AMERICAN SOCIAL CONDITION IN THE LATE OF 19th CENTURY
FOUND IN STEPHEN CRANE’S MAGGIE: A GIRL OF THE STREETS

A THESIS

BY:

UTAMI ANGGIARINI

REG.NO.030705017

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

FACULTY OF LETTERS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH SUMATERA

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ABSTRACT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT................................................................................................. i

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................... iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ............................................................................................... iv

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION ..................................................................................... 1

  1.1. Background of Analysis ................................................................. 3
  1.2. Statement of Problem ................................................................. 5
  1.3. Objective of Analysis ................................................................. 5
  1.4. Significance Analysis ................................................................. 5
  1.5. Scope of Analysis ................................................................. 6
  1.6. Theoretical Approach ............................................................. 6
  1.7. Review of Related Literature ................................................ 7

CHAPTER II METHOD OF STUDY ...................................................................... 9

CHAPTER III CONDITION OF AMERICA IN THE LATE OF 19TH CENTURY.............. 10

  3.1. The Gilded Age ................................................................. 10
  3.2. City Life ........................................................... 13
  3.3. Settlement Houses ............................................................. 16
  3.4. Railroads ........................................................... 17
  3.5. Irish Immigrants in United States ........................................ 19

CHAPTER IV THE ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN SOCIAL CONDITION IN THE LATE OF 19TH CENTURY FOUND IN STEPHEN CRANE’S

  MAGGIE: A GIRL OF THE STREETS.............................................. 25

  4.1. Power .............................................................. 26
  4.2. Alcoholism .............................................................. 30
  4.3. Violence and Moral Hypocrisy ........................................... 32
  4.4. Slum Life .............................................................. 36

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

  5.1. Conclusion .............................................................. 39
  5.2. Suggestion .............................................................. 41
Utami Anggiarini: American Social Condition In The Late Of 19th Century found In Stephen Crane’s Maggie…, 2007
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Literature is the expression of feeling, passion and emotion caused by a sensation of the interestingness of life. It grows from the imaginative mind of the writers. They express what was happening around them from natural phenomena to the lives of the people in their community. Everything felt, seen, or even read by a writer can be put into literary work by using the author’s creative imagination. The writer starts his work by selecting the subject matter, ordering words into a certain kind of writing that eventually the readers grasp the message the writer wants to convey through his writing. In short, literature can be the interpretation of experience.

A literary work has an element of entertaining. It can move our feeling and emotions. A literary work gives more lessons through the aspects of human life such as social, cultural, moral and religious aspects. It has a very close relationship with real life that we are experiencing. According to Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in Theory of Literature (1956: 94), literature represents ‘life’ and ‘life’, in a large measure, is a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been object of the literary imitation. It means that literature expresses life reality without ignoring the environment which influences the writing. Besides using his imagination or the ability of writing, a writer will always be connected to the real life or what he sees in real life. Therefore, many of literary works could be called as criticism of that real life when and where a writer is experiencing.

We know that life has many aspects to analyze and those aspects are poured into literary works by writers to convey their messages. It is also because a literary
work which contains critical messages is appeared when the author finds something wrong or unfair where he lives even in any other places. It is not wrong if we say that there must be a close relationship between the backgrounds of his literary works with the condition of life he is watching. As the compensation of his dislikeness toward this condition, he struggles and reveals his opinion by writing to convey something that according to him seems to be good or true.

Stephen Crane is an American naturalist. Being in shipwreck, and living in Bowery arouse his empathy toward the people and society, which caused him to write *The Red Badge of Courage, The Open Boat and Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. What he experienced shapes his view in seeing the reality in life, which according to him, is a complex matter. He creates characters as hopeless human beings, whose life seems to be determined by their environment where they live in. People have no choice to improve their lives. James B. Colvert states in *Great Short Works of Stephen Crane* (1965: XIII):

“Crane is concerned here with the moral responsibility of the individual, not with the deterministic power of social conditions. And as the statement suggests, moral capability depends upon to see through the illusion, wrought by pride and conceit the ability to see ourselves clearly and truly. In this sense, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *Experiment Misery* play variation upon themes developed in *The Red Badge of Courage, The Open Boat, and The Blue Hotel*-the moral consequences of human delusion.”

1.1. Background of Analysis

*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* is Stephen Crane’s naturalistic masterpiece. It is written in only two days before Christmas in 1891 and published in March 1893. It is not published commercially until 1896. The story seems to be set in the late of 19th
century in the slums of Bowery, New York City. The outdated language describes a period during the 19th century. The words and phrases they use are often contemporary slang or street language. For example, Maggie says to Jimmie, “Youse allus fightin’, Jimmie, an’ yeh knows it puts mudder out when yehs come half dead, an’ it’s like we’ll all get a poundin’.” (“You are always fighting Jimmie. You know that upsets mother when you come hurt. Now, we’ll all suffer.”). The characters are immigrants because the dialects are evidence in their conversations. Most immigrants emigrated from their home countries in searching prosperity in America. Arriving with nothing, they only can find residences in these slums of the city. That is such an environment that Maggie Johnson grows up. She falls in love with a man that abandons her. She returns to the streets and is destroyed by them. She has only one choice left that she must become a prostitute in order to survive and finally commits suicide.

*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* is not a commercial book but it pictures the brutality and degradation in the New York slums in the 19th century. According to Thomas A. Gullason in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, Norton Critical Edition (1979), Crane’s novel made the city with its slum dwellers and social problems, a fit subject for serious literary study. With Maggie, Crane reacted to this perspective on American life by showing the New York that he had seen himself. It was a New York inhabited by the poor, the drunken, and the desperate, people blinded by hypocrisy or driven by need, profane and corrupted. Crane considered this portrait of New York to be necessary honesty; most of his contemporaries considered it improper, even scandalous.

Slum life like poverty, alcoholism and prostitution play an important part in the transformation of the characters' lives in the novel. As Perkins states in *The
“American Tradition in Literature” (2002:493), “Stephen Crane sets out to show that environment is a tremendous thing in the world and frequently shapes lives regardless.” It means that the environment shapes the life of its people.

Every literary work usually spring from the context of its time and place. Like the personal experience of Stephen Crane’s life, the social considerations must be weighed more heavily in this novel than in others for the obvious reason that Crane was more socially conscious than others. The events at the time the novel was written are reflected completely in this novel. From 1880 to 1900 the populations of the United States increased by the arriving of the immigrants. They formed their own communities in the city. The government was unable to control it. The city was remaking itself, changing its value and becoming a society that gauged personal worth by money and possessions. Crane’s naturalistic writing came out of this environment.

*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* will be an interesting topic to be discussed as it concerns with Crane’s experience on American social condition. It deals much with the historical details and the characters are described to be deeply involved in them. Maggie may be the title character of this novel, but it is certainly arguable that the real subject of the novel is the city of New York, and more specifically the Bowery neighborhood. The readers of this novel may have a good knowledge on the historical and social background of the novel in order to understand it.

1.2. Statement of Problem

Stephen Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* portrays American social condition in the late of 19th century. It is not just about Maggie but it deals more directly with Crane’s experience in Bowery. His experience will show us the real condition of America at that time.
The problem to be analyzed in this novel is how *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* reflects the American social condition in the late of 19th century.

1.3. Objective of Analysis

Objective of analysis stands for the object that is going to analyze based on the problem of the analysis. The objective of this thesis is to analyze and to prove whether *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* reflects American social condition in the late of 19th century.

1.4. Significance of Analysis

The analysis of this thesis is expected to be able to give significance for the readers. The significance is:

- This thesis will give information to the readers about American social condition in the late of 19th century based on *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*.

1.5. Scope of Analysis

In doing an analysis, we need to limit the fields that are going to analyze. It is to make sure that the analysis is not out of context. In this thesis, I focus only on the social life of slum area in America in the late of 19th century as reflected in Stephen Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, not on other aspects of the novel.

1.6. Theoretical Approach

M.H. Abrams divided Literary Research Approach into four different kinds. They are *Expressive Approach*, deals with the internal point of view of the author,
because it is believed that art is the result of images, thoughts and feelings of the author, *Objective Approach*, stresses on the text of the literary works itself, *Mimetic Approach*, literary research deals with the universe, and *Pragmatic Approach*, literary research deals with receptive mind of the reader toward the literary text. By the classification, I use mimetic theory. It focuses on the relation between the literary text and the extra-textual universe.

Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in *Theory of Literature* state that there are two approaches in analyzing the literary works. They are intrinsic and extrinsic approach. Intrinsic approach is a kind of approach which analyze literary works based on the text and the structural points of literary works; characters, plot, setting, style, point of view, etc. Extrinsic approach is a kind of approach which analyzes the relationship between the content and the other discipline of knowledge such as history, religion, psychology, biography, etc.

In this thesis, I use extrinsic approach by relating the story with the history of America. Historical approach is the suitable way to understanding the novel. I use American history as my reference to compare and find out the similar condition in both of the novel and the history. I also relate my analysis with the social condition in America during the 19th century.

The most common approach to the relations of literature and society is the study of works of literature as social documents, as assumed pictures of social reality. As H.A. Taine stated in *History of English Literature* (1863),” Works of art furnish documents because they are monuments” (Wellek and Warren, 1956: 95). Used as a social document, literature can be made to yield the outlines of social history. It means that literature is really not a reflection of the social process, but the essence, the abridgement and summary of all history. A social picture could be assembled for
American life from *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. The America of the 19th century immigrants and slums appear in this novel. This approach makes us find that the picture stands to the social reality. It is not fancy and only an expression of the desire of the author but it is a realistic observation.

1.7. Review to Related Literature

To be able to analyze the work, I have found many related literary readings which are useful to produce literary analysis. As the main resources of data and information I use the following books are:

   
   This naturalist novel is used as the main source and as the focus of analysis in this thesis.

   
   This book describes about the history of America in the nineteenth century especially about the Industrial Revolution.

   
   This book contains the history of America from settlement to superpower.

   
   Bailey explains about American history especially in the nineteenth century, where at that time American literary glows. He talks the most topic of literature at that time is about portray of good and evil.

5. *Great Short Works of Stephen Crane* by James B. Colvert (1965)
   
   This book contains the explanation about Stephen Crane and his literary works.
CHAPTER II

METHOD OF STUDY

In doing this thesis, I use the library research by collecting the data from some books and many other resources that can be related to the subject matter being analyzed. I use Stephen Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* as the main source. The novel contains the important information for the subject matter that is being analyzed. Others are about America in the late of 19th century.

In analyzing Stephen Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, I follow the procedure as follows:

a. Data Collecting

In this first step, I collect and underline the important things from the novel such as the information about the slum condition in America at that time. I do the same thing with the related books and references. I mark the important information from those sources which has parallel analogies with the novel.

b. Data Selecting

The second step is to select all the information that has been collected and only the very significant data are used in the process of doing this thesis.

c. Data Analyzing

At the last step, all the selected data are being analyzed to achieve what has been planned in the objective of this thesis and finally a conclusion can be drawn from this thesis.
3.1. The Gilded Age

The Gilded Age and the first years of the twentieth century were a time of great social change and economic growth in the United States. Roughly spanning the years between Reconstruction and the dawn of the new century, the Gilded Age saw rapid industrialization, urbanization, the construction of great transcontinental railroads, innovations in science and technology, and the rise of big business. Afterward, the first years of the new century that followed were dominated by progressivism, a forward-looking political movement that attempted to redress some of the ills that had arisen during the Gilded Age. Progressives passed legislation to rein in big business, combat corruption, free the government from special interests, and protect the rights of consumers, workers, immigrants, and the poor.

Some historians have dubbed the presidents of the Gilded Age the “forgotten presidents,” and indeed many Americans today have trouble remembering their names, what they did for the country, or even in which era they served. These six men—Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James Garfield, Chester Arthur, Grover Cleveland, and Benjamin Harrison—had relatively unremarkable terms in office and faced few if any major national crises during their presidencies. Some historians have suggested that these Gilded Age presidents were unexciting for a reason—because Americans wanted to avoid bold politicians who might ruin the delicate peace established after the Civil War.

This is not to say politics were unimportant in the Gilded Age. On the contrary, Americans paid more attention to politics and national elections during the
post–Civil War period than at any other time in history, because each election had the
totality to disrupt the fragile balance—and peace—between North and South,
Republican and Democrat. Voters turned out in record numbers for each presidential
election in the late nineteenth century, with voter turnout sometimes reaching 80
percent or greater. The intensity of the elections also helps explain why Congress
passed so little significant legislation after the Reconstruction era: control of the
House of Representatives constantly changed hands between the Democrats and the
Republicans with each election, making a consensus on any major issue nearly
impossible.

The increase in voter turnout was also partly the result of machine party
politics, which blossomed in large U.S. cities during the Gilded Age. Powerful
political “bosses” in each party coerced urban residents into voting for favored
candidates, who would then give kickbacks and bribes back to the bosses in
appreciation for getting them elected. Bosses would also spend money to improve
constituents’ neighborhoods to ensure a steady flow of votes for their machines. In
this sense, party bosses and machine politics actually helped some of the poorest
people in the cities. Many politicians elected during the Gilded Age were the product
of machine party politics.

Driven by the North, which emerged from the Civil War an industrial
powerhouse, the United States experienced a flurry of unprecedented growth and
industrialization during the Gilded Age, with a continent full of seemingly unlimited
natural resources and driven by millions of immigrants ready to work.

In fact, some historians have referred to this era as America’s second
Industrial Revolution, because it completely changed American society, politics, and
the economy. Mechanization and marketing were the keys to success in this age:
companies that could mass-produce products and convince people to buy them accumulated enormous amounts of wealth, while companies that could not were forced out of business by brutal competition.

Railroads were the linchpin in the new industrialized economy. The railroad industry enabled raw materials, finished products, food, and people to travel cross-country in a matter of days, as opposed to the months or years that it took just prior to the Civil War. By the end of the war, the United States boasted some 35,000 miles of track, mostly in the industrialized North. By the turn of the century, that number had jumped to almost 200,000 miles, linking the North, South, and West. With these railroads making travel easier, millions of rural Americans flocked to the cities, and by 1900, nearly 40 percent of the population lived in urban areas.

The Gilded Age ended sometimes in the first third of the 20th century, some cite the 15th of April 1912, the night when the ocean liner Titanic sank. Others mention World War I or the stock market crash of October 24, 1929. All these events certainly had an impact on the factors which put an end to the Age of Moguls in America. The Titanic disaster taught mankind that there were still limits to where it could go. World War I started a process in which the power of the federal government was increased against the power of the tycoons, a process which would be furthered by the depression which followed the stock market crash of 1929. But what really put an end to the Gilded Age or the age of the moguls, was the introduction of income and estate taxes during the Wilson administration. Corporate and income taxes rendered wealth accumulation slower and more difficult, whereas the estate taxes prevented the perpetuation of wealth in the hands of the founding families.
3.2. City Life

The population of American cities grew rapidly in the late 1800s. In 1860 about 15 million people lived in the cities and by 1900 over 30 million Americans were city-dwellers. This rapid increase was partly due to the number of immigrants to the United States, which we will examine closer in this section. It was also because many Americans gave up their farms to move to cities. Farmers hoped to make a better life in the cities because they often worried all the time and never got to be around very many people.

City life could be difficult and dangerous. New workers found it difficult to afford decent housing because of the low wages they were paid in their factory jobs. They usually lived in overcrowded, run-down buildings with no plumbing or heat. Disease was very prevalent in this type of situation. Fire was also a constant danger because the buildings were made of wood and were built so close together.

The Great Chicago Fire is a prime example of the danger of the city structures. To house the large number of immigrants that flocked to the Midwestern city, small wooden buildings were built quickly without regard for fire safety. One night a fire started, although the cause was never determined, and spread quickly. The fire lasted 24 hours, and by the time it was finally put out the Great Chicago Fire had killed hundreds of people, nearly 100,000 people were left homeless, and 1/3 of the city of Chicago had been destroyed.

As cities grew, many took on a similar shape. Poor people lived downtown, in the oldest section of the city. Farther out, the middle class lived in neat rows of houses or new apartment buildings. Beyond them lived the rich. They had fine houses with big lawns and plenty of trees. There were exceptions to this pattern, but most cities held to it.
The poor lived in areas called slums. A slum is a poor, crowded section of a city with run-down and unsafe housing. Similar to the slums were the ghettos. Ghettos were poor areas where people of the same background lived together and kept their culture alive. Often the poor lived crowded together in tenements, which were buildings that were carved up into small apartments. Often families of six or seven people lived together in one or two rooms. Under these crowded conditions is where disease spread and outbreaks of typhoid ad cholera were common. Most tenements had no windows, heating, or bathrooms. They were also and death traps for when fire broke out.

The middle class included doctors, lawyers, office workers, and skilled crafts people. They lived outside of the slum areas in well-kept houses with a patch of lawn and a tree or two. Disease was kept under control in these areas. Many middle class citizens joined clubs, bowling leagues, singing societies, and charity groups. These activities gave them a sense of community and purpose.

The rich built mansions on the rims of the cities. In New York, huge houses dotted 5th Avenue, and in Chicago 200 millionaires lived along the exclusive lakefront. They lived like European royalty and filled their mansions with priceless art works and gave lavish parties.

The amount of people pouring into the cities in the late 1800's meant that there was not enough clean water, loads of litter in the streets, areas filled with pickpockets and thieves, as well as other problems for city-dwellers. So in the 1880s, city-dwellers campaigned to improve city life. They forced governments to hire engineers and architects. In New York City, for example, underground tunnels were built north to the Catskill Mountains which brought millions of gallons of pure water to the city every day. Cities passed building codes which required new buildings to have fire
escapes and decent plumbing. Zoning laws passed in many cities put factories in different neighborhoods than apartment buildings. This cut back on the amount of air pollution where people lived. Cities hired workers to collect garbage and sweep the streets. They set up professional fire companies and trained police. Many cities improved public transportation as well. Street lights were put up in many cities. City planners found ways to make the best use of open spaces. Recreational areas, art and history museums, and concert halls were built for entertainment purposes that all helped strive for a better living environment in the cities.

Because there was less space and more ideas of expansion in cities, in the 1880s, architects got the idea to build up instead of out. This is where skyscrapers were invented. They were called skyscrapers because their tops seemed to touch the sky. New technology made the buildings possible and elevators were invented to zip people up to the top floors quickly. Traffic was beginning to become a problem as the streets filled with horse drawn buses, carriages, and carts. New advances in transportation now became prevalent in the cities. This included steam engines, trolleys, streetcars, and subway systems. Department stores also were born in cities. This was a store that offered shoppers everything they needed in one place.

### 3.3. Settlement Houses

Coping with the problems of the cities, especially in poorer areas, was beyond the ability of city governments and of churches. Into the vacuum stepped a new breed of professional social workers, often women, who created what were called settlement houses to alleviate the appalling conditions that existed in the industrialized cities. They offered education and training, including English language; they dealt with city hall and did their best to cut red tape. They also worked in the political arena to try to
reform things such as public health matters and child labor. The most famous of these workers Jane Addams, whose Hull House in Chicago offered both classical academic and practical education to anyone who lived in the slums.

For college educated women around the turn of the century there were few opportunities for them to put their education experience to practical use. Business management was virtually closed to them, as were the professions of law, medicine, the military, the ministry, and higher education, as well as others. In general women were confined to clerical work below the executive level, grueling factory labor, domestic employment, and missionary work, nursing, and primary and secondary education. The settlement house movement was, therefore, to some extent a product of women's frustration. Social work as it evolved in the 20th century was not yet a full-blown profession, so women who saw the terrible needs of poor women in the cities, many of them immigrants, created the profession on their own, frequently with financial assistance and moral support from fathers, husbands, or businessmen who shared their views.

Perhaps the most famous woman who ever worked in the settlement house movement was Eleanor Roosevelt. Early during her marriage to Franklin Roosevelt she worked with settlement houses in New York City. On one occasion she had to escort a young woman back to her residence in one of the city's worst slums. Being somewhat uncertain about what she might find there, she asked Franklin to accompany her, and he did. When they had delivered the woman to her squalid quarters, he said to Eleanor as they emerged, “My God, I didn't know people lived like that.” FDR's biographers mark this as a consciousness-raising event in his political evolution; but the remark also demonstrates how oblivious many prosperous people were to the horrifying conditions in which millions of people lived.
3.4. Railroads

Beginning in the early 1870s, railroad construction in the United States increased dramatically. Prior to 1871, approximately 45,000 miles of track had been laid. Between 1871 and 1900, another 170,000 miles were added to the nation's growing railroad system. Much of the growth can be attributed to the building of the transcontinental railroads. In 1862, Congress passed the Pacific Railway Act, which authorized the construction of a transcontinental railroad. The first such railroad was completed on May 10, 1869. By 1900, four additional transcontinental railroads connected the eastern states with the Pacific Coast.

Four of the five transcontinental railroads were built with assistance from the federal government through land grants. Receiving millions of acres of public lands from Congress, the railroads were assured land on which to lay the tracks and land to sell, the proceeds of which helped companies finance the construction of their railroads. Not all railroads were built with government assistance, however. Smaller railroads had to purchase land on which to lay their tracks from private owners, some of whom objected to the railroads and refused to grant rights of way.

Laying track and living in and among the railroad construction camps was often very difficult. Railroad construction crews were not only subjected to extreme weather conditions, they had to lay tracks across and through many natural geographical features, including rivers, canyons, mountains, and desert. Like other large economic opportunity situations in the expanding nation, the railroad construction camps attracted all types of characters, almost all of whom were looking for ways to turn a quick profit, legally or illegally. Life in the camps was often very crude and rough.
By 1900, much of the nation's railroad system was in place. The railroad opened the way for the settlement of the West, provided new economic opportunities, stimulated the development of town and communities, and generally tied the country together. When the railroads were shut down during the great railroad strike of 1894, the true importance of the railroads was fully realized.

3.5. Irish Immigrant in United States

Immigration is the movement of people into another country. American manufacturers welcomed the tide of immigrants, many of whom were willing to work for long hours and for low pay.

Between 1870 and 1924, nearly 26 million immigrants entered the United States. The first immigrants came to the United States before 1885 from Northern and Western Europe. They included people from England, Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia. They became known as the "old" immigrants. The immigrants from England and Ireland spoke English, some were skilled workers, and most adjusted easily to jobs in cities in the East and Midwest because they were used to textile and coal mining jobs where they had come from. They faced some discrimination when then first arrived, however, they were drawn into American life as the nation grew.

The second group of immigrants came from Southern and Eastern Europe after 1885. This included people from Italy, Poland, Russia, Greece, and Hungary. They were known as the "new" immigrants. Their languages and religions set them apart from the old immigrants and they found it harder to make a place in America as a result. Some immigrants spent their life savings to come to the United States on dirty, overcrowded ships. Once they arrived they were examined at such places as Ellis Island in New York City or Angel Island in San Francisco before being allowed into the country. A main reason why immigrants came to the New World was
because they were seeking a better life for their family. The United States offered new jobs and opportunities that they could not find in Europe.

Many newcomers adjusted to life in the United States by settling in neighborhoods around their own people. In cities across America, Italians lived in Little Italies, Poles settled in Little Warsaws, and cities were patchworks of Italian, Irish, Polish, Hungarian, German, Jewish, and Chinese neighborhoods. In their neighborhoods immigrants spoke their own language, celebrated special holidays, and bought foods from the old country. Sharing laughter and tears with their own people eased the loneliness of life in America. They found jobs through friends and relatives, so people from one country often did the same kind of work.

Immigration changed the character of the country. People brought their customs, religions, and ways of life with them. Various features soon filtered into American culture. Another impact of immigration was the rise of prejudice against immigrants. People opposed to immigration were known as nativists because they felt that immigration threatened the future of "native" American born citizens. Some nativists accused immigrants of taking jobs from "real" Americans and were angry that immigrants would work for lower wages. Others accused immigrants of bringing disease and crime to American cities.

Now we will focus specially on Irish experience. The land system of Ireland in the 18th and 19th centuries was cruel. Farmers were forced to rent the land they lived and worked on from wealthy landowners in England. The crop they depended on primarily for food and rent was potatoes. In 1845, a fungus hit the potato fields and a devastating famine ensued. This famine killed 2.5 million people and was quickly followed by three more crop failures in 1846, 1848 and 1851. Potatoes rotted in the fields, people were forced from their homes and many starved. This Potato Famine
caused a mass exodus of Irish citizens. Between 1846-1851, more than one million Irish immigrants came to America, and another 873,000 arrived between 1860-1880. Most of these people were poor, undernourished and feeling defeated by life.

The decision to leave Ireland was only the beginning of a long and difficult journey. Once aboard the ship that would bring them to America, the emigrating Irish found almost intolerable conditions. The steerage compartments were about five feet high with two tiers of beds. Men, women and children were crowded together with room only for themselves and their belongings rolled up next to them. A narrow cot was provided for each person but often it was not even wide enough to turn over. Beds and bedding were not aired out or washed until the day before arrival and inspection by government officials. The only air and light available was through a hatchway, which was closed during stormy or rough weather. The air became increasingly filthy and foul as the journey progressed. Food was often insufficient and not cooked properly. Grain, hardened and served as a lump, was common. Clean water was also insufficient for the needs of the steerage passengers. Toilets were inadequate for the number of people aboard, and stench permeated the air.

Once they arrived in the United States, the majority of Irish immigrants remained in the port cities where they landed. Often, they were sick and weak from lack of food and the rigors of the journey. Most had little money and had no other option than to remain in the seaports. Others mistrusted farming since the land had caused so many problems in Ireland and did not want to move to less populated farm areas. With so many newly arriving immigrants crowded together, there were limited job opportunities and terrible living conditions.

People were crowded into rooms with often a whole family living in one room. In 1850, it was reported that in the Irish Fifth Ward in Providence, an average
of nine people or 1.82 families lived in one or two rooms. The Five Points slum area in Manhattan was described by a witness as having 75 people living in 12 rooms and paying about $4 a month for rent. At this time, this was equivalent to about one week’s pay. In the back of the building were wooden hovels which rented for $3 a month. Many tenements did not have indoor plumbing or running water. Sewage collected in outhouses and rats were prevalent, carrying and spreading disease, often to children. In 1857, 2/3 of New York City’s deaths were children under age 5, mostly Irish. There were also epidemics of typhoid, cholera, tuberculosis and pneumonia throughout East Coast cities.

When the newly arriving Irish immigrants looked for work, they found only the lowest unskilled jobs available to them. Men were hired for low-paying, physically demanding and dangerous work. Wages for unskilled jobs during the 1840s were under 75 cents a day for 10-12 hours of work. The men built canals, railroads, streets, houses and sewer systems. Many others worked on the docks or canals.

Irish women, like Irish men, also had low-paying unskilled jobs. There were two main types of work available for Irish women—domestic servants or factory work. Domestic work was secure and dependable and was not seasonable. However, the work was tiring and strenuous. It was not unusual for one maid to cook, clean and care for children 16 hours a day or more.

Women who worked in factories found the work to be dirty, low-paying and dangerous. In Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore in 1833, Irish women who worked making cotton shirts were on a piecework system. They were paid between 6-10 cents a shirt and worked about 13-14 hours a day. Since they could only make nine shirts a week, the maximum pay was about 90 cents a week.
There was very deep prejudice against Irish-Americans during the 19th century, especially as more immigrants came into the United States. Many Americans considered the Irish as dirty, stupid and lazy. Newspaper cartoonists often contributed to this image by drawing Irishmen as looking like apes with a jutting jaw and sloping forehead. Newspapers also wrote about Irish people using the derogatory term of “Paddy.”

Americans also blamed the Irish immigrants for causing economic problems. They felt that the great numbers of Irish workers would put Americans out of work or lower wages. Americans felt that the increased number of people would mean taxes would rise due to additional needs for police, fire, health, sanitation, schools and poorhouses.

Consequently, it became acceptable to discriminate against the Irish. Many job posters and newspaper ads ended with “No Irish Need Apply.” Hotels and restaurants may have had signs stating “No Irish Permitted in this Establishment.” In 1851-1852, railroad contractors in New York advertised for workers and promised good pay. When mostly Irish applied, the pay was lowered to fifty-five cents a day. When the workers protested, the militia was called in to force the men to accept.

The Irish reacted to the conditions they were faced with in different ways. Many changed their accents, names and even religion to escape discrimination. Others turned to alcohol and crime. Still others turned to the Catholic Church. Since many of the priests and nuns were Irish, it provided a connection to home. It also helped the immigrants feel safe from prejudice and helped them learn American customs.
Stephen Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* was published during the time of industrialization. The United States of America, a country shaped by agriculture in the 19th century, became an industrialized nation in the late 1890s. Industrialism occurred as the Americans wanted to establish a new living because Civil War had ruined the infrastructures. After Civil War, American civilization was transformed and improved. The way of life and thinking change into what was called “Modern America.” The economic and social transformation happened as the result of industrialism and the rise of the city. Industrial activities of producing goods caused many factories to be established. Big cities became the place where the factories are built. The facts made many people lack of land for settlement. Then they lived in slum areas.

Maggie may be the title character of this novel but it is not just about her. It is certainly arguable that the real subject of this novel is the city of New York and more specifically the Bowery neighborhood. Crane focuses on the determinism of social and economic forces on the lives of individuals. He is interested to depict the social ills of his time, showing that despite an individual best effort, the forces of the society will overcome her and determine her fate. Social forces are as inevitable as fate. Social circumstances like poverty, a life time of brutality and a lack of realistic prospects inevitably push Maggie from a sweatshop to the life of prostitution.
4.1. Power

It is shown in the first chapter, when the boys are fighting, power is evident throughout the story. One of the boys is Maggie’s elder bother, Jimmie Johnson. He is a young man who is cruel and likes to fight. He is a member of Rum Alley gang which usually fights against the Devil’s Row. A boy who likes to fight seems to search for self-identity and self-esteem and so does Jimmie. He cannot find peaceful life at home because his parents like to quarrel. The reality makes him try to find out compensation among his friends, his gang, where he is appreciated and regarded as an important fellow.

In the opening scene, the boys are fighting over a form of power which neighborhood group of boys is better or stronger. Their pursuit of power leads them into a street fight which is broken up by the use of superior power. Pete, Jimmie’s friend, walks up and shows his stuff on one of the little boys and shortly all the boys retreat.

“A very little boy stood upon a heap of gravel for the honor of Rum Alley. He was throwing stones at howling urchins from Devil’s Row who were circling madly about the heap and pelting him.” (Crane, 1893: 1)

“He strode over to the cursing circle, swinging his shoulders in a manner which denoted that he held victory in his fist. He approached at the back of one of the most deeply engaged of the Devil’s Row children. A little boy fell to the ground and gave a tremendous howl. He scrambled to his feet, and perceiving, evidently, the size of his assailant, ran quickly off, shouting alarms. The entire Devil’s Row party followed him.” (Crane, 1893: 4)

Power is again illustrated when Jimmie and one of the other boys, Blue Billie, who run instead of fighting with him. The other boys stand around excitedly watching the fight. Suddenly one of them calls to Jimmie that his father is coming. Jimmie and Blue Billie realize it only after Ol’ Johnson begins kicking at the two boys as they
struggle to punch each other. He tells him to come home now. They walk off. Jimmie realizes the power his father has over him as he walks behind him, humiliated.

“The small combatants pounded and kicked, scratched and tore. They began to weep and their curses struggled in their throats with sobs. The other little boys clasped their hands and wriggled their legs in excitement. They formed a bobbing circle about the pair.” (Crane, 1893: 6)

“As he neared the spot where the little boys strove, he regarded them listlessly. But suddenly he roared an oath and advanced upon the rolling fighters. He began to kick into the chaotic mass on the ground. The boy Billie felt a heavy boat strike his head. He made a furious effort and disentangled himself from Jimmie. He tottered away, damning. Jimmie arose painfully from the ground and confronting his father, began to curse him.” (Crane, 1893: 7)

The relationship of Pete and Maggie also demonstrated power. When Jimmie and Pete talk about the fights, Maggie sits in the shadows admiring Pete’s clothing and his carriage. Maggie is easily impressed by Pete’s attention on his personal appearance. He is dressed in the flamboyant clothing of a bartender.

“Maggie observed Pete. His hair was curled down over his forehead in an oiled bang. His pugged nose seemed to revolt from contact with a bristling moustache of short, wire-like hairs. His double-breasted coat, edged with black braid, was buttoned close to a red puff tie, and his patent-leather shoes looked like weapons. Maggie thought he must be a very elegant bartender. He was telling tale to Jimmie. Maggie watched him furtively, with half-closed eyes, lit with a vague interest.” (Crane, 1893: 21)

Pete notices Maggie is listening to his stories of fight. He is only interested on her physique. Maggie becomes enamored of Pete not because she sees him for what he is but because she has never known anything better. Their first meet when Maggie is hearing him describe his prowess in fighting. Her attraction to Pete is not confined simply to her romantic notions but also her very real need for a protector. She thinks him as a knight.
Pete takes Maggie to shows featuring melodramatic plots of young heroines being saved by love. She wonders if the rise from poverty to wealth, from sadness to joy that she sees on the stage would be possible for a girl like her. This idea opens her mind to a better future and she sees Pete as her chance to escape from Bowery life.

“Maggie always departed with raised spirits from these melodramas. She rejoiced at the way in which the poor and virtuous eventually overcame the wealthy and wicked. The theatre made her think. She wondered if the culture and refinement she had seen imitated, perhaps grotesquely, by the heroine on the stage, could be acquired by a girl who lived in a tenement house and worked in a shirt factory.”
(Crane, 1893: 35)

As Pete shows Maggie more new things, she leans on him more and more. She is shamed about her household and hates her work in the sweatshop. Her mindset shifts from being submissive to her mother to being submissive to Pete. For her, Pete is her way out from her miserable life. She thinks Pete can provide wealth and prosperity.

“She imagined a future, rose-tinted because of its distance from all that she previously had experienced. As to the present she perceived only vague reasons to be miserable. Her life was Pete’s and she considered him worthy of the charge.”
(Crane, 1893: 49-50)

The characters in the novel are the products of their environment so that the novel has no villains in the traditional sense unless one counts the Bowery itself as a perpetrator. Individuals act according to the demands of their environment and their actions are determined by what they learn from their surroundings. In the environment of the slums, the only guarantee for survival is power and strength.

Jimmie grows up an irreverent young man without respect for the world. He lives without hope and idealism. He runs his daily life just the way it is. As a truck driver, places him in the constant state of warfare that was the streets of Manhattan at
the turn of the century. This work suits Jimmie’s outlook and his culture’s expectation that only the strongest can survive and every dollar earned must be fought for.

In the end of the story, power is illustrated not with the man attempting to prove it but with his companion’s actions. As Pete drinks himself into oblivion and passes out at the table, all the girls get up from the table and leave him. Nellie is the last to leave him because she is busy collecting the bills he leaves behind. Nellie takes them and puts them in her pocket. Drunk passed out, and alone, Pete is now powerless.

“Overwhelmed by a spasm of drunken adoration, he drew two or three bills from his pocket and with the trembling fingers of an offering priest, laid them on the table before the woman. Presently he went to sleep with his swollen face fallen forward on his chest. The woman drank and laughed, not heeding the slumbering man in the corner. Finally he lurched forward and fell groaning on the floor. The woman of brilliance and audacity stay behind, taking up the bills and stuffing them into a deep, irregularly-shaped pocket.”
(Crane, 1893: 70)

4.2. Alcoholism

From the start to the end of this novel, the use and abuse of alcohol is prevalent. Both the mother and father drink heavily to the point of passing out. The drinking habit of the father is shown in the second chapter when he is quarreling with his wife. His intention wants to escape from problems, because every time the quarrel appears, his wife always a victor.

“In the quarrel between husband and wife, the woman was victor. The man seized his hat and rushed from the room, apparently determined upon a vengeful drunk. She followed to the door and thundered at him as he made his way down stairs.”
(Crane, 1893: 10)
The mother drinks every morning. She is supposed to take care of the children and serve them breakfast, but she is already drunk in the morning. People usually drink to escape the reality. In this case, the mother is trying to run away from her miserable life. She has to raise her children alone after her husband dies. She is having a hard time in providing the daily needs for the family, whereas she is jobless. So she tries to forget her frustrations by drinking.

“Her mother drank whiskey all Friday morning. With lurid face and tossing hair she cursed and destroyed furniture all Friday afternoon. When Maggie came home at half-past six her mother lay asleep amidst the wreck of chairs and a table. Fragments of various household utensils were scattered about the floor. She had vented some phase of drunken fury upon the lambrequin. It lay in a bedraggled heap in the corner.” (Crane, 1893: 26)

These parental role models do not do anything about breaking the cycle of alcoholism in their family. In fact, their weakness to turn to alcohol during times of trouble only encourages and teaches Jimmie and Maggie to turn to it as well. As a teenager, Jimmie likes drinking. He drinks in order to escape from his bad destiny. He states that his house is like a hell.

“During the evening he had been standing against a bar drinking whiskies and declaring to all comers, confidentially: “My home reg’lar livin’ hell! Damnedes’ place! Reg’lar hell! Why do I come an’ drin’ whisk’ here thisth way? ‘Cause home reg’lar livin’ hell!” (Crane, 1893: 13)

These parental role models make Jimmie cannot find a good model from his father and mother. They often drink, quarrel, and beat the children. So he begins to search his own satisfaction by drinking and fighting, where he feels he is respected by his fellows.

Maggie is the enabler to her mother’s drinking problem. Through her desire to put the house back together after her mother breaks the furniture, Maggie enables her
mother’s vicious cycle by not trying to get her to stop drinking. Maggie lacks self-confidence and does not feel strong enough to stand up to her family.

Mary’s problem with alcohol goes further than coming home stumbling drunk. Mary spends quite a bit of time in and out of jail because of her drinking problem. When Mary drinks, she drinks to get drunk. When Mary is drunk, her rage and fury are unleashed, and the result is a confrontation. Usually Mary gets kicked out of the bar and arrested by the police. After Maggie’s death, Mary’s drinking gets worse, and she finds herself in jail even more.

“The mother had gradually arisen to such a degree of fame that she could bandy words with her acquaintances among the police-justices. Court-officials called her by her first name. When she appeared they pursued a course which had been theirs for months. They invariably grinned and cried out: “Hello, Mary, you here again?” Her grey head wagged in many courts. She always besieged the bench with voluble excuses, explanations, apologies and prayers. Her flaming face and rolling were a familiar sight on the Island. She measured time by means of sprees, and was eternally swollen and disheveled.” (Crane, 1893: 21)

Drinking is common in slums areas, such environments includes people who are mostly pessimistic, have no freewill to improve their lives and lack of faith as they think they cannot change their fate of being poor. In their mind, being drunkard inherited by their former generation that cannot be denied anymore. Beside the Johnson family, the old woman who is their neighbor also drinks and she is one of the people who cannot avoid drinking liquor in the neighborhood. Pete, on the other hand, is also considered as one. In addition, his work as a bartender shapes him to be a drunkard. At the end of the story, he is heavily drunk. He is stressed by the problems, that he has fought with Jimmie and ruined Maggie. He is surrounded by dozen of women, as Crane states:

“In a partitioned-off section of a saloon sat a man with a half dozen women, gleefully laughing, hovering about him. The man had
arrived at that stage of drunkenness where affection is felt for the universe.” (Crane, 1893: 68)

Alcohol plays an important part in the transformation of the characters’ lives in the story. Alcohol abuse prevents the characters from developing good relationships with each other.

4.3. Violence and Moral Hypocrisy

In Maggie: A Girl of the Streets, violence surrounds the slum area. Fighting is common among the inhabitants of the slum. The condition of the Johnson’s house equals to what happens in the family. Everything is messy and cruel. Fighting, striking, and beating one another are common attitudes to them. The Bowery, however, mostly influences that situation. In Maurice Bassan’s Stephen Crane A Collection of Critical Essays, Donald Pizer states:

“Crane uses two basic images to depict the Bowery. It is a battlefield and it is a prison. These images appear clearly in the novel’s first three chapters, which described an evening and night in the life of the Johnson family during Maggie’s childhood. The life of the Johnson family is that of fierce battle with those around them and among themselves.” (Bassan, 1967: 111)

First, the fighting between father and his son appears in the story. It happens when Jimmie is fighting with Blue Billie from the Devil’s Row. His father separates them with a blow. He screams at Jimmie and being rude to him, kicking him to stop the fight. On the other hand, Jimmie confronts and curses him, for he cannot accept his father’s treatment to him. Mr. Johnson also strikes Jimmie with an empty beer pail. In chapter three, Jimmie is asked by an old woman, his neighbor, to buy a can of beer. As he is back from buying the beer, he meets his father. Mr. Johnson forces Jimmie to give him the can but Jimmie refuses. Still the father the pail of can from Jimmie.
“The father wrenched the pail from the urchin. He grasped it in both hands and lifted it to his mouth. He glued his lips to the under edge and tilted his head. His throat swelled until it seemed to grow near his chin. There was a tremendous gulping movement and the beer was gone. The man caught his breath and laughed. He hit his son on the head with the empty pail. As it rolled clanging into the street, Jimmie began to scream and kicked repeatedly at this father’s shins.” (Crane, 1893: 13)

Second is the cruel treatment of a mother toward her son. The story shows it when Mary, the mother, suddenly washes Jimmie on the sink after his duel with Billie. She also swears and pounds him. Quarreling between the two characters again occurs as Jimmie has already become a young man. It is when he responds the mother’s anger with anger.

“The mother’s massive shoulders heaved with anger. Grasping the urchin by the neck and shoulder she shook him until he rattled. She dragged him to an unholy sink, and, soaking a rag in water, began to scrub his lacerated face with it. Jimmie screamed in pain and tried to twist his shoulders out of the clasp of the huge arms.” (Crane, 1893: 9)

Third is the quarreling between the father and mother. They often quarrel because of the children. It is when the father tells to stop pounding Jimmie. He hates the noisy sound of her scream, because every time she does that kind of attitude, he cannot get a rest. However the mother tries to confront his husband. He thinks that she has been drinking. She denies it and the quarrel goes on. Then when he comes home drunk, he and his wife fight again. This time it is because the father does not try to stop Jimmie from fighting.

“The husband seemed to become aroused. “Go to hell,” he thundered fiercely in reply. There was a crash against the door and something broke into clattering fragments. Below he paused and listened. He heard howls and curses, groans and shrieks, confusingly in chorus as if a battle were raging. With all was the crash of splintering furniture.” (Crane, 1893: 5)
Fourth is the fighting among the brother, sister and the little brother. It is revealed when Jimmie strikes Maggie for being so worry as she sees Jimmie is dirty and bleeding because of fighting with Blue Billie. The former is disorderly mad at the latter, as she would not act calmly. On the other hand, Maggie mistreats the babe Tommie, her little brother. She cannot be patient in taking care of him.

“She jerked the baby’s arm impatiently. He feels on his face, roaring. With a second jerk she pulled him to his feet, and they went on. With the obstinacy of his order, he protested against being dragged in a chosen direction. He made heroic endeavors to keep on his legs, denounce his sister and consume a bit of orange peeling which he chewed between the times of his infantile orations.” (Crane, 1893:8)

The fifth is the harsh attitude of a mother toward her daughter. In this case, Mrs. Johnson beats Maggie for breaking a plate. It occurs when Maggie was still a child. Next is when Maggie has already become a young girl. At this time, the mother often screams at her for she has often gone out with Pete and seldom comes home. The climax when she busily screams at the coming of Maggie who has left the house for three weeks. The mother’s scream makes all the Rum Alley neighborhood knows that Maggie is back. But Maggie turns and goes out of the house again.

“She screamed at Maggie with scoffing laughter. The girl stood in the middle of the room. She edged about as if unable to find a place on the floor to put her feet. “Ha, ha, ha,” bellowed the mother. “Dere she stands! She lurched forward and put her and seamed hands upon her daughter’s face. She bent down and peered keenly up into the eyes of the girl. “Oh, she’s jes’ dessame as she ever was, ain’ she? She’s her mudder’s purt darlin’ yit, ain’ she? Lookout her, Jimmie! Come here, fer Gawd’s sake, and look out her.” The loud, tremendous railing of the mother brought the denizens of the Rum Alley tenement to their doors. Women came in the hallways. Children scurried to and fro.” (Crane, 1893: 61)

Maggie is the victim of the story. She is steered by events and circumstances. Her mother, Mary, exemplifies not only the deterministic violence of the Bowery but...
through her treatment and judgment of her daughter, she is complicit in the moral hypocrisy that destroys Maggie. Pete believes that he has done nothing wrong by the girl. He dismisses himself from responsibility for her downfall by rejecting Maggie simply. Jimmie also rejects women and like Pete rejects his sister because of the pressure his peers but he at least pauses to consider that Maggie would have acted better if she had known any better. He also briefly considers the notion that the girls he has ruined may also have brothers.

4.4. Slum Life

Life on the streets is definitely tough as described in this novel. The characters live in a section of New York City surrounded by tenement housing. The sanitation is often poor. Security and comfort are minimal. The residents are very poor and usually lead lives filled with despair and violence.

“The slums were made up of cheap, unsafe, wooden shacks or brick houses lacking proper sanitation and adequate heating and mostly filled to overflowing with underpaid workers, women and children. Saloons, gambling dens, and actually were may be judged from an editorial in the 1892 Arena.” (Ahnebrink, 1961: 3)

Bowery is known as one of the slum areas in America other than Philadelphia and Boston. The settlers are usually factory workers, unemployed, criminals, drunkards, and prostitutes.

“From a window of an apartment house that upgrades its form amid squat, ignorant stables, there leaned a curious woman. Some laborers, unloading a scow at the river, paused for a moment and regarded a fight. The engineer of a passive tugboat hung lazily to a railing and watched. Over on the island, a worm of yellow convicts came from the shadow of a gray ominous building and crawled slowly along the river’s bank.” (Crane, 1893: 4)

The residents of these housing areas live there because the rent is cheap, and they have no or little money to live elsewhere. The residents are often educated and
go to work in factories for little pay. These families often have many children because they do not practice birth control and just live their lives one day at a time. Because of a lack of education, these residents are not goal setters, nor do they attempt to make their lives better. In fact, most turn to abusing alcohol and drugs. In this story, the drug of choice is alcohol. With the regular consumption of alcohol, the residents throw what money they do have away on getting drunk. Getting drunk plays into the downward spiral of their fortunes as they constantly make bad choices. The more they drink, the tougher they make their lives. Instead of making good choices, they allow the alcohol to numb them.

Stephen Crane used Bowery as the setting of Maggie because he once ever lived there. He knows very well about the slum area. Slum area is a sordid environment. The poor condition makes them hopeless in facing life. They do not have freewill to gain their future. In lower class society, people lack of education and money to support their life. The parents usually are laborers, or even jobless. They suffer from the poor and hard life. The environment forces people to do things which are amoral.

Environment is important to be analyzed. Places like homes are not the ones where people can settle their lives, get a rest whenever they are weary, get protection whenever they are in troubles, get loves and care other members of the family that they also love, share interest and attention to one another.

Homes then are just the same like bars, where fight is common things to see. It reveal mostly in the Johnson family. The force of the slum Bowery environment attracts the characters to do cruel things. The poor condition and sordid environment produce man who is uneducated, wild, and cruel and does not have well-manner. It is a result of the pessimistic view of life they have and they have no freewill to change
their destiny. They are hopeless as they think that such lives are already their destiny. They do not believe in God, because according to them, God would never let His people live in a suffer from such bad condition of living. God is love and if He loves them, He would never let it happen. Thus, they only believe that their life is the work of nature.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1. Conclusion

After analyzing the American social condition that found in Stephen Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, I have the conclusion of this thesis.

1. As a whole, Stephen Crane is successful in expressing his idea through this novel. In the late of 19th century, the impact of immigration widened the discussion of race as ethnic and cultural differences became more pronounced in a country where agricultural, industrialization, and mass production of goods all vied for labor. Capturing urban poverty of Irish neighborhoods, Stephen Crane penned *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* to chronicle the challenge of chiseling out an identity and livelihood in New York City.

2. It is certainly proved that the real subject of this novel is the city of New York and more specifically the Bowery neighborhood. Maggie is just the title character of this novel because Crane really focuses on the social forces on the lives of individuals. He is interested to depict the social ills of his time. He makes the city and the social problems, a subject for serious literary study. It is inevitably that *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* presented the American social condition in the late of 19th century.

3. With Maggie, Crane also seems to challenge his readers to see a side of life that many did not want to see. It is because the other popular novels at the time only describe the goodness of human nature and about the prosperity of American society. They overlook the grim poverty. It is also the affect of popular entertainment on the morality of poor people. For Crane, the morality
of melodrama dominates the morality of his age. People prefer to attribute the suffering of people to moral failings instead of looking at the social institutions which makes suffering. As a witness to the life of the Bowery neighborhood, Crane reacts by showing the real condition of New York that inhabited by the poor, the drunken, and the desperate people blinded by hypocrisy or driven by need, profane and corrupted.

5.2. Suggestion

Stephen Crane is very intelligent one to achieve his aims in order to reach his readers what he wants to convey.

The novel which handles the theme of determinism of social and economic forces actually has the close relation to the social condition at that time. It involves the Civil War that has recent ceased. So that, the condition of the society still in the chaos. The industrialization, the increasing of immigrant and urbanization are the effects of the war.

I realize that the discussion in this thesis is still far from being perfect. Due to this, I suggest the next students to carry out a deeper analysis on this topic. I expect that the reader would widely explore the information and the knowledge about the history of Industrialized America in details so we can discover more parallels from Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* which maybe have been missed by me because of lack of knowledge.

Finally, I hope the reader would analyze other aspects of this novel and get interesting findings about what can be explored from the novel.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX

STEPHEN CRANE’S BIOGRAPHY, HIS LITERARY WORKS,
AND SUMMARY OF MAGGIE: A GIRL OF THE STREETS

Stephen Crane’s Biography

Stephen Crane was born in Newark, New Jersey on November 1, 1871 the youngest of fourteen children of Reverend Jonathan Townley Crane and Mary Helen Peck Crane. Stephen's father was a dedicated Methodist minister who wrote sermons and tracts condemning the evils of tobacco, alcohol and prostitution - vices that Stephen would embrace later in life. His mother was an equally passionate proselytizer of virtue and was a leading figure in the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

By the age of twenty-eight he had published enough material to fill a dozen volumes of a collected edition and had lived a legendary life that has grown in complexity and interest to scholars and readers the more the facts have come to light. His family settled in America in the mid-seventeenth century. He systematically rejected religious and social traditions, identified with the urban poor and married the mistress of one of the better houses of ill-fame in Jacksonville, Florida. Although he was temperamentally a gentle man, Crane was attracted to war and other forms of physical and psychic violence. He frequently lived the down and out life of a penniless artist; he was also ambitious and something of a snob; he was a poet and an impressionist: a journalist, a social critic and realist. In short, there is much about Crane’s life and writing that is paradoxical; he is an original and not easy to be right about.
Crane once explained to an editor: “After all, I cannot help vanishing and disappearing and dissolving. It is my foremost trait.” This distinctively restless, peripatetic quality of Crane’s life began early. The last of fourteen children, Crane moved with his family at least three times before he entered school at age seven in the small town of Port Jervis, New York. Since Crane’s father died on February 16, 1880, his mother earned extra money to support family by writing for Methodist journals, New York Tribune and Philadelphia Press with Crane’s help. After a tentative return to Paterson, the family settled in the coastal resort town of Asbury Park, New Jersey, three years later.

At seventeen years of age he began to help his brother with his press service. He attended Syracuse University where he distinguished himself only as a baseball player. After attending a few classes he left school. He decided to write instead of going back to college in September. He moved to New York City and lived with his brother, Edmund Brian and his artist friends in nearby Lake View. New York City was the inevitable destination for a young man with literary ambitions and a desire to experience the fullness of life. There he studied the saloons, flophouses, and people of the Bowery. During this time his mother died of cancer. In two days before Christmas, he had written the first draft of Maggie, but newspaper reporting something else. Editors were not impressed by news stories in which sense impressions and atmospheric touches triumphed over factual detail. He had not found a publisher for Maggie so he borrowed seven hundred dollars from his brother and paid for a private printing. In yellow paper wrappers, under the pseudonym “Johnston Smith,” he published Maggie: A Girl of the Streets in March 1893. Although Hamlin Garland admired the novel, and William Dean Howells promoted Crane and his book, the book did not sell. The mass audience of the time sought from literature what
Maggie denied: escape, distraction, and easy pleasure in romances which falsified and obscured the social, emotional, and moral nature of life.

Just why Crane turned next to the Civil War as a subject for *The Red Badge of Courage* is not clear. He may have wished to appeal to a popular audience and make some money; he later described the book as a ‘potboiler.’ In 1893, Crane began his best-known work, *The Red Badge of Courage: An Episode of the American Civil War*. The narrative, which depicts the education of a young man in the context of struggle, is as old as Homer’s *Odyssey* and is a dominant story-type in American literature from Benjamin Franklin through Melville, Hemingway, Malcolm X, and Saul Bellow. Crane was not so much working within or against this tradition as he was departing sharply from it. That is, Crane is distinctively modern in conceiving personal identity as complex and ambiguous and in obliging his readers to judge for themselves the adequacy of Henry’s responses to his experiences.

When *Red Badge* was first published as a syndicated newspaper story in December, 1894, Crane’s fortunes began to improve. The same syndicate that took *Red Badge* assigned him early in 1895 as a roving reporter in the American West and Mexico, experience which would give him the material for several of his finest tales—*The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky* and *The Blue Hotel* among them. Early in 1895 an established New York publisher agreed to issue *Red Badge* in book form. In the spring of that year, *The Black Riders and Other Lines*, his first volume of poetry, was published. Predictably, Garland and Howells responded intelligently to Crane’s spare, original, unflinchingly honest poetry, but it was too experimental in form and too unconventional in philosophic outlook to win wide acceptance. *The Red Badge of Courage* appeared in the fall as a book and became the first widely successful
American work to be realistic in the modern way. It won Crane international acclaim at the age of twenty-four.

In all of his poetry, journalism, and fiction Crane clearly demonstrated his religious, social, and literary rebelliousness; his alienated, unconventional stance also led him to direct action. After challenging the New York police force on behalf of a prostitute who claimed harassment at its hands, Crane left the city in the winter of 1896-1897 to cover the insurrection against Spain in Cuba. On his way to Cuba he met Cora Howorth Taylor, the proprietress of the aptly named Hotel de Dream in Jacksonville, Florida, with whom he lived for the last three years of his life.

On January 2, 1897, Crane’s ship *The Commodore* sank off the coast of Florida. His report of this harrowing adventure was published a few days later in the New York Press. He promptly converted this event into *The Open Boat*. This story, like *Red Badge*, reveals Crane’s characteristic subject matter—the physical, emotional, and intellectual responses of men under extreme pressure—and the dominant themes of nature’s indifference to humanity’s fate and the consequent need for compassionate collective action. In the late stories *The Open Boat* and *The Blue Hotel*, Crane achieved his mature style. In both of these works we can observe his tough-minded irony and his essential vision: a sympathetic but unflinching demand for courage, integrity, grace, and generosity in the face of a universe in which human beings, to quote from *The Blue Hotel*, are so many lice clinging “to a whirling, fire-smote, ice-locked, disease-stricken, space-lost bulb.”

In the summer of 1897 Crane covered the Greco-Turkish War and later that year settled in England, where he made friends, most notably with the English writers Joseph Conrad, H.G. Wells, and Ford Maddox Hueffer and the American writers Henry James and Harold Frederic. The following year he covered the Spanish-
American War for Joseph Pulitzer’s New York World. When he wrote *The Red Badge of Courage*, he had never battle at firsthand, but his experiences during the Greco-Turkish and Spanish-American Wars confirmed his sense that he had recorded, with more than literal accuracy, the realities of battle.

In the last months of his life Crane’s situation became desperate; he was suffering from tuberculosis and was hopelessly in debt. He wrote furiously in a doomed attempt to earn money, but the effort only worsened his health. In 1899 he drafted thirteen stories set in the fictional town Whilomville for *Harper’s Magazine*, published his second volume of poetry, *War Is Kind*, the weak novel *Active Service*, and the American edition of *The Monster and Other Stories*. During a Christmas party that year Crane nearly died of a lung hemorrhage. Surviving only a few months, he somehow summoned the strength to write a series of nine articles on great battles and complete the first twenty-five chapters of the novel *The O’Ruddy*. In spite of Cora’s hopes for a miraculous cure, and the generous assistance of Henry James and others, Crane died at Badenweiler, Germany, on June 5, 1900.

**List of Crane’s Literary Works**

1. Short Stories :

   1896   *The Little Regiment and Other Episodes of the American Civil War*

   1898   *The Open Boat and Other Tales of Adventure*

   1899   *The Monster and Other Stories*

   1900   *Whilomville Stories*

   *Wounds in the Rain: War Stories*
2. Novels:

1893  Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (A Story of New York)
1895  The Red Badge of Courage: An Episode of the American Civil War
1896  George’s Mother
1897  The Third Violet
1899  Active Service
1902  Last Words
1903  The O'Ruddy: A Romance

3. Play:

1940  The Blood of the Martyr

4. Poetry:

1895  The Black Riders and Other Lines
1896  A Souvenir and a Medley: Seven Poems and a Sketch
1899  War Is Kind

Summary of Maggie: A Girl of the Streets

Maggie: A Girl of the Streets is a story of a young pretty girl who lives in a tenement in the New York slum, Bowery. She is raised by a couple of parents who are both drunkards. Her family name is Johnson. She has two brothers, Jimmie and Tommie.

When she was still a little girl, she seldom played with other children of her age, for she had to take care of Tommie, her little brother. On the other hand, her elder brother, Jimmie, did not only hang around with other kids but also fought. His enemy was The Devil’s Row. They often fought as wanted to conquer the Bowery.
The father likes to quarrel with Jimmie. Once he ever kicked Jimmie because Jimmie fought with other kids. However, as Jimmie did not accept his father’s cruel treatment, he swore and screamed at him. At home, Jimmie once again was being struck by his mother, Mary. Maggie, as wanted to take care of Jimmie, was being swore and struck back by him. Tommie, the little boy, was also did not want to just calm down as his sister jerked him rudely. He confronted her back.

Maggie’s father did not live long. He died and then followed by the death of Tommie. Maggie and Jimmie then worked in order to establish the daily needs of the family, because their mother was only a housewife and jobless. Maggie worked as laborer in a collar and cuff factory, while Jimmie was a truck driver.

Once, Pete, Jimmie’s friend came to their house as Jimmie took him. As Maggie took her attention on Pete, she felt attracted with Pete’s appearance. She hoped that Pete would come again on Saturday night. Unfortunately, he did not. However, the other day, Pete came again and this time he asked Maggie to go out. Then they became lovers.

As Maggie seldom came, her mother was very angry to her. She even did not come home for three weeks. The mother’s temper suddenly rose and she rejected Maggie. Maggie could not accept that. His brother, Jimmie, also did the same thing as their mother did. He also rejected the coming of her sister. Maggie left the house again. This time she came to Pete as her last shoulder to cry on. On the contrary, Pete rejected her. When Maggie came, he told to her to go away and to leave the bar for his boss would be angry.

As her existence was being denied by persons who supposed to be close to her, she surrendered her life to a man that she met on the street. She became a
prostitute. She suffered from the environment that shaped her life miserable. She finally committed suicide.

Jimmie came home and announced that Maggie is dead. Mary did not believe it at first but then began to cry. The chapter and story end with Mary exclaiming, “Oh, yes, I’ll forgive her! I’ll forgive her!”