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***Analysis of “In Chancery”***

The following extract is taken from the first chapter of Bleak House written by Charles Dickens. The title “*In Chancery*” refers to the Lord Chancellor's court, a division of the High Court of Justice, in Lincoln’s Inn Hall.

The text is organized into two sections: the first is the introduction of the scene; the second is a detailed description of the “*fog everywhere*”. The narrator is a third person omniscient voice outside the novel.

The intelligent reader is able to recognize that the central concern of Bleak House is its accusation of the English Chancery court system. Chancery courts were one half of the English civil justice system, existing side-by-side with law courts.

Dickens introduces London and the Court of Chancery by calling up images of mud, smoke and fog. Dickens sees the mud of the London streets as an unpleasantness and a source of desperation. Smoke and fog were common in London in the 19th century because of pollution and industrial use of coal.

In addition, there are jokingly figures of speech, as in the idea of meeting with a “*Megalosaurus*” or as snowflakes “*gone into mourning ... for the death of the sun*”. The narrator highlights the darkness atmosphere with the repetition of term “*fog*” for several times: for instance, “*fog everywhere*”, “*fog up the river*”, “*fog down the river*”, “*fog in the eyes and throats*”. It is a symbol of the human confusion associated with Chancery court, but also it is the emblem of institutional oppression and misery.

At the heart of this unlimited fog “*sits the Lord High Chancellor*”. The Chancellor presides over the Court of Chancery and Dickens’ seems to view that the Chancellor perpetuated chaos and confusion. The Lord Chancellor was a member of the Prime Minister’s cabinet and President of the House of Lords.

In conclusion, Dickens supports that High Court of Chancery “*holds this day in the sight of heaven and earth*”.