

THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
ABDERRAHMANE MIRA UNIVERSITY OF BEJAIA  
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**A Comparative Marxist Study of Charlotte Bronte's  
*Jane Eyre* (1847) and Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl  
of the Streets* (1893)**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for a **Master Degree in Literature and Civilization**

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**Academic Year: 2020-2021**

## **Dedication**

My thesis is proudly dedicated to all my family; especially my beloved parents God protect them.

To my loving future husband, Kherzi Halim, who has always been with me through good and bad times encouraging me each step of the way. With his love, support, and understanding I have reached one of my goals in life.

To my perfect brothers, sisters and aunts for their support and help.

I also dedicate this work to all my friends and teachers without exception.

**Issaadi Hanane**

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my beloved father may peace be upon him.

To my dear mother who supported and believed in me throughout my studies.

To my little brothers who have been a great motivation.

To all my family and my best friends for their encouragements.

## **Acknowledgments**

First of all, we thank Allah for all the blessings, help and strength that guided us to complete our dissertation. We are deeply grateful to a number of people who have given us valuable advice and encouragements while writing this research.

We would like to express our gratitude and a special thank to our supervisor Dr. Ounissa Chioukh-Ait Benali for her patience, guidance, great knowledge and valuable advice. We would like also to thank Ms. Wissam Baouz for her help and her timely feedback.

Finally, our warm thanks go to our family and to all our friends who have helped us to make this dissertation possible.

## Table of Contents

<b>Dedication</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Abbreviation</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>General Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter One: Crane’s and Bronte’s Biographies, Literary Influences and Historical Background Summary of <i>Jane Eyre</i> and <i>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets</i></b> .....	<b>5</b>
Introduction	
1. The Biographies of both Authors Crane and Bronte.....	5
1.1 Crane’s Biography.....	5
1.2 Bronte’s Biography.....	6
2. Crane’s and Bronte’s Literary Influences.....	8
3. Socio Historical Context.....	11
3.1 Naturalism.....	11
3.2 The Industrial Revolution and The Gilded Age.....	12
3.3 The Victorian Age.....	17
4. Summary of the Novels.....	20
4.1 <i>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets</i> .....	20
4.2 <i>Jane Eyre</i> .....	21
Conclusion	
<b>Chapter Two: A Marxist Reading of <i>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets</i> and <i>Jane Eyre</i></b> .....	<b>23</b>
Introduction	
1. Marxist Theory.....	24
2. Introducing Selected Marxist Concepts.....	25

2.1 Class Struggle and Alienation.....	25
2.2 Marxist Principles.....	25
2.2.1 Materialism.....	25
2.2.2 Social Struggle.....	27
2.2.3 Economic Power.....	28
<b>A Marxist Reading of <i>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets</i> and <i>Jane Eyre</i>.....</b>	<b>30</b>
1. Class Struggle in <i>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets</i> and <i>Jane Eyre</i> .....	30
2. Economic Power in <i>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets</i> and <i>Jane Eyre</i> .....	41
3. Materialism in <i>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets</i> and <i>Jane Eyre</i> .....	49
Conclusion	
<b>General Conclusion.....</b>	<b>60</b>
Work Cited.....	63

### **Abstract**

This dissertation borrows Marxist concepts to compare Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. The objective of this present analysis is to reveal the main effects of the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century on the American and British society. Based on the concepts of the Marxist theory, this comparative study investigates the drastic consequences produced by capitalism. It also explores the class struggles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and attempts to show how class division might be the ultimate result of a capitalist patriarchal society.

**Key words:** Marxism, Capitalism, Social struggles, Industrial Revolution, Proletariat, Bourgeoisie.

**List of Abbreviation**

*MGS: Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*

*JE: Jane Eyre*

## **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

The lower class life in the late nineteenth century was the interest of many writers because of its impact on American and British literature. Literature sheds light on society to present its ills, and reflects the writer's thoughts about life and the real situation of the world around him. Writers such as Crane and Bronte gave a vivid picture of the period they lived through their respective works.

Despite the geographical difference, the American author Stephen Crane and the British author Charlotte Bronte were able to illustrate and reveal the depth of that society in their novels entitled *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) and *Jane Eyre* (1847). They opened a window on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Industrial Revolution in addition to the conditions of people's living and preoccupations of that time. They also focused on the position of women. Both writers intended to depict the influences of the Victorian and the Industrial Revolution to the readers as they were, leaving them to discover the weaknesses of their societies.

America and England experienced numerous changes in the late nineteenth century particularly during their economic development which divided society into several classes. Many people lived in silent pain, but fewer segments of society have decided to reflect that pain, their problems, and the effect of social class divisions. From these writers, we highlight two important figures from different social environments and different literary styles who reflect this reality through their novels. The ultimate aim of the present comparative study between the two novels *JE* and *MGS* of different social settings is to show and explore the social struggles and the conflicts within British and American society, and to analyze the class relations as well as the effects of the industrialization and urbanization of the nineteenth century on their respective societies. Marxist literary criticism will be the theory used to analyze the two novels regarding the economic development.

Throughout this study we seek to answer the following questions: what are both authors' description of social division and what are the types of conflict that characterize these societies as portrayed in their novels?

In conducting this comparative study, we have selected Marxist literary criticism to analyze the two novels. On the basis of its sociological and historical context, this theory seeks to understand ideologies, thoughts and emotions in the life of individuals within their society. Therefore, the choice of Marxist literary criticism as a theory can be applied in the analysis of *JE* and *MGS* because of its concern with class relations, social conflicts in addition to the struggles of men and women to free themselves from exploitation and oppression.

The two novels have been the object of study of many critics. *Jane Eyre* (1847) was an instant hit as it draws the attention of the people and critics. However, according to certain reviewers of the novel and the public, *JE* was not only an instant literary success, but it becomes the most controversial gothic novel of the Victorian era literature (Blakemore).

According to various critics, the work is both "feminist" and "antifeminist", "radical" and "conservative", "romantic" and "Victorian". Nonetheless, it conveys Bronte's critique of the Victorian society. Most of society's key institutions, including school, family, social status, and Christianity, are called into question by *JE*. The story invites the reader to ponder on a number of modern social and political concerns. Bronte shows in her novel that society is composed of classes; upper, middle, and lower class (qtd. in Blakemore).

Erin Blakemore in her article "Sorry, but Jane Eyre Isn't the Romance You Want It to Be", states that the famous Victorian literary critic George Lewes considers the Novel *JE* as being "the best novel of the season." It had, nevertheless, been a source of debate. Moreover, Elizabeth Rigby declares in the December 1848 *Quarterly Review* that Jane is a "personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined soul," and the work as a whole is "anti-Christian." The work was first criticized as "anti-Christian" and extremely "hypocritical",

with one reviewer claiming that “never was there a bigger hater than Charlotte Bronte” and “yet I would say that these reviewers struck on some element of truths in the novel” (qtd. in Blakemore).

When Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) was first published using the pseudonym of Johnston Smith, *The Century Magazine* refused to publish it. However, the novel caught the interest of the literary critics and authors William Dean Howells and Hamlin Garland who succeeded to persuade D. Appleton's publishing house to print the work in 1896. Since then, *MGS* had always been considered as an American Naturalist Classic work. The characters beliefs, words, and actions are all influenced by their surroundings and the events of their daily lives. One of the concerns Crane has mentioned is alienation. The people of the Bowery are represented as being both alienated and brutally separated from the rest of the world. They are lonely, miserable, oblivious of other alternatives, and uneducated (“Maggie: A Girl Of The Streets”).

Most critics were disturbed by the content of *MGS*. William Dean Howells notes that it contained too much of a “certain kind” of realism while Timothy Gilfoyle declares that it most closely resembles to “literary slumming missions.” He adds that Despite Crane's early efforts in the city, including his representation of a prostitute wrongfully charged of harassment, he eventually comes to conventional views about prostitution. Even Maggie's unexplained death by the city's river, in the opinion of Joseph Salemi, is "commonplace" as many prostitutes commit suicide there, and so Crane took use of “the stereotypical resonances. . . a street girl at the river’s edge would evoke in his readers.” Robert Dowling similarly asserts that the story of *MGS* is not a “story of rebellion”, but of “blank conformity to convention”. He also describes the character of Maggie, Jimmie, as well as her love interest towards Pete as “disappearing relics of the Bowery working-class eclipsed by Victorian, middle- class ideals” (qtd. in Cannon 44-45).

From our review of literature we may assume that many critics were interested in both Bronte's novel *JE* and Crane's *MGS*. However the two works had never been compared before. Therefore, our investigation will focus on the comparison of the two novels from a social and economic point of view.

To fulfill the aim of this study, our thesis is divided into two chapters; each one investigates a particular element of the whole study. The first chapter explores the social and historical background of the United States and the Victorian Age along with the literary influences of Crane and Bronte. It also provides a brief summary of the two works in addition to the authors' biographies. In the second and final chapter, we first introduce the theory used to conduct our research which is Marxist literary criticism. Then we apply the theory to compare between Crane's and Bronte's novels in order to highlight the class conflicts and the outcomes of the capitalist patriarchy during the nineteenth century.

**Chapter One:**  
**Crane's and Bronte's Biographies,**  
**Literary Influences, Historical Background and**  
**The Summary of *Jane Eyre* and *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*.**

## **Chapter One: Crane's and Bronte's Biographies, Literary Influences, Historical Background and the Summary of *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *Jane Eyre***

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to give an overall view of the biographies of the two authors Bronte and Crane to help the reader understand their lives, careers, and experiences as writers. Then, a set of literary influences is provided for a better comprehension of Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. Furthermore, we will try to clarify some historical and social issues in which the two works emerged with a brief introduction to The Victorian Age, The Industrial Revolution, The Gilded Age, and Naturalism to show the major events that the British and the Americans went through. At the end, a brief summary of both novels is included.

### **1. The Biography of both Authors Crane and Bronte**

#### **1.1 Crane's Biography**

Stephen Crane (1871-1900) was the first and most influential American naturalist writer. He was an American novelist, poet, and short-story writer who was born in New Jersey and became famous at the age of twenty two as the author of the novel *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893). His father, Jonathan Townley Crane, was a Methodist clergyman and his mother, Mary Helen Peck, was a religious writer. Raised by his older sister Agnes, Crane lost his father when he was eight years old, and he eventually lost his five older siblings.

As a student, Crane was more interested in sports and observing the world around him. He went to Claverack College and attended Syracuse University but left school in 1891 before obtaining his degree. Crane learned to read and write before turning 4 and by the age of sixteen, he had written many journals. When he was 22, he published his first novel, *MGS* using the pen-name of Johnston Smith. It sold few copies but failed to catch the interest of

many critics. In contrast to his second book, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1891) was a big success and became well-known.

Beside *The Red Badge*, Crane also wrote some poems and short stories such as *An Experiment in Misery* and *In the Depths of a Coal Mine*. He worked as a journalist, publishing articles about the slums of New York. In fact, Crane was a poor man who lived in The Bowery. His experience of poverty provided him with the inspiration for his first novel *MGS*. He also worked as a reporter for several American and foreign newspapers reporting against many wars such as the Spanish American War, Cuba and Philippines and so on. Encouraged by the success of his poems and second novel *The Red Badge*, he published his third novel *George's Mother* in 1896, at the same time a new edition of *MGS* was being planned for publication under D. Appleton and Company. In 1896, at the end of his tragic life, Crane wrote a collection of poems called *War is Kind*. Crane suffered from many diseases during his time in the Bowery till his years as a war correspondent, and he died when he was only 28 years old on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1900 (Stallman 528).

## **1.2 Bronte's Biography**

Charlotte Bronte is one of the most popular and influencing novelists among the representatives of the Victorian Age. She was born at Thornton; West Yorkshire on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1816. Bronte grew up in a religious and strict atmosphere. Her father Patrick Bronte (1777-1861) was an Anglican priest. Her mother Maria Branwell died in 1821 when Charlotte was five years old, leaving six children, Charlotte, Maria, Charlet, Elizabeth, Emily, Anne and Patrick Branwell. Their aunt, Elizabeth Brabwell, took care of the six young siblings. Being separated from their father and not having real contact with him, they spent their time reading and creating their own imaginary worlds.

In 1824, the four older girls, Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte and Emily, were sent to school at Cowan Bridge. However, the Conditions at school were terrible, and the following

year, Maria and Elizabeth died of tuberculosis. Therefore, Charlotte and Emily were immediately pulled from school and returned home. Charlotte attended The Roe Head School in 1831 which was a lovely place in comparison to Cowan Bridge. She was an outstanding student. However, due to their poor conditions she left.

Bronte worked as a governess as soon as she turned 19. Later she became a universal poet and writer. In 1846, Charlotte, Emily and Ann, published a self-financed book of poems under male pen names Currer, Acton and Ellis Bell respectively. The Bronte's felt that their writing would not be taken seriously because they were women. However, their poetry did not attract the audience; only two or three copies were sold. Yet, the sisters were not discouraged, instead each one wrote a novel. Bronte published her masterpiece *Jane Eyre* in 1847, where she depicted the class struggle, social status and gender discrimination in the Victorian era. The reaction to the book was incredible. Many copies were sold and had captivated the attention of many literary critics. Later, she came up with her second major social novel, *Shirley* (1849) which focused on the industrial interest and the role of women in society, and her third novel, *Villette* (1853), talked about internal conflicts and isolation. Bronte's last novel *Professor* (1847) was published posthumously and was not welcomed by many publishing houses.

Bronte married her father's assistant, Arthur Bell Nicholas in 1854 and became pregnant. Shortly afterward, similar to her sisters, she became ill of tuberculosis and because of some complications from the pregnancy, she died on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March in 1855 with her unborn child (Tompkins).

## **2. Crane's and Bronte's Literary Influences**

While writing *MGS*, Stephen Crane was mainly influenced by his religious family and the need to reveal the reality and impurity of the real world. Raised by Methodist parents who focused a lot of their time in writing religious articles which had a great impact on him.

Scholars have seen that Crane's career arose from the young writer's sense of conflict between the religious orthodoxy of his early training and the realities of life as he saw them (Schneider 1).

Crane was concerned with revealing the powerful forces that direct human actions using a straightforward technique. Donald Pizer writes in his article "Stephen Crane's 'Maggie' and American Naturalism" that Crane's technique is described as "obliqueness and indirection" and he uses irony and expressionistic symbolism to push the reader to look beyond the underlying reality (168). In the article entitled "Stephen Crane and The Drama of Transition", Schneider states that Crane took part in the school of the emerging writers of America in 1890-1917, influenced by Zola's naturalism who argued that man was a product of natural forces. Crane was influenced by both Zola and Spencer. However, what makes Crane's style unique is the fact that he rejected the ideas of deterministic naturalism in Zola's and Spencer's writings in which they explained that "man's actions are directed by the guiding hand of God" (2-3). However Crane did not entirely liberate himself from the traditional religious beliefs and the essence of man, he felt that both God and nature were indifferent to man and his goals (2-3).

Crane is known for his naturalist style in which he recreates real life in fictional settings. This can be seen in his first novella *MGS* (1893). In "Fiction and Politics: The Progressive Impulse in Stephen Crane's *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*", Greg Phelps explains that *Maggie* is "an expose of the harmful consequences of Social Darwinism upon the lives of the working class in a New York City tenement. It is driven by a progressive impulse that anticipates the growth of Progressive politics during the early twentieth century" (76).

During the nineteenth century, Social Darwinism emerged as a social theory founded by Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner. The central principle of Darwinism, which

influenced many American authors, including Stephen Crane, was that people become powerful in society because they are innately better and that human qualities are passed through generation to another by heredity as seen in *MGS*, the fates of the characters are conducted by unchallenged social forces beyond their control. Aside from Maggie, who had a strong desire to flee the tenement, none of the other characters share this desire, instead each one focused solely on survival (Phelps 76-79).

Crane's second novel *The Red Badge of Courage* was a great success and won him an international fame. As mentioned in "Stephen Crane and Impressionism", written by Rodney O. Rogers, Crane was influenced by French impressionist painters and *The Red Badge of Courage* is often compared to it. He adds that Conrad named Crane a "complete impressionist", whereas R.G Vosburgh states that "impressionism was his faith" (292). Crane's literary style methods are often identical to impressionist paintings. According to R. W Stallman "Crane's style is composed of disconnected images, which coalesce like blobs of color in French impressionist painting" (292). Additionally, Bert Bender in his article "Hanging Stephen Crane in the Impressionist Museum", states that seeing Crane as an impressionist is clear as his friendship with multiple artists influenced him (47).

Bronte's *JE* was written during the Victorian era in the nineteenth century when England was going through some changes, mainly surrounding the Industrial Revolution. Many creative styles and literary schools, and even some social, political, and religious movements, emerged throughout this period. While writing *JE*, Bronte was influenced by her life experiences as a teacher and governess in addition to her sisters' tragic death. The story of *JE* revolves mainly around society and its norms and on what is going on during that period. Social, political and the Industrial Revolution created several changes in the way people interacted, as well as in way people earned their living. So, the novel speaks about Jane's dissatisfaction with the times.

Carol A. Bock writes in her article “Gender and Poetic Tradition: The Shaping of Charlotte Bronte’s Literary Career” that Bronte’s “early interest in writing, like that of her siblings, was stimulated by a desire to join the literary and political controversies of her day” (49). She was sent to the Clergy Daughters’ School at Cowan In 1824, of which purpose to the *Leeds Intelligencer Newspaper*, was to provide an “effective Education” that would prepare young women “to maintain themselves in the different stations of life to which Providence may call them” and to offer “a more liberal Education for any who may be sent to be educated as Teachers and Governesses” (49). She adds that Among the Bronte’s, Charlotte was the most anxious about her need to establish herself in a fulfilling and economically viable career (49).

*JE* is a “book of books” because while writing the novel Bronte was inspired by a rich collection of sources from oral tales and legends such as *Bluebeard’s Castle*, *Cinderella*, *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Beauty and the Beast*. Moreover, she was also influenced by Johann Wolfgang’s *The Bride of Corinth* (1797), and Sir Walter Scott’s *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819) that in a way similar to *JE* (qtd. in Bronte). *In the novella, Bronte was influenced by real-life experiences and developed them through characters and the plot.* According to Murray Ellison in his article entitled “Charlotte Bronte’s Life Informs Jane Eyre”, *the loss of family members and having different jobs are only few of the similarities. Like the protagonist, Bronte was raised by her obnoxious aunt.* Losing her mother and suddenly becoming the eldest child in her family forced her into the position of leadership and an overwhelming sense of responsibility, one that conflicted with a streak of rebelliousness and personal ambition. *While writing the novel, Bronte did not give her cruel Aunt Reed a first name. She also mentioned a deceased father from which we can assume that Bronte’s father was too busy with his work to be involved in the life of his children and that*

*he did not earn lots of money.* The death of Elizabeth and Maria had a great impact on Charlotte's life which probably helped her to shape her personality as well.

Right after the tragic experiences, Bronte's father took the responsibility of tutoring his remaining children at home. The children were scholarly persons who read eagerly and were given a free pass over their father's library which include books such as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678-1684), Hannah More's *Moral Sketches* (1784), John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), Sir Walter Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), James Thomson's *The Seasons* (1726-1730), and the Bible. Bronte started writing poetry when she was only 13, right after the Brontes' journal *Branwell's Blackwood's Magazine* which strongly influenced her as well as *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* (1832). The children made their own little magazines of real-life versions, which catches the tone and spirit of the original *Blackwood's* quite well. It was during that period that Charlotte Bronte became more productive and enthusiastic about writing (Bock 49).

### **3. Socio-historical Context**

#### **3.1 Naturalism**

Naturalism is a literary movement that took place in France, England, and the United States from 1685 to 1900. Webster's dictionary defines it as "a state of thought (religious, moral or philosophical) that glorifies nature and which denies supernatural and spiritual forces" (Zhang 195). It came as a continuation and advanced movement of realism, however "unlike realism which focuses on literary techniques, naturalism implies a philosophical position" (Campbell 501). The term was first discovered by the French novelist Emile Zola, and was used by writers as a philosophy in order to describe how humans interacted and were influenced by their environment in such novels as Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), Frank Norris's *McTeague* (1899), and Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* (1903) among others (195).

Peter B. High mentions in his book *An Outline of American Literature* that Zola claimed that people were not really “free”, and that their lives were governed by “social, economic, and psychological” factors (88). The primary goal of naturalist painters was to depict reality as accurately as possible. It has a deterministic storyline and is typically set in urban slums where the characters do not have control over their own lives and are therefore crushed by forces they don't understand. These characters are mostly from the middle or lower class. Naturalists show them as being controlled by environment, heredity, chance or instinct. Crane's characters, like those in *MGS*, are governed by their surroundings, which is what distinguishes him as a "naturalist" demonstrating that even life and death are determined by fate (88).

### **3.2 The Industrial Revolution and The Gilded Age**

The 1750s and 1800s were a time of huge revolution and industrial prosperity that changed England and the world forever. Before the Industrial Revolution, people used to do all the work by themselves by hands such as clothing, furniture, and making their own crops. They were dependent on each other, most of them worked as farmers or craftsmen and when industrialization started their lifestyle transformed dramatically as a result of drastic changes in industrial technology. Consequently numerous improvements arose in fields such as technology, society, education, medicine, economy and culture in which several technological developments replaced human labor with machines. However, it led to a variety of new social concerns such as politics and economic issues (“Industrialization” 289-290).

Industrialization is characterized by the use of new sources. Britain saw a transformation from an agrarian society into an industrialized urban which turned the world into a modern one. This modernization tremendously impacted not only the social, economic, and political level but also brought a great influence to the literary works. It brought major changes to literature, particularly in term of themes as it is shown in the following passage:

The Industrial Revolution affected every part of life in Great Britain, but proved to be a mixed blessing. Eventually, industrialization led to a better quality of life for most people. But the change to machine production initially caused human suffering. Rapid industrialization brought plentiful jobs, but it also caused unhealthy working conditions, air and water pollution, and the ills of child labor. It also led to rising class tensions, especially between the working class and the middle class. (qtd. in “Industrialization” 289)

Positively, the development of technology and the economic growth has made England a leading country and hold an important role in the world. However, the industrialization created many impacts as well. Wrigley Tony states in his article “Opening Pandora’s box: A new look at the industrial revolution” that Industrial Revolution is like a Pandora Jar, once it is opened, there comes troubles which are not expected before. This great revolution caused many problems such as, pollution from factories that damaged the environment, the gap in social classes, the escalation of slum area in big cities, the increasing number of criminality, and other social and economic problems which were caused by urbanization.

During the Industrial Revolution, British population increased when people went from rural to urban cities. The construction of factories and textile mills changed Britain significantly. Due to Industrialization, thousand of new factories and mills were built throughout the United Kingdom. These factories relied on large number of workers and machinery to manufacture massive quantities of good in a single location. People went to the cities in order to work at the new factories. Before the Industrial Revolution, 80 per cent of the population lived in the countryside and only 20 percent of the population in the cities. Industrialization reversed this pattern (Easton et al. “Industrial Revolution” 272).

New sources of power such as steam power and electricity transformed the manufacturing, agricultural transport and communication industries. As the population

increased, new canals, roads and railway lines were built to connect cities. New ways of transport were invented. People traveled more as transportation improved, and they lived less isolated. Later, new communication technologies like telegraph and telephone system were introduced. A new social class known as the middle class emerged as well. These emerging classes were neither landlords of wealthy aristocrats nor factory workers. Instead, they included wealthy industrialists and merchant as well as bankers, shopkeepers, teachers, doctors, managers and government officials. People of the middle class could afford fine clothing, furniture, and other household items. It was this class that drove the demand for mass-produced consumer goods (Easton et al. "Industrial Revolution" 273).

Despite the fact that the Industrial Revolution raised the living standards of the majority of Britons, these achievements come at a high cost. Although the industrialists who operated the mills, factories, and mines, as well as the emerging middle class benefited from technical changes that made their lives more comfortable, many people were forced to abandon their typical rural lifestyle for a life in one of the industrial towns, where they worked long hours and lived in crowded and unsanitary conditions. Life was very different for those in the factories who struggled to survive on low wages and were forced to work in harsh conditions. Factory and mine managers couldn't care less about workplace welfare and conditions as long as high profit was gained. This included requiring longer working hours and using less expensive labour in the form of women and children. In this context, Engels wrote the following:

[...] a mass of children work the whole week through in the mills or at home, and therefore cannot attend school. The evening schools, supposed to be attended by children who are employed during the day, are almost abandoned or attended without benefit. It is asking too much, that young workers, who have been using themselves up twelve hours in the day, should go to school from eight to ten at night. And those who

try it usually fall asleep, as is testified by hundreds of witnesses in the Children's Employment Commission's Report. (qtd. In Easton et al. "Industrial Revolution" 296)

Children were regarded as model workers and they began working as early as the age of 4 or 5. They were inexpensive to hire and their families appreciated the additional income. Their jobs were simple but mentally and physically challenging and risky. In fact "the industrial revolution marked the climax of the long transition from Feudalism to Capitalism" (Heller 16).

The rich and poor in Britain had very different living standards. The rapid advancement in technology and society resulted in the emergence of new social elite known as the middle class. Aristocrats who were members of royal families with powerful family traditions and reputations held considerable money, property, and political power in the social hierarchy. The middle class consisted of factory owners, industrialists, physicians, and lawyers, collectively known as capitalists, whose generous wages have enabled them to build their homes. Compared to these aristocrats, the rest of the working class lived in slums closer to the factories with inadequate sanitation about which Engels writes questioning what kind of life they can afford in what follows:

[...] the social order makes family life almost impossible for the worker. In a comfortless, filthy house, hardly good enough for mere nightly shelter, ill-furnished, often neither rain-tight nor warm, a foul atmosphere filling rooms overcrowded with human beings, no domestic comfort is possible. The husband works the whole day through, perhaps the wife also and the elder children, all in different places; they meet night and morning only, all under perpetual temptation to drink; what family life is possible under such conditions? (qtd. In Easton et al. "Industrial Revolution" 298)

In his article "Capitalism and industrial development: some lessons from Britain's experience", Nicholas Kaldor states that urbanization brought with it new social classes and social divisions. He also writes that: "The division of the world into rich and poor areas is

now known to be the cumulative result of differences in the compound rates of economic growth which only emerged with modern industrial capitalism—the so-called Industrial Revolution which started in England in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century” (193). Many employees struggled to adjust to their modern city lives. Some embittered workers began to demand fair working conditions and political rights. As a result, there was an increase in interest in social revolution with theorists and activists like Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels attracting a fellow among the working classes. In his book, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (1867), Karl Marx suggested that the industrial revolution was driven by an economic system known as capitalism. Marx argued that Capitalism was based on the exploitation of the workers by owners of land, factories; railways and roads, shops and banks for profit. For capitalism to work it relied on an “army” of urban workers who would work for less than the value of their labor (qtd. in Easton et al. “Industrial Revolution” 304).

Literary writers attempted to criticize the period through literature. Hence, 18<sup>th</sup> century literature has known a great success. The outcomes of the Industrial Revolution have brought new interests to the literary world. With the appearance of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, the literary themes varied. The major themes were a response to the technological growth along with social issues and technology. Novelists of this period were primarily inspired by social status problems brought by industrialization and urbanization. The most well-known novelists of the period were Charles Dickens, the Bronte sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell among others (“Industrial Revolution in Literature”).

Like Britain and following the War of independence (1775-1783), the American industry expanded. By 1900, it had surpassed Britain in terms of global production. As America transitioned from a rural and farming community to an industrial society, living conditions for urban workers and the working class deteriorated. In this context, both Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner (1972) wrote that the Gilded Age was “a time in US

history characterized by fever and ambition, in which wealth consolidated through the operation of new technologies and novel corporations and arrangements of capital” (Qtd. in Sheckel and Palus 828). Industrialization significantly changed the US economy by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mark Twain came up with the term "The Gilded Age" in 1873 to describe a period that followed the Civil War (1861-1865) in America. It is an era that seemed to be unprecedented with the rise of wealth, power and opportunity and technology but corrupted underneath in every field of political corruption, agriculture, labor, urbanization and unfettered capitalism. According to W.E.B Dubois “The Gilded Age” was a time in which industrialization dominated, “the transportation networks, natural resources, and economic base for much of the nation, frequently through subsidy from the federal government, if not from purchased politicians” (828). The Gilded Age brought out the best and worst of the American experiment.

### **3.3 The Victorian Age**

The Victorian age (1837-1901) is named after Queen Victoria during her role. This era was a time of great, political, religious and social changes along with rapid technological discoveries and industrialization that changed the way people viewed the world and influenced many writers of the era. The emphasis of capitalist development switched from commerce to industry (“Capitalism”).

During Queen Victoria’s reign, the British Empire saw a great expansion of wealth, power and culture. Britain witnessed the Industrial Revolution which brought a strong division between the working class and the wealthy. The wealthy grew wealthier and the poor poorer. The Queen introduced new reforms in arts, science and politics, reforms that are still in effect today. This age began with an economical boom and prosperity, however; it was also an age of contradictions of enormous poverty and injustice.

For the most part, due to the industrial innovations and the expansion of economy, there were huge costs that led to poverty and child labor. The social divisions of the time included the upper class, which included members of the royal family, the middle class, which included officers and landlords, and the lower class, which included laborers. “The middle classes were usually self-employed merchants and shopkeepers who lived in large houses, educated their children and employed servants” (“The Victorian Age” 8). The lower class included servants, governesses, farmers and the underclass in general. While the bourgeoisie, enjoyed a prosperous life the proletarians could not afford the luxurious life and had to work for them. It was the golden age for the middle class citizens. More labor was needed due to the huge number of emerging industries. Life for the working class was harsh and brutal; they could not afford food and clothing for themselves, nor afford education for their children. Their living conditions were overwhelming. Migration in Britain (1801-1871) played a great part as well that caused an increasing amount in the UK population. As a result, many found themselves living in the streets due to the insufficient housing as explained by Dunford and Perrons in their book *The Arena of Capital* (1983):

[...] In the mid-Victorian era rural crafts declined along with agricultural employment, and so large numbers of people left the countryside. Several million work-ers, equal in fact to one-half of the total population in 1801, were forced to leave the country altogether. Others found work in domestic service, in the industrial and commercial sectors of the London economy, and in the booming industrial areas that had for the most part already been established. In some cases the coming of the railways helped to extend the workable parts of a coalfield, as in South-West Durham, the East Midlands, and the Scottish Lowlands, and played a part in the development of mineral areas such as Teeside and the Furness district of Cumberland. (276)

Child labour became a recurring issue during the Victorian period. Many Young children were employed in many industries such as coal mining, chimney sweeping,

shoeblacks, errand boys or flower selling for a very low wage and they were required to work 12 to 18 hours a day. The miserable living conditions of the young destitute orphans forced them to resort to violence. Children from the middle and upper classes, in comparison to orphans, had access to schooling. The most of them were sent to school after spending time in a nursery. While the children from the lower classes worked for them to earn their living (“The Victorian Age” 8).

Life was very difficult for women during that period as well. They were treated as second-class citizens in society. They had few if not no opportunity to work outside the household, other than being a governess to children, a hospital nurse or a maid. Victorians believed that women had no right to be educated. Women were seen as weak. They were considered as “Angels in the House” who were expected to marry, to be devoted and submissive to their husbands, to raise children and to take care of household chores such as cleaning and cooking. Due to the brutal poor conditions, prostitution became a common form of work for many women from the poor families (“Social Life in Victorian England”).

The Victorian Era has been referred to as The *Golden Age* of the English literature. The rapid changes have led to the flourishing of literature. Many writers reacted to both the wonders and troubles of the era. Periodicals thrived, and journals delivered new stories, satirical essays, verse, and fiction on a monthly basis. Novels dominated the Victorian literary marketplace and became more affordable. Many authors mirrored the Victorian issues in the stories of the characters in a realistic way. They talked about poverty, suffering and social injustice. Among the lower class people and among the novelists who criticized the great social changes of the era we have Charles Dickens (1812-1870), who is considered as the greatest novelist of the Victorian Era. His works became so popular, he painted the Victorian Age as a time that was dirty, dark and crude, especially for those who were living in the lower class. He also portrayed social problems and morality, trying to show and accuse the

inhumanity and hypocrisy of 19<sup>th</sup> century society. Some of Dickens well-known works are: *Oliver Twist* (1838), *Hard Times* (1854), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and *Great Expectations* (1861) (“Victorian Novelists Biography”).

Women novelists thrived during that period such as the Brontes sisters, Charlotte, Emily and Anne, who introduced the female character. They depicted woman’s struggles against gender discrimination and social status such as Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855) novel *Jane Eyre* (1847) which mirrored society’s social hierarchy and women during the Victorian age and which is going to be the focus of our coming analysis in the second chapter.

#### **4. Summary of the Novels**

##### **4.1 *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets***

The story of Maggie starts with a scene of the young boy Jimmie fighting with some children from Devil’s Row, a nearby area in the bowery. Seeing him confronting his rivals by himself, an old friend of Jimmie, called Pete, joins the fight. Soon later, Jimmie’s father arrives and brutally drags him home. There we meet, his kindly shy older sister Maggie, his little brother Tommie, and his cruel, abusive mother Marry Johnson. Maggie’s parents are alcoholics and constantly arguing.

As time went by, Tommie and his father passed away. Both Maggie and Jimmie remain with their ruthless drunken mother. Maggie grew up and blossomed to become a lovely innocent lady, she even got a job in a shirt factory. Her brother Jimmie, on the other hand, worked as a truck driver; however, he became more aggressive and a troublemaker. Pete, who had now become a bartender, seduced the naïve girl Maggie and the two became a couple. Maggie was impressed by his confidence and his high class culture; she hoped that he will help her escape from her miserable poor life. However, her relationship caused her troubles as she starts spending most of her time with Pete. Her mother Maria and her brother

had their suspicious, and accused her of dishonoring their family. Jimmie attacked Pete and blamed him for ruining his sister. Maggie had no choice but to move out to live with Pete and lately become dependent on him.

On a night out, the couple met Nellie who mocked Maggie and persuaded Pete to leave her. Maggie, now abandoned by Pete, she tried to return home but was turned down, thus she had no alternative but to turn to the streets. Pete never believed that he actually ruined her, but blames her family. The day after he left her, Maggie went by his bar but he showed no mercy as he yelled at her to go to hell. Being deserted by everyone, Maggie began roaming the streets looking for help but found none and soon became a prostitute. The story of Maggie ends with Jimmie announcing the death of his sister to his mother.

#### ***4.2 Jane Eyre***

Jane Eyre is a bildungsroman that narrates the story of a ten-year old orphan girl Jane, who lives a life of torment at Gateshead with her cruel Aunt Reed and cousins, Georgiana, Eliza and John. Jane was disliked by her cousins who always used to fight with her, and as a punishment, her aunt, imprisoned the young girl in the Red Room, the place where her uncle died. In this room of terror, Jane saw her uncle's ghost. Being terrified, she begged to be set free. However, her obnoxious aunt refused. To put an end to this struggle, Mrs. Reed sent Jane to the religious Lowood Institute, a miserable and desolate place run by the hypocrite and cruel headmaster Mr. Brocklehurst. At Lowood School, the girls suffered from wretched and harsh conditions such as freezing rooms, not enough proper nutrition nor sufficient clothing and shoes. Jane remained there until she reached adulthood. She preferred school to spending time with her aunt's family; she even made friends with Miss Temple and the student Helen Buns. Unfortunately, she lost her best friend Helen who was helping her control her passions. Helen died from tuberculosis, just like Charlotte's both sisters in real life.

Jane spent six years at Lowood School as a student, and two years as a teacher before being offered a governess position to Mr. Edward Rochester's daughter Adel. She accepted the position and relocated to Thornfield Hall. Later she had fallen in love with her boss, Mr. Rochester, whom she had rescued from a fire.

Later on, Jane returned back to her aunt's estate. On the deathbed, Aunt Reed assured Jane that she did not regret the way she treated her. She also admitted that Jane's uncle, John Eyre, wanted to adopt her and make her his heir, But she informed him that she was no longer alive. When Jane returned to Thornfield, Mr. Rochester confessed that he was secretly in love with her, and asked her to marry him. Jane happily accepted the proposal. However, during the ceremony a lawyer claimed that Rochester was already married to Bertha Mason, a mad woman from the West Indies. After admitting the truth, Jane forgave Rochester but fled Thornfield and ended up destitute. Jane became homeless and jobless. Fortunately, she was helped by Marry, Diana and St. John Rivers who took her at Moor House. John got her a job as a teacher in their town. By then, he fell in love with her, he proposed to her to accompany him to India as his wife. Jane declined because of her feelings for Rochester. Surprisingly, Jane inherited her uncle's wealth. Later on, she discovered that the River Siblings were her cousins and shared her inheritance with them.

One night, Jane decided to go to Thornfield after hearing Rochester's voice calling her name. However, the manor was in ruins as Bertha had set a fire and jumped to her death. While trying to save her, Rochester became blind and handicapped. Jane visited Rochester at Ferndean and promised to take care of him. Ten year later, after getting married, the couple had a son. Rochester sight had been partially restored and they lived happily.

## **Conclusion**

In the first chapter, we tried to provide the readers with a glimpse into the lives of both authors and the literary influences of Bronte and Crane that were provided to understand both novels. Then, we explored the British and the American 19th century Industrial Revolution, with a focus on social aspects including class division, child labour, and urbanization along with a synopsis of *JE* and *MGS*. In the second chapter, we will introduce Marxism as a literary theory and explain why it is pertinent for our research. Then, we will apply it to the analysis of the two novels.

## **Chapter Two:**

**A Marxist Reading of *Jane Eyre* and *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*.**

## **Chapter Two: A Marxist Reading of *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *Jane Eyre*.**

### **Introduction**

As we have seen in the previous chapter, we introduced the historical background of the two novels. The present chapter will be divided into two parts. We will attempt to provide a brief overview of the Marxist theory as stated by Karl Marx. Then, in the following section, we will analyze and compare Crane's and Bronte's novels using the Marxist concepts of social class, economic power, and materialism.

### **1. Marxist Theory**

As a theory, Marxism is extremely complicated and difficult to express briefly due to its ephemeral nature (Rockmore 1). Marxism is a social, political, and economic philosophy based on the ideas of Karl Marx, a German philosopher (1818-1883). It is also known as the conflict theory, and it examines how social classes and money influence society. The emergence of Marxism came as a result of the economic inequality, rapid technological and political change in Europe during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, it attempts to reform capitalist society based on private ownership in many ways to achieve the emancipation of the proletariat and humans in general. Marxist political economics explores the theory of social relations of production and their rules of growth (Lenin 5-10).

Marx believed that the working class or the proletariat was excessively exploited by the capitalists, bourgeoisie, or the ruling class who generally owned the factories or “the means of production” as he called them. He argued that capitalism created a class struggle that oppressed the working class, lowered living standards, and was an ineffective method of structuring society. He suggested that communism is the best solution so that the working class could improve their situation through education and personal development. In his book *Das Kapital* (1967), Marx wrote that only a worker’s revolution could correct this injustice.

He added that society is divided into two classes: “the capitalists” and “the workers” whom he calls “the proletariat”. Marx shared the same principles and views as the political economist, Friedrich Engels (qtd. in Rummel).

## **2. Introducing Selected Marxist Concepts:**

### **2. 1. Class Struggle and Alienation**

Social class is a group of people who share the same socioeconomic position. The concept of class is defined as a group of people who live in one society and share identical costumes, interests, laws, and economic situations. In the early 19th century, the term class began to replace concepts like rank and order as a description of the major hierarchical groupings in society. After the late-eighteenth-century industrial and political revolutions, this usage reflected changes in the organization of Western European societies (“social classes”). Milton M. Gordon in his article, “Social Class in American Sociology” explains that sociologists use the term "social class" to refer to “the horizontal stratification of a population” (262). The idea of class is used to represent disparities based on wealth, income, employment, position, group identification, degree of consumption, and family history.

### **2.2 Marxist Principles**

#### **2.2.1 Materialism**

Marx was a materialist and notably a follower of Feuerbach, starting in the years 1844-1845, when his beliefs were firmly defined. He believed that material circumstances or economic forces influence the form and the evolution of society. Marx attempted to explain all social phenomena in terms of their position and function in society and nature's complex systems. In the book *Marxism Philosophy and Economics* (1985), Thomas Sowell writes that Marx’s materialism was a humanistic ethical concept. He adds that, according to Marx and

Engels, materialism is synonymous with humanism and serves as the logical foundation of communism (31), which is also explained in their book *The Holy Family* (1844) of which we extracted the following:

If correctly understood interest is the principle of all moral, man's private interests must be made to coincide with the interest of humanity. If man is unfree in the materialist sense, i.e, is free not through the negative power to avoid this or that, but through the positive power to assert his true individuality, crime must not be punished in the individual, but the anti-social source of crime must be destroyed; and each man must be given social scope for the vital manifestation of his being. If man is shaped by his surroundings, his surrounding must be human. If man is social by nature, he will develop his true nature only in society, and the power of his nature must be measured not by the power of separate individuals but by power of society. (qtd. in Sowell 31-32)

Marx argued that no worker is actually "free" The moment when a worker is free to sell his labor is the period when he is obliged to sell it, making him "no free agent" (qtd. in Sowell 34). As a result, capitalism is founded on the "exploitation of the nominally free labor" (34). Marxian materialism underlies not just political and ethical teachings, but also Marx's historical theory. Marx's historical materialism concept tries to explain human growth and history in terms of the material conditions that underlie all human life. That is to say, it is the study of society and its history and asserts that the development of society is based on material and economic conditions. As Donald Clark Hodges explains in his article "The Role of Classes in Historical Materialism":

The general thesis of historical materialism is that the consciousness of men is governed by their material mode of existence. Historical materialism asserts that a man's behavior is determined, even though unconsciously, by his relationship to the means of production and that his religious, moral, and political principles are similarly conditioned. (16)

This perspective of evolution and change refutes the claim that class society is founded on fundamental human greed. The material exchanges and conflicts that people have experienced throughout history have resulted in the establishment of a class society. This means “it is not material interest but the material mode of existence that is capable of explaining the irrationality and rationality of human behavior” (16).

### **2.2.2 Class Struggle**

The concept of social classes has been studied by many sociologists before Karl Marx for many decades. Bertell Ollman states in his article “Marx’s Use of ‘Class’” that according to Marx, there are only two classes in a developed capitalist society: capitalists and proletarians. *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) describes the former, commonly known as the bourgeoisie, as “owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labor” (573). This means that the owners of industries, businesses, and materials required generating money. Marx added that the proletariat or the working classes are “the class of modern wage-laborers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor-power in order to live” (573). They work in return for wages. In this context, Marx wrote in *The Communist Manifesto* the following:

The history of all human society, past and present [wrote Marx in 1848, in the *Communist Manifesto*; except the history of the primitive community, Engels added], has been the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, baron and serf, guild-burgess and journeyman—in a word, oppressor and oppressed—stood in sharp opposition each to the other. They carried on perpetual warfare, sometimes masked, sometimes open and acknowledged; a warfare that invariably ended either in a revolutionary change in the whole structure of society or else in the common ruin of the contending classes. . . . Modern bourgeois society, rising out of the ruins of feudal society, did not make an end of class antagonisms. It merely set up new classes in place

of the old; new conditions of oppression; new embodiments of struggle. Our own age, the bourgeois age, is distinguished by this—that it has simplified class antagonisms. More and more, society is splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great and directly contraposed classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat. (qtd. in Lenin 17)

Marx's idea of classes is essential; according to him a class is defined by the ownership of property. Thus such ownership gives a person the ability to keep others out of their property and exploit them for personal gain. In another way, Marx defined the class as people living under economic conditions that divide their lifestyle from other classes. As a result, classes exist due to their connection with the means of production. Marx stated that the history of all previously existent societies was a history of class conflict. Although Marx and Engels felt that classes existed in all societies, they argued that class separation was most apparent under capitalism. He added that the rich and the poor existed in every society. However, these classes were known under different names and lived under different conditions. But the only constant thing that remained is one of exploitation and dominance (qtd. in Yadav).

### **2.2.3 Economic Power**

Power is a person's capacity to affect and dominate others. According to Karl Marx, those who control the means of production have an economic power in society. Power is an instrument that connects economics with politics. Since the bourgeoisie possesses the majority of the means of production, they can manipulate politics to keep the proletariat or labor class in control.

Karl Marx's foundational work, *Das Kapital* (1867) is the foundation of Marxian economics. Marx outlined his theory of the capitalist system, its dynamism, and its self-destructive tendencies in the book. Marx analyzes the economy as a whole, not just one part

of it. His argument is founded on the notion that humans are productive beings who produce all economic value via their labor. Marx explains in his book the notion of "surplus value" of labor and its implications for capitalism ("Analysis of Society"), which the Oxford Dictionary defines as "The excess of what workers can produce over what they need to consume."

The proletariat has no right to own the means of production. In fact, they must have "nothing to sell but their labour-power" in order for capitalism to thrive (Sowell 53). Therefore, capitalists force employees to labor longer than is required to earn a living and then take the excess output, or surplus value, generated by the employees. To put it another way, Marx argued that workers produce wealth through their labor but are underpaid. He claims that their labor is exploited by the ruling classes, who make money not by selling their products at a higher price, but by paying employees less than the value of their labor. The specific method of inducing excess labor and appropriating excess products is unique to capitalism. This basic pattern of class "exploitation" was regarded as universal to a wide range of economies and cultures throughout history. This shows that capitalism does not favor private ownership of the means of production, but it necessitates the "disintegration of private property based on the owner's labor" (53).

Based on the ideas of Karl Marx, we will attempt to show how both Crane and Bronte through their work *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *Jane Eyre* provide a picture of their societies. They have tried to dismantle the capitalist's ideologies prevalent in that time period. Bronte examined the consequences of socioeconomic classes via Jane's own experiences and relationships with other characters. *JE* may be viewed in terms of complexity and character motivation via a Marxist lens. Marxism examines how society's roles are defined by wealth. Through Jane's struggle to adjust to her society, Bronte was able to portray problems of social class and control in the novel. Crane also used *MGS* to criticize the state of society. Faced with the darkness of New York City, his short story exposes the truth of

violence, greed, and evil by showing a real society, an actual family, and ordinary people's instincts. Crane highlighted his concern with the lives of the working class.

### **A Marxist Reading of *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *Jane Eyre***

#### **1. Class Struggle in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *Jane Eyre*:**

The idea of social conflict is crucial in Marxian thought and has reached a breaking point. In the capitalist system, three fundamental classes are distinguished by Karl Marx: the owners of the means of production referred to as the bourgeoisie, the proletariat, and the landowners. As we have referred to it above, the idea of class is characterized by differences based on wealth, income, employment, position, group identification, degree of consumption, and family history (Gordon 262).

Crane's *MGS* effectively explores the idea of class struggle through many characters. *MGS* demonstrates that America in the 1900s was a society divided into different and strict classes. Throughout the tale, there are three distinct class divisions: lower, medium, and upper. Real-life scenarios or living conditions are used to depict each class. In the opening paragraphs, a young Jimmy “stood upon a heap of gravel for the honour of Rum Alley [...] throwing stones at howling urchins from Devil’s Row” (1). Here the author presents the street of the Bowery where the lower class inhabited and shows a lack of consciousness as they struggle against each other. The proletariat is subjected to violence, which is evident in the lowest classes, “In the streets infant played or fought with other infant or sat stupidly in the way of vehicles [...] Jimmie stood until the noises ceased and the other inhabitants of the tenement had all yawned and shut their doors” (4-9). This passage demonstrates how the poor’s amusement consists of watching other people fighting.

Maggie’s parents are also examples of these sorts of people. During the few times that her father is present in the tale, he is portrayed as being aggressive. When hauling Jimmie

home from the street, he is very violent, “His parent kicked him” (Crane 3) and when Jimmie buys beer for a neighbor, his father confronts him “Give me deh can” (8) and takes the drink. Mary, the mother shares these traits as well, brawling with both her husband and son, “She jerked the baby’s arm impatiently. He fell on his face” (4) and when an elderly neighbor asks Jimmie, “what is it dis time?” (7) Crane makes it clear that several parties frequently start fights. “Is yer fader beatin’ yer mudder, or yer mudder beatin’ yer fader?”(7). Being drunk is one of the causes of all this conflict. Both parents are frequently drinking, and they typically just ignore each other. In fact, Crane denotes that alcohol is the way for the poor to cope with their social condition. For example, Maggie’s parents are unemployed and have little money, yet they still spent it on booze. They believe that by consuming alcohol they would be able to forget about their problems. It makes them happy for a short time. However, the only thing that drinking alcohol does is causing them to have more problems. This state of coping with the socioeconomic problems by alcohol is also shown among the people of the tenement, as this quotation shows: “Eh, Jimmie, it’s a shame,” she said. ‘Go now, like a dear, an’ buy me a can, an’ if yer mudder raises’ell all night, yehs can sleep here” (8). By this, the author does not only reveal the problem of alcohol but also its results and effect on poor children as well.

Richard Peet argues that the Marxist principle revolves around inequality and poverty which are mainly originated by capitalist societies, and that it might be carried on through generations via the environment in which each individual is born (564). Crane's choice of the Bowery as a setting demonstrates how tough and unjust life can be. He creates a harsh world for his characters in this story. Tenement dwellers have to put up with dreadful living conditions, “they entered a dark region [...] The building quivered and creaked from the weight of humanity stamping about in its bowels” (4). These sentences provide a glimpse about how people lived towards the end of the nineteenth century. It's a poorly lit environment with kids playing in the mud. It does not smell nice, and the reader can only hear the creaking

and noise of the environment from reading the sentences. Poverty is unavoidable in their surroundings.

In chapters four and five, Crane shows how Jimmie's way of life is influenced by his family, "He never conceived a respect from the world, because he had begun with no idols that it had smashed", he adds: "he stumbled upstairs late at night, as his father had done before him" (11-14). Young Jimmie is shown to be getting involved in deadly conflicts from the novel's very first scene. It makes no difference to him whether his opponents are friends or rivals; "He menaced mankind at the intersections of streets" (11), all that he wants to do is to fight. It demonstrates how difficult it is for those born into poverty to obtain an ordered life with an education and earn a reasonable salary. Both parental education and family income have a significant impact on children's educational achievement. In the story, the character Jimmie is born into a low-income household with illiterate parents, and he grows up to be low-income and uneducated. He also grows up to hate the upper-class people, "He maintained a belligerent attitude towards all well-dressed men" (Crane 11).

In the tale, the middle class and the lower class are quite similar but there are some key differences. The jobs for middle-class workers are far more important than the lower-class workers. Pete, for instance, is a bartender who earns far more than Jimmie who becomes a truck driver (Crane 5). Working as a bartender and earning more money helps Pete to maintain his middle-class position. Pete is dressed well and occasionally seen in places like museums and theaters, in contrast to Jimmie and Maggie. Pete's ability to afford the luxurious life allows him to show off about his position and power, for example in this passage: "d' boss, he comes in after, an' he says: "Pete, yehs done jes' right! Yeh've gotta keep order, an' it's all right." See?" (Crane16). He continues "Dat bloke was a dandy," said Pete, in conclusion, 'but he hadn' oughta made no trouble. Dat's what I says t' dem: "Don' come in here an' make no trouble," (16). In addition to that, Pete's manners of speaking and behaving

are more courteous than Jimmie's, as this passage shows: "His mannerisms stamped him as a man who had a correct sense of his personal superiority" (15).

Considering the character of Maggie who "blossomed in a mud puddle" (Crane 14) this didn't affect her the way it affected the other characters. In fact, she "grew to be a most rare and wonderful production of a tenement district, a pretty girl" (14). She grows up to make choices different from her parents. Seeing that she is raised in a poor and broken home, she is able to remain innocent despite the chaos. Maggie is oblivious to the influence of her socioeconomic status in her life. She feels she can rise to higher class, "None of the dirt of Rum Alley seemed to be in her veins" (14), Crane adds "When a child, playing and fighting with gamins in the streets, dirt disgusted her" (14). But she is unaware that she lacks the socio-cultural capacity to do so. In the novel, Maggie "observed Pete" (15). She shows interest in him and considers him a gentleman, "Maggie thought he must be a very 'elegant' bartender" (15). Therefore, Maggie sees Pete as her chance to escape poverty, to have a respectful life. However, as they start dating, she begins to become more critical about the condition of her lifestyle and everything appears to her as "dreary" and "grinding" (17).

According to Marxists, all individuals who are involved in the manufacturing process have their own set of social ties and concerns. In addition, each person is assigned to one of several groups based on comparable interests and beliefs which might vary greatly from one group to the next. Class is unique in that it does not refer to a specific person but rather to a certain job. This concept of class differences can be seen in chapter seven when Pete takes Maggie to an Orchestra in Bowery Street. This statement shows where the place of the middle class stands:

The vast crowd had an air throughout of having just quitted labour. Men with calloused hands, and attired in garments that showed the wear of an endless drudging

for a living, smoked their pipes contentedly and spent five, ten, or perhaps fifteen cents for beer. [...] Quiet Germans, with maybe their wives and two or three children, sat listening to the music, with the expression of happy cows. An occasional party of sailors from a warship, their faces pictures of sturdy health, spent the earlier hours of the evening at the small round tables. Very infrequent tipsy men, swollen with the value of their opinion, engaged their companions in earnest and confidential conversation. (Crane 19)

The hall is crowded with working-class clients, some with families, along with a few servers carrying trays of beer and making change. Small boys sell a cake to the crowd, while the smoke from the men's pipes hangs in the air. Since Marx explains that the proletariat are proprietors of labor power and only owners of labor power with no other resources but their hands, bodies, and minds, these employees lack property. So, they must find the labor for an employer to live and provide an income for themselves and their family. From this passage, we can understand the difference between the social condition of Maggie's family who is jobless, and the working-class people. Those who are unable to find work in the factories typically turn to drink and do not live a long or healthy life like Maggie's father.

After going to the theater, Maggie becomes critical of her way of clothing and behavior as she "began to note with more interest the well-dressed women she met on the avenues. She envied elegance and soft palms" (Crane 22). The following passage indicates the desire of Maggie to belong to the high-class:

Maggie always departed with raised spirits from these melodramas. She rejoiced at the way in which the poor and virtuous eventually overcame the wealthy and wicked. The theater made her think. She wondered if the culture and refinement she had seen imitated, perhaps grotesquely, by the heroine on

the stage, could be acquired by a girl who lived in a tenement house and worked in a shirt factory. (Crane 25)

During the Industrial Revolution, the United States economic elites established their social and political power due to the result of the country's fast-growing economy which increased their wealth and allowed for the development of unique social and cultural traits among different economic groupings. During that time men wore suits or other expensive clothes, while women wore exquisite dresses. In the novella, Maggie tries to dress prettier and make her house look finer, but it doesn't work. Despite her attempts, Maggie lacks the tastes and learned abilities of a middle-class lady. Thus, she is not accepted in that class.

In *MGS*, Crane develops a keen understanding of the lives of New York City's working class. He depicts the hardships and bleakness of life of the lower class in America during the Industrial Revolution. Moreover, social conflict is reflected in *MGS* through violence, injustice, and poverty. The enormous divide between the rich and the poor is formed by industrialization and urbanization in the United States. This phenomenon is also observed among the British society's citizens and which has been the center of interest of many writers such as Bronte.

In *JE*, Bronte demonstrates that society is made up of three classes: upper, middle, and lower. The Reed family and Mr. Rochester symbolize the upper class or affluence, whereas laborers such as Jane, and her friend Helen represent the lower class or the poor. Consequently, the characteristics of the Marxist social conflicts are well-presented.

The unjust and repressive character of hierarchy is first depicted in the home space at Gateshead Hall where the protagonist Jane is punished for being outspoken and free-spirited. The conflict between Jane and her cousin John Reed highlights this, "He bullied and punished me; not two or three times in the week, nor once or twice in the day, but continually" (Bronte

12). In fact, Jane's initial struggle begins when her uncle dies. Her aunt Mrs. Reed and her children treat her as a person of the lower class; always criticizing, neglecting, abusing, and bullying her. Additionally, Bronte goes further by describing some physical abuse as well which can be seen in the character of John Reed's in the following example: "He ran headlong at me: I felt him grasp my hair and my shoulder: he had closed with a desperate thing. I really saw in him a tyrant, a murderer" (13).

The portrayal of John's cruel and dominating personality represents capitalist's most oppressive aspects. This is seen in a specific exchange in which John asserts himself to be the owner of the house when he said: "Say, What do you want, Master Reed?" (Bronte 12). Jane's aggression is something John had to deal with regularly, and it has become a habit for him. He is cruel to his mother and sisters, and he despises Jane, "John had not much affection for his mother and sisters, and an antipathy to me" (12). He torments Jane so much that she has horrific sensations whenever he comes close to her.

Bronte refers to how the bourgeoisie mistreat the lower class. As Marxists explain, it is not only social but also political. They argue that the capitalists oppress the members of the working class (Jessop 3). We can see that in John's constant reminders for Jane that she is an orphan and a Reed family-dependent, reinforces in her the belief that to be without a class is to be without value. He makes Jane afraid by reminding her that he is the superior being, for example when saying to her: "You have no business to take our books; you are a dependent, mamma says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentlemens' children like us" (Bronte 13). This quote demonstrates John's dominance and authority over Jane. Words like "dependent," "no money," "none," and "beg" are used in his expression to refer to Jane's attributed lower-class status.

Jane's ambiguous position in society is immediately apparent in the novel's first chapters. Jane, a poor orphan who lives with her relatives, is alienated from them. According to Marx, alienation is a fundamental term in the interpretations of labor and capitalism political economy. Alienation can refer to capitalists' exclusive appropriation of wealth or the misery experienced by the proletariat (qtd. in Marcus 208). Thus, Jane is always reminded of her position and situation in the family by more than just the Reed family members as this passage demonstrates: "Be seated somewhere; and until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent" (9-10). Also when Jane was locked in the red room by Mrs. Reed as a punishment for fighting with John, a servant called, Miss Abbot, describes Jane as "less than a servant" (15) and that because she does not work or pay for her room and board.

The author uses Jane's isolation to show how shallow society's standards are, and how a person's social status dictates how people lived their lives during the Victorian era. Jane is rejected by society on several occasions and in various ways. She is considered as a nuisance. Bessie, another servant in the Reed family house, says that Jane should be grateful to God for the Reeds when she says:

"you ought to be aware, Miss, that you are under obligations to Mrs. Reed: she keeps you: if she were to turn you off, you would have to go to the poor-house [...] And you ought not to think yourself on an equality with the Misses Reed and Master Reed, [...] They will have a great deal of mon-ey, and you will have none: it is your place to be humble and to make yourself agreeable to them." (Bronte 16)

Actually, Jane's social status illustrates how the rich and the poor are treated differently. Those who are wealthy see themselves to be much superior and deserving more. Because she is an orphan and has a little fortune, Jane is constantly oppressed and not respected by the members of her family.

Social struggle can also be found in the novel at Lowood School where Jane makes acquaintances with several poor girls, living in a horrific environment. Life at school is harsh and miserable, the girls suffer from cold rooms, poor meals, and clothing as shown in this passage, “Our clothing was insufficient to protect us from the severe cold: we had no boots” (Bronte 70) she adds, “the breakfast was so ill-prepared” (73). The author managed to depict hierarchical power not only through the character of John Reed but also through Mr. Brocklehurst, and Mr. Rochester. Mrs. Brocklehurst is a cruel and vindictive headmaster. He enjoys making the girls tremble in his presence. He likes his power and enjoys imposing punishment. John is replaced by Mr. Brocklehurst as the male authority figure over Jane. She asserts: “I disliked Mr. Brocklehurst; and I was not alone in the feeling. He is a harsh man; at once pompous and meddling he cut off our hair; and for economy’s sake bought us bad needles and thread, with which we could hardly sew” (Bronte 144).

Mr. Brocklehurst is a religious abuser who is prejudiced against the lower classes while living in luxury and misbehaving the girls at Lowood in order to make them aware of their class and gender boundaries of Victorian England. He is constantly accusing Jane of being irresponsible and careless, treating her as a non-human being (77). Thus, he orders her to stand on a stool while he informs the school that she is a liar, consequently, he prohibits the other students to speak to her as this passage explains:

“My dear children,” pursued the black marble clergyman, with pathos, “this is a sad, a melancholy occasion; for it becomes my duty to warn you, that this girl, who might be one of God’s own lambs, is a little castaway: not a member of the true flock, but evidently an interloper and an alien. You must be on your guard against her; you must shun her example; if necessary, avoid her company, exclude her from your sports, and shut her out from your converse. Teachers, you must watch her: keep your eyes on her movements, weigh well her words, scrutinize her actions, punish her body to save her

soul: if, indeed, such salvation be possible, for (my tongue falters while I tell it) this girl, this child, the native of a Christian land, worse than many a little heathen who says its prayers to Brahma and kneels before Juggernaut — this girl is — a liar!” (Bronte 77-78)

The Victorian era was a time of great prosperity for the rich middle class. People in the middle class owned and managed enormous economic empires. Bronte shows Mr. Brocklehurst as a figure who represents the middle class during the Victorian age. He owns his own means of production and exerts his power and dominance over the poor and the proletariat as the headmaster of the school. In addition to that, the author illustrates how the view of lifestyle differs depending on the social status such as clothing through Mr. Brocklehurst, and which is shown in the following quote: “I have a Master to serve whose kingdom is not of this world: my mission is to mortify in these girls the lusts of the flesh; to teach them to clothe themselves with shame-facedness and sobriety, not with braided hair and costly apparel” (Bronte 75).

Lower-class women were expected to be housewives and provide comfort to their husbands during the nineteenth century. Without a heritage or position, a single woman had little chance of succeeding in life and could only hope to find a spouse. The poor had no money and no access to education during the times or get a job. Jane's chances for the future after leaving Lowood School were quite restricted because she comes from a poor household. Because of her socioeconomic standing, she can either work as a servant or a governess. Moreover, Bronte displays how various socioeconomic classes choose spouses in different ways. Jane is depicted by Bronte as a middle-class woman who works for the wealthy landowner Mr. Rochester as a governess which represents Marx's thought that workers are compelled to sell their labor time to capitalists in order to live.

Money or fortune has a significant part in the tale which explains Jane's suppression of her feelings for Mr. Rochester, and her decision to draw herself from him because of their different social position when she fell in love with him, thinking that he felt the same way. The class difference is an obstacle for any possibilities of love between Jane and Mr. Rochester. It is a relationship between a simple governess and a wealthy gentleman which would be disliked by the class-based society. The following statement asserts the fact:

“You have nothing to do with the master of Thornfield, further than to receive the salary he gives you for teaching his protégée, and to be grateful for such respectful and kind treatment as, if you do your duty, you have a right to expect at his hands. Be sure that is the only tie he seriously acknowledges between you and him; so don't make him the object of your fine feelings, your raptures, agonies, and so forth. He is not of your order: keep to your caste.” (Bronte 188)

Throughout the novel, Jane is confronted with the strict distinction between middle and upper class in Thornfield that is reflected in Rochester's statements when he said to her: “Miss Eyre, draw your chair still a little farther forward: you are yet too far back; I cannot see you without disturbing my position in the comfortable chair, which I have no mind to do” (Bronte 152). These words describe the relationship between the master and the servant. Furthermore, Bronte shows how marriage is based on social status. It is said in the narrative that Jane's father was poor, but her mother came from a wealthy family. Jane's grandfather was against their marriage due to the differences in social position which can be highlighted through this passage: “that my father had been a poor clergyman; that my mother had married him against the wishes of her friends, who considered the match beneath her; that my grandfather Reed was so irritated at her disobedience, he cut her off without a shilling” (Bronte 31).

Bronte attempted to highlight the resulting poverty, alienation, oppression, and the strict social class hierarchy in Victorian England as a result of the Industrial Revolution that took place in the nineteenth century. By that time the British society was going through profound changes. Through Jane's character, Bronte expressed her criticism of Victorian values.

## **2. Economic Power in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *Jane Eyre***

According to Marx, capitalism is a historically unique form of production. It has become the dominant mode of production. For him, the division between owners of the means of production and non-owners of the means of production, i.e. bourgeois and laborer is the most important feature of capitalism (Ilegbinosa 1).

We cannot talk about capitalism without referring to poverty. In major cities, poverty reflected the core of the Industrial Revolution's tremendous expansion and technical advancement in the 1890s. As a result, factories were opening up with plenty of jobs for unskilled workers. The Bowery is described as a city of low-income people where everything is contaminated and numerous crimes occur. Crane describes the condition of slum-dwelling Americans in the 1890s claiming that poor laborers will never be able to escape their socioeconomic status.

Through *MGS*, Crane depicts the ruthless life of the working class in America during the Industrial Revolution. Those who were unable to find work in the factories typically turned to drink and did not live a long or healthy life as demonstrated through the characters of Maggie's parents: "During the evening he had been standing against a bar drinking whiskies, and declaring to all comers confidentially: 'My home reg'lar livin' hell! Why do I come an' drin' whisk' here thish way? 'Cause home reg'lar livin' hell!'" (8).

Numerous families and men during the times ended up like Maggie's father, a lifeless shell of a man who would do anything for another drink, the following passage shows the hopeless destitute father who cares less about the way of getting another drink even by stealing:

‘Give me deh can. See?’ said the man.

‘Ah come off! I got dis can fer dat ol’ woman, an’ it ‘ud be dirt the swipe it. See?’ cried Jimmie.

The father wrenched the pail from the urchin. He grasped it in both hand and lifted it to his mouth. He glued his lips to the under edge and tilted his head. His throat swelled until it seemed to grow near his chin. There was a tremendous gulping movement and the beer was gone. (Crane 8)

Maggie's father is crushed by both society and his wife. He frequently goes to the local bar to drink away his sorrows, or he vents his rage on his children, “He hit his son on the head with the empty pail” (8) Crane adds, “His parent kicked him” (3).

Purchasing power is an important aspect of economic power. This later is defined as the capacity of an individual to enhance their lifestyle quality. Countries, businesses, and people can gain economic influence through growing their incomes and therefore increasing their wealth. As a result, they can buy more and better goods and services to fulfill their requirements. In the novel, Mr. Johnson is depicted as a figure that is unable to afford his family a good financial standard of living, meaning he has no economic power.

Crane portrays the Johnson family and living situation as quite dysfunctional. Crane used the Bowery as a setting making reference to a real neighborhood in New York City. His choice of the Bowery demonstrates how harsh and cruel life truly is during that time for the poor. He depicts his characters in a pitiless environment where poverty is unavoidable. Crane

hints to the Irish immigrants who moved to America hoping for a steady life but ended up destitute due to the effect of the Industrial Revolution. Throughout history, immigration has had a significant influence on how many people live and survive. The United States of America is a country of immigrants, and many immigrants move there in search of a better life. Thus, through Maggie's family, Crane shows that this is not the case for everyone.

Many immigrants who travel to the United States of America are obliged to take multiple jobs to make a living. Many people are forced to work in deplorable conditions in order to survive. We can illustrate this through the character of Jimmie for example. After the death of his father, he became the head figure of his family and "felt obliged to work" (Crane 11) after spending "some red years without laboring" (10). Some people were fortunate enough to obtain a steady job and make a living in America without having to live in poverty. Crane highlights this through Pete's character. As a middle-class figure, Pete was able to obtain a regular job as a bartender and afford himself quite good living standards. Due to his economic power, Pete wears fine clothing, "he wore a different suit each time" (Crane 18), and could spend much time in theaters and museums enjoying his life.

As the story goes on, the character of Maggie is shown as weak and reliant on others. This weakness exemplifies the notion of economic power in the fact that Maggie chooses to count on others to survive. Throughout the story, Maggie becomes totally dependent on her family and Pete. She is shown as being dependent on her family in the first five chapters. She looked up to her elder brother, Jimmy, as a father figure after the death of her father. She counted on her parents in feeding and sheltering her in addition to Jimmy. To some extent, this conduct was expected of her and other poor children for they are supposed to be taken care of by their family until they're grown-ups. At some point in the story, her brother says to her: "Mag, I'll tell yeh dis! See? Yeh've edder got t' go on d' toif er go t' work!' Whereupon she went to work" (Crane 14).

Furthermore, Crane shows that Maggie's reliance on Pete is entirely voluntary. For example, "From her eyes had been plucked all look of self-reliance. She leaned with a dependent air toward her companion" (36). Maggie considers Pete as a potential husband. He provides her with food, and shelters. This dependence leads to Crane's concept of economic power. The economic impact of the Industrial Revolution pushed most of the poor women to rely on a patriarchal institution like marriage. Ultimately, Maggie hopes to receive financial stability from Pete: "He pressed her arm with an air of reassuring proprietorship" (36). She believes that Pete will take care of her in every way.

Marxists argue that the only way to restore people's power is to possess the means of production (Nigam 3). Eventually, Maggie has no choice but to become independent when her attempt to be dependent on her family and Pete fails: "Oh, go to hell!" cried he. He slammed the door furiously and returned, with an air of relief, to his respectability. [...] Maggie went away" (Crane 49).

Maggie's incapacity to operate on her own drives her to prostitution: "She passed more glittering avenues and went into darker blocks" (51). She is pushed into unfortunate circumstances by poverty and loneliness. All of these events lead and contribute to her death (51). Crane depicts the protagonist, Maggie, as a part of the historical period's impact on people during the nineteenth century.

Similar to the American society, the Victorian era is also remembered for bringing about significant changes in social life. Britain grew into a worldwide empire, bringing with it huge sums of money from the colonies. With the country's industrialization blooming, the middle class discovered economic prospects, while a new working class emerged, fighting for job stability and good living standards. In the 19th century, the English society was based on wealth and social status. During this period, class hierarchy and gender were mostly in the

spotlight. So through *JE*, Bronte shows the protagonist Jane struggling for independence from economic oppression. Jane learns that money brings power, and power brings action. The novel represents the Marxist nature which bases life on socioeconomic status rather than ideology.

*JE* appears to be a love story of a smart young woman Jane in search of happiness while maintaining her independent spirit. However, as she seeks financial and social independence, she draws on major problems of class hierarchies and economic conflicts that impacted Britain overall. Bronte's narrative can refer to political, social, and economic issues that trouble the times.

Economic forces are first portrayed by Mrs. Reed and her son John Reed. Both characters belong to the rich middle class for inheriting money from the deceased John Reed while Jane represents the lower class for being an orphan child with no economic income. Due to this, Jane's life in Reed's family is full of misery and oppression. They use her social position to ignore her and mistreat her. We can notice this in the story when the family gathers around the fireside in the drawing-room, Jane is sitting alone, alienated from them because they regard her as an orphan with no status and no possessions. She states:

I was a discord in Gateshead Hall: I was like nobody there; I had nothing in a harmony with Mrs. Reed, her children, or her chosen vassalage. If they did not love me, in fact, as little did I love them. They were not bound to regard with affection a thing that could not sympathise with one amongst them; a heteroge-neous thing, opposed to them in temperament; in capacity, in propensities; a useless thing, incapable of serving their inter-est, or adding to their pleasure; a noxious thing, cherishing the germs of indignation at their treatment, of contempt of their judgment.

(Bronte 19)

Bronte describes Mrs. Reed as a person of higher status, reflecting some of the choices, actions, and power that came with it, including hierarchical attitudes of Victorian England. Mrs. Reed's attitude toward Jane can be seen as a reaction to Jane's lack of education, socialization, and money. Jane is not included or invited during the Reeds dinner parties as she declares in the following extract: "Christmas and New Year had been celebrated at Gateshead with the usual festive cheer; presents had been interchanged, dinners and evening parties given. From every enjoyment I was, of course, excluded" (33-34).

Mrs. Reed makes it clear about who Jane is and where she fits in the family, indicating that Jane's social position separates her from them. Despite the harsh conditions Jane is going through with her family because of her economic position, she does not wish to belong to the poor. This statement can be highlighted when she replies to Mr. Lloyd by saying: "I should not like to belong to poor people" (29).

Economic position had a significant role during the Victorian era. The family a person belongs to has a strong importance. Those with strong economic position were mainly born in a fine household enjoy a prosperous life while the others are in an extremely difficult financial situation as a result of their economic situation. Bronte expresses this through Lowood School, which is an institution that consists of educating poor orphaned children who have no economic incomes:

"Can you tell me what the writing on that stone over the door means? What is Lowood institution?"

"It is partly a charity-school. You and I, and all the rest of us are charity-children. I suppose you are an orphan."

"[...] this is called an Institution for educating orphans." (Bronte 58)

Only a small amount of England's population during the nineteenth century was from the middle and upper classes. Between these two categories and the proletariat, there was a huge division. The top class, or aristocracy, consisted of nobles and clergymen. Middle-class families were regarded as rich since they generally held professional jobs. Those who were lucky to be born into the wealthy elite were rarely required to do physical labor. Instead, they were landowners who employed lower-class people to work for them ("Social Life in Victorian England"). Bronte demonstrates this through Mr. Rochester's character, a well-known respected member of the bourgeoisie elites who owns a huge mansion at Thornfield and has many servants who work for him, among them the governess Jane. He is described in the following extract:

"Mr. Rochester!" I exclaimed. "Who is he?"

"The owner of Thornfield," she responded quietly. (117)

"[...] the family have always been respected here. Almost all the land in this neighborhood, as far as you can see, has belonged to the Rochesters time out of mind."  
(123)

During her life, Jane goes through different economic stages, from being a poor orphan until she reaches economic stability. After Lowood School, she had to achieve economic independence and become a governess at Thornfield for Mr. Rochester. Jane believes that through her work as a governess she would shift her social class and earn some economic independence. Her ambition is "to save money enough" out of her "earnings to set up a school some day in a little house rented" by herself (227). This quotation reflects Jane's ambition, hope, and desire for independence to accomplish her goals rather than being dependent on Mr. Rochester's wealth like Miss Ingram who is attracted to him solely because of his social position. In fact, Jane believes that her employment as a governess is a legal

labor in exchange for Rochester's money and accepts nothing more, which is evident in her following statement:

“I only want an easy mind, sir; not crushed by crowded obligations. Do you remember what you said of Celine Va-rens?—of the diamonds, the cashmeres you gave her? I will not be your English Celine Varens. I shall continue to act as Adele’s governess; by that I shall earn my board and lodging, and thirty pounds a year besides. I’ll finish my own wardrobe out of that money, and you shall give me nothing but—” (Bronte 308)

Jane expresses her independence by rejecting Rochester's expensive presents even after marriage. When discussing marriage in Victorian society wealth and status are first taken into account while love comes last or is never considered. However, Jane’s dream is to marry Mr. Rochester for love and not to become wealthy to avoid a dependent position. Jane decides to leave Mr. Rochester to purchase her independence instead of being his mistress after he remarks to her that: “Hiring a mistress is the next worse thing to buying a slave: both are often by nature, and always by position, inferior: and to live familiarly with inferiors is degrading” (Bronte 356).

Bronte demonstrates that Jane's choice not to become Rochester’s mistress is related to economic reasons. She fears being rejected and treated as inferior because of her social position. Once she left Thornfield, she had nothing but twenty shillings with her, and for a moment she thought about the “homeless wandering” and what she had “left” (367). However, she is determined to pursue her independence. On her journey, Jane faces many difficulties for she becomes an absolute “destitute” (669). She is completely reliant on herself, wandering in the streets hopelessly seeking a job, “what I begged was employment” (376) but could not find any; consequently she becomes a beggar and she is left without financial power. Jane's narrative reflects the realities of poor women throughout the Industrial

Revolution; who were more concerned with their survival. However, Jane's situation changes dramatically once more when she is taken in by St. John River's who finds her a job as a schoolmistress in a tiny village (405). She says: "[...] compared with that of a governess in a rich house, it was independent" (405) Jane is quite satisfied with her new job and feels like a free, honest, and independent mistress.

Throughout the story, Jane inherits a huge amount of money from her uncle, and becomes now financially independent: "I am independent, sir, as well as rich: I am my own mistress"(496). By receiving this money, she becomes self-sufficient; she has her wealth and can decide what she wishes. She desires to have control over her own life. This enables her to choose to marry Rochester purely for love, rather than marrying him and becoming financially dependent on him. *Jane considers herself as Rochester's equal. Her independence is emphasized by the use of the pronoun "I" which means that nobody can tell her what to do because she is her own master.*

Bronte challenges the protocol of the 19<sup>th</sup> century period; she describes the character of Jane as a rebellious woman who fights against Victorian norms. Jane condemns the conventions of the period and rises up from the bottom to the top of the class ladder by overcoming the capitalist cruel system.

### **3. Materialism in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *Jane Eyre***

Considering the term "Materialism", there are many different definitions and uses of this word. Outside of Marx's materialism, the word itself means an excessive obsession with materials such as possessions and money. However in the Marxist theory, According to Marx, the notion of materialism explains how individuals interact with society. Furthermore, Marx and Engels assert that thoughts could emerge only as products and reflections of material surroundings (qtd. in Conforth 14-25).

The notion of materialism can be found in Crane's *MGS* that tells the story of a young lady who becomes a prostitute in the late 1800s. Crane introduces this tale to bring awareness of the dreary circumstances that exist in industrialized areas of America. Industrialization made manufacturing more tolerable, but it had also made living in many urban centers extremely unlivable. Because of the Industrial Revolution, cities such as New York were transformed and expanded.

During the nineteenth century, cities in the United States expanded at a rapid pace and the majority of its population increased due to the immigrants who came across the world among them the Irish. Because of the large number of individuals in the city, many immigrants lived in rented housing or slums. Marx argued that "if man is shaped by his surrounding, his surrounding must be human" (qtd. in Sowell 31). Through the description of the Bowery lifestyle Crane managed to demonstrate the negative effects of the Industrial Revolution by using the Bowery as a setting with a vivid description of the neighborhood in his statement "Eventually they entered a dark region" (4) he continues, "A wind of early autumn raised yellow dust from cobbles and swirled it against a hundred windows" (4). Here Crane narrates how poorly and polluted the environment of the Bowery is.

Crane describes the Bowery as an unhappy place where "there were buckets, brooms, rags and bottles" (4). In fact, the author is obviously criticizing the late-nineteenth-century atmosphere. Additionally, the building process of cheap and shoddy row housing for working-class people was a common feature of industrial urban areas. Cities have been dramatically changed as a result of industrial expansion and population increase.

For Marxists, "a man's behavior is determined, even though unconsciously, by his relationship to the means of production" (Hodges 16). Accordingly, Crane tried to depict the mental influences of slums which are continuously affecting the people. For, people's attitudes

and behaviors are shaped by their surroundings. The Bowery of New York City for example contributes to the degradation of moral standards and shapes lives which can be seen in each member of the Johnson family. In the first chapter, Jimmie is described as an aggressive child fighting against the neighbor children Devil's Row (Crane 1). Then Mr. Johnson is shown to be violent toward his children as it is displayed in this extract: "Jimmie arose painfully from the ground and confronting his father began to curse him. His parent kicked him. 'Come home, now', he cried, 'an' stop yer jawin', er I'll lam the everlasting head off yehs" (3).

At home, the character of Mary Johnson is described by the writer as alcoholic and aggressive with her kids, "She threw herself upon Jimmie [...] The woman's operations on the urchin instantly increased in violence" (5) as well as toward her husband "The woman screamed, and shook her fists before her husband's eyes" (6). Crane goes further on describing the attitudes of the neighbors when he writes:

Once, when a lady had dropped her purse on the sidewalk, the gnarled woman had grabbed it and smuggled it with great dexterity beneath her cloak. When she was arrested she had cursed the lady into a partial swoon, and with her aged limbs, twisted from rheumatism had kicked the breath out of a huge policeman whose conduct upon that occasion she referred to when she said, 'The police, damn em!' (8)

Through his characters Crane presents the attitudes and the vulgarity of the language of the poor immigrant inhabitant in the slums. Their language shows how the Bowery's bad and harsh environment influences them by representing the reality of lower-class people. From their behavior and language, we can understand that it expresses a genuine feeling of pain and misery. This shows how people are shaped accordingly to their surroundings.

The lower class became a victim of their materialistic world because of industrial advancement that was not available to everyone. Poor people were struggling to get food and

keep their lives due to the unfair distribution of fortunes. New York's Bowery life reflected the history of America during the nineteenth century which was characterized by an atmosphere of poverty, injustice, violence, and intolerance. The historical background of America during this period made the mood of the poor pessimistic. Their environment pushed them to seek comfort by drinking alcohol which influenced their psyche and boost their violent behavior, the following passage displays the violent behavior of Mary:

The mother's massive shoulders heaved with anger. Grasping the urchin by the neck and shoulder she shook him until he rattled. She dragged him to an unholy sink, and, soaking a rag in water, began to scrub his lacerated face with it. Jimmie screamed in pain and tried to twist his shoulders out of the clasp of the huge arms. (Crane 5)

During that time, alcohol was often used as a pain consolation, thirst appeaser, and for social interactions by both the lower class and middle class. To support this idea this following extract from the novel attests the fact:

The vast crowd had an air throughout oh having just quitted labour. Men with calloused hands, and attired in garments that showed the wear of an endless drudging for a living smoked their pipes content-edly and spent five, ten, or perhaps fifteen cents for beers. (Crane 19)

Jimmie's growing up in a poor, violent and combative environment shapes his personality. He becomes a cold-hearted and unsympathetic individual. He is surrounded by hatred and ignorance, he frequently goes to the bar and drinks to forget the reality. As a matter of fact, Jimmie is forced to be harsh in order to survive the urban poverty and the inescapable cruelty of the world.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, America experienced a lot of problems including, poverty, the creation of slums, violence, and prostitution. The characters in *MGS* are locked in their class

with no way out. Poverty and the slums life have shaped their behaviors and actions. In chapter five, Maggie is described as a pretty girl who “blossomed in a mud puddle” (14). Contrary to her brother and parents, Maggie is not influenced by the cruelty and the dirt of Rum Alley (14). While growing up she is able to stay innocent and hopeful for a better life outside the Bowery. However, her life is strongly and quickly turned upside down when she meets Pete the “elegant bartender” who gives her a glance of the upper-class lifestyle by taking her to theaters and museums. Thus, she is subject to the upper class environment (15-24). Maggie believes that Pete would be her way of escaping the slum life as her thoughts about her poor condition grow more cynical and bleak.

The museums and theaters along with Pete’s economic conditions shape Maggie’s way of viewing life and help in changing her behavior. These material functions determine the evolution of the protagonist who starts to work hard to improve herself. Being exposed to the middle-class way of dressing, behaving along with the theater’s melodramas makes her think about the possibility of overcoming the low life and being accepted among the high middle class (Crane 25). So, Maggie begins to hate all her dresses, and she envies elegance exactly like the well-dressed women she observes on the streets as she sees them “to be allies of vast importance of women” (22). All these factors lead Maggie to be reliant on Pete. However, her relationship with him makes her look like a disgrace in the eyes of her family and all along with the neighborhood. Maggie’s mother and brother accuse Jimmie of being a bad influence on her and changing her, “Anybody what had eyes could see dat dere was somethin’ wrong wid dat girl. I didn’t like her actions” (31).

Despite her hardest efforts to change her circumstances by marrying Pete, Maggie is subject to this environment which influences the outcome of her life. Whilst a family should look out for each other no matter the circumstances, Maggie is abandoned by her mother and brother. They show no sympathy toward her, instead, they act with savageness and hatred “Ah

don't bodder me!' he said with savageness of a man whose life is pestered" (Crane 45). As for Pete, he felt a relief once he abandoned Maggie, freeing him from being responsible of her "Oh, go to hell!" cried he. He slammed the door furiously and returned, with an air of relief" (49). Pete does not believe that he ruined Maggie, but holds her family responsible. For that, due to these circumstances, Maggie is left all alone, wandering through the streets and has no other option but to become a prostitute. She uses her sexuality to advance her social standing for the sake of her survival. Eventually, Maggie succumbs to suicide attempts as a result of her terrible living standards. Maggie's terrible ending is influenced by social and economic factors. She is a victim of violence, abuse, and abandonment.

Materialism is defined as the explanation of what happens in the material world from the standpoint of the material world. The materialist approach to describing natural processes is looking into the processes themselves to figure out how they work (Cornforth 14). Through the short story of *MGS*, Crane analyzes his characters as beings that are shaped, influenced, and distorted by the capitalist material system.

As we have already seen, materialism studies the impact of social development based on material, history, economic conditions, and how social phenomena are explained according to their position and function in society. In general, materialism is a theory that regards all of humanity and the environment as a physical aspect (Sowell 30). As a matter of fact, a person's class is established by his or her possession of different proportions of productive forces. In other words, classes are determined according to their material relationships (Priya). Thus, in her book *JE*, Bronte succeeded to reveal how society is established and developed according to the material surrounding.

Throughout one's life, one encounters a myriad of important and unforgettable figures. In the novel, *Jane Eyre* is a girl whose life is changed and shaped by a variety of

different people and events. Starting with the death of her parents which made her live a different life full of bad and some of good experiences which through time have shaped her personality and social development. During the Elizabethan era, family life was represented as perfect. However, when social inequality grew more prominent, it became like a distant dream for the poor citizen. The period was marked by the social and economic disorder.

With the introduction of the Reed Family in the novel, Bronte gives a broad picture of the rich middle-class family's behaviors and attitudes based on their material power. Aunt Reed, for example, is a hypocrite and a figure of injustice. She always punishes Jane instead of her son indicating that Jane is punished because of her inferiority. Mr. Reed's mistreatment is illustrated by these quotations from the novel: "Mrs. Reed was blind and deaf on the subject: she never saw him strike or heard him abuse me, though he did both now and then in her very presence" (12). Through the Reed family, Bronte presents how individuals are separated into several social classes.

Jane's childhood in Gateshead has a negative impact on her. She never enjoyed living with her aunt and cousins. She is always isolated from them and becomes cold-hearted due to her aunt's and cousin's brutal treatment. Even though she was harshly assaulted, Jane always stands up for what she believes in her statement: "I am not deceitful: if I were, I should say I loved you; but I declare I do not love you: I dislike you the worst of anybody in the world" (Bronte 42-43).

According to the concept of Materialism, man is a product of circumstances and upbringings. Hosted by her rich family, Jane never wished to belong to poor people even if they were kind-hearted. Jane's time with the upper-class family has influenced her thoughts about the destitute as she thought of them as uneducated, rude, and grim (Bronte 29-30). She does not wish to become like the poor women she saw "nursing their children or washing their

clothes at the cottage doors of the village” (30) but she wishes to go to school. This proves the concept of historical materialism that human behavior is ultimately conditioned by material interests. Once at Lowood School, Jane stands isolated from everyone, we can deduce from this how her experiences in Gateshead shaped her personality by building walls between her and the others “As yet I had spoken to no one, nor did anybody seem to take notice of me, I stood lonely enough: but to that feeling of isolation I was accustomed; it did not oppress me much” (Bronte 57). We can understand from this passage that being alone does not bother her because she fears enduring the same treatment received by her family.

Her experiences at Lowood institution during the first days were quite different from her last days. The institution aims to educate young ladies by teaching them how to behave and to prepare them to work as teachers or governesses. We cannot decline the fact that life at the school at the beginning was not golden (70). The headmaster Mr. Brocklehurst uses a variety of cruel tactics to force the girls into obedience, the girls suffer from beatings, bad quality of food, drink, and even lack of clothing. They are emotionally and spiritually assaulted especially Jane. However, she would never exchange Lowood with all its imperfection for Gateshead (88).

After the miserable conditions, the hardships finally lessened. At School, Jane has the means of a good education. For eight years, Jane was quite happy there, she made good progress and was promoted to a higher class. She learned French and drawing, and she finally became a teacher. Jane had to learn to be proper and righteous as an adult. Her time at school taught her to be quiet and disciplined (Bronte 99). Her life at the institution had been one of “rules and systems” (100). Her experiences helped her to become a Lady. Jane sees education as the only way to reach independence for someone who does not come from a wealthy family. However, Jane’s only desire is to seek freedom. The following expression justifies her need to be free: “I desired liberty; for liberty I gasped; for liberty I uttered a prayer; it seemed

scattered on the wind then faintly blowing. I abandoned it and framed a humbler supplication. For change, stimulus. That petition, too, seemed swept off into vague space” (101).

Nevertheless, her poverty and social class could not crush her desire to achieve ethical and economic independence. Unexpectedly, she continues to develop her spirit and strengthen her beliefs on herself. Jane’s choice to leave the Institution to work as a governess in Thornfield is due to her need to improve her economic condition, and because she has “a prospect of getting a new situation where the salary would be double” (105) in contrast to what she earned at Lowood. English women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were supposed to be content with mindless occupations, while the protagonist goes against these values. Through Jane, Bronte expresses her dislike of the Victorian norms.

We should note that Marx’s materialism attempts to explain and understand the development of a society as well as human engagement with the social world (Rashid 29-30). At Thornfield, Jane encounters her wealthy master Mr. Rochester. As such, he might be the most important and influential figure to Jane. During her first weeks, Jane makes sure to “dress” herself with “care” (116) and act with correctness as she was taught to. Unlike the other characters, Mr. Rochester is the kindest and fairest towards Jane. Before him, Jane had only bad memories within her relationships with the upper-class figures such as her family and Mr. Brocklehurst. Her previous relationships have shaped her personality to fear and to be aware of her actions. The following extract from the novel *JE* attest to the fact:

The Lowood constraints still clings to you somewhat; con-trolling your features, muffling your voice, and restricting your limbs; and you fear in the presence of a man and a brother—or father, or master, or what you will—to smile too gaily, speak too freely, or move too quickly: but, in time, I think you will learn to be natural with me, as I find it impossible to be conventional with you; and then your looks and movements will have more vivacity and variety than they dare offer now. (Bronte 161)

Mr. Rochester's sympathetic approach to Jane encourages her to appreciate herself, increase her confidence, and improve her self-esteem. Jane eventually gets along with her master and they fall in love. As Donald Clarck Hodges writes in his article entitled "The Role of Classes in Historical Materialism": "It's the material mode of existence that is capable of explaining the irrationality and rationality of human behavior" (16).

Class determines what a character can and cannot accomplish, as well as how others see him or her. This is because, throughout the Victorian era, a person's social status dictated how people lived their life. Even marriage was influenced by social status since people tended to marry within their social class. Women were particularly powerless since men and their families preferred to pick a good wife based on her wealth. This is shown through Mrs. Fairfax's remark on Jane when Mr. Rochester proposes to marry her in the following extract "Gentleman in his station are not accustomed to marry their governesses" (Bronte 303). This passage proves Mrs. Fairfax's opposition to Jane's marriage to her master.

Mrs. Fairfax argues that the principles of class should be respected. Nevertheless, Mr. Rochester's character goes against these principles. The following quote shows the fact how Mr. Rochester does not care about social status "Station! Station! —your station is in my heart" (301). For this matter, Jane grows doubtful and changes her mind about getting married until she becomes independent. She believes that the only way to become equal to Mr. Rochester is by becoming rich and it would be more appropriate for her to marry him then. So, instead of marrying, Jane is determined to become self-sufficient and live her life as she wishes. Once again, we can conclude that certain principles in society arise as a consequence of certain material factors. From this, we notice how capitalism in the Victorian era has shaped the norms of society as a whole.

Hence, Bronte goes against the values and principles of the Victorian period by giving the protagonist a happy ending. The fate of Jane is not determined by the capitalist society even after all her social experiences. Bronte has made Jane a heroine who, despite all the hardships, oppression, alienation, and mistreatment, is able to overcome it all. Her poverty and social class could not crush her desire to achieve ethical and financial independence despite her living in a capitalist society. The character of Jane is described as straightforward, strong, and passionate. She always stands against her oppressors and does not succumb to her poor life. Instead, she becomes a strong independent woman. Bronte succeeded in portraying an ambitious character that fights for her freedom and contradicts Victorian values.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, we explored the analytical part of our research. First, we introduced the Marxist literary theory and discussed three of its main principles. Then, we have tried to analyze both novels *MGS* and *JE* using these principles. We attempted to examine and extract the key themes shared by both works such as social struggle, poverty, oppression, exploitation, and violence. Moreover, we studied the main characters of the two works in order to identify the capitalist influences and the social history that has shaped the authors' point of view. In the light of the Marxist principles, we first identified the different social classes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and exposed the social conflicts the proletariat are exposed to by the bourgeoisie. Then, we explored the outcomes of economic power. Finally, we highlighted the different influences and norms of the capitalist system.

## General Conclusion

The present study explored the social conflicts in Bronte's *JE* and Crane's *MGS*. Based on Karl Marx's Marxist principles, this research investigated the terrible outcomes of Industrial Capitalism on the American and British societies during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both countries underwent significant changes during that time which saw major influences and great social upheaval.

The first chapter begins with an overview of Bronte's and Crane's lives. Then, we discussed the literary influences that have inspired them in writing their literary works. It also depicted the socio-historical and political context of the periods in which both novels were written. We introduced the main impacts of the Victorian hierarchy, industrialization, and capitalism on the British Kingdom and the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and which resulted in the creation of social conflicts. Then, we provided the summary of the two novels.

The second chapter is divided into two sections. In the first part, we presented a short survey of the Marxist literary theory and some of its fundamental principles which are: social class, economic power, and materialism. Precisely, we introduced Karl Marx's major beliefs, thoughts, and critiques of capitalism. In this way, we analyzed the works by exploring these tenets on *MGS* and *JE*. The second part is situating class conflicts and struggles in *MGS* and *JE* within the framework of Marxism. Through the characters, the settings, and the events of both novels we showed how the British and American societies were divided into three major classes: the upper, the middle, and the lower class, or what Marx calls the proletariat and the capitalists. Later, we made some references to power, wealth, domination, liberation, conflict, violence, oppression, alienation, and hierarchy faced by the main protagonist Maggie Johnson and Jane Eyre. Both characters are looked down by those potentates with money and power. Those who were fortunate enough and had a good financial position enjoyed their life

fully in contrast to the ones born in a poor family. Since, money is the only source of power. Furthermore, we discussed how hierarchy determined and shaped people's psychology and fate whether by influencing them to seek power or to succumb to their reality basing our analysis on Marxist materialism.

Through the analytic reading of the novels *MGS* and *JE*, we demonstrated that the division into rich and poor classes is known to be the result of the economic growth which started to emerge with industrialized capitalism. The circumstances of both novels reflect the conditions and the hard times in the British and American societies during the 19th century. We noticed that the proletariat or people of lower rank were exploited, oppressed, and treated unequally by people of high-class status or capitalists. In *MGS*, the characters of Maggie, Jimmie, and their parents are described as weak and deeply influenced by the cruel and poor environment. Lack of financial matters pushed poor people to lose their self-esteem. As a result, drinking alcohol was their way of life. In addition to the spreading of prostitution and violence inside the family and in the streets. Crane showed how class divisions have a terrible impact on people's lives, leading them to an unfortunate fate. As for *JE*, the narrative is full of social imbalance and struggle between the protagonist Jane and other characters such as her cruel aunt Reed, cousin John, Mr. Brocklerhurst, Mrs. Blanche Ingram, and Mr. Rochester. Through these conflicts Bronte tried to criticize the effects of class division and the tragic life of lower-class people during the Victorian era. However, Jane struggled for equality, independence, identity, and wealth.

Finally, the Marxist method of analyzing a literary work which focuses on how authors represent reality through characters, settings, and events of the story leads us to the conclusion that the novels *JE* and *MGS* are strong social commentaries on the 19<sup>th</sup> century changes. Both Bronte and Crane attempted to picture and depict real life by portraying the feelings, ideas, and lifestyles of the characters from different socioeconomic classes. *JE* and

*MGS* mirror the class division, economic, and political events of capitalism, industrialization, and Victorian hierarchy.

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