Aging and Oldness in *A Tale of Two Cities*

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In the preface to the first edition of *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens mentions that he "first conceived the main idea of this story" when he was acting in Wilkie Collins's drama of *The Frozen Deep*, and that the idea "has had complete possession of me [him]."[1] The drama centres around a girl and two men, one of whom is the girl's fiancé while the other is her rejected lover.[2] Both of these two men happen to go on to the Arctic expedition, and take refuge in the same hut. Although the rejected lover has hated his successful rival and has sworn to kill the man, he, in the end, sacrifices himself to save the girl's fiancé, who has been in danger in the freezing cold. In the performance, Dickens played the role of the rejected lover, "into which he poured all his own repressed desperation," and added to "the emotional power of the play" with "the intensity he gave to the character."[3]

Dickens's enthusiasm about the play explains the stress he lays on the character of Sydney Carton, also the rejected lover in *A Tale of Two Cities*, and on the theme of self-sacrifice. The sacrifice is made, in addition, to save the husband of a woman Sydney has loved. The strong attachment the author had to the character is also shown in the fact that one of the alternative titles he prepared for the novel was "*Memory Carton*," though it was not his final choice.[4] When he says, also in the preface, that "what is done and suffered in these pages" has been "certainly done and suffered . . . all my[him]self," he may be chiefly referring to the action and suffering of Sydney and

of Charles Darnay, who can be regarded as Sydney's double, as they are "sufficiently like each other to surprise. . . everybody present." (p.81) One of the critics even calls them "two plainly delineated faces of the same coin," that "embody his[Dickens's] own ideal of himself."[5]

If the author is emotionally involved in the lives of these characters so much, it would be significant to dwell on what is *not* "done and suffered," at least directly, by the two youths in those pages: that is, to become old. As the novel ends before they reach that stage of life, (as it is, one of them does not even have the possibility of reaching that stage, because he perishes in the very last chapter of the novel) we never witness them suffering from their elderliness. The text, on the other hand, is so full of concern with the issue of oldness and aging that we cannot overlook or neglect it. The problem ranges from the personal senility to the oldness of the systems or institutions in the society. The whole thing, especially the hardship of most of the characters, starts because the influential and old-established systems sport their fate. Young Charles Darnay, for instance, has to be tortured much by the feudal system in French society, which he refuses to accept and decides to forsake but is not allowed to escape from, while he does not attain personal oldness in the novel. The death of another youth, Sydney Carton, also has the same afflicting system, and people's antipathy towards it, as an underlying cause. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to re-read *A Tale of Two Cities* from this viewpoint.

When it comes to the discussion of oldness, *Le Vieillesse* by Simone de Beauvoir elaborately analyzes the theme of old age, in its first half, in terms of the positions and roles of the aged in multiple kinds of society, varied in time and space, while the latter half dwells on the oldness as personal and internal experience.[6] Based on the idea that old age is a matter of both social and personal concern, this paper will try to take into account the oldness of the systems, philosophies and institutions in society, as well, which forms the background of the novel. It will necessarily develop into the careful illustration of the elderly closely connected with the society they live in.

I

One of the matters of significance in this novel is young Charles Darnay's refusal to accept his uncle. As his uncle is a twin brother of his father, Charles's resistance towards his uncle is easily equated with his resistance towards his late father. A critic suggests that there is more to this youth's behaviour:

> Charles d'Evrémonde, the French hero of *A Tale of Two Cities*, an aristocrat by birth, a democrat by choice, gives up for ever his fortune and his title to express his loathing of his despicable father but it is the whole patriarchal system (embodied in the man) that he has chosen to disown, and his gesture is even more political than personal.[7]

In this part of the paper, therefore, we will focus on some of the prominent social systems in *A Tale of Two Cities* that have to undergo a drastic change within the course of the story: feudal system, aristocracy and patriarchy in France. The traditional old-fashioned systems are undermined to the root by the revolution, which is, needless to say, the very setting of the novel. We will witness, in the course of the discussion, how these systems present the negative aspects of oldness.

The typical extravagance of the French aristocrats of the time is represented in the scene of reception held in the "grand hotel" of "Monseigneur, one of the great lords in power at the Court."(p.109) Their luxurious life is contrasted with the general state of the common world where "Hunger" and "Want" are "prevalent everywhere."(p.38) Monseigneur is first introduced to us while he is having his morning chocolate with the help of "four strong men," "all four a-blaze with gorgeous decoration." (p.109) His rooms, "adorned with every device of decoration that the taste and skill of the time could achieve," are filled with "E[e]xquisite gentlemen of the finest breeding." (pp. 111-2) The abundance Monseigneur enjoys is the result of his "truly noble idea" about particular public business: the idea "that it must all go his way—tend to his own power and pocket." (p.110)

Among the company of the "exquisite gentlemen" at the reception is one Marquis, who is deeply related with the issue of feudalism. He is about sixty, which might be a little too early to be depicted as "old," yet his conversation with his nephew Charles certainly reveals his old-fashioned idea about "the honour of the family." (p.126) His chief concerns are, like those of other people of his rank, "the assertion of our [their] station" and "perpetuating the system under which I have [he has] lived." (p.129) Just as Sir Dedlock in *Bleak House* "heaves a noiseless sigh" over "the example of the confusion into which the present age has fallen; of . . . the opening of floodgates, and the uprooting of distinctions,"(p.449) this Marquis deplores that "a new philosophy has become the mode," and the aristocrats "have lost many privileges."[8]

His nephew, on the other hand, adheres to the "new philosophy" and is ready to give up France and the property. Here we notice that the uncle Marquis (and also his "system") suffers manifold blow. One is, without mention, that Charles, a member of his honourable family, is openly against the system which has privileged them. The other is that the conflict the Marquis represents is not just the conflict between the old and the new generations. Another blow comes from the people of lower station, over whom his "not remote ancestors held the right of life and death."(p.127) The Marquis behaves arrogantly towards common people according to his philosophy. The heartlessness he shows when his carriage runs over a child provokes antipathy among people at the scene of the accident, and the father of the dead child gets his revenge on the Marquis by stealing into his bedroom and murdering him with a knife. Incidentally, common people in France rumour that the murderer of the Marquis will be "executed as a parricide" because the Marquis is "the father of his tenants," though the murder is not carried out by his real successor Charles. Moreover, in the crowd of rumouring people, there is "O[o]ne old man," who plays the role of the reciter of the history and tells others about the cruel execution of the prisoner who attempted on the life of the late king. Just as the Marquis, a representative figure of the "Bull's

Eye," is destroyed as well as his château, other aristocrats become the target (which is another meaning of "Bull's Eye") of the attack by the oppressed class.

Curiously enough, in addition, it is not only with the defiant people, including Charles Darnay, that the "old philosophy" or the old-fashioned system has friction. That is, the Marquis has to suffer another threat from within upon the property and various privileges he cherishes, for the "system" is based, unavoidably, on the idea of inheritance. His nephew's words make Marquis recognize the plain fact that he has to, when the time comes, hand down everything he has possessed and enjoyed:

> "This property and France are lost to me," said the nephew sadly; "I renounce them." "Are they both yours to renounce? France may be, but is the property? It is scarcely worth mentioning; but, is it yet?" ". . . If it passed to me from you, tomorrow ——" "Which I have the vanity to hope is not probable." "—— or twenty years hence ——" "You do me too much honour," said the Marquis; "still, I prefer that supposition."(p.129)

In this conversation, we cannot fail to notice the Marquis's insistence on his own property and his fear of losing it in the immediate future.

As is mentioned, the Marquis is now about sixty years old, and cannot expect to live for so long a time. He, however, does not want to accept the idea of handing down his possessions too soon or so willingly. His words in the conversation above seem to reveal, in spite of himself, his abhorrence not only of losing his privileges but of his own death or of his becoming too aged to exert his authority upon the property. What we find here, therefore, is an elderly man at a loss as a result of the younger generation, together with the lower station, rejecting his "system" and also of himself finding the cruel reality immanent in the "system" itself. He is forced to face the fact that he is on the verge of losing his authority. What the Marquis has to suffer or fear, that is the attainment of the height of authority and sudden fall from that station due to his aging, is the common lot of men in patriarchal society. Thus the fate of the Marquis and his"philosophy" stands for the negative propensity "oldness" can possess.

II

Another important system related to the issue of oldness is that of Tellson's Bank. While Royalty in France has been destroyed, the royal family is confined in prison, the "shining Bull's Eye of the Court" has disappeared, and the aristocrats have fled abroad, another old-fashioned system Tellson's Bank survives through the tumult. (p.232) London branch of the Bank becomes the information centre for the French noblemen in exile; Paris branch, more symbolically, occupies, in1792, a part of the hotel where the Monseigneur used to hold gorgeous receptions. The Monseigneur has run away and the hotel has been forfeited, but Tellson's has escaped going bankrupt. There is even a surmise that the nobility's "plate and jewels would tarnish in Tellson's hiding-places," which suggests the perpetuity of the institution. (p.257) In the following part, we will discuss the positive aspects of oldness by dwelling on this bank and its employees.

When the Bank is introduced to us for the first time, the place is described:

> an old-fashioned place, even in the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty. It was very small, very dark, very ugly, very incommodious. It was an old-fashioned place, moreover, in the moral attribute that the partners in the House were proud of its smallness, proud of its darkness, proud of its ugliness, proud of its incommodiousness.(p.61)

It is also mentioned that the system in the place follows the gerontocratic idea that the aged have the power and authority:

> . . . the oldest of men carried on the business gravely. When they took a youngman into Tellson's London house, they hid him somewhere till he was old . They kept him in a dark place, like a cheese, until he had the full Tellson flavour and blue-mould upon him.(pp.62-3)

The oldness not only of the place but of the workers there is described with emphasis from time to time. One who visits the old bank, for example, has to push

open its door "with the weak rattle in its throat" and walk past "the two ancient cashiers" to reach "the musty back closet." (p.146) We see, moreover, a clerk named Jarvis Lorry, who will be referred to later again in detail, in Tellson's Bank. He calls himself "an old fellow of hard upon fourscore," but he admits that he is "a boy" "to half a dozen old codgers" in the bank. (pp. 233-4)

The inconvenient building with a door "of idiotic obstinacy" (just like the partners themselves), the aged clerks and the changeless system in Tellson's Bank all work together to present the insistence on and indulgence in old-fashionedness. (p.61) "Any one of these partners would have disinherited his son on the question of rebuilding Tellson's." (p.61) Therefore, this institution, as far as we see, is free from any change, renewal or innovation, and will remain as "old-fashioned" as it chooses to be.

Though he is not a manager but merely one of the employees, Mr. Lorry is Tellson's representative figure, who keeps working "in his fidelity to the House of which he had[has] grown to be a part," however dangerous and tumultuous outward circumstances may be. (p.257) Mr. Lorry, when first introduced to us in 1775, is already about sixty years old and "in his declining years," (p.105) though he is not regarded as old enough in the institution. His "orderly and methodical" manner and a "face habitually suppressed and quieted" tell that he has made efforts for a long time to acquire "the composed and reserved expression of Tellson's Bank." (p.26)

In the interview with Lucie Manette, whom he informs that her father has been found alive, he repeatedly emphasizes that he is "a mere machine" with "no feelings" and that the relation with the customers are "mere business relations" with "no particular interest, nothing like sentiment." (p.31) Their conversation reveals that Mr. Lorry has known the family, on business terms, for twenty years, and that it was he who accompanied baby Lucie in crossing the channel from France to England. As Lucie's father was in prison at that time, he, in a sense, played the role of her surrogate father. Now, again, he is going to attend her on her trip to France to perform business.

Although, when they are heading towards the garret of Dr. Manette, he cannot help feeling "disturbance of mind," he proceeds, in a business-like manner, to make necessary arrangements for them to leave France as soon as he finds it the best. (p.43)

Mr. Lorry owes his manners much on his long service in the old-fashioned institution. This Tellson's man pays attention to Dr. Manette and to his family with his "business eye" on his visit to their house; (p.107) his ability as a man of business is trusted by the lawyer Stryver, who confesses his intention to make a proposal to Miss. Manette and is indirectly persuaded out of the hopeless plan. He, in addition, carefully watches and supports Dr. Manette when the latter falls into the state of mental disorder for nine days after Lucie's marriage, helping the Doctor's recovery with the deliberate cleverness of a man of business. His businesslike manner and repression of feeling, however, is of a completely different nature from the stone-like coldness and mercilessness of the Marquis, Charles's uncle. Although he is a bachelor and childless like the Marquis, he has always been a favourable father figure, especially for the Manettes.

Just like the firm, stable and old-fashioned Tellson's Bank where he has served for the most part of his life, Mr.Lorry is calm, experienced and trustworthy. He is well over seventy (actually he is seventy-eight) when he undertakes the task of going over to tumultuous France in order to carry out the orders from the Bank. With the "gallantry and youthfulness" that impress Charles Darnay, he never hesitates to take responsibility in dangerous circumstances.(p.235) He regards his age not as an obstructive factor but as the veritable qualification for the difficult job. Though he still insists, at this point, that he has "been a man of business," there is no denying he is "an old man now, overborne with anxiety of late," and his sympathy with Lucie and her husband, who has been arrested for the second time, makes tears fall from his "gradually weakened" eyes. (pp.304-5)

Another positive view on Mr. Lorry's old age is expressed, in a different connection, in his hearty conversation with Sydney Carton. When asked by the youth

if his childhood seems far off, Mr. Lorry answers: "'. . . as I draw closer and closer to the end, I travel in the circle, nearer and nearer to the beginning. It seems to be one of the kind smoothings and preparings of the way.'" (p.306) His composed acceptance of the process towards the close of life illustrates the assuring and agreeable disposition the old age can possess.

While the feudalism or "old philosophy" in France has suffered tragic destiny, as we have seen, "old-fashioned" Tellson's Bank is allowed continuation into the future. A representative figure of the latter institution, Mr. Lorry, displays the favourable characteristics of aging, playing the role of universal tolerant father figure inspite of, or because of his own childless bachelorhood. His businesslike way and his sympathetic attitude, at the same time, seem to personify, in him, "a gentler, more maternal masculinity in old age" that signals "moral, spiritual, and domestic fulfillment" rather than "one kind of idealized man—the youthful, virile, assertive man of action."[9] He is, as it were, a personification of positive attributes of oldness.

III

Now let us turn our eye to a curious case of a character, Dr. Manette. For, he is probably the most concerned about the issue of aging among the characters in the novel. Although the problem he presents can be understood as a result of his traumatic experience, it may shed a new light upon the theme of oldness which is treated in the text negatively and positively at the same time.

He is first introduced to us indirectly through the words and visions of another character, Mr. Lorry. At this point in1775, it is not clearly indicated that the person referred to is Dr. Manette, but we can conjecture the truth from the additional information revealed to us as the story proceeds. On his way to Dover, where he is to meet the daughter of the Doctor, Mr. Lorry answers the message from his bank by a mysterious phrase: "Recalled to life." (p.19) After the messenger has left with his

message, Mr. Lorry is haunted by a vision throughout the travel on a carriage. He, in the vision, digs out somebody from the grave and converses with the man who has been "buried alive for eighteen years." (p.25) The vision appears to him repeatedly, but the person who has been dug out is always aged forty-five with a head "prematurely white." (p.23) This episode helps to establish a figure of a man who is on the border, or has even crossed the border figuratively, between life and death, though he does not yet deserve to be categorized as "aged."

Dr. Manette appears in person when Mr. Lorry takes Miss. Manette over to Paris. The two visitors find the man locked up in an attic in the crowded part of the city. What characterizes the figure in the dark is his "white hair," just as the hair of the man in Mr. Lorry's vision. In addition to his "white hair," he has "a white beard," "withered and worn" body, and "hollowness and thinness of his face," which all help to give him an aged appearance. (p.48) Dr. Manette, at first, does not recognize Mr. Lorry nor even his own daughter. When asked his name, he does not tell it but gives the number assigned to him in the prison. His attention, besides, is suffering from lack of concentration and often swerves from the conversation with the visitors back to shoe-making, which he has continued for a long time since he was put into prison. Though his present state is caused by his suffering in prison, his mental confusion and physical degeneration coincides with the focus on "the mind-body parallelism" in the medical study of old age in the nineteenth century.[10]

The next time we see Dr. Manette is in 1780 at the Old Bailey, where Charles Darnay is on trial for treason. The Doctor is summoned to bear witness to the circumstances of his trip from France to England, for both he and Charles were passengers on the same ship at that time. While his daughter Lucie looks strong at his side, Dr. Manette is "a man of a very remarkable appearance in respect of the absolute whiteness of his hair," and he looks "as if he were old" when "pondering and self-communing" expression is upon him. (p.72) Severe questioning he is put through at the court torments him, as he has to recall the horrible experiences of the days in

prison. When the inquiry is over, his "pondering and brooding look" makes "him old." (p.84) His appearance is now entirely different from that of the man saved from the attic in Paris and there are moments when he becomes "a handsome man, not past the prime of life," yet he has not overcome his detestable past completely. (p.72)

Four months after this trial, we find him in his own house on a Sunday afternoon. On this occasion, he is "in his best condition" and looks "specially young" in the company of Lucie, Mr. Lorry and Charles Darnay. (p.106) When Charles mentions, however, that some document written by a prisoner has been found in an old dungeon in London Tower, Dr. Manette nearly loses his calmness. The strange expression on the Doctor's face is recognized by Mr. Lorry, who has seen it once at the court. The Doctor manages to resume tranquility, making an excuse for his momentary agitation.

It is after more than one year that Charles Darnay seeks the chance to visit the Doctor's house again and make a confession of his love towards Lucie. Although, by this time, Dr. Manette is "a very energetic man," "with great firmness of purpose, strength of resolution, and vigour of action," Darnay's confession brings his suffering back to him. (p.135) He tends to be silent during this interview, and his characteristic "white hair," which overshadows his face, is referred to again in this scene. (P.137) The young suitor's sincere words, however, succeed in moving the Doctor's heart, and his wish to be his "child, companion, and friend" is gratified in the end. (p.138) Still, Lucie's father cannot hide his disquietude when Charles wants to tell his true name and the reason he has fled to England from France. He refuses to listen to Darnay's words and just promises to postpone the moment until the wedding morning. When Lucie comes home that night, she is much alarmed to hear the sound of shoe-making hammer in her father's room. The Doctor could calm himself this time again by walking to and fro in the room with his daughter, but it is clear he is on the verge of going back to his past days of suffering and degeneration.

The wedding of Charles and Lucie, as can be foreseen, brings about the worst

regression of the bride's father: the Doctor finally falls on to his shoe-making habit for as long as nine days when the newlyweds have left for honeymoon. After the period, he comes to himself but he has lost the memory of the events of these nine days. Mr. Lorry, who has attended on the Doctor all the while, seeks advice for the case without mentioning that it is about the Doctor himself. It is intriguing to find Mr. Lorry, on this occasion, expressing his need to "rely for right guidance" on Dr. Manette or urging the Doctor to give "your [Dr. Manette's] authority." (pp.201&204) Mr. Lorry's terminology here seems to impose, on the Doctor, the position of power which is related with youthfulness and manliness the Doctor has been deprived of.

Dr. Manette, as a professional, objectively analyzes the case, though he has the reason to suspect that it might be related to his own illness. He explains his habit of shoe-making as a means of relieving his pains "by substituting the perplexity of the fingers for the perplexity of the brain, and by substituting, as he became more practiced, the ingenuity of the hands for the ingenuity of the mental torture." (pp. 203-4) It is also true, on the other hand, that the aged tend to escape into habit to defend themselves from the objective instability of their position and their internal fear.[11] Here, again, we find his symptom similar to the tendency the elderly might show. The Doctor, in the end, suggests that the shoe-making tools should be taken away from the patient secretly, and Mr. Lorry follows the advice with the help of Miss. Pross.

Dr. Manette, from then on, lives quietly and happily with the young couple, while Mr. Lorry at Tellson's Bank spends his days busily because of the tumult in France has increased the business dealings with his French customers. Yet Lucie's family is not completely free from the French disquietude; it receives a significant blow by Charles's decision to go back to France in order to save Gabelle, who has loyally served Charles's French family and is now in prison because he has worked for the aristocrat. As soon as Charles Darnay arrives in Paris, he is caught and sent to La Force prison. Dr. Manette, with his daughter, goes over to Paris and tells Mr. Lorry

"with a cool bold smile" that he can "help Charles out of all danger." (p.259) He courageously appears, with his "streaming white hair" and "the impetuous confidence of his manner," in front of the crowd of people who are at a grindstone to get their weapons ready for massacre. (p.261) His past experience as a prisoner in Bastille operates to his advantage, and he is allowed to make a plea for Charles's life at the court.

Though Mr.Lorry is afraid that his friend might become ill once again, he soon finds out that the Doctor, who is now sixty-two, has never been more energetic:

> Now that . . . he knew himself to be invested through that old trial with forces to which they both looked for Charles's ultimate safety and deliverance, he became so far exalted by the change, that he took the lead and direction, and required them as the weak, to trust to him as the strong. The preceding relative positions of himself and Lucie were reversed. (p.269)

Charles Darnay cannot be released so easily as his family might hope and is kept in La Force for one year and three months. His father-in-law, however, is "confident in his own power, and consciously persistent in his end, never doubting that he would save Lucie's husband" all the while. (p.271) When Charles is tried in the court, this time in France, Dr. Manette gives witness to his innocence. In contrast to the obscure statement at the Old Bailey in 1780, he answers this inquiry with "clearness" and "with the greatest discretion and with the straightforward force of truth and earnestness." (p.282) Charles can finally win a favourable verdict and is set at liberty, thanks to the influence of the Doctor, who is "proud of his strength" and declares that he has "saved him." (p.284) Here again, we see the positions of the father and the daughter reversed. The reversal of their positions is stressed with seemingly unnecessary importunity in the following chapter. The "compassionate superiority" he feels towards the "woman's weakness" of his daughter somehow emphasizes his insistence on his own authority and power both as a parent and a man. (p.285) Since

he was rescued from the garret in Paris in 1780, he has been cared for and looked after by his daughter, just like aged parents are dependent on their children. Actually, he was then only forty-five years old or so, which is still the stage of life where a man can exert influence upon people around him, under ordinary circumstances. Due to his extraordinary experience of long-term confinement in his youth, however, Dr. Manette seems to have skipped a certain period of life and been forced into senescence, as his untimely white hair symbolizes. At the time of Charles's second trial, on the other hand, the Doctor seems to be spurring himself to exaltation, enjoying the sense of self-confidence and authority. This may be because he is conscious that his pride in himself helps to keep away his mental disorder. His unprecedented persistence in exercising authority, moreover, appears to be almost desperate, all the more because it might be the last opportunity for him in his life, now that he is over sixty.

Dr. Manette's exaltation cannot last for a long time ; it is not his natural age but some significant fact related to his past experience that deprives him of his momentary seat of power. Shortly after the release, Charles is taken into custody again, because of the document found in a cell of Bastille. The writer is Dr. Manette himself, who has accused Charles's father and uncle for their past cruel crime. This crucial evidence against the young man unavoidably determines his execution. When Charles speaks to him after the death sentence, the Doctor cannot but "draw his hands through his white hair, and wring them with a shriek of anguish." (p.328) Although the Doctor tries to help his son-in-law once more, it is useless, for he himself is the accuser this time. Dr. Manette is unable to overcome this hardship, and returns to his shoe-making days "with a helpless look straying all around." (p.335) There is no hope of his recovery suggested; he is, at last, found as a "helpless, inarticulately murmuring, wandering old man" in the carriage to go back to England. (p.348)

As we have seen so far, *A Tale of Two Cities* abounds in the issues concerned with "oldness." The "old philosophy" in France, refused by young Charles and

revolted against by common people, discloses the threat of the inevitable loss of authority through aging and presents the negative features of oldness. The "old-fashioned" system of Tellson's Bank, supported by its "ancient" employees, somehow survives with the positive aspects of oldness represented by Mr. Lorry. The case of Dr. Manette presents the most complicated and ambivalent views on old age, foregrounding, again, the fear of deprivation of power.

When Dickens published *A Tale of Two Cities* in 1859, he was in the middle of his forties, which is about the same age as Dr. Manette when he is found in the garrett in Paris. It is often suggested that Lucie Manette is partly a personification of Ellen Ternan, who was Dickens's young mistress and caused his separation from his wife in the preceding year of the publication of the novel.[12] Dr. Manette's insistence on his own authority, which is closely connected with youthfulness and manliness he has lost or about to lose, and the ambivalent attitudes towards the issue of oldness in general presented throughout the novel may show the author's complex view of himself in relation with a girl so young as might be called his daughter. Middle age is generally the stage of life when people cannot avoid the thought of youthfulness which is beginning to recede from themselves and of old age which is drawing near. Dickens, all the more because of the gap between their age, must have been also conscious of the matter of youth and aging, though there is no knowing whether his view on oldness was of negative or positive nature. Dickens, actually, did not have to cope with his own sixties or seventies in the real world, because his untimely death saves him from facing his old age. *A Tale of Two Cities*, however, illustrates, in a subtle way, the attitude towards oldness is not only relative to the social background but inconsistent even within a single mind.

Notes :

1 Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859; rpt. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1994), p. 9. Further references to this novel will appear in the text.
2 Andrew Sanders, *The Companion to A Tale of Two Cities* (London: UnwinHyman Ltd., 1988), p.21.
3 Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph* (1952; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1986), p.440.
4 Sanders, p.3.
5 Leonard Manheim, "A Tale of Two Characters: A Study in Multiple Projection" in Michael A. Cotsell (ed.), *Critical Essays on Charles Dickens's* A Tale of Two Cities (New York: G.K Hall&Co., 1998), p.65.
6 Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Vieillesse*, trans. Sankichi Asabuki (Kyoto: Jinbun-shoin, 1972).
7 Anny Sadrin, *Parentage and Inheritance in the Novels of Charles Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.24.
8 Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (1853; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1986), p.449.
9 Herbert F. Tucker(ed.), *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999), p.99.
10 Hans-Joachim von Kondratowitz, "The Medicalization of Old Age" in Margaret Pelling and Richard M. Smith (eds.), *Life, Death, and the Elderly: Historical Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.142.
11 Beauvoir, p.550.
12 Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990), p.860.