

Of Mac and Mud: Disciplining the Unruly Victorian Street in Charles Dickens's *Bleak House*.

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本稿は、チャールズ・ディケンズ「荒涼館」に現れるロンドンの警察の考え方と態度との結び付きを考察するものである。当時の史料を使って、ビクトリア朝の警察がどのようにロンドン市街で取締りを行い、秩序を維持しようとしたかを見てゆく。動物の排泄物の清掃から始まり、行き交う馬車の交通整理をし、犯罪を取り締まり、はやり病を減らし、浮浪者をあしらう等々、ビクトリア時代の街路に発生する問題はお話にならないほどひどかった。世界一早く産業化した資本主義の国として、ビクトリア時代のイギリス人はこれらの都市問題を解決するお手本をほとんど持っていなかった。ディケンズは、警官と徒手空拳で遣り合う道路清掃夫ジョーの姿を同情を込めて描き出している。このジョーは当時のイギリス人が街路で発生する問題に向き合い、乗り越えてゆくあれやこれやの苦労をまざまざと見せてくれる。このようにある時は正面から又ある時は一寸斜に構えて当時の社会状況を重層的に描き出しているのである。

This paper explores the connections between the attitudes and posture of the London police in Charles Dickens's novel, *Bleak House*, with the historical context of Victorian attempts to police, regulate, and order the actual streets and roads of London. The transport problems facing Victorian streets were monumental, ranging from cleaning up animal waste, regulating wheeled traffic, preventing crime, minimizing epidemic disease, and appropriately dealing with vagrants. As the world's first fully-industrialized, capitalist country, Victorians had few models to look to in order to solve their urban dilemmas. Dickens creates a sympathetic character in the form of Jo the street sweeper who faces police authority at a distinct disadvantage, and who embodies many of the problems Victorians faced in handling their street-related problems, acting as a palimpsest to refract and to reflect historical conditions.

"This boy," says the constable, "although he's repeatedly told to, won't move on."

"I'm always a-moving on, sir," cries the boy, wiping away tears with his arm. "I've always been a-moving and a-moving on, ever since I was born. Where can I possibly move to, sir?" (247).

This dialogue from Dickens's *Bleak House* dramatizes two of the agents within the disciplining or ordering dynamic of the street: policing and cleaning. The exchange between Jo – the orphaned and homeless street sweeper – and police authority in the form of the unnamed constable orders their relationship and reveals their subject positions. Little more than a beggar, Jo earns his money by sweeping up the animal and vegetable refuse that litters London streets. He holds out his hand for payment from both shop owners and well-to-do passersby. On the other hand, the constable earns his money, in part, by preventing obstructions from blocking the public thoroughfares. Besides preventing theft and assault, the police have the mandate to keep traffic along the roads moving. While his authority doesn't extend to outright arresting street sweepers like Jo, the constable does have the authority to "move on" those whom he ascertains to be vagrants or beggars.

Jo remains legitimately afraid of the police, and the constable, in his turn, remains justifiably annoyed with the waif. He reminds Jo that he's told him "five

hundred times" to move on, but the boy won't comply. Drawn by the altercation in front of his legal stationery shop, Mr. Snagsby – who unbeknownst to Jo is his actual father – asks the constable where the waif should move on to. Unfortunately, the constable has neither answer nor authority to address this particular question. "My instructions don't go into that" (247) replies the constable. "My instructions are that this boy move on." In short, the Victorians don't possess ready solutions to street people like Jo. There's no legitimate place for him except on the street, that is, moving on the street and never staying too long anywhere.

This article places literary analysis within a historical context of relevant transport history to argue that Jo acts as a prism that refracts Victorian anxieties regarding the regulating and policing of the dirt and disorder of their roads as well as a focus with which to view the uneven Victorian efforts to control the movements and conditions of a permanent underclass that called the street home. Consequently, this article discusses the dirt and the congestion that characterize the Victorian road as well as the police authority and reformist response that attempt to control these problems. First, this article studies the formation and character of the Metropolitan Police, considering its legal mandate and responsibilities regarding policing the road. Second, the rules of the road are considered through a successive series of Highway Acts. Third, the road problem of vagrancy and vagrants is explored. And finally, this article describes one of the innovative solutions to cleaning the road: the Street Orderly System of Charles Cochrane.

Through an exploration of these issues surrounding the policing and cleaning of the Victorian road, this article argues that the road exists beyond the acceptable horizon of middle-class order, stability, and ethos; instead, the road remains the visible public site for disorder, filth, and degradation. However, as the tangible and visible public site for both actual disease and moral degradation, the Victorian street resides within the orbit of reformist efforts. Yet the Victorians achieve only limited success in shaping the road to meet middle-class standards of stability and order. In other words, although the Victorians attempt to impose order and stability upon their roads, the colonization by middle-class hegemony of the Victorian road remains incomplete and uneven.

Dickens's chapter, appropriately titled "Moving On," remains a good example of one of Dickens's recurring themes: the exploitation of children and society's callous regard for their welfare. Through the intervention of Snagsby, Jo avoids further altercation with the police and moves off. Later in the chapter, the narrator describes Jo resting and eating his meager supper along Blackfriars Bridge and gazing at the cross at the top of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. The boy is sick, exhausted, and nearly starving. His encounters with the police have made him fearful of arrest. It seems his life on the streets is one of great stress as well as great poverty and insecurity. London's great Christian structure – reminding the reader of the opportunity for and obligation of Christian charity – ironically remains blind and mute to Jo's plight. Juxtaposed to the resting boy are the flowing Thames and "the crowd flowing by him in two directions" (253). Everyone and everything seems productively purposeful in contrast to Jo's temporary fixity and purposelessness, an ironic conflation of productivity with instability (movement) and purposelessness with stability (non-movement).

However, most of the time, mobility, that is movement for movement's sake (rather than purposeful movement toward a significant destination), characterizes Jo. His only purpose is survival, yet he is superfluous and expendable to the society in which he lives. He joins the movement only when "he is stirred up" and like

before, "told to move on too" (253). The narrator leaves the reader with a sense of the futility and the unfairness of movement for movement's sake.

The authority given to the police then by today's standards seems very slight indeed. Although in "Moving On," the constable appears to dominate the context of Jo's world, police power along roads and in the streets was very circumscribed and ambiguous for the simple reason that the regulations for the road were few and those few remained ambiguous. Ironically, while congestion along London's streets increased and as social reformers and legislators saw the need to facilitate movement and prevent obstruction, few or no laws were ever passed to regulate street use and movement – except for laws concerning vagrancy and the poor – designed to move them along. (You can exist, but not here.) The lack of road rules coupled with the paucity of police authority to enforce those limited highway rules that did exist seems to mitigate the effects that a dominating colonization could have over a "subject" populace despite the historical imperial purpose of roads. The next section considers the historical formation and development of London's police force and looks more closely at police authority and responsibility.

In *Bleak House*, the street acts as a spatial emblem or marker for what Doreen Massey in *For Space* calls "a constellation of processes rather than a thing" (141), a constellation of processes that "inevitable conflict" (147) but which produces a network (or culture) of multiple "entities and identities . . . collectively produced through practices which form relations" (148). In other words, the street forms a specific space, according to Massey, that functions "as the sphere of relations" (148) between disparate and often contradictory dynamics, a space of "entanglements and configurations" (Massey 148) continuously being constructed through its multiplicities, that is, its multiple narratives and the multiple trajectories of its inhabitants. Michel Foucault in his essay "Of Other Spaces" terms this spatial characteristic of heterogeneous relations and processes a "heterotopia" (24), or heterotopic space, that he beautifully describes as "an ensemble of relations" (22). To perceive of a particular space like the road in terms of Massey's "sphere of relations" and Foucault's "ensemble of relations," I argue, underwrites Dickens's significant theme in *Bleak House* that despite great evil in the world in the form of inequality and injustice, great good and happiness are possible too. Esther's initiation into life and development attest to it.

The Metropolitan Police

At the time of the serial publication of *Bleak House* in monthly installments between March 1852 and September 1853 within Dickens's own magazine *Household Words*, London's fledgling police force had changed very little since its formation in 1829. At the instigation of then Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel (hence the originally derisive terms bobbie and peeler), Parliament agreed to form a Metropolitan Police force that would have jurisdiction over the entire London metropolitan area. This would be a new kind of authority for public space. Two joint Police Commissioners were appointed: Charles Rowan and Richard Mayne.

Previous to the formation of the Metropolitan Police, public safety and the control of the streets within every parish or vestry had been entrusted to the night watch. Called "charlies" because of their reorganization under Charles I (1600-1649), the night watch proved to be as inept as it was laughable. In its original concept, the night watch was to consist of retired soldiers organized along military lines. They assumed their duties from dusk to dawn, roaming the streets not only crying the time but also checking that the locks on shop doors and windows were securely fashioned. Their primary job, like the Metropolitan Police after them, remained

surveillance. However, at the beginning of the Victorian era, the night watch tended to consist of paupers who in order to be kept off charity and out of the work house, were given the job. The nightly patrols became less extensive and less regular. More often than not, the night watch spent the night dozing in a guard house, completely useless. While a horse patrol had begun in 1805 to control the robberies committed by mounted highwaymen along the great roads leading to London in the Metropolitan counties (Smith 161), no official daylight protection existed in London for the safety of citizens or the prevention of crime.

A rash of outrageous daylight assaults and robberies stunned the metropolis. Roaming gangs of thugs would loop a noose or a belt around the neck of some well-to-do walker along the street, render the victim unconscious or otherwise incapable of resistance, then rob the unfortunate. Such crimes were called "garroting," and the fact that their incidences increased rather than decreased shocked vestry officials. These criminal assaults, notorious for their boldness and severity, pushed Parliament into taking action after long months of public protest for the government to do something to make the streets safe. Prime Minister Robert Peel established in 1828 a Bow-Street day-patrol (Smith 162) which evolved into the 1829 Metropolitan Police. However, it was no secret that the "real" purpose of the police force was "the expediency of instituting a force powerful enough to cope with mobs, and to repress those incipient commotions which, if too roughly dealt with by the military, are apt to leave an abiding sense of irritation in the public mind" (Smith 172). In other words, despite the public outrage to garroting through lurid and sensational press reporting, the police force originated for political control of dissidents.

However, Parliament didn't want a paramilitary organization organized like France's gendarmes, nor did Commission Maine want his police force to become a muscular tool for any political faction, particularly that of the upper classes. For five years, the Metropolitan Police seemed generally to fulfill these wishes. An 1834 Select Committee reported that the new police force had done nothing which was inconsistent with the civil rights and privileges of private society. On the contrary, the Select Committee praised the police force but for consistently acting in the spirit of essential English liberties of freedom of movement and freedom from interference (Winter 50).

During his entire tenure as joint Police Commissioner, Maine remained extremely sensitive to criticism and accusations of police political involvement, interference in the liberty of the subject, and brutality. He consistently reinforced the police's laissez-faire interpretation of enforceable laws and closely monitored the police's action to make sure constables didn't overstep their bounds. After all, there were no laws against public drunkenness or prostitution. As long as drunks and prostitutes were neither riotously nor disorderly or violently accosted passersby, the Metropolitan Police tended to ignore them, or direct them homewards, or keep them moving along. Arrest was only an extreme measure employed after repeated warnings to behave went unheeded.

The metropolitan district under the fledgling police force's jurisdiction had a circumference of 90 miles and an area of over 700 square miles (Smith 99). The population of London contained one eighth the total population of Great Britain in 1870, almost three and a half million people, double that of Paris and four times that of New York City (Smiles 88). The metropolitan district was divided into 18 divisions, each division separated into subdivisions, every subdivision divided into sections, and each section into constable beats; the central authority and offices of the Metropolitan Police was located at Scotland Yard (Smith 165). By 1870, there were 921 day-beats and 3126 night-beats (Smiles 100). In 1856, the force consisted of

a Chief Commissioner, Sir Richard Maine, two Assistant Commissioners – Captains Labalmondiere and Harris, 18 Superintendents, 133 Inspectors, 625 Sergeants, and 4954 Constables, making a total in all ranks of 5734 (Smith 164).

The qualifications for beat constables remained fairly high. Every policeman must be able to read and write, possess a good character, and be able-bodied (at least 5' 7"). Every section-house possessed a library, and policemen were encouraged to broaden their minds and enhance their education through personal motivation. In addition, recruit applicants needed "to give proofs of an unimpeachable character for honesty, industry, sobriety, and good temper" (Smiles 98). In short, these working-class men needed to embody middle-class virtues. However, in the first few years, many constables, unfortunately, were dismissed, most from drinking on the job. Between 1850 and 1856, 1276 constables were fired and of these, 68 received criminal convictions for a variety of offenses ranging from extortion and brutality to thievery or receiving stolen goods (Smith 166). Commissioner Mayne employed iron discipline over the force, and he was quite serious about the integrity of a policeman's character and the public perception of the police as incorruptible and able to enforce the law equitably.

The best constables were found to come from outside London, presumably because they were free from both the jaded cynicism of the metropolitan "sophisticate" and also free from any established corrupt relationships with the urban criminal element. Once living in London, they were given a beat in or near their own place of residence in order to increase both their familiarity with the urban landscape under their watch and also to make them familiar with neighborhood residents. Drilled like soldiers and given badges with numbers to maximize individual accountability, a constable was expected to be "a machine, moving, thinking, and speaking only as his instruction-book directs" (Smith 171). In short, he was to impersonally personify an institution but also be friendly and familiar though formal and distant.

In *Bleak House*, Dickens constructs a model policeman: Detective Inspector Bucket. Throughout the novel, Bucket proves to be shrewd and thoughtful, capable and relentless but also amiable and fair. He seems like he could be the "poster boy" for the Metropolitan Police. Lawyer Tulkinghorn hires Bucket to investigate Nemo's (Captain Hawthorn's) death who Tulkinghorn suspects to have been associated illicitly with Lady Dedlock. The reader is introduced to Bucket through Snagsby's first impressions of the officer in Tulkinghorn's offices in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Snagsby finds Bucket a "stoutly-built, steady-looking, sharp-eyed man in black, of about middle-age" (286). Like a ghost, Bucket is attentive and silent, almost invisible, preternaturally able to appear and disappear at will without notice. Indeed, Bucket's most salient characteristic seems to be his habit of lurking in the shadows – watching. He wanders the roads of London and environs as unobtrusively as he can in order to observe a multitude of people, places, and activities. At Tulkinghorn's funeral, he takes the opportunity to hide behind a lattice so as to scan the crowd in order to solve the lawyer's murder.

Lest we disparage Bucket's integrity or dismiss him merely as hegemony's agent of the gaze, we shouldn't forget that the Metropolitan Police's primary function was surveillance. Two-thirds of the force patrolled the streets on the night-beats from 9 or 10 at night until 5 or 6 in the morning while the remaining third of the force took over during their day-beats. The primary duty of officers on patrol at night remains watching, simply checking that doors and windows of houses and shops are secure (Smith 165). The practical theory was that surveillance amounts to prevention of crime. During the day, the patrol constable's primary duties remained

preventing street crime through presence alone, calming “riotous” behavior of drunks and people in loud disputes, and reporting street nuisances like noise and smoky chimneys (Smith 102). However, as traffic increased upon the roads—a flowing multitude of carriages, vans, wagons, omnibuses, horsemen, and pedestrians – their new duty became to patrol the thoroughfares and keep the traffic moving to prevent the roads from becoming “scenes of disorder, danger, and inextricable confusion” (103).

Although a man of good will and character, Bucket’s job – besides watching – remains one of dogged pursuit. As part of the detective force, Bucket’s job is essentially predatory: he hunts and apprehends criminals who have already committed crimes. “His duty is to pursue the criminal through all his shiftings and turnings, until the case is clear against him” (Smith 175). He employs these skills late in the novel in his tracking of Lady Dedlock. Accompanied by Esther, they travel the wintry roads of London pursuing Esther’s mother. Both Lady Dedlock and Esther Summerson travel the Victorian road to unravel and work out the implications of their middle-class identities and desires. Never quite able to catch up, Bucket nonetheless skillfully keeps on Lady Dedlock’s trail by continuously making inquiries of toll keepers, coach drivers, and inn keepers along the road.

London’s detective force was organized in August, 1842 (Smiles 98) principally to track down perpetrators of serious crimes like murder and forgery (Smiles 99). As of 1856, the Metropolitan Police had 108 members attached to the Detective Police, including Inspectors, Sergeants, and “plain-clothes men” (Smith 174). Detective officers found it necessary to maintain a personal knowledge and familiarity of the criminal population of their assigned specialty. However, despite its generally good record and admirable character of its members, the new police force received criticism almost immediately after its inception. To begin with, the police had been charged with brutality in breaking up public gatherings and acting as “agent provocateurs,” or spies, in plainclothes to incite a riot and thereby bring about a swift police response and discredit the rally organizers.

In the spring of 1833, the Home Office (which was the governmental entity to which the Metropolitan Police answered) received word of a demonstration by the National Union of the Working Classes. Armed demonstrators reportedly were poised to engage in violent civil disobedience and planned to march through the streets with the intention of causing mayhem and destruction. Home Secretary Melbourne declared the event illegal and ordered the police to arrest the leaders. The rally was still held at Cold Bath Fields, and Police Commissioners Rowan and Mayne later insisted that Melbourne had ordered them to disperse the crowd, an order Melbourne flatly denied. A battle ensued between police and demonstrators in which two constables were stabbed, one dying. The man who had fatally stabbed the constable was arrested. But after a very public trial, a verdict of justifiable homicide was reached after it was revealed that several plainclothes constables had provoked demonstrators and themselves incited the crowd. In addition, one police spy was proven to have acted under police orders to infiltrate Union meetings (Winter 50-51).

The Select Committee asked the commissioners if public policy as well as the Metropolitan Police’s mandate extended the essential police duty of surveillance to suspect activities like information-gathering and infiltration of any group deemed politically undesirable (Winter 52). Although both the Select Committee as well as the Police Commissioners thought the police a good alternative to calling in military troops to put down civil unrest – suspected or real – Mayne was reluctant to allow his police force to be manipulated or otherwise used for political ends. He intended

that the public perception of the police would be that “the policeman enforced the law and not the will of the ruling class” (Winter 57).

Apparently the Cold Bath Fields lesson proved a lesson Mayne learned well. During the Chartist movement, Mayne not only refused to allow the police to spy on Chartist meetings, he forbade any member of the police to attend a Chartist meeting out of uniform (Winter 56). And although the police practiced a “transparent,” that is, visible presence on London’s streets, by 1848 their recognition by most Londoners as having greatly contributed to the safety and the order of London’s streets not only contributed to their effective control of streets but also had been recognized as a reason for the failure of the Chartist movement to make London an effective center for their 1848 demonstrations (Winter 57). Indeed, the 1834 Select Committee heard criticism not that the police overacted in its behavior in the streets, but rather that the police had failed to intervene perhaps when necessary (Winter 59). Mayne asked for and received written clarification “whether or not a constable was entitled to make an arrest on the spot for an assault he had not witnessed” (Winter 59). He was not.

While the Select Committee ultimately expressed confidence in the honorable intentions and policies of the police, the Cold Bath Fields incident early in the long history of the Metropolitan Police vividly underscores their delicate position. Despite the need for order in an open society, the desire for control to enforce order would be in permanent tension with the equally strong desire for the personal freedom of citizens. The police found themselves daily practicing this equilibrium. Mayne apparently never forgot the lesson of Cold Bath Fields. Throughout the rest of his long career as Police Commissioner, he reinforced the notion of the Metropolitan Police as a “depersonalized, non-military, virtually unarmed, impartial force, answerable not just to the Home) Office but to the same laws that the rest of the community must obey” (Winter 53). In short, police behavior was accountable to the same law governing citizens.

Yet despite its occasional forceful behavior in crowd control at demonstrations or public events, the police developed a laissez-faire attitude in its systematic way of controlling daily behavior in the streets. This proved the most significant characteristic of the police. In addition, Mayne refused to adopt a popular middle-class conviction that poor Londoners were potential criminals held in check through fear alone, or that neighborhoods lacked any sense of knowable community (Winter 57). At Mayne’s insistence, most constables lived in the neighborhoods they patrolled and were expected to know people by name. They consistently proved that London streets could be orderly (but yet congested) “without diminishing the scope of individual liberty” (Winter 59), the liberty of the citizen subject would not be diminished by police behavior.

Besides crowd control at public events, the police also had the authority to stop any “riotous” behavior which threatened the safety of the public upon the roads. For example, the police had the authority to detain and bring before a Justice of the Peace any teamster guilty of driving any vehicle in a “reckless” manner. Such behavior would include attempting to drive more than one vehicle (Glen 434) or from passing another vehicle at a high enough speed “so as to endanger the safety or life of passengers or passersby” (Glen 435). In another example, common, wandering prostitutes were expected not to behave “in a riotous or indecent manner” (Glen 430). Yet the adjectives that constituted the laws of the road – “riotous” and “reckless” – are subject to very subjective interpretation. The latitude of interpretation in this last phrase may well have “protected” more expensive, well-dressed prostitutes strolling the more fashionable streets. What might be disorderly

to one group of people could be the model of legitimate order to another. What might be considered reckless to one might be considered constrained and controlled by another. And just how fast need someone move to not be considered an obstruction?

Such ambiguity within the legal language of the road isn't helped by the absence of any other articulated and enforceable rules or signs of the road. For example in London, as hard as this is to imagine for us today, there were no street signs, traffic lights, or any traffic signs at all. Indeed, besides the injunctions about moving along but not in a reckless or riotous manner, no traffic regulations whatsoever existed at all. For example, while traditionally travelers used the left hand side of the road, this tradition was not law. Legally, anyone could travel anywhere in the street or road one chose. Hence the road could be a difficult and dangerous place to be. Wagons and carts making deliveries to stores and shops often blocked the road on either side of the street. In order to prevent long delays and keep to their schedules, cab drivers, hackney drivers, and omnibus drivers drove down the middle of the road, stopping in the middle of the road to discharge and pick up passengers. Pedestrians needed to be both alert and move quickly.

In addition to no written regulations, no technological regulating devices existed, at least for long. However, this complete absence of regulatory devices was about to change with a novel experiment. Engineer and railway manager, John Peake Knight (1828-1886), had designed a semaphore signal to be placed at intersection of main and feeder rail lines – a signal that showed either a red or green light to indicate whether a traveling train was free to move through the intersection or for safety's sake needed to stop. In 1865, Knight proposed that “drivers and pedestrians could be disciplined into becoming more orderly street users by means of an impersonal, mechanical monitor” (Winter 34). The progressive Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Robert Mayne, warmed to Knight's idea and persuaded the Home Office to try the signal.

The signal consisted of a hollow cast-iron pole from which red arms could be extended or green lights shone. The light was powered by a gas line running up the center of the hollow pillar and the arms operated by a constable turning a lever at the base of the signal. The experimental signal was to be placed on an island in the middle of the intersection “where traffic coming off Westminster Bridge met the flow from Great George Street and where vehicles going east in front of Parliament met those going west on Whitehall” (Winter 35). To prepare and to educate the public to the advent and to the practice of the semaphore signal, Commissioner Mayne had leaflets posted all over London weeks before the signal became operational in December, 1868.

The signal was a great success. The “rat's nest” of congestion at this busy junction was immensely relieved, and “the public seems to have adjusted quickly and with little fuss” (Winter 36) to what Mayne had feared might be construed as an infringement upon the liberty of the subject. Knight quickly predicted that his signal would soon become a standard component of the street landscape with additional semaphores becoming installed at other major arteries throughout London.

However, the success was short lived. In January, 1869, a series of explosions from leaks in the gas line and consequent gas build-up injured several of the signal-operating constables, one seriously. The fledgling traffic signal project was halted, and quickly died. London remained without traffic signals until 1929 when electric ones were installed (Winter 36). Even this modest experiment, despite its apparent success in regulating traffic, failed to alleviate road congestion and bring long-term order to roads.

Coupled with the lack of any traffic signage, both the police's reluctance to overtly interfere in the "liberty of the subject" and Commissioner Mayne's reticence to allow his force to become a political tool sprang from the lack of any substantial legal foundation that codified enforceable laws at the police's disposal. The next section looks more closely at the legal definitions and descriptions of the road as embodied in Highway Acts.

Rules of the Road

In the same year as the establishment of the Metropolitan Police, 1829, Robert Wellbeloved (1803-1856) codified for Parliament a "Treatise on the Law Relating to Highways." If the newly formed police was to have any authority to enforce laws, the laws themselves regarding roads needed to be officially articulated. Although later acts like the Highway Acts of 1835, 1862, and 1864, clarified, embellished, and amended the 1829 act, Wellbeloved's treatise remained the legal foundation upon which all subsequent road regulations were built. In effect, after 1835, subsequent highway acts periodically came out merely as re-editions of the 1829 Highways Act which had ceased to be published, or they addressed very local and particular problems of legal clarity involving London's renovation and the responsibility for payment of such construction.

Mayhew claims that according to an 1818 Government Report on turnpike roads, there existed 19,725 miles of paved streets in England and Wales and 95,104 miles of other public highways – a total of 114, 829 miles of roads. The volume of traffic traveling these roads was tremendous. These roads served a three-fold purpose: the conveyance of passengers, letters, and goods. According to Mayhew, "the passengers, letters, and parcels were conveyed chiefly by the mail and stagecoaches, the goods by waggons and vans" (Mayhew 330 v.3). However, the next 20 years saw only 4500 more miles of roads added to the country's infrastructure. This rather negligible increase was due to the increased importance of railways (Mayhew 329).

By 1850, the number of streets and roads of London and its environs totaled 3686 miles in length servicing a population of 2,461,960 with a police force of 6,072 (Mayhew 177 v.2). A decade later in 1870, that number had more than doubled to 6708 miles, equal in distance to a straight line drawn from London west across the Atlantic and America to San Francisco (Smiles 100). In 1850, Londoners took pride in the fact that along its roads daily, "a vaster flood of traffic is poured for several hours than is found on any other streets of the world" (Smith 167). In one day, it was estimated that more than 67,500 pedestrians and close to 13,800 vehicles passed only one spot – Bow Church, Cheapside – in a single day. Near Aldgate, within an area of only one and a quarter square miles, no less than 400,000 people poured through the thoroughfares every twelve hours (Smith 167). In 1870, 60,000 people and 25,000 vehicles crossed London Bridge daily while Westminster Bridge daily carried 45,000 pedestrians and 13,000 vehicles in the busiest seasons of the year (Smiles 103). The most crowded roads in the West End remained the corner of Hyde Park during the season, Bond Street afternoons, and the bottom of Park Lane where it intersects the Strand in the evening (Smiles 103). Unfortunately, the tremendous volume of traffic produced unprecedented congestion and stoppages. Crowded thoroughfares and congestion favored pickpockets – the most common kind of street criminal – who relied upon slow-moving people and crowds to ply their trade (Smith 184).

According to Mayhew, there existed three types of pavement in London: stone, macadam, and wood. While many towns and cities used limestone and river cobbles, being without nearby quarries, London imported granite from Scotland.

“The stone pavement is made by the placing of the granite stones, hewn and shaped for the purpose, side by side, with a foundation of concrete. The concrete now used [1850] for the London street- pavement is Thames ballast, composed of shingles, or small stones, and mixed with lime” (Mayhew 203 v.2). Macadamization was introduced into London about 1825, and while it proved much less labor intensive and inexpensive than granite pavements, the disadvantage to this crushed and compacted rock surface was the dust raised through use as well as an increased need for repair of ruts. Last, wood pavement consisted of wood blocks fitted together grain-side up and had the advantage of quiet egress opposed to the disadvantage of slipperiness (Mayhew 203 v.2). The installation of “noiseless pavement” in “appropriate places” – wooden blocks instead of the normal granite over a concrete foundation – helped eliminate “noise pollution.” While only five miles of wood pavements existed in London by 1850, macadam roads outnumbered granite ones four to one (Mayhew 204 v.2).

The 1829 Highways Act addresses two kinds of law pertaining to streets and roads: common law and statute law. Common law refers to rules from custom, that is, rules from traditional or long-established public usage. Statute law refers to acts of Parliament (Wellbeloved 41), that is, explicitly legislated. By far, the most important basis for road rules remained common law. Statute law for the most part concerned itself with Turnpike Trusts established by Parliament after costly and lengthy petitions by private parish companies or trusts.

Traditionally, travelers had a right of way to use any highway, day or night, in any season, for any lawful reason. Lawful movement remained a right and not a privilege. Throughout the Victorian era, the well-established phrase – the liberty of the subject – dominated the concept of common law regarding road use. Simply put, the public had acquired the right to use any thoroughfare for passage because of the public’s “uninterrupted possession” (40) of such a right of passage.

The 1829 Highways Act defined what could be considered a thoroughfare to which the public possessed a legal right of way. The act defined a highway as: “Any thoroughfare which is open to all the King’s subjects. No distinction between carriage road, horse road, or mere footpath” (1). Some property owners had seen the Highways Act as the means to control access to their property and prevent trespassing. Wellbeloved wanted no doubt that the law did not infringe upon the long-established right of the public to use traditional paths. He denied accusations that footpaths injured property. He wrote that every right of way remains a public easement, and although this easement “requires” the consent of the property owner who actually owns the soil over which a footpath runs, the consent was “presumed where the public have had a prescriptive possession (viii). In other words, consent of the property owner for public right of way is presumed because of the long-standing traditional use by the public.

Such established use transforms “private” property into public easement. While the legal width of a mere footpath varied from 16 to 24 inches, and a traveler was guilty of trespass if found straying from said circumscribed borders, the right of a traveler to use the path would not be abridged. While some property owners thought to circumvent the jurisdiction of traditional right of way public easements by arguing that the Highway Act actually related to highways capable of two-way vehicular traffic, Wellbeloved’s treatise effectively invalidated this argument before it gathered any precedence. The act read that “no distinction can be found between footpaths and carriage roads: the right of the public is of exactly the same quality over one as over the other” (viii). Furthermore, according to Wellbeloved, “any way which is common to all of the King’s people, to be traversed by them, is a highway”

(6). The twin concepts of the liberty of the subject along with the notion that the benefit to the public good outweighs the interests of the private landowner would dominate road legalities throughout the Victorian era.

We find a legal battle about road rights between Sir Leicester Dedlock and his neighbor, Lawrence Boythorn in *Bleak House*. Their dispute remains a comic and smaller simulation of the greater Chancery suit of Jarndyce and Jarndyce about which so much of *Bleak House* revolves. Both men claim as their own property a stretch of "green pathway" (111) and accuse the other of trespass. Boythorn remains a thorn in Dedlock's side through his relentless adolescent stubbornness. While neither man refuses to acknowledge the other's "right of way" to use the pathway for passage, neither wants the other to erect any structures along the road – like a gate – that implies ownership of the property through which and upon which the thoroughfare traverses. Their long-standing and apparently irresolvable quarrel in a way gives satisfaction to both of them. By the end of the novel, the disputed thoroughfare has become a reason for their getting out of their respective homes to view the latest spatial insult by their "enemy." Boythorn's last challenge was to "post tremendous placards" (812) along the disputed bridle-road denouncing Leicester. Having lost so much including their health, the dispute exists to humor the two implacable neighbors.

Yet actual road disputes proved less humorous as disputatious parties demanded fuller definition by the law. In 1865, because Wellbeloved's 1829 treatise had long been out of print, William Cunningham Glen published an annotated version of the 1835 Highways Act. Glen was very clear that Wellbeloved's 1829 treatise was still "recognized as a standard authority on the Law of Highways" (viii). His work more fully articulates and clarifies Wellbeloved's position. Glen reiterates and embellishes upon what structural entities are to be considered highways. He writes that a highway is "all roads, bridges, carriageways, cart ways, horse ways, bridleways, footpaths, causeways, churchways, and pavements" (2). In addition, Glen states in his preface quite unambiguously who has the right of passage along highways: "Every person, in every parish and hamlet, has an equal right to use the highways within it, at all times and seasons, for passing and repassing, on purposes of lawful business or pleasure; and the law entitles every person to the enjoyment of that right without let or hindrance" (vii).

Herein resides one of the duties of the police, like that of the constable who rousts Jo. In order to facilitate the movement of traffic and yet maintain the "liberty of the subject," Jo has a right to "pass or repass" any stretch of road as long as he doesn't stop and become an "obstruction." Unless a licensed stall owner, virtually any person who makes a living in the street – workers such as costermongers and musicians – has a legal right to pursue their trade as long as they kept moving at a sufficient pace.

By 1865, Glen had more fully articulated exactly what constitutes a legal obstruction of the road. Although numerous, these offenses of obstruction read reasonable and fair. Like many laws, the laws pertaining to the obstruction of the road describe in the negative the activities that should not be conducted on roads rather than attempting to detail rightful use other than passage. Legal obstructions include: digging up of gravel or stones for private use, mining, removing fences or signs, hunting, shooting guns within fifty feet of the center of the carriageway, pitching a tent, baiting bulls or fighting dogs, gambling or betting, dumping of garbage or junk, turning out livestock to pasture, storing of dangerously flammable materials, and standing sales by street vendors (414).

While these activities weren't criminal in and of themselves, they were banned from being conducted on the road by being defined as obstructions. Likewise, certain sexual behavior – like exposing oneself indecently – was criminalized as a road obstruction rather than as a sexual indiscretion. If one leaves out hunting and shooting parties, these obstructive laws clearly affect the lower classes significantly more than the upper ones. They seem mainly directed against those who through want or simply public entertainment look to the road as the site wherein certain “lower” desires can be satisfied.

Perhaps highway acts remained unable to consider this kind of inequitable class consequence of its road rules because they focused upon more basic considerations like the definitions of the terms “street” and “road” themselves. While the previous Highway Act of 1829 readily included any type of track or way used for any kind of travel to be considered a “highway,” the difference between road and street came not so readily. While the Highway Acts of 1862 and 1864 made the attempt at defining “main road,” the definition was less than completely serviceable. James Abraham Foot writes in the preface to his *Consolidated Abstracts of Highway Acts* that a main road will be considered any road which is “a medium of communication between great towns or a thoroughfare to a railway station.” Inhabitants of “smaller” towns chafed at the thought that their town wasn't considered great. Operators of the remaining turnpike coaches bridled at the thought that they were excluded because their vehicles carried traveling passengers rather than communications like newspapers, dispatches, or letters. How could they advertise and reach a large audience if they couldn't proclaim that they serviced “main roads”?

By late-Victorian times, the problem of ambiguous definition persists. Sydney Davey's 250- page treatise, *The Law Relating to Construction, Sewering, Paving and Improvement of Streets Under the Public Health Acts, 1875-1925* (including the private Street Works Act, 1892), spends most of its time attempting to articulate some final difference in definition between “street” and “road” – unsuccessfully. In addition, it spends a significant portion of time addressing who will pay for a multitude of street improvements, and the penalties and fines incurred for those who fail to comply.

Section 4 of the Public Health Act, 1875, reiterates the broad definition as articulated by the Highways Act of 1829. It reads that “the term ‘street’ includes any highway and any public bridge (not being a county bridge) and any road, lane, footway, square, court, alley or passage, whether a thoroughfare or not” (135). According to Davey, the term “street” used in its widest sense refers “not only to roads with buildings at the sides – that is, at its margins or edges or buildings bordering the pavement – but to highways of all sorts and private ways as well” (1). This definition appears at odds with one vein of popular parlance that had streets as urban ways while roads were rural ones. However, a later legal definition upheld the sense that “a street is not limited to a street in the popular sense, that is, a roadway with buildings at the sides” (136). Traditionally, even highways that stretched for long distances into the countryside no matter their urban terminus – for example, Ermine Street – never received the appellation of “road” anywhere along their length. Davey admits that “the word ‘street’ is not limited to its popular meaning” (57). In fact, Davey's definition of street seemed to indicate an interchangeability of terms that couldn't be untangled precluding making any definitive or productive distinction between streets and roads.

Yet legalists persisted in articulating definitions. An 1892 definition clarifies a private street. Interestingly, it hinges upon neither ownership nor use, but

responsibility for repair. It reads: "A 'street' in the private Street Works Act, 1892, means...a street as defined by the Public Health Act, 1875, not being a highway repairable by the inhabitants at large" (135). However, even this seemingly direct and workable definition runs into problems. Churches, chapels, and churchyards are exempt from the expenses of building, improving, or repairing streets and roads. They cannot be taxed for such purposes (Davey 89). These roads and paths exist on private – church – property although the public maintains the freedom to use them.

This caveat became exploited by property owners to get the public to pay for the maintenance of their private roads. They simply built a road and declared it public. The 1892 statute remains worth reading in its entirety. It reads:

A borough or urban district or rural district council may agree with any person for the making of roads within their district for the public use through the lands and at the expense of such person, and may agree that such roads shall become on completion highways maintainable and repairable by the inhabitants at large. The council may also, with the consent of two-thirds of their number, agree with such person to pay any portion of the expenses of making such roads. (53)

The potential for a landowner, through coercion or bribery, to persuade the local administrators to use public funds to pay for private roads over which the public had the common law right-of-passage anyway made sense to landowners but not to general rate payers.

Appealing to the assumption underlying turnpike tolls – those who use or benefit from the road should pay for it – rate payers shifted the burden of road repair to adjacent commercial interests or private owners whom they claimed most benefited from the road. The addendum read: "Under section 150 of the Public Health Act, 1875, an urban authority (now styled a borough or urban district council) may require a street, not repairable by the inhabitants at large, to be sewered, levelled, paved, etc. by the owners of the premises in the street" (55). In other words, if roads are not maintained to the minimum standard of the local borough authority, that authority may make improvements and repairs and bill "the owners or occupiers of the premises fronting, adjoining or abutting" (55) said street.

Shifting the focus of definition from use, Davey thought the distinction might be made by the manner in which a highway is changed through improvement. According to the "construction" definition, because a street tends to imply adjacent buildings, and as buildings are a sign of civilization, growth changes both the volume and the diversity or complexity of use of the highway. In other words, roads become streets when buildings spring up along their margins. Yet despite the construction or alteration of buildings on either side, could the newly refurbished way be entitled to an entirely new name rather than just the change in appellation from road to street (16-17)? No one knew. And if a road will have buildings erected on at least one side through planning, may that road be termed a street (58)? No one could agree. Could a street return to being a road when the buildings were gone? No one had the answer. After 250 pages, Davey concludes that the nomenclature actually doesn't matter for either legal reasons or for ordinary, every day use.

While definitions of structure remain whimsical and unimportant, definitions of people remained an entirely serious matter. While important to the parties involved, disputes in definitions between "street" and "road" tended to have financial payment as the motivating force. Simply put, it amounted to who would foot the bill. But street sweepers like Jo and other "vagrants" remained a moral

matter of greater cultural consequence. In the next section, I turn to the middle-class ethos concerning a permanent underclass permanently associated with the road.

Vagrants and Vagrancy: Degradation, Contagion, and Reform.

The obstruction law concerning road use overlaps with vagrancy laws to define vagrancy as an obstruction of the road. A vagrant was any person “not having any visible means of subsistence, and not giving a good account of himself or herself” (Glen 430). From this legal definition sprang the constable’s authority in *Bleak House* to move along poor Jo. The history of vagrancy legislation shows an increasingly harsh judgment and treatment of poor wanderers from the early Middle Ages through the Tudor period. Successive statutes criminalized poverty and rootlessness. In other words, economic conditions that pushed the poor along the roads made them criminals. The law rewarded conformity to stability and having roots while it punished mobility.

By 1876, there were an estimated 36,000 tramps and vagrants in England and Wales (Brown 4). Their numbers rose and fell with upswings and downturns in the economy. “As in earlier times, changes in the vagrancy laws during the nineteenth century were typically presaged by an official announcement of alleged dangerous threat to public security from an increase in vagrancy” (Humphreys 107). Late-Victorian authority accepted that nationally there would be 40-30,000 traveling poor in good economic conditions and 80-70,000 during a down-turn of the economy (Humphreys 109).

Their presence was most visible along British roads, and therefore, the rules of road obstruction seemed the most suitable to control them. The 1824 Vagrancy Act categorized the mobile poor into three categories in ascending order: (1) the idle and disorderly; (2) rogues and vagabonds; and (3) incorrigible rogues, that is, hardened, vicious criminals (Brown 5 and Humphreys). The very definitions were pejorative, and legally gave no grace or redeemable status to the itinerant poor. Throughout the Victorian era, these categories were invoked to stigmatize and demoralize the traveling poor as well as to ensure their harsh treatment under vagrancy laws (Humphreys 82). If arrested for vagrancy, the offender generally received as punishment one month at hard labor. For the second offense, the vagrant received three months hard labor and jail until the next quarter session of court convened. The third offense meant twelve months of prison. At this point, forced transportation to one of the colonies loomed as a real threat for repeat offenders.

Not only resonating with the concept of liberty of the subject, vagrancy oddly parallels the argument about determinism and free will. The Victorians debated whether the plight of those homeless poor labeled vagrants was of their own doing and therefore a moral matter, or a contingent product of their social environment and therefore not governable by the will. In *No Fixed Abode: A History of Responses to the Roofless and the Rootless in Britain*, Robert Humphreys describes the debate as one between an environmental view and the individual one. He notes that contrary to the environmental view forces beyond the control of individual citizens like the economy, weather, class structure, and one’s own family, the individual view reinforces the notion that each individual was responsible for his or her own fate (3). However, Humphreys maintains, that an enlightened perspective wasn’t encouraged in the population’s consciousness. He says: “Although the possibility of economic factors contributing to the changing numbers tramping the roads had long been incontrovertible, the idea was still largely kept under wraps by the authorities” (93). In a distortion of the liberty of the subject, vagrants were given their

individuality, and their vagrancy was therefore a matter of their own moral responsibility.

Yet, determinism played a role too, a determinism that smacks of the racializing process of colonization. Victorians were encouraged to view poor wayfarers as having three determining characteristics. They were of "repulsive nature, of 'evil disposition,' and were destitute" (93). Ironically and incredibly, many critics of Victorian charity believed that the traveling poor in reality possessed covert means of support that rendered them undeserving of charity and help. However, the facts were that, like Jo, the "majority of wayfarers were devoid of support and frequently of ailing health" (93). Middle-class morality tended to be blind to such ailments, or if acknowledged, to blame the victim for choosing a poverty that a free will and moral character could prevent.

This "belief in the paramount importance of individual ethics," Humphreys says, "led the nineteenth-century middle classes to conclude that it was unfair, undesirable, and nationally dangerous to allow a lazy residuum to loiter aimlessly in dark corners" (3-4). According to Humphreys, the nineteenth century believed that "the worth of the nation was, in the long run, the accumulated qualities of the people composing it" (3). Since Britain's greatness was seen to have been built on the strength of character of its citizens, Britain's industrial and economic success was the direct result of the energetic application of the entrepreneurial spirit embedded within the character of its citizens. This national character remained embodied by solid middle-class virtues. "Personal success incurred diligence, discipline, deference, morality, sobriety, and self-reliance...Poverty resulted from improvidence, insobriety, and character deficiency" (3). Middle-class values stated that: "Individual shortcomings could always be overcome by personal discipline, hard work, and a positive attitude towards self-improvement" (3). The individual remained responsible for conformity with these social conventions that were deemed essential in the building of an acceptable morality. Hence, middle-class values and morality were a sign of civic virtue and patriotism

On the other hand, the rootlessness, poverty, and idleness associated with vagrants were associated with immorality and inappropriate citizenship. Valorizing the virtues of "thrift, diligence, and respectability" (91), Victorians viewed even those without a humble cottage roof over their heads as generally depraved, disorderly, idle, and unstable (91). Popular Victorian sentiment was convinced "that those without a settled way of life should be viewed with caution and anxiety" (91). Unsettled equaled uncontrolled. Uncontrolled equaled disorderly. And disorderly meant riotous - a condition under police jurisdiction - and riotous behavior was as undesirable as it was criminal.

Jo clearly falls into the first category of vagrant: idle and disorderly. Although Jo maintains a visible means of subsistence - his street-sweeping broom - his activity is defined as begging because he holds out his hand for payment from passersby or solicits money for his services from shop owners who front the streets he sweeps. By definition, beggars are obstructions to order because they're stationary. By extension - despite his broom - Jo is without visible means of support because he's a beggar, and beggars are defined through Poor Law definition as nonproductive idlers. In addition, although he routinely sleeps in a derelict and abandoned house in Tom-all-Along's rather than "sleeping rough," that is, out in the open, Jo's fixed "home" is considered inappropriate stability.

But perhaps most tellingly, Jo is unable "to give a good account of himself." His lack of education and his stammering speech (fear and sickness render him inchoate) make his inarticulation suspect. Language facility is an emblem of

legitimacy while limited linguistic capacity is considered criminal. As voiceless, Jo is dominated by the voiced. In addition, as an orphan, Jo has no memory of his parents. He has lost not only an important component to his identity but part of his history. Given that the colonizer operates by erasing the history of the colonized, Jo's lack of a permanent home and substantial means of support, his lack of voice, history, and parents, combine to forge an identity illegitimate to middle-class hegemony. His identity, in fact, is as the colonized. As Jo-all-Alone, he remains one of the most vulnerable persons to inhabit the road, a member of London's poorest street workers and permanent underclass.

Dickens maintains a curiously ambivalent attitude towards Jo. On the one hand, Dickens paints a very sympathetic portrait of the waif based not only on his sense of social justice but also on his own precarious childhood experiences in which he needed to work at a young age and often found himself starving. Dickens's Jo is bathed in pathos and isn't portrayed as either vicious or criminal but merely disadvantaged and unfortunate. Dickens makes Jo, a minor character, pivotal in the plot. Lady Dedlock seeks him for information concerning her former lover, Captain Hawdon (Nemo) based upon Jo's past association and experience with the fallen man. And Dickens constructs a lengthy death scene for Jo like that of Little Nell's in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, a scene which cathartically engages the reader in sentiment and that emphasizes Jo's essential goodness and innocence through pathos.

Yet Dickens also dehumanizes Jo. Believing that "the sooner he comes out of the street, the better," (595) Esther and Allan take in Jo. Because of their charitable impulses, they feed the starving boy who ravenously gulps down coffee, bread, and butter as he looks "anxiously about him in all directions...like a scared animal" (591). Besides describing Jo in terms of animality, Dickens compares Jo, in a manner similar to Booth, with the needy Africans to whom Mrs. Jellyby would minister. But the narrator doesn't quite equate them but admits that Jo "is not a genuinely foreign-grown savage; he is the ordinary home-made article" (595). It's a "left-handed" compliment; Jo is still a savage, something much less than civilized. As "dirty, ugly, disagreeable to all the senses" (595) Jo remains – that is, remains to the middle-class senses of the narrator and the audience – merely "a common creature of the streets" (595). The term "common" carries a double meaning: pervasive and lowly. While Jo is part of a large disadvantaged class, his condition isn't unique. To prick the conscience of a middle-class audience, the narrator reminds the reader that there are people like Jo "dying thus around us every day" (604). And the term "creature" bespeaks a Victorian commonplace, like "she is such a delicate creature" rather than solely referencing Jo's bestiality.

Dickens's narrator then launches into a biting diatribe filled with savage irony. Continuing the comparison between Jo and the foreign native, the narrator admits that the grime, filth, parasites, sores, and rags are all "homely" products rather than foreign-made. Dickens's narrator foregrounds environmental determinism to explain Jo's condition. Jo is a product grown from "English soil and climate" (595) as well as made by the "native ignorance" of the British at home. The narrator admits that people like Esther and Allan, George, Squod, and Miss Flite (that is, middle-class people) shrink from people like Jo and distance themselves from him because they cannot place him in their world. "He is not of the same order of things, not of the same place in creation" (596). Jo's incomprehensibility to the characters and the audience is spatialized. Jo cannot be positioned by middle-class referents to anything beneficial or virtuous. Jo remains, in fact, "of no order and no place; neither of the beasts, nor of humanity" (596). But if Jo is neither animal nor human, what is he? His ambiguous status within the conceptual framework of the

middle class marginalizes Jo and places him in some indefinable in-between place. Jo simply occupies the shadows of culture and borders of society, the shadows and borders of the road.

Commenting upon the poor's degraded living conditions, Dickens says: "I am so surrounded by material filth that my Soul cannot rise to the contemplation of an immaterial existence" (Fielding *The Speeches of Charles Dickens* 129). While Dickens is sympathetic to the plight of the poor, we see that the influence of Henry Mayhew's godless description of the unsettled poor complicates his response. Dickens goes on to doubt the positive effects of teaching children given that the misery of their lives contrasts sharply with the ideals and content of education. He reasons that the "noxious, constant, ever-renewed lesson" (Fielding 129) of that child's whole existence can't be overcome or even mitigated by education. Dickens dooms Jo.

If enough distance is placed between Jo and the middle class, perhaps he will go away, disappear, and be forgotten. Jo is unable to be classified satisfactorily by a Victorian culture obsessed with cataloguing. His presence, instead, reminds Victorians of not only their inability to adequately and fairly deal with people like Jo, but of their own precarious position and proximity to Jo's condition. Jo is dangerous to middle-class complacency and security because he is so unsettling a reminder of how far the middle class could fall themselves. The middle class will do anything to prevent themselves from being like Jo and living on the street.

But besides being a threatening sign of middle-class precariousness, blindness, and selfishness as well as a sign of depravity and criminality, Jo exists as a real physical threat. Earlier in the novel, Jo contracts smallpox, and in caring for him, Charley become infected. In caring for her, Esther becomes infected and is temporarily blinded. Esther survives but with a scarred face. The spread of disease was directly linked to infected street people associated with working and living primarily in the road and with the unsanitary conditions of the road. The fact of as well as the potential threat to the physical health of the social body instigated much needed sanitary reform in London. And sanitary reform meant road improvement.

Ironically, it took disease to change minds before any real street improvement began. The cholera epidemic of 1832 killed over 5000 Londoners (Sheppard 23). In 1837, a typhus epidemic hit. Advancing from the orient (or so it was thought), successive cholera epidemics in 1848 and 1854 rocked and shocked the city. Epidemics not only resonated with the time in which Dickens wrote *Bleak House* but also coincided with the text's serial publication. Since disease had been positively and directly linked to water – sanitation, sewage, drainage, supply – some overall plan to combat these fatal epidemics was advocated by the fledgling Board of Health, spearheaded by a friend and disciple of Jeremy Bentham, Edwin Chadwick. Funded by the London City Council, Chadwick administered the closing of cesspools, the removal of dung and excrement, and facilitated the rudimentary beginnings of sewage control and surface water drainage in the most densely crowded and hence most virulent areas.

Dickens himself addressed letters to the Metropolitan Commissioners of Sewers (Story *The Letters of Charles Dickens* v.5) supporting a plan to change London's decrepit brick sewers with a modern system of pipes. In his journal *Household Words*, Dickens included a section titled "Social, Sanitary, and Municipal Progress" which provided both his editorial endorsement and an editorial outlet for the fledgling Metropolitan Board of Sewers to communicate its progressive plans for sanitation reform in the forms of water supply and sanitary waste disposal (Storey). Further throwing his support for the Board-instigated Public Health Acts, Dickens

himself addressed the Metropolitan Sanitary Association on a number of occasions in 1850 and was the keynote speaker at the first anniversary banquet of the association May 10, 1851. Congratulating the Board on its installation of centralized water-works that helped to eradicate cholera-producing cesspools, Dickens earned the cheers and toasts of his audience.

Because of the drainage and sanitary improvements in the decade following outbreaks of cholera and typhus, road construction, improvement, and repair seems to have fallen under the authority and the jurisdiction in 1875 of the Public Health Department. The association between roads and health parallels the Victorian metaphorical use of streets and roads as circulatory channels responsible for moving vital fluids of the social body. When these channels become congested or blocked, ill health and disease result. The idea of urban streets as blood vessels within the general circulatory system or the pulmonary system gave rise to a rhetoric of the organic body – with attendant qualities of health and disease – when referring to the state and function of roads. Most Victorian reformers considered that the broadening and straightening of urban thoroughfares would increase ventilation and therefore the health of residents.

At a chance meeting between Dr. Allan Woodcourt and Jo, the former expresses his desire for Jo to accompany him so that the two of them may leave the fetid neighborhood and street of Tom-all-Alone's and emerge "into the broad rays of sunlight and the purer air" (590). The street was considered a morally, spiritually, and physically compromised site by most Victorian street reformers, few of them realizing, like William Morris, that the diverse use of the street contributed to the "zest of city life" rather than exposure to stimulation and bad influences jeopardizing the health of urban residents.

In order to counter the tendencies of vagrancy against the moral and national health of the country, the Charity Organization Society (COS) adapted a plan in 1869 developed by Dr. Thomas Hawksley – a system of charity police (Humphreys 4). This system would replace gratuitous charity with mandatory workhouse incarceration in which deterrent discipline would prove to morally benefit inmates (4). In other words, the traveling poor would be punished with incarceration, and an incarceration that remained anything but pleasant in order to make them fear traveling, being poor, and ending up in the workhouse.

The 1824 act as well as the 1834 Amendment enforced spartan accommodation in workhouses and casual wards in order to create so unpleasant an environment as to force users to change their chronic welfare and indigent ways. Charity was designed to be harsh in order to make chronic relief inhospitable. Some workhouses were so bad that inhabitants committed crimes in order to be sent to prison, a step up in material conditions for them (Humphreys 95). Casual ward inhabitants were consistently subjected to search – and owing to the 'filthy state,' their clothes were torn apart and vagrants were forcibly bathed while their clothing was disinfected. Sleeping quarters were clinically clean but simple to the point of being harsh (Humphreys 95).

A great need arose in 1848 as many Irish emigrated after successive disastrous potato harvests and found themselves roofless and rootless in Britain (Humphreys 88-89). A real fear of civil unrest traveling upon the heels of an army of traveling poor made control – either containment, disbursement, or elimination – paramount to the stability of middle-class order. Thus not only criminality but revolution spurred on the enforcement of vagrancy laws. The 1868 Poor Laws Board suggested that vagrants be registered, searched and bathed, forced to perform daily labor of at least four hours, and made to consume a uniform diet (Humphreys 95). This

regimen suggests a police or totalitarian state in which a mobile population need be controlled, contained, and disciplined while under surveillance. Most Victorians (though not the vagrant poor themselves) didn't see the drop in the users of casual wards as due to the harsh measures but rather to their beneficial effects.

Such drastic measures failed to eliminate the problem of workless workers traveling the roads. In 1881, W.M. Wilkinson said that "tramps were 'perpetuating and increasing the breed and begetting a race which has the very genius of not working within its bones and sinews'" (4). He further maintained that "if the natural history of this 'nomadic, lowest, seething-class could be written, we should probably find it is the residuum or dregs of our social system for many centuries" (4). Spencer's hypothesis of 'the survival of the fittest' seemed "confirmed by the daily indications that the rich did rather well out of life whereas nature 'understandably' rejected the indigent poor" (92). The racializing of the itinerant poor remains consistent with colonization's tendency to render an exploitable, troublesome class inferior.

Such social Darwinism saw that if workhouse moral discipline and forced work programs didn't improve the character and behavior of these "dregs," then the only humane alternative was forced resettlement in the colonies, that is, transport abroad. This process, albeit its mandatory system, remains what Booth of the Salvation Army recommends. Although his plan sought to train the previously "worthless" residuum in some productive trade in the city and farm colonies within England before their emigration abroad, Booth's plan like Hawksley's saw the solution as getting rid of the troublesome and problematic, undesirable and, it seems, no longer worthy of domestic residence, segments of the population who lived on the road.

Rootless people were told to leave the parish or be arrested as criminals. As diseased bodily and morally, the middle class avoided contact with the vagrant poor at all costs. Fear of contamination of individual bodies as well as the social body was paramount. Like the constable telling Jo to move on, the parish authority simply sought to keep them moving and out of sight and finally out of one's own jurisdiction. Some parish officials employed "beggar pokers" who went "armed with a painted pole about five feet long" (92) warning "beggars to move on, and if it were necessary, escorted them like a guard of honor to the side of town" (92). The "deserving poor" had homes, so ran the generally accepted definition, while the undeserving poor were characterized by their own mobility, and hence degraded, criminalized, and harassed.

However, not all parishes responded harshly. For example, the parishes of Dorset construed a more humane scheme. The Dorset System was developed to provide "a regional system whereby travelers with honest intentions might be encouraged to take a pre-determined route between casual wards" (Brown 109). Judging them to be honest workers traveling the road looking for work [here one thinks of Gabriel Oak in Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd* as an example of an honest workman down on his luck], the Dorset System printed tickets that could be exchanged at specified places for a pound of bread and occasionally a piece of cheese. Later in the day, the same ticket might guarantee a bed for the night to genuine travelers.

But enlightened and relatively inexpensive care for the traveling poor is notable for its exception rather than the general rule. While their moral degeneracy and human worth could be debated, their association with filthy streets couldn't be argued away. The next section considers the Victorian effort to clean its roads, roads

universally agreed to be tremendously dirty, and hence in need of policing and ordering.

Of Mac and Mud: Cleaning the Road and Street-Orderlyism.

As conduits of consumption and funnels for production, roads both generate and receive the residual waste associated with a commodity culture. During young Queen Victoria's coronation, a visitor to London streets would have been appalled by the filth, the stench, and the congestion. With horses pulling the omnibuses and trams, and coal-burning locomotives pulling the aboveground and underground trains, the streets were dismally dirty and foul. In 1849, Henry Mayhew reported in *London Labour and the London Poor* that visitors described London streets as smelling like a stable-yard due to the enormous amount of manure (217). While three and a half million tons of coal were consumed every year in London adding to the dust and dirt deposited on the streets (225), Mayhew notes that a Report of the National Philanthropic Association ascertains that "four-fifths of the street-dirt consists of horse and cattle-droppings" (217). Although the data are imperfect, estimates ranged from 20,000-24,000 horses each daily dropping close to 30 pounds of dung on the thoroughfares of London. With typical Victorian obsession with statistics that comprehensively quantify, Mayhew reports that the total weight of animal droppings per year amounted to a stunning 52,000 tons (219) – close to 100 tons a day! Vestryman and head of the Street Orderly Brigades, Charles Cochrane, conservatively estimates that over 24,000 tons of manure is deposited annually on London roads. The Board of Health doesn't hesitate to put the total amount of manure deposited annually on London streets at a staggering 200,000 tons (Mayhew 219 v. 2). Perhaps the Board was including the droppings of not only the 224,000 cattle and the 1,617,300 sheep, calves, and pigs driven to the Smithfield market but also the deposits of the countless tens of thousands roaming dogs and cats.

John McAdam's new system for constructing road surfaces added another element to street refuse. In addition to animal waste, both macadam and granite pavements deteriorated through use. Iron shod horses and iron-rimmed wheels ground the surface down and created granular particulate that needed to be swept or scraped to keep the roads clean. Through use, the road itself is in a state of degradation and decomposition and becomes the repository for waste. Mixed in with pulverized, dry manure or the fresher variety as well as coal dust was vegetable matter and assorted human litter. The chemical nature of animal urine and manure significantly contributed to the dissolution of pavement integrity.

Street workers called scavengers evolved a special terminology to describe the road residuum, a language adopted by the better classes. Any matter that could be swept from the road pavement was called mud while material that needed to be both scraped and swept was termed mac, short for macadam (Mayhew 220-21 v. 2). In a culture where everything is catalogued, often according to quality, street refuse remained no exception. Street-cleaning contractors complained that mac was inferior in "quality" to the purer manure or mud. Because it was comprised of a mix of street matter, mac fetched lower prices.

While at the very beginning of *Bleak House*, Dickens's lyricism about Chancery fog is well-known, embedded within this famous description and actually leading into it remains the reference to mud in the streets: "As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth" (1). Mud remains as ubiquitous as fog. Dogs are sunk in the mire and horses are "splashed to their very blinkers" (1). It's no accident that Dickens references these two animals since they remain the primary sources of mud, a euphemism for animal dung. Like

the fog, street mud is everywhere, a daily fact of life for all Londoners regardless of class. Pedestrians slip and slide through the filth as new deposits are daily added "to the crust upon crust of mud...accumulating at compound interest" (1). Dickens choice of metaphor remains apt. Not only does mud build-up at a daily, exponential rate if not picked up, but the picking up of street refuse is big business.

While vestries procured the service of a few contractors that owned mechanical street-sweeping machines, most street cleaning was accomplished cheaply and regularly by a small army of the poor equipped with brooms, shovels, and barrows. Typically, the street sweepers were young boys like Jo. Many were Irish orphaned children, and often were girls. A prime location for such work remained intersections of major thoroughfares that saw heavy traffic and thereby offered a good opportunity since the sweeping needed to be constant to rid the street of animal manure. If the street sweeper operated at an intersection of streets, he or she was referred to as a crossing-sweeper.

In order to deal adequately with this street waste on a systematic basis, the founder and president of the National Philanthropic Association, Charles Cochrane, formed in conjunction with vestry boards the Street Orderly Brigades (see Mayhew *London Labour and the London Poor* 285 Vol.2). Recognized as self-supporting laborers, the thus employed crossing-sweepers were paid minimum wage through both charitable donations received by the National Philanthropic Association and the tax rates collected by individual parishes. This system of Street-Orderlyism was seen by Cochrane as improving not only the health of city streets but also the employment opportunities for the working poor and, as industrious workers, thereby their moral health (Mayhew 289 v.2).

This 1842 system proved to be an ongoing project designed with a two-fold object: to provide employment to pauper labor and to keep the city streets clean. As a London vestryman as well as philanthropist and reformer, Cochrane "became inspired with the possibility that filth could be turned into an instrument for social regeneration" (Winter 120). First recognizing that dirt was an impediment to movement, and then developing that concern with dirt as a cause of contagion, Cochrane progressed with the concept that dirt could be part of the social reformer's welfare agenda. Cochrane first became interested with projects concerning the road when in 1841 he proposed to London's vestrymen to pave the entire length of Oxford Street with wooden blocks. He claimed that this type of pavement was easier to clean than macadam or granite surfaces, muffled traffic noise, and provided excellent traction for horses when dry. Despite these advantages, wooden block pavements became extremely slippery after even a light rain that turned animal dung into a greasy film (Winter 121). But both the initial expense of replacing the pavement along the entire length of Oxford Street as well as the expense of keeping the street clean due to frequent inclement weather simply proved too costly for parish officials. The majority of vestry officials voted against the proposal (Winter 122).

Instead of abandoning his plan, Cochrane, instead, lobbied for an expanded proposal to pave all the city's streets with wooden blocks and argued enthusiastically for the practicality of using parish expenditures on such a scheme. He gave a series of speeches that convinced enough vestrymen to pave a section of Oxford Street on an experimental basis (Winter 122). To counter the drawback that in wet weather dung made wooden block pavements slippery, part of Cochrane's expanded plan included a group of street sweepers placed at intervals along the busiest streets. He would provide them with "scoops and short-handled brooms or brushes" (Winter 122) in order to sweep up dung and urine before it had a chance to

seep into the pavement and either grease or dissolve the surface. He said that these sweepers would be trained to “dart out and remove animal excrement almost as soon as it plopped onto the carriageway” (Winter 122). He would recruit his sweepers from “boys and single, able-bodied men on the Poor Law lists and form them into Street Orderly Brigades” (Winter 122). These street-sweeping brigades were to be organized around a military model with one foreman (sergeant) overseeing about twenty men. Militarization, in this case, of a domestic organization, remains one of Brantlinger’s characteristic elements of imperialism. Not only does the street-cleaning brigade order the streets, but the militarization of the Brigade ordered its members as well.

Modeling the Street Orderly Brigade upon the relatively newly-formed but nonetheless proven Metropolitan Police, Cochrane believed uniforms gave a sense of pride in the wearer and instilled both a sense of order in public space and accountability of brigade members. Increasing the self-esteem of the working poor as well as paying them a decent wage for their regular, full-time employment weren’t the only advantages dreamed of by Cochrane. Working a regular beat like a constable, the street orderly would become a sort of assistant constable. As familiar to neighborhood residents as the constable, the sweeper would be able to keep an eye on passersby and street activity, and pass along any information concerning suspicious characters to the local constable (Winter 124). Thus in addition to their sweeping duties, the Street Orderly Brigade would be involved in surveillance and perhaps become informants.

Not only would the sweepers wear uniforms, receive regular wages, and live in barracks, they would receive moral and spiritual guidance (Winter 122). Since the sweepers lived in barracks, they could easily attend regular classes given for their benefit on Bible instruction. Cochrane envisioned that this spiritual guidance coupled with a new-found self respect produced from gainful employment would elevate the working poor from the degradation they currently suffered. After a year or so in the Brigade, according to Cochrane, veteran members would move onto better employment. Thus the Street Orderly system was a stepping stone to salvation for the destitute much like Booth’s colony system, intended to turn the human detritus of Victorian society into productive and responsible working citizens. Cochrane reports that only a few of his sweepers return to a life of work in the streets. Most moved onto more advantageous employment (Mayhew 297 v. 2).

In addition, the swept-up dung, Cochrane claimed, could be sold to farmers as fertilizer, and the sale not only would pay the expenses of the brigade but would also turn a profit to the City Corporation. Because the excrement was gathered “fresh,” it would fetch a higher price because it was unadulterated with miscellaneous road grit. Cochrane also claimed that his cleaning system would increase the value of shops that now stood along the filthiest sections of roads. Property owners, he claimed, could command twice the rent for shops once they were located on clean premises while shops could expect more sales since respectable customers could patronize them even in foul weather unimpeded by filth (Winter 122). In short, Cochrane promised to turn waste into wealth. The image of new life rising from decomposition was an organic image that coincided with the circulatory metaphor as applied to streets, an image of reclamation that proved very compelling to Victorian sensibilities.

In 1842, Cochrane rented a barracks building on Great Windmill Street and recruited and equipped close to a hundred orderlies out of his own pocket. He offered their services to keep certain selected streets “perpetually clean” to any city administrative or commercial group willing to help defray some of the expense. A

group of shopkeepers along Regent and Oxford streets were the first to respond. Fifty orderlies were immediately put to work in the winter of 1843-4. In 1848, Cochrane's address to a public meeting of the Literary and Scientific Institution notes that the failure of potato crops in Ireland in 1846 and 1847 would flood London with thousands of destitute Irish in 1848. Cochrane argues that 10,000 men could be employed in London alone through Street-Orderlyism. While Cochrane argues that the economic and humane benefits would be significant, the political consequences are tempting. No one wanted thousands of desperately poor and hungry people influenced by the growing Chartist movement roaming the streets to become a mob clamoring for worker's rights. Employing the unemployed thousands could very well prevent civil insurrection and the kind of class war that most property owners desperately desired to avoid. Cochrane, in effect, offers Street Orderlyism as the means to politically control or order London's streets. After his fervid speech, the Institute resolved in favor of Cochrane's suggestion of "Employment of the Poor," particularly through street cleaning.

Over the next nine years, the Brigades expanded, working in even the filthiest streets of St. Giles and St. Pancras. In 1851, Mayhew reports that 546 men and boys passed through the Street Orderly system. Their current numbers ranged from 80 to 90 with an average employment rate of 60. Mayhew notes that almost 1900 dependent wives and children benefited too (294 v. 2). Every orderly was assigned a particular series of courts or yardage of public way (295 v. 2). During the summer, almost 30 applicants a day applied to enter service.

Cochrane's "excremental vision" (Winter 123) earned the support of the press as well as received enthusiastic from such other liberal reformers as Edwin Chadwick, Henry Mayhew, and Charles Booth who praised Cochrane for reclaiming the destitute rather than merely subsidizing them. Like them, Cochrane was a "miasmatist" rather than a "contagionist" who believed that disease originated from putrefying matter rather than from ingested drinking water infected with excrement or spread by physical contact (Winter 125). The 1851 report by the City Surveyor of Sewers, William Haywood, published in Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*, lauded Cochrane's impressive results reporting disappointment only that the system wasn't pervasive enough to cover the entire city. According to Haywood, streets greatly benefited from continuous and near instant cleaning of droppings compared to mere intermittent sweeping. Streets looked clean and smelled clean rather than resembling a stable. Haywood rates the importance of Cochrane's Street Orderly System to community health and safety behind only proper systems of sewage and drainage as well as proper road surfaces (Mayhew 305 v. 2).

However, not every health official concurred with Haywood's and Cochrane's optimistic assessment of the Brigade's results. London's 1851 Board of Health claimed that Cochrane and his supporters exaggerated the benefits of his system. The Board of Health denied their assertions that "the unwholesome of the metropolitan thoroughfares" (Mayhew 305 v. 2) persisted in the City of London. In addition, a handful of vestry committees resented Cochrane's sweepers for infringing upon private contracts that were a form of vestry patronage (Winter 125). In Westminster, one contractor refused to pick up the piles collected by Cochrane's orderlies claiming that he wasn't paid enough to cart away such an excessive load. When he demanded more money, Cochrane loudly complained of corruption, and the parish cancelled the experiment. Another Westminster parish replied that people on the filthiest streets preferred to live in dirt (Winter 125). Cochrane couldn't convince them that poor people didn't want to wallow in filth. Cochrane's

enthusiasm was perceived by many to be abrasive, and his tactics of “end runs” around recalcitrant officials to be inappropriate procedure.

Ironically, street-cleaning was termed “scavenging” and street-cleaners constituted part of the “scavenging” class, a class described by Mayhew at the very beginning of his encyclopedic work as a destabilizing and destabilized group of nomads. Cochrane’s street-orderly system competed with the class of irregular cleaners and scavengers like Jo who claimed territorial rights to certain streets. Their precarious existence hung by the narrowest of margins, relying upon what little they could scavenge, then either trade or sell. Street-Orderlyism divides the nomad class against itself, pitting members of its subgroups against each other. In this sense, Street-Orderlyism disrupts the sustenance of the lowest portion of London’s permanent underclass, ironically disrupting the order of their lives while stabilizing the order of middle-class life. In other words, by directly competing with the class of irregular sweepers, the Street Orderly system orders their disorder by taking their work.

Furthermore, if shop owners and institutions merely waited for Cochrane’s street-orderlies to arrive, the streets in front of their premises would be cleaned through someone else’s charity or paid taxes. So rather than paying irregular cleaners “out of pocket”, the middle-class usually opted to wait for the Street-Orderly System to proceed on its ordered rounds. Consequently, “illegitimate” cleaners often reduced their wage rates to compete with Street-Orderlies and existed far below even Victorian standards for a living wage. Further disenfranchised, the plight of these scavengers seemed to resemble the residue that they swept up, they themselves becoming the detritus produced by Victorian ‘business as usual,’ waste discarded and ignored by middle-class sensibility.

In addition to human competition in the form of organized reform like Cochrane, sweepers like Jo faced competition from street-sweeping machines. In 1842, while Cochrane was forming the Street-Orderly Brigade, Joseph Whitworth conducted successful trials in Manchester with a horse-drawn, mechanical street sweeper. Whitworth argued that four of his machines could do the work of 70 or 80 human hand sweepers at a considerable savings in operational cost (Winter 123). He echoed the popular sentiment: “Machinery itself is progressive” (Winter 123). In order to sell his machines to city officials and to counter the alleged redemptive value to pauper labor of Street-Orderlyism, Whitworth argued that cleaning the gutter was humiliating work actually unfit to elevate anyone either economically or morally (Winter 16).

Not only do workers like Jo have to compete with formal organizations like Cochrane’s, but with Whitworth’s machine, they also competed with technology. Paralleling competition between horse-drawn conveyance and steam-driven road locomotives, as well as the competition between railway cartage versus road cartage, the sweeping controversy reflects the general ascendancy of technology into every facet of Victorian life as well as the colonization of roads by motorized transport following WWI.

Conclusion

In this article, I have discussed the generally ineffective ways in which the Victorians tried to control and order their disorderly roads. Dirt and congestion seemed to not only characterize Victorian roads but also were problems that only seemed to become aggravated during the Victorian period. Not only did the Metropolitan Police lack the specific authority to fully control the activities upon roads, the police lacked the inclination to infringe upon the rights of citizens.

Instead, the police were careful to respect the liberty of the subject and freedom of passage that long had been British traditions.

Despite legislative threats or reformist help, the problem of thousands of itinerant poor traveling the roads never abated. Despite the Victorian conception of vagrancy as a moral condition and the vagrant as part of an inferior race, the moral imperative never was able to adequately address or mitigate the numbers of homeless poor which continued to fluctuate dependent only upon uncontrollable economic conditions.

If those Victorians permanently associated with the road – like vagrants and tramps and street workers – were characterized by moral degradation and material dirt, it's only because the physical condition of roads remained so appalling. Reliance upon animal power and lack of appropriate sanitation contributed to the filthy character of Victorian roads.

Similar to Booth's Salvation Army and the Metropolitan Police, military-style organizations like Cochrane's Street-Orderly system that coupled productive work for the poor with clean streets for the middle class had limited success because the problems of dirt and poverty were of such immense scale. In short, despite their desire to address road problems through a model of colonization, the Victorians remained unable to fully order their disorderly roads.

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