

ATILIM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE MASTER'S PROGRAMME

**NINETEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH SOCIETY IN THE CONTEXT OF
CLASS AND GENDER RELATIONS IN *NORTH AND SOUTH* AND *GREAT
EXPECTATIONS***

Master's Thesis

İrem NALBANT

Ankara-2024

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Thesis Advisor

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kuğu TEKİN

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis titled Nineteenth Century English Society in the Context of Class and Gender Relations in *North and South* and *Great Expectations* and prepared by İrem NALBANT meets with committee's approval unanimously/by a majority vote as Master's Thesis in the field of English Culture and Literature following the successful defense conducted on 11/06/2024

Prof. Dr. Aslı Özlem TARAKÇIOĞLI (Chair)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kuğu TEKİN (Advisor)

Assist. Prof. Dr. Gökşen ARAS (Member)

Prof. Dr. Şule TUZLUKAYA

Director

ETHICAL STATEMENT

I accept and acknowledge that I have prepared this thesis study, prepared in line with the Thesis writing Guidelines of Atılım University Graduate School of Social Sciences:

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İrem NALBANT

ÖZ

NALBANT, İrem. *Kuzey ve Güney ve Büyük Umutlar* Romanlarında Sınıf ve Cinsiyet İlişkileri Bağlamında On Dokuzuncu Yüzyıl İngiliz Toplumunu, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2024.

Bu tez, Viktorya dönemi İngiltere'sinde var olan sınıf ve cinsiyet temelli toplumsal sorunları Marksist edebiyat eleştirisi merceğinden inceleyecektir. *Kuzey ve Güney* (1855) ve *Büyük Umutlar* (1861) romanları sanayileşmenin etkisiyle birey ile toplum arasındaki çatışmayı anlatmaktadır. Seçilen iki yazarın sorunlu toplumsal konulara bakış açıları tezde tartışılacaktır. Bu sorunlu konuların en önemlileri arasında Viktorya çağının sosyo-ekonomik ve kültürel durumu ve kadınların görece düşük konumu araştırılacaktır. Sanayileşmenin etkisiyle sınıflar arasındaki kopukluk derinleşmiş, özellikle mevcut adaletsiz toplumsal düzen nedeniyle emekçilerin ağır çalışma koşulları dayanılmaz hale gelmiştir. Bu durumların Marksist bir okumayı zorunlu kıldığı görülmektedir. Marksist ideolojiler, farklı sosyal sınıflar etkileşime girdikçe sosyal hareketliliğin insanların davranışlarını nasıl etkilediğini anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, kentsel ve kırsal alanlar arasında ortaya çıkan bireysel çatışma, Elizabeth Gaskell'in *Kuzey ve Güney*'i referans alınarak analiz edilecektir. Charles Dickens'ın *Büyük Umutlar*'ı ise burjuva toplumsal değerlerinin bireyleri nasıl etkilediği, özellikle yoksul alt sınıf bireyleri nasıl baskıladığı dikkate alınarak incelenecektir. Bu tezin Viktorya dönemi edebiyatında sınıf ve toplumsal cinsiyet temelli konulara ilişkin gelecekteki çalışmalara yeni bir katkı sağlayacağını umuyoruz.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Viktorya Toplumunu, *Kuzey ve Güney*, *Büyük Umutlar*, Sosyal Sınıflar, Cinsiyet Sorunları

ABSTRACT

NALBANT, İrem. Nineteenth Century English Society in the Context of Class and Gender Relations in *North and South* and *Great Expectations*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2024.

This thesis will examine class and gender based social problems existed in Victorian England through the lens of Marxist literary criticism. The novels, *North and South* (1855) and *Great Expectations* (1861) describe the conflict between the individual and the society under the influence of industrialization. The selected two authors' perspectives concerning the problematic social issues will be discussed in the thesis. Regarding these problematic issues, among the most important ones; are socio-economic and cultural state of the Victorian age and the lower status of women will be investigated. Under the effects of industrialization, the rupture between the classes deepened, especially the hard-working conditions of the laborers became unbearable due to the existing unjust social order. It is observed that such circumstances necessitate a Marxist reading. Marxist ideologies can be helpful in understanding how social mobility affects people's behaviour as different social classes interact. Consequently, the resulting individual conflict between urban and rural areas will be analysed with reference to Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*. As for Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*; the main focus will be on how bourgeois social values affect the lives of individuals, and how they oppressed, especially lower-class citizens. Hopefully, the thesis will be a fresh contribution to the future studies on class and gender-based issues in Victorian literature.

Keywords: Victorian Society, *North and South*, *Great Expectations*, Social Classes, Gender Issues

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INTRODUCTION

A major period of social, political, and cultural change occurred in Europe, especially in Britain, during the Victorian era, which lasted from 1837 to 1901. Queen Victoria, who came to the throne at the age of eighteen, is linked to this period of history. Britain experienced significant social and economic transformations as well as fast industrial and urbanisation during the nineteenth century. People moved from rural areas to urban areas. The critic Christina Crosby states that “the three great facts of [nineteenth century Britain] are capitalization, industrialization, and urbanization, the transformation of local and agrarian economies and ways of life into the modern world of steam and iron, metropolitan centres and worldwide interdependencies” (Crosby, 1999:227). The nation was at the pioneering of the Industrial Revolution, as improvements in manufacturing, transportation, and technology revolutionised daily life and the workplace. Parallel to the growth of the middle class, the gap between the rich and the working class became wider. These societal shifts were reflected in literature, with the Victorian novel emerging as a potent vehicle for delving into the delicate subjects of the day. Not only did the novelists portray the shifting social structure, but they also explored ethical quandaries, religious disputes, gender norms, and the difficulties people encountered in a fast-changing society. Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens, two of the important writers of the period, shared the changes in society with the readers through their novels, and reflected the industrial revolution, class conflicts and the economic situation of that period in the novels.

Victorian novelist Elizabeth Gaskell was well-known for her works that examined the social and economic shifts brought about by industrialization. Being one of the most prominent industrial novelists of the time, she gives sympathetic and perceptive accounts of working-class life in these revolutionary times in her novels. According to Ian Campbell, Elizabeth Gaskell was influenced by Scottish writer and critic Thomas Carlyle. “Undoubtedly Elizabeth Gaskell derived inspiration from the successful novelists of her time as well as from the successful Scottish author whose influence she openly acknowledged - Thomas Carlyle” (Swift, 2001:98). The smaller scale of Scotland was a major source of inspiration for Scottish writers during Gaskell's formative years who wrote about industrial change. Smaller factories had an instantaneous effect on the nation (Campbell, 1994:103). It is reasonable that Gaskell,

who talks about industrialization and its effects on society in her novels, was influenced by Scottish writers.

The struggles and injustices experienced by workers in industrialised cities are explored in Gaskell's novels, including *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1854). She clarifies the poverty, working conditions, and social unrest that frequently followed these situations. Through her writings, Gaskell hoped to advocate for social reform and bring attention to these problems. The way that Gaskell depicts the social and economic injustices brought about by industrialization and capitalism is consistent with Marxist literary theory. She encourages readers to examine the established power structures critically and to support social change through her writing. Her analysis of the working class and their struggles offers a framework for comprehending the repressive historical context and challenging the economic structure that sustains these disparities. In *North and South*, Gaskell examines the struggle between England's rural South and industrial North, presenting it as a fight between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The sharp differences in living standards and income between factory owners and their employees are depicted in the novel. Gaskell analyses the industrial capitalist system's underlying power relations and its exploitative mechanism critically.

Dickens was another prominent novelist of his time who “was not absent-minded about what was happening in this area of economic and social development” (Collins, 1980:652). Dickens is widely regarded as a social reformer who brought attention to the struggles of the working class and other marginalised groups through his books. His personal experiences of growing up in poverty and seeing the social injustices brought about by the Industrial Revolution had a profound impact on him. Readers were captivated by his characters, which included debt-ridden people, child labourers, and orphans, and they made them feel sympathy for those who were subjected to repressive social systems. Dickens explores class differences and social mobility's effects in *Great Expectations*. Pip, the main character, is from a lowly background and aspires to be successful. As Pip discovers where his wealth has come from, he is forced to consider the moral consequences of his change and starts to doubt the principles and goals of the upper class. This illustrates how capitalism is dehumanising and how class exploitation takes place within it, reflecting a Marxist critique of social class. Dickens, Gaskell, and numerous other novelists attempted to

incite social reform movements by portraying social issues. The two important writers of the period cultivated the main problems of that period in their novels and emphasized the good & bad effects of changes on individual and social life.

This thesis will also touch upon women's problems that existed in the Victorian period and analyse the difficulties experienced by women living in that period through the works of Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*. Gender roles were rigidly established and women's social status was restricted during the Victorian era. Men were expected to be the primary sources of income, and women were mostly dependent on men for financial and legal decisions, and they had few rights. In addition to housework, women also worked in factories and were oppressed under the harsh conditions of the period, in her novel, Elizabeth Gaskell described this situation and revealed the difficulties of women working in factories. In *Great Expectations* through his characters such as Estella and Miss Havisham, Dickens explores limited opportunities of women and gender inequality. The novels highlight women's struggles and challenges. They were often marginalised, oppressed, and restricted by the strict gender norms of the era.

Consequently, the thesis will consist of three main chapters. The first chapter will focus on Marxist theory, gender issues and the socio-cultural background of the Victorian era. The second chapter will examine Elizabeth Gaskell's novel *North and South* in terms of Marxist theory, and the last chapter will focus on Charles Dickens' novel *Great Expectations*. *North and South* and *Great Expectations* will be analysed through the Marxist approach with reference to class and gender.

CHAPTER 1: THEOROTICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Marxist Literary Theory

The developing world's adoption of Marxist theory has been largely shaped by the industrial states' lack of development and their historical colonial status. According to the classic Marxist perspective, the division of precapitalist peasant society and the emergence of the revolutionary proletariat class depend on the expansion of capitalism (Britannica). In the nineteenth century, Marxism arose as a practical reading of history that offered the working class a chance to better life. Marxism offers a theoretical framework and a practical strategy for enacting social change, which together enable people to gain a social, economic, political, and cultural understanding of the nature of reality, society, and the individual (Janabi, 2018:7). German philosopher and social critic Karl Heinrich Marx (1818–1883) and his friend Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) introduced the Marxist theory for the first time in the nineteenth century.

Marxist literary theory presents a critique of literary works based on Marxist philosophy and sociology. Its goal is to analyse how literature and society interact, especially how they relate to social inequality, capitalism, and class conflict. Ideologies and social structures are reflected in Marxist theory through literature. It examines how literature can both shape and affect readers' perceptions of the world and support or undermine the established power structures. Abrams defines Marxism in his *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by saying “A Marxist critic typically undertakes to explain the literature in any era by revealing the economic, class, and ideological determinants of the way an author writes, and to examine the relation of the resulting literary product to the social reality of that time and place” (2018:219). When analysing literature from any era, a Marxist critic usually looks at how an author's writing style is influenced by economic, class, and ideological factors. The Marxist critic also scrutinises how the literary production relates to the social reality of the specific time and place. According to *The Norton of Anthology English Literature*, “The first English author of note to embrace Marxism was the poet and painter William Morris, who shared with Marx a conviction that utopia could be achieved only after the working classes had, by revolution, taken control of government and industry (Greenblatt, 2018:1029).

Karl Marx is the originator of the Marxist critique of literature, despite the fact that he wrote relatively little about it. “He quotes Sophocles (in Greek), Balzac, Dante,

and *Timon of Athens* in *Capital*, but only their attacks on the evils of money. He discusses "literature" in Section III of *The Communist Manifesto*, but it turns out to be the "literature" of socialist pamphleteering. The Introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy* discusses Greek art, literature, and mythology, but in no real detail" (Hyman, 1947:7).

The main goal of Marxist criticism is to apply the theories of Marx and Engels to literature by imposing on the reader the necessity of questioning the falsity of the capitalist mode of production in both real life and fictional works. Through their allusions, Marx and Engels helped the development of art even though they did not create an artistic theory. As a result, Marxist criticism not only advances the two thinkers' but also delves into the sociology of literature, which is made up of the terms literary production, distribution, and exchange within a society, including book publication, societal awareness of these books, and literacy rates. Somehow Marxist criticism is associated with sociology because "sociology's basic concept of role, far from being value-free, is an ideological reflection of and apologia for the division of labour ... not a scientific notion for grasping that society" (Slaughter, 1973:4).

Marx believed that literature was a mirror reflecting society as a whole and that literature was linked to interpersonal relationships in general. All members of the community can see both positive and negative reflections through literature. Literature is interpreted from the viewpoint and experience of the author. Briefly, literature in particular and art in general are components of the superstructure. Reading literature requires an insightful reading of the social processes. While studying literary works, one should make an effort to comprehend the social context, particularly the fundamental ideological justifications that the works are based on (Lisman, 1988:3).

Marxist critique sees literary works as reflections of the social institutions, based on Karl Marx's socialist and dialectical theories. Even literature, according to Marxists, is a social institution with a particular ideological function dependent on the author's background and ideology. In essence, Marxists think that a work of literature emerges from the economic and ideological circumstances surrounding its creation rather than from divine inspiration or pure aesthetic labour (Kautsky, 1987:9).

Eagleton, in his preface to *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, says that Marxist criticism views literature as a product of its historical circumstances, and literature itself must be conscious of its own historical circumstances. A historical overview of Marxist criticism from Marx and Engels to the present, illustrating how the criticism

evolves with the history it is based on, would be the most useful approach to discussing it (1976:10). When examining a work of literature, it is necessary to look at the characteristics of the period in which it was written, as well as the author's life and historical background. Yet, still, it will not be enough to grasp that specific period thoroughly. Marxist interpretations see literary works as the author's ideology or the ideology of the class that the author represents. The ideologies of Marxist theorists could be analysed under two groups according to Abrams. Some Marxist critics define their ideology as "vulgar Marxism." They analyse "bourgeois" literature as having a direct relationship to the current state of the class struggle to them. Literature should be dedicated to the political cause of the Left and should only depict social realism, or social realities like class struggle. Vulgar Marxism is the process of applying Marxist concepts to literary analysis in a basic way.

What some Marxist critics themselves derogate as "vulgar Marxism" treats most literary works of our age as thoroughly dominated by bourgeois ideology, and demands instead a "social realism" which will represent the "true" reality and progressive forces of our era; in practice, this has often turned out to be the demand that literature conform to the official party line (Abrams, 2018: 219).

On the other hand, another Marxist critic, George Lukács, advocates flexible application of ideology. According to him, every literary work is unique and creates its own fictional world and everyday realities (Abrams, 2018:206). For example, although Tolstoy came from a wealthy and aristocratic family, in his works, he criticized aristocracy. The real world of class struggles and political tension may be better illustrated if one ignores the author's social class or remove his political beliefs. This is because literary forms can depict the nature of ideology with a kind of aesthetic distance or detachment that give them some autonomy.

More flexible Marxist, on the other hand, building plausibly upon fragmentary comments about art and literature in Marx and Engels themselves, allow literature some degree of autonomy, and claim also that the greatest literary masters of the capitalist era have been able to transcend their bourgeois ideology sufficiently to represent (or in the frequent Marxist equivalent, to reflect) the truly "objective" reality of the class conflict, the social "contradictions" and the alienation of the individual under capitalism (Abrams, 2018:219).

French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser is renowned for his contributions to Marxist theory. He suggested a structuralist interpretation of Marxist philosophy and questioned conventional readings of Karl Marx's writings. Althusser maintained that institutions and social structures shape people and underlined the role of ideology

in upholding the status quo in society. Key concepts in Louis Althusser's work on Marxism are dominant class, class difference, and dominant ideology in society. According to Althusser's analysis, a dominant class that holds power and upholds its hold on society through a variety of strategies, such as the propagation of dominant ideology, is responsible for structuring society. Althusser's essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" is one of his most important works in which he explores these concepts. In order to maintain the perpetuation of social relationships that serve the interests of the ruling class, Althusser examines how dominant ideology is propagated and strengthened through ideological state apparatuses (such as the media, the church, and educational institutions) in this work. The following organisations are depicted by Althusser as Ideological State Apparatuses:

- the religious ISA (the system of the different Churches),
- the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private “Schools”),
- the family ISA,¹
- the legal ISA,²
- the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties), – the trade-union ISA, – the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.),
- the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.) (Althusser, 1971:80).

Althusser also explains the difference between the Representative State Apparatus and Ideological State Apparatus:

As a first moment, it is clear that while there is one (Repressive) State Apparatus, there is a plurality of Ideological State Apparatuses. Even presupposing that it exists, the unity that constitutes this plurality of ISAs as a body is not immediately visible. As a second moment, it is clear that whereas the – unified – (Repressive) State Apparatus belongs entirely to the public domain, much the larger part of the Ideological State Apparatuses (in their apparent dispersion) are part, on the contrary, of the private domain. Churches, Parties, Trade Unions, families, some schools, most newspapers, cultural ventures, etc., etc., are private (Althusser, 1971: 80).

At first glance, it is evident that there are numerous Ideological State Apparatuses in addition to one Repressive State Apparatus. The unity that makes up this plurality of ISAs as a body is not immediately apparent, even if it exists. Second, while the unified (repressive) state apparatus clearly belongs to the public domain, the majority of the ideological state apparatuses, despite their apparent dispersion, are

clearly part of the private domain. Private organisations include churches, parties, trade unions, families, certain schools, the majority of newspapers, cultural endeavours, and so on. In order to preserve its hold on power and influence over society, the ruling class uses ideology, as Althusser explains. He contends that ideology serves to uphold the interests of the ruling class and legitimise the current social order through a variety of institutions, including the state, media, education, and religion.

The evolution of Marxist theory was greatly influenced by Althusser's theories, especially in the disciplines of sociology, literary criticism, and philosophy. It would be extremely important to provide a scientific definition of ideology within the theoretical framework of Althusserian Marxism, as ideology is heavily discussed in any historic materialist analysis of a particular era. Althusser gives us a definition of the ideology:

An ideology is a system (with its own logic and rigour) of representations (images, myths, ideas or concepts, depending on the case) endowed with a historical existence and a role within a given society...we can say that ideology, as a system of representations, is distinguished from science in that in it the practico-social function is more important than the theoretical function (function as knowledge) (Althusser, 2005:231).

Briefly, ideology has its rigour and logic, which naturally escapes the subjects' consciousness in the majority of cases. Althusser views ideology as an unconscious phenomenon, in contrast to earlier Marxist theorists who saw it as a form of consciousness. It is here that Althusser departs from Marx, viewing ideology as forms and images of representation in the unconscious, whereas Marx saw ideology as a 'form of consciousness'. Althusser is against Marx's explanation of ideology. He suggests that ideology is present unconsciously everywhere and, in all practices, not just in the minds of the subjects.

In truth ideology has very little to do with 'consciousness'... It is profoundly unconscious... Ideology is indeed a system of representations, but in the majority of cases these representations have nothing to do with 'consciousness': they are usually images and occasionally concepts, but it is above all as structures that they impose on the vast majority of men, not via their 'consciousness'. They are perceived –accepted – suffered cultural objects and they act functionally on men via a process that escapes them (Althusser, 1971:233).

Ideology, or what Althusser refers to as the "allusion-illusion process," always distorts reality. It creates an illusion by misrepresenting reality while making allusions to it. According to Althusserian theory, ideological apparatuses are necessary for ideology to function. The organisations that give ideology its material existence are the ISAs.

After an extended period of political, economic, and ideological conflict, the bourgeois class finally gains control over the subordinate class. However, the conversion requires persistence. “in order to exist, every social formation must reproduce the conditions of its production, at the same time 'as it produces, and in order to be able to produce.” (Leitch et al., 2001:1484). The reason behind their interests' strength is a result of specific historical circumstances. Controlling Base or material production is the most crucial part of this process. Althusser says, “It is possible to say that the floors of the superstructure are not determinant in the last instance, but that they are determined by the effectivity of the base; that if they are determinant in their own (as yet undefined) ways, this is true only insofar as they are determined by the base” (Leitch et al., 2001:1486). Through their cultural revolution, bourgeoisie have the ability to control the very foundation of the social structure, which allows them to manipulate the superstructure or ideological formations.

Italian Marxist politician and philosopher Antonio Gramsci made important contributions to critical theory and Marxist theory, especially with his writings on capitalism, class conflict, and the function of ideology in society. The following are some major concepts from Gramsci's writings about capitalism, Marxism, the working class, the bourgeoisie, and the industrial revolution. Like other Marxist theorists, Gramsci emphasised the idea that class struggle is a fundamental component of historical development. He underlined how critical it is to comprehend the intricate dynamics and tensions that exist between various social classes to shape society. Within the context of capitalism, Gramsci examined the interactions between the bourgeoisie (capitalist class) and the working class (proletariat). He investigated how the working class fought for social and economic change while the bourgeoisie used ideological and economic tactics to hold onto power. He says the following about the industrial development in England.

There is a very extensive category of organic intellectuals—those, that is, who come into existence on the same industrial terrain as the economic group—but in the higher sphere we find that the old land-owning class preserves its position of virtual monopoly. It loses its economic supremacy but maintains for a long time a politico-intellectual supremacy and is assimilated as “traditional intellectuals” and as directive group by the new group in power. The old land-owning aristocracy is joined to the industrialists by a kind of suture which is precisely that which in other countries unites the traditional intellectuals with the new dominant classes (Gramsci, 2011:152).

According to Gramsci, the new social class that emerged as a result of modern industrialism exhibits impressive corporate and economic growth, but it makes only shaky progress in the intellectual and political spheres. Organic intellectuals are a very broad category, meaning they are born on the same industrial landscape as the economic group. However, in the upper echelons of society, the traditional land-owning class continues to hold its position of virtual monopoly. It loses its economic domination but keeps its political and intellectual domination for a considerable amount of time. The new group in power absorbs it as one of the "traditional intellectuals" and treats it as a directive group.

Bodenheimer says that for Gramsci, "all human beings are intellectuals. What distinguishes us from animals is the power to think, to conceptualize, and to change the world purposefully. Man, the maker (*homo faber*) cannot be separated from man the thinker (*homo sapiens*). Even in the unskilled worker forced to perform the most degraded, routinized physical labour exists a minimum of creative intellectual activity" (Bodenheimer, 1976:3). Gramsci makes a strong and historically supported case that the acceptance by the ruled of a worldview that belongs to the rulers, rather than the violence of the ruling class or the state apparatus's coercive power, is what gives the system its true strength. Throughout history, the majority of the subordinate classes have granted their consent to the dominant class for extended periods. They tell us what to learn, which books to read, what parts of our history we should and shouldn't know, how our government and economy function, how working-class people are ignorant and lazy, how to write your congressman and cast your vote to make changes, and how communists are evil brainwashers, butchers, jailers, and dictators. All of these things are taught to us both in the educational system and through the media (Bodenheimer, 1976:4). There are intellectuals among the working class as well; Gramsci refers to these as "organic intellectuals." Throughout history, as social classes have risen, a new class of organic intellectuals has emerged.

Karl Marx, Eagleton, Althusser and Gramsci are important figures of Marxist criticism. In the first part of the thesis, a brief information about Marxist theory is given and the ideas of these theorists are used. *North and South* and *Great Expectations*, two important novels of the nineteenth century, will be examined in light of this information.

1.2. Marxism, Social Class and Mobility in 19th Century Britain

The middle class expanded in size and income following the Industrial Revolution, which altered the social order. There was a pervasive injustice in the community that led to unrest. The middle class succeeded in achieving its political and economic objectives with the approval of the Reform Bill in 1832, despite the working class's demands for political rights through Chartist movements. The middle class was granted the right to vote, but the Chartist movement was doomed due to political oppression, organisational issues, and financial constraints. The gap between the bourgeoisie and lower class in the 19th and 20th centuries illustrated the pervasive injustices between these two classes. Marxists hold the view that literature never represents an ideology but rather is a perfect mirror of the socioeconomic structures from which it originates, portraying real social characters, the dominance of superstructures, class struggles, and conflicts (Williams, 2016:27).

Terry Eagleton, a well-known Marxist critic, emphasises that in a capitalist society, the ruling class always imposes the dominant ideology on the people who live there (Eagleton, 1976:80). It appears that everyone is interested in what the ruling class wants in this situation. The goal of Marxism was to eliminate class distinctions and establish a society based on shared ownership. German philosopher Karl Marx and sociologist Friedrich Engels first proposed it in their book *The Communist Manifesto*, published in 1848.

Abstract ideas were completely rejected in an attempt to explain everything in the context of the material world and how man struggled within it. Marxism viewed history through the lens of class conflict and the struggle of different classes to advance their relative power within social and economic frameworks. Marx and Engels say that “the history of all civilizations are based on class conflicts between those who are exploited and those who are exploiting the public” (Marx & Engels 1848:8). Marx and Engels emphasise the necessity of a proletarian class to comprehend social stratification. Through the concept of modern industry, only the revolutionary class, the proletariat, can continue to fight the bourgeoisie. According to Tucker, Marx defines society as consisting of two classes: the workers and the rulers who control the means of invention. Both classes are essential to society. This socioeconomic system is eliminated by their conflict, and a new one eventually takes its place. Marx analyses the nature of workers' capitalist conflict, focusing on exploitation. When workers are employed by a government-owned business,

they are being exploited. The owners' and exploiters' interests' conflict with those of the exploited class (Marx & Engels 1848:480). Marx used the terms "conflict" and "capital" to describe how a capitalist society develops as well as its class structure. The ruling and working classes in society have grown as a result of these factors. Different social classes have different economic conditions, which leads to different interests.

1.3. Marxism and Gender

Women in the Victorian era enjoyed very little freedom, and things were even worse when it came to choosing their careers. Several problems of women workers were brought to light by critic Wanda Fraiken Neff. "Not only were working women regarded as a problem. All women were a problem" (Neff, 1966:11). This statement illustrates the prevalent viewpoint at the time and paints a harsh picture of the situation facing all women workers. During this time, women were frequently assigned to roles and circumstances that were not thought to be appropriate for them. An increasing number of women workers were facing problems, including prostitutes, mill workers, and even unwed mothers. Patricia Johnson also criticised the circumstances facing female employees. She says that "working-class women fuelled the Industrial Revolution, making up as much as 60 per cent to 80 per cent of the workforce in light industries such as cotton manufacturing" (Johnson, 2001:1). Neff describes the situation of women in the nineteenth century by saying:

All women were regarded in the first half of the nineteenth century solely as potential mothers. The worker with her own earnings was, accordingly, an affront against nature and the protective instincts of man. That the family was affected by the labour of girls and women in the mills was a consideration of the roused general concern. The question of the health of human beings who were entrusted with the responsibility of the next generation, the conflict of factory work and long hours with domestic life and with a mothers care of her home and her children, the moral and spiritual degradation which might result from the employment of females outside their homes (Neff, 1966:37).

During this time, many women had to work to provide for the households that were expected of them. It was believed that women should take care of their children at home and ensure that they received a good education and upbringing. Although women constituted a significant part of the workforce at the time, the Victorian era's emphasis on motherhood prevented this perspective from changing.

Marxism has also had a significant impact on how society understands gender dynamics and women's liberation. Marxist analysis often sees gender inequality as a by-

product of capitalism, where the subordination of women and the exploitation of labour are intertwined. Marxism argues that women and the working class as a whole are exploited and oppressed because the capitalist mode of production supports patriarchal structures and traditional gender roles. Belkhir says that “as a good Marxist, Engels believed there could be no change in subordinate status of women until there was a change in the economic system allowing women to participate in the labour force on an equal basis with men” (Belkhir , 1994:10). Marx's writings included aspects of Victorian ideology, but they also contained a wealth of information about gender and the family. Marx argued that the status of women in society could be used as an indicator for the overall development of society as early as in 1844 in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (Brown, 2012).

A good deal of *Capital's* content focuses on gender and the family, even though the book is primarily a critique of political economy. In the book, Marx revisits and embodies what he called in *The Communist Manifesto* the abolition of the family. As factories adopt machinery that reduces the physical demands of labour, women and children also hold significant roles in the workforce. These workers are especially valuable to capital because they belong to a marginalised group that may be forced to work for less. Several other quotes from *Capital* show that Marx's perspective on women's place in the workforce was far more complex than most feminists realise. For instance, he claims that when women joined the workforce, they might have gained influence in their personal lives because they were no longer dependent on their fathers or husbands for a significant amount of the day and could financially support their families. The family was significantly impacted by this. Marx presents both sides of this evolution in this passage. While women were somewhat "masculinized" by their jobs and frequently unable to care for their children to the same degree that they had been able to in the past, long hours and night work tended to destroy traditional family structures (Brown, 2012).

Marxism and feminism have never had a strong relationship historically, mostly because many Marxists have avoided talking about gender and traditional women's issues. Despite his lack of extensive writing on the subject and his lack of a systematic theory regarding gender and the family, Marx saw gender as a crucial concept for comprehending the division of labour, production, and society at large. Marx's analysis of gender and the family went far beyond just taking into account the employment of women in factories.

1.4. Victorian Era and Industrialization

The Victorian era consists of three spheres; early Victorian period (1837-1851), middle Victorian period (1851-1875) and the late Victorian period (1875-1901). Due in large part to the quick changes brought about by industrialization, the early years of the reign were characterised by social and political unrest. The main problems of the Victorian era were class conflict, hierarchically organised society, and class divisions. The era consisted of working class, middle class and upper class. Although there were significant changes in these classes' wealth, power, and rights, it is crucial to remember that these classes remained comparatively stable, indicating that social class structure did not abruptly vanish in the nineteenth century. For instance, "through the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884-85, [...] not only the middle-class male householder but also, by 1885, his working-class equivalent had the right to vote" (Gilmour, 1993:3), it shows that although classes continued to exist, their boundaries changed.

By 1851, over half of the population was urban; in 1801, the majority of people lived in farms or villages. In a city like Manchester, just 25% of its residents were native to the area. Young adults and teenagers from the countryside flocked to the factories in search of work (Mitchell, 1937:24). "Friedrich Engels, who in 1848 was co- author with Karl Marx of the *Communist Manifesto*, learned about the economic misery of working people from his experience in England's industrial cities" (Mitchell, 1937:24). The first significant wave of English working-class political activism occurred in the 1830s and 1840s as a result of the Chartist movement.

Chartism was written at the end of a decade when the social and economic consequences of industrialization and urbanization were not only becoming all too visible but were increasingly the subject of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary scrutiny and inquiry. The rapid growth of industry and the increasing concentration of an expanding population in industrial and manufacturing centres served to both exacerbate and magnify the depressed social condition of the working classes and to highlight the growing gulf between the rich and the poor (Swift, 2001:2).

The movement began as a reaction to the unfavourable social and economic circumstances that industrial workers encountered throughout the Industrial Revolution. Demanding political change to improve the majority of the working class was the main goal of Chartism. It is known as the "People's Charter," the Chartists demanded numerous significant reforms, which enclosed: regardless of wealth or property, the Chartists held that every man should be able to run for parliament. They contended that salaries for members of parliament should be granted to make public

office affordable for those from the working class. The Chartist movement failed to succeed during the Victorian era despite numerous petitions and large-scale protests. On the other hand, the movement greatly influenced British politics and cleared the path for more reforms, like expanding the right to vote.

There was a rapid development of industrialization in Britain during the Victorian era in the nineteenth century. After starting in the late 18th century, the Industrial Revolution gained significant momentum in the 19th century, drastically altering both the economy and society. The mechanisation of production processes, the development of factories and urban areas, the building of railroads and canals to expand transportation networks, and the emergence of new industries like coal mining, iron and steel, and textiles were all important aspects of industrialization during the Victorian era. The lives of people in Britain underwent significant transformation as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Rural agricultural societies gave way to urban industrial centres, which attracted large numbers of rural residents seeking employment. Despite the difficulties, industrialization also resulted in tremendous advances in communications, transportation, and technology. Technological advancements like the steam engine, the spinning jenny, and the telegraph transformed various industries and enabled the nationwide and international transfer of goods and information. Victorian industrialization had a profound impact on many nations, not just in Britain. Many people believe that the Victorian era was a time of great invention and advancement, as well as a time of social and economic transformation that set the stage for the modern era. As Marx stated, the Industrial Revolution and its result as capitalist production;

...it imperiously calls for its restoration as a system, as a regulating law of social production, and under a form appropriate to the full development of the human race. In agriculture as in manufacture, the transformation of production under the sway of capital, means, at the same time, the martyrdom of the producer; the instrument of labour becomes the means of enslaving, exploiting, and impoverishing the labourer...Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth-the soil and the labourer (*Capital a Critique of Political Economy*, 1998:326).

As mentioned above, the capitalist mode of production destroys man's organic unity with the land and nature. Ironically, machinery, man's invention, was what held him captive. Furthermore, the class structure of society was impacted by the transition from the traditional mode of production to the capitalist one. The old agricultural practices were replaced with scientific ones, much as capitalism replaced the feudal system.

In comparison to modern jobs, the majority of Victorians; men, women, and even children worked long hours at jobs that required more physical labour. Mechanisation and dehumanisation of the working class were the main outcomes of changes in employment types during the Industrial Revolution, which also brought about changes in gender roles and the family. They worked in factories instead of in homes or on farms. Children and women worked alongside men in some industries. There were not many laws governing working conditions, work hours, payment, safety, or job security. In general, there were no contracts, pensions, or fringe benefits for workers. While trade unions grew gradually, labour was able to organise and achieve some notable improvements by the end of the period, particularly in terms of working hours and conditions, thanks to the concentration of workers in certain fields and the easing of laws prohibiting combination (Mitchell, 1937:56).

In conclusion, during this period, industrialization had both positive and harmful effects on society. Positive aspects of industrialization included increased economic prosperity, urbanization, and technological advances. As a result, sectors such as manufacturing, coal mining and textiles expanded, creating new employment opportunities and supporting economic growth. However, industrialization also brought disadvantages, especially for the working class. Harsh working conditions, long hours, low wages and below-average living conditions were commonplace in mines, factories and mills. Social problems such as child labour, overcrowding and poverty also resulted from this. While the working class demanded reforms and improved living conditions, the Victorian period also witnessed social unrest and movements such as Chartism. Industrialization increased economic growth and advanced technology, but it also brought attention to social injustices and hardships faced by the working class. The impact of this period on British society and the modern world is multifaceted; both its positive and negative aspects have continued over time. Class and gender issues will be explored in the following two analytical chapters of the thesis. While the main focus in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* will be on the resulting conflict between employees and employers and gender issues in the novel, Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* will attempt to shed light on how bourgeois social values affect the lives of individuals and women characters.

CHAPTER 2: *NORTH AND SOUTH* AND MARXISM

Elizabeth Gaskell is one of the leading female novelists of the nineteenth century. It is seen she deals with the effects of the Industrial Revolution in England in the Victorian period in her works such as *North and South* and *Mary Barton*. Both novels examine the effects of the social and economic changes created by the Industrial Revolution on people, such as harsh living conditions, the injustices of the working class, and class conflicts. Gaskell's purpose in writing industrial novels is to focus on the injustices in society, moral problems, and contradictions in human nature. Gaskell dealt with the social changes caused by the industrial revolution realistically, describing the difficulties and struggles that people experienced. She also mentions the place and problems of women in society by emphasizing the strengths of female characters. The similarities in Gaskell's works reflect a perspective that focuses on the effects of the Industrial Revolution and criticizes people's internal conflicts, social injustices, and class distinctions. For this reason, Gaskell's novels are among the important works that examine in detail the social and economic problems of the Victorian period. In this chapter, class differences in the novel *North and South* and the problems experienced by the workers of that period will be examined through Marxist literary theory.

Marxism is a philosophy that draws from Karl Marx's school of thought and Friedrich Hegel, as the previous chapter explains. Marxist theory is characterised by ideas such as class distinctions, the capitalist system, and economic fluctuations. It was developed by Karl Marx and other theorists. There were conflicts between the oppressed members of the lower class and the oppressors of the upper class. Marx believed that class dissension resulted from workers' alienation from industrial capitalist communities. The concept of Marxism aids to comprehend and provide an answer to the question of who gains from human labour, efforts, actions, and policies. According to Marxist theory, in the fight for social equality, the working class opposes the middle class and upper class. The only way for social transformation in the community to occur is through the victory of struggle. Marxist theories offer various points of view on the topic of social class conflict and the commodification of labour. Marxist theories by Marx and Engels can be applied to literature to explain the significance of underlying meaning when examining the issue of the capitalist production method in both fiction and non-fiction works. Eagleton, a Marxist critic,

observes that one cannot deduce the meaning of a literary work simply from its appearance. The work must have a deeper meaning for the individual. Eagleton believes that the creation of a text is revealed by Marxist literary criticism (Eagleton, 1976:38). Eagleton contends that literature is an accurate reflection of the socioeconomic societies in which it is found rather than an ideology. Using *North and South* as an example, this viewpoint can be used to illustrate the tensions and struggles that existed in Victorian society as well as the superstructures that ruled the district. With the emergence of industrialization and the capitalist economic system in England, Gaskell's *North and South* presents a well-constructed picture of contemporary socioeconomic tendencies. It focuses on how different classes interact within their own ideological and socioeconomic contexts. It compares and contrasts the North and the South as two distinct geographical locations with totally different lifestyles. Since class divisions are pervasive in both the north and the south of England, as the following explains, the name itself is indicative of the problem. "The old nation was strongest in the south of England and in the rural areas; the new nation became stronger as one moved from the centre to the periphery, particularly to those areas – in Wales, the midlands, and the north of England – where industrialisation had brought about rapid urban growth" (Gilmour, 1993:4).

The novel *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell offers a gripping story that explores the moral, social, and economic problems brought about by the Industrial Revolution. The novel chronicles the journey of Margaret Hale, a young lady who leaves the peaceful countryside of southern England to settle in the thriving industrial town of Milton in the north. The main characters of the story are Margaret Hale and John Thornton, who respectively stand for the north and the south of England. Margaret is from the south and has aristocratic roots, particularly thanks to her mother and maternal relatives, while Mr. Thornton is from the north and is a wealthy manufacturer who owns a mill. Margaret discovers the sharp distinctions between the lifestyles of the rural and urban areas, as well as the opposing social classes and ideologies that each community holds, as she grows accustomed to her new surroundings. *North and South* examines issues of industrialization, social change, class struggle, gender roles, and the complexity of interpersonal relationships through Margaret's experiences. She struggles for her ideals and views because she establishes relationships with Milton's residents and the mill owner John Thornton, leading to a

greater comprehension of the outside world. The novel offers a deep examination of the conflicts that exist between duty and love, tradition and advancement, and the basic human need for understanding and connection. A major theme in the novel is Gaskell's depiction of the struggle between rural and urban areas, which provides a detailed examination of the various viewpoints and difficulties encountered by individuals from various backgrounds.

The novel shows the class distinction between the characters through their communication with each other. Margaret meets Higgins and his family and begins to worry for Milton for the first time. Higgins remarks about Margaret's Hampshire origins. "That's beyond London, I reckon? And I come fro' Burnley-ways, and forty miles to th' North. And yet, yo see, North and South has both met and made kind o' friends in this big smoky place" (Gaskell, 2018:78). The narrator says "Milton became a brighter place to Margaret. It was not the long, bleak sunny days of spring, nor yet was it that time was reconciling her to the town of her habitation. It was that in it she had found a human interest" (Gaskell, 2018:80). "In *North and South*, city streets serve as a backdrop for Margaret's developing social skills as she is forced to reassess her rural assumptions about appropriate forms of sympathetic engagement" (Gaskell, 2018:396). Margaret's meeting with the Higgins family serves as a reminder of the extreme differences in wealth between affluent industrialists such as John Thornton and low-income labourers such as the Higginses. The meeting between Margaret and the Higgins family can be interpreted as a reflection of the class struggle and conflict that Marx advocated from a Marxist perspective. The Higgins family's experiences with poverty and exploitation show how the bourgeoisie exploits the working class, as exemplified by figures like John Thornton.

Margaret's early assumptions and prejudices are challenged by her increasing awareness of the harsh realities that the working-class faces, and as a result, she begins to identify herself with the labouring poor and their struggles. As stated on page eight, Marx says that literature is a reflection of society, and in her novel *North and South*, Gaskell shares with her readers one of the most important problems that emerged in society under the influence of industrialization at that time, with the working-class characters and employers she created. There is a significant split in Victorian society between the working class and the middle class or between those who have nothing to eat or drink and those who have plenty of both. In industrial cities like Milton City,

where Thornton, one of the protagonists and millowner in both the North and South of the novel, faces pressure from American competitors to reduce worker wages; consequently, workers start going on strike in protest of this unequal distribution of wealth in society (Kalpaklı, 2010:3). Margaret suggests a dialogue and communication as a solution: “Mr Thornton”, says Margaret, “go down this instant if you are not a coward. Go down and face them like a man. Save these poor strangers whom you have decoyed here. Speak to your workmen as if they were human beings. Speak to them kindly” (Gaskell, 2018:190). Margaret aims to explain the situation of capital owners and farmers to workers, and tries to establish empathy between the strike and the two classes.

To maximise their profits, capital owners or bosses want to pay their employees low wages. In contrast, workers want to be paid well and do not care whether their employers can afford to pay well during tough financial times (Kalpaklı, 2010:4). Nicholas Higgins describes this conflict to Margaret:

Why, yo’ see, there is five or six masters who have set themselves again’ paying the wages they’ve been paying these two years past, and flourishing upon, and getting richer upon. And now they come to us, and say we are to take less. And we won’t. We’ll just clem them to death first; and see who will work for ‘em then. They’ll have killed the goose that laid ‘em the golden eggs, I reckon (Gaskell, 2018:145).

In her novel, Gaskell not only expresses the difficult situation experienced by workers but also expresses the difficulties experienced by employers and says:

He was trying to understand where he stood; what damage the strike had done him. A good deal of his capital was locked up in new and expensive machinery; and he had also bought cotton largely, with a view to some great orders which he had in hand. The strike had thrown him terribly behindhand, as to the completion of these orders. Even with his own accustomed and skilled work people, he would have had some difficulty in fulfilling his engagements; as it was, the incompetence of the Irish hands, who had to be trained to their work, at a time requiring unusual activity, was a daily annoyance (Gaskell, 2018:320).

As a novelist, Gaskell conveys Mr. Thornton's business-related financial handicaps to the reader. The Irish who replaced the workers were incompetent and unskilled, making the situation more complicated. It appears that Gaskell tells the reader that the reasons behind the conflict can be resolved with time and equal involvement of both the working class and the bourgeois class. Under the guise of Margaret's opinions, Gaskell suggests that the glitches stem from the gap between the rich and the poor brought about by material inequality in the class system. Gaskell

handles the problems with the greatest care and wisdom. According to Julie Nash's article, "Servants and Paternalism in the Works of Maria Edgeworth and Elizabeth Gaskell:"

Gaskell refrains from presenting any sustained vision for social change. Instead, she retreats to the paternalistic idea that masters should be kinder to their workers in order to mitigate their anger and earn their respect. In her later industrial novel, *North and South*, Gaskell's outlook is more complex. Rather than throw up her hands and declare herself at sixes and sevens, she prescribes a new surprisingly intimate relationship for masters and workers. Despite these differences in approach, however, Gaskell depends on servant characters in both novels to help articulate the economic and social issues that concerned her (Nash, 2007:96).

Without a doubt, Margaret is the most ideal character Gaskell could have created to help the reader comprehend class conflicts. Gaskell uses Margaret as a mediator to start a conversation between the disputing groups. She spends her life in three different places: Helstone, London, and Milton. However, when she settles in Milton, she causes strife in the community as well as within herself. It is likely that she is presented as an innocent character with a certain ideology, but her circumstances will eventually change and challenge her. Karl Marx's ideas about the individual are reflected in Margaret's character, as Barbara Smith explains in her essay "Contingencies of Value" the value of certain things that are determined not by individuals but by the society (Smith ve Leitch Vincent, 2001:1911). She becomes a subjective being instead of an individual one. Thornton's identity is formed by society, then modified by events and Margaret's opinions. They are both portrayed as subjective, not individual, beings in the Marxist sense of individuality. The reader is also introduced to Thornton's father's tragic experiences from his previous life, in which he committed suicide as a result of some serious financial difficulties. He is a victim of the social class that he advocates for and represents. That is to say people are products of the social and cultural systems in which they belong. In her conversations with Thornton, Margaret tries to persuade him that the two classes will not advance if they ignore the invisible relationship and animosity that exists between the employers and employees. Margaret says "I see two classes dependent on each other in every possible way, yet each evidently regarding the interests of the other as opposed to their own; I never lived in a place before where there were two sets of people always running

each other down” (Gaskell, 2018:138). It could be argued that in Chapter 22: *A Blow and Its Consequences*, when the strikers rush to the Marlborough Mill gates and Margaret gets trapped there with the Thornton family, Margaret reaches the pinnacle of her mediation abilities. Margaret takes the initiative to mediate between the two sides because she is aware of the two classes, their arguments, and their motivations.

Margaret does a better job than Thornton at analysing the intensity of the situation. Since Thornton thought like an employer belonging to the bourgeois class, his approach to the workers is different from Margaret. He cannot see what they want. Clausson says that “Thornton stands for, the laissez-faire philosophy that rejects any emotional ties between employers and their employees” (Gaskell, 2018:10). His psychology can be explained with reference to Christopher Caudwell’s perspective studied in his work *Further Studies in a Dying Culture* (Caudwell, 1949):

The bourgeois, by his fundamental position, is free ‘in himself’. He is free not because he is conscious of his causality, but because he is ignorant of the social causes that determine his being. He pictures himself therefore as standing in a dominating relation to his environment, just as in society he seems by his dominating relation to capital and his ownership of social labour power, to be determining society and not determined by it (Caudwell, 1949).

To shield Thornton, she hugs him after realising that the strikers are armed with their clogs, but she is cut by a sharp pebble that one of the strikers throws. As she fulfils the role of mediator, Margaret puts her reputation and life in danger by defending a man she has no official or familial relationship with by using her body as a shield from the aggressive strikers. Nevertheless, the strikers retreat and the outcome is successful. According to the Marxist understanding, the working class can rebel against those who exploit them to get rid of oppression and as a result, they can be successful. Even though the rebellion against factory owners in the *North and South* ends in failure, this movement represents potential trends away from capitalist economic systems.

Thornton refers to the conflict between the classes as a "battle," while his mother refers to it as a "fight." Additionally, Mrs. Thornton refers to the anticipated agitation on the part of the workers as "their next attack" (Gaskell, 2018:137). In other words, Milton appears to be a model of a capitalist economic society in which people's ability and inclination to make money are the only factors necessary for them to survive. While describing the lives of the workers, Gaskell takes into consideration Manchester, which was known as the industrial city of England at that time. Therefore,

there is a constant struggle to survive. In contrast to non-industrial areas, Milton's way of life is characterised by suffering, conflict, impulsivity, and a rejection of fundamental principles. When Margaret first sees Milton, she notices a cloud with a colour similar to deep lead hanging over the horizon (Gaskell, 2018:64). "There was a slight taste and smell of smoke; maybe, in the end, it was more a loss of the scent of grass and herbage than anything good" (Gaskell, 2018:66). Milton is a mechanised city where residents live "in the middle of factories, and factory people!" (Gaskell, 2018:50). Industrialization has incalculable effects, as seen even in the town's panoramic view. "Here and there a great oblong many-windowed factory stood up, like a hen among her chickens, puffing out black 'unparliamentary' smoke, and sufficiently accounting for the cloud which Margaret had taken to foretell rain" (Gaskell, 2018:66). According to the author, Helstone is a peaceful and quiet place to live without any problems, unlike what people in Milton are going through.

As it is mentioned on page nine, Eagleton says when examining a work of literature, it is not possible to evaluate it independently of its period, and while doing this, the life of the author should also be taken into consideration. In several chapters of the book, Gaskell describes the appalling living and working conditions of labourers as well as their feelings. In the novel, she gives a realistic account of the day. She talks not only about the problems of the working class but also about the politics of that period. Shirley Foster in *Elizabeth Gaskell a Literary Life* argues that:

The three-pronged discussions between Margaret and Higgins, Margaret and Thornton, and Higgins and Thornton (with Mr Hale occasionally entering as a subsidiary contributor), especially in Chapters XV, XVII, XIX, XXVIII and XXXVI, engage with questions of free and fixed prices, relations between profits and loss and wages and production, and the mutual responsibilities of employers and employed, albeit within the framework of a personal and individual discourse. The novel, too, takes a mature look at the unions (Foster, 2002:109).

According to Althusser, the bourgeoisie are able to control the very basis of the social structure through their cultural revolution, giving them the ability to control the superstructure or ideological formations. The ruling class employs ideology to maintain its hold on power and influence over society. *In North and South*, despite the fact that factory owners refer to the agitators as a group of ungrateful hounds seeking higher wages, Gaskell claims that agitation simmers because workers demand more rights, mastery, and ownership. However, employees who wish to challenge the status quo face retaliation from the state apparatus. Higgins is portrayed as a troublemaker

and a spokesperson for Milton's miserable labourers. His conviction could be referred to as the author's viewpoint on the conflict-related issues. According to Higgins, the workers are only producing the goods for their masters, while the masters have the power to do anything in their business affairs. Every time their master hears them discussing reforms, he threatens them with direct consequences. They assist owners in increasing their income, but they receive nothing in return. Reflecting the powerful and dominant ideology, factory owners choose to despise workers because they think they can do whatever they want. Since the workers' uprisings were not something they expected and they did not know how to communicate with them, the events between the two groups could not be resolved easily. On page twelve, it is mentioned by well-known Marxist critic Terry Eagleton that the ruling class in a capitalist society always imposes the dominant ideology on the citizens. In this case, it seems that everyone is interested in the goals of the ruling class. This actually summarizes all the events in the novel, the conflicts between the working class and the class that rules them. According to another famous Marxist theorist, Gramsci, people are thinking beings and can change the world for a purpose. He argued that there were intellectuals among the working class. In the novel, *North and South*, Higgins is a worker who defends the rights of workers and wants them to work under better conditions. By questioning the situation of the workers, he knows that they will get better and that they deserve it.

North an' South have each gotten their own troubles. If work's sure and steady theer, labor's paid at starvation prices; while here we'n rucks o' money coming in one quarter, and ne'er a farthing th' next. For sure, th' world is in a confusion that passes me or any other man to understand; it needs fettling, and who's to fettle it, if it's as yon folks say, and there's nought but what we see? (Gaskell, 2018:330)

Through the end of the novel, Gaskell gives a message through Mr. Thornton:

I have arrived at the conviction that no mere institutions, however wise...can attach class to class as they should be attached, unless the working out of such institutions bring the individuals of the different classes into actual personal contact. Such intercourse is the very breath of life...I would take an idea, the working out of which would necessitate personal intercourse: it might not go well at first, but at every hitch interest would be felt by an increasing number of men, and at last its success in working come to be desired by all, as all had borne a part in the formation of the plan; and even then I am sure that it would lose its vitality, cease to be living, as soon as it was no longer carried on by that sort of common interest which invariably makes people find means and ways of seeing each other, and becoming acquainted with each other's characters and persons...We should understand each other better, and I'll venture to say we should like each other more. (Gaskell, 2018:435)

Naturally, there will be disputes between those classes, according to Gaskell. However, these issues ought to be resolved through conversation and interaction rather than force. In addition to Thornton, Gaskell uses Margaret as a vehicle for her ideas and appoints her as a mediator in order to bring these two classes together. The Victorian society of Gaskell shows that class boundaries were set by rigid rules. Since she believes that this is the only way to bring about harmony between various classes, people from different classes could still attempt to communicate with one another and even make decisions together in her novel.

In various parts of the novel, Gaskell describes the poor living and working conditions of labourers as well as their feelings. In both the North and the South, working-class exploitation eventually becomes a complex situation where a workers' revolt appears to be the only possible outcome. The relationship between the working class and masters is becoming worse due to a variety of factors, some of which have already been mentioned. Thornton is also shown as a mirror of Margaret's personality because they both go through significant life transitions.

On the other hand, as was indicated in the preceding paragraphs, both have different perspectives on the class conflicts. Margaret is sympathetic to the working class, while Thornton represents his class of manufacturing masters. Thornton's identity is formed by society, then modified by events and Margaret's opinions. Margaret also experiences a significant transformation in her uniqueness. The struggle between the employers and employees is settled at the conclusion of Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, opening up more promising prospects for both sides.

The resolution follows a turbulent sequence of events that include protests, strikes, and personal struggles of characters like Nicholas Higgins and his daughter Bessy, as well as those of John Thornton and the workers. Examining the novel, *North and South* from a Marxist perspective reveals the class conflict present in the novel. The class differences that emerged with industrialization and the problems it brought were examined in Elizabeth Gaskell's novel. By sharing with the reader the characters, she created, the dialogues, the uprising of the working class and the unions they formed, she also expressed one of the biggest problems of nineteenth century England.

2.1. Gender Issues in *North and South*

Barbara Harman describes the situation of women in the Victorian period as follows: “In Victorian England, female publicity seems nearly always to have been bad publicity. Walking alone in the city streets, speaking before a mixed audience, appearing at a polling booth, engaging in the world of business or politics, even eating in a restaurant might compromise a woman’s reputation” (Harman, 1988:2). Women had a very specific place in Victorian society, which was mostly defined by the expectations and social norms that were prevalent at the time. It was expected of women to be modest, moral, and prioritise their responsibilities as spouses and mothers. Their primary responsibilities were considered to be taking care of the family, maintaining the home, and providing for their husband. As a result of this, they had limited options for education and employment. Women were excluded from participating in many facets of public life and did not have right to vote. In such a situation, Elizabeth Gaskell focuses on solving the problem of class difference, one of the most important problems of that period, by creating a brave female character like Margaret. In order to highlight the complexity of women's roles as wives, mothers, daughters, and carers, Gaskell often portrayed her female characters in domestic settings. In *North and South* and *Wives and Daughters*, for example, Gaskell portrayed women's experiences inside the boundaries of the home and family in a nuanced manner through the characters. In order to address issues of injustice and inequality, Gaskell's female characters frequently took an active part in promoting social reform. Gaskell used characters like Mrs. Hale in *North and South* and Hester Rose in *Cousin Phillis* to examine the difficulties and sacrifices of motherhood. In spite of their own struggles and the expectations of society, these women exemplify the selflessness, fortitude, and resiliency needed to raise and guide their kids. In general, Elizabeth Gaskell's portrayal of female characters shows a profound comprehension of their inner lives, challenges, and goals in relation to Victorian society. She illuminates the varied experiences of women in the nineteenth century as well as the timeless themes of agency, resiliency, and solidarity with her nuanced and compassionate portrayals that have remained relevant with readers.

Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* addresses gender issues by depicting women's roles and Victorian societal expectations through the character of Margaret Hale. Margaret is portrayed as a strong-willed, self-reliant woman who defies

conventional expectations and norms related to gender. She defies the passive and submissive stereotype that was commonly associated with women of her era because she is fiercely intelligent, opinionated, and assertive. As Margaret makes her way through the male-dominated worlds of Milton politics and business, her portrayal emphasises the limitations and restrictions imposed on women by society. Margaret encounters the unfairness and inequality of the industrial world, so her character changes, and her interactions with Milton's male characters. Sally Shuttleworth describes the gender issues in *North and South* by focusing on Margaret:

At a basic level of plot, *North and South* seems to operate a series of displacements: the fundamental class conflict between the workers and employers is translated into an issue of gender, as Margaret, the defender of the workers, clashes with Thornton. Beneath these fierce conflicts between female culture and masculine power there lies a fundamental attraction, however, which they finally acknowledge. The union of Thornton and Margaret at the end of the novel stands in metonymically for the union of the classes they have come to represent: class issues have been displaced into those of gender, to be resolved by that most symbolic of all unions, marriage (Sally, 1998: 12).

Thornton and Margaret's marriage serves as a metaphor for the union of the classes they have come to stand for: gender issues have taken the place of class disputes and will be settled by marriage, which is deemed to be the most symbolic of all unions. Reconciliation between men and women, factory owners and workers, and North and South was reflected in the marriage between Margaret and Thornton.

Mrs. Hale, Mrs. Boucher, and Dixon, three characters that show the limited options and opportunities available to women in the nineteenth century, are three contrasting examples of how gender roles and societal expectations can impact women's lives. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Boucher both reflect and challenge societal norms surrounding women's grieving expression (Steele, 2017:5). Mrs. Butcher is left alone with her six children after losing her husband. It requires a great struggle for a woman to live under her conditions in the society she lives in. Also, Dixon's character stands in for the traditional Victorian ideals of duty and service, which were expected of lower-class women, While Margaret is more independent and outspoken. Readers can observe how master-servant relationships were arranged and how the social mores of the day influenced interactions between people from various social backgrounds through Dixon's point of view. Mrs. Hale's situation is described by Chu in this way:

At the beginning of the novel, Mrs. Hale was portrayed more as a vain, discontented woman. And in Milton, she was portrayed as a sentimental patient who regretted the changes in her life. On arriving in Milton, she could not bear

the industrial fumes and her condition worsened, culminating in her death in a foreign land. Mrs. Hale's tragedy ultimately stemmed from the patriarchal society, where middle-class women were denied the right to participate in social affairs and work. They had no means to earn a living and improve their lives, let alone fulfil their ambitions. Women could only count on their husbands. Mrs. Hale's tragic life story was the inevitable result of the class divisions in Victorian society and a vivid portrayal of the constant conflict between the weaker female side and the stronger male side in the gender struggle (Chu, 2022:3).

Taking care of her dying mother, Margaret sends for her outlaw brother in an attempt to win her approval. However, in the process of defending her brother, Margaret has to violate her moral code—a painful price to pay for her family's love. After her mother passes away, Margaret tends to her dejected father and keeps watching out for her brother; her father's passing causes the total collapse she has been battling throughout the novel. Margaret disregards her emotional and physical well-being (Davis, 1992:18).

Oh, how unhappy this last year has been! I have passed out of childhood into old age. I have had no youth-no womanhood; the hopes of womanhood have closed for me—for I shall never marry; and I anticipate cares and sorrows just as if I were an old woman, and with the same fearful spirit. I am weary of this continual call upon me for strength. I could bear up for papa; because that is a natural, pious duty.... What has happened to make me so morbid to-day? I do not know. I only know I cannot help it. I must give way sometimes. No, I will not though," said she, springing to her feet. I will not—I will not think of myself and my own position. I won't examine into my own feelings. It would be of no use now. Some time, if I live to be an old woman, I may sit over the fire, and, looking into the embers, see the life that might have been (Gaskell, 2018:348).

When her father leaves Margaret on her own, Margaret becomes aware of her spirit and youth. Steel mentions that “Margaret’s struggle with constraints on her emotionality represents Gaskell’s attempt to grapple with the legitimacy of women’s emotional expression” (Steel, 2017:4).

When her father had driven off on his way to the railroad, Margaret felt how great and long had been the pressure on her time and her spirits. It was astonishing, almost stunning, to feel herself so much at liberty; no one depending on her for cheering care, if not for positive happiness; no invalid to plan and think for; she might be idle, and silent, and forgetful, —and what seemed worth more than all the other privileges—she might be unhappy if she liked. For months past, all her own personal cares and troubles had had to be stuffed away into a dark cupboard; but now she had leisure to take them out, and mourn over them, and study their nature, and seek the true method of subduing them into the elements of peace (Gaskell, 2018:371).

Margaret Hale is a strong, empathetic figure who proudly rises above her weaker allies to rule both the North and the South. Once her cousin gets married and she is no longer needed, Margaret returns home to take care of her effeminate father

and traditional mother. Eventually, she becomes an orphan and Edith is glad to have her back as a semi-dependent sister and nursemaid for her kids, a fate Margaret eventually avoids. Throughout the novel, she stands by her family both physically and emotionally, even though she offends many of the more refined people in Milton and London. She also plays a significant role during the uprising, when her moral impulsivity leads to confusion. She continues to take charge as a friend, sister, and daughter while acting independently and responsibly in public. Beyond the choices of marriage and motherhood, she is determined to forge her own path in life following the passing of her parents, holding herself to a higher moral and intellectual standard than what is easily accessible to women in modern society. When she does get married, it will be to someone she has drastically transformed as well as greatly assisted; as a result, she will start a dynamic relationship with her spouse on an equal footing (Alban, 2016:52).

There is another strong woman in *North and South* besides Margaret Hale, the book's formidable protagonist. Through their interactions, she gets to know the strong Mrs. Thornton, a widow who raised her kids by herself following her husband's suicide and bankruptcy. Margaret receives a heroic ideal from Mrs. Thornton in Milton; Mrs. Thornton's self-reliant and proactive actions are reminiscent of Mrs. Barnette in Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*. According to Gaskell's more realistic account, Mrs. Thornton is a woman carrying out a task when she delivers a message to an industrialist during a workers' protest. She bravely makes her way through crowded, enraged streets to deliver this message, joining the factory owners on the roof above the irate labourers (Alban, 2016:51).

If you live in Milton, you must learn to have a brave heart, Miss Hale.

"I would do my best," said Margaret rather pale. "I do not know whether I am brave or not till I am tried; but I am afraid I should be a coward.

South country people are often frightened by what our Darkshire men and women call only living and struggling. But when you've been ten years among a people who are always owing their betters a grudge, and only waiting for an opportunity to pay it off, you'll know whether you are a coward or not; take my word for it (Gaskell, 2018:122).

Bessy Higgins, a prominent figure in *North and South*, illuminates the social effects and human costs of industrialization through her experiences. Milton is a rapidly industrialising town where the working class faces harsh realities, which are personified in Bessy, a young, consumptive factory worker. Bessy's persona is a

moving representation of the psychological and physical costs of industrialization on people, especially those living in underprivileged and marginalised areas. Her battles with ill health, unstable employment, and financial difficulties are a reflection of the pervasive misery and exploitation that many industrial workers faced during the Industrial Revolution. The novel examines the terrible effects of industrialization on common people's lives through Bessy's interactions with Margaret Hale. Bessy's resilience and bond with her co-workers, in contrast to her sense of resignation and despair, show the nuanced ways in which industrialization affects working-class relationships and personal identities.

I wish father would not speak as he does. He means well, as I telled yo' yesterday, and tell yo' again and again. But yo' see, though I don't believe him a bit by day, yet by night — when I'm in a fever, half-asleep and half-awake — it comes back upon me — oh! so bad! And I think, if this should be th' end of all, and if all I've been born for is just to work my heart and my life away, and to sicken i' this dree place, wi' them mill-noises in my ears for ever, until I could scream out for them to stop, and let me have a little piece o' quiet — and wi' the fluff filling my lungs, until I thirst to death for one long deep breath o' the clear air yo' speak on — and my mother gone, and I never able to tell her again how I loved her, and o' all my troubles (Gaskell, 2018:109).

Bessy Higgins would sometimes have hallucinations about the risky circumstances and could still hear and see the sounds of the factory. She talked about how the "fluff" was filling her lungs and how the conditions she had to work in traumatised her even now. In order to support the family in financially, Bessy was compelled to work in unsafe circumstances that ultimately caused her death.

She could not alter her terrible circumstances or the social injustices in Milton, even though she yearned to live in the countryside and escape the dirty industrial town. She was near death. Her father, on the other hand, disregarded her requests and acted irrationally regardless of her feelings because he was determined to join his fellow workers in their strike against the factory owners. She yearned for death and was also concerned about her family. She was a victim of the culture that was ruled by men. The workshops that men constructed and the machines that they ingeniously created have always oppressed women workers. To survive, low-class labourers of both sexes were forced to work in factories that represented masculine authority (Chu, 2022:3). According to Marxism, patriarchal structures and conventional gender roles are maintained by the capitalist mode of production, which leads to the exploitation and oppression of women and the working class as a whole. If the working conditions of workers, regardless of gender, are not improved, the difficulties experienced by female

workers cannot be improved. It is known that during the Victorian period, children and women worked for hours under poor conditions, and many people, like Bessy, experienced difficulties. When corrupt external material from the Milton factory penetrates the bodies of women, the disease that affects women in the North and South becomes fatal. Mrs. Hale is afflicted with "unparliamentary" smoke (Gaskell, 2018: 59), which "crept up to the very windows, and was driven in to every open door in choking white wreaths of unwholesome mist," while Bessy is afflicted with cotton "fluff" (Gaskell, 2018:65). The political act of each woman's death is to draw attention to the harmful effects of pollution and industrial waste (Reeder, 2013:5). It is very difficult to solve the gender problem without resolving class differences. Bessy's narrative also highlights the larger social issues at hand, which include the depletion of natural resources as a result of industrial activity, the absence of workers' rights, and inadequate healthcare. She draws attention to the structural injustices that industrial capitalism perpetuates by placing herself in opposition to characters like Margaret and Thornton, who highlight the glaring differences between the wealthy industrialists and the depopulated workers.

Women characters in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* hold important roles and a variety of positions within the story's social and economic contexts. The female characters in the novel present a variety of experiences, difficulties, and roles. Through their interactions with the male characters and with one another, they add to the novel's examination of gender roles, class dynamics, and the complexity of human relationships. Although it was generally difficult to be a woman in the Victorian era, with the influence of industrialization, women worked under more difficult conditions and were oppressed under capitalism. Bessy, created by Gaskell and symbolizing the difficulties of women working in the factory at that time, lost her life struggle at a young age and died due to a health problem caused by the toilsome working conditions.

CHAPTER 3: GREAT EXPECTATIONS AND MARXISM

Charles Dickens is one of the most important writers of English literature and it is known that autobiographical elements frequently appear in his works such as *David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist*, and *Great Expectations*. For instance, it is said that there are resemblances between Pip in *Great Expectations* and Dickens himself. In the novel, *Great Expectations*, the character Pip faces financial troubles while living with his sister and her husband. Interestingly, author Charles Dickens faced similar difficulties during his childhood. For *David Copperfield*, it can be said that “Dickens wanted readers to ponder what poverty might look like through the eyes of an innocent child, born with no other option” (Andrews, 2012:299). Bloom suggests that Dickens reread *David Copperfield* before beginning *Great Expectations* to ensure there would not be too much similarity between the two tales. He was satisfied that David and Pip, the main characters, were distinct from one another after reading (Bloom, 2000:7). It is seen that his works are inspired by his own childhood experiences and the social injustices he experienced. Dickens was a very talented writer in creating characters and events that bore traces of his own life and experiences. He criticized the society he was in with the characters he created and shared the most important problems of that period with his readers.

Dickens lived in England from 1812 to 1870, as the Victorian era emerged, when British imperialism and industrialism prevailed, democracy slowly blossomed, and a middle class developed. Dickens chronicled this transformative period from the streets of London and its surrounding villages. His characters, though fictional, portray daily social life from the perspective of people who are poor, working class, and middle class in ways that can easily be recognized as embodiments of frank, timeless reality. Dickens transparently demonstrated how ineffective social policies and prevailing discriminatory social norms wreaked havoc on families and communities (Andrews, 2012:298).

The themes in Dickens' works generally focus on social injustice, poverty, class distinctions, and contradictions in human nature. Addressing social problems by adding depth to his characters, Dickens managed to effectively convey his message to his readers by blending his brutal criticism with satire. As a novelist, “Dickens's lived experiences affected his professional lens as a writer, yielding themes such as innocence in adversity, resilience, ignorance and want, unjust social policy, optimism, and capacity for change” (Andrews, 2012: 300). By carefully analysing the characters in Dickens' novels, the reader

can understand the corrupt professional group of society at that time, how materialistic people became, and how they lost their faith in life in every sense.

Dickens starts writing *Great Expectations* during hard times of dramatic change in England in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Shaw describes *Great Expectations* as "his most compactly perfect book... all of one piece and consistently truthful as none of his other books is" (Shaw, 1937:12). Charles Dickens observed the effects of the Industrial Revolution on the social structure of England, with a particular focus on the lives of the impoverished and oppressed (Shihada, 2017:42). George Orwell believed that "in every page of Dickens's work, one can see a consciousness that society is wrong somewhere at the root in Dickens's novels"(Orwell, 1940:5). Societies were split into the bourgeois and proletariat classes during the Industrial Revolution. Dickens' novel vividly depicts the existence of capitalists during the Victorian era. Capitalists, also known as bourgeoisie people, typically consider how much capital they have created and how they have used the labour power of working-class society. As a result, capitalists tend to become materialistic and greedy. The exploitation of workers by the bourgeoisie and the authority is the theme of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*. Their employers treat them like machines and turn them into victims. As Roemer states, Marx's concept of exploitation reads as follows:

The concept of exploitation is a particular way of analysing such inequalities to describe an inequality as reflecting exploitation is to claim that there exists a particular kind of causal relationship between the incomes of different actors. More concretely, we will say that the rich exploit the poor when two things can be established: that the welfare of the rich causally depends upon the deprivations of the poor— the rich are rich because the poor are inadequate; and that the interest of the rich depends upon the effort of the poor – the rich, through one mechanism or another, appropriate part of the fruits of the labour of the poor (Roemer, 1994:101).

Economic exploitation of the working class resulted in a series of tragedies, including the transformation of innocent people into villains. It can be said that the rich exploit the poor. A useful framework for analysing the underlying dynamics in *Great Expectations* is provided by Marxism, which focuses on the analysis of class struggle and the exploitative nature of capitalist systems. This chapter uses a Marxist perspective to analyse the novel to identify how economic exploitation affects the characters' aspirations, lives, and sense of self.

The story of Pip, a young orphan, is told in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. At the beginning of the novel, Pip lives with his sister and her blacksmith

husband, Joe Gargery. Pip comes across an escaped prisoner in a cemetery one day, and he demands food and a file. Pip helps the man, but the prisoner is soon apprehended and removed. A mysterious man named Jaggers, who turns out to be a lawyer, tells Pip during his fourth year of apprenticeship that he has been given some property by an unidentified benefactor, on condition that he becomes a gentleman. His entire life is changed by this news, and he finds himself travelling to London to live a life that is entirely different from the one he had in the village, to be educated and shaped into a gentleman, or, to put it another way, to fulfil his lofty aspirations. Pip believes Miss Havisham is his hidden benefactor since he recalls seeing Jaggers at Satis House during his visits. He doesn't express this assumption, though. That is to say, his education in London is “an entirely bourgeois thing” and involves “little more than accent, table manners, and clothes” (House, 1942:159).

Pip falls in love with Estella and wants to win her heart by learning how to be a gentleman. Pip alienates people who are close to him, including Joe, as he makes his way through the complicated world of high society, feeling ashamed of his lowly beginnings. He also finds out that the person who has been helping him is not Miss Havisham as he had previously thought, but rather a prisoner called Magwitch. Social class, aspiration, identity, love, and redemption are among the themes that the novel explores. Pip gains insightful knowledge about the true meaning of prosperity, the value of forgiveness and compassion, and other related topics. In the end, he understands that contentment with one's actual self and acceptance of oneself are the keys to true happiness.

A Marxist analysis of *Great Expectations* can be done by looking at social inequality and class conflict. Marxist study provides a useful framework for comprehending how economic systems affect people's social interactions, aspirations, and personal development in addition to their material circumstances. In this particular society, people are valued and assessed according to their social and financial standing, as the novel depicts. Pip wants to move up the social scale and be accepted in a class-conscious society, and his ambition to become a gentleman is a reflection of this. Gilmour believes that “*Great Expectations* is the most complex and satisfying fictional examination of the idea of the gentleman in the Victorian period” (Gilmour, 1994:121). However, Pip fails his attempt to become a gentleman because of his lack of Victorian value: hard work. Karen Volland Waters claims that *Great Expectations* is “a useful illustration of the growing uncertainties and inquiries surrounding the perfect gentleman” (Water, 1997: 41).

The protagonist of the novel, Pip, lost his parents when he was a baby and resides in a small village with his sister and her blacksmith husband, Joe Gargery. He is happy and only hopes to become Joe's apprentice. However, one day, Miss Havisham invites him to Satis House to play with her gorgeous ward, Estella, who treats him with contempt. She refers to Pip as "a common labouring-boy" (Dickens, 2021: 50) and notes his "thick boots" and "coarse hands" (Dickens, 2021:50).

What I wanted, who can say? How can I say, when I never knew? What I dreaded was, that in some unlucky hour, I, being at my grimmest and commonest, should lift up my eyes and see Estella looking in at one of the wooden windows of the forge. I was haunted by the fear that she would ... exult over me and despise me (Dickens, 2021:112).

The fear that Estella will despise him has become unbearable for Pip. While he used to think that he would be a blacksmith like Joe, now it is time for a change for Estella.

After being made aware of the "commonness" of his life by Estella, a higher social status than him, he starts to realise how symbols, people, and places in his life, like Joe and the kitchen represent the way of life of a working-class person. He starts to wish to change his life thoroughly and become a gentleman and after that to attract Estella's attention. Though he is aware that he will never be able to fulfil this wish, he is destined to learn from Joe and become a blacksmith. Thus, he makes a valiant effort to advance his education in the hopes of at least becoming less common, but Pip's education was insufficient to fulfil his dream of becoming a gentleman because, in Victorian times, the ultimate goal of a gentlemanly education was "to establish and maintain class superiority and to maintain positions of power and control" (Waters, 1997:18).

According to Eagleton, literature is a valuable resource for comprehending the power structures and socioeconomic circumstances that exist within a society. Through a Marxist lens, literary texts can be analysed to reveal hidden meanings, investigate class conflict, and look at how economic exploitation shapes individual identities. Pip's change about economic exploitation can be understood through Eagleton's Marxist lens. Pip's ambition to rise above his social class and acquire social status stems from his wish to get out of poverty. According to him, the best way to find contentment and happiness is to be wealthy and well-positioned in society. The capitalist society portrayed in the novel where a person's value is frequently determined by their material belongings and social standing, feeds this yearning (Amada, 2023:3). As Pip tries to become a gentleman, he has these delusions because

he never realises that he is merely conforming to industrial society to fulfil his desire to be with Estella. Ömer Ögünç in his article “The Represented Individual in Charles’s Dickens *Great Expectations*” discusses how individuality needs to be clearly defined and problematized the conflict with reference to Horkheimer (1947):

[the individuals], isolated though they were by moats of self-interest, nevertheless tended to become more and more alike through the pursuit of self-interest. In our era of large economic combines and mass culture, the principle of conformity emancipates itself from its individualistic veil, is openly proclaimed, and raised to the rank of an ideal per se (Ögünç, 2017:1390).

To rise in social standing, members of the bourgeois social order are expected to adhere to bourgeois norms because they compete with one another, the people believe that to succeed more, they must yield to social pressures. The goal of the bourgeois society is to instil a false sense of consciousness in people so they will continue to struggle without realising what they are truly doing. Pip is more concerned with becoming a gentleman than he is with following the rules of society. Pip takes on moral principles and middle-class manners to become a gentleman, all while maintaining a submissive demeanour. Thus, the social order gradually suppresses Pip's sense of individuality. Pip's situation in *Great Expectations* is portrayed as being imposed by social norms starting in his early years. The family is crucial to this socialisation process because Mrs. Joe and her friends try to teach Pip proper etiquette (Ögünç, 2017:1390). Pip's life was clearly affected by capitalism since he started from being a member of the oppressed, impoverished class to partaking in the spoils of his labours. He becomes a gentleman in the span of a single glance. Pip's struggle for love and a privileged life in London may be explained by his superiority over Joe and his loyalty to Miss Havisham and Estella, two upper-class figures. According to Joseph Miller, Pip eagers to “trade all the spontaneity and charity of his relations to Joe for the coldness, formality, and decay of Miss Havisham’s house, and for life as a gentleman he thinks she has given him” (Miller, 1958:268). Throughout the entire book, Pip feels that his foster parents have robbed him of his identity and that he is a burden, a victim of society, or both. Taking on Pip's care will turn him into an object in the capitalist system of England, where social standing is determined by material possessions.

From the poorest to the wealthiest, a wide range of social classes are represented in *Great Expectations*. For instance, Joe Gargery, a blacksmith, resides in the marshy region close to Kent. Blacksmith in his work clothes, Joe has the distinct, well-knit

appearance of a scarecrow, and in his holiday clothes, he resembles a scarecrow dressed for Halloween. Right now, every item of clothing he owned was either too large or too little for him (Dickens, 2021:13). "Joe is the ideal example of how labour power is reproduced because he has not only learned the skills necessary for the job but also learn "rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means [...] ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination" (Althusser, 1971:132). Susan Schoenbauer Thurin writes that " Joe at work in the forge glorifies labor "(Thurin, 1986:205) and Philip Hobsbaum claims that he " is an embodiment of the dignity of labour" (Hobsbaum,1972:235). In addition, he is quite uncomfortable leaving "the order established by class domination" despite accepting his place in it. He addresses Pip as follows:

I'm wrong out of the forge, the kitchen, or off th' meshes [sic]. You won't find half so much fault in me if you think of me in my forge dress, with my hammer in my hand, or even my pipe. You won't find half so much fault in me if, supposing as you should ever wish to see me, you come and put your head in at the forge window and see Joe, the blacksmith, there, at the old anvil, in the old burnt apron, sticking to old work (Dickens, 2021:192)

He acknowledges that social divisions are necessary for society to function. "one man's a blacksmith, and one's a whitesmith, and one's a goldsmith, and one's a coppersmith. Divisions [sic] among such must come, and must be met as they come" (Dickens, 2021:191). After this speech Pip says that "there was a simple dignity in him" (Dickens, 2021:192).-However, As Pip moves up the social ladder, his conceit and social elitism only get stronger. He needs to change the way he talks, eats, and dresses in order to fit in with his peers as a new member of society. He knows very well that a gentlemanly manner is closely associated with wealth. Pip thinks of paying Joe to keep him away because he is embarrassed by him: "If I could have kept him away by paying money, I would have paid money," Pip says in this context. [...] 'I had no qualms about him being seen by Herbert or his father, both of whom I respected" (Dickens, 2021:246). Pip's internal conflict and metamorphosis are demonstrated. Pip's life has experienced a dramatic transformation. He is living a life of high expectations and elevated status; he is no longer the young, modest boy from the marshes. Being conscious of his social status and standing, Pip also does not want to be seen with Joe, who lacks manners. His embarrassing and challenging upbringing will always be with him, and he will never be able to get over it.

The emphasis on money and social class in marriages during the Victorian period did not create an environment for people from different social classes to come together and marry. Considering how materialistic the people in the novel are, Herbert is in a different place than them. Although Pip tries to change his social class to marry Estella, Herbert actually rejects an accepted rule in society by falling in love with a girl from the lower class. Herbert Pocket is one of Pip's closest friends. His father, Matthew Pocket, is Herbert's tutor when he first meets Pip, and the two of them are training to become gentlemen. Herbert is generous, kind, and grounded despite hailing from a wealthy family, which helps him build a close relationship with Pip. Pip receives emotional support and companionship from Herbert's friendship during his highs and lows. Herbert Pocket is one of the real gentlemen. In addition to supporting Pip through difficult times, he gives him wise counsel and encourages him to stay loyal to himself. True friendship is exemplified by Herbert's moral compass and loyalty, which stand in sharp contrast to the simplicity and greed of characters such as Bentley Drummle and Compeyson. A romantic element is added to the narrative by Herbert's romantic relationship with Miss Havisham's ward, Clara Barley. Clara comes from a lowly background and Herbert faces financial difficulties, but they have a sincere and loving relationship built on respect and affection. Their relationship emphasises the value of sincere emotional connections as opposed to materialistic arranged marriages.

Despite Clara's lower social status, Herbert is ready to marry her because she embodies all the domestic virtues that the Victorian bourgeoisie demanded of their wives.

There was something so natural and winning in Clara's resigned way of looking at these stores in detail, as Herbert pointed them out – and something so confiding, loving, and innocent, in her modest manner of yielding herself to Herbert's embracing arm – and something so gentle in her, so much needing protection. (Dickens, 2021:319)

Herbert Pocket in *Great Expectations* embodies the virtues of love, friendship, honesty, and aspiration. Throughout the novel, Pip finds support and direction from him as he works through the difficulties of personality, societal status, and personal growth. His character acts as a moral compass and a devoted friend.

Charles Dickens warns against the corrupting effects of wealth and status in *Great Expectations*, citing how they can lead to a sense of social emptiness, snobbery, and vengefulness. The book explains the terrible effects that materialism and socioeconomic disparity have on interpersonal relationships. Characters like Pip, Miss

Havisham, and Magwitch, for example, are shown to have undergone corruption, becoming conceited, cunning, greedy, and machine-like in their desire for revenge, property, and ownership (Shihada, 2017:7). Dickens presents Magwitch as a terrifying character throughout the entire novel. The prisoner, according to Pip, eats his food like a dog when he first helps him by bringing him food:

I have often watched a large dog of ours eating his food; and I now noticed a decided similarity between the dog's way of eating and the man's. The man took strong, sharp, sudden bites, just like the dog. He swallowed, or rather snapped up, every mouthful, too soon and too fast; and he looked sideways here and there while he ate, as if he thought there was danger in every direction of somebody's coming to take the pie away. He was altogether too unsettled in his mind over it, to appreciate it comfortably, I thought, or to have anybody to dine with him, without making a chop with his jaws at the visitor. In all of which particulars he was very like the dog. (Dickens, 2021:17)

Although the right way to eat is to enjoy what you're eating, the convict's eating habits render him inhumane, leading Pip to classify him as an animal. Therefore, Magwitch's money for Pip is tainted from the beginning because he is an outcast from proper society. While Pip thinks that Miss Havisham provided the necessary support for his education, he gets disappointed when he thinks that it is Magwitch and says: "The abhorrence in which I held the man, the dread I had of him, the repugnance with which I shrank from him, could not have been exceeded if he had been some terrible beast" (Dickens, 2021:334).—Magwitch is a violent, uncivilised criminal for Pip. Contrary to Pip's negative thoughts, Magwitch responded to him with these sentences:

Look'ee here, Pip. I'm your second father. You're my son—more to me nor any son. I've put away money, only for you to spend. When I was a hired-out shepherd in a solitary hut, not seeing no faces but faces of sheep till I half forgot wot men's and women's faces was like, I see yourn. I drops my knife many a time in that hut when I was a eating my dinner or my supper, and I says, 'Here's the boy again, a looking at me whiles I eats and drinks!' I see you there a many times as plain as ever I see you on them misty marshes. 'Lord strike me dead!' I says each time—and I goes out in the open air to say it under the open heavens—but wot, if I gets liberty and money, I'll make that boy a gentleman!' And I done it. Why, look at you, dear boy! Look at these here lodgings of yourn, fit for a lord! A lord? Ah! You shall show money with lords for wagers, and beat 'em! (Dickens, 2021:334)

Magwitch told Pip his most intimate thoughts and feelings. Even though Magwitch is not Pip's biological father, he treats him like a son. In contrast to Pip's abusive upbringing from his birth family, he shows genuine love and concern for him. Dickens examines themes of love, selflessness, and the strength of ties that connect families despite Magwitch's social divides. Being from a lower social class, Magwitch has experienced great oppression and suffering all of his life. The injustices and

inequalities of the Victorian England social system are brought to light by his experiences as a poor, abused orphan and, later, as a convict sent to a harsh penal colony in Australia. Marxist analysis uses Magwitch as a symbol for the abused working class, who are subjected to marginalisation, abuse, and dehumanisation at the hands of the ruling class. Magwitch and Pip share a deep bond that extends beyond social boundaries and class distinctions. Magwitch's function as Pip's covert benefactor and his ultimate sacrifice for Pip's welfare highlight the depth of human connection and the capacity for empathy and understanding, demonstrating the ability of human relationships to transcend material wealth and status.

Charles Dickens, a member of the newly powerful middle class, was influenced by the bourgeois ideology that this class promoted. As a result, the values and beliefs of this ideology are reflected in his novel, *Great Expectations*. The novel demonstrates how Dickens was a true product of his period and social class. His outlook and way of thinking were shaped by middle class ideology, which he reflected in his writings. His literary works were shaped by his interpellation into a middle-class subject position, to use Althusserian terminology. These literary works in turn influenced Dickens' readers, who read his fiction with great pleasure. Dickens' readers came from a variety of social classes, but most of them belonged to the middle class, as did most Victorian readers. Morality, diligence, respectability, kindness, domesticity and home, social uprightness, and family were all valued in middle class ideology. Dickens belonged to the middle class, which means that its ideologies developed in his thinking and, as a result, appeared in his writings. Pip in *Great Expectations* is rewarded for learning and demonstrating the importance of determination in achieving a respectable social standing and becoming a well-mannered member of the middle class. It can be seen how Pip's character changes throughout the novel by wanting to move up the grade for the girl he loves, being ashamed of his family when necessary, and being under the influence of upper-class people. Under the influence of capitalism and the bourgeois class, Pip moves away from his real life and feels like he belongs to a class he never belonged to. The emergence of new classes under the influence of industrialization disrupted the existing structure of society during the Victorian period. Dickens shared with his readers how this change changed human life through the characters he created. A criticism of the aristocracy and their disconnection from the problems of the working class can be found in Miss Havisham's dilapidated home and fixation with appearances. Dickens also draws attention to the terrible living

circumstances faced by the impoverished in Victorian England and the exploitation of labour.

3.1. Women Characters in *Great Expectations*

Victorian women had to learn how to live in their private domains at home and become skilled housewives before getting married. These skills included cooking, cleaning, washing, and weaving. Victorian men were expected to maintain their careers and participate in the public sphere to support their families, in contrast to Victorian women. Victorian men were expected to be tough, forceful, and domineering, characteristics associated with men, while women were expected to be nurturing and gentle, characteristics associated with women (Yıldız, 2021:333). Still, because of their feminine characteristics, women in the Victorian era developed into mentors and partners for Victorian men:

[...] women were expected to deal with domestic affairs and serve as a moral guide. It was believed that women were protected against worldly evils and possessed a moral influence that can correct men's missteps. Victorian society believed that a woman's contribution to the masculine world is emotional and moral guidance which constitutes a woman's responsibility as a wife or mother. They were seen as the divine guide, purifier, inspirer of man, and their mission was to help man to resist the evils and temptations of the world (Gökçek 2021:143).

The phrase "Angel in the House" describes the ideal woman of the nineteenth-century England. The phrase first appears in Coventry Patmore's poem "The Angel in the House," where he characterises women as "passive and self-abnegating" (Flanders, 2003:16). As a result, his portrayal of women came to represent the ideal of the nineteenth-century English woman. It should be highlighted that the "Angel in the House" was essentially a middle-class phenomenon. However, since working-class women also had to put in long hours at the factories every day, maintaining a perfect home was harder for them. As a nineteenth-century novelist, Dickens frequently divides women into two main archetypes in his novels: the fallen, morally corrupt woman and the virtuous, selfless angelic figure. Dickens presents his female characters as models of virtue, generosity, and selflessness. Pure, patient, and morally strong characters are exemplified by Agnes Wickfield in *David Copperfield* and Lucie Manette in *A Tale of Two Cities*. The male protagonists find inspiration and moral guidance from them. Dickens often portrays his female characters as being abused, exploited, and victims of societal injustice. Individuals such as Nancy in *Oliver Twist*

and Little Emily in *David Copperfield* encounter hardship, destitution, and deceit from male partners. The stories they tell shed light on issues of power relations, gender inequality, and women's vulnerability in Victorian society.

Dickens also produced female characters that are strong-willed, self-reliant, and defiant of social norms and traditional gender roles. Both Betsey Trotwood in *David Copperfield* and Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations* are instances of strong female characters who defy authority, value independence, and claim their autonomy in a patriarchal society (Orthaber, 2010:18). Dickens offers comic relief and satire through the humorous and eccentric female characters he includes in some of his works. Mrs. Gamp in *Martin Chuzzlewit* and Mrs. Micawber in *David Copperfield* are two examples of memorable characters because of their wit, exaggerated characteristics, and comedic effect. The variety and complexity of Dickens' portrayal of female characters overall reflect the complexity of Victorian society as well as the evolving roles that women played throughout the nineteenth century. Dickens portrayed several stereotypical or constrained by the social mores of his day, but he also developed complex and enduring female characters who challenge expectations, support social change, and enhance the depth of his narrative.

One of Charles Dickens's most fascinating and nuanced characters in *Great Expectations* is Miss Havisham. She represents a number of themes, including time, loss, and retribution, and plays a crucial part in the narrative. Presented as a wealthy and eccentric woman who was betrayed by her fiancé, Miss Havisham has lived in her crumbling mansion for decades. She is stuck in the past because of the horrific incident that happened on her wedding day; she still wears her wedding dress and keeps her house's clocks set to the precise moment she learned she was being abandoned. The themes of betrayal, heartbreak, and the lingering effects of past trauma are all embodied by her character. As she raises Estella to splinter men's hearts in retaliation against the male gender, Miss Havisham demonstrates her manipulative and controlling nature. She plans to exact revenge on all men for the suffering she endured at the hands of Compeyson by using Estella as a weapon. Miss Havisham's controlling and possessive actions towards Estella shed light on her complicated mentality and her need to hold onto control and authority in her life. Pip, the main character of the story describes her in this way:

I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman,

and that the figure upon which it now hung loose, had shrunk to skin and bone. Once I had been taken to see some ghastly waxwork at the Fair, representing I know not what impossible personage lying in state. Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. (Dickens, 2021:61)

Since her fiancé abandoned her, Miss Havisham has never left her home, and she stopped wearing watches when she ought to have. Therefore, everything about her, including her clothing, is yellowed, which is a powerful metaphor for her inner state of being stuck in an unending cycle of character development (Orthaber, 2010:58). Despite her best efforts to stop time, Miss Havisham is trapped in Satis House like a corpse. Even so, her horrific image serves as a potent reminder of the reality of her broken heart, despite the fact that her suffering is both physically and psychologically awful (Knight, 2007:37). With the character of Miss Havisham, Dickens shares with his readers an ideology that was dominant in the Victorian period. If a woman does not marry, she may become like Miss Havisham. The view of women in the Victorian period and the importance of marriage become clear here.

Pip is a poor child and Estella is a wealthy, intelligent woman, that's why Miss Havisham maintains that the two should never get married due to the disparities in their social classes. According to Marxist ideology, this was the way of thinking. Marxist analysis places a strong emphasis on how economic variables shape social relationships. Due to the lack of options for higher education and work during the Victorian era, women were frequently financially dependent on men, but Estella is different because she is educated, rude, and insults Pip all the time, because of his class. According to some critics, the description of Estella can be changeable and different. For example, Shaw describes her as a "born tormentor," (Shaw, 1947:41). Humphrey House says "she has been trained to be a tormentor and has learned the lesson gladly" (House, 1942:51). and for Bloom "the mocking Estella." (Bloom, 2000:2) If someone criticizes her for being heartless and proud, the reasons are Miss Havisham and her parent's nurture (Gates, 2009:390). Estella is the victim of her society. As Marx said, people are a part of the society they live in and they adapt to and are affected by that society over time. Since Estella is raised by Miss Havisham, she is under her influence. She treats men the same way Compeyson treated Miss Havisham, attracting men the way a candle attracts moths. She feels that men are her natural enemies, so she is willing to enjoy the power of the oppressor without feeling bad about being the reason behind Estella's cruel treatment of her suitors. For example, Miss Havisham wants

Estella to love her only within the airless, dark confines of Satis House, where she can live in safety away from everyone while also having the ability to sabotage any chance of love between Estella and Pip.

As a result, Miss Havisham is shown to be teaching Estella about conceit and snobbery, and even encouraging her to despise Pip.

The possibility of their friendship and love blossoming is destroyed when she persuades Estella that Pip is only after her money and not because he loves her (Shihada, 2017:8).

Estella, who was raised by the wealthy Miss Havisham, has led a comfortable life and attended a French lady's school. However, even though she is comfortable in her middle class, she is not happy because she is also hurt by crime because her father is the convict Magwitch. She is therefore, in a sense, destined to live an unhappy life because of her relationship to a criminal, just like Pip. Estella is raised to be cold and to break men's hearts by Miss Havisham, who uses her as a weapon in her war against men because she was abandoned on her wedding day. Thus, it could be argued that Estella is punished by being forced into an abusive union.

The novel also portrays homemakers like Mrs. Gargery, Joe Gargery's wife and Pip's sister, as bothering their husbands and exaggerating small matters. Pip's sister Mrs. Joe, as she is known throughout the novel, is cunning, vicious, and resentful of the housework she must do, in contrast to Joe's goodness, kindness, and contentment. This makes Mrs. Joe an example of not "the admired model of Victorian womanhood [...], [but] the anti-type of this ideal" (Newey, 2004:212). One could argue that Dickens emphasises the value of the attributes that an ideal woman should have by showing what Mrs. Joe lacks. For example, Miss Havisham asks Joe to bring the documents to Satis House so that Pip can become his apprentice. Feeling left out, Mrs. Joe kicks Pip and Joe out of the house and do housework. Pip highlights how Mrs. Joe is the opposite of the "angel in the house" ideal in this scene:

She asked me and Joe whether we supposed she was doormats under our feet, and how we dared to use her so, and what company we graciously thought she *was* fit for? When she had exhausted a torrent of such inquiries, she threw a candlestick at Joe, burst into a loud sobbing, got out the dustpan [...] put on her coarse apron, and began clearing up to a terrible extent. Not satisfied with a dry cleaning, she took to a pail and scrubbing-brush, and cleaned us out of house and home, so that we stood shivering in the back- yard. (Dickens, 2021:102)

As a result, Joe feels that his home is a haven from the harsh outside world, whereas the wife of the "angel in the house" feels the opposite. Mrs. Joe employs her feminine responsibilities as a tool for removing her husband from the home. According to Catherine Waters, "Mrs Joe is very clearly defined by her lack of maternal qualities and her perversion of domestic values in Pip's narrative. [...] She is seen as a monstrous mother, a figure of deviance, feeding her family without love or due ceremony" (Dickens, 2021:153).

Biddy, Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt, is modest and a part of a socially marginalised group. Biddy is a perceptive individual. She accurately surmises that a gentleman is someone who makes an effort to fulfil his obligations and shows consideration for others based on her interactions with Pip. She possesses every trait Mrs. Joe lacked as a domestic woman. Biddy is kind and unselfish, in contrast to Estella's haughtiness and arrogance. "Biddy was immeasurably better than Estella, and [...] the plain, honest, working life to which I was born, had nothing to be ashamed of, but offered me sufficient means of self-respect and happiness" (Dickens, 2021:136). As a "truly good domestic woman", Biddy is rewarded by marrying Joe and achieving domestic bliss when Mrs Joe dies (Ayres, 1998:88).

Throughout history, women have always been oppressed and side-lined. In the nineteenth century, with industrial development, the period of women working under difficult conditions in factories began. Women were expected to be good wives, good mothers, and to work when necessary. The concept of the angel in the house, which emerged in the Victorian period, has gradually begun to lose its influence. The female characters created by Dickens are contrary to this understanding. Female characters, especially Miss Havisham, meet the reader with their unique and different characteristics. She is portrayed as an eccentric, wealthy woman who has experienced heartbreak and betrayal to a great extent. Since Miss Havisham is left behind on her wedding day and remains in a state of unending grief, her character embodies the idea of the Victorian "fallen woman." She stands for the destructive effects of male manipulation and betrayal as well as the social pressures and expectations women face to fulfil traditional roles as mothers and wives. On the other hand, Estella represents the ideal of the cold, distant, unachievable woman from the Victorian era who objectifies men in her relationships. In contrast to Miss Havisham and Estella, Biddy is a different kind of person. Being a teacher and carer, she is a bright, compassionate, and kind woman. Biddy is a symbol of the value

of education and self-improvement, as well as the domestic and nurturing traits of Victorian women. Pip's sister Mrs. Joe is a harsh, controlling character who personifies the ideal of the overworked, martyred Victorian woman. Her persona serves as a representation of the psychological and physical toll that women's expectations and household duties took at the time. The character of Mrs. Joe also draws attention to how difficult it is for women to question conventional gender roles or declare their independence within the confines of a male-dominated society.

CONCLUSION

Between 1837 and 1901, the Victorian era in Europe brought about a significant amount of social, political, and cultural change, particularly in Britain. This historical era is associated with Queen Victoria, who ascended to the throne at the age of eighteen. In addition to rapid industrialization and urbanisation, Britain saw significant social and economic changes during the nineteenth century. With the industrial revolution, class differences grew and the gap between the rich and the poor became wider. Victorian novels became a powerful medium for exploring the sensitive topics of the day as a result of these social changes being mirrored in literature. The novelists not only depicted the evolving social structure but also examined moral conflicts over religion, gender roles, and the challenges individuals face in society. Two of the most significant authors of the time, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens, conveyed to readers the social changes of the era via their works, which also mirrored the Industrial Revolution, class tensions, and the state of the economy. Elizabeth Gaskell was a well-known Victorian novelist who focused on the social and economic changes brought about by industrialization in her works. Being of the most well-known industrial novelists of her era, she provides her readers with insightful and compassionate depictions of working-class life during these revolutionary times in her novels. Dickens is widely recognised as a social reformer who used his writings to highlight the struggles of the working class and other oppressed groups. He was greatly impacted by his personal experiences of growing up in poverty and witnessing the social injustices brought about by the Industrial Revolution. His characters, including orphans, debt-ridden individuals, and child labourers, impressed readers and inspired empathy for those who were victims of oppressive social structures. This thesis also discusses the issues concerning women during the Victorian era and examines those issues through an analysis of *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell and *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. During the Victorian era, women's social status was constrained and traditional gender roles were strictly enforced. Women had limited rights and were mostly dependent on men for financial and legal decisions. Men were also expected to be the main providers of income. This thesis explores how industrialization has affected social classes and structures and demonstrates how the capitalist community plays a major role in the breakdown of human unity. The theory chapter attempts to investigate class structure and social mobility as well as the ways

the Industrial Revolution's effects on shaping social classes in this period. Victorian era and the Industrial Revolution affected the structure of social classes at this time. The Marxist analysis applied in this thesis sheds light on the historical context and development processes of social classes.

Marxist literary theory is a critical literature grounded on Marxist sociology and philosophy. Analysis of literary and societal relationships is its main objective, with a focus on how these relationships relate to capitalism, social inequality, and class conflict. Marxist theory uses literature to reflect ideologies and social structures. It looks at how literature can influence readers' worldviews and either reinforce or challenge existing power systems. Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx claimed that Marxism provides a dialectical understanding of social struggle, class relations, and social development. According to Marx, his earlier principles are the reason behind the conflict between the oppressors and the oppressed. Marxism's main objective is to examine the causes of the diversity of social classes. Marx claimed that social resistance in stable societies frequently results in a revolution and the emergence of new cultures. For this reason, the working class's uprising against the upper classes was seen by Marx and Engels as the significant nature of the revolution. Marxism is centred on the ideas of economic transformation, social class disparities, and the capitalist system. Lower classes are exploited by capitalism to control industrial processes. To understand social stratification, Marx and Engels emphasise the need for a proletarian class. The proletariat is the only class capable of battling the bourgeoisie through the idea of modern industry. Marx thought that literature generally had a connection to interpersonal relationships and served as a mirror reflecting society as a whole. Through literature, people from all classes can gain social awareness. Interpretations of literature are based on the authors' perspective and background.

Elizabeth Gaskell's famous novel *North and South* focuses on the moral, social, and economic issues that the Industrial Revolution brought about. The novel tells the story of Margaret Hale, a young woman who moves from the tranquil countryside of southern England to the northern industrial town of Milton. Margaret Hale and John Thornton, who represent the north and the south of England, respectively, are the story's central characters. Mr. Thornton is a wealthy manufacturer who owns a mill; Margaret is from the south and has aristocratic roots, especially because of her mother and maternal relatives. Through Margaret's experiences, *North and South* explores

topics such as gender roles, class conflict, industrialization, social change, and the complexities of interpersonal relationships. As she builds relationships with Milton's residents and the mill owner, John Thornton, she gains a better understanding of the outside world, which causes her to struggle with her ideals and views. The novel provides a thorough analysis of the tensions that arise between tradition and progress, duty and love, and the fundamental human need for comprehension and connection. Gaskell's portrayal of the conflict between rural and urban areas is a central theme in *North and South*, offering a great analysis of the diverse perspectives and challenges faced by people from different backgrounds.

The novel focuses on how factory owners in the industrialised North exploit the working class by putting profit before the welfare of their employees. The obvious division between the wealthy industrialists and the poor labourers represents the class struggle that is a fundamental feature of capitalism. Through the representation of Milton's mill owners and labourers, the novel delves into the power dynamics between capital and labour. The portrayal of the hard-working conditions, long hours, and low pay of the labour force are indicative of the capitalist class's exploitation of labour. Gaskell highlights the working class's struggles against industrial capitalism's oppressive forces while criticising the unequal distribution of wealth and power. In Gaskell's *North and South*, Margaret Hale serves as a vehicle for illustrating women's roles and Victorian social expectations. Margaret is portrayed as a strong-willed, independent woman who challenges gender stereotypes and traditional expectations. In the social and economic contexts of Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, women characters occupy a range of positions and play significant roles. A range of experiences, challenges, and roles are portrayed by the female characters in the novel. They further contribute to the novel's analysis of gender roles, class dynamics, and the complexities of human relationships through their interactions with the male characters and with each other. While women's lives were generally difficult during the Victorian era, industrialization led to more difficult working conditions and oppression under capitalism. Bessy, a character designed by Gaskell to represent the challenges faced by women in factories at the time, lost her battle with illness at a young age.

Charles Dickens portrays social stratification, social mobility, and the variations in speech patterns, mannerisms, attire, and style among the various socioeconomic classes. In his novel, *Great Expectations*, Dickens emphasises the poor conditions of the working class in Victorian society and creates a dialectical contrast

between the different socioeconomic classes in the story. While the authoritative dominant upper-class live in wealth and prosperity, the working class is compelled to live in filthy conditions. Dickens uses Pip, the main character of *Great Expectations*, to highlight the class disparities that existed during his time. It is important to remember that Miss Havisham is a representative of the bourgeoisie. On her wedding day, she received a letter telling her that their marriage could not work, so she plans to revenge on all men because they belong to the upper class of the bourgeoisie. Pip is turned into a capitalist's victim and suffers from her vengeance. Due to Pip's unsatisfactory beginnings as an employee, Havisham, and Estella, her adopted daughter, regard him as less worthy of their retribution than they do. Dickens draws attention to this aspect of Pip's personality when he joins the bourgeoisie. In addition, Pip gained social status and realised he was in the wrong class because Magwitch, Estella's father, was wealthy due to his involvement in criminal activity. Dickens illustrates how the lower classes' social status or outward appearances are valued more highly than their morals and values through Pip's relationships with Estella, Joe, and the Magwitch. These connections draw attention to the features of the times of Marx and Dickens. In the novel, Dickens criticises the aristocratic way of life by using Pip's thoughts. The significance of social acceptance and belonging to one's position in the world is emphasised in *Great Expectations*.

Understanding the dynamics of gender and women's liberation has been profoundly influenced by Marxism. Gender inequality is frequently viewed by Marxist analysis as a by-product of capitalism, where labour exploitation and subordination of women are intertwined. Marxism contends that patriarchal structures and conventional gender roles are maintained by the capitalist mode of production, which leads to the exploitation and oppression of women and the working class as a whole. Marx believed that understanding gender was essential to understanding production, the separation of labour, and society as a whole. Marx's examination of women's roles and the family extended well beyond considering the fact that women are employed in factories.

Victorian culture placed a lot of restrictions on women, expecting them to be obedient, subservient, and devoted to taking care of the home. Women's options and independence were limited by societal norms, as exemplified by characters such as Biddy and Estella. Miss Havisham is a multifaceted character who questions conventional gender norms. She is portrayed as a strong, affluent lady who uses her

influence over others, particularly Estella, to exact revenge on men. The limitations imposed on women by society and the results of these limitations are reflected in Miss Havisham's past experience and her need for power. Estella is portrayed as a cold beauty. Miss Havisham raises her to break men's hearts, including Pip. Because of the expectations placed on women to meet certain standards of behaviour and beauty, Estella's character draws attention to the objectification of women. The novel examines a variety of female relationships, including the difference between Estella and Biddy. Estella is the unachievable ideal of femininity, and Biddy is the embodiment of kindness, warmth, and intelligence. The variety of women's experiences and roles in society is reflected in these disparate portrayals. Pip's views on women change as the novel progresses. He is first drawn to Estella because of her attractiveness and charm, but he eventually comes to appreciate the kindness and depth of characters like Biddy and Mrs. Joe, Joe's wife.

Both novels shared the difficulties of the period with the reader and revealed the impact of the Industrial Revolution on people. In the light of Marxist theory, Elizabeth Gaskell's novel *North and South* and Charles Dickens's novel *Great Expectations* are examined in this thesis. This thesis aims to show how Marxist theory is used to analyse the novels *North and South* and *Great Expectations* and the positive or negative effects class of difference on human society. Unfortunately, in the twenty-first century, we still see the impact of the capitalist system and how people live under the dominance of this exhausting, exploitative ideology. The dominant ideology always oppresses the lower class and disrupts social order. Gaskell and Dickens shared this problem that existed in nineteenth-century England with their readers, and the sad thing is that this problem continues in some way and is a part of people's lives. During the process of writing this thesis, even after many years have passed, it is seen that the existing unfair system continues. In addition to the problem of class difference, the situation of female characters in the novels has been analysed. Women, who struggle to survive in a male-dominated society, have also become more oppressed by the impact of the Industrial Revolution and the existence of the capitalist system. Women had to overcome gender-based hardships both in their working and personal lives. I hope that this thesis will contribute to the further studies in the field of literature by adding a different perspective to the novels *North and South* and *Great Expectations* through Marxist theory.

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RESUME

Full Name: İrem NALBANT

Degree	Major	University	Year
Undergraduate Degree	English Language and Literature (ELL)	Atilım University	2021
Master Degree			

Work Experience:

Workplace	Position	Year
Ostim Technical University	English Instructor	2023-present
Denge High School	English Language Teacher	2021-2023

Foreign Language: English

Date: 11.06.2024

