

The Spiritual Orphans in *Bleak House*, *Hard Times* and *Little Dorrit*

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Introduction

Many neglected children appear in Dickens' novels, beginning with *Oliver Twist*. At the workhouse, Oliver and his fellow orphans "suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months." The children had a council, and "lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more; and it fell to Oliver Twist." He, "advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said: somewhat alarmed at his own temerity: 'Please sir, I want some more'" (56).¹ Oliver's behaviour was regarded as a rebellion, and one of the gentlemen on the board insisted that "That boy will be hung" (58). Oliver was taken to "the dark and solitary room" as "a close prisoner" (59).

Oliver is a victim hurt both by social authority, such as the gentlemen on the board, and social evil as seen in criminals like Fagin and Sikes. He becomes happy after experiencing plenty of pain and misery. Alex Zwerdling suggests that "Oliver's deprivation is primarily physical, external":

Between *Oliver Twist* and *Bleak House*, [Dickens's] vision of childhood suffering became much more psychological.... By the time Dickens came to write *Dombey and Son*, he had become more interested in the child deprived of love than of food and shelter²

Zwerdling, citing Esther's first memories of her godmother, who always told Esther of the disgrace of her mother and consequently of Esther herself, draws the conclusion that Esther's "self-denigration" is her "essential life style"; "she is never sure that she is worthy of love and respect." Her "self-denigration" is to be reinforced later by the disfigurement of her face.

Louisa in *Hard Times* is deprived of love by her father's Utilitarian education. She seems to be affectionate at heart, and to be in need of someone whom she is able to show affection for, but she is, at the same time, ignorant of what love actually is and of what to do with it, though she is surely able to "pity" her warped brother, Tom. Amy Dorrit in *Little Dorrit* must take care of her father, Mr Dorrit. Though he never plays the role of father, he is called "the Father of Marshalsea" ironically by the fellow prisoners. Amy, who is called "the Child of Marshalsea," looks young and timid, but she has not been allowed to be so childlike as her alias and appearance indicate. Arthur Clennam, who marries Amy at the end of the novel, is brought up and educated, being deprived of love, like Louisa in *Hard Times*, by his surrogate mother, Mrs Clennam, and becomes a grownup, who has a vague anxiety and a sense of guilt toward himself and his family. Mrs Clennam herself has never been given any love since her childhood, and she educated Arthur exactly the same way as her father had educated her. The education is, in fact, her revenge on her husband and Arthur's real mother.

Dickens often gives symbolic meanings to families. The Jellybys in *Bleak House*, for instance, constitute a miniature disordered society. Mrs Jellyby "devotes herself entirely to the public" (35),³ is

extremely eager to undertake noble projects, but her own children and also her husband are completely neglected. Arthur A. Adrian points out that “Dickens indicates those charged with the care of children make their abuses symptomatic of a disordered society.”⁴ The disorder of the Jellybys reflects one aspect of the whole society in *Bleak House*, and Mrs Jellyby’s “Telescopic Philanthropy” makes a clear contrast with Esther’s mother-like affection. Mrs Jellyby’s neglected children admire Esther, and Caddy especially tries to be as gentle as Esther. Esther visits the Jellyby’s on her way to Bleak House, and is made to consider what a housewife should be like by her guardian, John Jarndyce, who later asks Esther to be the mistress of Bleak House.⁵ It should be noted that Esther is thinking of the role of housewife while observing the Jellybys’ home, in which the housewife does not play her own role. It must be an ideal for girls to be good wives by observing the example in their own families. Like her “essential life style,” Esther is forced to make a negative start as a future housewife.

In *Hard Times*, Louisa’s insensibility concerning love is sharply antithetical to Sissy’s practicality. Though Sissy’s mental growth from a timid girl in the first book to a courageous and gentle woman in the third book are not described, she fully plays her role as a symbol of an emotional way of thinking opposite to Gradgrind’s Utilitarianism. She knows exactly what she should do when Gradgrind is quite at a loss at the crisis of his family in the third book. Sissy’s superiority and ability to understand things sensitively and intuitionally are already indicated in the second chapter in the first book, when the definition of a horse is given, though Mr Gradgrind does not regard her answer as acceptable at that time. On the other hand, the answer of Bitzer, an apparently exemplary student of Gradgrind system, is no more than a mixture of fragmented Facts.

The reverse of the parent-child role is a form Dickens often uses in portraying the parent-child relationship.⁶ It is typically seen in the connection between Amy and Mr Dorrit. Amy, whose mother died giving birth to her, is so gentle and devoted, as her name Amy indicates,⁷ that her mentally weak father more and more relies upon her. This is similar to the father-daughter relationship between Wickfield and Agnes in *David Copperfield*. Though Wickfield is not so egoistic as Mr Dorrit and “does not deliberately exploit the child,” “the love and care he gave [Agnes] in infancy after the death of her mother and his own weakness cause his daughter to think of “his happiness” as “the ‘utmost height’ of her hope.”⁸ It is the case for Amy and Agnes that with their fathers’ “increasing dependence” on them, each is unconsciously forced to become “a mother figure,”⁹ but the situation seems to be more complicated in Amy’s case. As is often pointed out,¹⁰ the whole world of *Little Dorrit* is covered with the dark shadow of the Marshalsea. She is indulgent to her father not only because she is affectionate by nature but also because she knows that her father’s selfishness and ridiculousness, as well as his misery, are produced by the shadow. Amy is also influenced by the shadow; her childlike appearance and timidity suggest her uneasiness about herself. She reveals her sentiments to nobody but Maggy, a mentally retarded woman who calls Amy Little Mother.¹¹ Amy, being pressed by Maggy, tells her a story of “a poor little tiny woman” who keeps a “shadow of Some one,” and hints her love for Arthur Clennam. He loves Pet Meagles at first, but he, who is mentally imprisoned by Mrs Clennam, believes himself unworthy of love. He often secludes himself from reality by daydreaming,¹² and tries to avoid being hurt. He approaches the Dorrits in order to compensate for his vague sense of guilt, and gradually hopes to set Amy free from the shadow.

Zwerdling points out that “Dickens is interested in someone who remains trapped between childhood and real maturity.”¹³ In this essay, I consider the spiritual orphans’ paths to their maturity,

mainly considering the three heroines, Esther, Louisa and Amy. As maturity is often symbolized by happy marriage at the end in Dickens, the heroines are to struggle for love. Not only Esther but also the other two are not able to find a good example of love around them. Amy's mother is dead, the other two heroines' mothers are powerless at providing model for their daughters, and, as a result, the relationship between the heroines and their fathers are emphasized. In *Bleak House*, as Esther does not see her real father, Hawdon, her connection with her surrogate father, Jarndyce, becomes important. Esther, who is most aware of her own thirst for love of the three, declares "to win some love" is the goal in her life, and she, as a narrator of *Bleak House*, is able to indicate her sentiments through other characters. After the first-person narrator provides rough pictures of the Chancery and Chesney Wold, she begins her narration, first about the deprivation of love, and then the declaration "to win some love."

Esther's Self-realization

Esther Summerson in *Bleak House* is in possession of psychological wounds from childhood, and tries to fulfill her thirst for love even when she attains womanhood. As Zwerdling points out, she believes herself to be unworthy of being loved. She has been told by her godmother repeatedly that "Submission, self-denial, diligent work, are the preparation for a life begun with such a shadow on it." She had no one but a doll to talk to in her childhood, and because of the extreme loneliness and "self-denigration," the greatest goal in her life is to "win some love"¹⁴:

I would try, as hard as ever I could, to repair the fault I had been born with (of which I confusedly felt guilty and yet innocent), and would strive as I grew up to be industrious, contented, and kind-hearted, and to do some good to some one, and win some love to myself if I could. (20)

Nevertheless, her self-denial is so persistent that she also substitutes Ada for herself. She tries to satisfy her thirst by making sure of Ada's happiness, as Arthur Clennam in *Little Dorn't* compensates for his vague anxiety by helping the Dorrits.

Though she is treated by Jarndyce somewhat differently from Ada, Esther charged with "self-denial" does not show any question or doubt about the treatment. Jarndyce intends to lead Esther to be the mistress of Bleak House from the beginning. He allows Esther to visit the Jellybys with Richard and Ada on the way to Bleak House, but seems to be most interested in Esther's opinion on Mrs Jellyby. He says to Esther:

"Well, I want to know your real thoughts, my dear, I may have sent you there on purpose."

"We thought that, perhaps," said I, hesitating, "it is right to begin with the obligation of home, sir; and that, perhaps, while those are overlooked and neglected, no other duties can possibly be substituted for them." (61)

Then, Jarndyce gives her the household key, calls her by the names of Fairy Godmothers such as Dame Durden, and encourages her who cannot be confident in herself to run a house. He tells Esther to call him "guardian", while he allows Ada to call him "cousin John." He looks as if he tried to make his relationship with Esther ambiguous and conceal his intention of marrying her by telling her to use the

legal term. Jarndyce often uses a certain term or concept in order to avoid facing realities. "A child" for Skimpole is another example; Jarndyce refuses to see Skimpole's parasitic nature by referring to him as merely "a child."

As the aliases given by Jarndyce suggest, Esther behaves as if she were a protector of Ada. She happily describes Ada's innocence and beauty, calling her "my darling," and is extremely concerned about her happiness. When Esther hears of the secret marriage between Ada and Richard, she cries and feels as if she "had lost [her] Ada for ever":

I was so lonely, and so blank without her, and it was so desolate to be going home with no hope of seeing her there, that I could get no comfort for a little while, as I walked up and down in a dim corner, sobbing and crying. (615)

Esther, whose degradation is reinforced by her altered looks, has already accepted Jarndyce's proposal, and has given up all hopes of marrying Woodcourt. So, she wants Ada to be happy with the man she loves most earnestly. When Esther decides to throw away "the dried remains of flowers" from Woodcourt, she "dropped a tear upon [Ada's] dear face" and "took the withered flowers out, and put them for a moment to her lips" (539). In addition, Esther has begun to feel the presentiment of Richard's ruin overshadowing their fantastic love. It is a kind of self-pity that makes Esther extremely sad.

Though Esther is surely burdened with the role of housewife by Jarndyce and to be his wife means nothing but resignation to her fate, she ameliorates her loneliness or uneasiness by describing Jarndyce as a strong and reliable father. When she first reveals her altered looks to him, she certainly loves him "as if he [were her] father." She is supported by him and leans her "head upon his shoulder" (436). His calmness and kindness might lead her to be too grateful to him and make it impossible for her to turn down his proposal, but Esther is surely in need of someone whom she can rely on. It is quite possible for her to imagine Jarndyce to be her real father, since she was so desolate in her childhood.

Esther says nothing reproachful to her mother, who in fact deserted her daughter twice; Lady Dedlock does not play a mother's role actually even after she reveals to Esther who she is. Esther herself is admired by, for example, Ada and Caddy as if she were a mother, but she does not know what maternal affection is and has no model of a mother. Esther has to create an imaginative figure of the good mother, as she makes up a fictional happiness with her surrogate father. Marcia Renee Goodman points out that Esther "describes Caddy's anger at Mrs Jellyby instead of her own anger at Lady Dedlock,"¹⁵ and also that "Dickens' doubling of Esther in the figure of Hortense suggests the suppression of anger Esther must manage."¹⁶ Certainly, this French maid tries to take revenge on Lady Dedlock, who has abandoned her. It is Jo, a desolate orphan, who indicates the resemblance of the three; he is confused and horrified at the veiled figures of the three, and is ironically an original cause of Esther's illness which reinforces her "self-denigration."

Esther marries Woodcourt at the end of the novel, and Ada goes back to Bleak House with her son, Richard, after her husband is dead. Jarndyce seems to regard Ada as a substitute for Esther, because he tells Ada to call him "guardian" from that time on instead of "cousin John." Esther's "self-denigration" seems to be cured by the happy marriage, as is indicated by Woodcourt's remark that "you are prettier than you ever were" (770), but her inferiority complex about her birth has already been overcome when she finds Lady Dedlock dead in "a burialground" (713). She thinks the dead body as Jenny's at first, and

then realizes it is her mother in Jenny's clothes. Jenny is regarded as Lady Dedlock's double, and Jenny's dead child is Esther's, and, according to Hillis Miller, "Esther did not die, like the brickmaker's baby, though her mother was told that she was dead."¹⁷ Esther, Jenny's baby, is restored to life when Lady Dedlock, wearing Jenny's clothes, lies dead, and relieved of her mother's degeneration. And, it is Woodcourt, not Jarndyce, who is beside Esther at the moment of her resuscitation. In fact, he noticed the death earlier than Esther, as his "solemn and compassionate look" (713) suggests, and he also notices earlier the recovering of Esther's beauty.

Influence of Education on Louisa

While Esther in *Bleak House* is aware of her own thirst for love and quite eager to get it, Louisa in *Hard Times* is completely insensitive and ignorant of it. Although Louisa is affectionate at heart and is in need of someone whom she is able to love, she has no one but her brother Tom. Consequently, she seems to be unable to connect her affection with someone else, and unable to think of marriage for love. She has unconsciously sensed that there must be love in marriage, when she heard Sissy's story about her parents, and therefore she begins to avoid Sissy for fear that her decision to marry for the sake of Tom should waver. She marries Bounderby, and then meets Harthouse. Though she feels easy enough about Harthouse's nihilism, she, at the same time, finds some danger in it. She finally becomes perplexed at Harthouse's declaration of love. She does not know what to do. All she knows is that her father's education has something to do with her confusion. She goes back to her father and reveals her real sentiments.

She sternly blames her father for his thoughtless education at first:

"Would you have doomed me, at any time, to the frost and blight that have hardened and spoiled me? Would you have robbed me ... of the immaterial part of my life ... ?"

"O no, no. No, Louisa."

"Yes, father, if I had been stone blind; if I had groped my way by my sense of touch, and had been free, while I knew the shapes and surfaces of things, to exercise my fancy somewhat, ... I should have been a million times wiser, happier, ... more innocent and human in all good respects, than I am" (161~162)¹⁸

All Gradgrind can say is that "I never knew you were unhappy, my child." Then, Louisa mentions her marriage:

I show you now ... the ordinary deadened state of my mind — you proposed my husband to me. I took him. I never made a pretence to him or you that I loved him.... I was not wholly indifferent, for I had a hope of being pleasant and useful to Tom. I made that wild escape into something visionary, and have slowly found out how wild it was. But Tom had been the subject of all the little tenderness of my life; perhaps ... because I knew so well how to pity him. It matters little now, except as it may dispose you to think more leniently of his errors. (162)

There is a certain ambiguity in Louisa's reproach on her father. She blames her father for his education,

and then for Bounderby's proposal. She insists on her loveless marriage and confesses the true purpose of her marriage. Though she might accuse her father of indifference to her happiness in marriage, she is never forced to marry Bounderby by her father; Gradgrind's education has nothing to do with her marriage. Barbara Hardy arrives at the following conclusion about Louisa's marriage: "It is heart, and irrationality, rather than a cold appraisal and calculation, which make the marriage."¹⁹

Louisa's incoherence is brought about by her confusion at that time as well as Utilitarian impracticability. A Utilitarian is good at generalization and analysis, but is not able to apply the results of them to individual cases. Mr Gradgrind can generalize "life" but can say nothing on his daughter's own "life." When Louisa reproaches her father, she says that "my dismal resource has been to think that life would soon go by, and that nothing in it could be worth the pain and trouble of a contest." Gradgrind's pitiful answer is that "And you so young, Louisa!" (162) This answer suggests Gradgrind's fatherly affection for Louisa and his wish for her to be happy. However, when he tells Louisa of Bounderby's proposal of marriage, he is completely unconscious of the indication of her disappointment in life. She says, "Father, I have often thought that life is very short," and Gradgrind says in return that "It is short, no doubt, my dear. Still, the average duration of human life is proved to have increased of last years" (78). Gradgrind's insensibility, as well as Louisa's, is due to Utilitarianism. In a society based on Utilitarianism, it is difficult to be sensible of human emotions. Even if one has good intentions, the results do not always turn out to be good. Or rather, it is actually difficult to have good intentions at all. Mrs Gradgrind is one of those who have no such intentions, and she is so afraid of her Utilitarian husband that she is unable to do anything but to tell her children to be obedient to their father. Her timidity, as well as her husband's Utilitarianism, provides Louisa with neither a model of love nor happy memories of childhood. Jean Ferguson Carr suggests that at "Mrs Gradgrind's death ... we are told of an effect [of the Gradgrind system] — 'the light that had always been feeble and dim behind the weak transparency, went out'" (150).²⁰ She is a victim weakened by Utilitarianism and unintentionally reinforces its effect on her daughter.

The possibility of Louisa's salvation is indicated in Stephen's instinctive look at her. Refusing to follow suit with the Union, Stephen isolates himself from the other Hands, and is taken to Bounderby's. There are Bounderby, Louisa, Tom and Harthouse. Told to explain the conditions of the workmen by Bounderby, Stephen earnestly pleads "a muddle" which Stephen himself and the other workmen are in, but he merely irritates Bounderby, who wants some definite information of the workmen's strike. Stephen is discharged, and, as a result, he is excluded from both the capitalist and the working classes. While appealing to Bounderby, Stephen "instinctively" glances at Louisa several times, as if he tried to "find his natural refuge in Louisa's face" (112). Stephen might be aware of her affection at heart, but rather he seems to seek unconsciously for the gentleness that only women possess, the same gentleness he has found in Rachael. His glances are not noticed by Louisa.

Once, he surely observes "a cautionary movement of her eyes towards the door." Though he, "stepping back, [puts] his hand upon the lock," he remains "to finish what [is] in his mind" (114). He glances at Louisa once again, but "her eyes [are] raised to his no more" (115). If Louisa realized what he wants her to do, she might understand that something is lacking in her.

Louisa does not know how to pity Stephen. Though she does not notice that her affection is needed by Stephen at Bounderby's, she seems to be anxious about his future. She visits the poor Hand with Tom. But, ironically, she is to be blamed by Rachael later for, in her words, "not mindin to what

trouble [Louisa brings] such as the poor lad” (185), because the visit ends up triggering Stephen’s being falsely accused of robbery. Louisa certainly has good intentions, but she is so ignorant of realities, which one is not able to learn by Fact. Louisa’s good intention does not lead to the expected result. Harthouse takes advantage of Louisa’s insensibility to love. He, since he comes to Coketown, has been watching the beautiful Louisa. He soon finds out who she smiles at, and he must have noticed her unconsciousness of Stephen’s gazes at Bounderby’s, though Dickens does not explain anything about that. Harthouse can notice Louisa’s defects because of the Utilitarian education he has also taken, as Louisa has found “a near affinity between” (163) them. It is easy for him to make himself understood by Louisa, but his arts are completely powerless with Sissy, who cannot understand Fact.

Dickens does not describe Louisa as a complete victim of her father’s education; he does not give her a happy future as a housewife:

Herself again a wife—a mother—lovingly watchful of her children, ever careful that they should have a childhood of the mind no less than a childhood of the body, as knowing it to be even a more beautiful thing, and a possession, any hoarded scrap of which, is a blessing and happiness to the wisest? Did Louisa see this? Such a thing was never to be. (219)

It is not Louisa but Sissy who becomes happy at the end. Though Dickens describes the characters’ later lives in the last chapter, persistently repeating, “Did Louisa see these things?” Such things were to be,” he never mentions what has actually happened to Louisa. He merely denies her happiness. She tries to “construct a realm outside the powerful sway of reason and logic”²¹ and fails. All readers can perceive here is the defect of “head” and the victory of “mind.”

The Deluded World in *Little Dorrit*

Dickens shows a contaminated society in *Little Dorrit*, symbolizing the actual problems, such as the corruption of the Circumlocution Office, by “shadow.” “Shadow” surely creates the actual darkness in the Marshalsea or the house of Clennam, but rather, as Amy Dorrit finds “a deeper shadow than the shadow of the Marshalsea wall” (712)²² in her father’s face, it is the metaphor that symbolizes the darkness in the mind.²³ As a result, as Angus Wilson points out, the characters in this novel are “gray rather than black and white.”²⁴ Every one of them has some particular problem. In *Hard Times*, Dickens concentrates on the influence of Utilitarian education through the father-daughter relationship between Mr Gradgrind and Louisa, but in *Little Dorrit* Dickens deals with various and broad topics, both social and personal problems, to create a certain uneasiness of society as a whole. The role of Amy seems to be much smaller than that of Esther in *Bleak House*. Amy looks innocent and childlike, but she is also influenced by the shadow. Her indulgence toward her father seems to be a reflection of her vague inferiority. She knows his egoism and vanity, but she cannot blame her father. It is because she understands that her father’s weakness is caused by the shadow. As Arthur Clennam excuses his weakness as “nobody’s weakness” for himself, Amy overlooks her father’s weakness.

The reverse of parent-child relationship between Amy and Mr Dorrit shows one aspect of the misguided world covered with shadow. Amy helps her father to create an illusory authority as father, though she knows the emptiness of both his showiness and her endeavour. She also notices the

emptiness of the whole society; she finds the same shadow, which she has found in the Marshalsea, in high societies. Mr Dorrit, a prisoner, regards himself as gentleman, and Mr Merdle, a celebrated gentleman, turns out to be as great a swindler as his celebrity as a gentleman would demand. And, Amy seems to be dependent on Maggy's idiocy in a way, that is, she feels relieved in the false parent-child relationship with Maggy. Though Amy is admired as Little Mother, it is Amy who looks like a child. Because Maggy cannot understand what Amy means, Amy can reveal her sentiments, though it is through a story. However, both the reversal of the parent-child relationship and the substitute parent-child relationship are not a normal state for the family. In order to attain maturity and have her own family, Amy has to overcome the two.

One day, Mr Dorrit, who notices the unusual rudeness of Chivery, the turnkey, implicitly reproaches Amy for not accepting Chivery's son's proposal. With an "uneasiness ... over him ... like a touch of shame" (270), he begins the story of "a certain Jackson":

There was ... a turnkey of the name of Jackson ..., and he had a— brother, and this—young brother ... admired —the—not daughter, the sister—of one of us; a rather distinguished Collegian His name was Captain Martin; and he consulted me on the question whether it was necessary that his daughter—sister—should hazard offering the turnkey brother by being too—ha!—too plain with the other brother Captain Martin ... unhesitatingly said that it appeared to him that his— hcm!—sister was not called upon to understand the young man too distinctly, and that she might lead him on ... indeed I think he said tolerate him—on her father's ... brother's—account. I hardly know how I have strayed into this story. I suppose it has been through being unable to account for Chivery (271)

Mr Dorrit bursts "into tears" (273) and Amy soothes him, asking him "for his forgiveness" (274). Amy, who is "unwilling to leave him alone," says to him that "when you are in bed [let me] sit with you." He asks her in return "if she [feels] solitary?" (275) He suggests the marriage to the turnkey's son to Amy so as to ensure his position in the prison, but Amy, without reproaching him, allows him to feel superior to her. She stays beside him all night, wondering whether "he [looks] now at all as he [has] looked when he was prosperous and happy." At daybreak she goes to her room, and, looking out of the window, answers her own question "in a burst of sorrow and compassion, 'No, no, I have never seen him in my life!' " (276). Amy, soothing her father, looks like an indulgent mother, but, being alone, she gives herself away.

Afterward, Mr Dorrit comes into a large fortune and wanders in the high societies of Europe, but Amy finds the shadow of the Marshalsea everywhere he goes. Trying in vain to conceal the shadow over him, Mr Dorrit spiritually collapses at Mrs Merdle's in Rome, and soon dies. The ruin is brought about by the gap between appearance and reality within himself; though he is now high as much that he can in the social position, remains as immature as he used to be. All Amy can do is to look intently at her father's self-destruction.

Dickens often indicates social malaise by describing unusually childish adults and adult-like children and exaggerates them by their unbalanced and grotesque figures and doings. Pretty but grotesque Charley in *Bleak House* is one such child.²⁵ The strangeness of the Amy-Maggy relationship is suggested by a nameless woman's reaction to the strange couple at the unusual hour. The woman

suddenly calls Maggy to account:

“Poor thing!” said the woman. “Have you no feeling, that you keep her in the cruel streets at such a time as this? Have you no eyes, that you don’t see how delicate and slender she is? ...” (217-218)

The woman exclaims, “You’re a woman!” when she, “bending her face,” tries to let Amy kiss her. Though Amy asks her “let me speak to you as if I really were a child,” the woman says:

“You can’t do it You are kind and innocent; but you can’t look at me out of a child’s eyes. I never should have touched you, but I thought you were a child.”
And with a strange, wild cry, she went away. (218)

This trivial episode reveals how the combination of Amy with Maggy looks from a distanced point of view, providing a certain suggestiveness of the young woman’s own sadness and pain.

When Mr Dorrit inherits a large fortune, Amy leaves Maggy in London. And, by the death of her father, Amy seems to be set free from something and goes back to the Marshalsea, where Arthur is taken ill. After his recovery, Arthur and Amy get married. Dickens symbolizes Arthur’s relief from the vague anxiety by the collapse of the house of Clennam. Though the struggle of both Arthur and Amy to get rid of the shadow is incomplete, they at least have witnessed the downfall of their respective parents’ castles “in the air.” Their “modest” (895) happiness is indicated by the sunlight after their wedding:

Little Dorrit and her husband walked out of the church alone. They paused for a moment on the steps of the portico, looking at the fresh perspective of the streets in the autumn morning sun’s bright rays, and they went down. (894-895)

They “pass along” not only in “sunshine” but also in “shade.” Something firm in the deluded world seems to be grasped.

Conclusion

Oliver Twist is a story in which a neglected child becomes a happy child. Though his enemies are strong and sly, he is rescued by kind adults after all. All he has to do is to endure the physical pains, and to be an innocent child.

On the other hand, the spiritual orphans have to struggle against their respective mental pains by themselves. Though Woodcourt is with her, Esther has to recognize her mother’s death for herself to be restored to life. She does not have to create an illusory happiness with Jarndyce any more. In *Hard Times*, the victory of “heart” over “head” is obvious and as a result Louisa is not able to be happy like Sissy. However, not every problem in the Utilitarian society is solved, and Louisa’s future is in fact obscure. Similarly the shadow in *Little Dorrit* still remains, but Amy at last finds her own “modest” happiness with Arthur. Thus, the spiritual orphans get out of the trap which forces them to struggle “between childhood and real maturity,” yet, as for Louisa, it might be better to say that she finds a reason why she is trapped. She merely reproaches her father, saying that “All that I know is, your phi-

osophy and teaching will not save me” (163), when she escapes from Harthouse’s temptation, but through Stephen’s death or Tom’s flight, she realizes something in herself, which prevents her from being as affectionate toward others as she is at heart.

Notes

1. Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1966); unless otherwise specified, page references following quotations from *Oliver Twist* are to this edition.
2. Alex Zwerdling, “Esther Summerson Rehabilitated,” *PMLA* (1973), p.429.
3. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (New York: Norton, 1977); unless otherwise specified, page references following quotations from *Bleak House* are to this edition.
4. Arthur A. Adrian, *Dickens and the Parent-Child Relationship* (London: Ohio UP, 1984), p.73.
5. In “Fathers and Suitors: Narratives of Desire in *Bleak House*,” *Dickens Studies Annual* 19 (1990), p.169, Barbara Gottfried offers the opinion that Dickens is “one of the most influential writers to propagate/disseminate the Victorian ideal of women’s special domestic mission.”
6. Adrian, p.119. Adrian comments:

Among the multitude of parent-child portraits in Dickens’s novels, one pattern—that in which parent and child exchange places—recurs so constantly as to appear nothing less than an obsession.
7. Adrian points out that Amy means “love,” p.126.
8. Adrian, p.122.
9. Adrian, p.123.
10. In “Guilt, Authority, and the Shadows of *Little Dorrit*,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* Vol.34, No.1 June 1979, pp.20-21, Elaine Showalter, citing Hillis Miller’s opinion on “shadow,” makes the following comments:

As J. Hillis Miller has observed, “shadow” is the “most frequently recurring” of certain key words in *Little Dorrit*, a term which links physical imprisonment and imprisoning state of soul” I think that a thorough exploration of the novel’s shadows can help us understand its coherence in the more specific terms of psychological realism and sociological observation. The shadows of *Little Dorrit* represent the world of psychic turbulence which lies beneath the brilliant “surface” of Society cultivated by the financial authority of Merdle, the political authority of Barnacles, and the social authority of Mrs. General. Not only institutions but also people have their shadows—doubles who enact their repressed roles and desires.
11. On p.31 Showalter points out several pairs in *Little Dorrit*, and comments that “these pairs might be described as characters and their shadows.” “Little Dorrit and Maggy” is one such pair.
12. Showalter calls Arthur Clennam “an irresolute dreamer.”
13. Zwerdling, p.429.
14. In “I’ll Follow the Other: Tracing the (M)other in *Bleak House*,” *Dickens Studies Annual* 19 (1990), p.161, Marcia Renee Goodman comments on “Esther’s description of her desire for love”:

The belief if she does “some good to someone” she will be loved, and that love can be “won,” that it is an achievement for which one works, rather than a feeling that two people come to share and to nurture between them... .

15. Goodman, p.162.
16. Goodman, p.157.
17. Hillis Miller, "Introduction," *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1971), p.16. On p.15 Miller points out that "Each character serves as an emblem of other similar characters. Each is to be understood in terms of his reference to others like him."
18. Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (New York: Norton, 1990); unless otherwise specified page reference from *Hard Times* are to this edition.
19. Barbara Hardy, *The Moral Art of Dickens* (London: Athlone Press, 1970), p.71.
20. Jean Ferguson Carr, "Writing as a Woman: Dickens, *Hard Times*, and Feminine Discourses," *Dickens Studies Annual* 18 (1989), pp.160-161.
21. In p.172, Goodman makes the following comment:
 In her drastic confrontation with her father [in Chap.12, Book II], Louisa tries to construct a realm outside the powerful sway of reason and logic. Yet she can imagine this realm only as the "immaterial part of my life," marking it as that which has no material existence or is irrelevant.
22. Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1967); unless otherwise specified page reference from *Little Dorrit* are to this edition.
23. See Note 10.
24. Angus Wilson, *The World of Charles Dickens* (London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1970), p.241.
25. Charley in *Bleak House* is described as follows:
 [She is] childish in figure but shrewed and olderlooking in the face—pretty-faced, too—wearing a womanly sort of bonnet much too large for her, and drying her bare arms on a womanly sort of apron. (188)

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