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İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI BİLİM DALI

CHARLES DICKENS'IN *OLIVER TWIST* VE ELIZABETH GASKELL'IN *RUTH* ADLI ROMANINDA "DÜŞMÜŞ KADIN" İMGESİNİN KARŞILAŞTIRMALI ANALİZİ

EDA KUZU

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

Danışman

DOÇ. DR. FATMA KALPAKLI

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Yukarıda adı geçen öğrenci tarafından hazırlanan Charles Dickens'ın *Oliver Twist* Adlı Romanında ve Elizabeth Gaskell'ın *Ruth* Adlı Romanında 'Düşmüş Kadın' İmgesinin Karşılaştırmalı Analizi başlıklı bu çalışma 20/06/2019 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda oybirliği/oyçokluğu ile başarılı bulunarak, jürimiz tarafından yüksek lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ÖZET

Viktorya döneminde, temel olarak iki çeşit kadın imgesi vardır: ideal ve düşmüş kadınlar. İlki, orta sınıf tarafından oluşturulmuş tüm kadınsal görevleri yerine getiren, 'Evdeki Melek' tanımına uyarken, ikincisi ideal olmanın bütün özelliklerinden sapan kadın tipidir. Bu çalışma, Charles Dickens'ın *Oliver Twist* ve Elizabeth Gaskell'ın *Ruth* adlı romanlarında düşmüş kadın imgesini karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemektedir. Pek çok Viktoryen yazar gibi hem Dickens hem de Gaskell romanlarında düşmüş kadın imgesini tasvir etmişlerdir. Bu çalışmanın amacı her ikisinin de düşmüş kadına olan bakış açılarını incelemektir. Bu çalışmadan her iki yazarın düşmüş kadına olan yaklaşımları karşılaştırıldığında Gaskell'in düşmüş kadınlara Dickens'dan daha cesaretli ve sempatik bir yaklaşım geliştirdiği sonucu çıkarılabilir. Nitekim, düşmüş bir kadın olarak Ruth onurlu bir ölüm ile yaşamı sonlandırılarak ve toplumda sosyal bir statü kazanma başarısı gösterirken, Nancy'nin ise korkunç ve kanlı bir sonu olması bu çıkarımımızı da destekler niteliktedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ideal kadın, Evdeki Melek, Viktoryen Kültürü, Dickens, Gaskell, Sempati.

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SUMMARY

In Victorian age, there are two stereotypes of women: ideal and fallen women. While the former stands for the "Angel in the House", conforming to all wifely duties set by middle class, the latter is the one, who deviates from all the features of being ideal. This study analyses the portrayal of fallen woman in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth*, in a comparative way. Like many other Victorian novelists, both Dickens and Gaskell portrayed the image of the fallen woman in their novels. The aim of this study is to analyse their perspectives in relation to the image of the fallen woman with reference to their works, namely *Oliver Twist* and *Ruth*. And after having an in-depth analysis of both novels, it can be concluded that Gaskell has developed a more courageous and sympathetic attitude towards the fallen woman compared to Dickens. As a fallen woman, while Ruth succeeds to gain a social status with an honourable death in Victorian society, Nancy has a terrible and bloody end.

Key Words: Ideal woman, Angel, Fallen Woman, Victorian Culture, Dickens, Gaskell, Sympathy.

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Introduction

The Victorian period is an era that takes its name from Queen Victoria, who ascended the throne on June 20, 1837 until her death in 1901 (Kramer 8). Victoria was eighteen years old when her monarch began. She became the longest-reigning British monarch, ruling England more than sixty-three years (Lehman 390). She was the niece of William IV, and the daughter of the Duke of Kent, who was the younger brother of William. When she was twelve, it became apparent that she would come after her uncle, so her widow mother prepared Victoria with a sense of duty before inheriting the throne (Synge 7). When her sovereignty of the world's most powerful country began, many Victorians most likely doubted how a teenage girl could overcome the Great British Empire (Stewart 12). In *Queen Victoria was Amused,* Alan Hardy gives the great historian Thomas Carlyle's declaration about her accession: "Poor little Queen, she is at an age, when a girl can hardly be trusted to choose a bonnet for herself, yet a task has been laid upon her from which an archangel might shrink" (178). However, Queen Victoria showed an enthusiastic and intelligent attitude towards the issues of the nation, consulting ministers of the government, paying attention to the papers sent to her with caution and she practiced the personal and ethical issues considering herself as a public (Mitchell 5). In *Victorian England,* Stewart points out the Queen's determination about her readiness to be queen:

> Since it has pleased Providence to place me in this station, I shall do my utmost to fulfil my duty towards my country; I am very young and perhaps in many, though not in all things, inexperienced, but I am sure, that very few have more real good-will and more real desire to do what is fit and right than I have. (12)

During Victoria's reign of Britain for almost sixty-four years, she became successful in many fields. However, those successes were not actually due to her own actions, but because all those changes coincided the time of her reign (Stewart 12). When Queen Victoria came to the throne at the age of eighteen, England was experiencing fundamental advancements, including technological, economic and social developments (Nelson 1). Regarding these changes, Levine indicates, in *The*

Emergence of Victorian Consciousness: The Spirit of the Age: "in the first quarter of the nineteenth century politically, socially, intellectually, and spiritually a new society was growing up in England" (2). When Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, England was transforming from an agricultural and feudal country to an industrial one. Kristine Hughes exemplifies this transition in her book *The Writer's Guide to Everyday Life in Regency and Victorian England from 1811-1901* and states that

> [b]etween the regency of King George III and the reign of Queen Victoria, a person might have witnessed the advent of steam locomotives, photography, refrigeration or the telegraph. This progress heralded a wealth of new employment opportunities, speculative plans for financial gain and a general sense of well-being as overall living conditions improved. (1)

Priorly, about fifteen million people consisted of the population, but only fewer than five million lived in urban, according to the 1831 census of England and Wales. Travelling was by horsebacks, or sailing boats, or by walking. People used handmade tools for any kind of daily works such as "dressmaking, cleaning, food production, hauling water for sanitation and consumption" (Nelson 1). Synge, the author of *The Reign of Queen Victoria,* describes the condition of Britain at that time as a different Britain "without any rapid means of communication, without trains or steamers, motors or bicycles, without telegrams, telephones, postage stamps, envelopes, postcards—a Britain without gas or electric light or even matches" (13). The appearance of people was also quite different. Men had whiskers with long hair and wore waistcoats with thick neckties. Women had hair divided in the middle and wore long skirts with high waists and laced big hats. Girls learnt from their mothers how to sew, cook, and wash. At that time, there were not many books, no free libraries or swimming baths. All food products were homemade. Due to low wages the working class had terrible accommodations. They had no right in governmental issues. A lot of people were living in countries rather than in cities. As travelling was a luxury, people could not travel very often. On account of inadequate healthcare systems, many people could not survive. The education of women was very little. There were no woman doctors or nurses. Instead of taking part in public with having professions, they stayed

at home, got married at young ages, and devoted themselves to their house and husbands. Migration was not so common at that time. British Empire was not the same as it is today. Many people were unaware of the colonies of Britain until communication spread all over the world (see Synge 13-16).

During the time Victoria ruled the country, the population of England increased from ten million to over thirty-seven million. British Empire increased its territories by winning many wars in the world, which made it a powerful country in international issues (Williams 1). As a result of the Industrial Revolution, the workers coming from the country began to work in factories and people from Ireland and Scotland moved to the cities, which made England the first urbanized nation in the world. Industrial cities grew very quickly (Swisher 12). However, the Industrial Revolution not only brought the progress but also caused some problems. As Charles Dickens wrote in *A Tale of Two Cities*:

> [i]t was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only. (4)

As it is seen in the famous passage of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, the Victorian Era was a period with full of contrast under the reign of Queen Victoria. On the one hand, it was the period of progress, reform and industrialization, on the other hand it was full of poverty, unemployment, injustice, and inequity. In *İngiliz Edebiyatı Tarihi*, Mina Urgan depicts the word Victorian as "pejorative which has unfavourable, negative meaning at the present time" (946). People of the Victorian Era, as Urgan puts it, were behaving hypocrite to be seen respectable. They were foolishly happy with social order of the country and their personality. They were narrow-minded to cover up piano legs with expensive, ornamented clothes as they resembled to the legs

of a woman. They were so fond of money that whether skilled or not, poor had no prestige in the eyes of theirs. They pretended to be big-hearted, but they were the enemy of all kind of beauty and art (946). In this period, people adopted most of the innovations, but they did not abandon their traditional social morals and behaviours (Hughes 1). There were still problems with the social structure, which included the upper class, middle class and working class, each had different social standings. Regarding of their class, women were the ones who were greatly affected in this period.

In this study, the issue of the fallen woman in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* will be analysed from the point of a male and a female writer with reference to gender theories and gender studies. The focus of this study will be on how these writers represent the image of fallen woman as their characters in their novels, and in what ways they will differ from each other. In this respect, the approaches of Gaskell and Dickens in their novels will be analysed in a comparative way. Thus, it is important to know about the status of women in the Victorian period. To be able to understand the status of women better it is necessary to know about the history of the Victorian period. Thus, Chapter I, with two subtitles, includes the historical and social backgrounds of the period. First section gives what the Victorian period was like before and after Queen Victoria's monarch. The reforms to improve the life conditions of working class and women will be given in detail. The second section will explain the social background of the period and how the daily lives of the Victorians were affected by the social hierarchy in this period.

Chapter II gives the information about the status of the Victorian women. According to Jane Smiley, Queen Victoria had much influence on women's social status (30). When Victoria married to Albert, there occurred a strong distinction between men and women with regards to their accepted qualities, "with women exaggerating the putative qualities of femininity [such as] privacy, tender, feeling, fragility, [and] men the putative qualities of masculinity [such as] public action, stoicism, [and] strength" (Smiley 30). Thus, this chapter displays the Victorian women who were restricted by patriarchal English society in many aspects. The second chapter

has two subsections. First section includes the legal rights of the Victorian women. The rights of women were very limited in this period. Even though some Acts were set by social reformers, they could not extend their rights until the end of the century. In the second section of the chapter, the roles of the Victorian women will be examined. There was a common view of separate spheres "whereby women were supposedly restricted to an idealized private or domestic sphere, while men were free to move between this and the public and economic spheres" (Morgan 1). As a result of this ideology, these women were supposed to have children, obey their husbands, take care their children and keep a nice household. Their sexuality was confined only to the marriage. These features made them ideal woman. Francoise Bash summarized the ideal Victorian women in *Victorian Women in Society and the Novel 1837-67*, as in the words below:

> Woman was evoked in the form of an angel by Coventry Patmore and Tennyson, a Madonna by Ruskin, the Virgin Mary by Sarah Ellis, representations which together sum up the contemporary ideal: chastity, humility and transcendence. The myth of Mary, whose meaning Simone de Beauvoir has brilliantly analysed, was triumphant in the Victorian era; it was indeed as a servant that '… a woman is entitled to the most magnificent apotheoses:' (6)

The women who could not fulfil the characteristics of ideal women were regarded as fallen women. In *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*, Deborah Gorham states, "[t]he ideal of feminine purity [was] asexual" (7). Thus, the fallen women were generally regarded as the ones who had sexual affairs outside marriage, unwed mothers, prostitutes, seduced or raped women (Anderson 2).

The Victorian writers tackled with many issues of the women in the novels. The issue of the fallen woman was one of the important subjects, which was also dealt with by two important novelists of the period: Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell, each of whom had their own way of treating the subject. Before analysing their view of women issues, their biographies will be given under two titles in Chapter III. Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell, both of whom lived in the Victorian period, had

attempted to involve in social issues. As the famous Victorian novelists, they criticized the view of the Victorian society towards the women, who were regarded as the victims of the society. Thus, Chapter IV covers both Dickens' and Gaskell's views of the fallen women. Both were influenced by the Victorian ideals and morals. They both had sympathy for the fallen women and involved in charitable projects. Dickens established Urania Cottage, an institution for the fallen women, with the help of the remarkable and wealthy philanthropist Angela Burdett-Coutts (Smith 146). Gaskell visited prisons in Manchester, where the fallen women stayed (Lansbury 26). However, both writers have different perspectives towards the fallen women in their novels. How they displayed the issue of the fallen women will be analysed in Chapter IV. This chapter has three subsections. In the first part, Dickens' view of the fallen women in *Oliver Twist* will be analysed. Although the novel based on the life of an orphan child named Oliver Twist, he depicts both fallen and ideal characters with different social roles. These women have very different lives and ends from each other. In the second part of the chapter, the fallen woman in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* will be examined. It also includes how Gaskell treats the subject and the reactions shown towards the novel in her time. In the last part of the chapter, there is a comparison of the fallen women from two writers' point of view. With regard to their gender, both writer's view towards the issue of the fallen woman will be compared with reference to how they handle their fallen characters in the selected novels.

CHAPTER I. VICTORIAN PERIOD

I.I. Historical Background

Despite of the general knowledge that the Victorian period began with the reign of Queen Victoria in 1837, and ended with her death in 1901, according to some historians, the period began earlier. While some believed the period began with the Reform Bill of 1832, others thought that it began with the establishment of the first railroads (Stewart 12). As the historian Anthony Wood says, "Victorianism, in some ways, preceded Victoria" (qtd. in Swisher 11). Sally Mitchell, in *Daily Life in Victorian England,* stated that there were three incidents, which played an important role in the world of the Victorians before the Victorian period began. The first one was the success of the Duke of Wellington over Napoleon at Waterloo in Belgium in 1815, which led to a great honour for Britons. The second one was the Industrial Revolution which changed England from agricultural country to the industrial one and therefore, gave England the greatest economic power in the world. And the last one was the Reform Bill of 1832, with which many distinguished men could get the right for voting. It was a major step forward about democracy and welfare of all the Victorians (1).

There were a lot of battles between England and France from 1793 to 1815, which affected lots of the Victorians badly as the government increased the charges to struggle for the battles. Britain could never again obtain food from the parts of Europe that Napoleon conquered at that time. Moreover, the land which agrarian workers had commonly used for grassing their animals and cultivating was closed. Consequently, it became much harder for ordinary people to acquire sufficient food. In 1814, the leader of France, Napoleon Bonaparte was beaten and sent into exile. A year later, he escaped and came back France proving his army that he achieved his strength again. This caused England to fear from an invasion. Thus, the British army was well prepared for the battle in Waterloo in 1815 and won a victory against Napoleon and French. While the French economy was badly influenced, England was developing in manufacturing to a great extent, which made England supreme in the world's markets. (see Mitchell 1,2). During Victoria's rule, the country conquered the one-quarter of

the world's land and became a very powerful empire in worldwide shipping and communications (Swisher 11).

The Victorian period was often described as an era of transition. The Industrial Revolution which had already started when Victoria came to the throne, had an important role on the process of transition of England. As Sally Mitchell explains in *Daily Life in Victorian England*, in the beginning, people were doing spinning and weaving by hand. Then, the machines were invented for these jobs. The steam engines and waterpower were used to run these machines. As it required less muscle force, women and children began to work in factories, because their labour wasn't high in price. Both the large amounts of manufacturing and the low payments of workers made the textile in Britain low-cost among other countries. England became a wealthy country and it led to growth in technology and trade as well. The economic and industrial strength of England continued nearly until the end of the nineteenth century (see 2-3). However, the Industrial Revolution had harsh effects on daily life of the Victorians. As England was the first nation to be industrialized, its transformation became severe, experiencing both social and economic problems as a result of the rapid and uncontrolled industrialization (Abrams 1043). One of the important historians, George Macauley Trevelyan, in his book *British History of Nineteenth Century (1782-1901)*, comments that "Industrial Revolution is, in its social consequences, mainly destructive" (xvi). One of the problems was that great extent of coal production, which was used to supply fuel for machines driven by steam. It gave considerable damage to the environment. There was a dirty environment covered with coal dust. That's why England was known as "black country" (Stewart 16). Another important effect was the migration of workers from agricultural areas to the cities, such as London, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool to find a job in factories. The flow of many people to the cities brought some problems such as inadequate infrastructures, accommodation and sanitary. Especially the lower-class people were largely affected as they had to live with very low-paying jobs in very ugly, dirty conditions (Stewart 17-18). Several families generally lived in one room of a fusty house that has no sanitary system, light or heat (Mitchell 5). Kellow Chesney, in *The Victorian Underworld*, writes about the results of the overpopulation:

> Hideous slums, some of them acres wide, some no more than crannies of obscure misery, make up a substantial part of metropolis. Because they are densely occupied, they are profitable, and seldom cleared away except to make way for new thoroughfares and frontages. In big, once handsome houses, thirty or more people of all ages may inhabit a single room, squatting, sleeping, copulating on the straw-filled billets or mounds of verminous rags that are the only furniture. (5)

1832 Reform Act was another important event which occurred before Victoria ascended the throne. 1832 Reform Act made important changes in Britain's electoral system increasing the voting rights of middle class (Himmelfarb 6). Britain was governed by a Parliament, which consisted of two parts: House of Lords which were "upper house" including nobles and aristocrats, and House of Commons, "the lower house" which consisted of the distinguished members of Parliament, who hold the right of being elected as a representative of countries and boroughs. House of Lords held their position by virtue of aristocracy, and the Parliament Members were, indeed, assigned, not elected as the nobles had the control of many seats in the House of Commons. There were some standards for voting. Only if you were a landowner you could have right for voting. Having property meant that you had high position in the society and had right to speak for the governing of the country. Another criterion was that the voters had to be men. Women were thought to be rationally inadequate and uneducated to take part in political issues. Besides, the districts which were qualified for voting, depended on old-style of landowning. While some big industrial regions could never have representatives, there were other regions called "rotten boroughs" that could elect their representatives in Parliament despite having very few electorates (see Steinbach 36-37). 1832 Reform Act, however, became a movement towards democracy in the country. Parliamentary seats were districted again and doubled the number of eligible men. While the electorates before 1832 consisted of landholders and upper-class men, after 1832, a lot of middleclass men could vote (Mitchell 3). Although the first Reform Act did not give an actual democracy to England, as Anthony Wood says, it "had opened a door, and through that door there was to come

a whole mass of social and administrative reform, which was to bring in its wake the succeeding Parliamentary Reform Acts of the nineteenth century" (qtd. in Swisher 13).

Before Queen came to the throne, there was another important effect called Evangelical Revival. After the Regency period, people concerned much on social problems. Some charities were established for poor people and their education was undertaken by voluntary associations. In 1834, Poor Law Amendment was introduced, which ensured public assistance in workhouses (Mitchell 3, 92). The Factory Act of 1833 brought some restrictions in all textile factories. For people under eighteen, working was ten-hour day, and for children under thirteen, it was a forty-eight-hour week, and they had to go to school for two hours every day (Young 48). Children under the age of nine weren't permitted in factories at all. Although the restrictions may seem minimal, there were very important limitations at that time (Steinbach 46).

As for the actual date of the Victorian period, it can be divided into three parts: the early Victorian period; the mid-Victorian period; and the late-Victorian period, each witnessed important social and political reforms. As a general knowledge, the early Victorian period began with the Victoria's accession to the throne. According to Mitchell, "the first years of the reign were marked by social and political turmoil, largely in response to the rapid changes that came with industrialization" (5). The early Victorian period witnessed some important reforms increasing rights of many middle-class men. While middle-class men became a part of the political issues, working-class men were not. Thus, between 1832 and 1848, a political movement by working class called 'Chartism' broke out as a response to the 1832 Reform Act, which was a political step for democracy. They prepared a People's Charter with six demands including "equal constituencies, annual Parliaments, a secret ballot, the abolition of the property requirement, the institution of salaries for members of Parliament, and—perhaps most importantly—universal (male) suffrage" (Steinbach 47). They demanded universal suffrage as they wanted all adult men to vote. They wanted to vote secretly, for, at that time, everybody knew what he voted, and if he voted on the contrary to the demands of landlords, he could be fired. However, it wasn't enacted until 1872. Additionally, they wanted payment for the members of Parliament in order that poor

people could sit in the House. However, it was not completed successfully until Queen Victoria's death. Over the years, the members of Chartists increased, including all kind of people all of whom were discontent with middle classes. They held secret meetings. Their first rebellion was in Birmingham in 1839 with a lot of damages, yet, they failed as their plans had been heard (Synge 42-43).

In 1840s, the social problems went beyond the economic and political issues. There was a term of "hungry forties". People suffered from high-priced foods and economic depression, which caused many people to be unemployed. In 1842, many people got social aid and needed donations from charities. There were high crime rates much more than any other time of the nineteenth century. In 1840s, an Irish problem burst out as well. Poor Ireland was based on agriculture and their food was chiefly potatoes. When the potato blight caused a great devastation of Irish crops and led to starvation, many workers had to move to England. The price of bread, which was chief nutrition for working class in England, was kept high with the Corn Laws, which had high taxes on imported food in order to encourage domestic agriculture. It also protected the income of landowners and gave revenue to the government. While the landowners from upper classes promoted the policy as their income became high, the workers didn't like the policy due to high priced food (Mitchell 5).

The mid-Victorian period between 1850 and 1873 was generally described as the "Victorian prosperity" (Church 71). There was household stability, advancement and wealth in England (Mitchel 7). One of the most significant incidents happened in mid-Victorian period was the Great Exhibition, which took place in Crystal Palace. It was a tremendous international exhibition of industrial and technical productions performing the superiority of Britain in world markets (Steinbach 94-95). "The opening of the Great Exhibition was also the opening of the golden age of Victorianism" (Thomson 100-101). The Great Exhibition displayed thousands of wonders including "raw materials, machinery, manufactured goods, and fine arts, and has been extensively studied by historians of industry, design, mass production, taste, architecture, display, culture, and class" and attracted millions of visitors from all over the world. With the Great Exhibition, Britain showed its economic, industrial, and

manufacturing superiority to the world. Britain became the richest country in the world and living standards of people improved (Steinbach 95). During the exhibition for four months, it changed the world's view towards Britain (Hughes 137).

In the mid-Victorian period, there were important legislative acts. One of them was the second Reform Bill in 1867, which increased the number of electorates from the middle-class men and richer working-class men. There were two political parties in England: the Conservatives (Tory) led by Benjamin Disraeli, who acted for the landowners, the Church of England, love of country, and the protection of the existing rights, and, the Liberals led by W. E. Gladstone, who had many new electorates from middle classes, organized workers and the people of other religious parts. Both parties performed several steps for social reforms in the 1860s and 1870s including laws preventing adulterated food, child abuse, raising safety and sanitation standards of housing. The Factory Act of 1874 restricted the workers' working hours. Besides, the living standard of urban workers got better. Their salaries increased. With the establishment of police forces, the cities became safer and the crime rate decreased. The status of women changed in a lot of ways. Unmarried women who had possessions could take place in the elections of Poor Law officials and school board members (see Mitchell 10-11). With the Married Women's Property Act of 1870, supported by John Stuart Mill, married women could have limited authority on their possessions (Cohen 104). With the Education Act of 1870, which was the most important legislative act for the mid-Victorians, every child who didn't have any private education had to receive education in a local elementary school (Wild 109).

The late Victorian period was difficult to be categorized. However, for many Victorians, it was a time of serenity and security (Abrams 1052). Towards the late of the nineteenth century, England's supremacy in industrial and commercial issues began to diminish. The increase of the population slowed down as the birth rate decreased after 1870 (Thomson 223). The domestic, economic and political balance began to change. In addition to these, a cultural transition appeared. Some important figures died such as George Eliot, Thomas Carlyle, Benjamin Disraeli, Charles Darwin and Anthony Trollope. The chief artists and writers of the "*fin de siècle*" gave rise to

"less comforting -more modern- tone" of works. Economically, in 1870, the agricultural depression appeared due to the bad crops, which made England's agriculture worse. The people whose income came from the rent of their lands began to lose their wealth until they could find new income sources. Politically, the authority of landed gentries began to lose power in national interests. An interconnected world economy was in the process of development. As a result of inadequate food production, England could not meet the needs of its own population. Thus, the country began to depend on imports. Workers from countryside moved to industrial cities for jobs. By 1901, eighty per cent of Britons lived in urban places. The population of England increased rapidly. Although the working conditions in mines and factories seemed worse than the ones in the previous times in rural life, there was a simultaneous rapid increase both in industry and population. It was probably due to good salaries of workers, which led them marry at young age and have many children who could survive. Some precautions for community health were taken to prevent the epidemic and contagious diseases, which caused danger for the Victorians in the earlier times in the century. The invention of the typewriter and telephone in the 1870s provided job opportunities to many women in offices such as clerical jobs. Moreover, mandatory elementary education in 1880, offered new chances for many teachers. Many working men living in urban had voting right with the third Reform Act of 1884 compared to the first Reform Act. Besides, the term of "property qualification for service in the House of Commons" had been abolished. Thus, the working men could have right to elect and be elected (see Mitchell 11-14).

1.2.Social Background

In Nelson's *Family Ties in Victorian England*, it is given that during Victoria's monarch over England for almost sixty-four years, England experienced technological, economic and social reforms that changed English life and family substantially. The rapid increase in the population of cities led first to terrible living conditions in slums, and then to health measures. Advancements in technology made news transportation easier, especially with the invention of commercial telegraph system in 1850.

Construction of railways brought pollution, but it also provided job opportunities in railroads. By the 1890s, telephones became popular in business life. The travelling became easier with the innovations such as the passenger trains, steamships, London Underground in 1863, cheap safety bicycle in 1885 and automobiles by the 1890s. In social context, mobility became more prevalent and quicker for many Victorians than the early years. Although England had lived a period of economic regression, one of which was "Hungry Forties" the predominant issue was against poverty. Poverty rate decreased towards the end of the nineteenth century. When the cities grew, and the society became more urban, new opportunities emerged for impoverished people to get rid of their poor origin. As middle class became stronger, morally the authority of upper class diminished (see 1-4).

1.2.1. Class Structure

The Victorian period was a time of fundamental change with respect to population growth (Williams 9). The developments during the period brought forth class discrimination in the Victorian society. As class was an essential social fact in British culture, the Victorians accepted this idea and labelled themselves as a part of a class. Therefore, it is important to understand the concept of class to comprehend the Victorian Britain (Steinbach 124). In Chris Williams' edited book, *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, the importance of class structure is noted by Martin Hewitt as in the following words:

> For much of the century class was not only the single most important form of social categorization, but also the bedrock of understandings of political and social change, and of the narratives which were constructed around them. For contemporaries, the history of the nineteenth century was written above all in the shifting fortunes of the classes, the eclipse of the aristocracy, the triumph of the middle class and the challenge of the working class. (305)

The Victorians accepted the hierarchical society. Most of the population didn't even try to move up higher positions, instead, they were satisfied with their own status.

Class was identified in relation to the people's income levels, their socioeconomic status, their cultural preferences and their values (Steinbach 125). Attitudes of the people, the way of their talking, their costumes and their education showed what class they belonged to. Furthermore, every class had different living standards and followed different social traditions in almost every case. Most of the Victorians knew their own positions in the class system and each class had to obey the rules of their own classes (Mitchell 17). Sally Mitchel exemplifies that

> [w]hen the railroads designated different cars for first class, second class, and third class, passengers knew where they were expected to ride. Even if a working man had just won a lot of money on the races and could afford an expensive ticket, he would not dream of riding home in the first-class car. (17)

In those days, the family formation was constructed by the class system. The class was divided into three parts: the working class, the middle class, and the upper class. Financial gain of the working class was from wages; middle class people from salaries and profit; and the upper-class people from estates, lands or rents (Steinbach 125).

The upper-class, which stayed on the highest social rank, got their income from properties they inherited, or from the investments they made. One could not imagine how much their wealth was. Many Victorians except a small minority, accepted this inequality between them (Evans and Evans 11). The upper-class were the aristocrats and the gentry including duke, marquis, earl, viscount, and baron. They lived in pleasant houses with their servants. The inheritance of aristocracy title and the property always passed from fathers to their eldest son. However, the moral reforms done in the nineteenth century began to minimize the extravagancy and idle hours of upper-class people. They were expected to take part in political and local issues, or to acquire a job as an officer, a churchman or an executive. The younger children were expected to have professions such as military officers, colonial administrators or clergyman. These families had privileges such as being a member of House of Lords, and not being arrested for a dept or criminals (Mitchell 21, 22).

The most remarkable social change in the Victorian period was the increasing and strengthening of the middle-class. The rise of the middle class was the outcome of the industrial improvements (Ashley 148). Middle class people were very determined and worked in a disciplined and competitive ways, as they thought that it would provide them to reach "wealth, property and social position" which, at one time, belonged to the upper-class people (Swisher 18).

Middle class had people from rich industrialists and bankers to poor clerks. Upper middle classes, which had the highest social status included people from higher status such as clergymen, military officers, university professors, the headmasters of prestigious schools. They were the ones, who provided education for their children, even for their daughters in the later years. Farmers who had workers were also among the middle class. The lower middle class was the small business owners and office workers who didn't need to have much education but literacy. Their children had education until the age of twelve or fourteen. Although middle class had various status and income, they were regarded to have some standards and ideals. While the working-class children had to work at young age, and upper-class children were brought up by servants, middle class families gave importance to education, occupation and family issues (Mitchell 19-21). In *The Victorians at Home and at Work*, by Hilary and Mary Evans, in relation to the middle-class, the following information is given:

> The middle classes were the great success story of the Victorian age. At their worst they were small-minded, dull, hypocritical, smug, tasteless, insular, bigoted, blinkered from all considerations except that of business; everything, in fact, that we most dislike about the period. But at their best, it was they who made the age what it was. They may not have been numerically the majority, but it was their strength which gave the Victorian community its backbone. It was they who demanded the right to elect the nation's leaders – and they who told the leaders what to do. They created the conventions of the age – and followed them. They forged its values – and lived by them. (14)

If the great success of the Victorian period was the rising of the middle class, the great failure was the existence of the working class, which the period could not prevent

(Evans and Evans 17). During the nineteenth century, the cruellest treatment was likely towards the working-class people, many of which were children and women (Hughes 115). The working-class people were the workers and were divided into the skilled, unskilled and semiskilled classes. The working-class people were the ones, most of whom worked in jobs done by hand including farm labourers, servants, factory workers, coal miners, or building workers. They earned money just to be able to survive. They had no guarantee for long-term jobs. Even some people working in unskilled or semiskilled jobs needed extra jobs to do (Mitchell 18). Manual workers were not advantageous group among the population (Bédarida 209). As physical strength was necessary for manual works, the income of the working-class men was higher when they were in their twenties. After they got married both men and women kept on working and save money. However, after children were born, women could no longer work for long hours, especially when the children were small. As a result, the family earned less money and became increasingly poor. As the education wasn't so available among boys and girls from the working classes, they had to work at young ages to help their families (Mitchell 18). The living conditions of many working-class people were terrible. The houses of the working-class people were "often cramped, overcrowded and unhealthy" (Bédarida 62). Skilled workers were in better conditions and had higher income than unskilled ones. They worked as "printers, masons, carpenters, bookbinders, expert dressmakers, shoemakers, which were learned through apprenticeship. A lot of daughters of skilled workers would work as a teacher in later part of the century. These people made up a separate class in the working class, which had different life standards. People who are skilled in art such as shoemakers, saddlers or builders, established their own business. They took place in a border between the working and the middle classes (Mitchell 19).

CHAPTER II. VICTORIAN WOMEN

2.1. The Status of the Victorian Women

Although it was known that the Victorian era was a period, which extensively experienced the industrial prosperity, it was also a period of social and gender repression. The gender inequity was one of the distinct characteristics of this period. It was the gender that defined the roles (Crooks and Baur 13). The expectations from men and women were significantly different. Regardless of their social class, women had limited rights until the mid-nineteenth century. When a woman married, her legal existence was limited (Mitchell 478). The eighteenth-century jurist William Blackstone explains that

> [b]y marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law; that is, the very being, or legal existence of a woman is suspended during marriage, or at least incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband; under whose wing, protection and cover she performs everything. (418)

A wife wasn't considered as a separate person in the eyes of law. The husband became responsible for all her deeds. The status of a married woman was considered to be under the protection and the authority of her husband. Whatever she possessed or inherited before marriage such as money in hand, money at the bank, jewels, household goods, clothes, etc., belonged completely to the husband. And, the husband could give and allocate these properties whenever he wanted, whether they lived together or not. The husband could also hold the money her wife earned (Smith 4). Widows and spinsters had taken much care of their property than a married woman (Morris 237). With respect to the custody of children, the mother could not take the responsibility. The governing and the responsibility of the children belonged legally to the father. If the father had a healthy mind, the mother had no rights on children, except for some limited rights on infants. And he had the right to take them from mother (Smith 5). A married woman had to live in the places her husband decided. She had no right to sign a contract or decide on whom her property would be distributed when she died (Mitchell 104).

In the case of an unhappy marriage, women had also no rights to divorce except for rare situations. Divorce was not very simple and common before Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857. It was very difficult and expensive to end a marriage in front of the court as The Church of England approved two types of divorce. First one was called a divorce "from bed and board". It was a fault-based divorce like adultery, persecution or desertion. The spouses were legally separated but neither men nor women could marry again. The second divorce that the Church approved, was a divorce of annulment, which allowed remarriage. The Church gave annulments only when the marriage became invalid in the first occasion. With the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, a civil divorce court was established for both divorce and separation (Mitchell 106). After the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, if women were able to meet the expenses, they could end their marriage on the occasion of cruelty, desertion or rape (Calder 120). It meant that there were double standards in relation to the rights of men and women. While a husband could easily divorce a woman only for the reason of her adultery, a woman could not divorce the man for the same reason. She had to prove other matrimonial offenses (Holmes 601). Claudia Nelson, in *Family Ties in Victorian England,* indicated these offenses in the following passage:

> A husband could divorce his wife simply by proving that she had been unfaithful to him. A wife, however, had to prove that her husband was not only adulterous but had also deserted her, committed incest or bigamy, or abused her in a way that went beyond his legal right to chastise her physically. This double standard reflected the widespread view that a wife's adultery was more serious than a husband's, not only because it might foist upon him children not biologically his, but also because woman's sexual drive was, or should be, different from man's in being focused on pregnancy rather than pleasure. A husband's straying was regrettable but natural; a woman, who forgot her marriage vows betrayed both her family and all womankind. (8-9)

An important change in the legal status of married women came with The Infants' Custody Act of 1839, which allowed mothers to have custody of their children

under the age of seven, when the parents were legally separated. Although these acts slightly decreased the legal authority of the husbands and fathers, the women, who got divorced remained intolerable in the society and the children were seen naturally to belong to their father (Calder 120). Although the first Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, and the Infants' Custody Act of 1839 were the first steps to protect the women and the poor, it wasn't until after the Married Women's Property Act in 1870, the substantial alteration in the status of women was made, especially in the regards of education and political rights (Bash 16). Besides, the double standard that was approved in 1857 Act, was rejected with Matrimonial Causes Act of 1923, which gave married women the right to divorce her husband only if he committed adultery (Holmes 603).

Another widespread double standard emerged in the matter of education. Education in the Victorian age differed according to their sexes, parent's economic situations, social classes and religion (Mitchell 169). Education of girls was not very common as in the case of boys. It was thought that there was no need for girls to take part in public life. It would be more essential for them to complete their professions at home, growing to be a married woman like their mother. Education of the working-class girls began at home by taking care of babies, helping their mothers or doing needlework, which was a way of helping their family economy. Even for the parents, who had better standards, education of girls was not very important. It was considered that girls were needed protection socially and morally more than boys. Parents didn't want their daughters to be far from home or to be at big schools. There were small private schools near their houses, in which women gave lessons (Mitchell 181-182). As for the middle class, knowledge meant power. However, they usually thought that the power and knowledge should be in the hands of men. For many, it wasn't necessary for women to have an active education. Some Victorians believed that education would prevent women from performing their domestic tasks. On the other hand, an increasing number of the people including both men and women thought that the education of girls from wealthy classes wasn't enough and this would be a problem in the future regarding their future husbands and families (Morgan 36).

In respect of women's employment in the Victorian society, Sally Mitchell, in *Daily Life in Victorian England*, claims that there was a wrong belief that the Victorian women did not work. Except for the upper-class women, who had idle and luxurious lives, there were dozens of women who worked in different jobs (45). Claudia Nelson states that "[a]ccording to 1851 census, half of the six million adult women in England, Wales, and Scotland worked for pay, and two million were self-supporting" (Nelson 21). Among these jobs, the most common job was the domestic service while the clerical works and shop works remained in the second place (Mitchell 46). Regarding the wages, there was inequity between the genders. Lydia Murdoch reflects:

> No matter what the job, woman faced a set of common obstacles in the workplace. The wages for female workers varied tremendously, as did the nature of their work, but in practically all professions, women earned less than men. In 1883, for example, the School Board of London specified that the salaries of female teachers should be three quarters of those for male teachers of equal qualifications and experience. In 1890, male assistant teachers had an average annual salary of 117 pounds, while women earned 88 pounds for the same work. In addition to their subordinate status in relation to men of their profession, all women workers shared the experience of being judged by the evolving, contradictory Victorian gender ideal of femininity, which held that women shouldn't work outside the home and that women's paid labour was unnatural. (172)

The quotation above emphasizes that women were not as equal as men in relation to their workplaces and the wages as the Victorian women were expected to stay at home. Although men and women worked in the same positions, the women could not get the same salary as men who "retained the use of the lion's share of household resources" (Shani D'Cruze 259). The inequality between the two genders was prevalent in their roles as well. The next chapter will deal with the roles of the Victorian women.

2.2. The Roles of the Victorian Women

> Man for the field and woman for the health:
> Man for the sword and for the needle she:
> Man with the head and woman with the heart:
> Man to command and woman to obey;
>
> (Tennyson xxvii)

As in the poem written by the English poet, Alfred Lord Tennyson, who lived during the Victorian period, the roles of women were different from men. Indeed, it was the middle-class people who generated some proper roles described morally for men and women. Due to the Industrial Revolution, working outside of the home became more common than it had been in the past, thus, men were to work, and women were to concern about home and children (Swisher 20). As a result, a concept of "separate spheres" came out as an ideology of the middle class. Home and workplaces were separated. While men began to commute work, women stayed at home. Home became women's private place, where they would carry out domestic duties (Nelson 6). The "separate spheres" was the most common expression that described the gender discrimination in this period. Women were supposed to be appropriate only for domestic sphere, but men were both in the public and economic spheres and as well as domestic sphere (Morgan, 1). Sarah Richardson explains the 'separate spheres' as:

> While public life was increasingly seen as an exclusively male domain characterized by the manly virtues of action, determination and resolution, the domestic setting was where women's virtues of gentleness, tenderness, piety and faith could, and should most fully be developed. (175)

The quotation shows the appropriate places for men and women. While men were expected to maintain their existence in public sphere, women were regarded to sustain their courtesy, religiosity, and faith virtues in the domestic sphere. Women were thought to have no physical strength but the greatest moral values. Therefore, the husband was expected to be "strong, active, and intellectual, and a wife was supposed to be fragile, passive and emotional, obviously so in ways that best showed her

husband's prowess as a wise and knowledgeable protector" (Swisher 20). John Ruskin, who was an important example of the Victorian age, in his book *Sesame and Lilies*, reveals the different virtues of genders as in the following passage:

> The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, wherever war is just, wherever conquest necessary. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle, — and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims, and their places….She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise — wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side. (44)

As women became inactive in the business sphere in connection with the social changes coming with Industrial Revolution, except for some jobs made mainly by women, the Victorian women were prepared for marriage rather than work (Petrie 179). The union of marriage was a significant case for the Victorian society, "bringing together religious, social and cultural expectations" (Ward 32). Perkin Joan, in *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England,* gives three purposes of the marriage: "the protection of the children, avoiding from the adultery, and forming a mutual society with the help and comfort of both partners in both prosperity and adversity (20). Henry Peter Brougham emphasizes the importance of marriage in the words below:

> There is no one branch of law more important, in any point of view, to the great interests of society, and to the persona's comforts of its members, than that which regulates the formation and the dissolution of the nuptial contract. No institution indeed more nearly concerns the very foundations of society, or more distinctly marks by its existence the transition from a rude to a civilized state, than that of marriage. (431)

The quotation indicates that marriage was the keystone of the society. In the article, *Victorian Women Expected to Be Idle and Ignorant*, the critic Charles Petrie states that since infancy, all the girls born in poverty, dreamed of the marriage, as it was the only way for a woman to rise in the society (180). Therefore, marriage was the only appropriate job for women in the mid-nineteenth century (Neff 12).

Charles Petrie argues that as the population and the wealth of the nation increased as a result of the Industrial Revolution, it became important for men to keep women in idleness. When a woman was not forced to work outside, it was the sign of the success of her husband and father. Only girls who had economic problems went out of home to find a job (179). As Bash quoted in *Relative Creatures: Victorian Women in Society and the Novel 1837-67*, about the situation of wife-mother in the Victorian society, the woman was "nothing but a mother superior, she must only concern herself with her household and her children" (16). Wanda Fraiken Neff explains the importance of being mother in the following excerpt:

> All women were regarded in the first half of the nineteenth century solely as potential mothers. The worker with her own earnings was, accordingly, an affront against nature and the protective instincts of man. That the family was affected by the labour of girls and women in the mills was a consideration of the roused general concern. The question of the health of human beings who were entrusted with the responsibility of the next generation, the conflict of factory work and long hours with domestic life and with a mothers care of her home and her children, the moral and spiritual degradation which might result from the employment of females outside their homes. (37)

As the quotation above shows, even working women were expected to hold values of being mother and growing up children. On the other hand, in the upper-class, women were more likely the supervisor of housework rather than carrying out them directly. Nelson states that the competence was a need for the upper-class housewives by giving an example from the book of *Household Management* (1861), by Isabella Beeton, an English journalist, editor and writer:

> As with the commander of an army, or the leader of an enterprise, so is it with the mistress of a house. Her spirit will be seen through the whole establishment; and just in proportion as she performs her duties intelligently and thoroughly, so will her domestics follow in her path. Of all those acquirements which more particularly belong to the female character there are none which take a higher rank, in our estimation, than such as enter into a knowledge of household duties; for on these are perpetually dependent the happiness, comfort and well-being of a family. (27)

Household Management is one of the books published for women, including recipes to serve on dinners and parties, manners and commands on how to perform household affairs as a good wife. Claudia Nelson comments that these all wifely duties, which women were expected to fulfil, made a belief for many Victorians that if women did not perform their wifely roles, the attitudes and health of their husbands and children would get worse. The primary duty for a woman was to make home pleasant (25).

On the bases of the roles of women set by the Victorian society as a result of separate spheres, two kinds of women emerged: the ideal woman and the fallen woman. While the former was generally described as the "modest women, the wives of the middle-class citizens in good standing, who submit to their husbands while still thinking about those domestic duties: all the household angels;" the latter was regarded as "those sexual demons, the mistress, delighted to waste a man's money, time and energy" (Priestley 212-213).

2.2.2. Ideal Women

Until the beginning of industrialism, the term of house and home meant a dwelling place, safety, comfort or a place where one earned his living, while agricultural households were workplaces, where family members maintained their life. The house surrounded both the private and public places together. With the Industrial Revolution, when the workplaces moved from home to the factories, the term of house

was narrowed and became "woman's natural and appropriate place: she belonged in the house because biology put her there" (Dickenson xiii). As women were supposed to be in the borders of the family and the house, a stereotype of the ideal woman emerged for the Victorian women, who were supposed to behave according to their proper gender roles. Lyn Pykett, in her book, *The Improper Feminine*, gives an exhaustive list for representations of proper feminine: "the domestic ideal, or angel in the house; the madonna; the keeper of the domestic temple; asexuality; passionlessness; innocence; self-abnegation; commitment to duty; self-sacrifice; the lack of a legal identity; dependence; slave; victim" (16). The best description for the ideal Victorian women would be 'The Angel in the House' written by Coventry Patmore who was the famous English poet of nineteenth century:

> Man must be pleased; but him to please
> Is woman's pleasure; down the gulf
> Of his condoled necessities
> She casts her best, she flings herself
> How often flings for nought, and yokes
> Her heart to an icicle or whim,
> Whose each impatient word provokes
> Another, not from her, but him; (135)

As it is stated in the quotation, Patmore emphasizes that the role of a woman is to please man and take pleasure from this function. The poem became very popular in the Victorian society and was ascribed to the ideal Victorian housewife. When the first part of the poem emerged, John Ruskin wrote to Patmore: "I cannot tell you how much I admire your book. I had no idea you had power of this high kind. I think it will at all events it ought to become one of the most popular books in the language — and *blessedly* popular, doing good wherever read" (qtd. in Oliver 29-30). With the same view of women, John Ruskin wrote in *The Crown of Wild Olive* that "a true wife, in her husband's house, is his servant; it is in his heart that she is queen" (73). However, Virginia Woolf explains the angel in the house as in the following passage:

> She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the led; if there was a draft, 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. Her purity was supposed to be her chief beauty—her blushes, her great grace. (141)

As it is stated in the quotation above, Virginia Woolf described the woman as the one who cannot go beyond the scope of domesticity, who devoted herself only to her family, and who was purified of stain of sexual awareness (Cooper 10). Pure women stayed in the private sphere of home and family, where sexuality between man and woman was appropriate in the case of love, togetherness, especially procreation, all of which matched with the opinion of the 'angel in the house (Kent 198). Correspondingly, Sally Mitchell indicates that "[t]he pure woman's life was supposed to be entirely centred on the home. She preserved the higher moral values, guarded her husband's conscience, guided her children's training, and helped regenerate society through her daily display of Christianity in action (266).

"Sexual morality" and "sexual experiences" were among the strict standards set by the middle-class people for the importance of the family, especially for the women (Swisher 20). "Chaste daughters and a docile wife were the signs of a well-ordered household" (Cooper 12). Before a girl married, she was educated to be completely innocent and unaware of sexuality. She was supposed to be kept pure morally, and under protection of her mother. When she married, she stayed at home with servants rather than work outside and remained sexually innocent (Vicinus ix). In *The Fallen Angel: Chastity, Class and Women's Reading 1835-1880,* Sally Mitchell quotes a report by C. Willett Cunnington, about a doctor's advice telling mothers not to tell daughters about matrimony: "Tell her nothing, my dear madam, for if they knew they would not marry" (xii). About sexuality, J. B. Priestley, in *Victoria's Heyday,* quoted an excerpt from Dr William Acton, whose study of *The Functions and Disorders of the Re-productive Organs* was published in 1857:

> The best mothers, wives and managers of households, know little or nothing of sexual indulgences. Love of home, children, and domestic duties are the only passions they feel.
>
> As a general rule, a modest woman seldom desires any sexual gratification for herself. She submits to her husband, but only to please him; and, but for the desire of maternity, would far rather be relieved from his attentions. No nervous or feeble young man need, therefore, be deterred from marriage by any exaggerated notion of the duties required from him. The married woman has no wish to be treated on the footing of a mistress. (33)

As the quotation above states, the most important belief of the Victorian period was that a woman did not have sexual feelings much. The features of the good mother were "purity, selflessness, tenderness" and these features were so significant that if a woman deviated from these ideal qualities, they caused repulsion (Nelson 65).

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the term of 'ideal' had been the "perfect wife". The perfect wife was active in the family and supposed to carry out many important duties, the first of which was childbearing (Vicinus ix). A woman's ability of motherhood was accepted as "moral superiority" in the nineteenth century custom. As childbearing and pregnancy were considered as the nature of a woman to devote herself to others, even giving birth to an illegitimate child might be a blessing one. Therefore, the middle-class women, who adopted the motherhood roles determined by the Victorian society as their natural fate were praised in some broadcasting boards. Moreover, as it was thought to be virtuous behaviour when a woman gave birth to a child, women could have new roles in public sphere so long as they would combine these roles with feeding and protecting their children (Nelson 46).

Paternal roles were not as strong as maternal roles. While women were experiencing physical difficulties of childbearing, men did not require to sacrifice themselves. Fathers were also kept out from the relation of mother and child, and they stayed like a spectator. They also had little connection with their children as they could not meet the needs of a new-born baby such as changing diapers or breastfeeding. In

the middle classes, the main domestic duty of fathers was in public sphere rather than the private one. They were expected to earn money to support family needs. Although they had little emotional relation with their child, they were still regarded as fulfilled fathers (Nelson 46-47).

2.2.2. Fallen Women

As female sexuality had a crucial importance for the Victorian society, two different types of women appeared, the virtuous and the fallen (Watt 3). The term of the fallen woman generally refers to women who did not comply with the characteristics of the Victorian ideal women. Margaret Reynolds, in the *Fallen Women Exhibition Guide*, gives different situations involving the fallenness: "the orphaned seamstress who is seduced by a handsome aristocrat; the bored married woman who commits adultery; the girl who is abducted and raped in a brothel; the women who has a secret baby by the man she loved (10). Similarly, Anderson, in *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces* gives the most common description of the term "fallen woman" in the Victorian society as "a range of feminine identities: prostitutes, unmarried women who engage[d] in sexual relations with men, victims of seduction, adulteresses, as well as variously delinquent lower-class women" (2). Most of the fallen women were regarded as the prostitutes, but the term includes not only the women who deviated from sexuality, but also a group of women such as "female thieves, tramps, alcoholics, and those who were described as feeble-minded" (Mumm 527).

There wasn't a discourse of 'fallen man' as the Victorian period had double standards for men and women. Men who had sexual affairs without marriage were readily accepted, while women were harshly criticized by many Victorians (Reynolds 10). The following quotation excerpted from *A Woman against the World*, by William Gayer Starbuck reveals the attitudes towards men and women in relation to the sexual purity:

> When a woman falls from her purity there is no return for her – as well may one attempt to wash the stain from sullied snow. Men sin and are forgiven; but the memory of a woman's guilt cannot be removed on earth. Her nature

> is so exquisitely refined that the slightest flaw becomes a huge defect. Like perfume, it admits of no deterioration, it ceases to exist when it ceases to be sweet. Her soul is an exquisitely precious, a priceless gift, and even more than man's a perilous possession. (100)

With regard to the quotation above, for a woman, there was no greater sin than to lose her purity. She is excluded from the society. On the contrary, men were more forgivable when they committed a sin. Therefore, while the women were counted in the category of the fallen women, men were not.

Most of the women, who were called as the "fallen women" were among the lower class. Women from the working class could not become innocent and ignorant like the middle-class women. Even though many working classes approved the concept of 'ideal', they could not adapt to be a perfect lady because of the financial and social conditions. They lived in overcrowded houses, had to work at early hours and witnessed damaged lives of people, who tried to cope with poorness, alcoholism and prostitution (Vicinus xii-xiii). As they lost their respectability, they finally went to streets to continue their lives. Mumm defined the lifecycle of the fallen women as in the following excerpt:

> The typical life-cycle of a 'fallen' servant, was for a young girl, often from a disrupted family background, to be employed in domestic service from early to mid-adolescence; to fall through a sexual relationship with someone of roughly the same social class; to lose her place as a result; and be forced onto the streets through her lack of respectability (and resulting lack of references). These girls were so young that it is surprising that any stayed out of trouble. One girl, the daughter of an alcoholic, had been in service since her twelfth birthday. By seventeen she was in the penitentiary. Others had been general servants since the age of ten. (Mumm 533)

There was also a very clear inequity among the fallen women with reference to their status. The Victorian society easily accepted the woman who married after she

gave birth, rather than the woman, who never married. The illegitimacy was more welcomed among the poor people compared to the people who were in better conditions. For instance, if a single woman working in a factory bore a child, she would lose her job, while a single woman working as a domestic servant most probably could not (Nelson 69).

According to the Victorian society, a fallen woman was infectious, and they saw them as a threat for morality. These kinds of women were isolated from community as a blemished and taken away from the eyes of worthy society, especially with their bad endings. While Victorians regarded the fallen women as a shame and having lack of purity, indeed, they were the victims of the authority and the society (Barnhill 7-8). Sexual affairs were only appropriate for married women. For many women, pregnancy which was a proof of sexual crime, had endangered their 'life chances' badly. For these women, there were some institutions, one of which was the Foundling Hospital, to which unmarried mothers applied have their babies admitted to this institution, wishing their babies had a good future and proper working life. Workhouses were another alternative for mothers and children, which meant a life of miserable poverty. In the mid-nineteenth century, only women with good character had the chance of having their child accepted to Foundling Hospital (Mills). There was also a rehabilitating centre for the fallen women or prostitutes, called Urania Cottage, founded by Dickens and Angela Burdett- Coutts. (Smiley 18). Dickens thought that the women who entered the Urania Cottage should be supported instead of leaving them with their sin (Rogers).

2.2.3. Prostitution

It was believed in the nineteenth century that sex for the men was congenital. As Susan King Kent puts out that W. R. Greg, one of the experts on prostitution, considered sexual desire of men as 'natural'. And the repression of sexual desire of a man was thought to be dangerous. So, for the pleasure of male sexual desires, another type of women called prostitutes, emerged (63). "By the 1850s prostitution had

become ‘the Great Social Evil’, not simply an affront to morality, but a vital aspect of the social economy as well (Walkowitz 32).

According to Lyn Pykett, prostitution which was considered within the group of “fallen women”, were not “predators”, but the victims of greedy society in which they were weak both on the economic and moral grounds (64). There were various reasons of prostitution. Judith Walkowitz stated that most of these women came from the lower classes, many of whom were servants. As they were poor and paid low wages, they left their houses to survive as a prostitute (15,16). According to the feminists, Susan King Kent states that prostitutions commit sex due to the “economic necessity, not for sin or pleasure” (70). But for the Victorians, prostitutes tempted young men, ruined the morality, carried diseases (Kent 67). Michael Ryan mentions the causes of prostitution in the following words:

> seduction; neglect of parents; idleness; the low price of needle and other female work; the employment of young men milliners and drapers in shops in place of women; the facilities of prostitution; prevalence of intemperance; music and dancing in public houses, saloons and theatres; the impression that males are not equally culpable as females; female love of dress and of superior society; the seductive promises of men; the idea that prostitution is indispensable; poverty; want of education; ignorance; misery; innate licentiousness; improper prints, books and obscene weekly publications; and the profligacy of modern civilization. The neglect of parents and those who have the charge of youth, frequently produces the most lamentable results. (170)

Prostitution, which was regarded as a social evil, drew attention of every walk of life including the church, the country, the medical community, philanthropist, and feminists, all of which brought a series of solutions to handle with the issue and eventually to terminate it. As prostitution was thought to contaminate the honourable community, damage the marriages, the home and the family and eventually the country, some important steps were taken in order to control and improve the prostitution. These steps included Contagious Diseases Acts, which aimed to reduce

the sexually transmitted diseases for military; some reform institutions for individual prostitutes; and preventive associations to deal with the main reasons of prostitution. The aim of these institutions, from big penitentiaries to small homes, was to transform prostitutes into virtuously proper women (Bartley 1-2).

CHAPTER III. PERSONAL BACKGROUNDS OF THE AUTHORS

3.1. Charles Dickens

Born in Portsmouth, on February 2 in 1812, Charles Dickens was the son of John Dickens, a clerk naval and Elizabeth Barrow, both of whom were from the lower middle-class family. Initially, Dicken's family wasn't poor, but when his father spent money beyond the family's income, and got into debt, they confronted financial problems, which caused Dickens to feel humiliated (Champion 8).

Dickens could not continue his education due to the financial problems. Even though his mother tried to run a school to support the family, she could not continue working for longer as the school did not attract much attention of people. When the family's economy got worse Charles Dickens was sent to work in Warren's Blacking, a shoe polish job found by his cousin James Lamert, which was a dirty and squalid place (Davis 3). After working a few months there, his psychology was deeply impressed due to the terrible conditions of the factory (Hunter 9). He didn't like it as it was very far from his house and had to work with the working-class boys, including a child named Fagin, which he would use the name as a bad character in *Oliver Twist.* When his father's debt grew much and he could not pay it, John Dickens was finally sent to Marshalsea Debtors' Prison where he had to stay until he paid his debts (Champion 19-20).

At that time in England, debt was considered as a crime. If someone was charged of owing money, s/he was sent to Debtors' Prison, where the accused was hold until the debts were paid. These prisons were very dirty and disgusting places, where many imprisoners died under horrible conditions. The family of the debtors had to live in the jailhouses, but they were free to come and go (Dailey 23). The situation of his father affected Dickens very much. At the age of twelve, he felt responsible for his father's debts and felt humiliated again, which he used the theme of humiliation in his later novels. Even though the family had to sell everything they had, they were forced to move in prison to live with John Dickens, except Charles Dickens. He tried to help his family (Champion 20). The difficult times of Dickens' own childhood led him to be

more determined to be successful. When he became a famous novelist, he always remembered the terrible days of his childhood. With the fear of poverty, he often forged himself to work and became successful (Dailey 31).

Charles Dickens returned to school, Wellington House Academy, after his father inherited money and released from prison after paying his debts. Dickens was a bright, extraverted and amusing student at school. He wrote exciting stories and acted in school theatre. At the age of fifteen, he worked in a law office. Not satisfied with the job he worked, he improved himself in learning shorthand, and became a freelance reporter in the Law Courts. At the same time, he observed the changing London streets from the rich and modern places to the slums, where poor people lived. He became parliamentary reporter at the age of twenty. While he was continuing her occupation as a young reporter, he hopelessly felt in love with Maria Beadnell in one of her family's musical evenings. However, their relation was regarded unsuitable by her parents. Maria was sent abroad for a while. When she returned, she was cold towards Dickens. Even Dickens tried much to gain her love again, they broke up, which led Dickens to feel humiliated and to suffer for many years (Hunter 10-12).

In 1833, when he was twenty-one, his first sketch, *A Dinner at Popular Wal*k, was published in *Monthly Magazine*. With other sketches published monthly and weekly in magazines, his first book, *Sketches by Boz*, which came out in 1836, brought success to him. It attracted the interest of many people, since as one reviewer called, it was "a perfect picture of the morals, manners, and habits of a great portion of English Society" (qtd. in Smiley 1). He became very popular as people could not afford books at that time, but the novels published in instalments. *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* was one of them, written in monthly instalments, which caused great sensation (Hunter 15). In relation to this, Smiley states: "From that time to the end of his life, Charles Dickens was a figure of whom everyone had something to say, so it is appropriate to take a look at him upon his first real entrance into the condition of celebrity" (2). His literary success affected his private life. He met Catherine Hogarth, the oldest daughter of George Hogarth who is the editor of *Evening Chronicle* in which Dickens wrote twenty pieces. Hogarth family was lively, talented and interested in

music, which attracted Dickens much. He thought that they were suitable family for him (Smiley 4).

Dickens and Catherine Hogarth married in 1836 in Chelsea, London. They had ten children. However, she felt depressed after the birth of first children. So, Dickens showed great interest in Catherine. Even though death at infancy was common in the Victorian period, Dickens' children survived except one, probably because of his widespread popularity at 1840s. He provided his children with the best medical treatment. During those years, he continued working very hard with the fear of poverty which was the unforgettable memory of his childhood. Eventually, he achieved success. Today his best-known novel, *Oliver Twist* was first serialized in *Bentley's Miscellany* between 1837 and 1838. It was followed by *Nicholas Nickleby* in 1838-39, *Barnaby Rudge* in 1840-41, and the *Old Curiosity Shop* in 1841. As a result, he became the most popular and well-known writer of his age (see Champion 32-34).

Dickens' success came from his extraordinary memory in describing places he went. London was narrated in the novels of Dickens more than history books in the mid-nineteenth century. His memory made him to write every scene in detail with exact colours and images, giving us a strong impression of the Victorian London. These images are called "Dickensian" (Dailey15).

Charles Dickens was not only a well-known writer but also a sensitive and conscious man (Smiley 17). Throughout his life, Dickens became the voice of his society. He expressed his interest in the social problems of the period, revealing terrible conditions of the factory labours, miners and poor people living in cities, all of whom could not benefit from the prosperous aspects of the period. In creating his works, he had a sense of morality, which made him a true Victorian. Family life was an important value in the Victorian period. Although Dickens had no bright family life and maintained the subject of unhappiness of family in his works, at the end he concludes in supporting family values. Charles Dickens had a deep feeling as well, when he wrote about children. In those years, child abuse was excessive in workhouses. Thus, in his novels, he mentioned about their condition through his characters such as *Oliver Twist*, *Amy Dorrit*, and *Little Nell* (Dailey 14-17).

In 1839, Dickens met Angela Burdett-Coutts, who was the second wealthiest woman of England after the queen. He took part in many charitable projects. One of them was Urania Cottage, a rehabilitating centre for the fallen women (Smiley 18). Jenny Hartley, in the biography of *Charles Dickens*, mentions Dickens' active work in Urania Cottage in the following passage:

> He supervised the hiring and firing of staff, and got to know the inmates well. He interviewed them twice – once before they came to decide if they were suitable, and then when they had settled in, he would take down their life-stories, which he forbade them to tell anyone else. These secret histories, affording him privileged glimpses into London's seamy underworld, he recorded in Casebook, now lost. (Hartley 30)

In 1842, he travelled to the United States with his wife Kate, where he was greatly admired. Wherever he went, many people came to see him. Numerous dining invitations were given. People displayed scenes from his book in the theatres. However, after for a while, Dickens got tired from public attention. Before he left Boston, he gave a speech about the need for international copyrights that was an important issue for all of the authors. American press printed his books without his consent and payment. The day after his speech, he was advertised as greedy in the newspapers whose publishers were the ones, who made money from his works. As a result, Dickens' view of America changed. After his journey, he wrote a travel book, *American Notes*, which created a chaos in America even he restrained himself to write about the slavery and sensationalism of the press. It was approved in England more than it was in America. In 1843, Dickens wrote *Martin Chuzzlewit*, which was based on selfishness of his age, from greedy factory owners to the neglected poor children at "ragged schools". When the book did not sell much, Dickens narrated his misadventures of America with bad mimicry, which irritated American readers (Dailey 59-64). Unlike *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, his story, *A Christmas Carol* (1843) attracted attention of millions of people. Dickens wanted to give a break from work for a while in 1844 and 1845, so he travelled to Italy and France with his family. When he came back to England, he started to work as an editor in a newspaper, namely

the *Daily News*. In 1846, when he was on journey again, he started to write *Dombey and Son* in series and it was published in 1848 (Champion 43-44).

Between 1849 and 1850, he wrote *David Copperfield*, which came out of his childhood memories. In 1850, he started a new career in a new magazine, *Household Words*, which brought a great success. He wrote novels criticizing the Victorian society. He handled with the turmoil of Law in *Bleak House* (1852-53); harsh conditions of factory life and mill owners in *Hard Times* (1854); prisoners made by the society in *Little Dorrit* (1855-57). He also gave public readings at Christmas, which brought him fame with high salary. At the same time, he wasn't happy with his marriage and met Ellen Ternan, a young actress, so he decided to separate from Kate in 1858. He published *A Tale of Two Cities* in 1859 in a new magazine he launched called *All the Year Round.* It was followed by *Great Expectations* in 1860-61. *Our Mutual Friend* was his last completed novel. Towards the 1970s, he got tired and sick because of his constant reading tours that lasted for months at a time. At the age of fifty-eight, he died on June 9, 1870 (Hunter 24-29).

3.2. Elizabeth Gaskell

The early life of Elizabeth Gaskell was different from the stereotype of the Victorian family model (Foster 6). Tessa Brodetsky, in her biographical novel, *Elizabeth Gaskell*, published in 1986, describes Elizabeth Gaskell as "a model *par excellence* of a mid-Victorian woman" (1) and further explains her versality:

> She was a deeply caring wife and mother, inherently religious, sharing her husband's concerns as a Unitarian minister, showing an awareness and knowledge of much of rural England with its self-contained small-town life, but also living in and very much a part of the vigorous industrial growth of an expanding city, Manchester. She used these different facets of her experience to great effect in her writing, so that from its sum of the society in which she lived. (1)

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell was born in Chelsea on 29 September 1810. Both her parents came from dissenting families. Her father, William was a dissenting minister, a member of Unitarian community, and a treasury official. Her mother, also Elizabeth nee Holland, came from a family who were more traditional and rational middle-class dissenters (Peart and Robinson 11). While her father comes from a family, who had a marine life, her mother's family mostly had a rural life. That's why, we encounter both naval and rural impressions in many novels of Elizabeth Gaskell (Brodetsky 1-2).

Gaskell had one brother, John, who was twelve years older than her, but she could not spend much time with her brother (Peart and Robinson 11). When she was one-year old baby, her mother Elizabeth Stevenson passed away and Gaskell was sent to Knutsford to live with her aunt, Hannah Lumb. Although her father, William Stevenson, took the responsibility of Gaskell's twelve-year old brother, he apparently didn't want to undertake the custody of a motherless daughter. Accordingly, Gaskell became almost an orphan at infancy (Foster 6). At the age of twenty-one, her brother John went to sea and disappeared in 1828, which led her to portray sailor characters in her novels, such as Will Wilson in *Mary Barton*, Frederick Hale in *North and South*, and Charlie Kinraid in *Sylva's Lovers* (Brodetsky 2).

Her father remarried to Catherine Thomson when she was four years old. Gaskell didn't have a good relationship with her stepmother (Foster 6). Unlike the family ideology of the Victorian England, which was piously a holiness matter of fact managed by the hegemony of the father, Elizabeth Gaskell could not live with her new family, and thus, the term of family differed from that of traditional view in Elizabeth's mind. The authority was the women (her aunts) she lived with, who taught her about what the family relations should be. Thus, she was accustomed to have the control of her own earnings when she got married, to freely express her opinions and feared when the fiancée of her daughter expected a whole confidence from her future wife (Lansbury 3).

She had lost her father, her brother and her mother, but the most saddening loss of her was that of her mother. That's why, she showed a great love for her children

and was willing to give importance to maternal relations which she had never experienced before. The well-being of her children was the most important thing in her life. Thus, she was so obsessive about the issue that she used the topics about the success of motherless girls in her novels such as Rosamund in "*The Old Nurse's Story*" (1852), Mary Barton, Ruth, Thekla in "*Six Weeks at Heppenheim*" (1862), Libbie Marsh, Ellinor Wilkins in "*A Dark Night's Work*" (1863), Susan Dixon in "*Half a Lifetime Ago*" (1855) and Molly Gibson in *Wives and Daughters* (1864). Gaskell's sense of woman solidarity came from her unmarried aunts and Aunt Lumb, who was defined by Gaskell as "my more than mother" (Foster 9-10).

Unitarianism was one of the most important facts in Gaskell's lifetime, which primarily affected her education and social life. Unitarianism penetrated her point of view as well as her writings even though it was not especially mentioned by name in her works (Peart and Robinson 2). Unitarians were community, who did not accept doctrine of the Trinity and rejected the divinity of Christ (Easson 5). Individual liberty was very important in Unitarianism. At the age of twelve, Elizabeth Gaskell attended a school established by this philosophy, where she both had respectable education and was promoted to write. Writing became a way of expressing her feelings and ideas without being criticized. Unitarianism was generally an exception to the Victorian social ideas. Unitarian women had the knowledge about the languages, politics and science. Gaskell had many significant Unitarian friends such as Florence Nightingale and Harriet Martineau. While Gaskell was going through difficult periods, her Unitarian friends assisted her, like a family rather than a religious group. Unitarians were intellectuals and ready to fight for their ideologies. They were interested in public issues (Lansbury 3,4). And, in 1832, when Gaskell married to William Gaskell, who was among this group, became a Unitarian Minister's wife. She was Unitarian and her religion was an important factor in her home life (Easson 4). Both Gaskell and her husband were concerned in social reforms to change the world. Gaskell took a close interest in managing the shabby schools, visiting prisons and factories, caring for poor and sick people. She showed attention towards the working class (Lansbury 5-6).

Mr and Mrs Gaskell had children, the first one was stillborn. Then, they had three daughters, Marianne, Margaret Emily and Florence, who survived. They were followed by the birth of a son, who died because of scarlet fever when he was a baby. And the fourth baby was a daughter, Julia, who brought Gaskells happiness after a long sorrow of her son (Brodetsky 5).

Her writing career began with the death of her little son in 1845. She felt so depressed that her husband encouraged her to put her feelings on paper. And Gaskell's first novel, *Mary Barton* emerged and was published in 1848, which brought her great success (Lansbury 6, 7). Mary Barton was "one of the earliest 'social novels', for until this time the exploration of social problems had hardly been considered a suitable subject for polite conversations, let alone for fiction" (Brodetsky 8). Though Mary Barton was a controversial novel after it was published, later it was praised by many of her contemporaries. At this time, she used a masculine nickname, Cotton Mather Mills, but a year later, she used her own name (Brodetsky 8). Her popularity with *Mary Barton* in London led her association with Charles Dickens (Polard 21). Gaskell started to compose *Cranford* for Charles Dickens. It began when Gaskell met with Charles Dickens in London. Dickens demanded Gaskell to contribute to his magazine *Household Words*. Besides many short stories Gaskell wrote, her most remarkable contribution became her best-known story, *Cranford*, which was serialized in the magazine, and received many acclaims from her contemporaries, as well as Charles Dickens. Gaskell continued her writing career by *Ruth,* published in 1853. The book aroused discussions as it had an eponymous heroine, who was a fallen woman, and Gaskell showed sympathy and sensitivity towards the character, Ruth, in the novel. (Brodetsky 8). The novel caused dispute and was seen for many readers as an inappropriate topic for fiction and was prohibited in many houses, even in Gaskell's own house her daughters weren't allowed to read it until they were eighteen (Flint 21-22).

Elizabeth Gaskell's success came mostly from her calm and consistent description of sincere affairs of ordinary life between home and work in her writings. In her novels, it was apparent that her way of writing was different from other great

Victorian novelists. She generally writes about working people, for whom work is an important action in their life. She also describes in her novels about marriage and households but, her descriptions don't include the married couples, but sisters as in *Cranford* in 1853, father and daughter as in *Mary Barton* in 1848 and in *Wives and Daughters* in 1866, and brother and sister as in *Ruth* in 1853, all of these households are about family life. Gaskell's portrait of marriage was not like many novelists of her age, who considered marriage as the only effective and satisfying way of life (Calder 68).

North and South was the first serial published in Dickens' *Household Words* between 1854 and 1855, which represents Gaskell's view of the working class in Britain. In 1857, a controversial novel, *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, was published. Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell were close friends and shared much in common. After Gaskell wrote biography of Charlotte Brontë, she was threatened with cases and libel. In 1863, *Sylvia's Lovers* was published, in which she approached social conditions of the age. *Wives and Daughters*, her last incomplete novel, was published in serial form in *Cornhill Magazine* between 1864 and 1866 (Lansbury 7-8).

CHAPTER IV.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMAGE OF THE FALLEN WOMEN IN DICKENS' *OLIVER TWIST* AND GASKELL'S *RUTH*

4.1. Dickens' Fallen Women: Nancy, Agnes

Charles Dickens was an English writer, who lived in the Victorian period. He witnessed a period when many child workers suffered from harsh conditions of the factories, mines or workhouses, most of them unable to survive, and many child prostitutes lived in the streets. Dickens, as a social critic, became the voice of such terrible situations of his period through his novels. He challenged the mercilessness, injustice and cruelty of the Victorian society. *Oliver Twist*, one of the best-known novels of Charles Dickens, is one of such criticisms. The book includes miserable life of an orphan and the women that stands for fallen woman who have different social and moral standings.

Agnes is Dickens' first fallen character that appeared in the beginning of the novel. The novel begins in a workhouse at night when a poor pregnant woman gives birth and says in a faint voice, "[l]et me see the child, and die" (Dickens 2). The doctor hesitates, but she leans over the baby and kisses his forehead and dies. In the Victorian period, workhouses were institutions for those who were the orphans or abandoned children of poor mothers, and unmarried women who were pregnant as they had no other chance to look after their babies. These women had two options after they gave birth: either they would stay in workhouses and work or they would try their chance on the streets (Warren 52-53). Agnes is such a woman, who is introduced us a mysterious pregnant woman, who refuges to a workhouse. However, Dickens does not explicitly reveal her identity even though she is the mother of Oliver Twist, the protagonist of the novel. When the doctor asks the old woman, who is the only one accompanying the doctor in the little room, if she knows anything about the woman, the old woman says, "She was brought here last night. . . .by the overseer's order. She was found lying on the street; she had walked some distance, for her shoes were worn to pieces; but where she came from, or where she was going to, nobody knows"

(Dickens 3). At that time, the doctor can't see a wedding ring and says "The old story" shaking his head (Dickens 3). There is no information about her. Even her name is unknown, which is likely because of "society's wilful indifference to an unwed mother" as "she is a nonperson, who exists outside the construct of a socially acceptable family" (Ayres 114). Although Agnes comes from a well-known family, she is described as the figure of fallen woman because of her old story, which reflects to women who are pregnant out of marriage. The Victorian society did not approve unmarried mothers due to their notorious sexual affairs.

In the Victorian period, workhouses were so terrible that some people killed themselves or preferred to live in the streets rather than live in workhouses (Warren 50). Thus, Dickens reveals the reality of terrible conditions that would wait for the orphan in the workhouse by saying: "Oliver cried lustily. If he could have known that he was an orphan, left to the tender mercies of church-wardens and overseers, perhaps he would have cried the louder" (3). Like all the children in the workhouse, Oliver lives a miserable life and then is sent to Mrs Mann's baby farm, where he suffers from hunger. In the Victorian times, the babies were nursed by elder inmates in the workhouses or dispatched to baby farms, a practice of childcare. In both cases, children took little care. After they had little education there, they were sent to work in hard jobs such as factories and mills; or were hired by farmers or shopkeepers; or became chimney cleaners (Warren 52-53). So, at the age of nine, Oliver is given as an apprenticeship of Mr Sowerberry, an undertaker. Here he is cruelly punished for attacking an employee and runs away to London, where his unfortunate adventure begins in Fagin's thieves' den.

Nancy is another fallen character who inhabits in Fagin's house. She is working as a prostitute. Nancy is a described as the figure of the fallen woman, who is disapproved by the Victorian values because of having sexual affairs outside the marriage. Although Agnes and Nancy have different social and life conditions, they make similar mistakes. Nancy has no parent and works at streets since her childhood. She doesn't have a happy life. We are not told exactly what reasons made Nancy a fallen woman, but it is probably because of poverty like many other women in the

Victorian society. It is very clear, when Nancy tells Fagin pointing to Oliver: "I thieved for you, when I was a child not half as old as this! I have been in the same trade, and in the same service, for twelve years since" (Dickens 108-109). When Oliver Twist meets Nancy and her friend Bet, for the first time, they are described as following:

> They wore a good deal of hair, not very neatly turned up behind, and were rather untidy about the shoes and stockings. They were not exactly pretty, perhaps; but they had a great deal of colour in their faces; and looked quite stout and hearty. Being remarkably free and agreeable in their manners, Oliver thought them very nice girls indeed. And there is no doubt they were. (Dickens 58)

Although it is not obviously mentioned that Nancy works as a prostitute, it can be inferred from her being 'free and agreeable' that she is a prostitute. Donald Hawes notes that according to Kathleen Tillotson in the 1841 Preface Dickens says apparently that 'the girl is a prostitute' but that these words are omitted in his 1867 Preface (161). Slater discusses that "[w]e see [Nancy] first, through Oliver's innocent gaze, 'remarkably free and agreeable' in her manners, but her secret misery comes violently to the surface in the scene with Fagin after Oliver's recapture" (340).

Dickens first portrays Nancy as an assistant of Fagin, whom she helps to recapture Oliver. When Oliver is blamed for stealing the pocket of the Mr Brownlow, who is a kind man, he later believes in his innocence and saves Oliver from punishment. Mr Brownlow later brings him to his house, where he behaves affectionately. Yet, Fagin sends Nancy, and Bill Sikes, a burglar working for Fagin and seducer of Nancy, to recapture the boy. Initially, Nancy acts as a bad character when she accepts to recapture Oliver as she doesn't want to betray Fagin and Bill Sikes. Thereafter, she turns out to have a good heart after Oliver is brought back to Fagin. When Oliver tries to escape, Bill Sikes sets the dog on Oliver. Nancy begs Sikes "[k]eep back the dog; he'll tear the boy to pieces" (Dickens 106). We even see Nancy's struggle with Sikes despite of his threatening words. She says, "the child shan't be torn down by the dog, unless you kill me first" (106). Nancy represents the figure of

defender. Her sense of protection comes probably from her maternal instincts by not being indifferent to Oliver's defencelessness (Cellier 26).

Nancy's sincere goodness shows up after she learns Oliver's half-brother Monk's and Fagin's terrible plan to catch him. At that time, she starts to disgust her ugly life and sins. She courageously helps Oliver even though she knows how hazardous move she will do. Nancy reports Monks' intentions to Rose Maylie and repeats these revelations to Rose and Mr Brownlow at London Bridge. Her attempts to help Oliver contradicts the stereotypes of a fallen woman. However, we experience Nancy's loyalty to Bill Sikes. Despite of Sikes' violent attitudes towards her, she continues to take care of him in the scene that Sikes get injured in burglary. Following excerpt reveals how Nancy is dependent on Sikes:

> Such a number of nights,' said the girl, with a touch of woman's tenderness, which communicated something like sweetness of tone, even to her voice: 'such a number of nights as I've been patient with you, nursing and caring for you, as if you had been a child: and this the first that I've seen you like yourself; you wouldn't have served me as you did just now, if you'd thought of that, would you? Come, come; say you wouldn't. (Dickens 265)

She betrays Sikes only when she tells Rose the plan about Oliver to save him. On discovering how dangerous people Nancy will live with, Rose, who is later revealed to be Oliver's maternal aunt, offers Nancy protection. However, Nancy keeps her loyalty to Bill Sikes saying that "I must go back, …because among the men I have told you of, there is one: the most desperate among them all; that I can't leave: no, not even to be saved from the life I am leading now (Dickens 280). Rose offers Nancy luck of escaping from her present miserable life. Nancy is regretful for her immoral life, but she doesn't accept Rose's offer. Nancy sees herself, as Rose puts it, "as a woman lost almost beyond redemption" (281) And she rejects it saying:

> When ladies as young, and good, and beautiful as you are, …give away your hearts, love will carry you all lenghts- even such as you, who have home, friends, other admirers, everything, to fill them. When such as I, who have no

> certain roof but the coffin-lid, and no friend in sickness or death but the hospital nurse, set our rotten hearts on any man, and let him fill the place that has been a blank through all our wretched lives, who can hope to cure us. (Dickens 282)

We can also understand from the dialogue above between Nancy and Rose that the poverty of Nancy comes not only from economic reasons, but also from her inner nature as a result of seduction (Rogers). Her loyalty for Sikes has a strong influence on her decision. She can escape from the situation that she is in, but she refuses it and returns to her old life again. Rose astonishes at the insistence of Nancy to go back a dangerous man, but Nancy is desperate about her future. She explains the common fate of prostitutes:

> I only know that it is so, and not with me alone, but with hundreds of others as bad and wretched as myself. I must go back. Whether it is God's wrath for the wrong I have done, I do not know; but I am drawn back to him through every suffering and ill-usage; and I should be, I believe, if I knew that I was to die by his hand at last. (Dickens 281)

As Nancy says, her death comes by Sikes' hand at last. As in many fictions in the nineteenth century, the fallen women commonly die on account of a crime. Dickens also seems to accept the life of Nancy as hopeless and not curable. If a woman took place in the matter of a sexual scandal, it damaged her woman's reputation (Swisher 20). Nancy is very aware of the society's attitude toward the fallen women. Nancy predicts her end when she tells Rose about the common end for women like her. She cries to Rose: "Look before you, lady. Look at that dark water. How many times do you read of such as I who spring into the tide, and leave no living thing, to care for, or bewail them[?] It may be years hence, or it may be only months, but I shall come to that at last" (Dickens 326). It reveals that for the fallen women, there is not any opportunity or possibility available. The fate of Nancy as a fallen woman conforms to the stereotype, the Victorians expected. The Victorians wanted such a woman to be shameful and unhappy. Even though Nancy gained the readers' sympathy because of her goodness, Dickens doesn't let his character as a fallen woman to escape. Therefore,

death, as an inevitable end, comes to Nancy with a bloody one that comes by the murder of Bill Sikes. There is a vivid description:

> There had been a moan and motion of the hand; and, with terror added to rage, he had struck and struck again. Once he threw a rug over it; but it was worse to fancy the eyes, and imagine them moving towards him, than to see them glaring upward, as if watching the reflection of the pool of gore that quivered and danced in the sunlight on the ceiling. He had plucked it off again. And there was the body--mere flesh and blood, nor more--but such flesh, and so much blood! (Dickens 334)

Nancy dies on her knees, holding Rose Maylie's white handkerchief, which is a symbol of a possible redemption and goodness in this dark world (Bash 213). Although Dickens seemed to have positive opinions about women, he didn't avoid punishing Nancy with death. However, Dickens challenges the idea that a woman is "either fallen or not, either totally corrupt or pure" (Watt 12). Nancy may be a prostitute, but she has goodness inside her. However, Archibald claims that the reason of Nancy's death is not for the sake of Oliver, but for she returns to her seducer since she cannot keep away from an interdependent behaviour (57). Archibald also states that "Dickens himself was well aware of the behaviour of women caught in such destructive relationships, and he knowingly draws an accurate and insightful picture of such pathology in Nancy" (57).

As a reflection of the Victorian culture "women are portrayed as either Angels or Demons, Sinners or Saints, Virgins or Whores" (Tatum 242). Dickens, as a Victorian writer, shows his image of women with different types of women. The Victorians accepted the woman who was innocent, pure, and obedient, had no sexual life outside the marriage, all of which are the ideal features of the Victorian culture. Rose Maylie is the one, who represents the "Angel in the House". She is Agnes's sister. She is brought up by Mrs Maylie after Rose's father dies. She is a forgiving, young woman. She is the example of female virtue. Her angelic features are appropriate with the Victorian ideals of women as Dickens describes her in Chapter 29:

> She was not past seventeen. Cast in so slight and exquisite a mould; so mild and gentle; so pure and beautiful; that earth seemed not her element, nor its rough creatures her fit companions. The very intelligence that shone in her deep blue eye, and was stamped upon her noble head, seemed scarcely of her age, or of the world; and yet the changing expression of sweetness and good humour, the thousand lights that played about the face, and left no shadow there; above all, the smile, the cheerful, happy smile, were made for Home, and fireside peace and happiness. (194)

Rose is a symbol of 'ideal woman', who has good moral standards conforming to the Victorian ideals. As Brenda Ayres indicated in *Dissenting Women in Dickens's Novels: The Subversion of Domestic Ideology*, Rose is "young, beautiful, frail, mild, gentle, pure, ethereal, intelligent, sweet, pleasant, charming, coy, and blessed" conforming the stereotype of "angel in the house (118). Dickens clearly shows the discrepancy between Nancy and Rose when Nancy says:

> 'Thank Heaven upon your knees, dear lady,' cried the girl, 'that you had friends to care for and keep you in your childhood, and that you were never in the midst of cold and hunger, and riot and drunkenness, and something worse than all--as I have been from my cradle. I may use the word, for the alley and the gutter were mine, as they will be my death-bed.' (278)

It shows that they come from two different worlds. Rose was brought up in an environment surrounded by love, virtue and kindness which were appropriate for the Victorian society. Nancy, survived in the streets, which were full of crime and violence, ugliness which was improper life for Victorians. However, both were orphan without money and even a name. Rose was lucky for having been adopted by Mrs Maylie, who offered her a good life. Dickens argue that the environment people were born in, affects their characters and life choices. Although Nancy and Rose were born in the same circumstances as an orphan, their environment made them so different. As Archibald notes "the circumstances of Nancy's childhood have contributed to the misery of her present life" (59). On the other hand, even Rose is orphaned, she is luckier not to have a life like Nancy. She is adopted by an upper-class parent. She has

never experienced what a life without parents means. “Fagin is the only father figure Nancy knows, hardly the sort of “parent” to help her develop into a well-adjusted young adult” (Archibald 59).

Rose is an example of the Victorian lady. She is helpful and protective. Harry thinks that she is an angel, beautiful and has many other good qualities, and that he wants to marry her. Although Dickens portrays Rose as an angelic woman, she is tainted because of the illegitimacy of her birth. She feels that she is impure and doesn’t deserve a happy life as a wife of Harry since she has no name and there is a bad impression on her family. Harry has a noble job, working as a lawyer, and has an eye toward political office, so she doesn’t want to be an "obstacle" for his brilliant future, so she rejects Harry’s proposal:

> Yes, Harry. I owe it to myself, that I, a friendless, portionless, girl, with a blight upon my name, should not give your friends reason to suspect that I had sordidly yielded to your first passion, and fastened myself, a clog, on all your hopes and projects. I owe it to you and yours, to prevent you from opposing, in the warmth of your generous nature, this great obstacle to your progress in the world. (242)

She thinks that their marriage will give harm to his reputation. However, at the end of novel, Dickens gives a description of Rose and Harry’s happy ending saying that he wants to “linger yet with a few of those among whom I have so long moved and share their happiness by endeavouring to depict it” (379).

Dickens may try to show that although Nancy is living in bad circumstances and has a dark past, such as being a thief, prostitute, having a habit of drinking to excess, she proves to be more virtuous than Rose, especially in the case of vital issues, such as life and death matters. When Rose helps Oliver, she loses nothing, but Nancy can lose her life. Her character reveals that there is a thin line between good and bad. Nancy’s virtue dominates her character and turns her into a regretful and affectionate woman (Paraoissien 99). Dickens tries to emphasize as George Watt puts that virtue and vice can be together in one character (Watt 14). Dickens sees Nancy as a saving

influence, not corrupting one (Watt 15). Despite her being an example of the fallen women, she is sympathized by Dickens in the aspects of her goodness. Accordingly, Nancy becomes an important character. While, at first, we can see condemnation towards Nancy, when we reach the end, it turns into an important figure. Archibald indicates:

> The character Nancy enters the stage as a mere prop but quickly becomes a more important member of the cast, considered by many readers to be the true hero of the novel. And though there is some disagreement about the meaning of Nancy's saving Oliver and returning to Sikes, most critics agree that these final acts are key to understanding her character and her role in the novel. They usually label Nancy as a "fallen woman" or "whore with a heart of gold" whose death is a sacrifice for Oliver's sake. (Dickens 56)

Dickens also emphasizes the strength of Nancy, when a housemaid says about her, "[b]rass can do better than the gold what has stood the fire" (276). The Victorian society has set of values in which gold has much value than brass. While gold represents the angel in the house, brass represents the prostitutes (Ayres 113). Nancy is depicted as brass. However, Dickens implies that brass is stronger than gold in practical issues and it shows Nancy's strong character.

4.2. Gaskell's Fallen Woman: Ruth

Ruth was Mrs Gaskell's second novel, published in 1853, and, in all Gaskell's novels, as a social-problem novel, it had little interest among her contemporaries. Therefore, it was criticized. As Lansbury stated in the biographical work of *Elizabeth Gaskell*, the heroine of the novel, Ruth Hilton was considered as "a typical young woman perversely endowed by the novelists with a morbid conscience and censorious friends" (23).

The topic of *Ruth* wasn't formed as a result of sudden inspiration by Elizabeth Gaskell. It was a long novel, which rose between 1849 and 1850. Gaskell consulted

Dickens to take information about Miss Burdett-Coutts's emigration project for the prostitutes and was published in 1853 (Gérin 127). Ruth, the heroine of the book, was a prototype of a woman named Pasley, Gaskell met during her charity work at the New Bayley prison in Manchester. Pasley, like Ruth, was an orphaned young girl, working as an apprentice in a dressmaker shop, enticed by a young doctor and abandoned. She was later forced to thieve to survive and ended up in prison (Lansbury 26). The injustice in the case of Pasley, who was a social outcast finding no hope to work honestly again and had to be a prostitute to survive shocked Gaskell and led her write her novel, *Ruth* (Gérin 128). However, Shirley Foster points out that the case of Pasley and other young working girls forced to be prostitute in Manchester is not the only reason for Gaskell to pay attention to the issue of fallen woman, she also had such kind of people living in her household; a maid, who had illegitimate pregnancy, the young sister of their cook whose life was hanging by a thread by a 'bad man' in London (101). Consequently, she aroused anger of people, the copies of *Ruth* were burnt by churchmen, who found Gaskell's sympathetic narration of a "fallen woman" as immoral one (Matus 10). She felt offended as her novel was considered as improper, so she wrote in the letter to Anne Robson: "[o]f course it is a prohibited book in this, as in many other households; not a book for young people, unless read with someone older " (Gaskell 221).

Ruth was a social-problem novel, which was praised later. For instance, *The Guardian*, after claiming the novel "an inexpressibly beautiful and touching story", it declared about the novel's heroine, Ruth: "... her guilt is as little as can ever exist in such a case. Yet all through the book.... she is never suffered to forget her fall, nor are we ever either... it is as the humble self-distrusting penitent. . . that she wins our respect and love (qtd. in Shelston). She is "a heroine, who best represents the Victorian ideal of self-abnegation and gentle docility unmarred by excess of intelligence or education (Lansbury 23).

Ruth Hilton, the heroine of the book, is a beautiful young orphan, who is seduced and deserted by a wealthy young noble man. From the very beginning of the novel, we encounter the innocence, naivete, purity, unawareness of Ruth. Ruth has a kind and

loving parent. When they died, Ruth is given to a guardian, who does nothing except for finding her apprenticeship near a dressmaker. Now alone, she must make her own living. The first scene of Ruth is described as a workwoman when she was stitching ball-dresses for the coming ball with other girls at a cold January night:

> Ruth Hilton passed wearily one January night, now many years ago. I call it night; but, strictly speaking, it was morning. Two o'clock in the morning chimed forth the old bells of St. Saviour's. And yet, more than a dozen girls still sat in the room into which Ruth entered, stitching away as if for very life, not daring to gape, or show any outward manifestation of sleepiness. They only sighed a little when Ruth told Mrs Mason the hour of the night, as the result of her errand; for they knew that, stay up as late as they might, the work-hours of the next day must begin at eight, and their young limbs were very weary. (Gaskell 7)

Ruth is a very beautiful and an innocent girl. While the girls including Ruth, are stitching for women who will be in the upcoming ball, Mrs Mason, Ruth's master, comes and informs girls that she will send "four of the most diligent" in order to repair the dresses of ladies in case of any accidental damages (Gaskell 10). She says: "Dress, young ladies, you know, is a very secondary consideration. Conduct is everything" (Gaskell 14). However, she gives much importance to the appearances as it will aggrandize her "establishment" (10). Although she promises to send the most diligent girls, Mrs Mason declares the names of the beautiful girls, who will accompany her during the ball. One of them is Ruth Hilton, despite some girls' bewildered eyes. Even if she does not work as diligently as the other girls, her master decides to send Ruth to the ball because of her beauty, whether she is industrious or not.

We see the character of Mrs Mason as hypocritical and materialistic. Despite the insistence of Ruth, Mrs Mason does not change her opinion of sending Ruth because of her outstanding beauty and says: "No! diligent or idle, Ruth Hilton must appear to-night." However, Ruth is so innocent and fair that even the other girls know the reason, Ruth cannot understand the reason behind Mrs Mason's decision. She doesn't want

such a privilege even though she desires very much to be in the ball and says in ignorance of the real reason:

> ‘If you please, Mrs Mason, I was not one of the most diligent; I am afraid--I believe--I was not diligent at all. I was very tired; and I could not help thinking, and, when I think, I can't attend to my work.’ She stopped, believing she had sufficiently explained her meaning; but Mrs Mason would not understand, and did not wish for any further elucidation. (Gaskell 12)

Lansbury asserts that “had she been quick-witted she would have made her appearance her fortune, but beauty and stupidity, coupled with extreme poverty, make her a predestined victim” (26). She is unaware of the advantages of her beauty, which only leads her fall. Allan Conrad Christensen, in *Nineteenth-Century Narratives of Contagion: 'Our Feverish Contact'*, claims that “Mr Bellingham recognizes her worth as a beautiful commodity and probably assumes that as a seamstress she is available for purchase” (101).

Upon the order of Mrs Mason, Ruth goes to the ball, where she, for the first time, encounters the handsome nobleman, Mr Bellingham, who accompanies a young beautiful lady, Miss Duncombe. The first sign of seduction begins at that time. While Ruth is kneeling to repair the dress of Miss Duncombe, Mr Bellingham is attracted by “the scarlet colour of annoyance flush to that beautiful cheek which was partially presented to him” (Gaskell 17). When his partner doesn’t thank to Ruth, he gives Ruth a camellia left on the table as a conduct of apologizing for Miss Duncombe’s impoliteness by saying: “Allow me, Miss Duncombe, to give this, in your name, to this young lady, as thanks for her dexterous help” (Gaskell 17). The seduction goes on:

> Mr Bellingham danced on gaily and merrily through the night and fitted with Miss Duncombe as he thought good. But he looked often to the side-door where the milliner's apprentices stood; and once he recognised the tall, slight figure, and the rich auburn hair of the girl in black; and then his eye sought

> for the camellia. It was there, snowy white in her bosom. And he danced on more gaily than ever. (Gaskell 18)

After they returned home, she felt as if she was in the actual world and thought about the night and Mr Bellingham. However, Ruth was so innocent that "she had no idea that any association made her camellia precious to her" (Gaskell 18).

She is unaware of the fact that Mr Bellingham, who was surrounded of her beauty, has begun to tempt her. The absence of friendship in the town combined with poverty makes her ready to be easily tempted by Mr Bellingham, who is a very selfish young man. Not knowing how he is going to ruin her life; Ruth thinks Mr Bellingham is a very gentle and thoughtful young man. She is so pure and naïve that, on one occasion, when he rescued a child, who was about to drown in the river and gave his purse to Ruth for the necessities of child, seeming cared with the little child, Ruth misunderstands his actions and thinks that he is gentle and courageous despite the fact that he, indeed, uses the situation to come closer with Ruth. Ruth easily exaggerates his conduct as it is seen in the passage below:

> His spirited and natural action of galloping into the water to save the child, was magnified by Ruth into the most heroic deed of daring; his interest about the boy was tender, thoughtful benevolence in her eyes, and his careless liberality of money was fine generosity; for she forgo that generosity implies some degree of self-denial. (Gaskell 26)

Ruth knows nothing about love or sex. "She was too young when her mother died to have received any cautions or words of advice respecting *the* subject of a woman's life. Ruth was innocent and snow pure. She had heard of falling in love but didn't know the signs and symptoms thereof" (Gaskell 39,40). So, she can be easily tempted by Mr Bellingham. She is not aware of how society will view her behaviours, sometimes she feels discomfort and thinks "how strange it is…that I should feel as if this charming afternoon's walk were somehow, not exactly wrong, but yet as if were not right" (Gaskell 37).

At every turn, Mr Bellingham finds some excuses to be able to meet Ruth again and so readily becomes her friend, which paves the way for Ruth to be a fallen woman. And her fallenness begins when Mr Bellingham invites Ruth to her old childhood home, and she accepts. She enjoys the trip, but while she is returning to Mrs Mason's house, Mrs Mason sees Ruth "standing with a lover, far away from home, at such a time in the evening" (Gaskell 48). At that time Mrs Mason thinks that Ruth is fallen and fires her from her house, not allowing her to explain herself:

> Don't attempt to show your face at my house again after this conduct. I saw you, and your spark too. I'll have no slurs on the character of my apprentices. Don't say a word. I saw enough. I shall write and tell your guardian to-morrow. (Gaskell 48)

Upon these words, Ruth begins to cry in front of Mr Bellingham. Mr Bellingham proposes Ruth to go to London with him and says: "I cannot leave you here without a home; the thought of leaving you at all is pain enough, but in these circumstances--so friendless, so homeless--it is impossible. You must come with me, love, and trust to me" (Gaskell 49). Being "obedient and docile by the nature, and unsuspicious and innocent of any harmful consequences" Ruth cannot resist to Mr Bellingham's seduction (Gaskell 53). Not only she is lonesome, poor and frightened, but also, she is ignorant and doesn't comprehend that the proposal of Mr Bellingham is wrong. Now, as a fallen, Ruth has no other option than to go to London with Mr Bellingham, where they begin a sexual relationship. Ruth's life changes for the worse.

In the Victorian society, people reject women who have a relationship with a man without marriage and condemn them. Indeed, because of social perception of having an unwed relationship leads Ruth's actual fall. First condemnation comes from Mrs Mason, who is not much concerned with the protection of an orphaned girl, but Ruth's improper relationship which can damage her institution. Each condemnation leads her gradually become fallen. First example of it is that she goes with her lover. If Mr Mason behaves like a caring, protective mother, she will not do wrong.

When Ruth and Mr Bellingham arrive at North Wales and stay there for few days, we can see the harsh condemnation of town people towards Ruth, who starts to live with her lover without getting married. When they stay in the same room, people around her pay no attention to Ruth and regard her as a bad girl because of her relationship with Mr Bellingham. They think that "it's a shame such people should be allowed to come here" (Gaskell 61). Therefore, the situation of Ruth is found as being "wickedness under the same roof!" (Gaskell 61). The lodger also despises her, when she realizes that Ruth is not Mr Bellingham's wife: "Indeed! and she's not his wife," says the lodger, "that's clear as day" (Gaskell 56). However, Ruth is unconscious about the view of people until she is slapped by a boy named Henry. When Ruth attempts to kiss his baby sister, Henry hits her "a great blow on her face" and utters that "she's a bad naughty girl-mamma said so" (Gaskell 62).

Ruth is also humiliated by Mr Bellingham. He gets annoyed with her admiration of nature, which shows that they are two different creatures coming from different backgrounds. He, once seemed as a caring lover towards Ruth, now humiliates her even for not knowing to play cards and gets annoyed with Ruth's love of nature, which makes clear that two have very different worlds:

> 'Really, Ruth,' he exclaimed one day, when they had been imprisoned by rain a whole morning, "one would think you had never seen a shower of rain before; it quite wearies me to see you sitting there watching this detestable weather with such a placid countenance; and for the last two hours you have said nothing more amusing or interesting than--'Oh, how beautiful!' or, 'There's another cloud coming across Moel Wynn'. (Gaskell 57)

In the next scenes, we see Mr Bellingham with brain-fever. The doctor requires him to be seriously taken care. By now, in love and obedient to Mr Bellingham, Ruth does her best for him. But the doctor thinks that "she is too young to have the responsibility of such a serious case" (Gaskell 68). Thus, he wants the lodger to call his mother who has the control of her son. With the arrival of Mrs Bellingham, she bustles in the lodging with her doctor and servants. She persuades her son to abandon Ruth and they go to London leaving Ruth behind with fifty pounds in a letter:

> My son, on recovering from his illness, is, I thank God, happily conscious of the sinful way, in which he has been living with you. By his earnest desire, and in order to avoid seeing you again, we are on the point of leaving this place; but, before I go, I wish to exhort you to repentance, and to remind you that you will not have your own guilt alone upon your head, but that of any young man whom you may succeed in entrapping into vice. I shall pray that you may turn to an honest life, and I strongly recommend you, if indeed you are not 'dead in trespasses and sins,' to enter some penitentiary. In accordance with my son's wishes, I forward you in this envelope a bank-note of fifty pounds. (Gaskell 78)

She recommends Ruth that she should go to a penitentiary, an institution where the fallen women are sent for reformation. A great variety of institutions were formed by the Victorian England to control and change unconventional and troubled conducts. One of them was a female penitentiary in order to alter prostitutes. A female penitentiary was not an institution involving punishment as for the crimes and offenses, it was a charitable action for which outcast ones, generally known as "the fallen women" participated in (Mumm 527). According to Mrs Bellingham, Ruth is one of the fallen women, who deserve this kind of rehabilitation.

Miserable Ruth is ready to commit suicide, but is rescued by a hunchbacked man, named Thurston Benson, a dissenting minister, whom Ruth encountered on the stream of waterfall before. Later, Ruth reveals to be pregnant when Ruth loses his conscious and a doctor is called. He and his sister, Faith, take Ruth to their house in Eccleston. However, Ruth's arrival poses a problem with which Gaskell will have to tackle. Thus, not to be exposed to be condemned as an unwed mother by society, Gaskell uses a fiction for Ruth, and she is given a new identity by Bensons and introduced as Mrs Denbigh, Bensons' distant relative who has recently been widowed: "Then let us call you by my mother's name" and "Let me call you Mrs Denbigh, it would do very well, too. People will think you are a distant relation" (Gaskell 109). It is "the influence of conventional opinion that leads Benson and Faith to pretend Ruth is a widow" and "the pretense of widowed motherhood is a social parallel to

Childhood's moral innocence" (Mitchell 34, 36). It is easier for the society to embrace people, who have not bad reputation. So, Bensons tell a lie in order to offer a chance for Ruth to live without being criticized. Miss Benson says: "[b]ut at any rate our telling a lie has been the saving of her. There is no fear of her going wrong now" (Gaskell 297).

When they arrive at Eccleston, Ruth meets Sally, Bensons' housekeeper. She suspects of Ruth as she is very young. She tells her that "If I had been your mother, I'd ha' given her a lollypop instead of a husband" (Gaskell 113). Sally estimates that she is not a widow and cuts Ruth's "long wavy glossy hair" without mercy, which, indeed, shows her punishment upon the fallen woman (Gaskell 120). She thinks that it will bring Bensons shame. She utters that "[w]idows wears these sort o' caps, and has their hair cut off; and whether widows wear wedding-rings or not, they shall have their hair cut off--they shall" (Gaskell 121). Galia Ofek, in her work *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture Ashgate*, points out that obligatory hair-cut refers to prostitutes residing in Magdalen Houses as female penitents, and the scene of hair-cut reveals "Gaskell's reservations regarding the dominant cultural representation and treatment of women's sexuality on the one hand, and her failure to reject them and create a different set of signs on the other hand" (152).

Gaskell uses the fiction of widowed woman as the turning point for Ruth (Gérin 128). During the time she spends in Bensons house, Ruth's son, Leonard, is born and as a widowed mother, Ruth is welcomed by Eccleston people. Ruth begins to live in peace with her child, takes education, learns moral values, regrets her past conduct and becomes a part of the family and the society. Gaskell shows the rehabilitation of Ruth. In a few years, she changes a lot, which is mostly because of her motherhood. She, once was a protected, subservient girl, now is an educated, determined, a strong caring mother. She desires education much more than before she does because of her son. When Bensons begin to have financial problems, Ruth wants to help them and gets a job as a governess to Mr Bradshaw, who is an important businessman. During the time she spends with Bradshaws, she continues to be kind, intelligent despite her secret shame. Ruth gives the Bradshaws "the highest satisfaction" (Gaskell 174). Her job as

a governess for a man like Mr Bradshaw shows her position as a part of the respectable society. Gaskell describes Ruth's change during the years as:

> The increase of dignity in her face had been imparted to her form. I do not know if she had grown taller since the birth of her child, but she looked as if she had. And although she had lived in a very humble home, yet there was something about either it or her, or the people amongst whom she had been thrown during the last few years, which had so changed her that whereas, six or seven years ago, you would have perceived that she was not altogether a lady by birth and education, yet now she might have been placed among the highest in the land, and would have been taken by the most critical judge for their equal, although ignorant of their conventional etiquette an ignorance which she would have acknowledged in a simple, childlike way, being unconscious of any false shame. (173)

According to Winifred Gérin, Gaskell was not content with the physical rescue of Ruth as she did not make an end here. "Relying heavily thereafter on coincidence, melodrama, and contrivance to develop the plot" Gaskell brings back Bellingham, Ruth's former lover, into her life (129). After years, in Mr Bradshaw's holiday house, Ruth meets her seducer, Mr Bellingham, who returns as Mr Donne, a parliamentary candidate. Coral Lansbury finds this encounter as ironic because Gaskell satisfies the readers, who accept contemporary views of the fallen women and their fate (27). Mr Bellingham thinks:

> Mrs Denbigh was certainly like poor Ruth; but this woman was far handsomer. Her face was positively Greek; and then such a proud, superb turn of her head; quite queenly! A governess in Mr Bradshaw's family! Why, she might be a Percy or a Howard for the grandeur of her grace! Poor Ruth! This woman's hair was darker, though; and she had less colour; although a more refined-looking person. Poor Ruth! and, for the first time for several years, he wondered what had become of her; though, of course, there was but one thing that could have happened, and perhaps it was as well he did not know her end, for most likely it would have made him very uncomfortable. (Gaskell 229)

According to the Victorian morals, “an unmarried woman’s loss of virginity would inevitably lead to a life on the streets” (Lansbury 24) and such is the case for Mr Bellingham. He supposes that Ruth’s fate as a fallen woman must be different from Mr Denbigh, who is Ruth herself. Ruth now is a different woman. We see Ruth’s moral regeneration. She is not ignorant anymore. She is a mother now and this is the most crucial thing in her life. First, she confuses: “Oh, darling love! am I talking against you?” asked she tenderly. “I’m so torn and perplexed! You, who are the father of my child!” (Gaskell 225). Afterwards, she realizes the truth: "Oh, my God! I do believe Leonard's father is a bad man, and yet, oh! pitiful God, I love him; I cannot forget--I cannot!" (Gaskell 225). Although Mr Bellingham was the man whom she loved once, the circumstances she was in, “changed [Ruth] from the woman into the mother” (Gaskell 225). Following passage may prove that Ruth’s opinion about Mr Bellingham changed:

> He left me. He might have been hurried off, but he might have inquired--he might have learned and explained. He left me to bear the burden and the shame; and never cared to learn, as he might have done, of Leonard's birth. He has no love for his child, and I will have no love for him." (Gaskell 225)

In the passage below, Gaskell may try to indicate the double standards in the Victorian society, and accordingly, only women burden the sin, not the men.

Mr Bellingham is again charmed with the beauty of Ruth and tries to persuade her to be his lover once more. When Ruth rejects his proposal, Mr Donne offers to marry her and take care of their son. He says: “I have the power and the means to advance him in any path of life you choose” (Gaskell 245), and then he adds, “I will take care the highest paths are open to him!” (Gaskell 248). If she accepts his proposal for marriage, she may meet the expectations what society required. We can see her motherhood dominates the social expectations. She is now strong and intelligent enough to realize the truth (Brodetsky 45). It is true that initially she was in love with him and enjoyed his company, but she realizes that it would be greater mistake for her to go back to him now, and she says:

> When I said that I was happy with you long ago, I was choked with shame as I said it. And yet it may be a vain, false excuse that I make for myself. I was very young; I did not know how such a life was against God's pure and holy will--at least, not as I know it now; and I tell you the truth--all the days of my years since I have gone about with a stain on my hidden soul--a stain which made me loathe myself, and envy those who stood spotless and undefiled; which made me shrink from my child--from Mr Benson, from his sister, from the innocent girls whom I teach--nay, even I have cowered away from God Himself; and what I did wrong then, I did blindly to what I should do now if I listened to you. (Gaskell 245-6)

Ruth is now aware of the case and says that she no longer loves him and doesn't want her son to be grown up by his unscrupulous character. Her action of refusal is totally her own, which shows as Brodetsky states "her strength and maturity, her growth from an ignorant, rather weak and easily flattered girl" (45). Ruth says:

> 'I do not love you. I did once. Don't say I did not love you then! but I do not now. I could never love you again. All you have said and done since you came with Mr Bradshaw to Abermouth first has only made me wonder how I ever could have loved you. We are very far apart. The time that has pressed down my life like brands of hot iron, and scarred me for ever, has been nothing to you. You have talked of it with no sound of moaning in your voice--no shadow over the brightness of your face; it has left no sense of sin on your conscience, while me it haunts and haunts; and yet I might plead that I was an ignorant child--only I will not plead anything, for God knows all----But this is only one piece of our great difference-'. (Gaskell 248-9)

Her experiences make her conscious and she knows what to do next in her life. Even if Mr Bellingham offers the advantages he will provide for their son, she rejects him. Ruth thinks there are more important things that will give harm her son than becoming an illegitimate:

> You shall have nothing to do with my boy, by my consent, much less by my agency. I would rather see him working on the roadside than leading such a life--being such a one as you are. You have heard my mind now, Mr Bellingham. You have humbled me--you have baited me; and if at last I have spoken out too harshly, and too much in a spirit of judgment, the fault is yours. If there were no other reason to prevent our marriage but the one fact that it would bring Leonard into contact with you, that would be enough." (Gaskell 249)

Her action of rejecting Mr Bellingham is startlingly contradictory to the nineteenth century values since the woman must endure all the negative consequences of her sexual affairs. It was the situation which Sylvia Plath complained after years within the context of double standard, and which still exists in many parts of the world (Alban 49).

Soon after, when the secret of Ruth is revealed by a woman in the town, which causes Ruth's dismissal, townspeople despise her as a fallen woman, who has an illegitimate child. Mr Benson and his sister, Faith is also disgraced by people as they concealed the fact. The harshest condemn in *Ruth* comes from Mr Bradshaw. According to male community like him, the origin of social evil lays in the prostitution; thus, even the merest thing that deviates a woman from pudicity instantly makes her a whore (Lansbury 24).

Hypocrisy, which is the main feature of the Victorian period is illustrated in the book through the character of Mr Bradshaw. Mitchell identifies Mr Bradshaw as an example of "personification of unjust moral conventionality" (34). Before Ruth's secret is revealed, he appreciates Ruth, sending her gifts, which symbolizes "his patronising wealth, which are to make her his property in a chaste and economic sense" (Watt 2). When he learns about the Ruth's secret, he forgets all good qualities of Ruth and thinks that his "innocent children" will be "exposed to corruption" as Ruth is the governess of his daughters (Gaskell 286). Mr Benson states "not every woman who has fallen is depraved" (288), which is what Gaskell wants to prove through her novel. However, Mr Bradshaw pays no attention to Mr Benson's opinions for Ruth, who

"should be given a chance of self-redemption – and that such a chance should be given in no supercilious or contemptuous manner, but in the spirit of the holy Christ." (Gaskell 288). However, Mr Bradshaw isn't convinced. Gaskell shows Mr Bradshaw's wrathful anger against those, who are not able to abide by the rules of the society as in the following passage:

> The world has decided how such women are to be treated; and, you may depend upon it, there is so much practical wisdom in the world that its way of acting is right in the long-run, and that no one can fly in its face with impunity, unless, indeed, they stoop to deceit and imposition. (288)

Mr Bradshaw finds an opportunity to teach his daughters a moral lesson: "She has turned right into wrong, and wrong into right, and taught you all to be uncertain whether there be any such things as Vice in the world, or whether it ought not to be looked upon as Virtue" (Gaskell 279). Mitchell claims that Gaskell wants "the reader to see Mr Bradshaw in an unpleasant light; he is ostentatious, harsh to his own children and has an overbearing manner and a tasteless house (Mitchell 34). George Watt argues that Mr Bradshaw has "a mind which admits the existence of only two kinds of women, the virtuous and the fallen. He cannot or will not recognise the forces social, economic or psychological which shape the fate of the fallen. As such he becomes the voice of the middle-class respectability" (Watt 3).

Condemned again by the society, Ruth decides to tell Leonard, her son, the truth about his birth. Unaware of the truth about her mother, Leonard, lives in a happy, protected environment until Ruth tells the truth about her. She wants him to learn the truth from not anybody but hers, which shows her honesty and courage again:

> Leonard! when I was very young I did very wrong. I think God, who knows all, will judge me more tenderly than men--but I did wrong in a way which you cannot understand yet" (…) in a way people never forget, never forgive. You will hear me called the hardest names that ever can be thrown at women--I have been to-day; and, my child, you must bear it patiently, because they

> will be partly true. Never get confused, by your love for me, into thinking that what I did was right. --Where was I? (Gaskell 282)

Then, she explains that if he suffers from his mother's sin it is not his fault and tries to assure him saying: "It is only your own sin that can make you an outcast from God" (Gaskell 284). The response of Mr Bradshaw may be illustrating the most common reaction of the Victorian people against the children out of wedlock:

> Do you suppose that he alone is to be exempt from the penalties of his birth? Do you suppose that he alone is to be saved from the upbraiding scoff? Do you suppose that he is ever rank with other boys, who are not stained and marked with sin from their birth? Every creature in Eccleston may know what he is; do you think they will spare him their scorn? "Cannot bear it," indeed! Before you went into your sin, you should have thought whether you could bear the consequences or not--have had some idea how far your offspring would be degraded and scouted, till the best thing that could happen to him would be for him to be lost to all sense of shame, dead to all knowledge of guilt, for his mother's sake. (Gaskell 279)

Even though the Bensons and Ruth have difficult times with revealed secret of Ruth, Bensons doesn't leave Ruth and her son, Leonard, alone. During a typhus epidemic, Ruth finds a job and works as a sick nurse, which leads her to gain social status she lost. Although it is not a safe job, Ruth proves to be a skilled and talented nurse, and she becomes the most respected and sought out nurse professionally in Eccleston. Again, after a harsh condemn, Ruth succeeds to gain respect again. The situation changes Leonard, too. When he learns the reality, Leonard gradually becomes quiet and is worried about how to struggle with this shame: "He was evidently afraid of going into the streets, dreading to be pointed at as an object of remark" (Gaskell 300). While he is, at first, furious and offended against his mother, day by day, he calms down and becomes milder with the help of Ruth's love. And finally, he respects his mother when he learns that his mother is praised by many poor people in the streets, due to her service to sick people. Once he was ashamed of her mother, now manages to reveal: "Sir, I am her son!" (Gaskell 352), and he proudly continues: "She is my

mother" (Gaskell 352). He is immediately blessed by the people and things changes for the better as indicated in the following sentences: "From that day forward Leonard walked erect in the streets of Eccleston, where 'many arose and called her blessed' (Gaskell 352). Gaskell displays her belief that however blameful the parents may be, an illegitimate child has no fault or shame, which wasn't much desired attitude in the 1850s. Even Mr Bradshaw, who is defender of the Victorian principles of morality, accepts that he did wrong about Ruth and her son, and, by her grave, he shows Leonard his sorrow for Ruth (Brodetsky 47). Mitchell, in *The Fallen Angel: Chastity, Class, and Women's Reading, 1835-1880,* claims that:

> "the pretence of widowed motherhood is a social parallel to childhood's moral innocence; it may be needed for a time, but it should not persist. Long after Ruth is religiously redeemed, she suffers her social fall: her sin is made to the world. Again, she rises stronger than before. Her heroic nursing is not a part of her religious penance but rather the means of her social rehabilitation; after the epidemic her son is able to walk "erect in the streets of Eccleston, where "many arose and called her blessed. If the lie had not been found out, if Ruth had remained merely a governess, her life would have been less significant. Mrs Gaskell believed that woman's most special trait was her consideration for the weak, the helpless and the suffering. Ruth had never lost it even in her most fallen state: her headlong rush towards suicide was stopped by a cry of pain from Benson." (36)

During her service for sick people in Eccleston, respected and praised woman, Ruth learns that Bellingham is suffering from typhus. She insists on helping the man, who ruined her life. She cares him until he recovers. She, however, contracts the disease and dies. Mr Benson gives a funeral ceremony for Ruth in his church to testify that she proved herself as an honourable woman. Many people including Mr Bradshaw mourn for her, who was once considered as fallen woman. According to Arthur Pollard, Elizabeth Gaskell tries to show that "Ruth's downfall was a misfortune rather than a crime. To this end she insists on the innocence of Ruth and her self-dedication in redemption of her error" (88).

Throughout the novel we witness Ruth's transformation from a fallen woman to be respectable woman. In the novel, we first see Ruth as an orphaned, who is tempted by a young man, Mr Bellingham. Then, she loses her job as she is seen with a man without marriage which is seen as an improper conduct in the eyes of the society. After having been abandoned as a pregnant woman, she wants to commit suicide. Yet, she is rescued by a dissenting minister, who is a member of the respectable society. He and his sister protect Ruth and provide her a new place and a new identity as a widowed woman, which makes her live socially respectable. After a while, she even works as a governess for the children of Mr Bradshaw, who is a wealthy respectable man. When her secret reveals, she is fired in disgrace. As she cannot work as a governess again, she finds another job as a sick nurse and becomes the director of the fever hospital during an epidemic, which helps her to regain prestige and honour in the society again. Her praises are published. Afterwards, she dies honourably with a fever while she is nursing for the sick Mr Bellingham. By this way, Gaskell wants to minimize the assumptions that if a woman loses her chaste, she must be wholly excluded from the society in order not to give harm to the respectable people (Mitchell 33). Lansbury explains the change of Ruth from the beginning to the end as the reformation and transfiguration of Ruth:

> The little seamstress, betrayed and abandoned by her lover, is destined to become a heroine in the eyes of society, mourned after her death like a saint. The compassionate irony of the work is that Ruth is no brighter at the end of the work than at the beginning, - the child who once went astray dies singing like a child. The difference is that the child once fell into cruel and uncaring company but later came to live among kind and loving people, and this transformed the social outcast into society's friend and benefactor. (24)

Once condemned by the community in North Wales, now she, as Sally Mitchell, in her book, *Fallen Angel: Chastity, Class and Women's reading, 1835-1880*, evaluates that Ruth's victory of transformation is not "in isolation, nor in the altered society of an utopian outback, but within a conventional and recognizable contemporary world" (33). Lansbury says, "Ruth is far from being a simple

condemnation of conventional views of prostitution" and becomes "always the mirror to her surroundings" which "determine whether Ruth will be sinner or saint" (25). Elizabeth Gaskell's aim is to reveal sympathy for the character of the fallen woman. Socially excluded from respectable society, Gaskell creates a heroine who has good nature, innocence which comes from an "unconsciousness" of social rules she breaks (Jaffe 77).

4.3. A Comparative Analysis of the Fallen Women Characters in Dickens' *Oliver Twist* and Gaskell's *Ruth*

Both Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell are among the most important social writers dealing with the issue of the fallen woman. Along with the other social issues, Dickens criticizes the cruelty of the society for the fallen women in his novels. The themes of his novels written in the 1840s mainly focused on the purification of corrupted women characters and in the same sense, he, with the well-off philanthropist Angela Coutts, established a Magdalen Home, Urania Cottage and in 1847 (Auerbach 181). Dickens closely dealt with the Urania Cottage and described his role at Urania Cottage as the "active management" (Hartley 30). As Jenny Hartley states in *Charles Dickens: A Very Short Introduction*, "[h]is most sustained venture in social work was the home which he and Miss Coutts founded for young coming from workhouses and prisons, and from the streets and slums of London" (29).

Like Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell challenged the idea of the fallen woman. Towards the end of 1850s, she gave a hand to the fallen women by letting them stay in her own house. In the 1860s, she became the president of the society in order to give higher education for the fallen women. She was the pioneer of the Ladies' National Association, where she struggled for women for seventeen years, in both national and international concerns, to abolish the Contagious Diseases Acts, which discriminates women (Watt 1-2).

Although both Dickens and Gaskell were concerned with the issue of the fallen women in their private lives, they have different perspectives in terms of description

of their fallen characters in their novels. One of the important points is that they portray different types of the fallen characters in their novels. Dickens displays three fallen characters in *Oliver Twist*: Nancy, Bet and Agnes, each of whom is described as the victims of exploitation, and maintains miserable lives without hope for a future. Except Agnes, who has dubious pregnancy from Oliver's father, which ruins the reputation of her family, other two fallen characters are described as the prostitutes. On the other hand, Gaskell has only one fallen character, named Ruth, who is seduced and deserted by a wealthy young noble man while she was pregnant, but gains respect again. Among the fallen characters of Dickens, Nancy has an important role until the end of the novel because of her enormous sacrifice for the sake of Oliver's life. Contrary to Dickens' fallen characters, Gaskell's fallen woman shows high moral behaviour. As George Watt notes that Gaskell's heroine is "ultimately more noble than some of her literary compatriots" and as a seduced and deserted woman, she could have been "forced to become a prostitute to survive" (2). While Dickens' fallen characters cannot gain a place in society, Gaskell's heroine finds new opportunities to raise whenever she falls. In this respect, Dickens seems less courageous than Gaskell in dealing with the issue of the fallen woman, which is most probably owing to the fact that Dickens was much influenced by the patriarchal society as a male writer than Gaskell, who dared to be more moderate on the issue as a female writer.

The titles of the books are another vivid point that reveals the writers' views towards the fallen women. Although Dickens makes a plot that evolves around the miserable life of an orphan boy, the presence of Nancy as a fallen woman is equally important. However, Dickens prefers to give the title the name of the protagonist of the novel instead of putting a fallen character in the centre. On the other hand, Gaskell portrays Ruth as a heroine whose presence is more important than Nancy as a fallen woman. That's why *Ruth* is an eponymous novel in which Gaskell gives the book the name of the heroine, which may show her courage in dealing with the issue. As Tessa Brodetsky says: "The most startling departure from existing literary convention made by Mrs Gaskell in *Ruth* was not that she wrote about the fallen woman, but that she made her the central character" (41). Compared to Gaskell's fallen character, Dickens' fallen women remain minor characters, who are helpless and miserable. Dickens

pushes the issue of the fallen woman into the background while Gaskell tells us the whole story of Ruth in the book.

One of the fallen women characters who stays in the background is Bet, whose ambiguous presence exists when she is introduced to Oliver along with Nancy. Bet is Nancy's friend and works as a prostitute. However, Dickens avoids from revealing their occupation explicitly although it is understood from their manners and appearances that they are prostitutes (Beer 134). Another fallen woman, whose presence is not so important, is Agnes, Oliver's mother, who dies while she is giving birth to Oliver. Even her name is unknown until the end of the novel. She is an absent character. Throughout novel, Agnes is only mentioned in relation to her sinful relationship with Oliver's father, which is a shame in the eyes of the society. When she was just nineteenth years old, she loves her father's friend and got pregnant before marriage. All the same, she was abandoned. Despite the fact that Agnes comes from a respectable family, she runs away from home due to her shame. If a woman takes place in the matter of a sexual scandal, it damages her reputation (Swisher 20). As a result of her pregnancy as an unmarried woman, Dickens describes Agnes as "weak and erring" (Dickens 380). He avoids revealing about her life and prefers an immediate death for her. Tatum argues that "[b]y having this child out of wedlock, Agnes threatens the social order, and because she threatens the social order, she is abjected from the novel" (243). Gaskell, on the other hand, prefers to write the story of a seduced woman, Ruth, whose situation resembles to Agnes in this case. In a period when women were harshly criticized on account of their sexual relationship out of wedlock, Gaskell shows her sympathy courageously by giving the name of the fallen woman to the title of the novel. Not satisfied with that, she also shows every detail of Ruth's nature and feelings. Gaskell demonstrates her redemption and transformation throughout the novel. Although the novel attracted harsh critics, even some parts of it were burnt, Gaskell was persuaded that prejudiced and unfair approach towards the fallen women need to raise public awareness (Foster 101). In her letters to Lady Kay-Shuttleworth, Gaskell wrote the discussions about Ruth and her determination:

> But from the very warmth with which people have discussed the tale I take heart of grace; it has made them talk and think a little on a subject which is so painful that it requires all one's bravery not to hide one's head like an ostrich and try by doing so to forget that evil exists. (Gaskell 227)

This suggests that Gaskell is successful in depicting the fallen women in her novels. In the work of *Elizabeth Gaskell*, a biography written by Winifred Gérin, *Ruth* was regarded as "a perfectly straightforward tale, or as a study of woman in relation to society of woman as a victim of existing social order" (127-128). Contrary to many Victorians, Gaskell:

> distinguishes carefully between different types of fallen women, between those who have been seduced and those who have been turned to prostitution as a way of life. She takes motives and circumstances into account and does not lump together all those who have intercourse with men to whom they are not married under the general title of fornicators. (Beer 134).

Another remarkable difference is that the surnames of the fallen characters are absent in Dickens, while it is not so in Gaskell's. Gaskell dares to place the fallen woman in the centre of the novel and reveals the surname of the fallen woman at the very beginning of the novel: Ruth Hilton. Conversely, Dickens hides the surname of the fallen women in the novel. As Ayres states the "absence of names registers the lack of power that women have to signify themselves" (Ayres 116). In *Oliver Twist,* Agnes who has no name until the end of the novel, has also no surname even on marble plate, "[w]ithin the altar of the old village church there stands a white marble tablet, which bears as yet but one word: 'Agnes'" (Dickens 380). "Traditionally, when a woman marries, she loses her name and identity, becoming a blank to be filled in by her husband. For Agnes, that blank is not completed" (Ayres 128). Likewise, both Nancy and Bet have no surname. However, Rose has a surname, which is given by a widow who adopted her. When she marries, she will not lose her surname.

Nancy and Ruth are different in the matter of the characteristic traits and their appearances. Nancy is pessimistic and unhappy about the situation, in which she lives

and sometimes behaves hysterically, which is explicit when “[h]er eyes were swollen and red; she rocked herself to and fro; tossed her head; and, after a little time, burst out laughing” (Dickens 313). The manner of her speech complies with the lower-class people. She calls Oliver as “[y]oung brat” (Dickens 99). The reason might be that she has an unfortunate life, mistreated and abused by both Fagin and Sikes. As the novel develops, she shows the signs of a good person. Ruth, on the other hand presents a calm, patient, self-sacrificing behaviour. She is more optimistic and enjoys even the cold weather. Despite harsh working conditions, Ruth enjoys the beauty of night, “gazing out on the lovely sky of a winter’s night” while other girls not (Gaskell 8). She is like a bird looking from a “large old window” (Gaskell 8). Throughout the novel, Ruth is described as an innocent girl. Gaskell often describes Ruth’s innocence in many cases, “[s]he was innocent and snow-pure” (40); “remember how young, and innocent, and motherless she was” (49); “she’s an innocent, inoffensive young creature” (67).

With reference to the appearance of the fallen characters, Dickens’ depiction much suits the Victorian image of the fallen woman. When Nancy is first introduced to Oliver, she is described as not so beautiful with neglected hair and ragged shoes. Dickens describes Nancy and her friend as "they were not exactly pretty" (58). Although it is not clearly described in the novel that Nancy works as a prostitute, her occupation can be understood by her manners such as “being remarkably free and agreeable” (Dickens 95). As the woman virtue was an important feature in the Victorian period, Dickens avoids using physical intimacy in his works and shows passion as a rather innocent desire (Dailey 15). Such is the case for Gaskell as well. Even though Ruth has a relationship with Mr Bellingham and loves him very much, Gaskell does not show any physical intimacy of them. She deliberately does it in order to hint that Ruth’s romantic affairs are part of her mistake. Yet, Ruth never does the same mistake again. Unlike Nancy, Ruth has an extraordinary beauty with “her striking face, with dark eyebrows and dark lashes, combined with auburn hair and a fair complexion” (Gaskell 13).

With respect to the case of fallenness of the characters, both Dickens and Gaskell offer different reasons. One of the reasons is their environment they come from. The environment people were born in, affects their characters and life choices. Even though both Nancy and Ruth are orphans, they live in different social environments. Nancy is portrayed by Dickens, from the beginning of the book, as a woman who lived under terrible conditions. She has neither parents nor guardians. She leads a life in the streets since her childhood. Dickens reveals her terrible life when Nancy says:

> I am the infamous creature you have heard of, that lives among the thieves, and that never from the first moment I can recollect my eyes and senses opening on London streets have known any better life, or kinder words than they have given me, so help me God! Do not mind shrinking openly from me, lady. I am younger than you would think, to look at me, but I am well used to it. The poorest women fall back, as I make my way along the crowded pavement. (278)

It is obvious in the passage above that she comes from the lower class. She lives in a male-controlled environment. She isn't treated as a human being. That's why, she prefers to live as a mistress and thief, instead of trying to look for more respectable works. Dickens gives no other chance for Nancy. Ruth, on the other hand, is luckier than Nancy. We are told in the novel that Ruth has a good family background. She appears to come from a middle-class family. She is the daughter of a farmer and a granddaughter of a curate. She had a kind and loving parent. Gaskell makes it clear when Ruth sheds tears dreaming old January nights longing for her home and mother:

> Oh! at home I have many a time run up the lane all the way to the mill, just to see the icicles hang on the great wheel; and, when I was once out, I could hardly find in my heart to come in, even to mother, sitting by the fire;--even to mother,' she added, in a low, melancholy tone, which had something of inexpressible sadness in it. (8-9)

As given above, she doesn't have to work at streets, when her parents die, instead, she is given to a guardian who finds her a job as apprenticeship of a

dressmaker. It is true that she does not have a very bright life, but at least she doesn't have a miserable life either, like Nancy. While Nancy continues her life as a prostitute, Ruth has various jobs, first as a seamstress, then as a governess and finally as a nurse. According to the Victorian morals, if a woman loses her virginity without getting married, it is inevitable for her to maintain her life at the streets. Dickens conforms to this idea, whereas Gaskell rejects it, by giving the women a chance to redeem themselves. After Ruth is seduced and deserted, except her attempt to commit a suicide, she succeeds to regain a social status. In this regard, Gaskell protects her heroine as a fallen woman much more than Dickens does.

Innocence is another important factor that leads Ruth to be a fallen woman. In respect to this, Dickens and Gaskell draw different features for their fallen characters. Nancy is the mistress of Mr Sikes and portrayed as a bad figure from the very beginning of the novel. She is also the assistant of Fagin, whom she helps to recapture Oliver, which is most likely expected manners of a fallen woman in the minds of the Victorian people. Nancy is far from being innocent. On the contrary, Ruth begins as an innocent, pure girl, who most probably attracts much Ruth's seducer, Mr Bellingham. Though he is flirting with a young woman, when he encounteres Ruth for the first time "a new, passionate, hearty feeling shot through his whole being" (Gaskell 31). The cause of his feelings is "perhaps, something bewitching in the union of the grace and loveliness of womanhood with the naivete, simplicity, and innocence of an intelligent child" (Gaskell 31). It is also clear when Mr Bellingham tells his mother when they are in Wales that "Ruth is no improper character" and "… I led her wrong" (Gaskell 76). Ruth cannot easily realize the view of society owing to her innocence and thus, when she first becomes aware of this, she is deeply shocked and "[s]he could not put into words the sense she was just beginning to entertain of the estimation in which she was henceforward to be held (Gaskell 63). Another factor that causes her to be fallen is Ruth's ignorance and even stupidity. She doesn't seem to see anything wrong when she lives with Mr Bellingham in Wales until she realizes the condemn of people around her. "Is she really so ignorant, and therefore innocent, as Elizabeth Gaskell seems to insist? Is she really so taken by surprise when she is treated with contempt at the inn in Wales?" asks Tessa Brodetsky and concludes that:

> it was, of course important from Mrs Gaskell's point of view, if she was finally to establish Ruth as a woman of worth, to insist that there was nothing inherently depraved in her character; that she was inveigled into wrong doing by lack of knowledge and not through disregard of the moral laws she was breaking. (44)

It is also understood that Dickens intentionally shrinks away showing the transformation of Nancy. The sin of Nancy depends on her choices. Nancy is loyal to Bill Sikes until she dies. Although Rose Maylie provides Nancy a chance to escape from her current life, she rejects it because of her loyalty to Bill Sikes. Nancy's loyalty to him has a strong influence on her decisions. She has opportunity to escape from the life as a fallen woman, but she refuses it and returns to her old life again. It may be inferred that Dickens doesn't allow a migration for Nancy. Conversely, Ruth's sin comes unintentionally due to her innocence and ignorance. It is her innocence that leads her to be seduced by Mr Bellingham and condemned by the society. Accordingly, Gaskell gives Ruth a new identity in a new place. Ruth improves herself as a respectable woman by having education and a respectable job. Although she is seen as a shameful woman due to the revelation of her secret, she doesn't give up and becomes a heroine in the eyes of the people with her new job which requires helping sick people. She even refuses the proposal of Mr Bellingham, although he is still in her heart. Gaskell also uses the "birth of an illegitimate but beloved son as a means of redemption of the erring mother" (Cox 64). Mr Thurston thinks that the birth of her son will be "purification" of Ruth's sin. (Gaskell 136). Ruth's son is "a new, pure, beautiful, innocent life, which she fondly imagined, in that early passion of maternal love, she could guard from every touch of corrupting sin by ever watchful and most tender care. (Gaskell 135).

Both Dickens and Gaskell show us the virtuous behaviours of their fallen women, which was an important value in the Victorian society. In the case of Nancy, while Dickens shows her as a bad character, he, later, exhibits her virtue when she regrets from her conducts and helps Oliver, which indicates that Dickens has sympathy for her. As George Watt argues that "[w]hat Dickens challenges through Nancy's

presence in *Oliver Twist* is the mistaken idea that a woman is either fallen or not, either totally corrupt or pure." She "might be a harlot, the companion of murderers and thieves, but she can be essentially good" (12). In the case of Ruth, Gaskell pursues this ideology as well. Except her initial mistake of being a mistress which is incompatible to the Victorian ethics, Ruth fits the profile of being a young woman with virtuous and righteous attitudes. The difference is that from the outset, Ruth has a good heart, which is absent in Nancy. It is clear when Ruth tirelessly takes care of Mr Bellingham in Wales until his mother comes, and she accepts the plan of Bensons to do her best for the future of her unborn child. According to Mr Bradshaw, Ruth is portrayed as in the line with the expectations of the Victorians: "…lovely, quiet Ruth, with her low tones and soft replies, her delicate waving movements, appeared to him the very type of what a woman should be – a calm, serene soul, fashioning the body to angelic grace" (Gaskell 254). At the end of the novel, we witness her virtuous behaviours when she helps her seducer, who is about to die.

In many fictions in the nineteenth century, death is the fate of many fallen women commonly as a result of a crime or committing a suicide. Both Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell accept this common belief in their novels. However, there are differences in their implementations. While Dickens portrays the death of Nancy as a bloody one by Bill Sikes, Gaskell doesn't immediately prepare an end for Ruth. Even when Ruth attempts to commit suicide, when she was deserted as a pregnant woman, Mr Benson, a dissenting minister, rescues her. Gaskell prefers a rather respectable death for Ruth. Not because of her sin or shame, but of her moral attitude she should die. Therefore, Gaskell gives Ruth a new identity, which will help her to regain respect in the eyes of the society. Mr Benson and his sister take Ruth to Eccleston where she was introduced as a recently widowed. She works as a governess for the daughter of Mr Bradshaw, who is an influential congregant of Mr Benson. Moreover, she becomes a respected person after she begins to work as a sick nurse when a fatal typhus epidemic breaks out. She regains the honour in the eyes of the society. Gaskell seems to oppose the assumptions that if a woman loses her chaste, she must be excluded from the society. In this regard, Gaskell's approach towards the fallen women proves that she is more courageous than Dickens. On the other hand, Nancy is seen as a more

corrupted character throughout the novel. She has no social status like Ruth, which is the most distinctive feature of two fallen women. Although people in Eccleston knows about Ruth's past, as it is stated in the novel "the remembrance of those days is swept away" (Gaskell 354). However, Nancy has a different position in the society. In some of her conducts, Dickens displays Nancy's goodness and virtue, when she attempts to rescue Oliver despite of the bad consequences she will have, which is the indication of Dickens' sympathy towards the fallen women. Nevertheless, she is not honoured by the society. Therefore, Dickens does not avoid punishing Nancy with death. The murder of Nancy, as Hollingsworth argues "is by no means a necessity of the plot. Indeed, it is forced" (124). However, Dickens may keep the novel without her murder. As a social writer, his only favour for Nancy is that she dies holding a white handkerchief that belongs to Rose, which symbolizes the purity of Nancy. According to George Watt, "[f]or Dickens to effectively challenge the prejudice inherent in 'once a harlot, always a harlot' it is necessary to see a reformed prostitute dying [as] a pure woman. Nancy dies in the act of saving, not in the act of destroying or corrupting" (17).

Death is inevitable in the case of Agnes, who dies while she is giving birth. The only woman, who survives in the novel is Rose Maylie, who has the accepted norms of the Victorian values. However, Gaskell chose an honourable death for Ruth. She dies not as a consequence of her mistakes like Nancy, but from fever as a result of contracting the diseases, which may be seen as more respectable death compared to death of Nancy. Gaskell draws a light death scene for Ruth. As Cunningham states "She dies a beautiful death" (32) as in the lines, "[s]uddenly she opened wide her eyes, and gazed intently forwards, as if she saw some happy vision, which called out a lovely, rapturous, breathless smile. . .. 'I see the Light coming,' said she. 'The Light is coming,' she said (Gaskell 366).

Unlike Nancy, Ruth is mourned after her death by the society. "Ruth falls, but rises so steadily through the course of the novel towards saintly purity that her inevitable death scene is attended with an embarrassingly awesome holiness" (Cunningham 29). It is a fact that the theme of death is an inevitable end for the fallen

women in English literature, and both, as a Victorian writer could not resist this convention of the society. What differs Gaskell from Dickens is that Ruth doesn't die because of her sin as a fallen woman, she has rather a noble death.

CONCLUSION

The Victorian period dominated by Queen Victoria from 1837 to 1901, is a period of major changes in every sphere. In *Victorian England,* Clarice Swisher describes the nineteenth century England "as a jigsaw puzzle of change- economic, political, social, cultural, intellectual, and spiritual, but unlike a jigsaw puzzle, the pieces fitted together loosely, overlapping and interconnecting (11). Within the scope of these changes, the Victorian period is divided into three parts by many historians: Early Victorian, mid-Victorian, and late Victorian, each of them witnessed important reforms and innovations. Although the period is associated with the prosperity and wealth, it is also a period of social and gender oppression. Class distinction is an important matter in this period, which influenced daily lives of the Victorians. The social structure of the period is hierarchical including the upper class, the middle class and the working class. While the upper class was the luckiest one, the working class remained very unfortunate during the period. However, the middle class was the one, which grew much with the industrialization. Therefore, an idea of feminine ideal emerged by the middle class, who required women to be pure, obedient to her husband, confined to household and sexually innocent. These accepted qualities revealed a stereotype of "the angel in the house" which becomes the main topic in many Victorian novels. Women, who doesn't conform to these qualities are labelled as the fallen women.

Many Victorian writers dealt with the issue of the fallen woman. While some writers remained under the influence of the male dominated society, others protested against this concept. Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell are the examples of the Victorian social writers, who engaged with the issue of the fallen women, by conducting many projects. Charles Dickens established a refugee for the fallen women and Gaskell did voluntary works for them. Both had a sympathy for the fallen women and reflected their ideology through their novels. However, their approach to the fallen women are different as reflected in their literary works. This study has examined the stereotype of the fallen women, who are depicted in Charles Dicken's *Oliver Twist* and

Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* in accordance with the writers' point of view in a comparative way.

Dickens and Gaskell use different types of the fallen women images in the novels analysed in this study. The concept of the fallenness includes from unwed mothers, prostitutes, to seduced and deserted women, briefly any woman, who has sexual affairs outside marriage. Dickens has three fallen women in *Oliver Twist*: Nancy and Bet, both are prostitutes, and Agnes, an unwed mother, who dies during childbearing. On the other hand, Gaskell's fallen character, Ruth in *Ruth*, is another type of the fallen woman. She is an innocent girl, who is seduced and abandoned when she is pregnant. She becomes an unwed mother like Agnes in *Oliver Twist*.

Through this study, we have seen that Gaskell presents a more striking portrait of the fallen woman in her novel than Dickens does. if we compare these writers' point of view about the fallen woman, it can be concluded that Gaskell's sympathy and courage towards her fallen character surpassed Dickens. One of the most important evidence is the title of the novels. While Gaskell uses the name of a fallen character, Ruth, as the title of the novel, Dickens prefers to give the title the name of an orphan boy, Oliver Twist, which may reveal whose sympathy is more evident. Additionally, we have seen that Ruth's presence as a heroine of the novel is very important. The novel is based on Ruth's life from the beginning to the end. Gaskell focuses on her transformation from the fallen woman to the proper one. On the other hand, Dickens does not succeed to give such an opportunity to his fallen women characters in his novel. This may show that Dickens is not as courageous as Gaskell is in his portrayal of the fallen women characters in his novel. There is another important point, which shows Dickens' lack of courage in relation to the fallen women characters is that even though Nancy is a prostitute, Dickens doesn't mention her profession in the novel, except in the preface. Her job can only be understood by looking at her appearance or living conditions. Moreover, other fallen women characters in *Oliver Twist* are absent characters. Bet shows up only with Nancy, when they are introduced to Oliver, and when the novel develops, we hear that she gets crazy after Nancy's death. Agnes is also a minor character. Her only presence is when she gives birth to Oliver Twist. And

later, we learn that she has a sinful relationship and turns out to be Oliver's mother. Even though, Ruth resembles Agnes in the way of being seduced, Dickens prefers to depict Agnes as a more shadowy character. However, Gaskell seems more courageous in revealing Ruth's presence explicitly. to exemplify, The surnames of the fallen women are important clues scrutinized in this study. In *Oliver Twist*, all fallen WOMEN characters have never been called with their surnames, while in *Ruth*, Gaskell introduces her fallen woman character with her surname as "Ruth Hilton" from the very beginning. Although Ruth is labelled as a fallen woman, Gaskell gives her another surname, Mrs. Denbigh.

Like Gaskell, Dickens has seen the fallen women[1] as the victims of the society. However, his depiction of the fallen woman is less protective when compared to Gaskell. Though, both Nancy and Ruth are orphans in the novels studied in this thesis, our writers prefer to write different ends and different paths for their fallen women characters in their new lives after their fall. While Dickens forces Nancy to live in the streets to survive, giving no other option to gain a social status, Gaskell gives Ruth a new identity and a new city to live as opposed to the beliefs of many Victorians. An ordinary Victorian might have perceived Ruth as an outcast under the influence of the Victorian morals and beliefs, s/he is exposed to since childhood. Contrary to these Victorian beliefs and values, Gaskell tries to remove the label of the fallen woman and tries to take the burden of being stigmatized from the shoulders of Ruth. She wants to show to the readers that Ruth needs and deserves a second chance. However, Dickens doesn't defend her character in *Oliver Twist* as Gaskell does in *Ruth*. It is significant that Dickens draws the evolution of Nancy from being an improper to a proper women,

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[1] The term of the fallen woman emerges as a result of the deviation from the feminine ideal set by the growing middle class in the Victorian period. Thus, the term of the fallen woman became a very common issue in the Victorian literature. Consequently, Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell also dealt with this issue in their novels after having become acquainted with various figures of the fallen women in their private lives.

but Nancy continues to be a fallen woman until the end of the novel. Even though, Nancy is given an opportunity to escape, she doesn't accept it as she knows about the common fate of the other fallen women in the Victorian society like herself. Dickens may have rescued Nancy as Gaskell has done, but he doesn't show the courage to oppose to the Victorian conventions. As a result, the lives of the fallen women characters in the selected novels end up very differently.

As the theme of death is a very common incident in the life stories of the fallen women narrated in the Victorian novels, Dickens and Gaskell have had to comply with this convention as well. As can be seen in his novel, even though Dickens was also influenced by the Victorian morals, he still wished to show the goodness of Nancy as a fallen woman. His active involvement in charity works in relation to the fallen women in his daily life also demonstrates that he wished the redemption of the fallen woman. He, nevertheless, could not keep away from the belief that the death of these women was their inevitable fate. The fallen women always die at the end as it is illustrated in both of the novels analysed in this study. However, Gaskell follows a different way in drawing Ruth's death. While Dickens depicts the fallen women characters as the guilt-ridden victims, who commonly have a brutal death, Gaskell prefers to portray a respectable death in the eyes of the society for Ruth. She dies from fever, when she is working as a nurse and while she is serving for the community. This end may prove that Gaskell has more sympathy towards the fallen women and has more courage to defend them against the Victorian values in Ruth than Dickens does in *Oliver Twist*.

Under the light of all the information and examples given from the novels, it may be concluded that the most important reason why Dickens and Gaskell have different views towards the fallen woman might be their genders. As a part of the patriarchal cultural system, men authors might have a more insusceptible attitude towards the fallen women than women authors might have towards the fallen women in their literary works. Thus, Gaskell is much more interested in the issue than Dickens is. Another reason might be the time period, when these novels were written. Dickens wrote *Oliver Twist,* when the restrictions and harsh attitudes towards women were at

the height and women were supposed to be at home and carry out domestic duties. As a male writer, Dickens may have been much influenced by the period he lived in, where a woman's place was in the house, and if she did not conform to the Victorian morals, she was a threat in the eyes of society. Gaskell, on the other hand, wrote *Ruth*, in the mid-Victorian period, when the attitudes began to change towards the fallen women and some institutions were established for their rehabilitation. That's why, Gaskell might be approaching the issue of the fallen women more sympathetically compared to Dickens.

In the novels analysed in this study, namely *Ruth* and *Oliver Twist*, it has been observed that Elizabeth Gaskell's and Charles Dickens' literary treatment of the fallen women differs mainly with regard to their genders. It might be concluded that Dickens seems to be less merciful and less interested in the protection of his fallen women characters in his novel, *Oliver Twist*, whereas Gaskell is more sympathetic and more defensive towards them as shown in *Ruth.* Therefore, it can be said that Gaskell's sympathy and courage towards her fallen woman character surpassed Dickens' sympathy towards his fallen women characters in *Ruth.*

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