

Marxist Analysis of Capitalistic Trauma and Its Impact on Moral Degeneration After Industrial Revolution

Muhammad Iqbal¹, Sreen Gul² and Abdul Rashid³

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Abstract

The study's objective is to present a Marxist interpretation of American society as it is portrayed in Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. It was never going to be published because of its eccentricity. Additionally, the story shows the seedy side of life that is full of prostitution, sexual activity, and destitution; all of these things are shown in an unflattering way. Crane's portrayal of a population of impoverished Irish immigrants living in appalling conditions is a striking example of capitalist exploitation and poverty, with low wages, filthy living conditions, and an acute need for immoral activities to survive the harsh industrial revolution era. The work serves as an example of how capitalism and the decline of moral principles are intertwined. The study employs a sociological approach to examine the miserable circumstances of the characters in the novel's social background. A Marxist analysis of the current narrative underscores the detrimental effects of capitalistic monetization, including moral degradation and the dehumanizing effects of the capitalistic economic system. In order to evaluate the core data, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive approach. The supporting data, on the other hand, were gathered from books, papers, journals, internet sites, and other sources.

Keywords: Marxist Analysis, Industrial Revolution, Moral degeneration.

Introduction

The industrial revolution is often heralded as a time of invention and advancement, but it also leaves a lasting legacy of societal issues. Amidst the clatter of machines and the clamour of commerce, the fabric of human morality seemed to fray, particularly for those caught in the gears of capitalism's relentless advance. This research paper delves into the murky depths of this moral degeneration, employing a Marxist lens to dissect the insidious relationship between capitalistic monetization and the erosion of ethical integrity. Our primary case study is Crane's poignant novel, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, a stark portrayal of a young woman's tragic descent into the abyss of urban poverty and vice.

Through a Marxist lens, we deconstruct the pernicious link between the relentless pursuit of profit and the disintegration of traditional moral values. As Lukács (2017) observed, capitalism's inherent commodification of everything, from labour to human relationships, breeds a culture of alienation and exploitation, effectively severing the threads of trust and empathy that once bound communities (Lukács, 2017). In this environment, individuals become isolated cogs in the machine of production, their moral compasses warped by the constant pressure to secure survival amidst limited opportunities (Engels, 1845).

¹Department of English, International Islamic University, Islamabad. Email: iqbalsaqi.1987@gmail.com

²English Language Instructor, University College Samtah, Jazan University, Saudi Arabia.

Email: sgani@jazanu.edu.sa

³Lecturer, Department of English, University of Layyah, Pakistan. Email: Abdulrashid@bzu.edu.pk



Maggie's tragic arc exemplifies this larger societal decay. Her vulnerability and naivety make her easy prey for the exploitative forces of capitalism, each encounter chipping away at her fragile moral foundation. We will dissect how the constant pressure to secure basic necessities, coupled with the systemic limitations placed upon working-class women; gradually erode her sense of right and wrong. The choices she makes, though often desperate attempts at survival, become stark illustrations of the moral vacuum created by the capitalist system (Marx & Engels, 1848).

Crane's masterful storytelling transcends mere individual tragedy; it compels us to confront the uncomfortable realities of progress's price tag. *Maggie* is not simply a cautionary tale of personal failings; it is a scathing indictment of a system that prioritizes profit over human dignity (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944). As we delve deeper into the tragic events of Maggie's life, we will demonstrate how the very logic of capitalism – the relentless pursuit of accumulation – breeds a moral vacuum that devours the most vulnerable members of society. Capitalistic trauma (monetization) played key role in evolution and degeneration of the United States during industrial revolution. It goes without saying that capitalism encouraged marketization which made United States an industrial powerhouse. It incentivized technological innovations. Capitalism created job opportunities for the increasing population. It also played a pivotal role in United States urbanization. It improved living standards in metropolitan cities. Capitalism enhanced USA's infrastructure in terms of transportation, communication and railway system which facilitated trade and economic development. On the other hand, capitalism brought some negative consequences including labour exploitation, child labour, income imbalance, social dislocation and the worst of all is moral degeneration. During industrial revolution brothels and street prostitution became a common employment. Moral and social codes towards prostitution were diversified i.e. in favour and against as well. It was a world where prostitutes worked in the streets of five points. "Every home was a brothel, and every brothel a hell," was a common saying of the day. There were twenty to twenty-five thousand prostitutes in that particular time. Idea of prostitution offered women more financial happiness. "They were employed as a tourist spot for immigrants, businesspeople and sailors who travelled to Manhattan" (Sanger, 2021).

This research paper is not merely an academic exercise; it is a call to action. By critically examining the impact of capitalism on our moral fabric, we hope to spark a dialogue about the true cost of progress. We believe that Crane's timeless story offers a powerful lens through which to view our own contemporary struggles with economic inequality, moral decay, and the ever-present temptation to sacrifice empathy for self-preservation. Only then can we begin to imagine and work towards a society where economic prosperity does not come at the expense of our collective humanity.

Research Objectives

- To explore the impact of the industrial revolution on moral degeneration in the selected text.
- To analyse how capitalistic trauma fostered moral degeneration in the prescribed text.
- To investigate how capitalism sacrifices moral and social ideals.

Significance of the Study

This study offers a fresh Marxist analysis of Crane's *Maggie*, enriching understanding of its social commentary and its enduring relevance to contemporary concerns about economic inequality, moral decay, and the ethical implications of unchecked capitalism. By examining Maggie's tragic descent, it illuminates the nuanced ways capitalism erodes individual and societal well-being, particularly for marginalized groups like women and the working class. This interdisciplinary approach bridges the gap between literary analysis and broader societal

issues, sparking crucial conversations and informing present and future discussions about ethical re-examination and potential avenues for societal transformation.

Theoretical Framework

This research employs a qualitative Marxist framework to investigate the complex interplay between contemporary industrial capitalism, class structure, and moral degeneration in American society. Through a nuanced analysis of *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, we deconstruct the exploitative mechanisms inherent in such systems, focusing on how the commodification of labour and alienation from one's work ethic impact the consciousness and experiences of the working class. By examining the novel's portrayal of characters caught within this web of economic disparity, we illuminate the ways in which capitalist structures not only shape class divisions but also contribute to the erosion of traditional moral values within specific social strata.

Literature Review

Crane (1893) in "Maggie: A Girl of the Streets" delves into the grimy heart of the Bowery, a desolate canvas starkly painted with the brutal realities of post-industrial revolution capitalism. Recent scholarship, wielding the scalpel of Marxist literary criticism, dissects this bleak landscape, unveiling the insidious mechanisms that grind down individuals, erode morality, and ultimately contribute to the tragic downfall of the titular Maggie. This review delves deep into the intricacies of these analyses, exploring the themes that expose the corrosive machinery powering the world of "Maggie."

The 19th century world seemed quite bleak to Crane. A culture that valued individual achievement above the welfare of the society had negative consequences for individuals in lower socioeconomic groupings, including Irish immigrants. In doing so, Crane exposed the bleak reality of immigrant life, which included things like illiteracy, verbal and physical aggressiveness, drunkenness, prostitution in the area, moral decline and particularly a strong focus on financial gain. Poor people's circumstances make them more likely to use foul language. Poverty, the growth of slums, violence and prostitution were among the most pressing problems facing 19th century American society during industrial revolution. Due to capitalism, there was a breakdown in social order, and people were unable to live happy, fulfilled lives. Crane was a realist and a staunch imitator of the era. He used metaphor, sarcasm and symbolism in order to convey the stark truth of Bowery city's poor living conditions. Because of this gloomy outlook, which believes that people cannot change their behaviour after they have been conditioned, Crane's tone remains consistently negative throughout the narrative of capitalistic representation and moral degeneration in the deck of industrial revolution.

The industrial revolution, with its profound shift towards capitalist monetization, has become a fertile ground for Marxist analysis, sparking significant debate and discussion within academic circles. Crane's "Maggie: A Girl of the Streets" functions as a discerning evaluation of the ethical repercussions stemming from the dynamics of this economic transformation. Several notable authors have explored the moral ramifications of capitalism during the industrial revolution. Charles Dickens, in his novels like "Oliver Twist" (1838) and "Hard Times," (1854) exposed the plight of the working class under the capitalist system, highlighting the moral bankruptcy of those who profited from their suffering. Similarly, Emile Zola, in "Germinal,"(1885) depicted the brutal realities of mine workers and their struggles against oppressive capitalist forces.

A great deal has been written about the American working class, with many pointing to the rise of industry, urbanization and increased immigration in the second half of the 19th century as the genesis of the class. It's important to remember that the social order is what ultimately

shapes traditions and morality and it might be skewed in the lives of the impoverished. “The conventional morality has supplanted a new sort of ethics in American culture, especially in lower – class environments. It’s a problem caused by a shortage of resources” (Gandal, 1997). Stephen Crane once said, “A man comes into this world with his own set of eyes, and he is not at all accountable for his eyesight; he is responsible only for the quality of his own honesty” (Gandal, 1997). “Their portrayal of the harsh realities faced by the underprivileged is often compassionate” (Gandal, 1987).

Marxist critics argue that Crane exposes the dehumanizing effects of capitalism, where individuals and their labor are reduced to mere commodities. The Bowery, where Maggie lives, is portrayed as a capitalist wasteland where poverty and vice are rampant. Her family struggles to survive, trapped in a cycle of debt and exploitation. Maggie is alienated from the wealthy upper class and trapped within the underclass, denied opportunities for social mobility. This alienation breeds resentment and fuels the moral decline of the underclass. Maggie’s eventual descent into prostitution is seen as a tragic consequence of capitalist exploitation. Her body becomes another commodity, further reinforcing the dehumanization of the working class. This act also critiques the patriarchal structures that perpetuate female subjugation within capitalist systems. Crane’s vivid portrayal of the Bowery emphasizes the psychological toll of poverty. Maggie and her family grapple with despair, hopelessness, and a sense of worthlessness. This contributes to their moral decline and fuels a cycle of self-destruction.

Simmel (2023) focused his attention on the detrimental impacts of modern cities and city life. This is due to the fact that the city is an artificial environment to which people are required to completely adapt. In his article titled “*The Metropolis and Mental Life*” he compares and contrasts the psychological of living in a rural setting with those of living in a city. This all credit or discredit goes to the industrial revolution which emerged as a driving force and grabbed people to conglomerated setting of metropolitan cities where moral Degeneration gushed out resultantly. It goes without saying that these industrialized hubs kindled and vitalised privatization and capitalistic monetization which impacted the lives of people socially, physically, psychologically and spiritually.

In addition, according to Simmel (2023) city life is controlled by money and time, which, as a consequence, cause people’s lives to be controlled by machines rather than humans. He further states that city is also the centre of freedom and individuality; however, this frequently leads to feelings of alienation because cities make people feel tiny and alone among a swarm of strangers. Consequently, this thing frequently leads to feelings of alienation. So, it would not be wrong to say that individuality is the creation of industrial revolution to a great extent. Under this capitalistic trauma, it can be implied that 19th century was an age of privatization and capitalization which mould the flow of the population on moral and economic grounds. Prostitution, sex, dehumanizing forces, and several other industries opened new vistas for the upcoming era.

McNamara et al. (2014) contends that throughout the 19th century, a massive body of literature emerged that was dedicated to the portrayal of real city life, as opposed to symbolic descriptions such as those found in Greek mythology. He also asserts that city literature does the best job of analysing the connection between urban settings and human behaviour. According to him, reading about cities in literature gives readers the opportunity to experience cities and city life which contributes to their comprehension of this emerging phenomenon which sabotaged the moral values in American society of 19th century. In addition, those who live in the city have evolved a more contemporary way of thinking. Therefore, during the industrial era, when many people were unfamiliar with the new city, city literature was extremely useful in depicting how city life leads to the moral degeneration of masses and what its impacts are on the psychology of the people. This was particularly useful because city life leads to a greater concentration of immorality. To round off the discussion, it cannot be denied that capitalistic monetization

changed the mental framework of the people. They become materialists during the spell of capitalism. Individualism is another capitalist force which emerged from this economic web of capital monetization and led to moral degeneration.

Every civilization is defined by its morality; if any group or individual violates these norms, the result is chaos and unrest throughout the community. And at some point, moral degradation appears. These individuals pose a greater risk to the community. A person who has lost their morality typically engages in vices such as alcoholism, unhealthy habits, and sexual behaviour. The foundation of every society and every person within a country is morality. Morality dictates the course of every civilization or individual, but moral degradation destroys our conventions and society as a whole. Moral decline directly affects both individuals and groups. Moral decay can never lead to a capable country, tolerance, or healthy lifestyles. It causes injustice and inequality for both the person and our community. When deceit, lying, and moral decay are prevalent in a society, it erodes the foundation of that civilization. The moral decay seen in "Maggie: A Girl of the Streets" represents the lower classes of the 19th century.

Zheng (2017) argues that moral degeneration is the root cause of the loss or deterioration of the moral and ethical norms that underpin our society's customs. People tend to tolerate, welcome, and even renormalize ethical behaviours and penetration in a society when moral deterioration is taking place. Zheng goes on to say that a kind of shapelessness or deteriorating morals creates fertile ground for the growth of demoralized market preparation. It's clear from this that moral decay affects all facets of human existence and is not limited to cultural behaviour or financial attitudes. According to moral philosophy, humans decide what is right and wrong in their day-to-day decisions and acts. Standards like those found in a code of ethics are examples of ethical behaviour (Stuebs et al., 2021).

Crane (1893) work of "Maggie, A girl on the Streets" is regarded as a ground-breaking work of American naturalism. Its portrayal of a hostile universe in contrast to the civilized inhabitants foreshadows the paths taken by a great deal of American literary writing in the 20th century. Urbanization, industrialization, and a growing feeling of materialism all contribute to the widening wealth divide. It was to blame for the east side of the slums' growth as a district where, in Crane's day, poverty prevailed and vices of dirt, alcohol, crime, and degradation were practiced.

external living conditions contribute to the breakdown of moral convention is cited by (Khan et al., 2022). After describing New York City in the 1890s, it will discuss the mental influences. Specifically, Crane aims to demonstrate how Maggie's upbringing—poverty, an abusive family, and alcoholism—sent her on a path toward moral decay and eventual nonexistence. Which is, once more, a commendable notion, but is there any other way to make that message without including prostitution, anyone?

According to Garrent (1972), the novel is a small masterpiece because of its shameless examination of New York Slum culture and shady morals. Garrent maintained that Maggie is not a story about individuals; rather, it is the essence of primal human nature, perfectly captured with spontaneity and handling grace. He also thought the work's artistic brilliance was unrivalled.

According to MacDonald (1908) moral degeneration refers to the state in which an individual is susceptible to ill habits and moral inclinations. Examples of this include being lavish, gambling, intoxicated, addicted to opium, etc. Instead of physical or mental defects, they are the moral failings of stigma attached to any individual, which the public believes justifies labelling them as degenerate. Any vice that is a persistent trait or tendency in a person's character that is harmful to an individual or group is what leads to moral degeneration.

Nasution & Lubis (2019) assert that moral decline is a social issue that transcends age, education, and occupation and can arise in all spheres of society. The mismatch between individual or group behaviour and domestic cultural values and norms can be a sign of moral

decline, which, if left untreated, can lead to additional social problems and communities with the results of the degree of self-identification or cultural identification; on a larger scale, this will disrupt the satisfaction of life throughout the nation.

According to Oktaviani (2016), Ahmad Tohari is an Indonesian writer, humanist, and stern social critic. In his book *Ronggeng Dukhuh Park*, he discusses moral decay. He consistently speaks out in his works against the injustices committed by his society's lower classes. In addition, he calls for social equality. He desires an accountable, sincere, and just government. In addition, he calls for political, cultural, educational, and economic reforms. He understands that the only way to address moral degradation as a social issue is through rapid financial advancement. His works are philosophical and cultural, and they actually occasionally alter the course of social history.

Financial trauma and tension are linked to a number of detrimental outcomes, such as poorer levels of intimacy quality and sufficiency, more significant work-life imbalance, unfavourable family joint efforts, and less intimate support. Financial pressures can often affect a person, a couple, or a family. Families and people who are experiencing stress due to money-related problems can sense it throughout their life. Social inequality is demonstrated to be inextricably linked to mental health problems, much like unease and despondency. Examples of social inequality include social class and social standing acquired through tutoring, income, material circumstances, company, and word-related cultural position. Social incongruities, such as low financial status, primarily contribute to destitution-related pressure, such as anxiety and problematic aftereffects. In addition, cynical individual bookkeeping results in lower pay and unemployment. These conditions are caused by requirements of money-related resources and significant entryways. This may irritate some Americans, who must contend with the economy's ongoing fragility and volatility as a result of shifting monetary cycles, financial plan cuts, unemployment, political unrest, and unanticipated natural disasters. Since 2000, there has been a noticeable instance of a substantially extended client credit obligation for these Americans.

According to Ali et al. (2021) the most important thing in life is money since it allows us to meet all of our requirements. She believes that although money can make life simpler, there are some things that it cannot purchase. It will never be able to purchase our happiness, tranquility, or sleep, but morality makes our lives meaningful and significant. Even in difficult circumstances, we don't lie; instead, we are sincere and selfless. Its components include tolerance, obedience, and love. We are aware that capitalism has accelerated our way of life and met the majority of our necessities, but in the process of generating prosperity, it has occasionally destroyed our morality. In the context of the industrial revolution, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* serves as a real-life illustration of the agony of capitalism, highlighting both moral decay and financial acceleration. It should go without saying that the human cost of capitalism is personified in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. Maggie is traumatized and loses her innocence as a result of her harsh system-driven poverty. She might compromise her "morality" due to survival demands, reflecting the possible human cost of a society that puts capitalistic values ahead of basic necessities of existence. Crane may criticize the deplorable conditions of the city slums because he gives a genuine portrayal of a lower class woman in the 19th century by putting Maggie in this submissive role. He implies that even a "good" girl cannot elude the futility of the capitalistic system through Maggie's destiny. Maggie, in Marxist view, is a "used value" because capitalism promotes the idea of profit and exploitation. According to Smith (2017), "the issue of the goods is to be sold in the market, "therefore in a capitalist society, she is just a commodity that has to be traded. Maggie is used and abused by capitalists since she has no control over her own life and is seen as nothing more than a commodity to be traded for the gratification of males. Since they are financially desperate, they plan to exploit her to the most extent possible. Marxism states that the bourgeoisie's cultural dominance may

be inferred from its economic structure, as the bourgeoisie owns the means of production, which includes the means producing and spreading ideas.

Exploitation and proliferation of slums are the consequences of industrialization and immigration. Most individuals turned to alcohol as a means of escape from their surroundings; this is a frequent phenomenon in slums, where residents often drink to numb themselves to the harsh realities of their lives. Throughout the narrative, the characters' reliance on alcohol is one of their most fundamental flaws. Drinking is a regular part of both parents' lives and it has a negative impact on their mental health. To round off the discussion, it can be concluded that capitalist values during industrial era in 19th century American paved the way smoothly to moral degeneration.

Maggie: A Girl of the Streets sheds light on a variety of societal issues such as injustice, poverty and violence against the working class. The rise of capitalism put middle-class life and propriety under pressure. For instance, Crane depicted lower class existence in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. The period saw many changes in American culture, such as those brought about by industrialization and immigration, which led to an increase in population and the establishment of slums, where vice was rampant which, paved the way for moral degeneration. The unfortunate results of capitalism were the lack of financial stability caused impoverished individuals to lose their sense of self-worth; as a result alcohol consumption became a way of life for them. This resulted in the prostitution and violence that was prevalent at the period among family members and on American streets. Crane's portrayal of violent individuals destroying all forms of humanity in his work *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* which draws between daughter and sister into the realm of viciousness reflects his realistic approach towards American morally sabotaged society (Mahma, 2013).

Analysis and Discussion

Maggie: A Girl of the Streets represents rather pessimistic outlook on the society of 19th century during industrial revolution. Crane depicts harsh realities of immigrants' life, which were characterized by things such as verbal and physical aggression, alcoholism, prostitution and a strong concentration on financial gain. Moreover, Crane portrays the wretched existence of those from lower social classes, especially in the person of Irish immigrants who live in filthy slums in the Bowery with bleeding heart. The situation of people who are in lower social class contributes to the vulgarity of language. As the second chapter discusses, a multitude of problems beset 19th-century American culture, the most prominent of which were poverty, the proliferation of slums, as well as prostitution. The structure of society became disordered, and individuals lack the capacity to experience joy and fulfilment in their lives. As a result, Crane's tone throughout the narrative is of pessimism. Keeping all the pros and cons of the era, Marxism juxtaposes these vicious practices during industrial revolution to a great extent.

Crane (1893) describes the worldview of individuals from lower social class which is negative, sad and typically gloomy. He uses gloomy terms like "dark" to describe the Bowery's atmosphere, intimidating, uncombed, disorderly and strange. All of these adjectives have the feel of people from a lower social class. In addition, the colour red appears quite frequently throughout the piece which serves to emphasize the dismal tone that pervaded the Bowery at the time. *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* was a victim of her social norms and traditions, beliefs and capitalistic values in terms of financial disorders.

In the very outset of the novel, Maggie was a gorgeous girl living in impoverished circumstances, but once she and her partner made their escape, she encountered rejection from both her family and society as a prostitute. This showed that Maggie was a victim of the social traditions and beliefs of her society. In addition, learned how the industrial revolution necessitates a large amount of cheap labour and this allows a capitalist society to exploit individuals from lower social classes. Furthermore, throughout the 19th century, the rise of

slums in American society was facilitated by the new capitalist economy. Crane's character Maggie is victim of the capitalist ideology that underlies the new economic system. He examines the dreary existence individuals have to endure as a result of living in a capitalist society.

To cut short, the novel presents a victim of capitalism as a whole; as a result, Crane attempts to present their worries within the context of this ideology. People from all across Europe flooded into America, mostly causing urban areas to become overpopulated. The Bowery is one of these neighbourhoods; before, it was a violent and ignorant community where low-income immigrants lived in suffering. In his capacity as a reporter, Crane documented events in the Bowery throughout the summer of 1892. Crane used it as a backdrop for his novel *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* in which Irish girl is lured into prostitution and vice.

In the early chapters of the novel, we come across Bowery's grimy abyss, amidst "dilapidated brick houses" that stand as stark monuments to poverty's suffocating reign (Crane, 1893, p.1) Crane introduces us to the Johnsons. A silenced baby's cry, muffled by a symbolic "red, wet rag" (Crane, 1893, p.1), speaks of strangled innocence, a consequence of the industrial revolution's insatiable maw that chews up childhoods and spits out desperation. Mrs. Johnson, her face "flushed and red with anger" (Crane, 1893, p.10), drowns the sorrows sown by this harsh reality in cheap whiskey, her escape as fleeting as the fumes. Violence simmers like the very air, with young Jimmie, "itching for a fight" (Crane, 1893, p.25), his aggression a grim tool for survival in this wasteland forged by capitalism's cold gaze. Material possessions, like Pete's "jaunty air" and "better quality clothes" (Crane, 1893, p.55), offer a fleeting mirage of escape from the systemic chains that bind them all, the moral fabric of community fraying under the pressure of profit-driven progress. Yet, amid this bleak portrait, Crane plants a seed of dissent, a chilling question that echoes through the pages: can these superficial markers of class ever truly liberate those crushed by the moral degeneration wrought by greed and the gears of industry? This opening scene is more than just an introduction; it's a chilling prophecy, a glimpse into the abyss that awaits Maggie and those trapped within the Bowery's grip, where the very essence of their humanity is traded for survival under the unforgiving shadow of industry and profit.

The opening scene, though filtered through Jimmie's experience, resonates deeply with Maggie. The raw desperation and violence that erupts from Jimmie's father mirrors the harsh realities she faces daily on the unforgiving streets. The echoing threat, "Quit your jaw in', or I'll lam the eternal head off yews," (Crane, 1893, p.9) echoes the countless jeers and threats hurled at her by drunken patrons, exploitative factory bosses, and cruel children of privilege. Then he is punished by his mom. She carried him to a desecrated basin and started washing his slashed face with a wet towel. Jimmie yelped in agony and twisted his shoulders to free himself from the massive arms' grip (Crane, 1893, p.12).

In the grime-streaked maw of the industrial revolution, where "the money wolves" (Crane, 1893, p.157) feasted on human dignity, Maggie's descent into prostitution becomes a searing indictment of laissez-faire capitalism. Torn from a disintegrating family, ostracized and commodified, she embodies the moral degeneration woven into the very fabric of a system that thrives on exploitation. Brutally objectified, her body becomes a disposable cog, traded for fleeting pleasure by those who view her as mere surplus. This chilling objectification, born from a society valuing wealth over basic human compassion, culminates in a violent assault that lays bare the rot festering beneath the veneer of capitalist excess. Maggie's tragedy is not a personal fall, but a systemic one, a searing portrait of the class discrimination woven into the very fabric of this ideology. Her echoing lament – "I ain't got any friends (Crane, 1893, p.122) serves as a potent warning, urging us to question the true cost of progress and prioritize human compassion over the insatiable hunger for profit.

As the industrial revolution churned, its gears grinding against traditional values, Maggie, a naive runaway, became a pawn in a game of shadows and desire. Drawn by Pete's deceitful charm and the lure of escaping poverty, she surrendered her trust, only to find herself objectified and discarded in the grimy halls of capitalism's underbelly. Nell, hardened by the same system, wielded vice as a weapon, vying for Pete's attention in a twisted dance of self-preservation. As their paths intertwined, love curdled into betrayal, innocence into disillusionment, and Maggie's dreams shattered against the cold reality of a world where human worth was measured in coin, not compassion. In the final, cruel twist, even recognition flickered out in Pete's eyes, leaving Maggie adrift in a sea of moral decay, a stark testament to the corrosive power of greed in a world fuelled by the industrial revolution's insatiable engine. Nell and Maggie, two souls swallowed by the underbelly of the Bowery slums, navigate a harsh reality sculpted by the grinding gears of the industrial revolution. Capitalism, a force born in the smokestacks of progress, has reduced them to mere cogs in its machinery, their humanity bartered for fleeting pleasure and cold coins. In this bleak landscape, reification reigns supreme, transforming lives into commodities and relationships into transactions. The very air crackles with an emotional anaesthesia, a consequence of constant dehumanization by their desperate surroundings. Morality, like a forgotten melody, fades into the din of survival, leaving behind a desolate wasteland where compassion is a luxury and connection a fleeting mirage. These grim realities, etched on the faces of every inhabitant, stand as a haunting testament to the moral degeneration wrought by the very system that promises prosperity.

Additionally, the relationship between Maggie's parents is always tense and full of arguing and insulting, demonstrating the breakdown of the family unit as a whole and the absence of affection and love. Both of them think the other is pointless, "They got into a heated argument during which they often cursed one another's souls" (Crane, 1893, p.121). Jimmie, a street kid, responds angrily to his sister Maggie's request that he assists wash the blood from his street fights, despite the fact that she is asking him to do it. A person who has had a tough life is not likely to feel compassion for others. If others around him are not demonstrating any human behaviour, then how can he be expected to demonstrate any? There it's to goal of Marxism to create a society where all people are treated fairly and where poverty, exploitation and violence are eradicated. Because people are inherently self-centred and materialistic, this utopian vision will never become a reality (Callinicos, 2004). Therefore, Maggie is rejected by her capitalistic society, she is unable to have a happy and comfortable existence and her death at the story's conclusion is inevitable. Within a capitalist system, it's the worker's responsibility to market his or her expertise to the employer. Neither the output nor the circumstances of his labour are being monitored, and as a result, not only is he alienated from his own humanity but also in his labour detached from the natural world and from his fellow beings.

In a capitalist society, the motivation to make a profit emerges from this connection (Callinicos, 2004). After Pete's treachery, Maggie feels that she has no chance of making a better life for herself or her family. The chapter sixteen events show how Pete's abandons contribute to her feeling of isolation. In addition, she is estranged from her loved ones; her mother refuses to accept her when she attempts to return home, believing that Pete has wretched her.

Crane's earlier description of the tenement was as follows; it was a terrifying lower building with dark and gruesome halls. Witness accounts that the Bowery's rooms were packed and the tenements were unsecure are consistent with this. That's why Crane chose those two phrases to depict the terror and the poor circumstances of life in the Bowery. "Formidable ladies, with uncombed hair and dishevelled attire, gossiped while leaning on railings, or yelled in furious quarrels," Crane writes about the women of the tenement in the same chapter, painting an image of poverty and helplessness. Crane states in chapter four, "The infant, Tommie died." This is significant as researchers have seen in the historical context; the majority of New York City's fatalities in 1857 were Irish children under the age of five due to unsanitary environments. He

was buried in a little white casket with a flower that Maggie had stolen from an Italian man in his wax hand (Crane, 1883, p.8).

Within the evolving social order of the individual age, Crane's literary exploration of taboo subjects like poverty, violence, and sex work encountered significant resistance. This stemmed from a deeply entrenched social hierarchy where the capitalist class relentlessly extracted wealth from the lower strata, constituting the very "economic structure of society" as defined by Marxist theorists. Given that Marxist criticism itself operates through the prism of historical context, it stands to reason that its analysis of Crane's work must be cognizant of its own contextual grounding. Consequently, any biographical study of a Marxist critic like Lukács that neglects the historical tapestry shaping his thought would be demonstrably inadequate.

Crane (1893) "Maggie: A Girl of the Streets" plunges us into the suffocating depths of the American industrial revolution, where the gleaming promise of progress casts a long shadow of despair. The stench of filth and poverty permeates the tenements that cage Maggie and her family, their lives mere cogs in the relentless machinery of capitalism. Irish immigrants, escaping one oppressive system only to find themselves trapped in another, face a daily struggle for survival amidst the deafening din of factories and the ever-present threat of exploitation. The moral fabric of society frays under the weight of desperation, blurring the lines between right and wrong, survival and vice. Yet, even within this bleak tapestry, Crane weaves threads of hope. Maggie's unwavering spirit flickers like a defiant candle in the darkness, her capacity for love and compassion a testament to the enduring power of the human spirit. "Maggie: A Girl of the Streets" is a searing indictment of a system that prioritizes profit over people, a stark reminder of the human cost of progress, and a complex exploration of morality in the face of systemic injustice. It is a story that lingers long after the final page, prompting us to confront the shadows within ourselves and the inequalities that cast their shadows across our own world. Crane's literary works, through the lens of Marxist analysis, emerge as potent testaments to the harsh realities of late 19th-century America, particularly for the underprivileged. His meticulous attention to detail in depicting the squalid tenements, threadbare clothing, and the desperation of the Bowery's residents exposes the stark disparities and human costs embedded within the burgeoning capitalist system of the Gilded Age. Rather than mere personal expressions, Crane's writings become historical artefacts that lay bare the structural inequities and power dynamics of his era, giving voice to the often-marginalized Irish immigrants struggling to survive amidst poverty and social exclusion. Crane's unflinching gaze invites us to confront the harsh realities that coexisted with the Gilded Age's prosperity, challenging us to acknowledge the complexities and injustices that permeated the fabric of late 19th-century America (Eagleton & Matthew, 2023).

Crane paints a realistic image of drinking; witnesses the realm of vice, where a drunken man is sitting with a dozen ladies. A guy was seated in a saloon's private room with six ladies who were smiling and giggling around him. The guy had reached the level of intoxication at which one feels love for all of creation (Crane, 1893, p.7). Even more crucially, according to Marxist philosophy, men are not able to choose their destiny; instead, they are compelled to live in accordance with the changes in their society. Crane's work elaborates on the idea that one's surroundings may have a significant impact on one's behaviour; as a result, Maggie's tough upbringing which included growing up poor with alcoholic parents and a betraying boyfriend forced her into prostitution.

Maggie also commits the error of dating Pete, placing her trust in the wrong man. He was, in her opinion, the ideal man and the sure-fire path to her financial independence. When a group of boisterous young people cause trouble outside a bar, an elderly person who wishes to know more about the realities of living in a slum becomes enraged. Moreover, there was a corruption in the slums that developed over time in the sense that people in saloons entice people to enter, even though it is impossible to ignore the image of fighting there. As one passenger put it, "The

open mouth of the saloon called seductively to passengers to enter and annihilate sorrow or create rage" (Crane, 1893, p.54).

Given the circumstances, Johnson's mother is not able to provide her children with the nurturing love and care they need since she has been influenced by her surroundings to become a violent alcoholic. Mary is an alcoholic and an abusive parent. She is a symbol of viciousness since she spends all of her time yelling and frightening her children. "Her daughter Maggie's immoral behaviour was a target of her criticism" (Bloom, 2014). At a pivotal juncture in the stop, when Maggie has the opportunity to make positive changes in her life, her abusive mother dashes her hopes by accusing and rejecting her upon her return home. She screamed to her daughter, "Take her with him and you," glaring at her shadows. Her glare was so intense that it felt to burn (Crane, 1893, p.25).

In the novel, Pete represents the dominating group while Maggie portrays the exploited group; he takes advantage of Maggie's naiveté as a girl and successfully manipulates her into falling in love with him. Due to the emotional trauma caused by his leaving, she eventually turned to prostitution as a means a means of survival. Furthermore, Marxism is an academic theory about human civilizations and how they change. To put it more practically, this means that the tale Marxism has to convey is the story of how men and women have struggled to overcome certain forms of exploitation and oppression. Marxism divides society's members into two main groups: the strong and the weak. Therefore, the capitalist group imposes tyranny on Irish immigrants. Crane and Levenson (1996) provided us with a scientific account of 19th-century American society. As we've seen, he vividly describes the Bowery slum's environment and its residents' behaviour, which is characterized by harsh and uncivilized behaviour as well as alcohol consumption and a downward spiral into moral decline. Furthermore, parents are frequently regarded as key players in the behaviour and development of their children; however, the Bowery, parents may be the primary factor in their children's criminal behaviour, as the novel shows. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson are poor and in need, which makes them reckless and illiterate. Yet, under a capitalist system that aims to wring as much value as possible out of the working class, they fall short in their duty to educate their children. People consider them to be inferior.

Maggie and Nell's decision to become prostitute is illustrative of the broader concept that the impoverished would resort to whatever means necessary to improve their financial situation in the capitalist society. For survival after being rejected by her family and abandoned by Pete, Maggie turned to prostitution. This is to be anticipated, given that she is a poor girl whose lover and family have abandoned her, and that most businessmen have used her to meet their own wants while ignoring her. After Maggie has been used by several upper – class men, they attack her. Nellie, on the other hand, decides to join the realm of violence in order to ensure her existence. For financial gain, she makes an effort to attract Pete. Chapter 14 takes place at a pub, where Nell removes Freddie from the establishment without paying any attention to Maggie, who had initially accompanied the little kid. Pete was at the woman's shoulder as moved down to aisle between the tables, perhaps something explaining to him. To sum up it can be said that capitalism gives impetus to violence.

In the current study, the researcher observes how a prostitute, Nell provides pleasure to the guys in return for money, exemplifying the notion of exchange central to the reification of capitalistic concepts. Maggie joins the field of trade later on as well, joining the ranks of the subjugated humans who are really more than commodities. They are so influenced by their impoverished surroundings that they regard one another like things rather than human beings. They are emotionally insensitive because they have lost feelings of humanity in their harsh capitalist society. There it's to goal of Marxism (socialism) to create a society where all people are treated fairly and where property, exploitation and violence are eradicated, " Because people are inherently self-centred and materialistic, this utopian vision will never become a

reality” (Callinicos, 2004, p.41-42). Therefore, Maggie is rejected by her materialistic society, she is unable to have a happy and comfortable existence, and her death at the novel’s conclusion is inevitable. Within a capitalist system, it’s the worker’s responsibility to market his or her expertise to the employer. Neither the output nor the circumstances of his labour are being monitored, and as a result, not only he is alienated from his own humanity, but so, is his labour detached from the natural world and from his fellow humans.

In a capitalist society, “The motivation to make a profit emerges from this connection capital” (Callinicos, 2004). After Pete’s treachery, Maggie feels that she has no chance of making a better life for herself or her family. The chapter sixteen events show how Pete’s abandons contribute to her feeling of isolation. In addition, she is estranged from her loved ones; her mother refuses to accept her when she attempts to return home, believing that Pete has wrecked her.

Because of the conservatism of the time, Crane had a hard time being accepted for writing about controversial subjects including poverty, violence, sex and prostitution. In addition, the development of the industrial age affected social order. As a result of this unequal social order, capitalists extract as much money as they can from the lower classes. They are a driving force in economic production, or what Marxists call “The economic structure of society” from which society’s more visible institutions and norms may be seen to have arisen. Culture is the set of norms and expectations for how people should behave in a given society, including things like laws, political systems and religious beliefs.

Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* reflects 19th century American culture, including industry, immigration and the resulting poverty and city inhabitants. According to Marxist the, Irish immigrants are a persecuted group, doomed to repeat the same cycle of poverty and oppression they experienced in their homeland by virtue of their capitalistic norms and values. In the current study, the vice world is violent and deadly for prostitutes. As a result of being impoverished immigrant girls with little resources and few people who care about them, they are highly sought after and exploited. When Maggie lost her family and lover, she turned to prostitution like Nell and Hattie, in order to support herself and her daughter. Crane’s depiction of the violent character of the Bowery slums is an accurate description of the prostitutes’ dreadful lives in the 19th century. Men of many socioeconomic statuses, including business people, gentlemen, working men and inebriated men, may be seen roaring and violently attacking her in chapter seventeen girl cast a piercing look at a young guy with a light jacket and derby hat. He paused to gaze at her, then shoved his hands into his pockets and curled his lips into a sarcastic grin. He remarked, “Come, now, old woman, they don’t mean to tell me that they measured us up for just a farmer?” (Crane, 1893, p.56).

Conclusion

Crane's (1893) "Maggie: A Girl of the Streets" casts a searing light on the moral wasteland left in the wake of the industrial revolution's capitalist machine. In the festering heart of the Bowery, Maggie's tragic descent becomes a poignant indictment of a system that devours human dignity and spits out moral decay. Poverty, the bitter fruit of capitalist inequality, binds Maggie's family in chains of desperation, warping their values and making morality a luxury they cannot afford. Every avenue towards a decent life – honest work, marriage – turns into a dead end, further tightening the noose of their misery. In this suffocating environment, the constant struggle for survival breeds desperation, leaving them vulnerable to the system's predatory nature. Maggie's descent into prostitution isn't a personal failing, but a desperate dance on the edge of survival in a system that denies her agency and dignity. Society, a reflection of the system's warped values, judges her harshly, heaping shame upon her with every step she takes towards survival. This hypocrisy, where virtue is preached amidst blatant exploitation, becomes the final crushing blow, pushing her further into the abyss. Yet, even in

the depths of this moral squalor, embers of humanity flicker. Acts of defiance, however small, and moments of compassion, however fleeting, reveal the enduring resilience of the human spirit, even in the face of systemic oppression. These embers, refusing to be extinguished by the darkness, whisper of the possibility of revolution, a spark that could ignite a rebellion against the very system that thrives on moral decay. It forces us to confront the human cost of unchecked greed and inequality, challenging us to reassess the values upon which our own economic system is built. Can a system that sacrifices human dignity for profit ever truly be called moral? In the tragic fate of Maggie, we find a haunting answer, a chilling reminder that progress, unmoored from compassion, can pave the road to hell, one cobblestone of moral decay at a time.

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