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Autobiographical Truth Reflecting the Social Truth of Male and Female Subjectivity in Charles Dickens's *No Thoroughfare*

Charles Dickens'in *No Thoroughfare* Adlı Oyununda Otobiyografik Gerçekliğin Sosyal Bir Gerçeklik Olarak Kadın ve Erkek Öznelliğini Yansıtmaları

Gül KURTULUŞ*

Abstract

When Charles Dickens' less known partner Nelly's life story is scrutinized it can be seen that her life reflects the problematic theme of female subject formation linked with parental relation. In the social world, however, it is the laws of the society that determine the subjectivity of a child. In other words, the world the child exposed to is already interpreted and/or formulated. This forecloses the possibility of becoming either a free or a 'true' subject. Moreover, the subject formation of women in society is more problematic than men since they do not have the privileges men have in the patriarchal society, particularly in the Victorian society. Nelly being an actress, a profession she inherited from her mother and her grandmother had an undeniable influence on Dickens' interest in drama especially after 1850s. This paper dwells on mother-daughter relationship with respect to the child's perception of subject as an independent being or as a restricted being as seen in Nelly's life and explores its traces in Dickens' play, *No Thoroughfare*. The play indicates how females are defined in terms of their sexuality in society. In the play, female characters, who are fictional reflections of Dickens' partner, Nelly, her mother and two actress sisters demonstrate subject formation by confining them to the role of Victorian ladies, and displays the widely accepted association of femininity with compassion, sympathy, intense emotional state as well as their mercenary side against unfeeling, cruel and patriarchal mindset represented by the male characters.

Öz

Charles Dickens'in pek az kişi tarafından bilinen sevgilisi Nelly'nin hayat hikayesi incelendiğinde ortaya çıkan önemli bir konu toplumda kadın cinsinin şekillenmesi sorunsalının anne baba ve çocuk ilişkisiyle bağlantılı olarak Nelly'nin hayatında yansıdığı olacaktır. Oysa ki cemiyet hayatında bir çocuğun öznelliğini oluşturan toplumun koyduğu kurallardır. Bir başka de-

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yişle, çocuğun doğduğu ortam, dünya ya da toplum daha önceden yapılandırılmıştır. Bu durum bireyin özgür veya "gerçek" bir kişilik sergilemesini önler. Kaldı ki, eğer bahsi geçen toplum Viktorya dönemi toplumu ise kadınların öznellik gelişimi erkeklerden çok daha sorunlu olacaktır, zira erkek egemen toplumlarda kadınların erkekler kadar ayrıcalıkları yoktur. Annesinden ve anneannesinden ona geçen mesleği oyunculuğu icra eden Nelly'nin Dickens'in tiyatroya ilgi duymasında özellikle 1850'lerden sonra büyük etkisi olmuştur. Bu makale Nelly'nin hayatında da görülebileceği gibi anne-kız ilişkisiyle bağlantılı bir şekilde çocuğun özgür ya da baskı altında tutulmuş bir birey olarak kendi öznelini oluşturması konusunu Dickens' *No Thoroughfare* adlı oyunu ile ilişkilendirerek ele alır. Oyun kadınların cinsiyetleri temek alınarak toplumda nasıl tanımlandıklarını irdeler. Oyunda Nelly'nin oyuncu olan annesine ve iki kız kardeşine benzer özellikler gösteren kadın karakterlerin Viktorya dönemi kadınları için geçerli kurallar doğrultusunda nasıl özenliliklerinin oluşturulduğu gösterilmektedir. Aynı zamanda oyun zalim, duygusuz ve erkek egemen zihniyeti temsil eden erkek cinsine karşı şefkat, sempati ve yoğun duygusallıkla hareket eden, hem de paragöz kadın cinsinin yaygın olarak kabul gören bu özelliklerinin Viktorya kadınları tarafından nasıl yansıtıldığını açığa çıkarır.

Key terms: Nelly, Charles Dickens and drama, Victorian women, female subject formation, being an actress in Victorian times, women vs men in Dickens' age.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nelly, Charles Dickens ve tiyatro, Viktorya dönemi kadınları, kadın öznelinin oluşması, Viktorya döneminde kadın oyuncu olmak, Dickens'in yaşadığı dönemde kadın ve erkek çatışması

Introduction: Venturous Women on Victorian Stage

There was something cosy and domestic about these arrangements; the women involved were not *femmes fatales* or *cocottes* ... but comfortable, everyday creatures who were grateful enough to have steady men to support them and their children, and modest about their own position and claims. A man, even if he was not a husband, was after all still the best available source of income for a woman (Tomalin, 1991, p. 169).

Women involved in the abovementioned arrangements were actresses and Nelly Ternan as an actress who enjoyed Dickens' partnership in business and in private life was no exception as a victim regarding gender roles assigned to women and men in Victorian times. Actresses were formidable women with hindered positions in social sphere, such as the ambitious actress Fanny and the merry-sister Maria and Nelly, the Ternan girls. Their dreams faded away with the harshness of reality, which dictated the Victorian notion of "a woman." These young girls were in between "the good and the bad". since a career on the stage was nothing but exhibitionism and sin, and thus Fanny had to give up her career and become a docile governess, Maria failed to be the perfect wife as her life was stranded, which led to her health problems. On the other hand, Nelly's reputation was under protection and thus intervened by her sister as Fanny was afraid of the condemnation of the society.

The Ternan girls were defined as "quick eyed," "industrious," "sharp," "aspiring," and "clever," (Tomalin, 1991, p. 155, p. 154, p. 165) when women in the Victorian period

were categorized either by their purity or evil ways. Bad women came to bad ends and this was an expected case for the actresses. The women of the Ternan family represented a different character of woman from the conventional women type of the Victorian period. Their resoluteness to stand up for their rights in the society gave them both freedom and constraint. They had their freedom because they work to earn their own living and to be active in life as much as men, but at the same time they had to deal with the prejudices of the society who looked at their courage to take part in working life actively as a sin.

Victorian England did not leave women with a lot of chances; it was either a man, i.e. a modest income, or little or even no income at all. The arrangements had to be kept secret indeed, and this situation created the problem of isolation. For Nelly as Dickens' mistress, for example, who was twenty-eight in 1867 (Tomalin, 1991, p. 170), but who was with 55 year old Dickens, the opportunities that Dickens provided also required "a life of nervous isolation" (Tomalin, 1991, p. 171), because Dickens had to protect himself as a public figure and a family man. The problematic situation of women, and the accordingly problematic arrangements they had with men out of wedlock took part in Dickens' life who stood up as no exception to the fashion of having mistresses. An affair was not an uncommon happening in the Victorian period despite the "heavy" moral beliefs and public oppression.

Nelly, a blonde and pretty girl, Fanny who was Nelly's eldest sister, and Maria, the middle sister, were the three orphans whose father was a patient in an asylum and whose mother was an actress. They were born into a family that had close ties with theatre, whereas for Dickens from the very early stages in his career when he worked as a reporter to the very end, theatre was a personal interest and enthusiasm. Even as his marriage was breaking up Dickens enjoyed a dashing success as a public entertainer. That was the time Dickens delivered a series of public readings in simple evening dress, standing in the center of the platform, only by gesture, changes of voice and facial expression and as Wilkie Collins explains "he literally electrified the audience." Walking across Westminster Abbey, just before his death, words uttered in a friendly conversation reveals his lifelong passion for the theatre:

"What do you think would be the realization of one of my most cherished day-dreams?" "It would be to hold supreme authority [over a] skilled and noble company." "The pieces should be dealt with according to my pleasure, and touched up here and there in obedience to my own judgment; the players as well as the plays being absolutely under my command. That," he concluded, laughing and glowing, "that's my day-dream." (Johnson, 1964, p. 18)

Birth of children, their inevitable orphan state when they come of age and especially males who develop their personality, authority and consolidate their position in society are Dickens' central preoccupations in many of his works. This paper aims at exploring autobiographical traces as seen in *No Thoroughfare*, a play Dickens collaborated with

Wilkie Collins. First written for the Christmas number of *All The Year Round* in 1867, of the original narrative Dickens had contributed the "Overture" and Act III, Collins Act II and the two authors had collaborated on Act I and IV. The play helped its coauthors receive great acclaim when it was staged at the Adelphi Theatre on December 24th, 1867 and a year later at Mrs F. B. Conway's Park Theatre, Brooklyn. Even after the play had been running for five months at the Adelphi, on his return from his second American trip Dickens suggested poetic sound effects and took the play to Vaudeville Theatre in Paris in June 1868.

Part I: Mothers, Daughters, Actresses, and Mistresses

Dickens' mistress Nelly Ternan's life was full of ordeal. The little orphans had to travel with their mother while she was playing roles in country theatres. Several newspapers wrote about Mrs Ternan's plays and acting, she even worked with Macready, a close friend of Dickens. The Ternans had to live in the lodgings, at the back stages of theatres and on the railway carriages. The orphan girls had little chance of becoming a governess or a nurse but being an actress like their mother and grandmother¹. Not staying in one place for a long time, traveling a lot and earning their own money instead of relying on a male figure brought them a kind of freedom. Had they not traveled and stayed in a real home, they would still be able to go home only at night in late hours which was not acceptable in the marriage life². It is possible that the orphan characters and strong female characters in Dickens' works might be derived from those little orphans and their mother. The situation of actresses and their daughters in social sphere can be observed well through the Ternans' life story. The orphan girls had not much chance but became an actress. They started with small roles in plays for children. Their mother helped them to get ready before the stage. Fanny, the oldest girl, was a good actress like her mother, but she wanted to be a singer. When she failed to make her dream real she had to go back to the small roles. The other girls, Maria and Nelly were expected to have the same destiny.

It was unlikely that they could be governesses or nuns in such circumstances, what is more they were used to have some kind of freedom. Had they not traveled and stayed in

¹ Frances Jarman, Nelly's mother earned more than her husband, Farnan. She was the one who has been offered important roles in plays everyone dies to see like Shakespearean plays. She, too, gives birth to three children and then lost one son and then her husband got mentally ill, which meant she was the only one to take care of her family and to provide for her husband's treatment at the same time.

² Stage world, during the Victorian Period or the time before it, was pretty hard for actors and actresses. It was not an easy task to focus on their work and also being members of their families at the same time. Considering that the economic situation of the late Victorian period was worsening each day with population growing at a large scale thus leaving people no choice but to go hungry because they could not find work or means to live on, the same things could be said of drama players. When people of the Victorian period were thinking about how to survive next day, it would have been a fantasy to expect that people would gladly go and see a play (if they ever had the money or the enthusiasm for that). All this meant that dramatists, actors, and actresses had some troubles making their ends meet or performing their arts with pleasure because of those malignant and worsening conditions of the period.

a real home they would not be able to go home in acceptable hours which was against the practices in any kind of married life. Above all, it was the general assumption in Victorian times that exercise of any talent by a woman in public was a form of prostitution. Yet, women could have some degree of fame and satisfaction in the world of theatre, which would not be achieved by being a housewife. The Ternan girls had grown up in a world full of art and ideas which was totally alien to the other girls who were brought up to be good wives. Therefore, it was not very surprising when the actresses and their daughters failed in their marriages. Fanny became a good example for this assumption. After she got married she had problems with her husband and got divorced only to return to her career³.

There were various difficulties in actresses' lives: They had to rehearse for nine hours a day, even more. They had to deal with doing their hair and make-ups, as well as stitching their dresses and copying their parts. Lodgings where they slept were not usually clean and they had to share the beds. They did not have time for cooking and thus they led obviously unhealthy lives. To earn money and to survive they had to protect their health and had to play their parts in illness or grief when they lost their beloveds. Nelly's life was like that.

Dickens met Nelly first when he prepared a performance of the play *The Frozen Deep* with his collaborator Wilkie Collins. Nelly who was eighteen then had a role as well as her sisters Fanny and Maria. Even though Dickens had a scolding attitude towards Nelly at first, his feelings changed very shortly afterwards as he started to feel sympathy and a love relationship stemmed out of this acquaintance. Dickens had already a wife with whom he had so little in common. Their separation was a brutal one, as Catherine was sent to an asylum and Dickens took the children's care.

In the Victorian Period divorce was regarded as scandalous due to the unfair treatment of the women. Marriage was not romanticized, indeed, as told in the novels of the time. Divorce was not easy to obtain; the only acceptable reason for divorce was adultery, and even then it was only a valid reason for a man. Like most Victorians, Dickens thinks that a woman should devote her life to housekeeping and child care. Regardless of gender, Dickens' works embody echoes of Victorian morality. A good example of this is seen in Dickens' *Great Expectations*, which provided abundant rules for a man who wants to become a gentleman. Pip rises from a country laborer to a gentleman and thus climbs up on the social ladder while striving the rules of Victorian England. Dickens' beliefs and attitudes were typical of his own age.

However, Dickens' attitude to the actresses was vague and uncompromising with the beliefs of his age, while he admired the Ternan family as the women were strong, diligent and willing to be publicly known through theatre. As Tomalin says (1991), "The ambivalence of actresses, the fact that so many of them felt able to break the rules

³ The family structure of Nelly Ternan was matriarchal. Her mother and grandmother survived on their own; they brought up their children without the help of their husbands. The matriarchal structure of the Ternans was rare and set them apart from the general experience of nineteenth century England.

of society without bearing any apparent mark of their guilt - quite the contrary - was precisely what made them so attractive" (p. 79), which projects Dickens' attitude and how he was full of both admiration and criticism for the actresses. On the other hand, Dickens preferred to keep his family members away from public sphere. When his own daughter uttered the opportunity for her to be an actress, Dickens warned her saying: "although there are nice people on the stage, there are some who would make your hair stand on end" (Tomalin, 1991, p. 77). The aim was to protect her from the rumors, ill-deeds and extra-judicial punishment in society. So, Dickens did not follow a different path than the society he lived in, but he showed human traits, psychology and situation in his works to show the society's effect. He was pretty clear about the situation in the Victorian period, but he did not support it as he was against the capitalist system and the Victorian sexual system.

Part II: Rules, Roles, Lifelike Similarities, and Thoroughgoing Denials in *No Thoroughfare*

In Dickens' fiction presentation of wives and female characters in their domestic setting with striking examples of a woman morally guiding and spiritually inspiring or redeeming a husband or a son can be seen. Femininity is defined through its relation to the domestic space, positioning female subjectivity as the domain of affection and sympathy. Nelly Ternan's life was not an upholder of Victorian morals and some female characters in *No Thoroughfare* share similar traits with Nelly. Dickens' characterization of the daring and skilled Marguerite can be seen to a signal change in his attitude towards women. Dickens' praise of Marguerite is in fact his sense of the dangers she poses to men. However, in Act IV, Dickens transforms her into a submissive bride dependent on her husband. *No Thoroughfare* ends with the marriage of Marguerite and Vendale with the announcement of the villainous Obenreizer's death in an avalanche. Although Marguerite shows the bravery and skill of a mountaineer before her marriage and takes action when her male companions do not, she is now the delicate bride "who must not see" what the men around her observe (Nayder, 2002, p. 156). Vendale's marriage to Marguerite serves its purpose defusing the threat of female autonomy and "devaluing the relation between mother and child" (Nayder, 2002, p. 157). Besides, Marguerite secretly follows Vendale and Obenreizer to Switzerland accompanied by Joey, so she shows her skill and her knowledge. The figure of woman is the emotional engine without which male subjectivity would be reduced to an empty interior lacking the capacity to feel and Dickens competently frames the sight of society by employing mystery, an effective language with metaphors, images and proverbial statements with the themes such as honesty, compassion, loyalty and treachery.

Unlike Marguerite, other female characters such as Sally and Madame Dor include a host of maternal surrogates. Their relations to their children are defined as "natural." While discrediting maternal claims, "Dickens generally disparages female autonomy and women who assume the prerogatives of men" (Nayder, 2002, p. 147). Dickens' wife Catherine's life exhibited a similar situation. According to Dickens, Catherine was an unbalanced and a terrible mother.

Dickens, in *No Thoroughfare*, seems to have created female characters, who represent the two types of femininity which aroused in the Victorian period. First type was what is known as the old Victorian women like Madame Dor, who seems inactive and more subservient. The second type is Marguerite who, with the changes the second half of the Victorian period brought along following the Industrial Revolution, is more active and more overt in domestic affairs and in showing affections. Yet these two types are not considered unimportant at all because the Victorian idea of marriage and gender roles require them to be sacrificing, loving, honourable and respected mothers and wives and they are important because they will raise the children who will possibly become good Englishmen to boost the country's welfare.

Madame Dor is the example of a classical Victorian woman, who is probably dressed in a way which is fit for the era. "*Madame Dor has a dirty glove on her hand, which she is cleaning with india rubber. Sitting or standing she always keeps her back turned on the persons about her*" (Dickens, 2013, p. 14). Except for the dressing style, Madame Dor keeps herself away from the company of men or more precisely affection of men because that would be an inappropriate behaviour for a Victorian woman. Obenreizer assures that Madame Dor is the classic Victorian upper-class woman who represents the first half of the era because she is subservient: "The most domestic woman in existence! To-day, she is cleaning my gloves, to-morrow she will be darning my stockings..." (Dickens 15). It can be said that Madame Dor has accepted her gender role as a potential caring mother, secondary and mostly subservient to her husband, more precisely in this case, to Obenreizer as what is expected from a Victorian woman. The character Marguerite is portrayed as the second generation in the Victorian period both in terms of birth, behaviour and of characteristics. She is more active, she can show her affections openly to George Vandale and she is the potential sacrificing mother and wife even to save her beloved (husband) from the danger he is in. In Act II, when Vandale confesses his love to her, she, though "timidly" does not avoid kissing Vandale back (Dickens, 2013, p. 17). When Obenreizer is plotting against Vandale and goes with him to the Alps and when everyone knows the danger except for Vandale, Marguerite does not hesitate to follow him, despite the fact that women are expected to wait. In Act III, when Joey says: "Have you got courage enough to do a desperate thing" (Dickens, 2013, p. 31) meaning he wants to go after Vandale and Obenreizer to the Alps, Marguerite says: "Try me, I'm no fine lady." (Dickens, 2013, p.31) showing her courage.

Among the female characters, the Lady and Sally like Madame Dor represent silent, obedient, responsible Victorian woman figure while Marguerite steps out of these boundaries in spite of Obenreizer's dominance over her. Love between Vandale and Marguerite shows how they go against the restrictions and rules before marriage at that time. Apparently, Dickens works with the delinquents – or more properly the victims – of the Victorian sexual system. He's understanding and helpful to them. Dickens' pleasure-loving mother is absent in his portrayal of women in the play, but one of his sisters-in-law Georgina Hogarth, who made herself into a super-servant makes her way into the depiction of at least two docile female characters namely The Lady and Madame Dor. Dickens'

professional career and practical life are presented in relation to the role of women in the Victorian period in *No Thoroughfare*. The woman issue is prevalent both in the play and in this paper as it begins with Mrs Ternan and her daughters who were enthusiastic and successful actresses. Moreover, that is connected to Dickens' vision of life and how he has been such a great artist. With his regular theatre-going, imitating his mother's mimicry and the comedian Charles Mathews as well as with a strong belief in success, Dickens became "the great Dickens", who "has made himself virtually out of nothing" (Tomalin, 1991, p. 81). Actually, "nothing" is not the correct word as Dickens has a strong sense of curiosity, observation and sympathy, which lead him to the experience in life. Dickens is careful about the real women in his life by keeping them away from the tongue of the Victorian society although he has a huge sympathy for the women such as Mrs Ternan, her daughters and Caroline, who step outside the Victorian roles of women.

Marriage was believed to be the action which aroused women's "maturity and respectability" in the Victorian Age. Therefore for Dickens too, marriage holds an important place and thus in *No Thoroughfare* the marriages of Marguerite-Vandale and Sally-Joey are treated with equal attention, though there are some impediments caused by Obenreizer for the marriage of the former couple⁴. Obenreizer puts forward the idea that Vandale is not rich enough to deserve to be the husband of Marguerite though Vandale has fifteen hundred a year (Dickens, 2013, p. 19) yet this problem is solved as well when it is understood that George Vandale is actually the true Walter Wilding, which guaranteed increase in his yearly income to its double.

To prevent misalliance and to perform a proper marriage, which impedes love relationship or marriage for love, a man has to marry a woman of the same class. Obenreizer says: "my ward is the daughter of a peasant, and you are the son of a gentleman. In this country such a marriage as you propose is an outrage on society" (p. 18). Marguerite is willing to go against the society, but Obenreizer doesn't allow her as he himself is in love with her, but he cruelly uses his power over her as she has to be silent and obedient. Nevertheless, Obenreizer loses his power at the end because of his dishonesty, treachery and disloyalty, which enables the occurrence of the wedding like a rebel against the Victorian view of marriage and gender roles. In the presence of man, woman and even a monk, Marguerite declares: "there is but one motive. I love him" (p. 41). She confesses her love in an unconventional way presenting her as a modern and

⁴ While Obenreizer tries to possess and control Marguerite with the matters of money and behaviour, Marguerite becomes a disobedient woman, and then Vendale denies the class difference between him and Marguerite. As a typical feature of Victorian era Obenreizer as a man is the guardian of a woman who is in a position to be protected. Marguerite theoretically is dependent on Obenreizer, and she has to obey him. Obenreizer, thus, symbolizes the patriarchal, traditional man who expects to control Marguerite's life. In Act 2, Obenreizer basically limits the love relationship of Marguerite and Vendale, through his harsh words. When Vendale confesses his intentions for Marguerite, Obenreizer openly denies this, "I decline your proposal" (Dickens 20). Obenreizer states a definite refusal with "decline" which shows his manly power as a protector of a woman. What is more, he also reflects his patriarchal ideas upon marriage by suggesting Vendale that he has to have the double of his income, in order to take care of Marguerite (Dickens 19). This opinion indicates that the man has responsibility to take care of a woman economically, and the woman is to be dependent on the man, which renders her as a subaltern voice in society.

free woman. Marguerite who risks her life to save Vendale, the missing heir helps the reestablishment of order. The corrupted vision of society, represented by the character Obenreizer, a male is corrected with the help and love of Marguerite, a female. Thus, Marguerite's other side as a Victorian woman is exposed. That is to say, Marguerite also represents the Victorian female figure just in terms that she is compassionate, helpful and merciful, which are the characteristics of femininity, but again she is more than that as she easily ventures her life for her love.

When compared with Marguerite other female characters such as the Lady, Sally and Madame Dor are compatible with the Victorian woman figure as they are obedient and responsible. They do not try to violate any Victorian rule for their own sake. The Lady even does not have any name to avoid a public humiliation, most probably. She is inevitably important in representing growing tension between conflicting forces in the parent-child relationship, as well as processing the reinstatement and revaluation that enables rightful heirs to take their rightful place in the family and society. The Lady as "plainly dressed" as she is, speaks with an English of high rank and is an image of a protective mother, as a Victorian woman should be. She looks for her lost son. Sally too is a responsible, obedient maid whose only concern is to perfectly serve to males around him such as Walter, Vendale and Bintrey. Sally steps a little bit out of Victorian figure just when she boldly talks to Joey about marriage and life as if she was the dominant one. Except that, she perfectly fits into Victorian woman role⁵. Madame Dor's voice is not heard either on stage or in the text. Males are protectors, husbands, masters and decision-making units while women are mothers, servants, mistresses and obedient, responsible people.

On the contrary, Marguerite by declaring her love to Vendale in her bold words "I love you" acts like a modern woman by even giving the chance to Vendale to kiss her. Although Marguerite acts like a free woman, this is actually not the case as she is under the protection of Obenreizer who explicitly declares this by saying: "you know that I alone have authority over you as your guardian" (Dickens, 2013, p. 19). This brings us to face the fact that a woman needs to stay in private sphere in order to keep her silence, obedience, weakness, and to fulfil her domestic deeds.

On the subject of the gender roles of men, the diversity doesn't change. For example Walter Wilding and George Vendale are perfect for the image of a truthful, scrupulous Victorian man. Walter Wilding surprises one with his scruple, as he cannot have a fortune

⁵ The parody of George and Marguerite's relationship also gives a clear example of the Victorian approach to marriage. The marriage decision of Joey and Sally whose relationship seems like a more traditional one when compared to the former couple is a burlesque. Joey is an ordinary man who adds to the humour of the play by misunderstanding everything Sally says and he thinks that Sally will be an obedient wife to him which shows that he represents the man of the time. As for Sally, although she seems like a classical Victorian woman who does her duty on time and who takes care of everything related to the house, her difference and determination is revealed as she says, "The institution of marriage is a very serious thing. And the sooner a man and a woman learn to view it in that light, the better it may be afterwards for all parties" (Dickens 28). It is clear that she is a wise woman who will not be as obedient and submissive as a Victorian man would expect.

and a mother that doesn't belong to him. The fact that he is not the real "Walter Wilding", and that all his fortune left from a woman whom he used to call "mother" makes him sick and causes his death in the end. George Vandale, too has these attributes; his truthfulness makes him risk to go past the Alps in a bad weather, to fulfill the promise he made to Wilding before he died. We also see how gentle and smartly appropriate Vandale is towards Marguarite. For example, when it's her birthday and he gets her a present, regardless of his economical power, he brings her a small but meaningful locket that cannot be expensive. He is a loving man of virtue. These aspects make Wilding and Vandale the perfect examples for what a Victorian man should be. Joey represents a Victorian male figure as he is willing to have dominance over Sally as well as his love for her. When Joey implies his jealousy, Bintrey, the representative of common sense, says: "you're not to monopolise your wife before she is your wife It's quiet bad enough to monopolise a nice woman afterwards" (Dickens, 2013, p. 38).

Conclusion: Dickens the Socialist Playwright

In *No Thoroughfare* there are obvious examples of Victorian men and women. Virtuous and truthful, these characters stand out with their good nature and set an example for the audience. Yet they have qualities at the same time, that don't always fit the image of the ideal person of the time, whether it be intentional things like cheating and lying or unintentional things like falling in love with the wrong person and sudden reactions like yelling the beloved's name after he leaves. So in this sense, Dickens' play is more than an entertaining comedy, it is a timeless reflection of the world society and Dickens is more than a prolific novelist of his time, he is a socialist playwright.

Firstly Dickens was against capitalism, class distinction and the legal system at the time as he himself could be able to observe them with naked eyes. In relation to that, Tomalin says (1991): "Dickens was also a solitary walker. He often set off at night and sometimes stayed out until morning. In this way he came to know the whole London: the grimmest parts of the East..." (p. 83). This statement explains how Dickens knew about all the names of the streets and described them in detail in his work *Great Expectations*, which is about the injustice, class distinction and corruption. The most important thing regarding his mastery is that he skillfully reflected the facts that he saw with his own eyes to his works. Dickens as a professional man was devoted to the art, social criticism and charity as he could not stay indifferent to the cries of help coming from desperate people, who were excluded from the society. "Dickens devoted himself to raising enough capital to ensure the children an income and made sure they all received professional training" (Tomalin, 1991, p. 74). Notably, Dickens was not ignorant to the children as he did not want them to share the same destiny with *Oliver Twist*. Similarly, Dickens put too much effort to help the victims of the Victorian sexual system such as Caroline Maynard, who was an unmarried mother opposing to the pure and simple figure of the Victorian woman. For Dickens, "she was not a Fallen Woman but just the sort of young woman he admired" (Tomalin, 1991, p. 91). We can say that Dickens pursued his own ways to handle the Victorian system as he could not publicly defy the norms at that time.

Secondly, the women roles in the period and Dickens' double vision to this are reflected through his different attitude to his female family members and to Mrs Ternan and her daughters. In the play *The Frozen Deep*, some roles are performed by his sisters and daughters, but when the Queen demands a public performance of that play, Dickens "began to think it might be still more indelicate for them to appear in a public performance on the scale of the Manchester one" (Tomalin, 1991, p. 73). Dickens needed and looked for professional actresses maybe because he did not want to ruin the perfect Victorian image of the women in his family as can also be understood from his warning to his daughter, Katey when she wanted to be an actress: "Although there are nice people on the stage, there are some who would make [her] hair stand on end." (Tomalin, 1991, p. 77). On the other hand, he was quite glad to have Mrs Ternan and her daughters in the cast and he appreciated their position. On this issue, Tomalin says (1991) : "As a novelist he was naturally curious about them, and how they lived , how they managed , a houseful of brave little women alone, unprotected , unguided" (p. 79). Actually, this statement draws attention to some important points: The word " brave" shows his admiration as the women could manage it, but still they were presented somewhat weak with the usage of words "alone, unguided, unprotected" as he believed that they needed protection in Victorian society. Even though in Victorian period, the general view on marriage and role of woman was to confine the woman to the domestic sphere and domesticity in *No Thoroughfare* gender roles are reshaped to a degree through the characters and the themes. Charles Dickens, by empowering women in social sphere in *No Thoroughfare* criticizes the Victorian passive woman and through the character Margaret encourages women to take action and to have a say on their lives by setting themselves free from the limitations imposed on them by the society.

Finally, Dickens' successful, responsive and critical personality as well as his approach to the Victorian sexual system is reflected well in the language, style and genre he employed in *No Thoroughfare*. Dickens was not after fame nor a title as a dramatist as he did not want to publish his works such as *Great Expectations*, or did not venture to write a play by himself, but he mainly gave place to his worries, pains and thoughts about the system and the situation of society in his novels and plays (in which he collaborated with Wilkie Collins), which brought him a great fame as he described the situation well, created fictional characters, though very similar to the real ones (seen in Victorian society or in biographical notes) and he struggled to save the victims of the oppressive society in nineteenth century.

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