



RESEARCH PAPER

The Angel or the Monster: Presenting Patriarchal Ideology and Representation of the First World Women in Charles Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop*

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ABSTRACT

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This research explores the representation of women in a patriarchal society by representing the female characters in Charles Dickens' novel *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Dickens' attitude towards women is always contradictory. Dickens is ambiguous. He is sympathetic as well as biased towards women which are depicted in his novel *The Old Curiosity Shop*. He is an emotional social critic who shows his deep sympathy towards helpless women in distress which makes him a supporter of women but at the same time, he shows his deep respect to the patriarchal norms and values and become socially biased towards them when he metaphorically represents them as angel and monster in the family. Other female characters like Miss Nell and Miss Quilip have surrendered themselves to the patriarchal ideology who is depicted as an angel in a family where the strong and revolutionary kind of women like Miss Brass who denies herself to follow the patriarchal ideology is occasionally referred to as a female dragon. This paper applies the feminist ideas of Simon De Bevoir, Gilbert and Gubar, Marry Wollstonecraft, and Virginia Woolf in the text *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

Introduction

The Old Curiosity Shop is a story of female protagonist 'Nell', the whole story revolves around her suffering and struggle till she dies at the end of the novel. Dicken's way of introducing giants, dwarfs, and tricksters has made the novel one of the most powerful and bizarre in the presentation of the dark side. Half part of the novel is set in the town and the remaining half part of the novel is set in the countryside of England. He presents town life as distorted and chaotic while the countryside life is full of beauty, serenity, sincerity, and kindness. The novel presents

Victorian people and the Victorian way of life where the characters are both from the upper-middle class and low class comprising both males and females. The novel shows the complex Victorian time. It was a transitional period when the whole society of England was turning away from the traditional way of living to the modern way of living. In the context of the male-female relationship, females were starting to seek their rights and equality on the other hand patriarchal Victorian norms and values still existed in the society which wanted to keep women limited within their traditional roles. It was the time when women went outside to handle the job on the other hand women had to fulfill their domestic responsibilities as a dutiful wife, loving and caring mother, loyal daughter in patriarchal Victorian society.

Dickens as a creative social writer he always had sympathy towards the women. But being a male and a member of patriarchal Victorian society, he possesses some societal biases towards women while representing them in the novel. This makes him an ambivalent writer. His sympathetic feelings towards Marchioness, the female character is shown as Dickens allowed her to marry Dick Swiveller a good handsome clerk although she was an illegal child and a poor maidservant. Illegal childlike Marchioness are outcast by conservative society like Victorian society but it is the greatness of Dickens his liberal thinking which made him rise above such kind of hypocrisies' and conservativeness desiring for social change to equity and humanitarian values. Similarly, Dickens sympathetic attitudes towards women can be seen in the novel when he presents Mr. Quilip, the husband of Mrs. Quilip who is always cruel towards his wife and always mistreats her. By showing the pathetic condition of Mrs. Quilip in the hand of her tyrannical husband Mr. Quilip. Dickens here shows the domestic violence towards women by their husbands. Here he shows male cruelty towards their innocent wives like Mrs. Quilip desiring the women's freedom and happiness. In the same way, Dickens also seems sympathetic towards Miss Marchioness as he realizes her compulsion to involve in thieving money from her mistress because she was ill-treated maidservant who used to almost live in hunger and Dickens shows that it was only the way to get some money to buy some bread and fulfill her hunger. On the contrary, Dickens seems critical towards some of the strong female characters like Miss Brass, a professional woman who is the main authority in Brass law firm who has been presented as a monster with the loss of feminine qualities like simplicity, gentleness, submissiveness, and generosity. She rudely behaves to the person below her level even her brother Sampson Brass is cowed by her. She mistreats poor servant, Marchioness, here the writer presents her so negatively because it seems that in his view when women become authoritative women lose their sensibility and become cruel towards inferior ones.

Charles Dickens shows his ambivalent nature towards women while representing the female characters in the novel *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Charles Dickens who is an emotional social critic always supports socially disadvantaged groups such as women and shows his sympathy towards them when they are in

distress especially he supports those women who are docile, gentle, submissive, and surrendered themselves towards the patriarchal ideologies. He seems to follow the patriarchal ideologies when he metaphorically represents the women as an angel or monster. Such metaphorical representation of women makes him rigid towards the patriarchal norms and values. In the text, while representing the female characters, the writer seems to show his ambivalent attitude towards women. The writer shows sympathetic feelings towards the pathetic condition of female characters like Miss Nell and Mrs. Quilip while he expresses his dislike towards the strong female character Miss Brass who is categorized as a female dragon. Dickens individual sympathy together with his societal biases makes him an ambivalent writer towards women. Charles Dickens *The Old Curiosity Shop*, follows the female character Miss Nell, Mrs. Quilip and Mrs. Brass, and the entire city and village throughout. Although the novel does not follow the convention developed by Dickens in his later novels and is also not a best seller like his other novels which helped him to establish as the greatest English novelist this novel *The Old Curiosity Shop* left its effect of deep sentimentalism and sense of tragedy to the readers. The novel first appeared as an article in his weekly magazine *Master Humphreys Clock* later that story was extended to the novel. Dickens also wrote an article in his daily and weekly magazine. He was not only a popular novelist and journalist in the latter part of his life he gave a popular theatrical performance for his private interest as well as for charity.

Literature Review

Dickens' epic like long stories with various kinds of characters and his exhaustive depiction of contemporary life are unforgettable. Dickens wrote many novels among them are *Bleak House* which is considered Dickens greatest works of social criticism. This novel attacks society for its failure to be involved in the assistance of the poor. *Our Mutual Friend* is about wealth and poverty. *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* are about child labor which represents his unpleasant childhood experience. *Hard Times* is an assault on the industrial vice and political economy that exploits the working class and deadens society. *Pickwick Papers* is an allusion to the Victorian class struggles at the backdrop of the industrial revolution. *Our Mutual Friend* is a representation of the fragmented human relationships, families, and societies which indicate the extremely dehumanized and acquisitive Victorian society. Charles Dickens most of the novels are social commentaries which also reflect the role of Victorian women as in *Little Dorrit*. Together with these novels other novels that are remarkable for their social criticism are *Nicholas Nickleby*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Barnaby Rudge*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *David Copperfield*, and *The Old Curiosity Shop*. In the other novels of Dickens, the idea of evilness is presented connecting it with the physical deformity and ugliness of characters like Mr. Quilip. Almost the novel of Dickens ends with the happy ending of the protagonist but this novel ends with the tragic death of protagonist Nell while it brings a happy ending to other remaining characters. The novel is semi-autobiographical like his other novels such as *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* where he presents his unpleasant experience of his early childhood.

Theoretical Framework

As the term feminism is defined as a doctrine advocating social political and all other rights of women equal to those of men. Feminism is synonymous with the women's' movement, the feminist movement, women's' liberation, female emancipation, women's' rights, which is defined as an arrangement of movements and ideologies that share a common goal to define establish and achieve the equal political, economic, cultural, personal and social right for women. In reaction to political activism, feminists have also women's reproductive rights such as the right to abortion. Feminism is a broader term that includes a different aspect of humanity despite its focus on the whole issues of women. Feminism is distinguished as liberal and radical feminism in terms of its intensity of demand and arrogance. Feminism also has an affiliation to certain theoretical ideas such as it includes political feminism, psychoanalytic Marxist or socialist feminism French feminism, bio feminism, post-modernism, or post structuralism feminism. This paper applies the feminist ideas of Simon De Bevoir, Gilbert and Gubar, Marry Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf in the text *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

Textual Analysis

The structural elements of the novel support in creating the novel, the theme, characters and characterization, plot, setting, and style comprehensively build to contribute to build a unified structure and to contribute to give a total meaning of the novel. The novel is emotionally charged. The novel reveals the pain and sufferings of socially disadvantaged groups of contemporary Victorian society such as poor people, children, and women in a very realistic way. It also presents the continuous struggle between good and evil and its continuous existence in human society. The writing is not straight forward and simple. The novel has a long and complicated sentence even as the characters grapple with uncomplicated questions. The writer uses formal language full of complex words and sentences. In *The Old Curiosity Shop* by presenting evil and good features through the characters like Miss Nell and Mrs. Quilip it makes us think about the existence of good people and bad people in the society and so is our life which consists of positive and negative aspect like happiness and sorrow. Our society together with our life is contradictory so we have to accept these opposite and positive aspects of our life and that will make us optimistic towards our life. There are so many criticisms of this novel *The Old Curiosity Shop*. It has been looked at from several perspectives by several critics. The Victorian era was the initiation of feminist awakening; so many feminist activists formed the women communities and developed a kind of sisterhood among themselves to support the abused women and to encourage them to react against their husband exploitation. Charles Dickens who belongs to this era had sympathy towards the plight of those male abused women but he also shows his dislike to those activist women who inspire those housewives to deny the male authority to revolt against male-dominated values in the family. Regarding the above-mentioned ideas Lisa Surridge states:

"In *The Old Curiosity Shop* Dickens acknowledges the political reality of resistant women and indeed shows a veritable sisterhood of supportive women around Mrs. Quilip but simultaneously under cuts their resistance as vicious and shrewish almost as distasteful and in need to reform as Mr. Quilip himself. Strong women characters that protect abused women are depicted as dangerous because they threatened the patriarchal marriage." (Surridge 2005, p.68)

It shows Dickens dislike with the strong women who deny males authority and go against them. Dickens as a social critic he had seen poor orphan girls in his society who were exploited by middle-aged men by taking the advantage of their helpless and degradable condition. It was also the time of incompatible marriage prevailing in the society in which Dickens had shown these kinds of practices as exploitation of little girls. Regarding to the above mention idea, Lerner comments on the book: "Dickens shows how the ill-natured middle-aged man attempts to sexually exploit the teenage girls taking the advantage of their simplicity, innocence, poverty, and parentless situation when Quilip invites little Nell to be Mrs. Quilip the second" (Lerner 1997, p.76).

Dickens' novels, written in his forties usually portray the relationship of middle-aged men with young girls, which shows the writers added anxiety about gender and masculinity, his increasing preoccupation with aging. Dickens as a male member of the Victorian society had an idealistic view about the women which Dickens favors much in his writings. These idealistic women are capable to preserve their virtue even in the most deplorable condition of their life and such women were portrayed as angelic women which were one of the most popular assumptions in Victorian society. That society categorized women as either angels or monsters in the family. Regarding the idealistic view of Dickens about women Gorhams says:

"Dickens shows the prototype of the Victorian ideal women through the female character Nell who is unfortunately thrust into families that is ill-equipped to give her the nurture and support she so desperately needs, no one to comfort or advise her, and she must solitarily deal with the conflicting feelings brought on by her impending womanhood." (Gorhams 1982, p.172)

It shows the patriarchal Victorian society which demands Angel like daughter and wife in the family no matter whatever her circumstance is. Dickens who had seen domestic violence in Victorian society had sympathetic feelings towards the pathetic condition of those male abused women. Although the period is well known for the start of the feminist movement in the literature the family women were exploited by their tyrannical husband who is presented by Dickens through the wicked male characters who exploit their innocent wife. Regarding the above-mentioned ideas, Elizabeth Foyster says:

"Dickens clearly shows the marital violence in Victorian society as Dickens describes a tea party at Quilips house during which in absence of Mr. Quilip himself gathered women discuss the propensity of mankind to tyrannies over the weaker sex

while Mrs. Quilip bruised and cowed by her husband blushes meekly and say nothing, even her more forceful guests find that words fail them while discussing marital cruelty." (Foyster 2005, p.101)

Dickens presents the pathetic condition of women in the hand of their tyrannical husbands in the patriarchal Victorian society. Dickens also shows sympathy towards women through the representation of the plight of lonely wondering women who suffered from the sexual and social stigma which is reflected in Lisa Hartsell Jackson proclaims:

"In *The Old Curiosity Shop* Dickens shows the plight of the lonely wondering women through the contemplation of the old man who ponders how curious it would be to imagine Nell in her future life holding her solitary way among a crowd of wild grotesque companions, the only pure fresh youthful object in the throng." (Jackson 2000, p.46)

It shows the miserable condition of homeless, parentless, and young wondering women who face all kinds of suffering including the sexual harassment by the rogues of society in each step.

Dickens is ambivalent towards women while representing them in the novel. Sometimes he is sympathetic to some women characters seeing their pathetic condition while sometimes he becomes socially biased towards some strong women characters that go against the patriarchal ideology. While representing the female characters in the novel we find his sympathy as well as his societal biases towards women which makes him an ambivalent writer towards women. We find his sympathy towards the weak female characters such as Nell, Mrs. Quilip and his biasness towards the strong female characters like Miss Brass, Mrs. Jinwin. So, while representing the female characters in the novel he has become ambivalent towards them.

The novel presents socio-economic problems in that time such as poverty-stricken people, the helpless condition of an orphanage in Victorian England, child labor, women exploitation, prostitution, huge class gap, etc. The novel contains so many characters who come from the low-class background while few characters come from the upper-middle-class background but these few characters belonging to the class of wealth and power have control over the poor and powerless character from low-class background. The old man who is obsessed gambler Nell Trent is the embodiment of Angelic qualities, Daniel Quilip the embodiment of demonic forces Mrs. Quilip is true to portray of an idealistic wife according to patriarchy. Fredrick Trent the irresponsible wastrel brother of Nell, Dick Swiveller is emotional. Mr. Sampson Brass is insensitive while Miss Brass is also insensitive and masculine women. Fate plays a vital role in the novel which makes Miss Nell born in a poor class and it is the fate that takes her mother away and makes her orphan be left in the hand of her gambler grandfather who is over ninety and poverty-stricken. Instead of looking after her grandfather, she manages everything for him like an elderly mother

it is the poverty that makes her grandfather a gambler his gambling obsession is actually to collect money for Nell to get rid of her poverty and so that she can live a comfortable life. In the name of gaining money, he loses everything almost the time his fate makes him a loser. He lost everything he had in gambling due to which they had to leave their hometown to the countryside to live life as a beggar. Due to too many hardships Nell ultimately dies she is the person to whom fate makes her to born in poverty and to die in poverty. Through the moral characters like Nell, Kit, Kit's mother, Dickens shows how morality and humanitarian values exist even in most deplorable conditions of poverty while the characters like Mr. Quilip, Sampson Brass, Mrs. Brass who comes from rich class background loses the morality and humanitarian values.

Dickens has not represented his good women characters and bad women characters moderately in this novel. His female characters are either too good or virtuous like Nell and Mrs. Quilip who are too good to identify them with an angel in the family or too many wicked women like Miss Brass who is occasionally referred to as a female dragon. Dickens conservative attitude towards women can be justified as Gilbert and Gunbar in *The Madwomen in Attic* comment on Dickens:

“Likewise, Dickens also creates the characters that represent the extremes of cultural hegemony, the pure women or the women who is confronted by ‘fear’ or ‘loathing’ the images of ‘angel’ and ‘monster’ have been so ubiquitous throughout literature by men and much preference is always given to the ideal women who are usually an embodiment of true feminist as shaped by patriarchy.” (Gilbert & Guber 1998, p.812)

Dickens creates both the Victorian angel in the house through the portrayal of Miss Nell and Mrs. Quilip and also the subversion of true female identity through Miss Shaly Brass. He prefers the women like Miss Nell and Mrs. Quilip who have pity, tolerance, love, submissiveness which makes them an Angel in the family while he seems to highly condemn Miss Shaly Brass who is a strong and revolutionary woman. She seems to lose feminine virtues and traits as defined by a patriarchy so she has been categorized as a demonic woman in the family. This way of categorizing the women as Angel and demons are extreme, parochial, and patriarchal. Simplicity, calmness, gentleness in women are adored by Dickens while he hates the women lacking these feminine qualities in them and categorized them as Demonic women. In this novel, Miss Brass has been presented lacking these kinds of feminine virtues in her to be categorized as a demonic woman in the family. This shows Dickens' agreements towards the Victorian patriarchal ideologies. In such a society, women are either highly valorized to the level of an angel or so deeply condemned to the level of a demon.

Discussion

The writer shows if women are given power, they become more violent and tyrannical in the case of Miss Brass who is the main authority in Brass law firm. She

has lost the female virtues like pity, tolerance, love, gentleness, and simplicity and become masculine. Miss Shally Brass behaves so harshly and rudely to the people below her level. She even bosses her brother Mr. Brass who is cowed by her. This shows Miss Sally is masculine and bossy in nature and she is different from other ideal females like Miss Nell and Miss Quilip who are full of feminine virtues like love, pity, gentleness, sympathy, and submissiveness. Miss Brass inhuman treatment towards her maidservant Marchioness is so much pathetic that the poor innocent maidservant is not even given enough food to fulfill her appetite. This makes Miss Brass too much wicked with loss of humanitarian feelings which makes the writer represent her as a female dragon. The writer here represents Miss Marchioness so much wicked to associate herself not with the ordinary human being but with the devil-like creature that has lost all kinds of human feelings of love, pity, sympathy towards the helpless and destitute ones. Similarly, in the text Dick Swiveller frequently refers to Miss Brass as a female dragon:

“Of no use asking the dragon thought Dick one day, as he sat contemplating the features of Miss Sally Brass I suspect if I asked any question on that head, or alliance would be at an end. I wonder whether she is a dragon by the by, or something in the mermaid way. She has rather a scaly appearance. But Mermaids are fond of looking themselves in glass, which she can't be, and they have a habit of combing their hair which she hasn't. No, she's a dragon.” (Dickens 350)

Through the utterance of the character, Dick Swiveller writer has represented Miss Brass as a female dragon. He metaphorically represents Miss Brass women as a dragon which shows the writers' conservative attitude towards women and his agreement to the patriarchal ideologies which heightens women's level to the angel or condemns them to the level of Monster.

Victorian society had certain perceptions about the good or ideal women who were heightened to the level of either goddess or angel in family and such society always taught the women to be an ideal daughter, wife, and mother throughout their life. Regarding this idea Virginia Woolf comments on her book *A Room of One's Own*:

“She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming she was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrifices herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the leg. If there was a drought, she sat in it, in short, she was so constituted that she never had a mind or wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all I need not say it she was pure.” (Woolf 1929, p.168)

Ellen Miller Casey comments on her book *Review of Dissenting Women in Dickens Novels: the Subversion of Domestic Ideology and Dickens and Imagination*:

“Charles Dickens among other nineteenth-century writers took the liberty of expressing their perception of the society in which they lived through their writings.

Brenda Ayres argues that Dickens both advocated and resisted patriarchy, overtly promoting the ideology of domesticity while covertly subverting that ideology especially through his presentation of a typical woman." (Casey 1999, p.704)

In the text, he seems to emphasize greatly the Victorian patriarchal ideology where he highly supports and shows his sympathetic feelings towards the weak female characters like Miss Nell and Mrs. Quilip who seems to surrender themselves to the patriarchal ideology while he shows his negative attitude towards the strong and revolutionary female character Miss Brass who seems to deny herself to follow the patriarchal norms and values in the text. In the Victorian society, patriarchal ideology of the women as an angel or virgin was highly emphasized. Regarding to the above mention idea Steven Seidman makes a comment in his article *The Power of Desire and the Danger of Pleasure: Victorian Sexuality Reconsidered* "The Victorian society denied any forms of sexual feelings in women and restricted the role of sex to a procreative one." (Seidman 1990, p.47)

Findings

In Victorian society, the home was an important sphere and in the domestic sphere, it outlines the relation between husband and wife, and it outlined the relations between husband and wife on a larger scale. So, domestic ideology was highly emphasized on women while male spends most of the time in outside business being carefree about domestic affairs. Regarding the above mention idea Ruckert Katie comments on his book *Women a Law, Women's Issues Then and Now*:

"The ideology of the home was greatly emphasized by the Victorians and they also believed that it was important to preserve the Identity of the home even at the cost of demeaning any claim by adult women, daughters, and wives to social and legal equality, individuality or rights independent of the men they are attached to." (Katie 2002, p.174)

The Law of Victorian society deprived women of the right to property so Victorian women were dependent upon a male member in their family as a means of their survival. Regarding the above mention idea Mary Lindon Shanley comments on the book *Feminism, Marriage, and the Law in Victorian England*:

"In Victorian society, married women could not independently sign contracts nor draft valid wills and any married women property legally belonged to her husband. Unfortunately, marriage did not entirely offer economic stability and independence for women since Victorian society was very patriarchal. There were laws which forced women to be subservient to their husbands, for example, the common law doctrines of covertures, which the Victorians felt defined roles ordained by the natural and theological order which meant that through marriage man and woman became one person." (Shanley 1993, p.102)

In the industrial Victorian society women for the first time went outside their home to handle the job and became a career woman. It was the time when women started to become career conscious and economically independent. Regarding above mention idea, Beddoe comments in his book *Discovering Women's History: A Practical Guide to Researching the Lives of Women since 1800* "The industrial revolution brought about change in focus on women labor. Women had the opportunity to explore prospects outside the family establishment or even earn money" (Beddoe 1998, p.92). Economic independence in women makes women strong and revolutionary searching for their rights and freedom so the writer likes Charles Dickens who prefer women to remain within domestic affairs he mostly portrays women in his text who are economically dependent on a male member in the family so that they remain subservient to the males in the families which shows his support to the patriarchal assumptions about women. Regarding the above mention idea Elaine Showalter makes a comment on the book *A Literature of Their Own* "Dickens does not depict female characters who have economic liberty as those expressed by later feminist writers. His female characters are women who are yearning for financial freedom, unlike the modern women who are independent and self-sufficient" (Showalter 1997, p.9)

Lack of women's education not only degrades the women's status in society but such condition degrades the whole society. Regarding this idea first feminist mother of feminism Mary Wollstonecraft in her *Vindication of Rights of Women* remarks on the importance of women education in society:

"The importance of education not only for women own personal development is also stated in her preface that my main argument is built on this simple principle that if 'women' not prepared by education to become the companion of man she will stop the progress of knowledge and virtues for truth must be common to all, she contends that society will degenerate without educated women particularly mothers are the primary educators of young children." (Wollstonecraft 2008, p.70)

In the text, we find the condition of women's education is so poor. Miss Nell who even has not crossed her teenage is expected to get married while Mrs. Quilip is also a married at so young age with Mr. Quilip. Education is important for the psychological and economic development of the individual. Lack of education in these two women has made them economically dependent on their parents or husbands and psychologically they are more conservative who surrender themselves to the patriarchal ideology. Such condition of them has degraded their status and make them weak as a result male member got chance to dominate and exploit them so male too have degraded themselves due to the lack of women education and the society as a whole seems to degenerate and degrade.

In Victorian society, marriage was highly based on money. Parents of the young girls always think their daughters to get married to a good fortune gentleman so that they can live an economically secure life. Regarding this idea Mary

Wollstonecraft comments in her book *Vindication of Rights of Women*, "Girls marry merely to better themselves to borrow a significant vulgar phrase and have such perfect power over their hearts as not to permit themselves to fall in love till a man with a superior fortune offers" (Wollstonecraft 2008, p.75). In *The Old Curiosity Shop*, the young girls are expected to get a good fortune husband. In the case of Miss Nell, her grandfather Mr. Trent always thinks his granddaughter Miss Nell to get married to a rich gentleman so that she could be financially secure to live a comfortable and happy life then after.

In the patriarchal society, the male is the primary sex while the female is the secondary sex. In such a society, women are socially, politically, and economically subordinate to the male.

Although there is a biological difference between male and female there is no strong point to say that female is weaker than the male because women can do all the things that man can but it is the society which denies developing such kinds of ability to women. They are suppressed by the patriarchal norms and assumptions from the very beginning of their life in the patriarchal family system as well as patriarchal society which only encourages and force women to follow domestic ideologies instead of teaching them to develop their ability and skills as a man. Regarding the above mention idea Simone De Beauvoir comments in her book *The Second Sex*:

"A woman knows how to be as active, effective and silent as a man. She says that women handle masculine logic 'as skillfully as man if she has to'. But her situation keeps her being useful, preparing food, clothes and lodging. She worries because she does not do anything, she complains, she cries, and she may threaten suicide. She protests but doesn't escape her lot" (De Beauvoir 1953, p.72).

The female character like Miss Brass shows that women can be as capable and efficient as males in society. She is a professional woman like a male. Being a career woman, she is economically independent and so she is independent in her decision and action like a male. She is the main authority in Brass law firm. Her brother although is a male cannot take the independent decision and opinion to run the office without her help. Miss Brass is more efficient and capable to run the office than male members in her law firm. She can handle the office being the head of the office while other male employees are dependent on her.

Conclusion

This research shows that if in the family and the society women are given the same environment as male are given then women also can develop their ability and skills as male and become equal to male. Miss Brass is unlike the weak female characters like Miss Nell and Mrs. Quilip who surrender themselves to the patriarchal ideology because from their very beginning they got the patriarchal teaching in the family and in the society which they follow as the ideology of their

own life. So these women are unable to develop their ability and liberal thinking as males. Through this novel, Dickens tries to show the true life of English Victorian society. The book can also be looked like an attempt made by Dickens for social reform by making those ruling class people enlighten about the social problems. Thus this analysis shows that the life of socially disadvantaged groups such as women, workers, and children was very pathetic during the English Victorian period. The lower class people were exploited and dehumanized by those rich class people and Dickens writes in the favor of those destitute, women, and children hoping for the uplifting of the socio-economic status of these groups.

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