

Stylistic Use of Repetition in *A Tale of Two Cities*

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1. Introduction

As Brook (1970: 143) states, repetition is one of the linguistic devices “of which Charles Dickens is very fond,” and the novelist “makes things easy for his readers by his constant repetitions, and his habitual phrases are remembered by readers who are not used to reading with close attention.” According to Monod (1968: 461), Dickens’s “stylistic use of repetition reaches its climax in [*A Tale of Two Cities* (1859)].” Therefore, it is fruitful to deal with the language of Dickens, especially that of *A Tale of Two Cities*, from the point of view of repetition in order to explore his linguistic artistry with which the novelist, inheriting the language of the 18th century, improved upon the style of English prose.

Leech and Short (1981: 244) describe formal repetition as “repeated use of an expression (morpheme, lexical item, proper name, phrase, etc.) which has already occurred in the context.” In fact, Dickens exploits various types of repetition, that is, repetition of sounds, morphemes, words, phrases, and sentences for various stylistic purposes, such as association, implication, irony, characterization, or verbal iconicity. However, following Leech and Short’s definition, in this paper I focus my attention on the repetitive use of words or phrases. My chief concern is devoted to three aspects of repetition: first, repetition for characterization; secondly, repetition of words indicative of symbolic meaning; and thirdly, distinctive use of repetition between

the English and the French scenes. These kinds of repetition work together to convey the main themes of the novel to the minds of the reader.

2. Key words in *A Tale of Two Cities*

Before I examine the relationship between repetition and functional relevance, I will identify key words in *A Tale of Two Cities*, as compared to Dickens's other novels. For the statistical analysis of repetition, I take advantage of a computer-assisted approach to a self-made Dickens Corpus of his 22 novels.¹ In order to make Table 1 below, I use Mike Scott's "Key Words Tool" of "WordSmith Tools" program.² The key words are calculated by comparing the frequency of each word in *A Tale of Two Cities* with that of the same word in the Dickens Corpus. Any word which is found to be unusually frequent in *A Tale of Two Cities* is considered a key word. For instance, the word "madam" occurs 193 times at the frequency of 0.14 % in *A Tale of Two Cities*, while it appears 263 times at a diminutive frequency in the Dickens Corpus. The word is not expected to occur at such high frequency on the basis of the Dickens Corpus, and therefore it is given the highest numeric value of keyness, in other words, the highest log likelihood (743.8). On the other hand, the conjunction "and" is not regarded as one of key words, though it occurs at the second highest frequency in *A Tale of Two Cities* (5,000 times; 3.65 %), and in the Dickens Corpus (156,900 times; 3.56 %). The reason for this is because the word is present with almost the same rate in *A Tale of Two Cities* and the Dickens Corpus as expected.³

Table 1 Key words in *A Tale of Two Cities* as compared to Dickens Corpus

No.	Key words	<i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>		Dickens Corpus		Keyness (Log likelihood)
		Approx. 137,000 words		Approx. 4,348,000 words		
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
1	madame	193	0.14	263	0.00	744
2	prisoner	169	0.12	306	0.00	581.8
3	doctor	226	0.16	1,199	0.03	407.3
4	spy	72	0.05	66	0.00	316.3
5	mender	48	0.03	4	0.00	307.5
6	citizen	64	0.05	65	0.00	272.5
7	knit	65	0.05	98	0.00	241.1
8	the	8,024	5.85	214,911	4.91	239.5
9	wine	120	0.09	671	0.02	206.8
10	patriot	33	0.02	11	0.00	181.8
11	prison	91	0.07	433	0.00	178.9
12	chateau	27	0.02	3	0.00	169.4
13	courtyard	36	0.03	27	0.00	167.2
14	guillotine	27	0.02	6	0.00	157.8
15	fountain	42	0.03	69	0.00	150.6
16	gaoler	23	0.02	2	0.00	146.9
17	tribunal	23	0.02	7	0.00	128.6
18	tumbril	18	0.01	1	0.00	118
19	village	52	0.04	220	0.00	111.6
20	bank	65	0.05	387	0.00	105.9
21	husband	99	0.07	874	0.02	105.8
22	jackal	15	0.01	0	0.00	104.8
23	road	106	0.08	1,009	0.02	102.7
24	father	197	0.14	2,720	0.06	102.4
25	plane-tree	15	0.01	1	0.00	97.4
26	shoemaker	18	0.01	9	0.00	92
27	flop	15	0.01	3	0.00	88.8
28	citizeness	13	0.00	1	0.00	83.7
29	passenger	45	0.03	236	0.00	81.8
30	emigrant	23	0.02	40	0.00	80.5
31	jury	32	0.02	107	0.00	80.3
32	business	134	0.10	1,760	0.04	77
33	stone	74	0.05	689	0.02	73.8
34	hill	42	0.03	231	0.00	73.4
35	ladybird	12	0.00	2	0.00	72.5

In Table 1, 35 key words are presented in order according to their

log likelihood values. Of course, the proper names of characters rank among the top because most of them appear only in *A Tale of Two Cities*. In the Table, character names such as “Carton” and “Lucie,” the place names such as “Soho” and “France,” and such French words as “Monseigneur” and “Monsieur” are excluded.

Observation of Table 1 leads me to notice that the words used to refer to characters are at the head of the list: for example, the word “madame” for Madame Defarge; “doctor,” “father,” and “shoemaker” for Doctor Manette; “prisoner,” “emigrant,” and “husband” for Darnay; “ladybird” for Lucie; “spy” for Barsad; “mender” for one of the French patriots; and “jackal” for Carton. Moreover, the words related to France and the French Revolution also show keyness, for example, “citizen,” “citizeness,” “patriot,” “republic,” “guillotine,” “tribunal,” “tumbrel,” and so on.

Among the remaining words in Table 1, I focus my attention on the repeated use of the key words, “wine,” “fountain,” “plane-tree,” and “business.”⁴ The word “plane-tree” occurs only fifteen times, but it is frequently repeated in a particular context, and fulfills an important role as an indication of the subject matter of the novel. Statistically, the unusually frequent use of the four words may be said to be an example of lexical properties which distinguish *A Tale of Two Cities* from Dickens’s other novels.

3. Repetition for characterization

3.1 Repetition of “business”

One of the key words, “business,” occurs 134 times throughout

the novel. Eighty-nine of these instances are seen in the characters' speeches, and 50 of 89 instances (56%) in Mr. Lorry's speech. Moreover, 15 of the remaining 45 instances (33%) in the descriptive and narrative parts are found in such expressions related to him as "the man of business" and "his business eye." As a result, readers naturally draw a close association between Mr. Lorry and "business," or his businesslike manner. In particular, the less familiar collocation "business eye" occurs twice in Chapter 6 of Book II, and recurs in Chapter 8 of Book III again. Incidentally, in Dickens's novels, I find no instance of "business eyes" except for the three examples given to Mr. Lorry. It cannot be said that the combination is frequently used, but it is closely related to the repetitive use of "business" in Mr. Lorry's speech and in the descriptions of Mr. Lorry. The employment of "business eye" shows that Mr. Lorry has the ability to look at things objectively as seen in the passage below:

- (1) (Carton informs Mr. Lorry that Darnay, who was once released owing to Dr. Manette's testimony, has been arrested again.)

Mr. Lorry's business eye read in the speaker's [Carton's] face that it was loss of time to dwell upon the point. Confused, but sensible that something might depend on his presence of mind, he commanded himself, and was silently attentive. (Bk. III, Ch. 8)

The repetitive use of "business" literally shows his businesslike manner, but Mr. Lorry's ways of dealing with other characters is not always businesslike. He often displays great affection to Lucie and her father even though he repeatedly uses "a man of business" in his speech. The humanistic aspect of his character is reflected through words co-occurring with "business" in the descriptive part, as seen in the

passage below:

- (2) (Mr. Lorry tactfully asks Doctor Manette what caused the relapse and how it can be prevented.)

“Now, my dear Manette,” said Mr. Lorry, at length, in his most considerate and most affectionate way, “I am *a mere man of business*, and unfit to cope with such intricate and difficult matters. I do not possess the kind of information necessary; I do not possess the kind of intelligence; I want guiding....’

(Bk. II, Ch. 19)

In the underlined phrase of passage (2), the adjectives “considerate” and “affectionate” present some semantic features which are incompatible with aspects of “a man of business,” such as thoughtfulness, gentleness, and tenderness. The repetition of “business” directs our attention to Mr. Lorry’s businesslike manner, while the use of these humanistic adjectives, which are contextually antonymous with “businesslike,” offer a glimpse into his unobtrusive but significant traits. We observe a conflict of meanings between the two adjectives and his habitual use of the phrase “a man of business.” This is one of Dickens’s methods for character creation.⁵ That is to say, the author repeats a word peculiar to characters in his novels, dramatizing a particular semantic feature that constitutes them, and then gradually reveals new aspects of the characters’ personality through a semantic conflict between the repeated word and words co-occurring with it, as the novel progresses. In this way, Dickens often builds up manifold aspects of his characters.

3.2 Repetition of “business” in the description of Sydney Carton

The recurrent use of the key word “business” not only serves to characterize Mr. Lorry as discussed above, but also denotes other characters’ “business,” or their work, concerns, and roles. For instance, Carton’s “business” implies his heroic act of self-sacrifice, Cruncher’s is indicative of his work of body-snatching, and Madame Defarge’s is suggestive of her cruel revenge on the aristocracy. As a typical example, let us examine Carton’s “business”:

- (3) Carton’s negligent recklessness of manner came powerfully in aid of his quickness and skill, in such *a business* as he had in his secret mind, and with such a man as he had to do with.

(Bk. III, Ch. 8)

In the context of the passage, Carton threatens Barsad and forces him to co-operate in his plan to rescue Darnay from prison. The phrase “a business” contextually alludes to Carton’s future action. The underlined words, “recklessness,” “quickness,” and “skill” represent the qualities and abilities needed for Carton to perform his risky and self-sacrificing act in the near future. My interpretation of Carton’s “business” is based on the repetitive use of “business” in his speech, as seen in passage (4) below:

- (4) “And indeed, sir,” pursued Mr. Lorry, not minding him, “I really don’t know what you have to do with the matter. If you’ll excuse me, as very much your elder, for saying so, I really don’t know that it is *your business*.”

“*Business!* Bless you, I ⁶ have *no business*,” said Mr. Carton.
“It is a pity you have not, sir.” (Bk. II, Ch. 4)

The word “business” occurs several times in Carton’s speech. When

he refers to his own “business,” Carton repeats the expression “I have no business.”⁷ One such instance is shown in the passage above.

Here, Carton makes fun of Mr. Lorry by pointing out his job restraints as a banker after Darnay’s trial in the Old Baily. Mr. Lorry refutes Carton’s argument and says, “I really don’t know that it is your business.” In Mr. Lorry’s utterance, “business” means “a matter with which one has the right to meddle.”⁸ On the other hand, in Carton’s reply “I have no business,” “business” is defined as “work to be done or matters to be attended to in his service or on his behalf” or “a particular matter demanding attention.”⁹ The word “business” conveys two different meanings in the two speeches in passage (4). Carton states a seemingly unrelated thing in spite of the repetition of the same word, but his reply “I have no business” hints at an existence of his future “business,” that is to say, what is implied by “a business” in passage (3) in terms of foreshadowing. Through the repetitive use of “business,” Dickens directs the reader’s attention to the word, and suggests the different or contrastive roles between the characters. In other words, Mr. Lorry and Carton independently carry on their own “business” to rescue Darnay. The repeated use of “business” is not directly but intimately related to the themes of fate and resurrection.

In short, Dickens repeats a particular word instead of using different words or phrases of similar meaning, exploiting polysemy of the repeated word, and invites the reader’s attention to the word and its connotation. This technique shows one aspect of Dickens’s use of repetition.

4. Repetition of words indicative of symbolic meaning

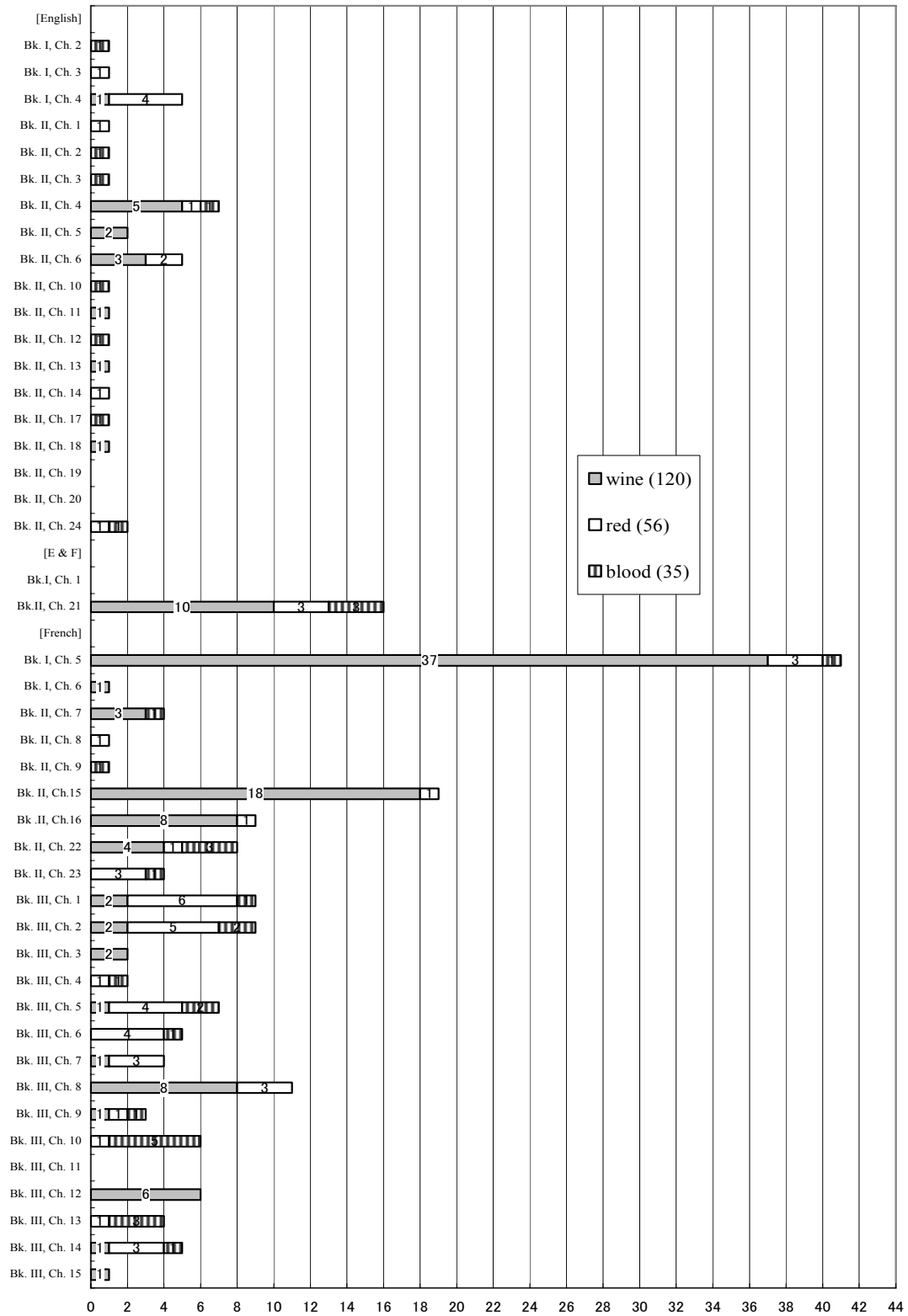
4.1 Repetitive use of “wine,” “red,” and “blood”

As Monod (1968: 462) notes, “Dickens makes a broader use of the symbols and allegories that had long been dear to him.” In reality, *A Tale of Two Cities* is full of repeated imagery and symbolic patterns. We hear again and again the footsteps and the rising storm; we see the drinking of wine and the staining blood. This novel achieves linguistic and stylistic contiguity through the repeated use of symbolic words like “footstep,” “echo,” and “wine,” “blood,” which are closely related to the subject matter of the novel.¹⁰ To put it another way, repetition of symbolic words fulfills an important function of promoting the thematic cohesion, by which the themes of this novel are brought to light.

Here, I concentrate my attention on the repetition of the key word “wine,” and its related words “red” and “blood.” These words often co-occur with one another, and convey additional and different meanings as well as their own specific meanings, in accordance with the scenes or contexts, especially between the English and the French scenes.

Figure 1 below represents the distribution of these three words throughout *A Tale of Two Cities*. The word “wine” occurs 120 times, “red” 56 times, and “blood” 35 times in total.¹¹ The chapters of the novel are divided into three groups: English chapters, French chapters, and English-French chapters, depending on the location of the incidents in each chapter.

Figure 1 Distribution of “wine,” “red,” and “blood”



Scrutiny of Figure 1 reveals, among other things, the following two points:

- (i) Although the three words, “wine,” “red,” and “blood,” occur throughout the novel, they occur more frequently in the French chapters rather than the English ones. Furthermore, these words often co-occur with one another in the French scenes. They also co-occur in the English scenes, but not as often.
- (ii) The word “wine” is remarkably obvious in the first French chapter, in Chapter 5 of Book I [37 of 120 (30.8%)]. This emphasizes a strong connection between what may be meant by the word and France, and prefigures the coming bloody Revolution at the very beginning of the French scenes. In the English chapters, on the other hand, the word “wine” occurs only 14 times, and most instances [10 of 14, (71%)] occur in a limited context: Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of Book II.

It is often pointed out that the word “wine” and its related words “red” and “blood” frequently co-occur as an indication of the French Revolution’s slaughter and bloodshed. In fact, Figure 1 supports this idea in quantitative terms, but does not reveal how the words create the symbolical imagery of the bleeding Revolution. Needless to say, the Revolution’s slaughter and bloodshed are not simply hinted at and represented through the repetition and co-occurrence of these three words, but the related words co-occurring with them in the same contexts contribute to creating the bloody imagery. Therefore, I will now investigate how the three words and their related words work together. What is more, as it seems that Dickens attaches different meanings to the word “wine” and its related words in each context, I will examine how the words carry variegated meanings for the French

and the English scenes.

4.2 Use of “wine” in French scenes

The following passage describes the breaking of a wine cask in the street, inspiring the people of the neighborhood to scoop and sop up the wine to drink it in the first French scene, Chapter 5 of Book I. The passage, long as it is, must be quoted nearly in full to preserve its peculiar effect:

(5) (i) A large cask of *wine* had been dropped and broken, in the street. (ii) The accident had happened in getting it out of a cart; the cask had tumbled out with a run, the hoops had burst, and it lay on the stones just outside the door of *the wine-shop*, shattered like a walnut-shell.

(iii) All the people within reach had suspended their business, or their idleness, to run to the spot and drink *the wine* . . . (iv) Some men kneeled down, made scoops of their two hands joined, and sipped, or tried to help women, who bent over their shoulders, to sip, before *the wine* had all run out between their fingers. (v) Others, men and women, dipped in the puddles with little mugs of mutilated earthenware, or even with handkerchiefs from women’s heads, which were squeezed dry into infants’ mouths; others made small mud embankments, to stem *the wine* as it ran; others, directed by lookers-on up at high windows, darted here and there, to cut off *little streams of wine* that started away in new directions; others devoted themselves to the sodden and lee-dyed pieces of the cask, licking, and even champing *the moister wine-rotted fragments* with eager relish. . .

(vi) *The wine* was *red wine*, and had stained the ground of the narrow street in the suburb of Saint Antoine, in Paris, where it was spilled. (vii) It had stained many hands, too, and many faces, and many naked feet, and many wooden shoes. (viii) The hands of the man who sawed the wood, left red marks on the billets; and the forehead of the woman who nursed her baby, was stained with the stain of the old rag she wound about her head again. (ix) Those who had been greedy with the staves of the cask, had

acquired a tigerish smear about the mouth; and one tall joker so besmirched, his head more out of a long squalid bag of a night-cap than in it, scrawled upon a wall with his finger dipped in muddy wine-lees — BLOOD.

(x) The time was to come, when *that wine* too would be spilled on the street-stones, and when the stain of it would be red upon many there. (Bk. I, Ch. 5)

The repetition of the word “wine” and words related to the spilled wine in each sentence of the passage above are shown as follows:

Table 2 Words including “wine” and words related to the spilled wine

	Words indicating “wine”	Words related to the spilled wine
(i)	A large cask of wine	
(ii)	the wine-shop	
(iii)	the wine	
(iv)	the wine	
(v)	the wine little streams of wine the moister wine-rotted fragments	mutilated cut off
(vi)	The wine red wine	stained spilled
(vii)		stained
(viii)		red marks stained the stain
(ix)	wine-lees	a tigerish smear besmirched BLOOD
(x)	that wine	spilled the stain red

The words representative of “wine” and its sediment recurrently occur in the passage (in sentences (v), (vi), and (vii) the pronoun “it” is used), which builds up close connections among the sentences. Observing the words related to the spilled wine, I notice the novelist’s deliberate order of them: in sentence (v), the words denoting the beheading on the

guillotine, “mutilated” and “cut off,” first appear, and then in the following sentences, such words as “stained” and “spilled” denotative of the spilling of blood by the killer machine are repeatedly used, thereby showing a cause-and-effect relationship. Moreover, in sentence (vi), we are first told that the spilled wine is “red,” and then the word “red” is repeated in sentence (viii). In sentence (ix), the juxtaposition of “wine-lees” and “Blood,” which gains special emphasis by coming at the end of the sentence, shows a close relation between “wine” and “blood.” Finally, in sentence (x), the words “wine,” “spilled,” “stain,” and “red” occur together, and the combinations “wine—red” and “wine—blood” allude to the slaughter and bloodshed of the Revolution with the help of the clause “The time was to come.” Dickens not only repeats the same word, but also deliberately arranges its related or associated words around it, for emphasis of its symbolic meaning.

The word “wine” and its related words “red” and “blood” frequently occur in the various revolutionary scenes that depict the violence and horror of the Revolution, making new combinations with the words indicative of the Revolution’s inhumanity. In particular, as the novel progresses, the word “wine” figuratively comes to represent the dehumanized condemned people executed on the guillotine.¹² The foreshadowing in the “wine-cask breaking” scene is realized and embodied in various scenes through the word combinations, for example, the “grindstone” scene in Bk. III, Ch. 2.

It should also be added that the very high frequency of the word

“wine-shop” (53 of 120 instances of “wine”, 44%) attracts attention. We usually buy wine at a wine-shop, where we sometimes also enjoy drinking it. In the novel, however, Dickens conjures up a different association with the word “wine-shop.” That is to say, the “wine-shop” of Defarge and Madame Defarge is located in Saint Antoine, where the revolutionary agitation arises and is carried into action. The wine drinking of the revolutionists at the wine-shop creates a sense of solidarity among them. Dickens evokes a strong association of “wine” with the Revolution through the repetitive use of “wine-shop.”

4.3 Use of “wine” in English scenes

Now my attention turns to the use of the word “wine” in the English scenes. In the revolutionary scenes in France, the word repeatedly co-occurs with words suggestive of the bleeding Revolution, while in the English scenes it co-occurs with words of different connotation. In fact, the word seems to be closely related to the development of the plot and the character’s fate. That is to say, “wine” recurrently occurs in the scene where the characters of the novel first meet each other, and they are destined to share their fate. Let me examine some typical instances.

As the first example, see the passage below, in which Mr. Lorry meets Lucie for the first time at a hotel in Dover:

- (6) (i) When it was dark, and he sat before the coffee-room fire, awaiting his dinner as he had awaited his breakfast, his mind was busily digging, digging, digging, in the live *red* coals.

(ii) A bottle of good *claret* after dinner does a digger in the *red* coals no harm, otherwise than as it has a tendency to throw him out of work. (iii) Mr. Lorry had been idle a long time, and had just poured out his last glassful of *wine* with as complete an appearance of satisfaction as is ever to be found in an elderly gentleman of a fresh complexion who has got to the end of a bottle, when a rattling of wheels came up the narrow street, and rumbled into the inn-yard. (Bk. I, Ch. 4)

The word “wine,” along with its synonym “claret,” first appears in the passage above in this novel. I find no words significant of blood or death like those we have seen in the revolutionary scenes, even though the word “red” in the phrase “in the (live) red coals” is found in sentences (i) and (ii). The “wine—red” combination does not indicate the outbreak of the Revolution here in this scene, but it may be exploited to suggest the fateful encounter between Mr. Lorry and Lucie. That is to say, the repetitive use of “digging” in sentence (i), which is repeated as many as eight times in the previous chapter, attracts our attention, and becomes reminiscent of Mr. Lorry’s mission: “to dig someone out of a grave” (Bk. I, Ch. 3), namely ‘to bring Dr. Manette to the safety of England.’ The second sentence, which describes a good effect of the drinking of wine on “a digger in the red coals (i.e. Mr. Lorry),” reminds us of the proverbial statement on wine: “some people only speak the truth after having drunk wine.”¹³ Thirdly, sentence (iii) describes Mr. Lorry’s drinking “his last glassful of wine.” This process and the use of “wine” in this scene may indicate the disclosure of the truth about Dr. Manette. In reality, in his interview with Lucie, which follows the passage above, Mr. Lorry explains to her that they are going to rescue her father, Dr. Manette, whom she believes to be

dead, in Paris.

Furthermore, let me observe the passage in which Sydney Carton and Charles Darnay first meet and dine together in a tavern after the trial in the Old Baily:

- (7) Drawing his arm through his own, he took him down Ludgate-hill to Fleet-street, and so, up a covered way, into a tavern. Here, they were shown into a little room, where Charles Darnay was soon recruiting his strength with a good plain dinner and good *wine*: while Carton sat opposite to him at the same table, with his separate bottle of port before him, and his fully half-insolent manner upon him. (Bk. II, Ch. 4)

Here, in the fateful encounter between Carton and Darnay, Dickens properly exploits the “wine” and its synonym “port” to individualize the two characters. That is to say, the word “wine” is assigned to Darnay, “port” to Carton. The novelist does not repeat the same word “wine,” in spite of the fact that Carton himself uses “wine” when he orders another glass in the later scene: “bring me another pint of *this same wine*.” Through the reiterated use of “wine” (4 times) in the scene of the encounter between Carton and Darnay and the deliberate use of “wine” and “port” between them, Dickens represents not only their fateful meeting but also their characteristic differences despite their physical resemblance. It might be said that Dickens creates a kind of symbolic meaning of “wine” in addition to its conventional symbolic meaning.

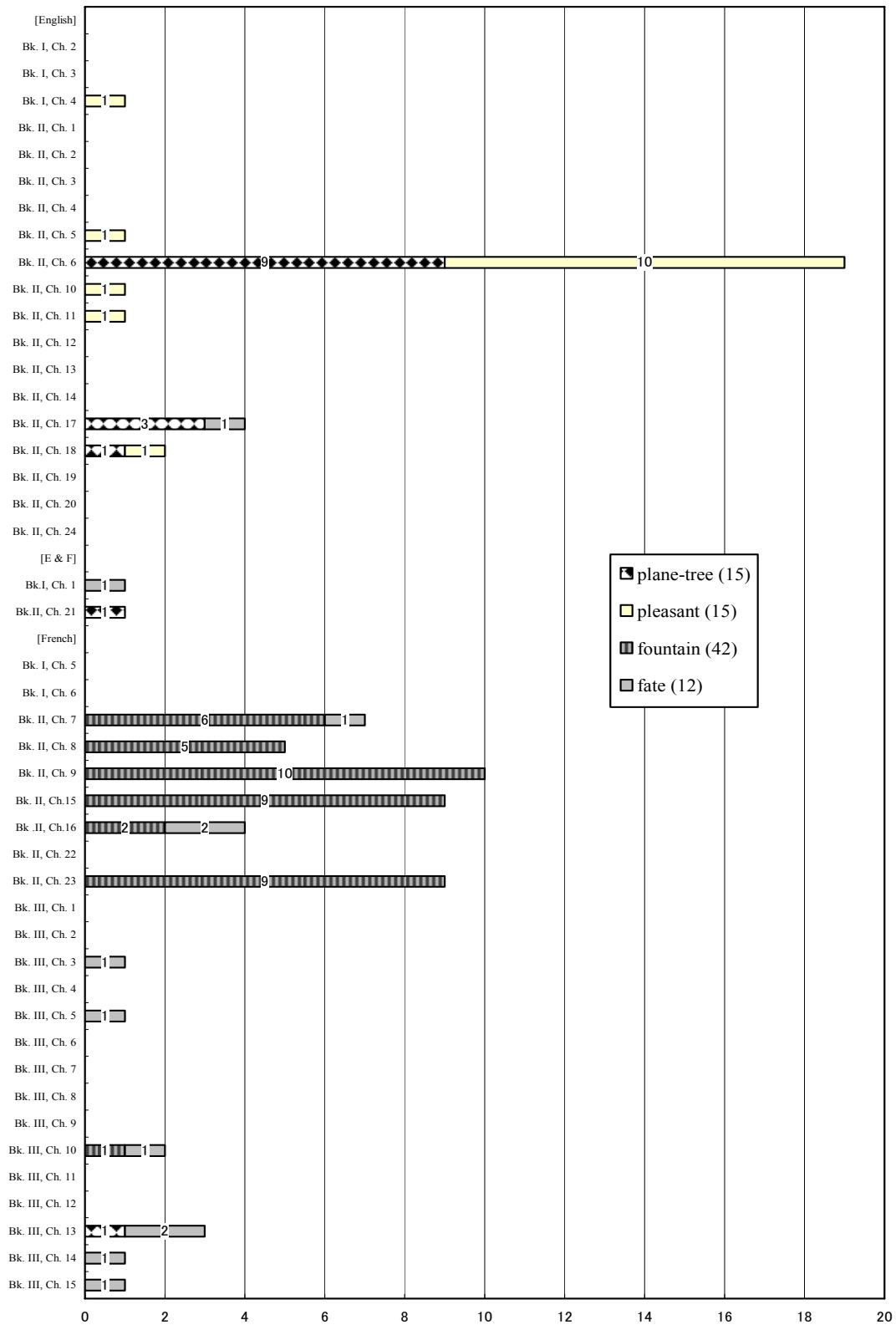
5. Distinctive use of repetition between the English and the French scenes

5.1 Repetition of “plane-tree” and “fountain”

A close examination of the distribution of the repeated words reveals that some words only or mostly appear in either the English or the French scenes. Needless to say, such Anglicized French expressions as “Good day,” “I salute you, citizenness,” and “the sun going to bed” (cf. Sanders 1988: 9-10, 45-47 & Monod 1968: 459-60) occur only in the French scenes. In the same way, words specific to the French Revolution like “Tribunal” and “guillotine” are repeated only in the French scenes. In particular, among others, I notice the frequent use of the key word, “plane-tree,” in the English scenes. The word, which is symbolic of “friendliness” or “charity,”¹⁴ occurs 15 times in total in the novel, and 14 of them are found in the English chapters. The only instance in the French chapter, Bk. III, Ch. 13, is used in a retrospective description of the English scene.¹⁵ Moreover, the word repeatedly co-occurs with the adjective “pleasant,” which is found 15 times only in the English chapters, notably 10 times in Chapter 6 of Book II.

On the other hand, another key word “fountain” (all 42 times) and its related word “fate” (10 of 12 times) occur mainly in the French scenes. The word “fountain” frequently occurs in the earlier French chapters, and is observed particularly in the scenes depicting the characters’ death and the misery of the French commoners. The words “fountain” and “fate” appear at some intervals as a running leitmotif. Figure 2 on the next page shows the distribution of these four words.¹⁶

Figure 2 Distribution of “plane-tree,” “pleasant,” “fate,” “fountain”



The different or contrastive use of repeated words in the English and the French scenes in *A Tale of Two Cities* enables the reader to realize the author's deliberate exploitation of words in terms of the subject matter, that is to say, contrast between the two cities. The repetition of "plane-tree" together with that of "pleasant" serves to create a favorable family atmosphere in the English scenes. In sharp contrast to this, in the French scenes, the words "fountain" and "fate" directly convey some of the dominant themes of the book: death, future life, fate, and resurrection.¹⁷ It seems that Dickens suggests the inevitable outbreak of the French Revolution and the characters' sealed destinies through the verbal associations of such repetitive words arranged mainly in the French scenes.

It is worth examining the repetitive use of "plane-tree" and "fountain" more closely and concretely. The words convey not only their own meanings but additional ones as well, for instance, foreshadowing.

5.2 Repetition of "plane-tree" in the English scenes

One example of the repeated use of "plane-tree" and "pleasant" in the English scenes can be observed in passage (8):

- (8) On this occasion, Miss Pross, responding to Ladybird's pleasant face and pleasant efforts to please her, unbent exceedingly; so the dinner was very pleasant, too.

It was an oppressive day, and, after dinner, Lucie proposed that the wine should be carried out under *the plane-tree*, and they should sit there in the air. As everything turned upon her, and revolved about her, they went out under *the plane-tree*, and she

carried the wine down for the special benefit of Mr. Lorry. She had installed herself, some time before, as Mr. Lorry's cup-bearer; and while they sat under *the plane-tree*, talking, she kept his glass replenished. Mysterious backs and ends of houses peeped at them as they talked, and *the plane-tree* whispered to them in its own way above their heads. (Bk. II, Ch. 6)

In the context of the passage above, Dr. Manette, Lucie, Mr. Lorry, and Miss Pross are in the courtyard after dinner. The repeated use of "plane-tree" and "pleasant" in close proximity serves to create a comfortable and cozy atmosphere of domestic peace. At the same time, however, I find the repetition of the word "wine." As already mentioned, "wine" in the English scenes is associated with a serious development in the plot. Through the co-occurrence of "plane-tree" with "wine" we can sense an impending misfortune to threaten Lucie's happy family life, even though the "plane-tree" itself carries a good connotation. In fact, in the scene which follows the passage above, all the characters who gather under the "plane-tree" hear the footsteps of the people in the street caught in the sudden storm, which seems to be indicative of the outbreak of the French Revolution. Additionally, the personification of the "plane-tree" and "houses" in the last sentence also serves as an ominous harbinger.

As another example of the repeated use of the "plane-tree," let me examine the following two passages. Passage (9) is observed at the very beginning, and passage (10) at the very end of Chapter 17 of Book II:

(9) Never did the sun go down with a brighter glory on the quiet

corner in Soho, than one memorable evening when the Doctor and his daughter sat under *the plane-tree* together. Never did the moon rise with a milder radiance over great London, than on that night when it found them still seated under the tree, and shone upon their faces through its leaves.

Lucie was to be married to-morrow. She had reserved this last evening for her father, and they sat alone under *the plane-tree*.

“You are happy, my dear father?”

“Quite, my child.” (Bk. II, Ch. 17)

(10) (Lucie sits by her father’s bedside for a while.)

She[Lucie] timidly laid her hand on his[Dr. Manette’s] dear breast, and put up a prayer that she might ever be as true to him as her love aspired to be, and as his sorrows deserved. Then, she withdrew her hand, and kissed his lips once more, and went away. So, the sunrise came, and the shadows of the leaves of *the plane-tree* moved upon his face, as softly as her lips had moved in praying for him. (Bk. II, Ch. 17)

The first passage appears in the context where Lucie and her father sit outside under the “plane-tree” the night before her wedding, and she reassures her father that her love for Darnay will not alter her love for him. The repetitive use of the “plane-tree” (and also the words “the tree” twice) along with the words indicative of light, “sun,” “brighter,” “moon,” “radiance,” or “shone” is closely related with the domestic happiness and hope that Lucie and her father feel.

Furthermore, in passage (10), the word denoting light, “sunrise,” is also used. At the same time, however, the “plane-tree” co-occurs with the word “shadow,” which seems to carry an ominous implication for Dr. Manette’s future. In reality, in the following chapter, Chapter 18 of Book II, Dr. Manette has temporarily reverted to shoemaking because of the shock of Charles Darnay’s revelation, on the morning of

his wedding to Lucie, of his identity as a member of the St Evrémonde family.

It can be said that the repeated use of the “plane-tree” itself symbolically suggests the Manettes’ domestic peace, co-occurring with the words significant of light. Yet, the change of words co-occurring with the “plane-tree,” that is to say, the new combination of “plane-tree” and “shadow,” implies the characters’ future fate in terms of foreshadowing.

5.3 Repetition of “fountain” in the French scenes

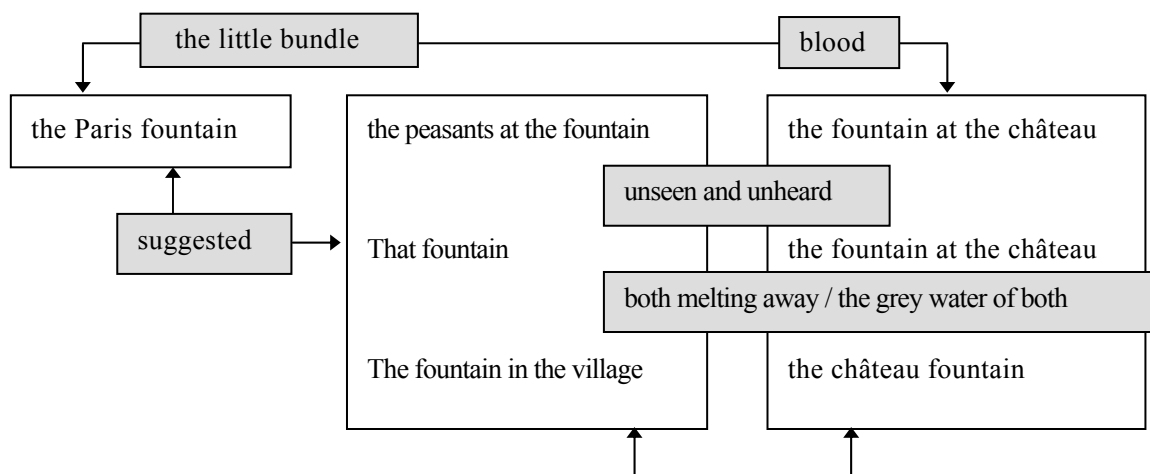
In the final part of this paper, I now explore what additional meanings the repetitive use of the key word “fountain” carries. The following passage appears in the scene where the Marquis St. Evrémonde is killed:

- (11) (i) He [St. Evrémonde] moved from end to end of his voluptuous bedroom, looking again at the scraps of the day’s journey that came unbidden into his mind; the slow toil up the hill at sunset, the setting sun, the descent, the mill, the prison on the crag, the little village in the hollow, the peasants at *the fountain*, and the mender of roads with his blue cap pointing out the chain under the carriage. (ii) *That fountain* suggested *the Paris fountain*, the little bundle lying on the step, the women bending over it, and the tall man with his arms up, crying, “Dead!” . . .
- (iii) *The fountain in the village* flowed unseen and unheard, and *the fountain at the château* dropped unseen and unheard--both melting away, like the minutes that were falling from the spring of Time — through three dark hours. (iv) Then, the grey water of both began to be ghostly in the light, and the eyes of the stone faces of the château were opened.
- (v) Lighter and lighter, until at last the sun touched the tops of the still trees, and poured its radiance over the hill. (vi) In the

glow, the water of *the château fountain* seemed to turn to blood, and the stone faces crimsoned. (Bk. II, Ch. 9)

The word “fountain” appears in three places: on a Paris street, in the village, and at the country estate of the Marquis. At the “Paris fountain,” an innocent child is accidentally run over by the Marquis’s carriage. At the “village fountain,” the poor peasants gather together for a living; the child’s father, Gaspard, is seen riding under the carriage. The “château fountain” is a decoration at the Marquis’s mansion. The three fountains refer to different things, but in the passage above, the repetitive use of “fountain” denotes their close association. The association is illustrated as follows:

Figure 3 Verbal chart of “fountain”



The linkage between the fountain in the village and the Paris fountain is clearly shown in the clause “That fountain suggested the Paris fountain” in sentence (ii). The village fountain is connected with the château fountain through the repetition of “unseen and unheard” in

sentence (iii) and “both” with the ellipsis of “fountain” in sentences (iii) and (iv). Moreover, the château fountain is connected with the Paris fountain through the assistance of the village fountain and the “blood” association of the two fountains, that is to say, the association of “the little bundle” in sentence (ii), which refers to the child killed by the carriage, with the word “blood” in sentence (vi). Through their association, by the construction of a verbal circle, we are made aware of the murder of the Marquis.

Dickens often repeats a word with different referents and meanings in different scenes, and attempts to establish a close link between the scenes. This technique contributes to indicating a cause and effect relation and foreshadowing.

6. Final Remarks

The foregoing arguments justify stating that Dickens deliberately exploits the technique of repetition with great artistry in order to individualize characters, to make creative use of conventional symbolic meanings, to prefigure future events, and to convey the main themes of the novel, such as fate, resurrection, and contrast, to the minds of the reader. The novelist’s use of repetition for the stylistic effects of emphasis and irony can also be found in his other novels. However, in *A Tale of Two Cities*, the repetitions of words and phrases are well organized and structurally used, and thus have the obvious function of creating a strong sense of unity in the structure of the novel. In a metaphorical sense, as various kinds of threads are woven together

into texture, various kinds of repetition are skillfully interwoven into the story, and provide a strong sense of continuity and association within the novel. Such structural use of repetition is one of the linguistic peculiarities of *A Tale of Two Cities*.

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¹ The self-made Dickens Corpus includes 22 novels: *Sketches by Boz* (1833-36), *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-37), *Oliver Twist* (1837-39), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-39), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41), *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-44), *The Chimes* (1844), *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845), *Battle of Life* (1846), *Dombey and Son* (1846-48), *The Haunted Man* (1848), *David Copperfield* (1849-50), *Reprinted Pieces* (1850-56), *Bleak House* (1852-53), *Hard Times* (1854), *Little Dorrit* (1855-57), *The Uncommercial Traveller* (1860), *Great Expectations* (1860-61), *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65), *Edwin Drood* (1869-1870).

² Mike Scott's Website: <http://www.lexically.net/wordsmith/index.html>

³ All quotations of Dickens's novels are taken from *The Oxford Illustrated Dickens* (OUP, 1947-58, 21 volumes). I also refer to electronic texts of Dickens's novels from *Project Gutenberg*. The Gutenberg Corpus can be found at <http://promo.net/pg/index.html>. The italics and the underlines are all mine unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ One of the key words, "knit," frequently happens in the descriptions of Madame Defarge, and seems not only to represent her character, but also to closely relate her to one of the dominant themes of the book — fate. However, it will be dealt with on another occasion.

⁵ The combination of "eye" with "business" in the description of Mr. Lorry is one demonstrative instance of "a regional, social, occupational, or philosophical typification by language." cf. Quirk (1974: 8)

⁶ This italic is in the original.

⁷ Another instance of "I have no business" is observed in the following passage:

(After telling Carton that he has decided to marry Lucie, Stryver criticizes Carton for making himself so unattractive to women.)

‘You have *no business* to be incorrigible,’ was his friend’s answer, delivered in no very soothing tone.

‘I have *no business* to be, at all, that I know of,’ said Sydney Carton.
(Bk. II, Ch. 11)

⁸ OED2 s.v. Business 16.c.

⁹ OED2 s.v. Business 13.d and 1.a.

¹⁰ Stoehr (1965: 25) quotes J. H. Miller’s words to explain Dickens’s use of images:

Images in a novel get their significance not simply in their immediate relation to the narrative line, but in relation to all the images in their contexts before and after. In Dickens this spatial quality results in part from the intricate plots in which everything that happens and all the characters turn out in the end to be somehow related. The revelations at the end cause the whole pattern of the novel to fall into place almost with an audible click.

¹¹ In *A Tale of Two Cities*, the word “wine” (120) includes “wines” (2), and “red” (56) includes “redder” (16) and “reddest” (2).

¹² One instance of the dehumanization can be observed in the following passage:

Lovely girls; bright women, brown-haired, black-haired, and grey; youths; stalwart men and old; gentle born and peasant born; *all red wine for La Guillotine*, all daily brought into light from the dark cellars of the loathsome prisons, and carried to her through the streets to slake her devouring thirst. (Bk. III, Ch. 5)

¹³ Vries (1976), s.v. Wine 5.

¹⁴ Vries (1976), s.v. Plane (tree).

¹⁵ The “plane-tree” occurs predominantly in *A Tale of Two Cities* in Dickens’s noels; only one instance is found externally in *The Uncommercial Traveller*. The instance is found in the following passage.

The illegible tombstones are all lop-sided, the grave-mounds lost their shape in the rains of a hundred years ago, the Lombardy Poplar or *Plane-Tree* that was once a drysalter’s daughter and several common-councilmen, has withered like those worthies, and its departed leaves are dust beneath it. (UT 23)

¹⁶ In *A Tale of Two Cities*, the word “fountain” (42) includes “fountains” (2).

¹⁷ cf. Vries (1976), s.v. Fountain 1.

Free Essay: Repetition is one of the linguistic devices of which Charles Dickens is very fond, and the novelist makes things easy for his readers by his...^Â Therefore, it is fruitful to deal with the language of Dickens, especially that of *A Tale of Two Cities*, from the point of view of repetition in order to explore his linguistic artistry with which the novelist, inheriting the language of the 18th century, improved upon the style of English prose. In fact, Dickens exploits various types of repetition, that is, repetition of sounds, morphemes,â€¦^{show more contentâ€¦}