

## CHAPTER THREE

### ANALYSIS

#### **A. The Johnson family lives in destruction.**

Ralph Ross in his book *Fabric of Society* says, “people imbibe thousands of moral notion with their mother’s milk” (Ross 274). It means that people do not doubt of the moral values of their social environment. They believe what everyone else in their environment believes. Furthermore, in his *Sociology: A Synopsis of Principles* John F, Cuber says that society in which an individual lives profoundly influences the individuals to follow its moral codes (134). Society exerts pressure upon the individuals. Society conditions its people to believe that the moral codes of their society are correct (Ross 274).

Moral values affect a society’s way of thinking and social behavior in very subtle ways (Berger 71). People may be led by them without realizing it. People sometimes are meek to follow their society’s moral codes. It is because they have been so far asserted. The characters in *Rum Alley* have been trapped in the conventional moral value of their environment, which leads to live in pressure.

A society tends to state its environment moral codes and values. They want to gain social identity and prestige. That is the society of respectability and honor. A society needs recognition, which can be supported by its individual. Besides, a society concerns themselves respectable in order to gain prestige and power (78). However, the value of self respectability and prestige will become the demand and force to its people.

In *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, Crane reveals the destructiveness of social environment. He creates a society of slum called Rum Alley. Through the society of slum, he would point out that the destruction of people is mostly not caused by their poverty, but by the pressure of their social environment. That is the environment forces the people to perform an expected action. The Rum Alley people suffer from poverty, but they suffer more from the demand and force of their social environment.

The word “slum” gives an impression of poor, helpless, and worthless. According to *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary*, the meaning of slum is “court, alley, or street of small badly-built, dirty, crowded houses” (Hornby 1202). Slum has interaction with poverty. Poverty itself means “state of being poor” (970). Slum is closely related to poverty. Nevertheless, slum has a wider dimension than poverty. Poverty is usually connected to economic conditions.

Slum does not simply deal with poverty. Slum might be said as a social group with the lowest economy in the classification of people in general.

The society of slum Rum Alley is a society who is so proud of themselves; even so they live in poverty. They are so proud to be admitted morally in order to gain respectability and honor. To reach this goal, the society will practice forces or punishment to those who do not obey.

The opening sentence of the story "A very little boy stood upon a heap of gravel for the honor of Rum Alley" (Crane 127) reveals the moral of Rum Alley society. It is an irony. The value of honor and the reality of a very little boy, a heap of gravel, and Rum Alley are very contrast to each other. The value of honor is too high to be reached by the Rum Alley people. The honor is inappropriate to the reality of poor Rum Alley people.

The Johnson family in this story admit themselves as a respectable family in order to state their existence in Rum Alley. They ignore the fact that they do not have the qualifications to perform such what they say as respectable or morally due to their poverty. The father, Mr. Johnson, for example, tries to act as a good father. He drags Jimmie home when he finds him fighting with other boys in the street. It seems that he wants to teach his son a lesson at home.

“Here, you Jim, git up, now, while I belt yer life out, yeh disorderly brat.” ... His parent kicked him. “Come home, now,” he cried. “an’ stop yer jawin’, er I’ll lam the everlasting head off yehs.” (130)

Mr. Johnson’s action seems to show that he is a responsible father. In fact, after they reach home, he just leaves Jimmie alone with his pain because he himself is so tired to take care of Jimmie.

The mother, Mary, also tries to pretend to be a wise woman. Instead of her drinking habit, she tries to give a good impression to her neighbor that her home is as the center of virtue. Whenever she meets other people, she always besieges with voluble excuses, explanations, apologies, and prayers (142). Her pretence is driven by the society’s expectation.

Mary has to reject her daughter Maggie, when she knows that the neighbors start to talk about her family. Maggie is having affair with Pete, a bullying bartender. Mary has to take that action because her environment forces her to do so. She has to concern about the reputation of her family in the society. The fact that the neighbors talked of it maddened her (168).

Her actions to keep crying in front of her neighbors when Maggie is died are also her acting. She tries to show to her neighbors that as a mother she

feels sorry of Maggie. In fact, she cries to hide her own fault to drive Maggie away from home.

Jimmie, the son who is famous because of his reputation for fighting and having affairs with any women takes action when he knows that her sister Maggie does not come home for few days and lives together with Pete. He fights with Pete to avenge the disgrace of his family to be ruined by Pete.

Society with its moral values may refuse such social behaviors, which deviates from the adopted values. Such behavior is considered disapproval. If there is a person whose action varies noticeably or markedly from the adopted norms characterizing persons in the society, he will encourage reaction of the society. The reaction may be in term of disapproval or protest (Berger 132).

Unfortunately, Maggie's action to date and later to live together with Pete has caused her to carry out deviation. Her action is disapproved by her environment. Her affairs with Pete have brought her to stain the respectability of her environment. "Anybody what had eyes could see dat dere was somethin' wrong wid dat girl. I didn't like her actions." (Crane 160). What Maggie does is strange on the eyes of her neighbors. The conversation between Jimmie and the old woman next door in the quotation below also show the neighbor's disapproval of Maggie's affair. "Ah, Jimmie, what de yehs tink I tumbled to,

las' night! It was deh funnies' t'ing I ever saw," ... "... I could see be deh way what he said it dat she had been askin' orften; he says ... (158).

Ridicule and gossip are society's instruments for mental punishment. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the society has resource to sanctions or punishment. The sanctions can be in the form of mental punishments such as ridicule and withdrawal (Green 35, 40). Society's force towards the Johnson family happens in very subtle ways. Gossips about Maggie which spread widely in Rum Alley society has pushed Mary and Jimmie to take action to ignore Maggie. The quotation below shows Maggie's other neighbor's gossips:

"She allus was a bold thing," he heard one of them cry in an eager voice. "Dere wasn't a feller come te deh house but she'd try the mash 'im. My Annie says deh shameless t'ing tried the ketch her feller, her own feller, what we useter know his fader." ... "I could 'a tol' yehs dis two years ago," said a woman, in a key of triumph. "... it was over two years ago dat I says the my ol' man, ... 'Dat Johnson girl ain't straight,' ... I know what I knows, ... 'an' it'll come out later." (Crane 160)

It is through its ridicule and gossips the Rum Alley society tries to control over its people. Gossips are effective among the slum people who need visibility and inspection from their neighbors.

In a helpless condition, one may become frustrated. It is said in *Encyclopedia of Psychological Problem* that “Depression is a condition marked by feelings of worthlessness, rejection, and worry. The depressed person is an unhappy individual with a pessimistic outlook of life” (Narramore 81). Depression may be caused by economic condition, failure in life, or even pressure.

The people of Rum Alley live in depression due to their poverty. They are worried about their living since they hardly survive in their poor condition. They feel useless since they fail to support their family. Mr. Johnson and Mary feel worthless since they cannot fulfill their primary need for their family. As a result, they live in a strong guilty feeling which drown them into drinking habit.

Depression influences one’s behavior. One may become harsh. He easily gets angry without proper reason. His emotion becomes unstable. Husband and wife may become cruel toward each other. This happens to Mr. Johnson and Mary. They tend to scold each other.

“... When I come home nights I can’t git no rest ‘cause yer allus poundin’ a kid. ...

The wife put her immense hands on her hips, and with a chieftainlike stride approached her husband.

“Ho!” she said, with a great grunt of contempt. “An’ what in the devil are you stickin’ your nose for?” ...

“Go t’ hell,” ...

The women screamed and shook her fists before her husband’s eyes. (Crane 132)

The parents lose their harmony of a marriage. “My home reg’lar livin’ hell! Why do I come an’ drin’ whisk’ here thish way? ‘Cause my home reg’lar livin’ hell!” (135).

They do not have communication, though they talk to each other. Their communication is mostly in form of scolding, blaming, self-pity. The father tends to admit that he is right. Mary also never admit her mistake.

“You’ve been drinkin’, Mary,” ... “You’re a liar. I ain’t had a drop,” (132).

“Why deh blazes don’ chere try the keep Jim from fighting’? ... “Ah, w’at’s bitin’ yeh? W’a’s odds? ... “because he tears ‘is clothes, yeh fool!” ... (136).

The parents’ inharmonic cause their children to feel depressed. Their parents’ quarrels frighten them. When their parents quarrel, Maggie, Jimmie, and Tommie will run and save themselves.



The babe crawled under the table and, turning, peered out cautiously. The ragged girl retreated, and the urchin in the corner drew his legs carefully beneath him. (132)

The little boy ran to the halls, shrieking like a monk in an earthquake. (134)

The parents' mistreatment has aroused Jimmie's feeling of enmity. He becomes indifferent towards his parents. He does not respect them. Moreover, he treats them badly. Jimmie treats his mother harshly when she is drunk in the street as the way his mother treats him when he was a child. Jimmie's treatment toward her reveals that Jimmie as a son has lost his respect to his parents.

"Shet yer face, an' come home yeh old fool!" roared Jimmie at her.

Jimmie followed, and at the top of the flight he seized his mother's arm and started to drag her toward the door of their room.

"Come home!" he gritted between his teeth. (156)

Depression also leads Jimmie to possess a hostile attitude toward others. He becomes unfriendly to others. His attitude is shown in the quotation below:

He maintained a belligerent attitude toward all well-dressed men. To him fine raiment was allied to weakness, and all good coats covered faint hearts. He and his order were kings, to a certain extent, over the men of untarnished clothes, because this latter dreaded, perhaps, to be either killed or laughed at. (139)

Jimmie's indifferent attitude shows his dissatisfaction with his own life and this causes him to be jealous of other's superiority.

The quotation above also implies Jimmie's feeling of inferiority. He realizes how he rates in the evaluation of other people in his environment. Jimmie's aware of his strength due to his body. He is tall and big. He regards himself superior than other people.

Moreover, Jimmie is inferior due to his poor life. His action and attitude toward other people imply his inferiority. He is so talkative and assertive. Thus, his overconfident manner is a trick to hide his feeling of his inferiority. His superior feeling is pretentious in order to compensate for his inferiority.

Likewise, it is also depression that brings Maggie to kill herself. After Pete abandons her and Mary rejects her, Maggie feels helpless. Feeling depressed of having no one to help her, she chooses to be a prostitute in order

to survive. Otherwise, she is unable to survive and she decides to commit suicide by drowning herself in the river.

Another mental and emotional disturbance caused by the pressure of social environment is the feeling of insecurity. Insecurity is also one of the effects of being depressed. Moreover, Narramore says, "The insecure individual is a person lacking in feeling of self-confidence. He feels inadequate, unwanted, as a result is vulnerable to constant emotional conflict" (134). Such feelings exist in the Rum Alley society. Their social expectation and poor condition cause them to have mental and emotional disturbance.

The world of Rum Alley is one of fear. The feeling of fear exists since the people are aware of their helplessness. The condition of the slum and their home give unpeacefulness to its individuals. The parents worry of being unable to give enough food for their family. They worry about their unstable life. Their children are afraid of having not enough food to overcome hunger. The quotation below shows their worries:

The babe sat with his feet dangling high from a precarious infant's chair and gorged his small stomach. Jimmie forced, with feverish rapidity, the grease-enveloped pieces between his wounded lips. Maggie, with side glances of fear of interruption, ate like small pursued tigress. (Crane 133)

The way the children eat shows as if they compete to finish their food. They are afraid that their portion will be taken by others. Besides, the parents abuse also frighten them.

The Johnson family live in insecurity also because they feel being watched by their neighborhood. All their actions are watched. The neighbors are always curious about their matters. The quotation below shows the neighbors' curiosity. Curious faces appeared in doorways, and whispered comments passed to and fro (136).

When Mary is teased by children in street, the neighbors are peeping. On an upper hall a door was opened and a collection of heads peered curiously out, watching her (155).

Moreover, the neighbors consider that the Johnson family's matter is a kind of interesting show. When Jimmie drags Mary home, they watch it enthusiastically.

“Whoop!” said the Rum Alley tenement house. The hall filled with interested spectators. ... He quickly followed and closed the door. The Rum Alley tenement swore disappointedly and retired.  
(156)

Still, there is another reason, which becomes the most important one that leads Rum Alley people to live in insecurity. Rum Alley people are not

satisfy with the role carried out by Johnson family. As discussed previously that society expects its members to carry out its expected role. The expectation dominates the slum people life. The people are told what to do and do not have opportunity to express their feeling. This influences the Rum Alley people that they are afraid and unable to do anything on their own.

#### **B. The influence of man's nature and the falsity of moral belief on man's destruction.**

First of all, we will discuss the importance of the value of human nature as shown by the characters in the story. As mentioned in the previous chapter, man living in a society is trapped in the condition of should and ought (Berger:34). He should do what his society tells him to do, and at the same time, he should not do what his society tells not to. Otherwise, there will be sanctions for those who deviate. It is the fact that man cannot live separately from his social environment. He lives among other people since he is a baby till he dies. It is impossible for him to ignore other people's interaction. When he is born he needs his parents to take care of him. Still, he needs other people when he dies to bury his body.

Still, there is the most important fact that cannot be denied. Man is a human creature who possesses feeling and will. As Arnold W. Green says "The

moral norms are by no means always fulfilled. Violations may occur because a person's desire for something proves stronger than his respect for the norms which forbid it" (35). It means that human has his own desire eventhough this may cause him to deviate the moral norms stated by his society He may experience happiness, sadness, anger, or disappointment. in his inner self. He has the inner ability to do something by himself without his society's intercession.

Desire is natural in human life. As a normal human being, man has earnest desire in his life. One may wishes for a good life, good job with good payment of course, or his desire is to love and to be loved, etc. Desire associates with the condition of the individual's life, such as financial background and social background. For instance, a beggar wishes to be a wealthy man, or a subordinate official aim for a higher position. The Rum Alley people also have their own feeling and will. As mentioned before, Rum Alley people are very poor. Beside their poor condition Rum Alley people have their wish to live in a proper condition. They wish to have enough food, live in peace, and be accepted in society.

Maggie, as a normal human being also has her own desire to live in a better condition than she has now. She also wants to be loved. She wants to look good as other girls she meets on the streets. The image presented by the

author shows Maggie's wish and longing. She longs for an 'ideal man' who loves her and who will free her from her present condition. She longs for a cheerful life.

Maggie perceived that here was the ideal man. Her dim thoughts were often searching for far away lands where the little hills sing together in the morning Under the trees of her dream-gardens there had always walked a lover. (Crane:144)

Jimmie also has his own desire. He spends most of his time standing at the streets' corner to fulfill his desire by seeing women passing.

Jimmie's occupation for a long time was to stand on street corner and watched the world go by, dreaming blood-red dreams at the passing of pretty women. He menaced mankind at the intersection of street. (138-139)

Jimmie's habit having affairs with any woman is for the fulfillment of his desire. He likes to seduce women and takes no responsibility on his deed.

Maggie's behavior after she meets Pete is also oriented toward the fulfillment of her longing. She begins to dislike her home and tries to change it. She began not to like the way she dresses.

Turning, Maggie contemplated the dark, dust-stained walls, and the scant and crude furniture of her home. A clock, in a splintered

and battered oblong box of varnished wood, she suddenly regarded as an abomination. She noted that ticked raspingly. The almost varnished flowers in the carpet pattern, she conceived to be newly hideous. (145)

She began to note with more interest the well-dressed women... She envied elegance and soft palms. She craved those adornments of person which she saw every day on the street, conceiving them to be allies of vast importance of women. (151)

Sometimes one needs to secure out of his present behavior because it contributes to the outcomes in the future. He needs stimulation in order to realize his wishes and will. It may happen that one is not conscious what he desires in his life. His wishes lie under his consciousness. Surrounding sometimes influences him not to see it. Maggie is not aware of her own life, the atmosphere of her home and her working place have buried her wishes.

She perched on the stool and treadled at her machine all day, turning out collars with a name which might have been noted for its irrelevancy to anything connected with collars. At night she returned home to her mother. (142)

In this case, she needs stimulation to help her to see her wishes and it comes from other person.



It is Pete who arises Maggie's awareness of her true wishes. As a matter of fact, Pete's presence in Maggie's house makes her conscious of her desire. Her first sight of Pete awakened her. She begins to see what she really want in her life. The following lines show Maggie's awareness of her poor condition after Pete's presence.

Her eyes dwelt wonderingly and rather wistfully upon Pete's face. The broken furniture, grimy walls, and general disorder and dirt of her home of a sudden appeared before her and began to take a potential aspect. Pete's aristocratic person looked as if it might soil. She looked keenly at him, occasionally wondering if he was feeling contempt. (144)

The presence of Pete brings Maggie to a new impression about her life. Her eyes are open to what she has not seen before. She is dissatisfied with her poor life. On the other hand, she is affected by the condition offered by Pete. As thoughts of Pete came to Maggie's mind, she began to have an intense dislike for all of she dresses (151).

Regular monotonous activities make one unconscious of the presence of his wish and desire. This happens to Maggie. Her daily activities at home and her working place enclose her life. She lives in a monotonous atmosphere

which she actually does not want to. Her dislike is shown in the quotation below:

She became lost in thought as she looked at some of the grizzled women in the room, mere mechanical contrivances sewing seams and grinding out, with heads bent over their work, tales or imagined or real girlhood happiness or of past drunks, or the baby at home, and unpaid wages. She wondered how long her youth would endure. She began to see the blossom upon her cheeks as something of value. (143)

The quotation also shows that Maggie needs refreshment and Pete comes to offer it to her.

Wish and desire may become a compass in one's life. They give guidance to the individual and control his action. Wish and desire also awaken one to realize his lack so he can fulfill it. Maggie begins to see the to love and to be loved. She longs for the presence of a lover. She needs love and attention but she gets none from the people around her. As a result, she runs to Pete who offers her care and attention. The kindness and the gallantry of Pete persuade Maggie to get love and attention from him. She needs someone who can give her protection. Pete's presence makes her begins to seek her need of being

secure and she thinks that she can get it from Pete. She regards him as her knight.

Here was a formidable man who disdained the strength of world full of fists. Here was one who had contempt for brass-clothed power; one whose knuckles could ring defiantly against the granite of law. He was a knight. (145)

It appeared that he was invincible in fights. (144)

To her the earth was composed of hardships and insults. She felt instant admiration for a man who openly defied it. She thought that if the grim angel of death should clutch his heart, Pete would shrug his shoulders and say, "Oh ev'ry'ing goes." (146)

One needs recognition from other people such as admiration or compliment. Maggie also needs that. Yet, she does not get it from the people around her. Pete comes to her and shows his admiration of her beauty. His compliments make Maggie feels as if she is recognized. Pete took note of Maggie. "Say, Mag, I'm stuck on yer shape. ..." (144).

Pete's bravery and strong body offer protection for her. His self-confidence gives her the feeling of security.

Maggie also needs someone who she can talk to. She cannot have her mother as her companion. It is with Pete she can express all her problem. These lines below show Pete's response to Maggie's sadness:

At times Maggie told Pete long confidential tales of her former home life, dwelling upon the escapades of the other members of the family and the difficulties she had had to combat in order to obtain the degree of comfort. He responded in the accents of philanthropy. He pressed her arm with an air of reassuring proprietorship. (166-167)

Pete gives her comfort which she never has from her family. Each individual might have experience which are different from others'. The differences of one experience to others' influence him to behave differently from the others'. As said in *Sociology* that "one's experience modify his behavior from others'. One's experience affects what he acquires from his environment" (Cuber 196). Maggie's new experience, which is introduced by Pete, affects her behavior. She begins to behave differently from the people around her.

Some factors in an environment have consequences on its individuals' behavior. Social treatments, for example, influence one's view of life. Such experiences happen in his social life affects his actions. Maggie's social experiences influence her action. Living in the slum society, Maggie

experiences unpleasantness. Her slum environment seems to be a prison for her. Her neighbors' interference in her affair with Pete has limited her actions. She can only spend her time inside the house, which offers boredom. Besides, her working place is also a place of oppression.

On the other hand, Maggie encounters experiences, which are different from what she finds in her slum when she goes to enjoy night life with Pete. Her new experiences are amusing. Maggie finds enjoyments which she does not get from her society. Beautiful dresses, theatre, Performance, and museum arouse her feeling of youth. Maggie's new experiences make her see that the outside world of slum is better than her own environment. Her new experiences indirectly affect her actions and view of life later.

The moral belief adopted by Rum Alley is the one which strictly bases on honor and respect. This is clearly seen in the Johnson's moral vision. They honor highly their society's moral values. The scenes set in the dance hall and theatre in Rum Alley give the picture of dramatic nature of Rum Alley's morality. In a dance hall, an audience of Maggie, Jimmie, and Pete and others listens to a song "whose lines told a mother's love, and a sweat who waited, and a young man who was lost at sea under harrowing circumstances (Crane 149-150). Then later Pete and Maggie see plays

... in which the dazzling heroine was rescued from the palatial home of her treacherous guardian by the hero with the beautiful sentiments.

Maggie lost herself in sympathy with the wanderers swooning, in snow-storms beneath happy-hued church windows, while a choir within sang "Joy to the world." To Maggie and the rest of the audience this was transcendental realism. Joy always within, and they, like the actor, inevitably without. Viewing it, they hugged themselves in ecstatic pity of their imagined or real condition.

(153)

The audience identifies itself with maligned and innocent virtue despite the inapplicability of these roles to their own lives. "Shabby person in the audience revolted from the pictured villainy of the drama. With untiring zeal they hissed vice and applauded virtue. Unmistakably bad men envied an apparently sincere admiration of virtue" (153).

This same ability to project one self into a virtuous role is presented in most of the novel's characters. Each crisis in Johnson family is viewed by neighbors who are the audiences, which encourage the Johnson family to adopt moral poses. In the scene in which Maggie is driven away, both Jimmie and Mary are aware of their needs to play the role of outraged virtue in response to

the expectations of their society. Mary addresses the neighbors “like a glib showman”, and with a “dramatic finger” (178) points out to them her unfaithful daughter.

In the final scene of this story, when Maggie dies in the river, Mary mourns over Maggie’s baby shoes while neighbors cry in sympathy and the visitors of church-women urge her to forgive Maggie “Yeh’ll fergive her now, Mary, won’t yehs, dear, all her disobed’ence?” (188). This final scene also reveals the moral attitudes which are to satisfy emotional needs or social approval.

In a moment she emerged with a pair of faded baby shoes held in the hollow of her hand.

“I kin remember when she used to wear dem!” ...

“Jimmie, boy, go git yer sister! Go git yer sister an’ we’ll put deh boots on her feets!” ...

“Dey won’t fit her now, yeh fool,” said the man.

“Go git yer sister, Jimmie!” shrieked the woman, confronting him fiercely. (188-189)

This scene also reveals an irony. Mary requests Jimmie to put Maggie’s baby shoes on Maggie’s feet. In fact, she knows that the shoes do not fit her feet

anymore. The cry of Mary is useless. Her cry will not bring Maggie alive. Maggie will not be reborn.

The characterizations on the Johnson family are also vulgar. Mary quickness to judge, condemn, and cast out Maggie symbolizes the self-righteousness of Rum Alley's morality. In a sense, she symbolizes the entire slum Rum Alley, both its primitive and sentimental morality.

It is appropriate that it is Mary who represents the Rum Alley society drives Maggie into prostitution and eventually death. Being secure in her moral role, she refuses to allow Maggie to return home and moreover, drives her to Pete and then into prostitution. Maggie is thus destroyed not so much by the physical reality of slum life as the morality imposed on the slum. That is the morality, which allows its user both to judge and to divorce themselves from the responsibility from those they judge.

Mary has failed to guide Maggie, she even pushes her to a deeper destruction. Her rejection to Maggie when Maggie is looking for help and protection brings Maggie to the world of prostitution. Mary does not do her duty as a mother to give Maggie advice to be aware of her mistakes by living together with Pete. On the contrary, she directly, judges her as a guilty person and punishes her by exiling her from the Johnson family's house.



The mother does not have mercy on Maggie. It is seen in her conversation with Jimmie after she turns Maggie out for the second time.

“Lookut her, Jimmie, lookut her. Dere’s yer sister, boy. Dere’s yer sister. Lookut her! Lookut her!”

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! Ain’t she purty? ...” (177)

The mother does not want to accept Maggie. She declares “No prodigal daughter”.

“Well, I didn’t mean none of dis prod’gal bus’ness anyway,” explained Jimmie.

“It wa’n’t no prod’gal daughter, yeh fool,” said the mother. “It was prod’gal son, anyhow.” (169)

A story of prodigal son is told in the Holy Bible Luke 15:11-24. It is about a man who has two sons. The younger one asks his father to give his share of the estate that falls to him. The father agrees and divides the wealth between his two sons. The prodigal son spends his share with loose living. When he has spent everything, he becomes to be in need. But no one will help

him. He begins to think of going home. He comes to his father's home and asks for his forgiveness. His father forgives him and shows his mercy. He welcomes his son like a king by serving him the best meal and the best robe.

The image of "prodigal" is to stress on Mary's unforgiveness and unfaithfulness. The mother's action deals with Maggie contradicts with the father's mercy in the bible. Here, the author wants to show that the Rum Alley society, especially Mary is an unforgiving person.

The morality of Rum Alley is also revealed through the reaction of the priest whom Maggie happens to meet in the street. The priest "sidesteps" her when she approaches him to seek for help (181). The priest feels disgusted and escapes away. He prefers to save his own respectability as a church man than to help Maggie.

The girl had heard the grace of God and she decided to approach this man.

But as the girl timidly accosted him he made a convulsive movement and saved his respectability by a vigorous side-step. He did not risk it to save a soul. For how was he to know that there was a soul before him that needed saving? (181)

Even the priest who bears the responsibility to guide and save sinners does not show his pity on Maggie.

Rum Alley society's morality contributes to Maggie downfall by blurring her vision. As mentioned previously. Her primary drive in life is to escape from her prison. Maggie is drawn because Pete's strength and elegance offer a means of overcoming the brutality and ugliness of her home and place of work. Her mistaken conception of Pete results from her enclosed world, a world which has given her romantic illusion just as it has supplied others with moral poses. Maggie sees unclearly Pete's persuasion, even she believes that Pete is her ideal man. For her, Pete looks aristocratic. Her innocence has led her to trust Pete's court "say Mag. 'm stuck on yer shape" (144).

As Maggie's vision is blurred, she does not see the guilt of living together with Pete. She does not feel disgusted as she is to seek protection. "Her life was Pete's and she considered him worthy of the charge. ... She did not feel like a bad woman" (167). She does not aware that she is out of her society moral codes. Her self illusion has blinded her not to see that Pete only takes advantage on her. She is only Pete's play thing.

Her mistake assures compassion, however, rather than damnation and destruction. She then becomes really immoral. Her weakness shows out the facts that her environment has failed to arm her with the moral strength. She would have been more firmly good if she knows how to behave. At the same time, it has blinded her with self-destructive moral romantic illusions. "She

wondered if the culture and the refinement she has been imitated, ... by the heroine on the stage, could acquired by a girl who lived in a tenement house and worked in a shirt factory” (154).

There is an irony that in choosing Pete, Maggie flees into the same world she wishes to escape. In fact, Pete’s world is a cheap and vulgar one as represented by his working place. Pete’s working place is the place where men gathered drinking and also fighting. Besides, his desire is to maintain the respectability of the bar in which he works. After he abandons Maggie, he dramatically purifies himself of guilt and responsibility for Maggie’s downfall. Pete convinces “I’m good f’ler, girls,” (184) to an audience of prostitutes.

In the book of *Morality and Conflict*, it is said that the morality of a social group can properly be seen into two parts, first, as a picture of the activities necessary to an ideal way of life, and secondly, the unavoidable duties and necessities without which even the elements of human worth are lacking (Hampshire 94). Morality is to govern all man’s actions with their states of feeling as the source of all values in the world. The nature of man itself is mainly to stress on the worthy of man as a human being.

Rum Alley society’s actions deal with Maggie shows the society’s necessary activities. Yet in fact, to carry out the necessary activities they ignore the value of Maggie as a human. Because of their actions, Maggie has to

**be exiled from her family and society. Moreover, she has to surrender herself to Pete, and then to sell herself on the street. The moral values adopted by Rum Alley people have disregarded the nature of moral values itself.**

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CONCLUSION**