究誌「試論」の発行（年一回）。
 2. その他必要な事業。

第3章 組織

- 第5条 本会は、会員により組織する。入会には会員二名以上の推薦と、会長の承認を必要とする。
 第6条 本会は次の役員を置く。
 会長1名
 編集委員若干名（うち事務局幹事1名）
 第7条 役員は次の会務にあたる。
 1. 会長は本会を代表する。
 2. 編集委員は、会長と共に編集委員会を構成し、「試論」への投稿論文の審査、「試論」の編集、及びその他の会務にあたる。
 3. 事務局幹事は、庶務会計の任にあたる。
 第8条 会長は、会員の互選により選出する。会長の任期は2年とし、重任を妨げない。
 編集委員は、編集委員会の推薦により選出する。編集委員の任期は2年とし、重任を妨げない。事務局幹事は編集委員の互選とする。
 第9条 本会には名誉会員を置くことができる。

第4章 会計

- 第10条 本会の会費は別に定める金額とする。

第5章 会則改正

- 第11条 会則の改正には会員の過半数の賛成を必要とする。

（平成13年10月1日発効）

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編集後記

このところ 100 ページを越えることが多かった本誌ですが、第 43 集はかなりスリムになりました。投稿論文は 5 篇でした。しかし厳正な審査の結果、3 篇のみが掲載されることになった結果です。

私たちの研究会は会員相互が切磋琢磨しつつ、質の高い論文の発表を目ざしています。そのため、審査にあたってもただちに不採用とはせず、編集委員の率直な意見を執筆者にお伝えし、改訂・再投稿を求めることにしております。今回掲載されなかった 2 篇についても、刊行スケジュールに間に合わないため、やむを得ず次集以降の再投稿を求めることになりました。

編集委員も、研究者としては、投稿者と何ら変わらない立場にあるピア(peer)です。専門領域が投稿論文と常に一致するわけではありませんので、その意見が必ずしも的を射たものであるとは限りません。それでも、改訂意見を参考にして再投稿された論文の質が例外なく向上しているのは、他者の眼に触れることがいかに重要であるかを証明していると言えましょう。

これほど手間をかけて掲載論文を磨き上げるという学術誌は、他にあまり例がないでしょう。本誌掲載の論文はほとんどが英文によるものですが、母語話者による校訂は、編集委員会によって行われており、投稿者の負担にはなっていません。会員の皆様におかれましては、このような利点を十分にご考慮いただき、世界の学界にインパクトを与える論文を今後もふるってご投稿くださるようお願いいたします。

14 年間にわたって本誌に貢献されたピーター・ロビンソン氏は、昨年 4 月に京都女子大学に転出しました。新任のポール・ヴリトス氏はケンブリッジ大学で博士号を取得したばかりの俊英です。専門はカリブ海文学、インド系英語作家、ポストコロニアル文学批評です。

E. H.

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