

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Background of Study**

Literature can be defined as the reflection of a specific society during a particular era. This perspective emphasizes literature's interconnectedness with the culture in which it originates and is embraced. It underscores that literature is not an isolated entity but holds a dynamic position, role, and purpose within a community, undergoing continuous evolution across time and variations between different societies (Teuw, 2008:21). In this context, literature often serves as a lens through which the complexities of social hierarchies and class distinctions are examined and critiqued. Through storytelling, authors can highlight the lived experiences of different social classes, bringing attention to issues of inequality, privilege, and social mobility. These narratives not only reflect the social realities of their times but also challenge readers to question and rethink societal norms and structures.

Social class refers to a collective of individuals who share common elements influencing their life opportunities. Variations in social class emerge from considerations of esteem and social standing. For instance, an esteemed community member is perceived as having a higher social status, while a member with low social standing may face societal disdain (Edmond, 2009). Society employs the concept of class to organize social groups into a hierarchical system based on economic status within the social fabric (Wright, 2003: 1). The social interactions associated with such social inequality or stratification often become focal points of conflict in society, a theme occasionally explored in literary works. Individuals may treat others differently based on factors such as wealth, status, education, religion, and race, leading to the formation of stereotypes and discriminatory behaviors. The term "class" not only involves stereotyping specific groups but also delineates their distinct social roles.

Charlotte Bronte's background is rooted in the emergence of the middle class and traditional moral values. Faced with various societal challenges, she crafted a classic work, a romance novel titled *Jane Eyre*. This novel quickly gained popularity in the evolving literary landscape of Europe during the Renaissance, presenting a modern form. In the initial sections of Bronte's novel, she explores societal attitudes, particularly focusing on education. Bronte, displaying a keen interest in academic pursuits, pursued literary training at Pensionnate Hegers in Brussels and also acquired proficiency in the German language. Finally, in 1847, Charlotte Bronte successfully published *Jane Eyre*, a novel that portrayed a woman as both fragile and resilient. The love story within the novel showcased an innovative narrative structure reflective of its time (Smith, 2020).

*Jane Eyre* is a captivating nineteenth-century novel that delves into and mirrors the societal class dynamics of the Victorian era. Following the death of King William IV, Queen Victoria ascends to the British throne. Despite lacking preparation for the role, she holds the belief that she will competently fulfill her duties in due course. Upon the door to her freedom opening, she comes to the realization that she was once a secluded girl in Kensington Palace. Now, however, she has transformed into the queen of the British Empire, encompassing the United Kingdom and Ireland (Jones, 2015).

The mix of literary genres in the narrative contributes to its entertainment and enjoyment. Furthermore, the story is derived from Charlotte Bronte's own life experiences during the Victorian era, reflecting her challenging circumstances. *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte, penned by the English writer, was successfully published on October 16, 1847. The novel was released by Smith, Elder & Co. in London, England, under the pseudonym Currer Bell. The initial American edition was published the subsequent year by Harper & Brothers in New York (Gaskell, 1857).

*Jane Eyre* (1847) stands as one of the enduring classics in literature. Despite her impoverished and plain appearance, Jane possesses an

indomitable spirit, intelligence, and courage. Orphaned in her early years, Jane endures a challenging upbringing under the care of a harsh aunt. Upon completing her education at Lowood School, she secures a position as a teacher for girls under the enigmatic and proud Mr. Rochester. The backdrop of Yorkshire sets the stage for the gradual development of a love story between Jane Eyre and Mr. Rochester, though their path is laden with numerous obstacles and tragic events that necessitate a temporary separation before a reunion is possible. Despite the hardships of her early life, Jane ultimately finds happiness through marriage by the conclusion of the narrative (Shuttleworth, 2004).

The researcher has opted to focus on a novel for the study, specifically choosing Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* because it serves as a literary work that provides insights into social class dynamics. This novel offers a straightforward portrayal of life in Victorian England. Through reading it, the researcher anticipates not only deriving enjoyment but also broadening his understanding of social class during that historical period. The choice to analyze *Jane Eyre* is motivated by several factors. Firstly, it stands out as one of the finest novels depicting a woman's struggle to find happiness in a world where love and duty frequently clash. Secondly, it has achieved significant popularity as a renowned novel, captivating millions of readers worldwide. Lastly, the enduring appeal of the protagonist, with her strong character, common sense, and unwavering commitment to her beliefs, makes it a compelling subject for analysis. The novel effectively illustrates both the challenges and moments of ease in the protagonist's life.

Based on the preceding explanation, the researcher has selected *The Reflection of Social Classes in the Victorian Era in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre (1847)* as the title for this study. This choice aims to achieve a comprehensive understanding of how Bronte portrays social class dynamics during the Victorian era through the character of Jane Eyre.

## 1.2. Identification of Problem

Literary works are formed as a response and reflection of social occurrences that exist in human life. In this context, the researcher believes that *The Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre (1847)* is one of the reflections of social events. Based on the context, the researcher found interesting problems in this novel to analyze as follows:

- Analysis of how different social classes are depicted through characters and their interactions.
- Examination of the limitations and opportunities afforded to individuals based on their social class.
- Exploration of the conflicts arising from class differences and how these drive the narrative.
- Investigation of the impact of class struggles on character development and plot progression.
- Analysis of the literary devices Bronte uses to reflect and critique the class system, such as symbolism, narrative voice, and setting.
- Examination of how class distinctions influence the identities, opportunities, and relationships of the characters, especially Jane Eyre.

## 1.3. Research Questions

Derived from the aforementioned study background, the researcher articulates the research questions as follows:

- 1) How are the social classes of the Victorian Era depicted in Charlotte Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre*?
- 2) How does the social class in Charlotte Bronte's "*Jane Eyre*" affect the treatments received by each class?

#### **1.4. Research Objectives**

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To analyze the social classes of the Victorian Era as depicted in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*.
- 2) To elaborate on the way the social class in *Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre"* affects the treatments received by each class.

#### **1.5. Significance of Study**

This study holds both theoretical and practical importance. Theoretical significance lies in the potential contribution of findings to the development of literary theory applications. Additionally, the study has the capacity to enhance overall knowledge, particularly concerning the portrayal of social class in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* its impact through the treatment towards each class.

In practical terms, this study is recommended as a resource for literary criticism, serving as an additional reference to enrich and advance knowledge, particularly in the analysis of the novel.

#### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on the exploration of social class in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) as the primary source, utilizing a sociological approach by employing Marx's theory of social class that can offer deeper insights into the portrayal of social classes during a specific era as depicted in the narrative. The scope involves using this sociological lens in literary analysis.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the second chapter, the researcher will discuss several references which are related to the research problem. In order to make the readers get understanding about this study. So, this study will start with Previous Study, Definition of Literature, Definition of Novel and Definition of Social Classes.

#### **2.1. Previous Studies**

Before beginning the research, it is essential for the researcher to review previous studies related to the topic to gather information and insights that will aid in forming the foundational concepts of this research. Additionally, the researcher identified three prior studies to use as references for developing and analyzing this research.

The first previous study was done by Tiainen (2013) with the title *Identity, Dependency and Autonomy in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre*. In conclusion, Jane Eyre's journey toward self-discovery and maturity is a complex interplay of internal psychological processes and external societal influences within the constraints of Victorian culture. Through the theoretical lenses of Erikson's psychosocial development, Havighurst's developmental tasks, and Lacan's relational identity, we see Jane's struggle and ultimate success in balancing dependence and independence. Her growth unfolds across significant locations, each representing different stages and challenges in her life. Despite the rigid and often contradictory expectations placed on women of her time, Jane achieves a harmonious self-identity, culminating in a fulfilling partnership with Mr. Rochester. The cultural analysis of Victorian perceptions of women, highlighted by the contrasting figure of Bertha Mason, underscores the broader societal context that shapes and reflects Jane's personal development.

The second previous study was done by Djafri and Hachani (2017)

who wrote *Social Conflicts in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre*. The present study is an attempt to deal with social conflicts in the British society during the Victorian period taking Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* as a sample. The work intends to look for the social conflicts that Jane, the heroine, has confronted and how she could overcome difficulties through internal and external conflicts. The realities that Charlotte Brontë shows in *Jane Eyre* stand as a mirror which reflects the realities in the Victorian era. To attain those objectives a descriptive analytical method is opted for. In addition to that, Marxist and Feminist literary theories are selected and adopted in the analysis.

The third previous study was done by Abaker (2019) with the title *The Image of Victorian Women as Depicted in Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte*. This research attempts to explore how successful Charlotte Bronte is in creating for her novel *Jane Eyre* a heroine of her age, dramatizing her own autobiography, including social problems that she encountered as a woman during the Victorian era. And how she can tackle and address many nineteenth century Victorian social problems such as class and gender inequality, race prejudice, and religious beliefs. The research uses the descriptive analytical method, and in it is revealed that Bronte has deliberately created Jane, the main character along with other female characters to refute Victorian inherited conventions that treated women unfairly, many critics and writers think and confirm that women were oppressed during Victorian era. Bronte made an innovation by raising a powerful, passionate, female character who can articulate her thought, and fight for her rights. This portrayal contracts with the real women images of Victorian time, who were oppressed and marginalized by men. It is sum up that Charlotte Bronte revolts against the inequality between men and women during the nineteenth century, she portrays this rejection in the *Jane Eyre's* resistant behavior.

The fourth research was done by Vyoralová (2019) with the title *Orphans in the Victorian Era in Jane Eyre and Oliver Twist*. The thesis analyses the position of orphans within the British Victorian society in two famous novels - *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. The thesis introduces three key themes: social class, social environment, and gender, which are the primary focus of the analysis. The main objective of the thesis is to establish the major differences and similarities between the novels, more precisely between their protagonists Jane and Oliver. Furthermore, the

novels and their protagonists are also compared to the real life of orphans in the Victorian era, which is described in the theoretical background of the thesis. Both of the novels are tales of social progress of the main character and both authors emphasize that by making good choices in life, even the most miserable little orphans might have their happily ever after fairy-tale ending. The historical-cultural research will show that lower-class orphans themselves in the Victorian era during which the novels became popular had it much worse.

The fifth previous study was done by Kumar (2021) who wrote *The Representation of Female Characters in Victorian Literature: A Study of Jane Eyre, Emma, and Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The depiction of female protagonists in three classic Victorian novels: Jane Eyre, Emma, and Tess of the d'Urbervilles, all written by Charlotte Bronte, Jane Austen, and Thomas Hardy, respectively. The Victorian era, with its strict social conventions and gender roles, provides a fascinating backdrop against which to examine the many ways in which women were portrayed in books published at the time. This analysis compares and contrasts the three main female protagonists, Jane Eyre, Emma Woodhouse, and Tess Durbeyfield, focusing on their individuality, social positions, and hardships. Different aspects of Victorian femininity are represented here, from the strong-willed and self-reliant Jane to the sympathetic but mistaken Emma and the tragically weighed-down Tess. Created these characters after carefully analysing the text to show how Victorian-era women were restricted by social norms.

The researcher summarized, including Tiainen (2013) on psychological development and Djafri and Hachani (2017) on social conflicts with a blend of Marxist and feminist viewpoints, lacks a comprehensive Marxist analysis of social class representation in *Jane Eyre*. Similarly, studies by Abaker (2019) and Kumar (2021) that focus on gender roles and societal critiques do not incorporate Marxist theory to explore the intersection of class and gender in character treatment. Vyoralová (2019) compares orphans in Victorian literature historically but does not apply Marxist theory to understand class disparities. These existing studies miss the detailed examination of how class distinctions influence character interactions and societal roles. Addressing this gap through a focused Marxist analysis could reveal how socio-economic structures affect character treatment, how Jane Eyre's social mobility impacts her relationships,



and how class conflicts are portrayed within the Victorian class system, offering a deeper insight into class-based disparities in the novel.

## **2.2. Theoretical Background**

### **2.2.1. Sociology of Literature**

The sociology of literature has a rich history dating back many years. According to Jadhav (2012:25), H. A. Taine was the first to attempt a systematic sociological approach to literature. His work, "History of English Literature" (1886), marked a significant milestone in this field. Following Taine, Karl Marx, Frederic Engels, and their followers contributed to the development of the sociological approach by viewing literature as part of the economic structure of society. However, it was in the late 20th century that the sociology of literature gained prominence within critical theory. This development owes much to influential social thinkers and critics such as Lucien Goldman, Leo Lowenthal, Robert Escarpit, Alan Swingewood, Diana Laurensen, John Hall, Georg Lukacs, and even Wellek and Warren (Jadhav 2012:25).

According to Milner (1981:27), George Lukacs argues that a literary work can only be effectively created when the writer draws directly from their experiences within the social world. Lukacs emphasizes that a skilled writer must integrate their thoughts, imagination, and personal experiences into their work in an authentic manner. He believes that this integration establishes an essential link between the individual as a private entity and as a social being within a community.

Furthermore, according to Goldmann (1980:11), a literary work must be connected to its historical context. This connection enables the social and communicative aspects of the text to be discerned, allowing Goldmann to explore the relationship between literary works and society. Literary works, in Goldmann's view, serve as reflections of societal life, crafted by writers who express their thoughts, perspectives, emotions, and reactions to the actual conditions of a society during a specific period of time.

It also examines human behavior in everyday interactions within their groups or communities. Therefore, the sociological approach is well-suited not only for studying human behavior within society, but also for understanding how social communities influence or shape their behaviors in everyday life.

“First, there is the sociology of the researcher and the profession and institutions of literature, the whole question of the economic basis of literary production, the social provenience and status of the researcher, his social ideology, which may find expression in extra literary pronouncements and activities. Then there is the problem of social content, the implications and social purpose of the works of literature themselves. Lastly, there are the problems of the audience and the actual social influence of literature.” (Wellek and Warren 1956:96)

Based on the explanation provided, it can be concluded that there are three distinct types of sociology of literature. Firstly, there is the sociology of the researcher, which examines how a literary work relates to the personal experiences and life of the researcher. This perspective acknowledges that the researcher, being a part of society, shapes their work based on their interactions and observations within that society. Secondly, the sociology of the literary work focuses on analyzing the social aspects embedded within the literary piece to understand its connection to the societal context in which it was created. Thirdly, the sociology of the reader involves readers interpreting the social aspects of a literary work to analyze how the social conditions at the time and place of the story's creation influence the work itself.

According to Laurensen and Swingewood (1972:13), literature serves as a reflection of its time. This suggests that readers can analyze the social phenomena occurring within a specific society during a particular period and location through literary works. Essentially, literary works mirror the situations and conditions of social life within the society they depict.

Hence, a literary work is inherently intertwined with its social context. Readers who engage with literary works can gain deeper insights by examining the external elements that surround the literary piece.

### **2.2.2. Definition of Social Class**

Social class is an arrangement of any social group or society into a hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property, social evaluation, and psychic gratification (Johnson, 2020: 42). This hierarchical structuring is fundamental

to the organizational framework of societies, shaping varying levels of privilege and access among different groups. The stratification of social class entails an unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, often justified by perceptions of varying abilities and efforts among individuals (Wright, 2019). These distinctions not only determine disparities in wealth and influence but also permeate societal interactions and perceptions, influencing daily dynamics and relationships (Piketty, 2021).

Social class is considered important or useful for society itself. The point of their argument is that privilege, power, and prestige, or so-called the reward, must be put in a certain position in society (Davis and Moore, 1945: 12). This structured inequality is intended to motivate people to perform tasks that they are skilled at, thereby achieving a certain level of social class. From this perspective, social class is seen as a positive force, driving individuals to strive for excellence and self-improvement in order to attain a better quality of life. The notion is that by rewarding certain positions and roles within the hierarchy, societies can encourage productivity and innovation, fostering an environment where people are motivated to reach their full potential.

On the contrary, (Reimer, 2001: 32) sees social class as something negative. He argues that in many societies, there is a tendency to create social inequality, where certain individuals are elevated to positions of superiority while others are relegated to subordinate roles. This hierarchical structure perpetuates a cycle of dominance and subjugation, leading to systemic discrimination and marginalization of the lower classes. This perspective highlights the detrimental impact of social class on societal cohesion and the well-being of those deemed inferior. Reimer's view underscores the inherent injustice in maintaining rigid class distinctions that favor a select few at the expense of the majority.

### **2.2.3. Karl Marx's Theory of Social Class**

Social class or social group refers to the stratification between human beings or groups in society. Based on the characteristics of social stratification, the division has several classes or groups in society. Social class is considered as a social class in a society that is defined by a particular position in the production process (Magniz, 2001: 45).

Marx's analysis examines human relationships through the framework of production and the varying roles within different industries regarding resource acquisition. He observed that disparities in resources do not inherently lead to intergroup conflicts. According to Marx (1867), the positions individuals hold within a social structure drive them to act in ways that aim to improve their own circumstances. Although Marx highlighted the role of class struggle in shaping societal dynamics, as noted in his work entitled *Communist Manifesto* where he states, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx and Engels, 1848), he did not view interest groups as central to his sociological perspective.

Karl Marx (1867) argued that social change is driven by social classes rather than individuals, noting that significant societal transformations are beyond the scope of individual efforts due to inherent selfishness. According to Marx (1867), it is the social classes, especially those in positions of power, that have the ability to change social conditions. He pointed out that those in power are not ordinary people but hold significant influence, whether through respect or authority. This concept is encapsulated in his assertion that "The class struggle is the basic driving force of social change" (Marx and Engels, 1848). Marx also emphasized the critical role of the working classes, who manage production tools and work for employers, in this process, underscoring that class struggle and structural power are key to understanding societal changes.

While the employer is the class that has the working tools, such as machinery, factories, and land (for landlords). The working class also does the job, but since the workers do not have the tools work, then they sell the power to the owners of capital / people who have the working tools (the employer). With this the works produced by the workers do not belong to the workers, but the work belongs to the employer. Between the upper class, middle class and lower class have the relationship because they need each other, workers need jobs of the employer/owner of the work, while the owner of the work also requires power to run production. The employer will profit if the house chores has done well. However, the relationship between the workers and the employer does not see the point of balance. The workers / employees will not be able to live if there is no income. They cannot work if the employer does not provide jobs.

However, contrary to the employer, that they can survive a long time even though the workers cannot carry out their duties properly because they can still look for another replacement to fill his life. In other words, the owners of capital can still live off the land they own (Siahaan, 1986: 56).

The special feature of the capitalist is the presence of the bottom and the top. The bottom is occupied by the workers and the top of which is occupied by the bourgeoisie (people who have the capital and as working tools). The bottom will forever be subject to the requirements specified by the capitalists in any tasks. Lower class people were given jobs when they worked for the benefit of the upper class. Work in excess of the time required by workers to meet their needs is an advantage for working owners (Ritzer, 2011: 65).

Thus, it can conclude clearly that the ideology of Marx is in accordance with the existing reality. Because the theories that have been advanced by Karl Marx contains elements of truth that ultimately justified by the evidence which grown in society. If related with the society, the development of soaring labour was grown high, because of the large number of factories, automatically labour categories required in large quantities. But people do not fully understand the situation is. People are prouder of the profession in the labour elaborated. They looked instead of social class, but they look out of income which they got (Magniz, 2001:32).

Benefit derived from the upper class of the position that they do not have to work alone, because it can live of the profits of the workers who work. The relationship between the upper class, middle class and lower class is a relationship of power with the goal of workers in order to keep working for the benefit of the employer by using the power of labour. Therefore, the upper class is the class of oppressors for the lower classes (Brewer, 1999: 25).

It can be concluded that each social class possesses distinct characteristics. The upper class is typically identified by their substantial wealth and distinctive lifestyle. Members of this class, often the wealthiest individuals in modern societies, not only hold significant political power but also tend to have received higher education from prestigious institutions. They are known for their participation in exclusive social clubs and their engagement in activities such as parties, shopping, and socializing.

Financially, the upper class generally expresses higher satisfaction with their financial status compared to the middle and lower classes, largely due to their substantial income derived from properties (Smith, 2001).

The middle class, on the other hand, represents the largest segment of society and is characterized by an average income level. This class is closely linked to urban growth and economic expansion. Despite their elevated status and income, middle-class individuals continue to uphold traditional values and ideals. They maintain a practical approach to life by managing home appliances and other necessities. Their strong work ethic and sense of responsibility underscore their commitment to education, as they prioritize financing their children's schooling (Brown, 2003).

In contrast, the lower class is less numerous and is primarily composed of individuals engaged in labor-intensive jobs, such as servants and governesses. Members of the lower class typically receive wages on a monthly or yearly basis and face greater financial instability compared to the other classes. Their economic position often limits their opportunities and influences their social status (White, 1999).

#### **2.2.4. Social Class in Victorian Era**

Class is a complex term that has been used since the late eighteenth century, encompassing various professions and social distinctions. In this context, class refers to social groups that manifest more or less prominently during specific historical periods, as observed within British society. Distinctions between different social classes can be discerned through inequalities in areas such as power, authority, competence, working and living conditions, lifestyles, and education (Harrison, 2017).

In the early nineteenth century, the working class and middle class began to emerge in society. The old hereditary aristocracy, bolstered by a new nobility that arose from success in trade, industry, and the professions, eventually evolved into the upper class. This transformation was characterized by the establishment of Public Schools and Colleges and by the maintenance of control over the political system. This control not only marginalized the working class but also limited the political influence of the middle class (Jones, 2017:14).

However, working classes remain shut out of the political process and become increasingly hostile, not only toward the nobility but also the middle class. The Industrial Revolution further exacerbated social stratification, particularly with the emergence of capitalists. By the mid-nineteenth century, skilled workers had gained enough strength to establish Trade Unions, which played a crucial role in advancing socialist political power. This was seen as a means to enhance their status, while unskilled workers and those in the lower class remained more vulnerable to exploitation due to their lack of bargaining power (Thompson, 2017:32).

Social classes in Victorian England were divided into three categories: the "upper class," the "middle class," and the "working class," according to the Marxist perspective on class conflict prevalent during and after World War I (Marx, 1867). In Victorian society, the quality of everyday life was intricately linked to one's social class. Class distinction was not solely determined by the amount of wealth possessed, but rather by the source of income, birth, and family background (Thompson, 1963). Typically, the upper class utilized personal vehicles such as cars, while personal vehicles were less common among the middle and lower classes. Class status was often discernible through behaviors, speech, clothing, education, and values. Each class had its own set of standards, and

individuals were expected to conform to the norms established for their respective class. The working class, often engaged in more visible manual labor within the community, typically appeared dirtier, reflected in their clothing and hands. Most individuals in the working class received daily or weekly wages. In contrast, members of the middle class tended to maintain cleaner appearances and received salaries on a monthly or yearly basis. The upper class, comprised of individuals with significant power, often held positions such as landlords (Smith, 2015).

It can be concluding that the novel of Jane Eyre written by Charlotte Bronte in Victorian Era which a literary works is common form of literature. Charlotte Bronte's character Jane Eyre is living in the nineteenth century. This period is called the Victorian Age. During the Victorian Age, great economic, social, and political changes occurred in Britain. Science and technology made great advances. The growth of the classes grew enormously. The Victorian novel, with its emphasis on the realistic portrayal of social life, represented many Victorian issues in the stories of the characters.



### **2.2.5. All About *Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre* (1847)**

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, released in 1847 under the pseudonym Currer Bell, is a significant English literary work that both mirrors and critiques the social conventions of the Victorian period. Against the backdrop of Queen Victoria's reign, the novel vividly illustrates the strict social hierarchies and gender expectations that characterized 19th-century British society. By addressing issues related to class and gender, *Jane Eyre* provides a detailed depiction of the societal limitations placed on individuals, especially women and those in lower social classes (Juliet, 1994).

Understanding the themes in *Jane Eyre* (1847) requires recognizing the historical context of the Victorian era. This period was characterized by a rigid class system and clearly defined gender roles that shaped individuals' behaviors and societal expectations based on their social status (Juliet, 1994). Women, in particular, were confined to domestic duties with few opportunities for social or economic progress. C. H. Smith observes that "The Victorian society's rigid class structure and gender roles left little room for individual agency, particularly for women" (Smith, 1999:75). Charlotte Bronte's own life experiences, such as her role as a governess and her personal battles with societal norms, significantly influence how these limitations are depicted in her novel.

In *Jane Eyre* (1847), Bronte delves into themes of social class, gender inequality, and personal strength through the experiences of the protagonist, *Jane Eyre* (1847). As an orphan and a governess, Jane occupies a low position in the social hierarchy, which significantly impacts her opportunities and interactions. Gilbert and Gubar describe Jane's journey as "a compelling narrative of personal resistance against the institutional constraints of her era" (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979:132). The novel critiques the societal limitations placed on women and those from lower social classes by portraying Jane's struggles and her steadfast resolve to maintain her personal dignity and autonomy in the face of societal pressures (Juliet, 1994).

The analysis of characters in *Jane Eyre* (1847) reveals how Bronte uses them to both reflect and critique Victorian social norms. Jane Eyre's moral fortitude and her defiance against oppressive societal expectations underscore her resistance to the established social order. Her interactions with Mr. Rochester, who embodies the complexities of social status and personal morality, delve deeper into themes of power and inequality. Kate Flint

points out that “Bronte’s depiction of Rochester and Jane’s relationship critiques the unequal power dynamics inherent in social class structures” (Flint, 2002:45). Through their dynamic, Bronte explores how social class affects personal relationships and self-worth (Juliet, 1994).

The novel's influence extends beyond its historical period, impacting both literary and societal conversations. By challenging the Victorian norms, *Jane Eyre* (1847) has contributed to wider discussions on gender equality and social justice. Its ongoing adaptation in various forms of media underscores its lasting significance as a critique of societal conventions and a proponent of personal autonomy and moral integrity (Juliet, 1994). Mary Poovey notes that “The novel’s innovative approach to social critique and character development has solidified its status as a foundational text in feminist literary criticism” (Poovey, 1988: 112).

*Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Bronte stands out as a major literary work that both reflects and challenges the societal standards of the Victorian period. The novel’s examination of issues related to social class, gender roles, and personal fortitude provides a nuanced critique of its historical setting (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000). Its significance in literary and social conversations highlights its dual role in mirroring and questioning the norms of its time, making it an enduring work with profound implications for understanding social justice and individual empowerment.

### 2.3. Conceptual framework

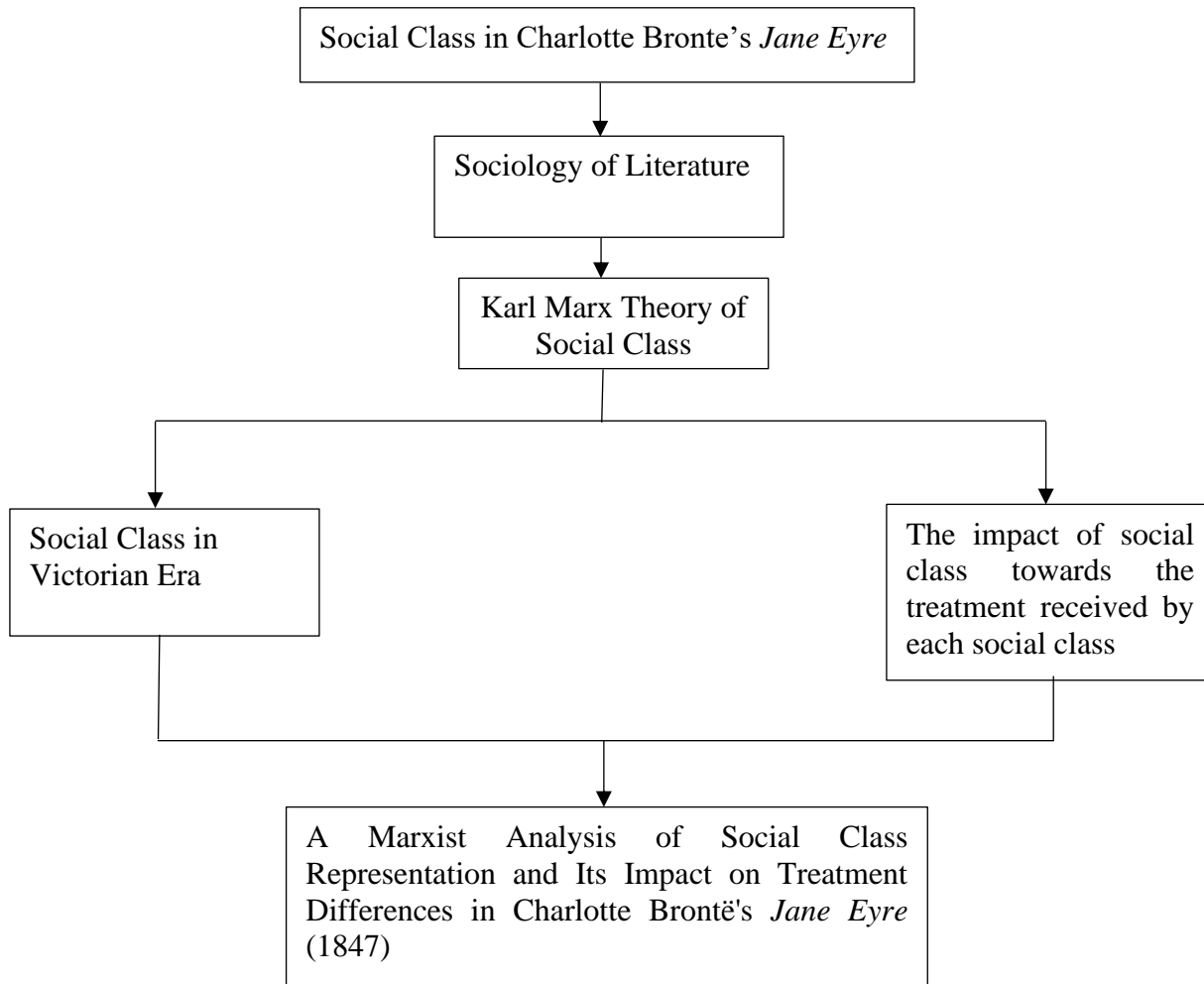


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Through Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), the researcher used Marxist theory to conduct this research by reading and analyzing the plot and every dialogue of Charlotte Brontë's novel. This framework provides a comprehensive overview of the connections between these concepts, guiding the analysis of social class and its representation in *Jane Eyre* (1847).