在《荒屋》當中被模糊化的貧民窟

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【摘要】

本研究在探討狄更斯作品《荒屋》當中的貧民窟意象。此一場域作爲書中諸多角色的心靈試驗場，不僅模糊了倫敦城裡所謂高尚與低劣的區域劃分，也模糊了書中角色的社會階級，如此模糊化讓整部小說的敘事更加複雜，造就了巴赫金所言之小說的多音義系統，讓狄更斯美醜交融的倫敦市景成爲小說角色多樣化的內心寫照。

【關鍵詞】

荒屋、狄更斯、貧民窟、地景、倫敦、巴赫金

【Abstract】

This research is to analyze the slum, Tom-All-Alone's, in Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*. The ruinous place, with all the characters' dark connections in it, serves as the area that the characters of upper class must enter and be testified with their desires. In their wondering in the slum, the distinction between the good and bad places in London, just like that between the high and low social ranks, therefore, is blurred with the interactions of the characters. Such blurring contributes to the heterogeneity of Dickens's works, which, in Bakhtin's term, could be understood as "heterogrossia", when the characters' performances and speech types are narrated in multiple dialogization. The heterogeneity makes Dickens's London the vivid reflection of his characters' minds.

【Keywords】

Bleak House, Charles Dickens, slum, landscape, London, Bakhtin

In *Bleak House*, Tom-all-Alone's is Dickens's imagined slum reflecting the real slum St. Gile near Oxford Street in London. The name came from Dickens's memory in childhood of a demolished house near his own residence. The description of Tom-All-Alone's corresponds to the image presented in Friedrich Engle's *The Condition of the Working Class in England*: "The narrow, dirty streets are just as crowded as the main thoroughfares, but in St. Giles one sees only members of the working class…Here live the poorest of the poor" (Shatto 142).[1] Such image is crucial in the whole novel, when "Tom-all-Alone's", in Dickens creation of the novel, stood as an alternative title other than *Bleak House*. In other words, when John Jarndyce shows his consciousness of the worldly bleakness by naming his mansion outside London, Dickens shows such reality of bleakness with the slum inside the city, suggesting that all the characters entering London are actually roaming around a ruinous place. The characters without the consciousness of this reality, like Lady Dedlock, Tulkinghorn, and Sir Leicester, are inclined to fall into this urban depravity. On the other hand, the characters who keep reminding themselves the social sins around the urban slum, like Esther and John Jarndyce, survive the world full of sufferings. One way to differentiate those two kinds of characters is to identify whether they are aware of themselves as parts of the social sins. Esther, among other characters, was born with this awareness on the basis of Protestantism. The awareness, to know the construction of self not as the privileged class outside the slum, could also be analyzed as the insight into the heterogeneity of the society and consequently into the complexity of urban impoverishments.

The living situation of the working class takes one of the important issues for Dickens to show the worldly suffering in the novel. For the third-person-viewpoint

[1] In addition to Shatto's quotation, Engels reveals the images of St. Gile with similar tone of Dickens in describing the house of Tom-All-Alone's: "The houses are occupied from cellar to garret, filthy within and without, and their appearance is such that no human being could possibly wish to live in them". In Engels' writing, the fact that the slum was among the most improved part of the city is emphasized: "St. Giles…surrounded by broad, splendid avenues in which the gay world of London idles about…" (71). The saying not only highlights the contrast between the living situations of working class and the upper class in London but also mirrors the ironic image of London with the most depraved and improved worlds.

narrator in *Bleak House*, the images of the slum, accompanying the narrative of Jo's connections with other characters, shows the writer's omniscience, as similarly shown in Engels's ethnographic work, to represent the social injustice. For the first-person-viewpoint narrator Esther, on the other hand, the representation of an unfair England is gradually revealed in her life experience, starting with her interaction with the brick-maker as the prevailing working class in London. As shown in the eighth chapter of the novel, "Covering A Multitude of Sins," the tragic prevalence starts with Esther's stepping into the brick-makers' community. If the original sin of human beings results in God's punishment by death, according to Christian doctrine, the heavenly rage and its consequences do not disappear in the nineteenth-century England as the most modernized country in Western Europe. As told by the title of the chapter, they are just covered. And one of Esther's missions in the novel is to discover, but not to judge, those sins, because she has to know that she is also among the sinners. Her first impression of seeing the bad housing of the brick-makers, though out of compassion, reveals her attitude of a lady seeing the poor:

> …it was one of a cluster of wretched hovels in a brickfield, with pigsties close to the broken windows, and miserable little gardens before the doors, growing nothing but stagnant pools. Here and there, an old tub was put to catch the droppings of rain-water from the roof, or they were banked up with mud into a little pond like large dirt pie.
>
> (Dickens 112)

In Esther's description, the sanity and arrangements are naturally below the standard of Esther, who keeps the housing of a luxurious mansion. Her response comes from her wealthy growth supported by John Jarndyce. For Jarndyce, paradoxically, the beautiful residence is in danger of being the ruin if the people inside get involved with the evil of Chancery. Such consciousness, of both Dickens (to make a paralleling sense of the slum and the noble palace when giving the story a title) and Jarndyce, is shown in naming the house as "Bleak" and is to lead Esther to know more of her social surroundings and consequently of her very own self. In her growth, she has been forced by her godmother to reflect on her own sinful birth as an

underground aristocratic. Esther's godmother, also the sister of Lady Dedlock, cannot marry Sir Boythorn because she has to secretly take care of Esther, leading a melancholic life. Therefore, when she delivers this depression to her niece, she is teaching the little girl the pain of sacrificing personal desire so as to protect the family fame, of which the essence is the material need. In other words, in her childhood Esther has learned the darkest part of the social hierarchy. The perception makes her sensitive to the emotions, especially those out of her social identity, functioning on other people socially inferior to her. Accompanied with Richard Carstone, Ada Clare, and Mrs. Pardiggle, the people of the dressing as gentlemen and ladies, Esther hears the brick-makers respond with disgust: "…gentleforlks minding their own business, and not troubling their heads and muddying their own shoes with coming to look after others." Such a disgust as the conflict of different worlds reaches its height when Mrs. Pardiggle ask the worker whether he has read books and gone to the church:

> Have I read the little books wot you left? No…How have I been conducting of myself? Why, I have been drunk for three days…Don't I never mean to go for church? No, I never mean, for go to church…And how did my wife get the black eye? Why, I give it her; and if she says I didn't, she's a Lie!
>
> (Dickens 113)

The tone of a drunkard that the brick-maker uses to tease Mrs. Pardiggle consists of the worker's discontent with the life in a slum on the one hand, and on the other of Dickens's dissatisfaction to the churches of his own time doing the charity to the working class. In *Bleak House*, the ideal characterization in confronting the social differences seems Esther, whose moral sense comes from her painful growth as the reflection on the sinful wealth, not Mrs. Pardiggle and Mrs Jellyby (a lady who neglect her own family in order to take care of the poor children in Africa), who try to change the society without the reflection on their own identities. The Christian thoughts in Victorian England may be the reasonable explanation for the opposing characters. Carolyn W. de la Oulton in *Literature and Religion in Mid-Victorian England* points out that the female characters in *Bleak House* like Esther, Mrs. Parddigle, and Mrs. Jellyby are greatly influenced by the evangelical churches. The

social works carried by Mrs. Pardiggle and Mrs. Jellyby are the philanthropic missions issued by the church. And Esther's attitude of examining herself is also given by her aunt, a single woman with the faith in evangelicalism. As suggested by the title of the eighth chapter of the novel, the multitude of sins as the result of social complication which may cause death, as that of a baby in the working-class family, is going to be covered by philanthropic actions when the ones who take those actions have no essential perceptions of their own social existences accompanied by worldly sufferings. Like the lawyer Jaggers in *Great Expectations*, Esther shows a more "realistic" (Oulton 176) attitude of living in London than that of Mrs. Pardiggle and Mrs. Jellyby. Jaggers, understanding that he is situated in "an atmosphere of evil" around Newgate (and therefore has the habit of washing hands), teaches Pip that one can never change the society for he or she is, since the birth, involved with it. The action of kindness that efficiently makes social change only takes place when the ignorance within the naïve sympathy has been eliminated. One of the points in this elimination is that one should conceal him or herself in taking the actions of helping others. Jaggers's plots to help Magwitch family, for example, thus, in its revelation as the end of the novel, must be modified with theoretical voices as the deeds of some other else. The shrewd lawyer is commented by Oulton as having "his own philanthropic impulse" (176). The philanthropic actions in *Bleak House*, however, like that of Mrs. Pardiggle, are exemplified by the ladies and gentlemen with aristocratic dressings getting into the slum, showing nothing of humiliating the self in kindness and therefore losing the essential faith in evangelicalism.

In other words, reflecting on her conflicting existence in the slum, Esther, like Jaggers, presents the "realistic" aspect of evangelicalism. In the history of English religion, in addition to Anglicism and Puritanism, there were people of Broad Church, which, though still a branch of Anglicism, struggled to get rid of the political pursuits. The cultural workers of Broad Church claimed the importance of literature and education to improve and stabilize the Christian society. As Oulton states in his research, Dickens "tackled the evangelical ethos throughout…work and found a convincing resolution in Broad Church belief" (Oulton 1). As shown in the opposition of Mrs. Pardiggle and Esther in *Bleak House*, the woman of philanthropic missions, though based on the theology of original sin, carries out the "ostentatious

display of personal piety" just like the Catholics before Reformation. Her deed thus becomes "a mark of vanity" (Oulton 111). Esther, on the other hand, receives the education of Evangelicalism, but the way she receives it is very different from that of Mrs. Parddigle. When other children are celebrating their birthdays, Esther must learn the lesson of original sin in the day of her secret birth:

> Submission, self-denial, diligent work, are the preparations for a life begun with such a shadow on it. You are different from other children, Esther, because you were not born, like them, in common sinfulness and wrath. You are set apart.
>
> (Dickens 18)

According to Protestantism, the "common sinfulness and wrath" are what a Christian should keep reminding him or herself for life. However, for Esther, who is "set apart," the theological idea is something that has been violently imposed on her. What Esther's aunt has prepared for the little girl is the "incessant self-examination" (Oulton 102). Esther has to carefully gaze on the instant of her sinful birth, while the evangelic missioners of philanthropy are inclined to gaze on the sin of others so as to think of him or herself as the elected.

Therefore, taking evangelicalism as the standard to identify the difference of Esther and Mrs. Pardiggle, we can see the reason why it is Esther but not Mrs. Pardiggle to see directly the death of a baby. As Harold Bloom comments in *Western Canon*, Esther is Dickens's "contribution to the British tradition of heroines of Protestant will" (Bloom 292). The scene in which Esther tenderly covers the dead baby with her handkerchief is Dickens's creative illustration for Puritanism as the most profound existential consciousness within English literature. Inside and outside the handkerchief are both the coursed lives. The act of covering, therefore, serves as the vulnerable protection just like the difference that Esther sensed when she firstly comes into the slum. The places of good and bad housing are distinguished with the social titles. Such hierarchical distinctions, however, are made to deter the Godly wrath, the death. The people committed to those worldly classifications, the Catholics with such rituals as tithe and the selling of pardon; the philanthropic missioners; or, as will be discussed later in this paper, the people like Tulkinghorn and Lady Dedlock seeking the personal desire under the cover of aristocratic fames, are

impossible to recognize the sins of selves and thus result in the consequential sins. What one could do in this ignorant world, as Esther keeps learning in this novel, is to tenderly treat the people threatened by death and, paradoxically, to carefully think over one's own dilemma of existence.

The division of the slum and non-slum in London for the characters' conflicting inwardness serves as a dramatic mechanism for Dickens to present, in Bloom's term, "Protestant will" as the "British tradition" of literature. If English Protestantism as the precursor of nineteenth-century evangelicalism contains in itself the doctrine that a Christian should seek the cause of and the pathway through death only by excessively examining the self (rather than the worldly institution outside, like the church), to identify an urban location as the figuration of death is more a perception of a sinful society in which the self could never escape from than a tour-like visit in the working-class houses. The travelling in London for the agonized characters in *Bleak House*, definitely not including Mrs. Pardiggle, is a journey to confront the division of the urban scenes with or without the death atmosphere. As illustrated in Mrs. Pardiggle's book for a drunkard and in the image of Esther's handkerchief, furthermore, such division is so strong to make people ignorant of the death, as carried by Jo wondering in streets, nearby themselves and meanwhile so fragile to protect them from the mortal threats of poverty and illness. The ideology that the urban classification might exclude one from the prevailing evil has a vivid instance in the characterization of Jo as the representative of the slum in London.

The 47th chapter of Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*, "Jo's Will", is mainly the narration of the neglected child Jo's death. When Jo takes his last breathe with the incomplete pray given by Dr. Woodcourt, the narrator bitterly concludes the chapter:

> The light is come upon the dark benighted way. Dead!
>
> Dead, your majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with Heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us every day.
>
> (Dickens 688)

In this bitter conclusion, Jo, as a homeless boy in London, is connected with other social ranks by his own death. Such a connection suggests that what Jo has carried

with himself, the illness, poverty, and death, threaten all the people in England. In the novel, the presence of Jo indeed illustrates the coming of death. He guides Lady Dedlock through Tom-All-Alone's and points out to her the final destination in the bury ground, the resting place that the church arranges for the outcasts in London. Such a tour epitomizes My Lady's life while, in the end of the novel, she really ends her life in the place where Jo has pointed out for her.[2] The place where Jo and the lawyer Tulkinghorn meet each other is also a situation about death: the investigation of Nemo's, or Captain Hawdon's, over-use of opium. The boy as a testifier of Lady Dedlock's secret also leads the lawyer to his abrupt end of life. If the presence of Jo does not directly evoke death, it still makes some characters confront fatality. One of the major characters of this novel, Esther Summerson, is infected with fever because she has taken care of the ill child in Bleak House. The soldier George Rouncewell, sympathizing the death of an innocent child and annoyed by Tulkinghorn's cruelty, is involved with the murder of the lawyer and almost executed. The people close to Jo, therefore, become unfortunate. The one without determination, like Lady Dedlock, and the one without a good heart, like Tulkinghorn, can barely survive this misfortune brought by the boy. The conclusion of Jo's fate, "Dying thus around us everyday", reveals clearly his relationships with other characters and thus contributes to Dickens's motif for his fictional works, mercy. This neglected child, in other words, stands as the ultimate test for the people who want to live inside and outside London city.

The conclusion for Jo's death consists of more tones than just suggesting Jo's threatening figure of death in the fictional plot. Addressing to the people in different societies, the narrator applies the forms of speeches in the court, in the church, or in the London streets. In H. M. Daleski's reading of *Bleak House*, the laments on Jo's end is "uncertain" but, smoothly following the sentimental tone of prayer, conceives

[2] In his famous research, "Interpretation in *Bleak House*", J. Hillis Miller states that the characters in this novel are usually led to tragic end by their own subjectivity shown in the acts of interpretation. Lady Dedlock, for example, subjectively interprets the words of Nemo's handwriting as her own memory of love and thus regards the construction of the city as her way out of the boredom of Dedlock Family. Her subjectivity, accompanied with the indifference of the words and of the city, leads her to death.

"mixture of effects" to suggest "a whole society that shares in the guilt of Jo's death" (26), which would be gradually revealed in Esther's development, on the basis of Protestant thinking, to see through the sins of herself and of the whole city. The narration with heterogeneous tones, as Miknail M. Bakhtin subtly theorizes, supports Dickens as one of the canonical novelists. According to Bakhtin, the novel as a literary genre, of which the characteristic art is "heteroglossia," cannot be analyzed in the ways of traditional stylistics, especially of analyzing poetry (263). In analyzing the "heteroglot, multi-voiced, multi-styled and often multi-languaged" genre (265), five levels of fictional narration can be firstly listed: the "authorial literary-artistic tone"; the "oral everyday narration"; the "semiliterary (written) everyday narration"; the "extra-artistic authorial speech"; and the "stylistically individualized speech of characters" (262). The Russian scholar takes the passages from Dickens's *Little Dorrit* to illustrate the leveling. The way Dickens describes Mr. Merdle in the beginning of the novel, for example, is an "act of authorial unmasking" (304). In other words, the linguistic masks, or the "oral everyday narration," that the people characterized in Dickens' works as his contemporaries in Victorian England would use to describe Mr. Merdle is taken off by the "authorial speech" to show that all such oral glorification as "wonderful" or "master" could be replaced by a simple word "rich." The unmasking thus reveals Dickens's unique way in criticizing the value of social philistine. The narration is itself also an illustration of "hybrid construction": "an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages,' two semantic and axiological belief systems" (304).

In addition to the adjectives as the narration of oral speeches, the "hybrid construction" can also be identified with the narrative sentences ("written narration") with subordinate conjunctions. As shown in the sentence that Bakhtin takes from *Little Dorrit*, "It began to be widely understood that one who had done society the admirable service of making so much money out of it, could not be suffered to remain a commoner." The authoritative narrating of the situation of Mr. Merdle's making much money interacts with such common opinions as "do great services" and "suffered to remain a commoner" (306). The conjunctions between the main and

subordinate clauses, like "that" and "who," thus successfully combine the authorial speech and "individualized speech of characters." Such combinations, contributing to heterogrossia, are made by the novelist "into a higher unity" (263). For Dickens, the unity shows itself in his socialist theme of criticizing the capitalist pursuing.

Bakhtin concludes his application of heteroglossia to Dickens's work with the rhetoric of landscape, taking each utterance syntactically combined within the sentences as the island surrounded by conflicting social ideologies:

> So it is throughout Dickens's whole novel. His entire text is, in fact, everywhere dotted with quotation marks that serve to separate out little islands of scattered direct speech and purely authorial speech, washed by heteroglot waves from all sides. But it would have been impossible actually to insert such marks, since, as we have seen, one and the same word often figures both as the speech of the author and as the speech of another—and at the same time.
>
> (307)

Like the description of Mr. Merdle in *Little Dorrit*, it is impossible to separate the voices of the narrator and the characters in Dickens's novel with quotation marks. As also shown in the passage of Jo's death, the shocking appearance of the one-syllable word "Dead!" consists of actually Dickens's contemporary tones in the court or in the church and of the narrator's storytelling attitude (following the prayer given by Allan Woodcourt). The way that Bakhtin expresses the heterglossia in Dickens's work is the metaphor of the speeches as islands scattered in the text. The saying with space distribution enables the scholar to make his readers pause in reading the novel with time sequence so as to examine an utterance as the mixture of ideologies.

Bakhtin's rhetoric of applying the image of "island" to the analysis of fictional sentences presents an interesting angle for this research to discuss the function of the imagined slum, Tom-All-Alones, in Dickens's work. While in reading a novel, one must examine the formation of one utterance as the unit complicatedly interacting with other utterances, just like one should observe the possible effects of tides or wind on a small island. The effects of Tom-All-Alone's in all the images of urban spaces are similar to Bakhtin's theory of the "internal stratification" of the fictional narrative.

The slum, perpetually interacted with other places in *Bleak House*, as the background of Jo, given with his exposition in the novel, rationalizes his role as the messenger of disasters:

> Jo lives—that is to say, Jo has not yet died—in a ruinous place, known to the like of him by the name of Tom-all-Alone's. It is a place black, dilapidated street, avoided by all the decent people; where the crazy houses were seized upon, when their decay was far advanced, by some bold vagrants, who, after establishing their own possession, took to letting them out in lodgings. Now, these tumbling tenements contain, by night, a swarm of misery. As on the human wretch, vermin parasites appear, so, these ruined shelters have bred a crowd of foul existence that crawls in and out of gaps in walls and boards; and coils itself to sleep, in maggot numbers, where the rain drips in; and comes and goes, fetching and carrying fever, and sowing more evil in its every footprint than Lord Coodle and Sir Thomas Doodle, and the Duke of Foodle, and all the fine gentlemen in office, down to Zoodle, shall set right in five hundred years—though born expressively to do it.
>
> (Dickens 232)

The descriptions of Jo's environment and the poor people around him connect the boy with other important characters in this novel. This is a narration of Jo, who is "not yet died," foreshadowing his tragic end, which results in the tragedies of others. Furthermore, the evil and disease surrounding him also affect greatly the major plot of *Bleak House*. The "bold vagrants" who have "seized" the ruined houses may include hopeless Nemo, who shares his money earned from copying law papers with Jo and spends rest of it in the consumption of opium. This connection makes Jo the intimate of Captain Hawdon, the only witness to Lady Dedlock's secret, and the only testifier for Tulkinghorn. Meanwhile, the disease prevailing in the area where Jo lives also affects Esther later in Bleak House and paradoxically makes her a stronger narrator of the whole story. To deal with these evil and disease, the "fine gentlemen in office" with the titles of alphabetical order always show their incompetence when they, since their births with high ranks, desperately claim that they could set

everything right. Sir Leicester Dedlock exemplifies best this incompetence. He struggles to preserve the name of his family, believing that the preservation of royal order could be the only way to save the destabilized society, while he can do nothing about the turbulences caused by changes of time and the contradictory human natures. The baronet cannot help his wife, when the ironmaster Mr. Rouncewell as the prospering middle class in England despises the master-and-servant relationship in Chesney Wold and takes away the maid favored by Lady Dedlock. This failure, caused by the threatening exposition of the wife's secret, also conceives the baronet's ignorance to Lady Dedlock's affection to her past lover. With the suicide of My Lady, Sir Dedlock earns by his family name nothing but a lonely old age. In other words, Sir Dedlock's insistence through the novel, the aristocratic titles from A to Z, seems the way to set right the world of evil and disease while the narrator doubts it would succeed for another five hundred years in history. The similie in this description of Jo's background, the parasites within human bodies like the people within the broken houses, is the truth of mortality that the aristocratic keeps denying by titles. Avoiding the place of Jo, the "decent men" are still heading to the ground where Captain Hawdon has been buried.

The plots organized in this description of Jo's place indicate that the people around Jo are agonized with the choices of getting into or running away from the ruinous lives. Those choices result from the characters' attitudes toward the mortality that nobody could avoid. Although Esther lives in Bleak House, a beautiful mansion, she steps into the slum with her compassion with the poor and receives the consequences like the infection with disease. On the other hand, Sir Dedlock, "disdainful of all littleness and meanness" (Dickens, 10), never sees such outcasts as Jo, thus refuses to believe that his noble wife has infused all her emotions into a tomb of nobody. He finally finds that his palace built with great names and beautiful pictures is itself a solitude house. Interestingly, between the extreme characterizations of Esther and Sir Dedlock, Lady Dedlock and Tulkinghorn's standpoints facing the low life of Jo are ambiguous. Lady Dedlock superficially adapts herself very well in the fashion of the nobles, but decides to take a look at the life of an inferior law writer, taking the handwriting on the law papers seemingly familiar to her as the outlet of her boring society. Tulkinghorn, another character

taking poverty and filth in Tom-All-Alones as nothing but still fascinated by them, holds a career of protecting the name of Dedlock family. To achieve in the protection, he makes use of the poor and then desert them. After the investigation of Lady Dedlock's weird behavior with the ads of Jo and Hotence, he asks Detective Bucket to call off Jo[3], and refuses to recommend Hotence as the servants of the noble houses. Tulkinghorn's arbitrariness in dealing with the matters of the aristocratic and the poor makes him ignore the possibility that the people with nothing might fight back. The line that he draws between the nobles and the commoners is broken when Hotence shot through his heart. Though Detective Bucket makes up the distinguishing line and then, according to the standard of Sir Dedlock, the foundation of the social structure, the seemingly omnipotent and omniscient officer is unable to save Lady Dedlock.[4] The incapability presents the fact that the titles and names are proven to be not enough to prevent such misfortunes as illness, deaths, and humiliations from happening, for the misfortunes exist like the fog and mud around all the people in England.

As described in "Tom-All-Alones," the "foul existence" that is "sowing more evil in its every footprint" includes not only the poor. Some characters with the choice of good and bad lives sow their own evil in their footprints into Tom-All-Alones. Sir Dedlock will never step into the dark lane. However, when he fights Sir Boythorn

[3] In D. A. Miller's *The Novel and the Police*, the scholar points out that in *Bleak House*, the power of law as carried out by Detective Bucker "should not be seen as purely a repressive practice" (73). The detective tries to keep the society in order by dealing with the murder by Hotence and the runaway of Lady Dedlock; however, still as the assistance of Tulkinghorn, he also presents the desire released by the Chancery. The detective story in this novel is contradictorily the frustration for the poor and the encouragement for the rich in their fulfillments of personal desires. Here the detective's (and also other policemen's) order to keep Jo away from the aristocratic illustrates this contradiction. The official order to abandon a child on the streets serves as the way to protect the nobles from the threatening slum.

[4] Shih Yi-chin's research states that the presence of Detective Bucket dramatically reduces the lawlessness figured by the gothic descriptions of landscapes. The detective plot includes Bucket's success in solving the murder case by his authoritative knowledge of the geographical arrangements of the city. The success thus provides the reasoning for the reader to think about haunted London.

for the rights on the lands in Lincolnshire, his beloved wife has wondered into the slum and never come back. Going with compassion into Tom-All-Alones, Esther witnesses such misfortunes as the death of a baby. Raised with the doctrine that every one is born with sin, Esther learns the bitterest part of this doctrine: death is around people. The lesson is completed when she has to suffer the consequence of her compassion. When men and women are "born with Heavenly compassion", they are also born with social classes. Compassion can be considered as a sin when it is produced with the differences among classes, or with the different abilities of all the selfish people to defer themselves from death. Refreshed by such a consideration through her life, the characterization of Esther stands opposite to that of Sir Dedlock, who totally rejects this thinking. The two characters thus have different geographical actions in the novel. Esther's footsteps are among the places inside and outside London: the Chancery, Tom-All-Alone's, the aristocratic mansions, or other usual streets of the city. Her journey of finding her real mother is to understand why she was born with sin, so she has to remind herself everything she has done with her traveling around Bleak House, Lincolnshire, and London is sowing evil. The infection of fever and the destruction of her original face thus become part of her redemption from the evil. Sir Dedlock does not want to participate in the walking of the commoners. He will never meet such persons as Jo and limit his walking in the territories of the nobles. He still faces the impact from the slum (though not as directly as Esther): the death of Lady Dedlock. In addition to the two characters, who totally receive and reject Jo, Lady Dedlock and Tulkinghorn as the characters treating Jo ambiguously have their special way of walking into Tom-All-Alone's and receiving the consequences. Between the life and death of Jo, and between Tom-All-Alones and other places, the interactions with Jo in this novel present the grave truth that inside and outside London, as a city with evil, Tom-All-Alone is a place one can hardly define.

Death is prevailing through the ruinous atmosphere within the city. The characters threatened by death proceed their actions, which form the main part of the novel. The formation tells the reason why, as indicated by Susan Shatto, the name "Tom-All-Alone's" was preserved by Dickens as the alternative title for *Bleak House* (13). Both suggesting "Ruined" places that people can never get out (as also

occurred in Chancery), the titles summarize the characters' situation of being permanently prisoned. Applying Bakhtin's theory to the prevailing death in *Bleak House*, the slum Tom-All-Alone's, in a descriptive tone that cannot definitely taken as the author's or the common opinion, interacts with Dickens's ruinous London to be a place ironically without a specific location in the novel.

The displacement that Lady Dedlock feels everywhere illustrates well the ambiguous position of the slum in the novel. The second chapter of *Bleak House* starts with My Lady's boredom, corresponding to the sense of confronting the dead-end in Tom-all-Alone's:

> My Lady Dedlock's "place" has been extremely dreary. The weather, for many a day and night, has been so wet that the trees seem wet through, and the soft loppings and prunings of the of the woodman's axe can make no crash or crackle as they fall. The deer, looking soaked, leave quagmires, where they pass. The shot of a rifle loses its sharpness in the moist air, and its smoke moves in a tardy little cloud towards the green rise, coppice-topped, that makes a background for the falling rain. The view from my Lady Dedlock's own windows is alternatively a lead-coloured view, and a view of Indian ink. The vases on the stone terrace in the foreground catch the rain all day; and the heavy drops fall, drip, drip, drip, upon the flagged pavement, called, from old time, the Ghost's Walk, all night.
>
> (Dickens 9)

Raining covers such sounds as the cutting of trees and the shooting by hunters. The watery air also makes vague such visions as the motions of the animals in the woods. What is remained clear is the regular dropping on the rock. The opposition of the sharp and regular sounds and the obscuring of senses contribute to Lady Dedlock's situation of be "bored to death." The solid mansion that My Lady lives in symbolizes the fame that Sir Dedlock takes as "old as the hills." The house shelters the physical existence of the noble people, like the title protects their social positions in the changing age. However, such protections weaken the senses of the people. Protected by the house, Lady Dedlock in front of the window gets used to her blunt

senses and, believing that she will no longer be bothered by worldly "meanness and littleness," to her withered spirit.

As described in the beginning of the novel, dampness is everywhere in England. The raining in London, as heavy as it is in Lincolnshire, gives another scene. In the slum with bad housing, "where the rain drips in", the water cannot only be sensed by sight and hearing. When the dampness causes disease, the people there feel their bodies rotten with all the worldly meanness. The protection from the rain, therefore, is one of the effects that the urban division of some districts into the slum is expected to fulfill. Lady Dedlock's eager to release the boredom fails this fulfillment. Her life finally rots with Nemo in the bury ground as the end of her journey in the city. In other words, her sense of being somewhere, as the product of social classification and urban distribution of good and bad housings, falsely fights the destructive dampness. Boredom in Chisny Wold, the sense to which the destructive rain contributes, foretells Lady Dedlock's destiny of escaping to nowhere, either from the poverty to richness (from good to bad housings as the refuge from death) or from the richness to poverty (from the boring fashion of aristocracy to her spiritual redemption). In Christian doctrine, as already suggested in the episodes of Esther to visit the slum, one sees in any places nothing but the sinful self. The cultural formation of "being somewhere," as James Buzard has stated, in Esther's case the philanthropic mission in Victorian London and in Lady Dedlock's the classification of the noble and the poor, will in the novel dramatically, often tragically, ends itself for the novelist to show that nothing would escape from God's notice (112). Allan Conrad Christensen further extends Buzard's idea of being somewhere to specify the episodes of contagion in nineteenth-century narrative. For Christensen, the contagion in the novels, emphasizing such images as the "air that everyone breathes" or, in *Bleak House*, the fog, can be taken as the omnipotent mechanism to make the fictional characters inescapable from the worldly sufferings (32). Esther's infection with the fever form Jo as the representative of Tom-All-Alone's, for example, thus serves as her lesson to know that the only way to escape from the sufferings is to be totally engaged in them so as to know the sin of the self. The lesson, however, does not function to such characters as Lady Dedlock and Mrs. Pardiggle, who go into the slum not to see the sin of the selves but to reinforce the consciousness of social

classes by the suffering of the poor.

Therefore, Lady Dedlock's journey to Tom-All-Alone's has with the philanthropic episode the same function of giving the reader the sense that the complicated sins are going to be covered. Disguised as a servant, Lady Dedlock has Jo her only guide in Tom-All-Alones to see the life of Captain Hawdon. Her order to keep Jo from looking back indicates her fear to the exposition of the identity as a lady. But the frustrating communication between My Lady and Jo leaks the reality. Her rhetoric makes the meaning of her words hardly understandable to Jo, while Jo's slang is also difficult to her. Jo "pauses to consider…meaning, considers it satisfactory, and nods his ragged head" (221). Contrasted with Jo's submission, Lady Dedlock's refusal to Jo's speaking, "I don't understand you", illustrates her denial of her identity to be mingled with the poor in the slum. Unlike Esther, My Lady could never develop the insight into the society and therefore into her own essential existence as the heterogrossia which could be presented in the genre of novel.

The linguistic frustrations go parallel with the action of differentiating the self from the place that he or she is actually in. Such differentiation, however, has been recognized by Esther as fragile as the handkerchief that she covers on the dead infant. My Lady's disgust with the filth in the slum, as she anxiously reacts to Jo's playing of the rat, also tells the fact that she rejects to join Jo's party while she is actually inside it. In the end of the journey, when she is going to give the gold to Jo so as to keep him quiet, "Jo silently notices how white and small her hand is, and what a jolly she must be to wear such sparkling." Basically, the disguise of My Lady as the protections of her identity is vulnerable, from which the details that Jo notices result in her tragedy. The noble mansion and the clothes of a servant here are all the protections for Lady Dedlock from the intrusion of raining. The sheltering house provides her the body without physical damages, but she still feels intruded when the sounds and visions of raining result in her boredom in the aristocratic life. The disguise as a low class provides another protection for her "small and white hand", when the examining gaze of others, like rain, is possible to speed her destruction.

My Lady's visiting Tom-All-Alone's, in other words, provides readers another version of philanthropic actions than that in the episode of Mrs. Pardiggle. While

Mrs. Pardiggle fails to educate the brick maker with her book, Lady Dedlock also meets the linguistic troubles with Jo as a result of different educational background. While Mrs. Pardiggle demonstrates her social position with the dress of lady and thus has been taken as the outsiders of the slum, Lady Dedlock shows the disguise no better than the dress of the philanthropic missioner and therefore leaks her own noble identity. When the dress and talking had been the consideration for the Victorian women to go into the London slums (Ross, 17), Lady Dedlock, by clearly revealing the need of a lady rather than a noble woman to dispense charity to the poverty in need, shows herself an ironic image of Mrs. Pardiggle. Mrs. Pardiggle seeks the people in need while Lady Dedlock looks for the people she needs (like Jo or Nemo). In the selfish actions of getting into and out of the demolished areas of the raining city, what one would ultimately finds, as Esther perceives in her narrative, is the death not effectively limited by a fragile handkerchief and, as My Lady faces both in her mansion and in the slum, the mortality not definitely confined within some particular places.

In Victorian London, as some scholars have stated as the historical reality, the slum is not a place easy to be defined. The word "slum" in the Victorian dictionaries was taken from the word "slumbers" with the meaning of "sleepy" and "unknown back ally" (Wohl 5). To point out the fact that the real cause of the urban slum is the indifference of the middle class (as the "sleepy" and "unknown" part of their consciousness) towards the poor, Dickens, in *Household Words*, also mentions the invisibility of the London slum as a result of the "juxtaposition" of the "splendours and luxuries of the West End" and the "most deplorable manifestations of human wretches and depravity" (Wohl 6). Such blurred distinction of the urban landscapes into the wretched and non-wretched also caused the difficulties of the city administrations to proceed the slum clearance when the places to be cleared in the city had not been identified until 1890s (Yelling 30). Under such circumstance, the benevolent actions as those taken by the mid-Victorian reformers Octiva Hill, of whom Dickens took the characterization of Mrs. Pardiggle and Mrs. Jellyby, would seem inefficient when the fundamental causes of the social problems, the "mal-distribution of social wealth," may be underestimated in those deeds of charity (Wohl 186). With this ignorance, the philanthropic missioners who go into the

impoverished areas to eliminate the gaps between social classes may further confirm the social gaps when they, like Lady Dedlock, is just going to superficially cover their sinful identity within the city.

If the slum represents the fact that, with such natural helps as rain, a person, regardless of his or her social ranks, will finally feel the physical corruption and death, the geographical differentiation from the slum may be some way to fight this fact. However, the plot of Lady Dedlock in *Bleak House* shows that the fighting, stupid and useless, could never escape its tragic end. Tulkinghorn's investigation with the helps of Jo and Hentence proves that neither the wearing of a servant nor the noble mansion is suitable for Lady Dedlock. The slum with its ultimate meaning of death is the only place where My Lady must rest her mind. The social titles that result in the regional differentiations in England served as the temporary shelter for the upper class English from the turbulences caused by such historical changes as Industrial Revolution. As shown in the novel, the division, shelter, or protection, under which the contradictory stubbornness and selfish desires are taking places, is as broken as the houses in Tom-All-Alones. With the power of rain, the artificial workings are the lines always blurred by death. For the female philanthropic missioners who live by their benevolence on the poor, on the other hand, though the meaning of the slum is not as fierce as death, there still exists the similarity between their living environments and the impoverished places. As Wohl points out in his research about the slum, the first problem of London housing, perceptible but not yet accurately documented in Mid-Victorian age, is overcrowding: "Cleanly, healthful, and cheerful districts have one by one been swamped by the silent but inexorable tide" (31). Similar description can also be found in Mrs. Jellyby's house: "…a narrow street of high houses…There was a confused little crowd of people, principally children, gathered about the house" (Dickens 36). Mrs. Jellyby's concern with the African children makes her forget the children in her own house, presenting herself as a mirror-image of Mrs. Pardiggle. The reasoning of the philanthropic missioners in Dickens's work, therefore, contains the indulgence in the sins of others and thus results in the ruinous scene in the lives of themselves. Such indulgence, therefore, indicates the absurdity of the distinction of the urban areas into the good and the bad housings.

For the lawyer Tulkinghorn, Jo and the slum act differently from what they do to Lady Dedlock. While My Lady's indeterminate character choosing the different classes (and the different regions of London) composes her song of death, Tulkinghorn hurries to his own destruction because of his obsession with the arbitrariness that defines the social class. The definition, however, goes against the reality of a complication that Esther has sensed when visiting the slum. His mysterious ability in manipulating law and the people in London suggest that he possess the power to decide who belongs to a specific social class. In the second chapter, his presence reinforces the fact that the "legal mysteries" shown by the lawyer make the nobles irrationally stabilize themselves as a privileged nation: "There is always an air of prescription about him (Tulkinghorn) which is always agreeable to Sir Leicester." With the case Jardyce & Jardyce as the major topic of its plot, *Bleak House* dramatizes Dickens's critiques to law. The clearness with which the law system should carry out to help people precede their lives is always denied within the heaps of law papers with vague meanings. As shown in the case about heritage, all the people around London believe that they could be rich with the help of law, while the complicated working of Chancery only confuses the one, like Richard Carstone, with hopes. To claim the aristocratic rights is also the responsibility of a lawyer in nineteenth-century English court. The outcome of this duty, whether a royal family could possess the social privilege, contributes to the classification of the high and low class. Such contribution constructs what Sir Dedlock states as the "order of a society" and what rules Lady Dedlock fails to obey. As the law representative of Dedlock family, Tulkinghorn works mainly to justify a belief that royal titles inherit not only names but also the material resources (like the house that protects Lady's Dedlock's "small and white hand"). The justification is usually dramatic. When the aristocratic cause troubles as the low class does, the lawyer has to decide what to reveal to and what to hide from the society. Therefore, many "marriage settlements" (include Lady Dedlock's), "aristocratic wills," and "noble secrets" are "shut in the breast of Mr. Tulkinghorn." He shows characterization as the "silent depository" with the dark outlook:

> He is of what is called the old school—a phrase generally meaning anything that seems never to be young—and wears knee-breeches

> tied with ribbons, and gaiters or stocking. One particularity of his black clothes, and of his black stockings, be they silk of worsted, is, that they never shine. Mute, close, irresponsive to any glancing light, his dress is like himself.
>
> (Dickens 12)

Opposite to the noble dress with such luxuries as the "sparkling" that Lady Dedlock puts on even when she is in Tom-All-Alones, the dark and plain wearing of Tulkinghorn shows his special position in Dedlock Family. When the family members, in their splendid dresses, cheerfully talk to each other about fashion, the lawyer behaves silently to conceal the contradiction that all those aristocratic are not different from the people of other classes. Social classification is itself a definition as arbitrary as the ink-colored line irrationally drawn among the peoples with the same quality. It is the ideology that could not be questioned. Therefore, the conflict happens when Lady Dedlock simultaneously crosses the line and tries to stay on the side of the royal family. The dark line, the silent lawyer, eventually becomes her authority. In other words, Tulkinghorn expresses most of his personal existence when someone trespasses the division of social classes. The situation exemplifies the general tone of this novel in describing the law or the court system in nineteenth-century England. The code of law, with its function of discipline, gradually takes control of the society when people try to fulfill their own desire that can never be controlled.

When Tulkinghorn is stepping into Tom-All-Alones to investigate the handwriting of Nemo, the law stationer Snagby warns that the people there might be "rough." Then they walk into the fascinating description of the street:

> It is quite dark now, and the gas-lamps have acquired their full effect. Jostling against clerks going to post the day's letters, and against counsel and attorneys going home to dinner, and against plaintiffs and defendants, and suitors of all sorts, and against the general crowd, in whose way the forensic wisdom of ages has interposed a million of obstacles to the transaction of the commonest business of life—diving through law and equity, and through that kindred mystery, the street mud, which is made of

> nobody knows what, and collects about us nobody knows whence or how: we only knowing in general that when there is too much of it, we find it necessary to shovel it away—
>
> (Dickens 142)

Snagby's worry consists of the ideology of social class not only for the people but also for the places in London. He thinks that Tulkinghorn as a lawyer of a noble family might feel displaced when the later sees the people in the slum. The lawyer, for his own reputation, indeed avoids visiting Krook in front of Snagby. The avoidance, however, is not as desperate as that of Lady Dedlock in Tom-All-Alones. When Nemo is found dead of opium, Tulkinghorn does not mind his exposition and participates in the investigation led by Detective Bucket. In contrast to Lady Dedlock with powerful passion, Tulkinghorn, "mute" and "close," figures himself as the impersonal line between the selfish affection and the social fame, authorized to walk freely in both the lands of the rich and the impoverished. To define specifically, Tulkinghorn's occupation is to protect the fame of the upper under which the essential principle is to escape from poverty, illness, and death. His ink-colored figuration thus possibly serves as the justified standard for the classifications of people and lands. The "legal mysteries" as Sir Dedlock seeks from the lawyer, goes parallel to the atmosphere of the Chancery Land, "through law and equity, and through that kindred mystery." All the contradictions of human behaviors are thus mysteriously consumed into the norm system of class division, with which the English constructs their temporary shelter from rain and from death.

As emphasized by the narrator, Snagby's worry and Tulkinghorn's actions happen on the streets with mud. The image of damp dust corresponds to the description of Tom-All-Alones following Jo's appearance: the evil sowed in footprints. The footprints, made by Tulkinghorn with the claim of equity and law, are sowing still his own evil. With the personal desire to grasp the power of law, he entraps Gridly with the crime of court contempt and threatens Lady Dedlock with the excuse of protecting the family. All the people are destined to get the mud on streets, for they are all selfish. The situation of being muddy, as the result of raining and the roads carelessly arranged, is the blurred division of the good and bad places within the city, suggesting the classification of the high and low levels of people. Its gradual

increase of mud goes with the imperceptible enrichment of Tulkinghorn's power, parodying the irrational formation of the social fames and of the worldly sufferings.

Therefore, the complicated consciousnesses between social classification and personal affection of Lady Dedlock and Tulkinghorn affect their arrangements of the geographical actions, which are presented most dramatically in the actions around the slum. For the English in nineteenth century, the slum as represented by Tom-All-Alones stood not only as the objective location but also as the enigmatic space that people must be driven to think of with their subjective minds. Within this space, Lady Dedlock has to anxiously ask Jo to show her the "dreadful places" and, after walking out of the dark lane and getting away from Jo, keep herself permanently under the disguise of a servant just like she seeks the protection for her beautiful outlook in the royal palace. A space in which the dripping rain might corrupt the life is so terrible that no protection, physical or social, could help one to escape from it. On the other hand, Thulkinghorn thinks that he could define those "dreadful places," just like he could define the luxurious lands. He grasps the power to place Lady Dedlock in the boring mansion and to exile Hotence and Jo on London streets. The line he draws for the people and for the places they live in is as fragile as the protection that Lady Dedlock puts on. Tulkinghorn's murder and later My Lady's escapade caused by the murder investigation are thus powerfully and poetically concluded with Esther's statement of getting lost:

> We rattled with great rapidity through such a labyrinth of streets, that I soon lost all idea where we were; except that we had crossed and re-crossed the river, and still seemed to be traversing a low-lying, waterside, dense neighborhood of narrow thoroughfares; chequered by docks and basins, high piles of warehouses, swing-brides, and masts of ships.
>
> (Dickens 817)

This memory of journey with Detective Bucket is a record of a mature woman looking for her lost mother. Having seen the worldly suffering in her quest for the origin, Esther, with her sense of lost, mildly protests against the irrational classification imposed upon people and consequently the division upon the landscapes. The "dense neighborhood of narrow thoroughfares" is itself a labyrinth constructed by

such self-righteous men as Tulkinghorn and wondered through by such contradictory women as Lady Dedlock. Confronting the death, as revealed in Esther's journey, what one could have might be only the sounds of horses' rattling. The repeated sounds of rattling serve a good conclusion for the novel. If, when the characters' reactions to the slum are to be considered, Lady Dedlock and the philanthropic women show the vagueness; Tulkinghorn reveals the arbitrariness; and Esther Summerson carries out both the vagueness and arbitrariness (and therefore the absurdity) of the urban division of the slum and non-slum, the actions that people could do to make happiness is endlessly running from one place to another and thus being lost in the mechanical sounds. In other words, Esther's searching for the mother (according to the Protestantism as her background, which is also the search for her origin as sin) is always a picture in moving. According to Christensen, when the plot of contagion that "rises from what is dead and buried underground and infects what is living" may be the crucial point when the "synchronic" narrative (the third-person narrative in the novel) and "diachronic" memory (Esther's first-person narration) meets each other to construct an unified motif of human mortality (33), the place of slum somewhere (and perhaps everywhere) in London provides the best stage for the characters to struggle for themselves. For Bakhtin, therefore, the fictional utterance may the metaphorically taken as the island somewhere to be sacked with different ideas from all the directions; for Dickens, some ruinous place inside London, receiving the conflicting ideologies from all the aspects of Victorian age, may imaginably and eternally exists as the fictional utterance for the readers to reflect on the dark connection within a complicated society.

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