



Tracing the voices of Resistance: Representation of tormented Girlhood in select Novels of Dickens

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Abstract— Charles Dickens is famous for his depiction of stereotypical female characters like Dora, Emily, Agnes, Amy, Florence, Nancy, Esther, Estella, Biddy etc. Interestingly, there are a number of girls in a few novels of Dickens who can however not be reduced into any of the above stereotypes as they do not conform to the standards of the Victorian society with ease. They are represented as characters voicing out their repressed state of existence from which they strongly desire to escape. Although these characters are generally seen as minor characters, they are shown to be much in tune with the voices of dissent raised against the patriarchal role of the Victorian society in terms of the restrictions that it imposes on girls from their childhood. This study will try to talk about the oppressed and traumatic childhood of a select set of Dickensian novels. It will focus upon the characters like Caddy Jellyby from *Bleak House*, Kate Nickleby from *Nicholas Nickleby*, Tattycoram from *Little Dorrit* and trace these early voices of resistance raised against their tormented girlhood as depicted in the novels. This study will also deal with the various dimensions of the nineteenth century Victorian idea of the girl child and the discourses associated with the sex and gender issues of the age while trying to locate the position of Dickens in his manner of representation of the above mentioned characters in the relevant novels.



Keywords— deprivation, distress, feminine ideal, patriarchal role, sex and gender.

I. INTRODUCTION

While writing about the concept of the Victorian women in her book *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*, Deborah Gorham talks about the cult of domesticity which insisted in the concept of ‘a separate sphere’ for women with a ‘distinct set of roles’ (p. 4) in the Victorian age. According to her, between the public and the private, it was “the private sphere of love, the emotions and domesticity was defined as the sphere of the women” (Gorham, 2012, p. 4). The general idea behind the Victorian idealisation of womanhood would actually begin to find its initial reflection in the domestic space of the Victorian family which particularly echoed in the roles of parenting and upbringing of the girl child in it. Gorham elaborates on how it was essential for the women of the Victorian age to remain within the domestic sphere like the family to perform her duties through which the social

status of the patriarchal male would be reflected in a Victorian English society (p. 6-8). She writes

Through the creation of an appropriate domestic environment, and through the management of social life, women at all levels of the middle class were responsible for assuring that the private sphere acted as an effective indicator of status in the public sphere. Through the family, then, middle- class females played a central role in determining the social status of the males with whom they were connected, just as they played a central role in functioning of the cult of domesticity. (Gorham, 2012, p. 8)

Gorham brings in the concept of the prescribed roles for the Victorian daughters as holding the key to their future and she also mentions that the prescribed feminine ideal for the Victorian middle-class daughter of the house was to fit into the conventions of being “the sheltered flower, a creature whose role in the home was to adorn it and assist in its maintenance” as it was never expected of her to participate in the public sphere for she was supposed to remain within the confines of domesticity throughout her life (p. 11). As Gorham puts it, “the cult of domesticity depended not only on an image of the ideal wife, but also on an image of the ideal daughter” and the family, although ideally considered to be a matter of the private sphere, could not however be completely separated from the impact of the public sphere as the economical and political developments would have their own influence on it. Thus being part of the domestic sphere it was not only the wives but also the daughters who would be influenced by the public within the private sphere of the family space.

Novels written and published during the reign of Queen Victoria in England are characteristically known for their depiction of the Victorian society in its various shades. Charles Dickens, being considered to be one of the master novelists of the Victorian age is also famous for portraying a significant number of female characters in his novels. As Robin Gilmour remarks, the female stereotypes of the Victorian age included the categories of ‘the Angel in the House’, ‘the Fallen Woman’, ‘the Madwoman’, ‘the Siren’ and ‘the Criminal’ into which women of the period were classified (p. 189). A majority of the female characters in the novels of Dickens in spite of displaying some amount of diversity too can be categorically read as individuals either conforming to the prevailing stereotypes of the Victorian age or in pursuit of achieving those stereotypical roles in their lives. Catherine Waters in her essay ‘Gender, family, and domestic ideology’ writes

Dickens’s fictional representations of the family have traditionally been examined as an index to social realities . . . his novels can be assigned a more active role in the discursive construction of the family and of gendered identity . . . and rather than assessing the faithfulness of their correspondence to reality, his novels must be understood in more dynamic terms. (p.122)

The domestic world in Dickensian novels are indeed shown to have been dominated by the role of the home-making woman embodied in female characters like Little Nell, Agnes Wickfield, Esther Summerson, Little Dorrit,

Florence Dombey and a few other characters who can actually help in the establishment and maintenance of the patriarchal stereotype of the ‘Angel in the house’. Interestingly, these few female characters along with many more are initially represented as good daughters of the family to which they belong. As Catherine Waters opines in ‘Gender, family, and domestic ideology’ “The representation of these domestic angels helps to define the middle-class ideal of the family in opposition to the values and practices held to characterize social groups” (p. 123). Although deprived of the desired amount of love and affection from their family particularly from their parental figures, the above mentioned female characters are represented as submissive daughters of the middle class families of the Victorian age. Little Nell from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Agnes from *David Copperfield*, Dorrit from *Little Dorrit*, Florence from *Dombey and Son* and Louisa from *Hard Times* can be seen as the epitome of domestic virtue with what Catherine Waters calls as the “everpresence of the Good Angel, the constancy of the ‘same sweet girl’ in her ministry of domestic devotion . . .” (p. 126). Besides these domestic angels, Dickens had also depicted daughters like Estella (*Great Expectations*) and Emily (*David Copperfield*) who cannot be categorized into the stereotypical image of the ‘Angel in the house’ owing to the complicated life that they are made to lead. Although victims to the evils of the Victorian society, failing to realize about its impact in the beginning these girls suffer a tragic fate in the due course of the novel. Emily and Rosa stereotypically represent the ‘Fallen Women’ in *David Copperfield*. Nancy and Rose Maylie are representations of the criminal women in *Oliver Twist* by Dickens. Apart from the brief list of characters already referred here, there also remain a number of extraordinary female characters in few of the novels written by Dickens who can however not be categorized into any of the stereotypes as neither do they completely conform to the established standards nor are they able to totally escape from those stereotypical conventions in their life. They chose to raise their voices against the distress of their tormenting girlhood. This paper is going to be a reading of three such female characters from a select group of novels of Dickens whose voices of resistance are not much in tune with the contemporary ideology of domesticity as they seem to resist their status of being oppressed at certain decisive moments in their lives.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE

This paper is going to trace three different voices of resistance from three different novels written at several time periods in the life of Dickens. It will explore three

daughter figures from these three novels. Kate Nickleby from *Nicholas Nickleby*, Caddy Jellyby from *Bleak House* and Tattycoram from *Little Dorrit* and their experiences as represented in the novels will become the matter of discussion in this paper. Although none of them are the principal characters, these girls are significant in terms of the position that they occupy in the novels owing to the voices of resistance that they are made to display during the most vulnerable moments of their life. Interestingly these three novels can be used to explore three different kinds of portrayals of the figure of the Victorian daughter in three different ways. Kate Nickleby is a fatherless daughter in the novel with a helpless mother and an adult but inexperienced elder brother in the novel; Caddy Jellyby in *Bleak House* is the eldest daughter of the Jellyby family and Tattycoram is the adopted foundling companion to the daughter of the Meagles family in *Little Dorrit*. In spite of being characters from three different novels, these three girls have similarity in their experiences of being tormented by circumstances in their girlhood. None of these three girls can be reduced to any single stereotypes used for the classification of women in the Victorian age as they can actually raise their voice to speak about the kind of discomfort that they feel while staying within a particular kind of domestic space. Although Kate, Caddy and Tattycoram have three different life stories to tell, a story of deprivation runs through their narrative which unites them in one single pattern. Kate Nickleby is a victim of her Uncle Ralph Nickleby's plan which does not go unanswered by Kate who despite being a feeble and unprotected child is able to strike the conscience of his uncle through her pleas. Caddy Jellyby is a victim of her mother's eccentric manner of considering her philanthropic concerns for Africa to be more important than the duties and responsibilities of being a homemaker. Tattycoram's story in *Little Dorrit* is a bit different one as Tatty being an adopted child in the Meagles family appears to be vocal about what she considers to be of an inferior position in comparison to their daughter's in the family. Tattycoram appears to have been struggling with her unhappiness in the Meagles family and she eventually starts to live with Miss Wade but is shown to reconcile with the Meagles before the ending of the novel.

III. THE NOVELS: DISCUSSION

To begin with the novels, in Chapter 19 of *Nicholas Nickleby*, Nicholas's sister Kate is shown to modestly protest about her displeasure on being unwillingly exposed to Sir Mulberry's harassing advances when left in her Uncle Ralph Nickleby's dinner party on the circumstance.

"What is this?" said Ralph.

'It is this, sir,' replied Kate, violently agitated: 'that beneath the roof where I, a

helpless girl, your dead brother's child, should most have found protection, I have been exposed to insult which should make you shrink to look upon me. Let me pass you.'

Ralph did shrink, as the indignant girl fixed her kindling eye upon him

(Dickens, p.236)

A victim of abuse and harassment within her own uncle's house Kate's narrative perhaps provides the readers with one of the most vulnerable issues among all of the Dickensian novels. A precursor to Agnes Wickfield's narrative of being Wickham's victim in *David Copperfield*, Kate has no David to save her from the distress but she herself alone who can meekly protest about her helplessness to her uncle after bearing the torment of being treated as a 'matter of business' by him at the dinner party. Chapter 19 of *Nicholas Nickleby* indeed has one of the most remarkable of all the other chapters in the novel as it makes the adolescent and vulnerable fatherless girl discover her own voice of resistance against the humiliations faced by her from Sir Mulberry and others at the dinner party. Michael Slater in his *Dickens and Women* classifies Kate Nickleby with three other Dickensian female characters that represent the image of Mary Hogarth through their "beautiful, sympathetic, devoted, self-sacrificing" nature. Slater writes

The 'Marys' – Rose Maylie, Kate Nickleby, Madeline Bray, Mary Graham – are

beautiful, sympathetic, devoted, self-sacrificing seventeen- year- olds, a

succession of stained- glass memorials to Mary Hogarth as she had become

angelically transformed in Dickens's mind. . . Kate, Madeline and Mary Graham

all have to endure the hot breath, and hot hands, of evil men. . .(p.234)

Slater also mentions that characters like Kate receive moral approval from the writer as they are represented as strong and resolute in love for their male relations (234). Kate is indeed a timid adolescent girl of fourteen years or so when her father dies leaving her under the supposed care of an unemployed nineteen year old elder brother Nicholas and their widowed mother, the family begins to look up to Ralph Nickleby in times of need. Nicholas eventually is employed as a teacher in the Dotheboys Hall and Kate, although still a child is trained by Miss Knag

and other previously employed girls of Miss Mantalini to become a milliner as this was one of the few available jobs for penniless young women of the time. Since the death of her father in the novel, Kate had already been going through a lot of distress and her new employment adds to another set of humiliations and bitterness in her life. Burdened under the necessity of getting employed, Kate is unable to refuse her laborious apprenticeship at Miss Mantalini's at the tender age of fourteen and thus is forced to participate in the public sphere like most other unfortunate girls of her time.

Dickens also brings the distress associated with 'women workers in the clothing industry' in which they were exploited into accepting extremely poor conditions with little time to rest or attend their own needs in proper time. Preoccupied with the hardships of her engagement, Kate has to disguise her real feelings in front of her mother. Her distress as shown in the novel with her new occupation does not end when she is invited to be present in a dinner party at her Uncle Ralph's place 'to keep house for him' (Dickens, 225) during a gentlemen's party. Although Kate is reluctant to go with Ralph, her mother's insistence convinces her to act according to Ralph's wish. Kate is expected by her mother and Uncle to abide by the patriarchal role assigned to daughters in the Victorian era. Most importantly, Mrs. Nickleby hopes that her daughter might get the opportunity of winning some good fortune due to her good impression with Ralph. Kate is made to dress up well for the occasion and is indeed taken aback by the fact that there are no ladies except she herself.

'Pray, uncle,' said Kate, a little flurried, as people much more conversant with society often are, when they are about to enter a room full of strangers, and have had time to think of it previously, 'are there any ladies here?'

'No,' said Ralph, shortly, 'I don't know any.'
(Dickens, 2011, p.228)

Indeed there were no other female figures in Ralph's house on that day in which Kate was exposed to a bunch of abusive men at her uncle's house. Kate is subjected to repeated insults as she is considered to be someone with whom liberty can be taken owing to the fact that she appears to have no one to protect her while participating in the public sphere. Although being next in relation of a guardian to Kate after her deceased father, Ralph Nickleby himself chooses to transgress the role of a parent over here. Kate is initially reluctant to show her displeasure out of the role that patriarchy imposes upon all women accepting the male dominance in their lives. Kate too is unable to speak up in the beginning out of her gratitude

towards her Uncle without realizing that her torment was actually planned by Ralph himself. Kate, although meek and gentle is however successful in raising the conscience of her uncle regarding his duty and he is reminded of his brother's face on seeing Kate's helpless condition. Kate Nickleby may be a vulnerable victim of patriarchy but her resistive nature culminates in her ability to raise question about the conduct of her uncle under whose protection she should have felt comfortable. The complicated structure of human relationship can become an area of further reading through its presentation in this part of the novel.

Caddy Jellyby from *Bleak House* is another example of the girl child expressing dissatisfaction on her own situation in her own family due to her mother Mrs. Jellyby's strange nature of nurturing philanthropic interests in the social and economic development of Africa is shown to hamper her domestic peace. The author calls it Mrs. Jellyby's 'telescopic philanthropy' as the Jellyby family is introduced in the chapter by the same name. The Jellyby household is all in complete disarray when Esther arrives there for the first time and Caddy Jellyby being the eldest daughter of the house seems to have been mostly affected by her mother's negligence as she detests the general condition of the house. All the children in the Jellyby family are neglected as none of their parents seem to be having much interest in the affairs of the family and all of them seem to be on their own. Amidst the disorganised structure of the Jellyby house, Esther was drawn by Caddy's appearance from the very beginning of the novel. She says

But what principally struck us was a jaded and unhealthy-looking, though by no means plain girl, at the writing-table, who sat biting the feather of her pen, and staring at us, I suppose nobody ever was in such a state of ink. And, from her tumbled hair to her pretty feet, which were disfigured with frayed and broken satin slippers trodden down at heel, she really seemed to have no article of dress upon her. . . (p. 38)

Caddy's despair arises chiefly out of the fact that she is unable to enrich herself on account of being preoccupied with her mother's enormous amount of paper work which she has to look after so that her mother's 'African Project' can keep functioning. On the night in which Esther and Ada come to stay at the Jellyby's, Caddy finds a moment to express her despair at the kind of life she has to follow in the Jellyby household. Caddy's loneliness becomes the reason of her friendship with Esther and Ada. On getting a

chance to express her disgust with her present situation, she explains

“I wish Africa was dead!” she said, on a sudden.

I was going to remonstrate.

“ I do!” she said. Don’t talk to me, Miss Summerson. I hate it and detest it. It’s a beast!” . . .

But knows a quantity, I suppose? Can dance, and play music and sing? She can talk

French, I suppose, and do geography, and globes, and needlework, and

everything?” . . .

“I can’t,” she returned. “I can’t do anything hardly, except write. I’m always writing

for Ma. (Dickens, 44)

Caddy Jellyby is almost on the verge of crying after this episode. Her deep anguish on realizing that Ada, despite being an orphan is so much more accomplished than she is generates her anguish for her present condition. At this juncture, she exclaims that “The whole house is disgraceful” and her next exclamation “I wish I was dead!” she broke out. “I wish we were all dead. It would be a great deal better for us” (p.44). Caddy breaks in tears in front of Esther after these words.

Caddy’s tormented girlhood in her family is due to an improper upbringing that all the Jellyby children go through. Mrs. Jellyby’s utilizes Caddy’s skill for her African project by keeping her entire family deprived of the immediate needs that they require from her as a mother and mistress of the family. Caddy is thus a victim of her family’s negligence and opens up about it to Esther. Caddy even goes as far as complaining about the inappropriate role of her mother to Esther by breaking the stereotypical concept of a docile and timid daughter of the house. Although she is unable to protest about it in front of her parents, she confides on Esther regarding the inappropriate role of the parental figures in her life. Once again Dickens gives a very brief instance of an exceptional scene in which the daughter of the house becomes the voice of resistance against the parental authority within the house. It will be apparent from the following conversation

“O! Don’t talk of duty as a child, Miss Summerson; where’s Ma’s duty as a parent?

All made over to the public and Africa, I suppose! Then let the public and Africa

show duty as a child; it’s much more their affair than mine. You are shocked, I

dare say!(Dickens, 1977, p. 47)

Much in tune with that of Jane Eyre, Caddy has that air of intelligence in her which can question the mechanisms of the world. She is called as the ‘angriest daughter’ by Hillary Schor in her book *Dickens and the Daughter of the House* (p.109). Caddy enjoys some kind of empowerment for being granted a protesting voice against the eccentric ways of her family. Caddy even thinks of getting married to Mr. Turveydrop in order to escape from her mother’s African project for she remarks “It won’t much agitate Ma; I am only pen and ink to her. One great comfort is,” said Caddy, with a sob, “that I shall never hear of Africa after I am married” (Bleak House, 1977, p.169).

The next and perhaps the most intriguing character for this study would be Tattycoram from *Little Dorrit*. Tattycoram is an adopted child in the Meagles family. Regarding her inclusion into the Meagles family it comes to be known that Tattycoram was a foundling adopted from the Foundling Hospital to become a companion of their daughter Pet Meagles. Tatty’s narrative highlights the philanthropic nature of Victorian families who would find comfort in the adoption of orphans, if not to let them acquire the position of their son or daughters but become members of the family in some way. The irony in Tattycoram’s case lies in the fact that inspite of Mr Meagles being self satisfied for saving Tattycoram from the Foundling Hospital she feels deprived of the equal amount of care as she can find being showered on Pet Meagles, the daughter of the Meagles family. Clennam notices the bitterness in Tatty’s eyes on several occasion of his visit to the Meagles family. Tatty choses to express her resentment on witnessing the indulgent nature of the Meagles parents for their daughter Pet as Clennam notices the anguish on Tatty’s face when she witnesses the Meagles family picture with Pet on it. The narrator in Chapter 16 of *Little Dorrit* mentions about Arthur Clennam witnessing Caddy’s distress

The picture happened to be near a looking-glass. As Arthur looked at it again, he saw,

by the reflection of the mirror, Tattycoram stop in passing outside the door, listen to

what was going on, and pass away with an angry and contemptuous frown upon her

face that changed its beauty into ugliness. (p. 186)

Although instances from the novel do not show the Meagles family being rude to Tattycoram under any circumstances, it is her own displeasure of being a foundling growing up in an adopted family always demanding some kind of allegiance from her every time by

reminding about her reality. Tatty is deprived of a true family and her torment arises from the fact that she is not treated on equal terms with Pet Meagles. For Jenny Bourne Taylor, “hovering on the margins on the narrative, the alternately rebellious and self- abnegating Tattycoram disturbingly embodies the contradictory dynamics of passion and repression” (p. 209). Tattycoram desires to leave the house of the Meagles particularly after meeting with Miss Wade. Her character becomes an allusion to Caddy Jellyby’s outburst to Esther on getting relieved after leaving the Jellyby household, and in her “obsessive pattern of self assertion” to speak against her supposed confinement she resembles Jane Eyre to some extent (Taylor, 2001, p. 209). Since *Little Dorrit* is about the lives of people with the prison, the theme of ‘inner confinement’ runs through Tatty’s sense of being imprisoned among the Meagles. As Jenny Bourne Taylor notes “Tattycoram . . . brings together and extends the novel’s concerns with social and psychic confinement. . . (p. 210)”. Tatty is unable to bear the burdens of goodness that the Meagles have exercised upon her and is aware of her appendages to them. Tatty’s identity goes through a process of omission and reclamation as she is renamed by the Meagles from Harriet Beadle to Hatty and finally to Tattycoram to become the maid and companion to Pet Meagles. The practice of changing names has been associated with a repression of identities also and Tattycoram finds her identity always being overshadowed by the the presence of Pet Meagles. In the strange practice of counting five and twenty which Mr Meagles keeps on insisting whenever Tatty is on the verge of voicing her resistive nature, it can be observed that Tatty being a foundling is always be expected to have the most submissive form of temperament towards her relation with the Meagles family. Her stature is diminished to that of a ‘passionate girl’ owing to her excited nature. Tatty’s upbringing although much better in comparison to what the conventional Victorian daughters like Florence Dombey or Louisa Bounderby faced, Dickens perhaps desired to show an extraordinary literary instance of a foundling girl child who eventually is taken by the dominating companionship of Miss Wade but retreats to the domestic space of the family by the end of the novel.

The fact that Miss Wade is known to Tattycoram is in itself a matter of great concern for the Meagles. Tatty reveals how Miss Wade has tried to befriend her by writing to her first. It is at this moment that Tatty’s touch gets reproached by Pet and this establishes her reluctance at not being able to consider Tatty an equal within the family. Tatty is taken in by Miss Wade’s manner of offering support during emotional turmoils. Tattycoram says “So she wrote to me to say that if I ever felt myself

hurt,” . . . or found myself worried . . . I might go to her, and be considerably treated” (Dickens, p. 188). Tatty is asked to count five and twenty by Mr Meagles to calm her down. The next reference to Tatty appears in Chapter 27 of the novel when it comes to be known that Tatty has left the Meagles home after a heated argument expressing her dissatisfaction with the Meagles. Mr. Meagles describes the incident to Clennam in *Little Dorrit*

We presently heard this unfortunate Tattycoram loud and angry, and before we could

ask what was the matter, Pet came back in a tremble, saying she was frightened of

her. Close after her came Tattycoram in a flaming rage. “I hate you all three,” says

she, stamping her foot at us. “I am bursting with hate of the whole house”. (Dickens,

1996, p.305)

Mr Meagles is sympathetic of Tattycoram’s deprivation as while explaining her condition to Clennam he refers to Tatty’s tormented past in which she never had the chances of being “caressed and cared for in her childhood like her young mistress” (305). Mr. Meagles also realizes that when everybody in the house would have talked about their parents, it must have been equally tormenting for Tatty whose sense of deprivation and inability to find recognition among the Meagles makes her desperate to seek refuge in Miss Wade’s companionship. Quite interestingly Dickens has used the plot of the foundling’s being separated and reunited in other novels like *David Copperfield* in which Emily, like Tatty, taken in by the imaginary promises of Steerforth lands into great trouble. In case of *Little Dorrit*, Tatty is also misguided by Miss Wade’s promises of companionship and leaves the Meagles family. Peter Preston in his introduction to the text claims that in spite of granting Tattycoram the essential “intelligence to perceive and eventually articulate her position” she is not offered the means of escape as Miss Wade is represented in a ‘negative light’ whose ‘motives of liberating Tattycoram are highly dubious’ (Dickens, 1996, xix). The kind of relationship that is developed between Tatty and Wade is also an allusion to the kind of power that Miss Havisham had exercised over Estella in *Great Expectations*. Tatty serves a binary to Amy Dorrit who is the stereotypical representation of a Victorian daughter never being resistive to her fate of being confined in the prison since her childhood. Tatty is a brief marginalized representation of what Amy could have been but Dickens does not allow Amy to lose her innate innocence despite all hardships. Tattycoram even raises her voice against Miss Wade when she realizes that Wade

has made Tatty her dependent and all she wants is to have Tatty in her control. Miss Wade considers her own position superior to that of Tatty for she says

Is that your fidelity to me? Is that the common cause I make with you? You are

not worth the confidence I have placed in you. You are not worth the favour I

have shown you. You are no higher than a spaniel and had better go back

to the people who did worse than whip you. . .

‘Go back to them,’ Miss Wade retorted. ‘Go back to them.’ (Dickens, 1996, p-626)

Tatty’s voice against Miss Wade’s desire to manipulate her is openly resisted in this section of the novel when Tatty expresses her tormenting experience with Miss Wade

You are reproaching me, undemanded with having nobody but you to look to.

And because I have nobody but you to look to, you think you are to make me do, or

not do, everything you please, and are to put any affront upon me. You are as bad as

they were, every bit. But I will not be quite tamed and made submissive. (Dickens,

1996,p- 626)

Tatty refuses to be taken in by Miss Wade’s false friendship and is finally reunited with the Meagles as according to Peter Preston she seems to be ready to “accept her dependence on the patronising but benevolent Meagles than submit to the bullying demands of the faintly depraved Miss Wade” (Little Dorrit xx). Tatty has to accept the rule of five and twenty as she has no other option left other than that.

IV. CONCLUSION

It can however be seen that even when the three characters in this study are allowed some kind of autonomy to speak about their condition, they are not granted any permanent change in the position that they hold in the society. Kate Nickleby has her brother Nicholas to take revenge from Mulberry for her humiliation but there is no change in the gendered notion of the public and private sphere and Kate’s position in it. Caddy chooses to marry her choice but goes through a phase of poverty and hardship after that even when she chooses not to return to her mother. Tatty has to return to the Meagles after discovering Miss Wade’s true nature. Above all even when a voice of resistance is granted to the characters, the writer is unable to resolve the issue

completely owing to the discomfort that lies with the problem in the Victorian age which could probably not allow a complete liberation for its women.

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