

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

A SURVEY OF SOCIAL CLASSES: A STUDY OF HUGO'S
LES MISÉRABLES AND DISRAELI'S *SYBIL*

by
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: A Survey of Social Classes: A Study of Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Disraeli's *Sybil*

Set between 1798 and 1848, *Les Misérables* and *Sybil* recount the narratives of typical French and English characters of that time, influenced by the significant historical moments that occurred in France and England respectively during this period, even though neither is labeled a purely historical novel. Both authors tackle, behind the dominating love stories between the two main characters in both novels, the socio-political conditions of the two countries while implementing their own political points of view within the story lines through main and secondary characters. Common themes reign over the two stories such as love, social classes, politics and the effects of the French revolution. Despite the 17-year gap, the novels can be studied in parallel in regard to how France and England's situations were influenced by the French revolution at that period in history. This project, through a close reading of the political aspect, love stories, characters and themes, aims to bring to light differences and similarities between the novels. This comparison, as this thesis will infer, strongly argues that Hugo's novel functions in a more progressive way than that of Disraeli. This project focuses on analyzing the gulf between the conditions of the working class as opposed to that of the aristocracy and bourgeois factory owners since this division between the classes reflects the "troubles" between the different social classes and the monarchies that resided behind the success of the two thriving countries. I specifically pay close attention to the theme of politics in both novels through a close reading of the representation of classes that both authors use by focusing on how the novels address the theme of history and the way they deal with the sociopolitical conflict through the representation of social classes. In both novels, the representation of the sociopolitical conflict and the social classes at both ends of this conflict is overloaded due to the novelistic genre and literary elements that both authors resort to. The use of melodrama, race discourse and allegories in the quest for resolution in both novels serve the overloaded exaggerated representations of history that this thesis will analyze as a means of asserting that Hugo's *Misérables* is more progressive than Disraeli's *Sybil*.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times
it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness,
it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity,
it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness,
it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...*

– Charles Dickens

Set between 1798 and 1848, both novels, *Les Misérables* and *Sybil*, influenced by the significant historical moments that occurred in France and England respectively during this period and the authors' political beliefs, recount the narratives of typical French and English characters of that time, even though neither is labeled a purely historical novel. Behind the dominating love stories in these two novels, whether between Egremont and Sybil in Disraeli's novel or between Marius and Cosette in Hugo's novel, both authors portray the socio-political conditions of the two countries while implementing their own political points of view within the story lines through the main and secondary characters. Several common themes predominate over the two stories such as love, social injustice, social classes, politics and the effects of revolution.

Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) was a British writer as well as a Prime Minister of England who served twice in the Parliament. His interest in politics intertwined with his writing; he started fashioning himself as a political figure mostly through his literature. Therefore, his first novels mainly revolved around his persona as a way of discovering himself and evolving. Both his political and religious beliefs had a significant impact on his writings. He used the techniques of Romanticism to portray the reality that he desired in his

novels. Literature was, for Disraeli, the field where he could convey messages and discuss his political beliefs. *Sybil* is one of the novels in which Disraeli expressed his political points of view concerning the gulf between the rich and the poor in late 18th and 19th century England.

Disraeli's *Sybil* (1845) has been studied from several angles; some critics have analyzed the novel as a whole by itself while others compare *Sybil* to Disraeli's former novels or to other English writers' novels. In "'Sooty Manchester' and the Social-Reform Novel 1845-1855: An Examination of 'Sybil,' 'Mary Barton,' 'North and South,' and 'Hard Times,'" Arthur Pollard draws a comparison between Disraeli's *Sybil* and Gaskell's *Mary Barton* to prove that the latter can be considered a historical novel while Disraeli's *Sybil* cannot because of the dramatic representation of historical aspects. As O'Kell asserts in "Two Nations, or One?: Disraeli's Allegorical Romance" the fact that *Sybil* cannot be viewed as strictly a historical novel is due to "its prominence in the subgenre known as the social-problem novel, *Sybil* has attracted more serious critical comment than the rest of Disraeli's fiction" (O'Kell 211). O'Kell focuses on Disraeli's representation of the Church and the conditions of the poor to prove that *Sybil*, and not any of Disraeli's other novels such as *Coningsby*, should in fact be viewed as Disraeli's "manifesto of young England".

Other than being compared to different novels by Disraeli or by other writers, critics have also analyzed *Sybil* by itself. In "Disraeli the Archi-textual: Construction of Authority in *Sybil*," Ben Moore mentions that "Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil* (1845) has often been read in three overlapping contexts: as a political novel, an engagement with the 'Condition of England' debate, and a novel concerned with symbols and signs" (Moore 47). Moore specifically focuses on the lost archi-textual constructs like the papers and buildings in

order to compare them to “Derrida’s ‘supplement’—an object or concept that appears marginal to a structure, but on which that structure in fact relies” (Moore 47). Moore uses the link between the archi-textual constructs and Derrida’s ‘supplement’ as a way to argue an original authority that has been lost and that the novel is trying to recover. In sum, whether to compare it to other novels or to analyze it by itself, *Sybil* is a rich novel worth studying, especially if one focuses on the symbols that Moore discusses in her article. I will be extending Moore’s analysis of the archi-textual constructs as a way of recovering an original authority to analyze the author’s themes and motifs behind such recovery; which show the conservatism of Disraeli as opposed to the progressiveness of Hugo in their representations of the sociopolitical conflict.

Victor Hugo (1802-1885) was a French poet and novelist who is one of the most important writers in the French literature canon. During his life, Hugo showed interest in politics, which also affected his writings. The suffering and violence Hugo witnessed during his life made him especially concerned with utilizing politics in his novels. After witnessing a firefight between the soldiers of the government and rioters in 1832, which influenced the revolution in *Les Misérables*, he separated himself from the monarchy, which was a source of income for Hugo. *Les Misérables* is one of Hugo’s most famous novels, and, among other things, gives a sense of the significant role that politics played in his novels. The novel, like other literary works by Hugo, depicts the poor conditions of the working class and the injustices against them. Hugo’s political life and experiences greatly influenced the writing of *Les Misérables*, which is one reason why it is a novel worthy of analysis.

Similar to *Sybil*, *Les Misérables* (1862) is a novel that is analyzed and studied through different lenses. Critics have studied the novel by itself for its rich themes and compared it to several other French and non-French novels. In “Realism in *Les Misérables*,” Olin Moore compares two of Hugo’s novels, *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Les Misérables*, in order to show that the latter is more realistic in its documentation than the former. The realism in Hugo’s *Les Misérables* was one of the many reasons that pushed critics to view the novel as an invitation for social reform. In “On Rereading French History in Hugo’s *Les Misérables*,” Angelo Metzidakis views the novel as a way to educate specifically the bourgeois readers into becoming politically active by combining their moral obligations with their power especially through the character of Marius. Leah Gordon in “Providence, Duty, Love: The Regeneration of Jean Valjean in Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*” also observes Hugo’s novel as a call for social reform. However, she specifically focuses on the theme of religion and the role that religion should play in the restoration of the social system, especially through the character of Bishop Myriel. While many critics focus on the analysis of the characters of the novel, Rosalina de la Carrera, in “History’s Unconscious in Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*,” focuses on combining Freud’s human psyche with the landscape of *Les Misérables* as a way to demonstrate Hugo’s discourse as “will-to-conscience” (Carrera 855). As a way of extending previous analysis of *Les Misérables*, I will also be viewing the novel as a call for social reform and education for the bourgeois class not only as a means to analyze the novel itself but also to show that Hugo is more progressive than Disraeli.

Despite the 17-year gap between the two works, they can be studied in parallel as France and England’s situations were mainly influenced by the French Revolution. One of

the main reasons I chose these two novels was to join French and English literature under the same umbrella, especially since their histories intersect during the specific period in which both novels were written. This project's aim is to use what has been written on *Sybil* and *Les Misérables*, the sources mentioned above, as a foundation and starting point to place both novels in conversation. In other words, what I want to do is analyze through a close reading the political aspect, love stories, characters and themes that previous critics have already analyzed to detect the differences and similarities between the novels. This comparison, as this thesis will infer, strongly argues that Hugo is more progressive than Disraeli.

In this project, I specifically want to focus on analyzing the gulf between the conditions of the working class as opposed to that of the aristocracy and bourgeois factory owners since this division between the classes reflects the “troubles” between the different social classes and the monarchies that resided behind the success of the two thriving countries. I want to pay close attention to the theme of politics in both novels through a close reading of the representation of classes that both authors use by focusing on how the novels address the theme of history and the way they deal with the sociopolitical conflict through the representation of social classes. In both novels, the representation of the sociopolitical conflict and the social classes at both ends of this conflict is overloaded due to the novelistic genre and literary elements that both authors resort to. The use of melodrama, race discourse and allegories in the quest for resolution in both novels serve the overloaded exaggerated representations of history—which, as Moore suggests, can never be accessed as such—that this thesis will analyze as a means of asserting that Hugo's *Misérables* is more progressive than Disraeli's *Sybil*.

In the first chapter, I will provide historical background of both countries, using the French Revolution as a starting point as well as short biographies of the two authors. From the historical background of that period, which basically focuses on the political and social conflict, I will move on to the novels since it was that conflict and the political lives of the authors that inspired them to write *Sybil* and *Les Misérables*. In this chapter, I will make sure to point to the actual conflict that commenced the revolutions, the times of trouble and the difference between England and France. Then, in the second chapter, I will use Georg Lukács's *The Historical Novel* to analyze the traits of a historical novel in order to see why these two novels cannot be completely considered historical novels mainly due to their use of melodrama. I will also use Jameson's *The Antinomies of Realism*, focusing on the categories of Transcendental Transcendence and Transcendental Immanence, which tie allegories with morals, to analyze the novelistic form and literary elements that the two texts share as well as how they employ them differently, thereby furthering my argument that Hugo is more progressive than Disraeli. Transcendental Immanence uses moral allegories to recount 'reality' in an ideal way, or in a way as not to disappoint the readers as actual reality does. Readers, as a result, are not permitted to see the complete truth. Transcendental Transcendence uses allegory to convey the authors' social and political beliefs concerning the sociopolitical situation that is dealt with in the novels. This chapter explores the melodramatic construction of these narratives, in order to see what role this genre played in their recounting of historical events while focusing on the exaggerated personas of the characters as well as the melodramatic scenes in both novels. After having analyzed the novels' genres and their characters, it will become clear that due to melodrama and the categories of Transcendental Transcendence and Transcendental Immanence *Sybil*

and *Les Misérables*'s representations of historical events comes off as overloaded, exaggerated and excessive.

This exploration will lead me to chapter three in which I use Foucault's *Society Must Be Defended* to investigate the way the two authors represent the social classes in their novels as being a key to sociopolitical conflict in both France and England. In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault discusses class struggle through a race war discourse, which can be observed in both novels. I will use Foucault's 'racial discourse' to map this social conflict between the aristocracy and the bourgeois factory owners on one hand and the working class on the other hand. Finally, moving from the Foucauldian idea of racial conflict as a way of mapping class tensions internal to the nation-state—that is, by representing the “gulf” between the classes as an unworkable racial divide—my last chapter explores the progressive resolutions that the two authors offer in their novels. In this chapter, I will mainly focus on doing a Marxist paradigm of close reading used in Frederic Jameson's *Antinomies of Realism*, Georg Lukács's *The Historical Novel*, Perry Anderson's “From Progress to Catastrophe,” and the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. I want to specifically zero in on how the violent scenes in the two novels are crucial to the idea of progress, as explicated by Jameson, Lukács and Perry Anderson, and how the two marriages at the end of each text are used to partially resolve the conflict. My conclusion will stress, in turn, why Hugo's *Les Misérables* functions in a more progressive way than Disraeli's *Sybil*.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF LATE EIGHTEENTH-, EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND AND FRANCE AS IT RELATES TO BOTH NOVELS

One cannot begin to understand the events and developments that occur in both Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil* or *Two Nations* without a significant knowledge of the history of the authors' countries, France and England respectively, which mainly influenced the latter's literature. In this light, before analyzing the novels, a historical survey of the two countries between 1798 and 1848 is necessary.

According to Hobsbawm in *The Age of Revolution 1789 – 1848*, the city of the late eighteenth century in Western Europe owed its prosperity to the countryside.

The agrarian problem was therefore the fundamental one in the world of 1789, and it is easy to see why the first systematic school of continental economists, the French Physiocrats, assumed as a matter of course that the land, and the land rent, was the sole source of net income. And the crux of the agrarian problem was the relation between those who cultivated the land and those who owned it, those who produced its wealth and those who accumulated it (Hobsbawm 21-22).

Some areas, especially in England, took the agrarian development to a completely new level and made it into a capitalist form of agriculture. Commerce and manufacturing activities began to flourish, notably in Britain whose power came from its economic progress. Science played a big role in this progress, as the industrial revolution started taking place. The Age of Enlightenment found its path and strength in the midst of the progress of production and trade. The Enlightenment was against the old régimes, to which France still belonged, and found faith in other monarchies such as that of Britain.

Monarchies found themselves under the inclination to adopt the ‘Enlightenment’ as their slogan; however, they failed to get away from the hierarchy of “landed nobles” (Hobsbawm 35). Therefore, the only way to “abolish agrarian feudal relations all over Western and Central Europe was the French Revolution, by direct action, reaction or example, and the revolution of 1848” (Hobsbawm 36).

When the Age of Enlightenment began, the Church’s influence and power began to lose its hold on the people while philosophers and artists began to promote reason, i.e. human rights, over religion. Politics was open to all due to printing, which led to the independence of a former British colony through the American Revolution. Nonetheless, France was still governed by the ‘Ancient Regime’. During the reign of Louis XVI, there were three estates in France; the first one was the nobles, the second the Church, both of which were privileged by the King, and the third estate comprised the rest, including peasants, workers, the middle classes and merchants. Only those belonging to the third estate paid taxes to the King and the two first estates. However, due to the huge expenses of the war against Britain and France’s support of the American Revolution, France found itself in major debt. As a solution, the King and his finance minister decided to announce taxation reform, which the nobles did not agree to.

This conflict between the Monarchy and the nobles over the reform of the tax system led the King to call an assembly of the three estates, during which the third estate, despite it being the largest, lost to the other two estates. As a result, the third estate called for their own assembly, “the national assembly”. As a follow up, a huge number of Parisians and soldiers stormed the Bastille Prison for weapons. Rebellions started spreading around the country leading to the abolition of the feudal system. The notion of human

rights and individual freedoms emerged, and the first two estates lost their privilege, which made most of them flee the country and turn against the new government in the name of the King. The latter started fearing for his life and was caught while trying to escape the country in 1791. People lost their faith in the King who was charged with treason and later on publicly beheaded, which ended many centuries of monarchy. Meanwhile, neighboring monarchies, Britain one of them, launched a war against France to suppress the revolution before it spread to their countries.

In 1792, the first French Republic was declared. However, some revolutionists felt that it was not enough to change the government. They believed that society must be transformed as well. Some extremist Jacobins led by Maximilien Robespierre installed what was called the “Reign of Terror” during which they executed a large number of people who were thought to be against the revolution. Napoleon Bonaparte came to supposedly ‘rescue’ the revolutionary beliefs of “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity” when he assigned himself as Emperor of France. During his time as Emperor, Napoleon initiated a blockade of Britain and launched war against countries that did not abide by the siege on England. During Napoleon’s evasion of Russia in 1812, his army was defeated. He was eventually exiled only to briefly come back to power and be permanently defeated during the Waterloo battle.

After Waterloo, the restoration of the Bourbon Monarchy took place with Louis XVIII, who died childless in 1824. In 1824, his brother Charles X came to reign and called for another election during which the liberals won the Chamber of Deputies. This victory triggered the July revolution of 1830, which dethroned Charles X and brought Louis-Philippe I to the throne. During his reign, the King was obligated to cooperate with the

Chamber of Deputies, but the government still had little sympathy for the working classes. The only powerful “friend” of the working class was General Jean Maximilien Lamarque. His death triggered the June Rebellion of 1832, which was an unsuccessful rebellion that occurred during the funeral of General Lamarque.

During the French revolutionary wars, Britain’s parliament was made up of two houses, the House of Lords, i.e. nobles and Church leaders, and the House of Commons. Ironically, only those who owned property elected the House of Commons, and so it was dominated by landowners. Due to the industrial revolution, a significant majority of the population moved to the cities, which created a misrepresentation during the elections due to unpopulated you mean “sparsely populated” boroughs, i.e. “rotten” boroughs. Therefore, rural areas were much more represented than urban areas, where most of the population resided. Two political parties stood out in England in the nineteenth century; the Tories, i.e. conservatives, and the Whigs, i.e. the liberals. The rotten boroughs allowed the Tories to control the parliament because most Tories were landed gentry. In order for British people to vote, they had to own a certain amount of land. While Tories wanted to enforce tariffs on foreign wheat, the Whigs encouraged free trade, which created a conflict. As a result, the Reform Act of 1832 was instituted to remove rotten boroughs and grant suffrage for the urban middle class but did not create democracy in England since a very large number of the population still could not vote. Consequently, Chartism was initiated by working class agitators.

The ground for Chartism was prepared, in part, by Peterloo in 1819. Conservative leaders suppressed working class agitators, and during a protest for parliament reform, the cavalry charged the protesters and killed as well as injured many. This event is known as

the Peterloo Massacre since it took place in Saint Peter's field in Manchester in 1819 and was meant to mock Britain's victory over France by drawing attention to local abuses. The People's Charter emerged in the 1830s and demanded democratic reform, and wrote a petition that received over one million signatures. However, the House of Commons did not accept this petition and found a way to reject it. Many violent demonstrations took place after the petition was refused until the peaceful Great Chartist Meeting in 1848. Three laws or reforms were issued during this period to try to contain the violence of a revolution that threatened to repeat the French Revolution. The silencing of Chartists came as a disappointment to Karl Marx, who saw no other solution to the conflict of the ruling classes but a proletarian revolution. "In order to divert you from the People's Charter, the only goal important to you, they spawn," according to Engels, "all sorts of projects for superficial reforms" (Engels, 466).

It is these historical events and political conflicts that influenced Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil* or *Two Nations*. These events are also representative of the influence of the history and sociopolitical conflict—that is, of class and representation—on nineteenth century on literature. Since both Hugo and Disraeli participated in politics at a certain point in their lives, it is also necessary to take a look at their political stands for a better understanding of their novels and literature.

To begin with, in "The Self-Fashioning of Disraeli 1818–1851," Paul Smith and Charles Richmond go deep into Disraeli's life up to the year 1850 as they explore "his social and political ideas, his style of self-presentation, and the significance of his Jewish origins and his assumption of the romantic mode" (Smith 1). Being of Jewish origin and European intellectual status, Disraeli felt he was a stranger to the country he was living in,

i.e. England. This situation forced him to prove himself in society through literature and politics. Disraeli self-fashioned himself by creating and molding his political persona, mostly through literature, which led him to become the leader of the Conservative party and prime minister of England twice; hence his focus on the idea of leader in his novel, which will be explored further in the chapters of this study. During his early life, as a result of his modest background, Disraeli struggled to demonstrate what Smith calls as his “genius” in politics, in society and in literature especially concerning the determination of the gap between the races of history, democracy as opposed to aristocracy, capitalism and industrialism, and the future of the nation of England. From a young age, as Richmond argues when discussing the education of Disraeli (Smith 3), the latter took notice of the men who acquired power over those who were writers. He was able to differentiate between the life of action that required corruption as a means to success and the life of artists that required purity in order to be dedicated to others. Disraeli did not attend public schools or universities for education; he taught himself from his father’s library books and especially from the Kantian lessons, which he memorized. The most important lesson was that the power of understanding dictates the rules onto nature and not the other way around.

Through his journey of self-fashioning and learning he achieved in order to become part of the elite group of his society, Disraeli was driven to write literature, to take control over society, to make money, to fall in love, and thus become part of the political power elite of England. Disraeli’s first novels revolved around him as a way of self-fashioning and self-development. These novels not only recount events and present the feelings of the author MAYBE but also depict the evolution and growth of the self of the author. “P. J. Eakin's argument [is] that autobiographical truth is not a fixed but an evolving content in an

intricate process of self-discovery and self-creation, and, further, that the self that is the center of all autobiographical narratives is necessarily a fictive structure” (Smith 5); however, Smith continues to say that this self cannot be completely imagined away from the culture made available by the real world. Other than Disraeli’s literary expression of his nature, feelings and thoughts, “was the moral authenticity as much as the self-indulgence with which he was concerned” (Smith 5), which clearly influenced Egremont, a character that I will later analyze. Smith adds that, according to Schwartz, Disraeli used to judge his main characters according to traditions and the interest of community as a way of grooming his own personality. Disraeli’s desire to undertake heroic deeds came from his lack of money and his dependency on his father’s properties. However, the political stability of England’s system did not allow for such acts was not conducive to such deeds, and the period of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic disruption was over even before Disraeli came of age. The only time England partly witnessed this sort of situation was during the parliamentary reform of 1831. This idea of needed violence in order for there to be political action is an aspect that this study will later explore in its fourth chapter as violence, in the texts examined, becomes a necessity for change to take place.

In addition, Disraeli’s religion also played an important part in his writings.

Disraeli was, in fact, as Stanley Weintraub and Anthony Wohl have recently been at pains to illustrate, operating in a context often more tolerationist than tolerant, in which anti-Semitic prejudice of a racial as well as a religious kind was commonplace, even if discrimination did not boil into persecution (Smith 9).

Thus, he was also trying to demonstrate and prove the ‘genius’ of his race in order to liberate himself from the prejudice that his environment placed. Disraeli used his identity as Jewish, even if only in his writings, to place himself as part the English society. “It was a

form of romantic transfiguration of the real in the light of the ideal, achieved through the supposed ability of the man of exalted intellect to discern a deeper reality beneath the banalities of conventional wisdom” (Smith 10). He relied on an idealistic Romanticism to implement the reality he desired into the ideal world of his books. Smith continues by saying that “Even Napoleon was half assimilated to the Jewish genius. In the local English context, this approach enabled Disraeli to reverse the positions of host nation and alien minority by turning the former into the religious and intellectual pupil and tributary of the latter” (Smith 11).

Disraeli was also able to change the relationship of patronage that he had with the aristocracy. He employed the same technique in many of his writings in which his analysis of England’s sociopolitical situation was represented through metaphors of a mob instead of a solidified community. Furthermore, he took on the topics of the gulf between the conditions of the working class as opposed to that of the bourgeoisie and aristocracy, as well as mentioning asserting his view on the only possible solution for the division of the classes that consists of a new, reborn monarchy, which suggests that Disraeli had to have been influenced by the ideas of Hegel (Smith 13). During the period Disraeli wrote *Sybil*, race was a key matrix for other representing politics and the conditions of society, especially due to the aftermath of the French Revolution and Industrial Revolution. This study will therefore focus on how an already existent sociopolitical conflict is represented through the notion of race war in both Disraeli’s and Hugo’s novel.

Disraeli uses melodrama and the notion of race as ways of making sense of the sociopolitical conflict in his novel. “Disraeli’s compulsion for self-dramatization, extravagance and hyperbole finds an outlet in his political career. When, after he was first

elected to parliament in 1837, he required a forum to articulate his social, political and spiritual principles, he returned to fiction and wrote the Young England trilogy – *Coningsby*, *Sybil* and *Tancred*” (Smith 64). In this imaginative framework, Disraeli found a field where he could openly express his political ideas. For this reason, *Sybil* is a novel worthy of exploration since it presents Disraeli’s political views in literary and generic forms.

Sybil is a novel set in the nineteenth century and focuses on the gulf between the ruling class, bourgeoisie and aristocrats, on the one hand, and the working class on the other. “The novel begins with a brilliant sketch of the young men about town gathered in Crockford’s Club on the eve of the 1837 Derby” (Shrimpton 9). The novel ends with “the final chapter, the economic recovery of 1844” (Shrimpton 10). The events of the novel follow Egremont, the young brother of an English earl, as he decides to disguise himself as Franklin to live with a Chartist factory manager who is the father of Sybil, the girl he falls in love with. The reader follows Egremont as he tries to investigate the various regions of England and discover the different conditions of the social classes. The actions of the novel begin with the death of King William IV and the beginning of Queen Victoria’s reign, which Disraeli narrates in the third chapter, before moving on to 1838, when the People’s Charter advocated for social and political reform during the first Chartist Petition. During the 1830s there were two English parties, the Tories and the Whigs. The Tories were divided when the Whigs party passed the First Reform Act, which gave rights to middle-class men to vote and take part in political power. Sir Robert Peel, a statesman in the conservative party, suggested the acceptance of this new rising middle-class while the

others of the same parties disagreed and sided with the crown and the church. Despite this division, the conservatives won the elections in 1841.

However, Sir Robert Peel refused to abolish the ‘New Poor Law’, which forced the poor rural population to move to the urban areas, protecting the rural landowners from paying large amounts of taxes. One of Disraeli’s characters, Lord Marney, observes this refusal in the first chapter of the second book. After the House Commons refused the Chartist Petition, violent riots began taking place, during which Egremont gives an important speech in the favor of the Chartists. The climax of the novel is a labor demonstration in Lancashire during which Sybil’s father is killed. The death of Gerard during this workers’ protest alludes to the Peterloo massacre during which a cavalry charged into the crowd protesting for parliamentary reform. The violence, through racializing the working class, serves Capitalism, i.e. the bourgeoisie. According to Hobsbawm “from the point of view of capitalists, however, these social problems were relevant to the progress of the economy only if, by some horrible accident, they were to overthrow the social order” (Hobsbawm 57). The idea of violence will thoroughly be explored in the fourth chapter of this study after an analysis of the representation of the “races” that Disraeli offers in his novel. Disraeli, through the speech that Egremont gives during one of the riots, suggests his idea of the need for a leader for the Chartist movement. The idea of leader and representation are recurrent notions that study will explore and analyze through the representation of races. The ideas of race and representation are key elements to my analysis of Disraeli’s *Sybil* as well as Hugo’s *Les Misérables*.

In the preface of his book, *Victor Hugo*, Porter mentions that Hugo had always been strictly against the death penalty and had always defended the poor. He was a peacemaker

and was always in favor of the union between France and Prussia (Porter VII). “He sought to reconcile enemies without sacrificing integrity” (Porter VIII). After witnessing violence and suffering while following his father through France and Italy, ““Victor Hugo was no longer satisfied with being a story teller or a poet; he expressed the first stirrings of the vocation of a social reformer”” (Porter 66). Despite the fact that Hugo had sympathy for the unfortunate, he never really took on politics and specifically liberalism until later in his life. He always thought that monarchy and democracy walk hand in hand just as the English parliamentary model had implied (Porter 66). On June 5, 1832, Hugo directly experienced the revolution as he witnessed a firefight between the troops of the government and the rioters, which he describes in *Les Misérables*. After that, Hugo took the decision of detaching himself from the monarchy, and he no longer accepted money from this monarchy (Porter 66). This decision, as well as other of Hugo’s beliefs and changes, are clear influences on Marius’s character that this study will further examine. Hugo always believed that poverty could be abolished and the way to restrain the people from revolting was not hard labor but “a paternalistic intervention as enlightened self-interest by the ruling class” (Porter 67).

However, while writing *Les Misérables*, he started insinuating that the entire society is responsible for the poverty and the crimes committed by workers that were happening during the period in which he was writing, which is evidence of progression in Hugo’s political and social viewpoints. “He played a courageous role as the violence of the liberal conscience of France from 1849 to 1870, including 19 years in exile to protest Louis-Napoléon’s coup d’état that turned the republic into a new empire” (Porter 67). Being pro-enlightenment himself, Hugo believed that the church and the state should not take part in

public education and “that guidance and enlightenment must descend on the people from ‘above’, from [the] intelligentsia” (Porter 77). Furthermore, “by June 1850, his dismay at severe restrictions on voting rights forces him to acknowledge himself a member of the opposition to the government” (Porter 69). In August of 1851, Hugo officially allies with ‘the petit bourgeoisie’ when he signs on to a Democratic-Socialist manifesto. In his writings, Hugo always found freedom to express his political beliefs. One example is blaming the ruling class through Jean Valjean when he says: “harsh law enforcement breeds the monsters it wants to eliminate” (Porter 127) though he does not present a solution for this problem in his novel. “He simply tries to stimulate our moral sensibilities as Fantine’s misadventures and steadfast love for her child stimulated the moral sensibilities of Jean Valjean. Hugo intends the reformed convict to serve as a model for us as Valjean comes to know God, whom Hugo equates with conscience” (Porter 129).

Thus, the moral integrity of Hugo’s characters is a product of his narration of the events that take place.

The events portrayed in *Les Misérables* span the period between October 1815 (Jean Valjean’s arrival in Digne) and the summer of 1833 (the death of Valjean). But, to either side of these dates, there are flashbacks to the French Revolution of 1789 and to the Napoleonic Wars as well as flashforwards to the revolutionary events of 1848 and to the early days of Louis-Napoleon’s Second Empire (1852-70) (Clark 5).

The events of Hugo’s novel begin with Myriel, bishop of Digne, in 1815, just after the battle of Waterloo. During the novel, Hugo makes sure to paint a historical picture throughout the narration of the story for the readers that gives a sense of the situation in France even if melodramatically described. One example is Hugo’s melodramatic description of the rain, which played a huge part in defeating Napoleon during the Battle of

Waterloo. While portraying historical moments, *Les Misérables* recounts the story of many different characters while placing them into two different races, the bourgeoisie and the working class. Jean Valjean is the principal protagonist, which the following chapters will carefully study since Hugo uses Valjean's changing fortunes as way of implying the victory of virtue over vice. This opposition is a clear example of Hugo's use of melodrama to delineate the characters and the events of the novel. The struggle of the poor working class, the peasants and workers that Hugo mainly revolves his book around, especially the character of Jean Valjean, and which reflects the real struggles that were happening around that time and many scenes are influenced by real events. One noticeable event in the text is the battle at the barricades, which mirrors several fights at the barricades in France during 1832, and specifically the June Rebellion. "On June 5, 1832, the funeral procession of the popular General Maximilien Lamarque, identified with the patriotic opposition to the regime of July, set off an outbreak" and "police estimated the insurgent dead at 80, the wounded at 200. Government forces lost 70 dead and more than 290 wounded" (Pinkney 512).

After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, France saw the restoration of the Bourbon Monarchy with King Louis XVIII, who came to power in 1814. This restoration is actually portrayed in the novel through Gillenormand, Marius's grandfather who serves as the representation of the pro-monarchy bourgeois party. After the death of King Louis XVIII, Charles X, his brother, came to the throne as the last of the Bourbons. During his reign, Charles X refused to accept the results of the elections of July 1830 and dissolved the Chamber of Deputies a second time which, consequently, led to the July revolution of 1830, which caused Charles X to flee the country to Prague. Hugo gives an overall

perception of the Restoration in the fourth book of the first part of his first volume. Louis-Philippe took over after his cousin Charles X fled the country. Despite the fact that Louis-Philippe tried to be more moderate than previous kings, the working class was still marginalized and unimportant to the government. Thus, the young and the working class began to protest their terrible conditions in November of 1830 against the monarchy and the government. Following this protest the battle at the barricades took place during the funeral of the liberal general Jean Maximilien Lamarque in 1832, the only person who had sympathy for the working class. This event mirrors the students' revolution or the secret political society, the Friends of the ABC: a fictional association of revolutionary French republican students that Hugo describes in his novel. It is of course at these barricades where Valjean saves Marius's life. Shortly after this event, Hugo ends his novel with the death of Valjean while Marius and Cosette, married at that time, are by his side.

Having gone over history, the biographies of both authors and short summaries of the novels, one can begin to acknowledge how those aspects affected their literary works. Through literature, both authors found means to manifest their political and social beliefs in fictional form. One can, therefore, perceive the way in which the two authors leave their mark through their writings. Through *Les Misérables*, Hugo is trying to present himself as an enlightened public intellectual who uses his writings as morals, and, through *Sybil*, Disraeli is presenting himself as a political leader; thus, both are writing themselves into existence, into the real world. The real world, according to Lukács, is constantly changing as it leaves the past behind.

It therefore becomes clear that these novels are not the same as Lukács's historical novel, which the latter defines, via Sir Walter Scott, as follows in his book *The Historical Novel*:

What matters therefore in the historical novel is not the re-telling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. What matters is that we should reexperience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality (Lukács 20).

Especially since both novels rely on Transcendental Transcendence and Transcendental Immanence, categories that Jameson deals with in *The Antinomies of Realism*, in re-telling the historical events through the storylines of their characters, 'the poetic awakening' of the characters simulates that of the authors, which this study will explore thoroughly in the second and fourth chapters. In the second chapter, I will closely explore the construction of the narratives of the two novels, which are clearly embedded in melodrama so as to serve the authors' specific agendas. However, before I can discuss the effect and role that melodrama, as well as Jameson's categories of Transcendental Transcendence and Transcendental Immanence, play in these novels, it is vital to point out the difference between these partly historical novels and other historical novels. This difference, in turn, suggests the ways in which in these novels both authors are attempting to write themselves into the real world.

In *The Historical Novel*, Lukács distinguishes the majority of Scott's heroines of representing the normal English woman of his generation without any interesting additives that come with discussing the character's paths when he says: "that with very few exceptions all of Scott's heroines represent the same type of philistinely correct, normal English woman; that there is no room in these novels for the interesting and complex

tragedies and comedies of love and marriage” (Lukács 34). This is not the case in Hugo’s or Disraeli’s novel as we will see in the second chapter, which distinguishes them from the novels of Balzac and Elizabeth Gaskell for example. “Scott does not command the magnificent, profound psychological dialectics of character” (Lukács 34). While both Disraeli and Hugo’s novels take charge, through the construction of their narratives, of the psychological development of their characters, this development is influenced by their own experiences and perspectives in order to serve their own agendas. For Scott, as Lukács observes in his book:

the great historical personality is the representative of an important and significant movement embracing large sections of the people. He is great because his personal passion and personal aim coincide with this great historical movement, because he concentrates within himself its positive and negative sides, because he gives to these popular strivings their clearest expression, because he is their standard-bearer in good and in evil (Lukács 38).

In Scott’s novels, one comes across significant historical figures. However, he does not draw them as great heroes that people should worship. On the contrary, the development of such characters follows the historical events that made them into such subjects.

Balzac understood this secret of Scott's composition. Scott's novels, he said, marched towards the great heroes in the same way as history itself had done when it required their appearance. The reader, therefore, experiences the historical genesis of the important historical figures, and it is the writer's task from then on to let their actions make them appear the real representatives of these historical crises (Lukács 39).

Balzac was greatly influenced by Scott while writing his novels, especially while writing *Les Chouans*, which clearly distinguished Balzac and his novel from Hugo and *Les Misérables*. In contrast, in both Disraeli’s and Hugo’s novels historical characters play minor roles that serve as an explanation to the non-historical main characters of the novels’

actions. For example, in *Les Misérables*, the funeral of General Jean Maximilien Lamarque coincides with the riot happening in the novel, serving as a background to the Friends of the ABC's actions of revolt at the barricades during which Marius joins the revolution and Jean Valjean saves his life. In other words, it is as if the revolt was purposefully mentioned as a way to serve the development of Valjean saving Marius, whom he dislikes.

On the other hand, in *Sybil*, the mention of Robert Peel, a statesman with the conservative party, and his refusal to abolish the "New Poor Law" sets the stage for the revolutions that will take place later in the novel, forcing Egremont to participate in the riots and forcing Gerard, Sybil's father, to die in order for the couple to be able to get married. Thus, one can see that the significant historical personalities only play a minor role as setting the tone for the later actions of the main characters in both novels, *Les Misérables* and *Sybil*.

What distinguished Scott, as well as Balzac, was knowing how to separate his political world view from the artistic world picture in his novels. Thus, "one can establish Engels's 'triumph of realism' over his personal, political and social views" (Lukács 54) because "he seeks the "middle way" between the extremes and endeavors to demonstrate artistically the historical reality of this way by means of his portrayal of the great crises in English history" (Lukács 33). In other words, in his novels, Scott portrays both the grandeur and development of the nation as well as the crises and miseries that came with such national growth, as is seen in Goethe's statement that:

what it is that constitutes Scott's pride in English history : on the one hand, naturally, the gradual maturing of national strength and greatness, the continuity of which Scott wishes to illustrate in his "middle way"; but on the other, and inseparable from this, the crises of this growth, the extremes whose struggle produce this "middle way" as their end-result and which

could never be removed from the picture of national greatness without robbing it precisely of all its greatness, wealth and substance (Lukács 54).

Therefore, according to Lukács, it is due to the dual personality of Scott “the Scottish petty aristocrat” and the writer who “embodies the sentiment of the Roman poet, Lucan: "Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni" (the victorious cause pleased the gods, but the vanquished pleased Cato)” that he was able to become this great historical novelist as opposed to a romantic novelist (Lukács 54) – that is, to escape becoming a romantic novelist.

And it was for this reason that he was able to portray objectively the ruination of past social formations, despite all his human sympathy for, and artistic sensitivity, to the splendid, heroic qualities which they contained. Objectively, in a large historical and artistic sense: he saw at one and the same time their outstanding qualities and the historical necessity of their decline (Lukács 54).

This historical objectivity that Scott is recognized and praised for does not figure in Hugo’s *Les Misérables* or Disraeli’s *Sybil*. For example, Hugo’s novel, through the narration of the events of the characters, expressed a need for violence, revolution against the system. On the other hand, in his novel, Disraeli praises old times through his characters. In his book, Lukács observes that Hugo “constructs his historical novels basically according to the same principle of decorative subjectivization and moralization of history” (Lukács 77). Hugo, as Lukács notes, believes in the need to make of history a moral lesson for the present. Hugo’s intention through his novels, especially *Les Misérables*, is apparently to transform history into a lesson that teaches the precedence of good over evil, morality over immorality. This focus on morality is, as Brooks writes, in keeping with melodrama as a genre: “melodrama is indeed, typically, not only a moralistic drama but the drama of morality” (Brooks 20). On the other hand, Disraeli’s *Sybil* is also fashioned in a way to propound the author’s belief

that the Chartist movement needs a leader from the bourgeois race. Thus, through the means of melodrama and other literary elements that the second chapter will explore, Hugo's novel is far from Balzac's historical novel *Les Chouans*, and Disraeli's *Sybil* is very different from Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, especially in terms of how it represents history.

Balzac's 1829 novel, *Les Chouans*, is set during the aftermath of the French Revolution. The novel takes place when Napoleon is still in power, but there are still eruptions of ongoing civil strife. It is 1799, and the Chouans, part Royalist, are revolting against Revolutionary France in 1799. The story takes place in Brittany by recounting military history. Balzac writes of a love story between the aristocratic Marie de Vermeuil and the Chouan Royalist Alphonse de Montauran. Even though she belongs to the Republican Party, she falls in love with Montauran, who decides to marry her. When her party finds out about her betrayal, they trick her into thinking that Montauran loves another woman, and she orders the destruction of the rioters. She later finds out that the letter she received about Montauran's love for the other woman was a ruse; but it is too late, Montauran is killed the day after their wedding. The form of this novel as well as many other of Balzac's novels is greatly influenced by Scott: "Scott's influence on Balzac is extremely strong. Indeed, one may say that the specific form of the Balzac novel emerged in the course of his coming to grips, ideologically and artistically, with Scott" (Lukács 81). Lukács specifically focuses on Balzac's *Les Chouans* because it "represents a worthy successor to Scott in its portrayal of popular life" (Lukács 82). In his novel, Balzac never implements any compassion to the suffering he describes through his narration: "it is simply horrible, senseless torment" (Lukács 193). He does not distinguish any member or

the crowd nor does he focus on personal conflicts, arising from within the suffering, which might come of interest to the readers. In contrast, Hugo does focus more on the personal conflicts as opposed to the suffering and revolt of the masses. For example, during the fight at the barricades of the Friends of ABC, Hugo highlights the characters of Marius and Jean Valjean as he gives more importance to the former's near-death experience and the way Valjean saves him even though he does not approve of him. This is an excellent example of the difference between the old way of representing history and the new way that Lukács discusses in his book:

The writers of the classical period of the historical novel were only interested in the cruel and terrible happenings of previous history insofar as they were necessary expressions of definite forms of class struggle (e.g. the cruelty of the Chouans in Balzac) and also because they gave birth of a similar necessity to great human passions and conflicts etc. (the heroism of the Republican officers during the Chouans' massacre of them in the same novel) (Lukács 193).

In *Les Misérables*, however, Hugo uses “the cruelty and terrible happenings” to highlight his main characters, through which he is teaching his readers a lesson. In the same scene in which Valjean saves Marius, Hugo is highlighting the virtue of Valjean through whom he has been moralizing history through the means of melodrama. These and several examples of differences between Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Balzac's *Les Chouans* show the contrast between historical and partly historical novels from which one can conclude that the main reason for this gap is the idea of representation. This problem of representation is not only in French literature but in English literature as well. While Balzac can be put in parallel with Hugo to highlight the difficulty of representing history, Disraeli's partly historical novel *Sybil* can similarly be studied in juxtaposition with Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*.

Gaskell's 1848 novel takes place in Manchester City between the years of 1839 and 1842. John Barton questions the relation between the poor and the rich, especially when it comes to the distribution of the riches. After losing his wife and son, he raises his daughter Mary by himself. Eventually he becomes involved in the Chartist movement and the Trade-Union movement. When Mary starts working as a dressmaker, she catches the attention of two young men, Jem Wilson and Harry Carson. She thinks that if she married Carson, who has a wealthy father, she would live a better a life. However, she realizes that she is in love with Wilson. Esther, Mary's long lost aunt, comes back to warn both Barton and Wilson to take care of Mary in order for her not to end up like her aunt. Wilson confronts Carson in the hopes of protecting Mary but they end up fighting. Later on, Carson is murdered and the policeman who has witnessed the fight between Carson and Wilson blames the latter and arrests him. Esther investigates the murder and tells Mary that Wilson is innocent. Mary decides to look into the matter, only to find that her father is the murderer. Therefore, in order to clear Wilson's name she searches for his cousin who comes to the trial and testifies that he was with his cousin Jem during the murder. During the trial, Mary is looked after by Margret as she falls sick. Barton feels great remorse for killing Carson and confesses to Carson's father who forgives him. Esther returns to Mary's home where she also dies. Eventually, Jem decides to take Mary, their child, and his mother to Canada where he can find a decent Job. While in Canada, they here news that Margret and Will, Jem's cousin, will soon get married.

In his book, *The Novel*, Schmidt distinguishes between Disraeli's *Sybil* and Gaskell's *Mary Barton*: "It is worth remembering that *Sybil* predated *Mary Barton* (1848) in revealing what industrial workers were up against, though Mrs. Gaskell was closer to her

subject and less grandiloquent. Disraeli's books still have truths to tell" (Schmidt 319). This distinction between the two novels raises the question of representation of nineteenth century England. Disraeli's representation is more theatrical than Gaskell's representation; a difference that many authors have spotted. For example, in "'Sooty Manchester' and the Social-Reform Novel 1845-1855. An Examination of 'Sybil,' 'Mary Barton,' 'North and South,' and 'Hard Times,' [sic]" Arthur Pollard gives the examples of the representing Union Trade workers. In *Mary Barton*, Gaskell describes the Union Trade workers in chapter 10 as "desperate members" and "pale men, with dark eyes". While on the other hand we can clearly see Disraeli's theatrical and dramatic representation of the Trade Union workers, who he describes in his fourth chapter as "Enveloped in dark cloaks and wearing black mask" and plotting initiation rituals, just like the one for Michael Radley. In order to become one of the members of the Trade Union, Mick Radley has to go through an initiation ritual: he is blindfolded and lead by two men in dark cloaks to a room where he kneeled and pledged loyalty to obey all orders given to him. Pollard mentions that "Mrs. Gaskell's treatment of the matter appears more convincing than that of Disraeli" (Pollard 91). For this reason, Gaskell is generally considered by critics to be more historical than Disraeli due to the latter's more dramatic representation.

This change of historical outlook also develops as a result of the 1848 Revolution. It expresses that general disillusion with the results of the bourgeois revolutions which begins after the great French Revolution, but which only now becomes really powerful current. Among bourgeois-liberal historians and writers it takes the form of "cultural history", i.e. the conception that wars, peace treaties, the overthrow of states etc. are only the outward and unimportant part of history; whereas the really decisive factor, that which really changes things, the "inner" part of history is made up of art, science, technology, religion, morality and worldview. The changes in these spheres is what determines the real path of humanity, whereas "outer"

history, political history, only describes the surface splashing of the waves (Lukács 210).

Therefore, it is the difficulty of representation of the “cultural history” that Lukács foregrounds in his book, which distinguished Balzac’s *Les Chouans* from Hugo’s *Les Misérables* and Disraeli’s *Sybil* from Gaskell’s *Mary Barton*. Thus, the historical background narrated above prove that both novels were affected by the historical event that were taking place during the period the novels were written in. Several scenes in both novels can be mirrored with real historical events. Due to the influence of the experience, the historical background, and the beliefs of both writers as well as their desire to write themselves into the history, *Les Misérables* and *Sybil*’s literary elements and melodramatic style provide an overloaded representation through the genre of the novels and the race discourse that both skew the historical representation. I will fully explain and analyze this representation in the second chapter in order to highlight the difference between the two novels that makes Hugo’s novel function in a more progressive way than that of Disraeli.

CHAPTER III

NOVELISTIC GENRE: LITERARY ELEMENTS AND MELODRAMATIC STYLE

After the bourgeois revolutions, there was a change of the historical outlook. After these revolutions, writers became more concerned with representing “cultural history”; a history that focuses more on morality and worldview rather than wars, peace and betrayals. The fact that the new historical outlook deals with the authors’ worldview makes it difficult to represent because each writer had his own view on society; this can be clearly observed in *Sybil* and *Les Misérables* seen that they reflect the authors’ political views as the previous chapter explained and this chapter will further demonstrate. In *The Historical Novel*, Lukács discusses this change, which distinguished Balzac’s *Les Chouans* from Hugo’s *Les Misérables* and Disraeli’s *Sybil* from Gaskell’s *Mary Barton*, and can be perceived through the novelistic forms and literary elements of the novels. Due to the influence of the experience and the beliefs of both writers as well as their desire to write themselves into the history, *Les Misérables* and *Sybil*’s melodramatic style provides, alongside the notion of race, a doubly burdened representation of the sociopolitical conflict. This chapter will focus on melodrama “as a mode of conception and expression, as a certain fictional system for making sense of experience, as a semantic field of force,” (Brooks xvii) according to Brooks’s *The Melodramatic Imagination*, and will focus on Jameson’s categories of Transcendental Transcendence and Transcendental Immanence in *The Antinomies of Realism*. Despite the fact that Hugo’s *Les Misérables* and Disraeli’s *Sybil*

share the same novelistic genre and the literary elements mentioned above, the authors apply them differently.

In *The Melodramatic Imagination*, Peter Brooks discusses the need for melodrama in order to portray the social aspect of history when he says in the preface:

In our efforts to characterize and describe certain kinds of fiction we confined ourselves to traditional categories – tragedy, comedy, romanticism, and realism. Sooner or later, melodrama – or some cognate thereof – was needed if we were to make sense of the cultural form that mattered to us (Brooks viii) us refers to 20th century critics.

It is thus due to the difficulty of representing “cultural history” and of making “sense of the cultural form that mattered to us” that the authors relied on melodrama and the categories of Transcendental Transcendence and Transcendental Immanence especially since, as mentioned in the previous chapter and will be explored later in this chapter, they are, through these novels, writing themselves into history and are experiencing “a poetic awakening” alongside their characters. However, before going into, through a close reading of both novels, into how melodrama and Transcendental Transcendence and Transcendental Immanence play a significant role in both works, one needs to set the ground and define these literary elements first.

That being said, the question now lies in the characteristics of melodrama that distinguish it from the rest of the categories such as realism, tragedy and comedy. The most important attribute of the melodramatic genre is that it “refuses to content itself with the repressions, the toning-down, the half-articulation, the accommodations, and the disappointments of the real” (Brooks 9). This generic attribute is witnessed in both novels since the authors ‘refuse’ to represent the “disappointment of the real” as is especially clear in the two ‘magical’ marriages at the end of both novels, which offer, as I will show in later

parts of this study, the authors' ideas of possible resolutions or solutions to the sociopolitical conflict dramatized in the two novels. In *Les Misérables*, Hugo's refusal to satisfy himself and the readers with the disappointment of the real is articulated by the death of characters that, at some point, stand against are opposed to the magical marriage between Marius and Cosette. For Hugo, the marriage between Marius and Cosette, which is basically a marriage between social classes; i.e. bourgeois and working class, that comes as a solution to the sociopolitical conflict that I will closely explore in subsequent chapters, is the happy ending that breaks this disappointment with reality. Thus, any threat to this happiness is killed off by the author. Inspector Javert, who threatens to imprison Valjean throughout the novels and thus to once again orphan Cosette, commits suicide as a result of a guilty conscience after Valjean spares his life. Monsieur Thénardiens, who repeatedly threatens to take back Cosette or constantly demands money in order not to cause trouble, moves to America after Marius Pontmercy gives him money for saving the latter's father, Georges Pontmercy. In addition, Madame Thénardiens is imprisoned and dies while waiting for trial. Eponine, on the other hand, who is madly in love with Marius and constantly tries to separate him from Cosette, is killed off when she takes the bullet for Marius at the barricades and dies in his arms.

Last but not least, Valjean is also killed off at the end of the second volume of the novel; however, not because he would not allow the young couple to get married, because at that point the couple is already married, but in order for them to live happily with the money that Valjean leaves for Cosette. After their marriage, Valjean confesses to Marius about his past life. The latter is horrified by Valjean, considers that his money, which he gives to Cosette, is tainted, and thus decides to push Valjean out of Cosette's life and goes

on a quest to find the real origins of Cosette's money. When Marius finds out that Valjean saved his life and that he made his money honestly, he takes Cosette to Valjean's house where they find out that the latter is dying. They both apologize, and Jean Valjean forgives them as he passes away. Consequently, the couple can now live happily and enjoy the fortune that Valjean gives Cosette with a clear conscience. Hence, Valjean's death also serves the marriage of Marius and Cosette as well as their fortune.

On the other hand, in his novel, Disraeli also kills off characters in order for the magical marriage between Egremont and Sybil to work. Walter Gerard, Sybil's father, who is against his daughter marrying Egremont, is killed during a riot in Lancashire. Therefore, his death makes it possible for Sybil and Egremont to marry and, on the other hand, allows for Egremont to become a parliamentary supporter of the Chartist movement and for an aristocrat to lead the working class in the place of the working class Gerard, which is what Egremont believes is the only way for the movement to succeed. In addition, Lord Marney, Egremont's brother, who is also opposed to his brother's political beliefs, as well as against his love for Sybil, is "literally stoned to death" towards the end of the novel (Disraeli 355). Thus, as a way of refusing the disappointment of the real, both authors, by using melodrama, make sure to eliminate any characters that might stand in the way of the magical marriage towards the end of the novels.

According to Brooks one needs to see melodrama "as a mode of conception and expression, as a certain fictional system for making sense of experience, as a semantic field of force" (Brooks 17). Therefore, in the exploration of the two novels of Hugo and Disraeli, one needs to analyze melodrama as a mean of expression of political and social beliefs. What both novels try to do in a sense is to offer a cultural and historical understanding of

nineteenth century France and England through the fiction of the characters of the novels and through melodrama. “The few critics who have given serious attention to melodrama have noted its psychological function in allowing us the pleasure of self-pity and the experience of wholeness brought by the identification with ‘monopathic’ emotion” (Brooks 12). Thus, through the melodramatic style of the novels, the reader can identify with the emotions of the exaggerated personas of the characters and the events that they undergo in the two novels. Many characters in both novels are hyperbolic; however, my focus will be on specific main characters whose exaggerated personas and roles in many melodramatic scenes play a crucial part in the storyline of the novels. In *Les Misérables*, the main focus will be on Bishop Myriel, Valjean, Cosette, and Marius. In *Sybil*, I will mainly focus on Sybil, her father, Walter Gerard, and Charles Egremont.

In *Les Misérables*, Bishop Myriel, who is unlike other bishops during the nineteenth century and specifically in 1815, the date that Hugo begins his novel, can, as described by Hugo, almost be considered a saint. During the reign of Louis XVI, the Church was one of the two estates of France, the first being the nobles, which was privileged by the king. Therefore, during the French Revolution, the Church was in opposition to Napoleon. Nonetheless, despite the fact that Bishop Myriel was against Napoleon, the people of Digne still love him dearly because of his noble character: “Even his conduct towards Napoleon had been accepted and pardoned in silence by the people, a good, weak flock, who adored their emperor, but who loved their bishop” (Hugo 1: 35). Bishop Myriel, due to the melodramatic description of his persona and his action, is described as a noble man; he helps the poor, and opens his house to all those who need it. When Valjean gets out of prison, he starts looking for a place to eat and stay the night. Despite Valjean having the

money to pay for food and accommodation, no one in Digne will let him stay with them because of his yellow passport, which identifies him as an ex-convict. Nonetheless, despite his yellow passport, Bishop Myriel welcomed Valjean at his house without any money. Valjean was in complete shock at the Bishop's reaction and explained to him that the curé that he knew from Marseille was nothing like Bishop Myriel. The people of Marseille, when they went to mass to listen to the Monseigneur, as they called him, could not even see him, get close to him, or even understand what he was saying. For Valjean "that is what a bishop is" (Hugo 1: 53); an unapproachable man and a man not listened to.

Through Valjean's comparison, Hugo makes a point of highlighting the virtue of Bishop Myriel, which is not a quality found in other bishops of that time. Bishop Myriel is approachable; Valjean tells him: "you are good; you don't despise me. You take me into your house [...] and I haven't hid from you where I come from" (Hugo 1: 53).

Furthermore, Hugo's exaggerated persona of Bishop Myriel can also be perceived when the latter saves Valjean from the police. When Bishop Myriel welcomes Valjean to his home, they sit to have dinner on the Bishop's silver plates, which catches the attention of Valjean. After having dinner, the house members, including Valjean, went to sleep. However, in the middle of the night, the latter wakes up and starts thinking about his current situation as an ex-convict with a yellow passport and believes that he will always be treated accordingly. Therefore, he decides to steal the silver plates and run away. When he is caught by the police and brought back to Bishop Myriel's house, the latter saves him from being imprisoned again by saying to the police that the silver plates in Valjean's possession were a gift. Moreover, not only does the Bishop save Valjean's life, he also gives him the silver candlesticks as a gift on the condition that Valjean uses them wisely and changes his life:

“Jean Valjean, my brother; you belong no longer to evil, but to good. It is your soul that I am buying for you. I withdraw it from dark thoughts and from the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God!” (Hugo 1:73). This melodramatic scene exemplifies the exaggerated persona of Bishop Myriel, who helps Valjean when he needs a place to stay, saves him from the police when he steals from his house, and gives him more silver for him to better his life; Myriel is an extraordinary Bishop.

On the other hand, Valjean’s persona is also an exaggerated one due to the effect of melodrama embedded within the story of Hugo. After Valjean’s changing fortunes, the latter becomes exactly what Bishop Myriel wants him to become. He uses the silver given to him to become rich and enrich the city of Montreuil while he gives money to those in need. Several melodramatic scenes in the novel highlight Valjean’s exaggerated persona. When Valjean is Monsieur Madeleine, he helps the poor, and he even risks his life and his mask to save Fauchelevent’s life. When Valjean decides to start his life from scratch, he disguises himself under the name of Monsieur Madeleine, who eventually becomes the mayor of Montreuil. Most of the city adores Monsieur Madeleine, while few hate him; Fauchelevent is one of those who hated Monsieur Madeleine because he is jealous of the latter’s growing fortune. Despite the fact that Monsieur Madeleine knows that Fauchelevent dislikes him, he risks his life while trying to save him from the cart that has fallen on him. When no one will help lift the cart under which Fauchelevent is almost dying, Monsieur Madeleine, under the eyes of Inspector Javert who constantly suspects him of being Valjean, goes under the cart, risks his life, and saves Fauchelevent’s life. Monsieur Madeleine knows that lifting the cart will require great strength, which he is trying to hide from Inspector Javert. However, the goodness of Monsieur Madeleine will not let him

watch a man die just to save himself and not expose his identity. This scene is one of the many scenes that highlight Valjean's exaggerated persona.

On another note, Fantine, a factory worker who works at Monsieur Madeleine's factory, is fired without the knowledge of Monsieur Madeleine when her boss finds out that she has an illegitimate daughter. Thus, she becomes a prostitute in order to be able to send money to her daughter and to live. However, Inspector Javert arrests her when he finds out. She begs him not to imprison her, but Javert refuses her request. Just in time, Monsieur Madeleine walks in, saves Fantine from prison, and brings her back to his house where he and Sister Simplicity, a nun who lives with Monsieur Madeleine, take care of her until the day she dies. Monsieur Madeleine pays all of Fantine's debts and even the sums of money the Thénardiens falsely demand of Fantine. During those days, Fantine tells Monsieur Madeleine about her daughter Cosette, and the latter promises to bring Cosette back to her. Unfortunately, Fantine passes away before Monsieur Madeleine can bring back Cosette because he is taking care of another matter, which also highlights his nobility and goodness. Nonetheless, he makes it a promise upon his life to find Cosette and take care of her. While Monsieur Madeleine is trying to find a way to bring Cosette to Fantine, Inspector Javert surprises him with the news that a man under the name of Jean Valjean has been arrested. When Monsieur Madeleine finds out, he decides to go to court, reveals his identity, and confesses that he is indeed Valjean to save the other man's life. This melodramatic scene emphasizes Valjean's persona as a noble and good man. Despite the fact that he may get arrested for admitting that he is indeed Valjean, Monsieur Madeleine could not bear the idea of another man to be imprisoned because of him. Nevertheless, to his surprise, the court does not plead him guilty, and Valjean runs back to Fantine's bed

side and continues the process of trying to bring Cosette back. However, Inspector Javert will not let Valjean go and continues to pursue him. Fantine dies when inspector Javert arrests Valjean under her eyes, but Valjean escapes from prison and goes to Montfermeil to find Cosette. These noble deeds that Valjean engages in, in spite of their endangering his life, which the reader perceives during these exceptionally melodramatic scenes, emphasize the exaggerated persona of Valjean.

In addition to these scenes, there are two crucial scenes that one should focus on and that shed more light on Valjean's exaggerated persona. The first is when Valjean spares Inspector Javert's life during the events that take place during the period of the fights at the barricades. Valjean has the chance to kill Inspector Javert, who is captured by Enjolras and his friends, but Valjean does not execute him and lets him go free. In such a melodramatic scene, the nobility of Valjean appears exaggerated since he has the chance to kill the man who has made his life miserable and has never let him live in peace, but he does not kill him and lets Javert go.

The second melodramatic scene that also emphasizes Valjean's exaggerated persona is when he saves Marius's life during the fights at the barricades. Despite the fact that Valjean dislikes Marius because the latter wants to take Cosette from him, he saves his life as he takes Marius, who has no more energy and is fainting on the ground, out of harm's way while the fights are taking place between the rebels and the governmental troops. Valjean's nobility does not allow him to leave the man he despises for wanting to take Cosette, whose exaggerated persona is also highlighted in the novel, away from him.

One can notice the exaggerated persona of Cosette as she is the girl that Marius and Valjean cannot live without, though for different reasons. On the one hand, Valjean needs

Cosette in order to maintain his virtue and feeling of love; Hugo, while describing Cosette and Valjean's relationship, says that:

He protected her, and she gave strength to him. Thanks to him, she could walk upright in life; thanks to her, he could persist in virtuous deeds. He was the support of this child, and this child was his prop and staff. Oh, divine and unfathomable mystery of the compensations of Destiny (Hugo 1: 296).

For Valjean, taking care of Cosette is his life's purpose. She is the reason he stays a noble and virtuous man. On the other hand, Cosette is also Marius's reason to live; Hugo makes that clear when he says:

This man accepted all, excused all, pardoned all, blessed all, wished well to all, and only asked Providence, of men, of the laws, of society, of the world, this one thing, that Cosette should love him! That Cosette should continue to love him! That God would not prevent the heart of this child from coming to him, remaining his! Loved by Cosette, he felt himself healed, refreshed, soothed, satisfied, rewarded, crowned. Loved by Cosette, he was content! He asked nothing more (Hugo 2: 611).

For Marius as well, Cosette is the reason he leaves all behind, his friends and his beliefs, and even goes to speak with his grandfather, the person he swears not to speak to anymore. Even when Hugo describes the love between these "noble souls" he says that: "God willed that the love which Cosette met, should be one of those loves which save" (Hugo 2: 684). This strong love is the reason why Marius decides to go die at the barricades when he finds out that he will not be with Cosette. Scared that Marius might find out that he is an ex-convict and take Cosette away from him, Valjean decides to travel to London with Cosette. When Marius goes to take Cosette and run away together, he does not find her and thus decides that it is better that he should die fighting at the barricades. This melodramatic scene not only highlights the exaggerated persona of Cosette, whose presence is vital to the

lives of the men around her, but also sheds light on Marius's exaggerated persona and melodramatically generated nobility.

When Marius discovers the truth about his father, he decides to leave the house after fighting with his grandfather, who hates his daughter's husband, Marius's father, Georges Pontmercy, because he was a colonel under Napoleon. Marius's admiration for his father and his ideas evoke pride in him. Marius's pride does not allow him to take money from his aunt or his grandfather in spite of his poor situation after leaving the house. He would never take money from others: "For him a debt was the beginning of slavery. He felt even that a creditor is worse than a master; for a master owns only your person, a creditor owns your dignity and can belabor that" (Hugo 1: 457). Not only does he not accept money from others, but he also helps those in need even when he himself needs the money. Hugo's hyperbolic portrayal of Marius does not simply stop at his character as man but also includes his manners as a lover:

Marius, the pure seraphic Marius, would have been capable rather of visiting a public woman than of lifting Cosette's dress to the height of her ankle. Once, on a moonlight night, Cosette stooped to pick up something from the ground, her dress loosened and displayed the rounding of her bosom. Marius turned away his eyes (Hugo 2: 685).

With Cosette, Marius is very careful about his behavior and is the perfect gentleman.

Marius's hyperbolic character also reminds the reader of Charles Egremont's exaggerated persona in Disraeli's *Sybil*.

In his novel, Disraeli also makes it a point, much as Hugo does, to exaggerate the persona of the characters to serve the melodramatic scenes that take place in the novel; however, the difference between the characters in Hugo's novel and those in Disraeli's is the origin of their nobility. In Hugo's novel the virtue of characters, as is obvious in the

foregoing discussions of their personas, and their melodramatically generated nobility comes from the actions that they undertake. On the other hand, as the close reading of Disraeli's characters will show, the principal source of their nobility is their social class, not their actions. Indeed, Charles Egremont is introduced at the beginning of the novel as a "young nobleman":

Tall, with a well-proportioned figure and a graceful carriage, his countenance touched with a sensibility that at once engages the affections, Charles Egremont was not only admired by that sex, whose approval generally secures men enemies among their fellows, but was at the same time the favorite of his own (Disraeli 7).

No information is offered about Egremont's nobility other than the fact that he is described as of "Norman blood" (Disraeli 13) and is referred to as a "member of the aristocracy, the Honorable Charles Egremont" (Disraeli 197). Egremont, however, takes no action that proves his nobility. Thus nobility, as Disraeli portrays it, comes from social class.

Egremont "was popular at school, idolized at home" (Disraeli 29): the perfect man. Disraeli continues the exaggeration of Egremont's persona when he says: "an air of refinement distinguished his well molded brow; his mouth breathed sympathy, and his rich brown eye gleamed with tenderness. The sweetness of his voice in speaking was in harmony with this organization" (Disraeli 31-32). The actions and thoughts of Egremont that the reader encounters as the novel progresses grant him, in sum, a hyperbolic persona.

When Egremont meets Sybil by mistake at the church, he immediately falls in love with her. His love for Sybil makes him disguise himself as Franklin the journalist in order to go to Mowbray and be closer to her. However, while he is there, he is able to witness the misery of the working class and the poor and becomes conscious that change needs to happen. This poetic awakening that Egremont experiences upon exploring the difficult lives

of the poor and working class seems to be too ideal for Sybil, who does not believe it when she finds out that Franklin is actually Egremont, a rich aristocrat. Nonetheless, Egremont corrects Sybil on her thoughts when he tells her:

You look upon me as an enemy, as a natural foe, because I am born among the privileged. I am a man, Sybil, as well as a noble [...] And can I not feel for men, my fellows, whatever be their lot? I know you will deny it; but you are in error, Sybil; you have formed your opinions upon tradition, not upon experience (Disraeli 237).

After spending time with Walter Gerard and Sybil, Egremont comes to see the conditions of the working class and the poor and agrees with their demands and rights that he even gives a speech and actually acts on his beliefs and thoughts. Egremont says that: “the future principle of English politics will not be a levelling principle; not a principle adverse to privileges, but favorable to their extension. It will seek to ensure equality, not by levelling the Few but by elevating the Many” (Disraeli 253). He presents himself as the perfect leader and rescuer who will make sure that the working class and the poor will get their rights even though he himself belongs to the aristocracy. The aristocracy at that time relied on the ideology of the *laissez-faire*; they did not take action against the injustice being done to the working class by a part of the bourgeoisie, i.e. most of the factory owners.

In drawing the hyperbolic persona of Egremont, Disraeli makes sure to highlight the difference between Charles Egremont and his brother Lord Marney. After returning from his short sojourn with Sybil and her father Gerard, Egremont faces his brother with the gravity of the situation. In a dialogue between the two brothers, the reader can perceive the air of sympathy that Egremont speaks with about the conditions of the poor. However, Lord Marney is insensitive to the matter and tells him: “I am your elder brother, sir, whose

relationship to you is your only claim to the consideration of society”’. Egremont’s response to his brother shows the difference between them; “‘ A curse in the society that has fashioned such claims,’ says Egremont in an heightened tone – ‘claims founded in selfishness, cruelty, and fraud, and leading to demoralization, misery, and crime’” (Disraeli 134). Egremont’s response shows the difference between the thoughts of the two aristocrats, emphasizing Egremont’s exaggerated persona more emphatically.

Not only do these new thoughts and beliefs exaggerate Egremont’s noble persona, his actions do also, especially when he turns into Sybil’s ‘knight in shining armor’ who saves her from the rebels who want to assault her:

He cut down one man, thrust away another, and placing his left arm round Sybil, he defended her with his sword, [...] Her assailants were routed, they made a staggering flight; the officer turned round and pressed Sybil to his heart. ‘We will never part again,’ said Egremont. ‘Never,’ murmured Sybil (Disraeli 357).

After rescuing her from the rioters and promising never to leave each other, Egremont and Sybil are married. Thus, she ends up married rather than violated by a mob. This melodramatic scene uses violence to “reveal [the heroine] in instances of weakness and vulnerability that become emblematic or [her] moral goodness” (Williams 54). Sybil’s rescue also allows Disraeli to portray the morals of Egremont and the goodness of his character through a melodramatic scene of violence. Sybil’s persona is also hyperbolic as she is drawn as a virtue in distress, the goodness that needs rescuing.

From the beginning of the novel, Sybil’s persona is exaggerated. Sybil’s character and beauty come off as ‘out of this world’:

a character of almost divine majesty; while her dark eyes and long dark lashes, contrasting with the brightness of her complexion and the luxuriance of her radiant locks, combined to produce a beauty as rare as it is choice;

and so strange, that Egremont might for a moment have been pardoned for believing her a seraph, that had lighted on this sphere, or the fair phantom of some saint haunting the sacred ruins of her desecrated fane (Disraeli 60).

Both in Disraeli's description of her persona and the fact that it is through Egremont's eyes, the reader perceives her hyperbolic character. Even the children from the cottage near the factory call her "the queen, the queen" (Disraeli 159). Not only does Egremont take notice of Sybil's beauty but also several other characters do as well; one of the workers during the meeting says: "Methinks she looks like a heavenly messenger [...] I had no idea that earth had anything so fair" (Disraeli 279) and in another instance Disraeli adds: "every one was captivated by her beauty, her grace, her picturesque expression and sweet simplicity" (Disraeli 346). Nonetheless, Sybil's beauty is not the only feature that makes her persona hyperbolic; her thoughts and beliefs in the rights of the poor and in her father as a leader makes her character even more exaggerated and noble. When talking about her father, Sybil says: "All I desire, all I live for, is to soothe and support him in his great struggle; and I should die content if the People were only free, and a Gerard had freed them" (Disraeli 201). Her belief in her father and the Chartist cause make her nobler. In addition, her refusal of Egremont's love due to his social class draws her as the ideal female, especially when she firmly tells him: "'Believe me', she said, 'the gulf is impassable'" (Disraeli 240). However, as the novel unveils, Sybil discovers that she belongs to the Norman race, an idea that I will further explore in the coming chapters. Thus, the nobility in her character, which is not found in other working-class characters, can be interpreted as an in-born nobility. At the same time, Walter Gerard's character is also exaggerated as the 'innocent' and 'sainted' leader.

Sybil admires her father and describes him as the perfect leader especially when she says: “I go to hear him speak. None of them can compare with him. It seems to me that it would be impossible to resist our claims if our rulers heard them from his lips” (Disraeli 202). His goodness makes Sybil proud of her race, and she makes that clear: “he is full of hope and exultation [...] When I heard my father speak the other night, my heart glowed with emotion; my eyes were suffused with tears; I was proud to be his daughter; and I gloried in a race of forefathers who belonged to the oppressed and not the oppressors” (Disraeli 216). In *Sybil*, the oppressed working class to which Sybil belongs, are presented as the Saxons while the oppressors, aristocrats and factory owners to which Egremont belongs, are Normans. Even Egremont admires Gerard’s character, though he still wants him to leave in order to take his place, which is an idea that I will explore further later in this chapter, when he tells Sybil: “I honor your father’ said Egremont, ‘I know no man whose character I esteem so truly noble; such compound of intelligence and courage, and gentle and generous impulse” (Disraeli 252). Therefore, the admiration of both, Sybil and Egremont, highlights Gerard’s hyperbolic character as the perfect leader who everyone trusts, especially since he does not encourage violence when it comes to demanding the rights of the poor.

Nonetheless, his rediscovered identity as belonging to the Norman race also constructs the nobility of his character as an innate nobility. This discovery highlights Disraeli’s reactionary perspective and conservatism. In addition, Gerard repeatedly defends Mr. Trafford who is a good and trustworthy factory owner. Even Lady Maud, an aristocrat, admires Walter Gerard’s look and behavior when she says: “so very aristocratic-looking. Papa, the inspector of Mr. Trafford’s works we are speaking of, that aristocratic-looking

person that I observed to you, he is the father of the beautiful girl' [...] 'He seemed a very intelligent person'" (Disraeli 161). Therefore, we can see the exaggerated persona of Walter Gerard as someone who is admired by his class, the aristocrats and the bourgeoisie.

After having explored the exaggerated personas of the characters and the melodramatic scenes that take place, one can notice the reciprocal relation between these two literary elements. This relation is an example of what Brooks mentions in the preface to *The Melodramatic Imagination* when discussing melodrama. This description would appear to apply to both novels:

[Melodrama] seemed to describe, as no other word quite did, the mode of their dramatizations, especially the extravagance of certain representations, and the intensity of moral claim impinging on their characters' consciousness. Within an apparent context of "realism" and the ordinary, they seemed in fact to be staging a heightened and hyperbolic drama, making reference to pure and polar concepts of darkness and light, salvation and damnation (Brooks xiii).

Through the exaggerated personas and the melodramatic scenes in the two novels, it clearly shows how, while using real context at some point, both authors are using melodrama to talk about the notions of "darkness and light, salvation and damnation" (Brooks xiii) especially in scenes that were previously mentioned such as Valjean rescuing Marius in *Les Misérables* and Egremont rescuing Sybil in Disraeli's novel. As Brooks continues:

Melodrama is indeed, typically, not only a moralistic drama but the drama of morality: it strives to find, to articulate, to demonstrate, to "prove" the existence of a moral universe which, though put into question, masked by villainy and perversions of judgment, does exist and can be made to assert its presence and its categorical force among men (Brooks 20).

Through the same melodramatic scenes that I have explored above, one can see the moral universe that both authors are trying to paint in their novels when characters save other

characters despite their sociopolitical differences. Brooks also explains about the representation of social life that melodrama offers when he says that:

moral manichaeism is the basis of a vision of the social world as the scene of dramatic choice between heightened moral alternatives, where every gesture, however frivolous or insignificant it may seem, is charged with the conflict between light and darkness, salvation and damnation, and where people's destinies and choices of life seem finally to have little to do with surface realities of a situation, and much more to do with an intense inner drama in which consciousness must purge itself and assume the burden of moral sainthood (Brooks 5).

The consciousness that Brooks is talking about can be seen in many scenes in both novels. On the one hand one sees the awakened consciousness of Valjean when he saves not only Marius but also Javert, who keeps disrupting and threatening his life. Marius's awakened consciousness is also an important aspect to look at. When Marius finds out about his father, he decides to follow in his footsteps and takes his father's beliefs as his own; this shapes his personality and character as a proud man who helps the poor even when he needs that money most. On the other hand, there is the awakened consciousness of Egremont when he spends time with Walter Gerard and Sybil and experiences the difficult conditions of the working class and poor, making him stand with the Chartist movement against his family.

This consciousness reminds us of "the poetic awakening" that Lukács discusses in *The Historical Novel*. He says that "what matters therefore in the historical novel is not the re-telling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events" (Lukács 20). For Lukács, the poetic awakening comes from the great historical events that the characters go through as well as the motives that lead them to act the way they did in historical reality. In the case of the two novels that this thesis is

exploring, this poetic awakening comes more from the inner drama that takes place in the novels, which is depicted by the authors themselves. Therefore, this poetic awakening is that of the authors through the characters because of their use of melodrama and binding morals with allegory, which leads to the next section of this chapter on the categories of Transcendental Immanence and Transcendental Transcendence that also tie allegory with the morals that the authors are trying to convey concerning their social and political beliefs.

The fact that both novels belong to the melodramatic genre or, at least, use melodrama in most of the scenes, suggests that they do not fall into the category of realism. In his book *The Antinomies of Realism*, Frederic Jameson discusses the doubles of realism, which are not external to realism per se but rather within realism itself. In other words, melodrama exists within realism. Nonetheless, in order to get to the essence of realism, which is considered closer to history, melodrama, Jameson asserts, needs to be hollowed out. Jameson's novelistic categories allow us to see how Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Disraeli's *Sybil* fall under the categories of Transcendental Immanence and Transcendental Transcendence, both of which depoliticize the novels. The essence of these categories is to bind morals with allegory in the realistic description of the events, which both novels seem to employ through their narration of the events.

Transcendental Immanence binds allegories with morals to narrate 'reality' in an ideal way as not to disappoint the readers. Thus, readers are not presented with the complete truth. For example, Hugo uses Transcendental Immanence in his opposition of the morals of the characters to the social classes to which they belong. In other words, Hugo uses his characters as allegories to show the shift in France's history during the period of the revolution. One clear example that Hugo opens his novel with is that of Bishop Myriel,

who unlike most bishops and despite him being against Napoleon and the revolution during which they, as a Church, lost their aristocratic title, helps the poor and is the reason for Valjean's changing fortunes and heart. The character of Valjean, on the other hand, can be seen as an illustration of the historical changes in France. Valjean's morals are not that of a convict, which can be seen from the beginning of the novel when the reader finds out that Valjean is imprisoned because he steals bread to feed his nieces and nephews who could not afford it. It is because of the lack of money needed to feed his family that Valjean becomes a criminal. Valjean admits to himself, as he was trying to steal the silver plates of Bishop Myriel, that it is society that made him a criminal.

It is the difficult conditions of the lower class that forced him to commit a criminal act as well as forced him to escape from prison several times. Every time Valjean is caught escaping the prison to go see his sister and her children, his jail sentence is extended. Valjean's character is an excellent example of how the French law enforcement is producing the criminals it is trying to keep off the streets. Hugo thus uses Transcendental Immanence to manifest the fact that Valjean's changing fortunes evoke a feeling of hope for a brighter future for the lower and working class of France. When given money and good living conditions, Valjean becomes a nobleman who helps the poor. Despite it being melodramatized, Hugo is using Valjean's character as a way to portray the change that should take place after the French Revolution.

Disraeli also uses Transcendental Immanence by making his characters into allegorical representations of his interpretation of the events and changes in England's history in the nineteenth century. One main example is Egremont's change of heart and sympathy for the poor and working class of England while he himself is part of a social

class that adopted the ideology of laissez-faire and allowed the bourgeoisie, i.e. factory owners, to treat the working class unjustly because it served their financial and political interests. While both use Transcendental Immanence to portray reality in an ideal way, Hugo uses it to show how, if given the chance, the working class can prosper while Disraeli uses it to show that the ideal situation is for the aristocracy to help the working class while staying their superiors. These ideals, as we will see, are fortified by the use of Transcendental Transcendence in the next section.

Transcendental Transcendence makes use of allegory to present the authors' social and political beliefs concerning the sociopolitical situation that the novels deal with. Disraeli uses Transcendental Transcendence to make fun of political activists in nineteenth century England, i.e. the mob in the novel, because of their violent actions. He thereby draws a manipulative difference between the violent mob and the good activists such as Gerard. Disraeli, thus, tries to convey a message, through his mocking of the mob, which goes deeper than just criticizing the mob. In other words, he uses Transcendental Transcendence to convey his opinion on the violent riots and the Chartist movement: the Chartist need a proper leader who will let them obtain what they need without in any way threatening the wealth, lifestyle and peace of mind of the aristocrats and the bourgeoisie. Disraeli uses the violence of the mob to a way to infer that the working class needs a leader from the aristocracy to help them obtain their rights while still keeping them at a lower level. Thus, Disraeli legitimizes violence against the mob working class in order to portray the need for an aristocratic leader, and for Egremont to rescue Sybil. This idea can be clearly noticed when Egremont tells Sybil the following:

‘The people are not strong; the people never can be strong. Their attempts at self-vindication will end only in their suffering and confusion. It is civilization that has affected, that is effecting this change. It is that increased knowledge of themselves that teaches the educated their social duties. There is a dayspring in the history of this nation [...] You deem you are in darkness, and I see a dawn. The new generation of the aristocracy of England are not tyrants, not oppressors, Sybil, as you persist in believing. Their intelligence, better than that, their hearts are open to the responsibility of their position [...] They are the natural leaders of the People, Sybil; believe me they are the only ones’ (Disraeli 238).

This passage strongly suggests Disraeli’s own political stance through Egremont’s beliefs that the people cannot succeed on their own; they need a leader and not just any leader, but one from the aristocracy, i.e. someone like Egremont. For this reason, Egremont advises Sybil to take her father and go back to Mowbray. However, Walter Gerard does not abandon the cause and is killed off, not only in order for Egremont and Sybil to be married, but also to leave the position for Egremont, the aristocrat, as leader of the people. At the same time, Disraeli also portrays Egremont as a leader figure during the scene in which the latter gives a speech in Parliament, a speech that makes Sybil respect and love Egremont more than she already does in addition to the violent death of her father who was against the love between her and Egremont.

Conversely, Hugo uses Transcendental Transcendence to portray activism as a heroic act in the example of the friends of the ABC. The conflict in *Les Misérables*, as the following chapter will further explore, is one between the working class, “the mines and the miners” (Hugo 1:480), and the bourgeois factory owners. Hugo labels the Friends of the ABC as heroes when he says: “the friends of the ABC were not numerous, it was a secret society in the embryonic state; we should almost say a coterie, if coterie produced heroes” (Hugo 1: 434). Hugo even titles in Volume 2, Part Five, the 21st chapter of the first book:

“The heroes” (Hugo 2: 845). He also portrays the beginning of the fights at the barricades using a melodramatic tone: “Suddenly the drum beat the charge. The attack was a hurricane” (Hugo 2: 845). Another way of using Transcendental Transcendence to present the revolution as heroism is Marius who goes to die at the barricades but is saved by Valjean, a rescue which comes off as unreal for the readers. Marius is described as a hero, a fighter: “Marius, still fighting, was so hacked with wounds, particularly about his head, that the countenance was lost in blood, and you would have said that he had his face covered with a red handkerchief” (Hugo 2: 847). Despite the fact that both authors use Transcendental Transcendence to convey their political beliefs, the difference illustrated is that Hugo uses it to idolize the revolution and encourage it while Disraeli uses it to mock the mob in order to convey the idea that they need a leader from the aristocracy.

Thus, through the categories of Transcendental Transcendence and Transcendental Immanence and the examples explored above, one can notice how these novels do not completely fall under Lukács’s historical novel, which Lukács’s defines, via Sir Walter Scott, in *The Historical Novel*. Lukács says that:

What matters therefore in the historical novel is not the re-telling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. What matters is that we should reexperience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality (Lukács 20).

That being said, since both novels rely on Transcendental Transcendence and Transcendental Immanence in re-telling the historical events through the storylines of their characters, then ‘the poetic awakening’ of the characters maybe interpreted as that of the authors. Thus, because of the use of Transcendental Immanence and Transcendental

Transcendence and melodrama, readers do not “reexperience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality” (Lukács 20)

On the one hand, they re-experience the motives of the characters through the allegories that the authors use to express their political beliefs in the form of Transcendental Transcendence. The workers’ rebellion in *Sybil* is partially historical as it does mirror the Peterloo massacre; however, his description of the mob does not reflect the historical reality that Lukács is talking about because he uses Transcendental Transcendence to mock the violence of the mob. In addition, Hugo’s scene of the fight at the barricades is inspired by the June rebellion of 1832; nonetheless, his excessive use of melodrama and moral allegories does not allow him to portray the brutal reality without idealizing it through the use of Transcendental Transcendence to make activism a heroic act.

On the other hand, the readers re-experience the motives of the characters through the authors’ use of Transcendental Immanence to portray reality in an ideal way and the use of inner drama. The authors use Transcendental Immanence to give the characters morals that do not conform to their social class. Marius, who belongs to the bourgeois class, believes in the revolution and the rights of the working class and Egremont, who belongs to the aristocratic class, also believes in the workers’ rights. Furthermore, the use of melodrama and romance undermines the re-experience of the motives; romance trumps political actuality. The motive of Marius’s decision to go to the barricade is because he cannot marry Cosette. On the other hand, the motive of Egremont to give a speech siding with the working class is because of his love for Sybil. Thus, in their novels, Hugo and

Disraeli distance themselves from historical events because of the morals and ideals presented through the characters.

Lukács, on the other hand, emphasizes the fact that the historical novel must report the destruction of those traditional ideals through progress.

Thus if Scott's main tendency in all his novels – and which forms of them in a sense a kind of cycle—is to represent and defend progress, then this progress is for him always a process full of contradictions, the driving force and material basis of which is the living contradiction between conflicting historical forces, the antagonisms of classes and nations. Scott affirms this progress. He is a patriot, he is proud of the development of his people. This is vital for the creation of a real historical novel, i.e. one which brings the past close to us and allows us to experience its real and true being (Lukács 53).

However, the progress presented in both novels, i.e. the resolutions that they both present at the end through the 'magical' marriages, idealistically solving the sociopolitical conflict in both their countries, refuses to face up to either loss or a more realistic future. If the historical novel gives life to history through literature in order to explain the present day and the evolution and progress of that history, it insists that progress occurs at the expense of older ways of life that the historical novel recounts. However, in the case of these two novels, despite the portrayal of the rebellions in both novels as signs of progress, the authors refuse to portray the consequences of progress, preferring, instead, to substitute melodramatic motives that obfuscate the issues involved by going back to traditional ideals or imposing them from above by using Transcendental Immanence and Transcendental Transcendence.

Despite the fact that both novels narrate historical moments and experiences, their reliance on melodrama, Transcendental Immanence and Transcendental Transcendence, partially hides history from their readers. Therefore, before one can analyze the progress

that takes place leading up to the marriages implemented as solutions to the sociopolitical conflict in both novels, one needs to understand how this conflict is being portrayed through the overloaded melodramatic representation of the social classes and events. Both novels deal with the gulf between the exploiter and the exploited, although the representations used differ. In *Sybil*, the sociopolitical dispute is framed as one between Normans and Saxons, the exploiter and the exploited. Meanwhile in *Les Misérables*, Hugo portrays the class struggle as one between the factory owner and the worker, the bourgeois and the working class. Thus, the next chapter will analyze the difference in the representation of the sociopolitical conflict through race discourse in both novels as a way to prove that Hugo is more progressive than Disraeli.

CHAPTER IV

CLASS REPRESENTATION AND FOUCAULT'S "RACE WAR DISCOURSE"

In both novels, the exploitation of one class by another is the actual reason for the sociopolitical conflict. In order to further understand this sociopolitical conflict, one needs to analyze the way class is represented in *Les Misérables* and *Sybil* by extending the previous chapter's analysis of overloaded melodramatic representation while specifically focusing on the notions of the political conflict between social classes. In this chapter, I will mainly focus on the representation of characters as belonging to a specific race—a mode of representation that Foucault analyzes in *Society Must Be Defended*—through an analysis of the main characters of both novels. However, before diving into a close reading of this mode of representation of classes, one needs to understand the origin of race struggle. Foucault analyzes “the history of this discourse of race struggle and war from the seventeenth century to the emergence of State racism in the early nineteenth century” (Foucault 62). He explains how power changed from belonging to the theory of sovereignty, a power that is exercised over lands and production rather than people, to a “new type of power, which can therefore no longer be transcribed in terms of sovereignty, [and] is, I believe, one of bourgeois society's great inventions. It was one of the basic tools for the establishment of industrial capitalism and the corresponding type of society” (Foucault 36).

Foucault's critical analysis revolves around "the war that is going on beneath order and peace, the war that undermines our society and divides it in a binary mode is, basically, a race war" (Foucault 60). This discourse of "race struggle and war" is one that concerns itself with managing the population through the racialization of one class, the working class, by another powerful class, the bourgeois.

Foucault proceeds to explain that the social body is constructed of two races with one being overpowered by the other, which is how the war beneath peace prevails:

At a very early stage, we find the basic elements that make the war possible, and then ensure its continuation, pursuit, and development: ethnic differences, differences between languages, different degrees of force, vigor, energy, and violence; the differences between savagery and barbarism; the conquest and subjugation of one race by another. The social body is basically articulated around two races (Foucault 60).

However, the meaning of 'race', which Foucault is discussing, is different from today's contemporary theoretical views of race, and is closer to the notion of 'people' as belonging to different classes, the rich and the poor, the bourgeois and the working class. This racialization of another class is crucial to this chapter, as Foucault when he says:

I mean the idea—which is absolutely new and which will make the discourse function very differently—that the other race is basically not the race that came from elsewhere [...] but that it is a race that is permanently, ceaselessly infiltrating the social body, or which is, rather, constantly being re-created in and by the social fabric. In other words, what we see as a polarity, as a binary rift within society, is not a clash between two distinct races. It is the splitting of a single race into a superrace and a subrace (Foucault 61).

Thus, we can see that this discourse deals with one race, which through the power of politics, is divided into two races "a superrace and a subrace". The bourgeoisie, mainly the factory owners, 'used' the upper class to exert violence and power over the working class,

which they racialized, because it serves their interests and investments. Hence, “war continues to rage in all mechanisms of power” (Foucault 50). In other words, even if a country is at peace, there will still be an internal war between powers; there will always be someone or some party more powerful than the other, and this party will use that power to racialize the weaker party in order to exert their authority and dominance over the weak; i.e. the working class. Foucault clarifies the role of the nation:

The essential function and the historical role of the nation is not defined by its ability to exercise a relationship of domination over other nations. It is something else: its ability to administer itself, to manage, govern, and guarantee the constitution and workings of the figure of the State and of State power. Not domination, but State control. (Foucault 223).

This is where, the race war is shaping itself as a way of managing the population and the sociopolitical conflict because “ultimately, the idea that the essential function of society or the State, or whatever it is that must replace the State, is to take control of life, to manage it, to compensate for its aleatory nature, to explore and reduce biological accidents” (Foucault 261). Therefore, one needs to decode the war that takes place within peace because “peace itself is a coded war” (Foucault 50). Society is constantly at war, making people take one side or the other because people unwillingly belong to a certain social class. Hence, the definition that Foucault attributes to this ‘war’: race war as a way of representing social class conflict.

Foucault later talks about the Marxists who looked at this discourse in a different way; they basically discuss race as class struggle, which is, as I will argue in this chapter, what Hugo and Disraeli do, each in his own way, in their novels, however in an overloaded manner. This change that this discourse underwent is mainly what Foucault is trying to explain; it is the subjects that the discourse is concerned with that define the type of the

discourse. It is the classes as races, who are the subjects of this conflict, that make this discourse a race war discourse because of the sociopolitical conflict that those races are involved with. Nonetheless, this discourse is the result of the wars of the powers. Thus, what Foucault is trying to convey is that the fundamental element of this discourse that makes it different that the philosophico-juridical discourse is the notion of truth because truth is no longer a universal notion but rather the result of this race and class struggle discourse; Arnold Davidson, in the introduction to Foucault's *Society Must Be Defended*, says:

Foucault describes the historico-political discourse of war as putting forward a truth that "functions as a weapon," as speaking of a "perspectival and strategic truth." Discourse, knowledge, and truth, as well as relations of power, can be understood from within the strategic model. Hence the importance of seeing how this model functions at all of its levels of application (Davidson xxi).

Davidson clarifies how History changes from being concerned with sovereignty, which deals with the glorious and legendary wars, to focusing on power; "Power is the concrete power that any individual can hold, and which he can surrender, either as a whole or in part, so as to constitute a power or a political sovereignty" (Foucault 13). Thus, the historical subject changes from what Kant and Solon perceived as "the legislator or the philosopher who belongs to neither side, a figure of peace and armistices" (Foucault 53) and becomes concerned with what lies beneath the war, the occurring events that take place after.

Consequently, this discourse is not similar to the war discourse that Hobbes was dealing with. Foucault says that "the discourse I am talking about, this partisan discourse, this discourse of war and history, can therefore perhaps take the form of the cunning

sophist of the Greek era” (Foucault 58). The latter makes it clear that in the discourse that he is dealing with and talking about “is, basically, a discourse that cuts off the king's head, or which at least does without a sovereign and denounces him” (Foucault 59). Hence, this discourse developed from ruling people through sovereignty to managing the people through racial distinction. In a nutshell, this is how the race war representation changed from the Middle Ages and took the shape of class struggle, which is what both Hugo and Disraeli deal with in their novels in a melodramatic way by using their characters and the classes attributed to each as a mode of representation that is very much overloaded via binary racial terms such as Norman/Saxon in the latter’s case.

Both authors represent the notion of class struggle and the gulf between the ruling class and the other working class in their novels; however, the way this sociopolitical conflict is portrayed differs for each. For this reason, one needs to make the differentiation between historical and racial levels. Despite the fact that both novels deal with historical backgrounds as well as events, the racial representation that each author uses to portray this conflict is deployed in his own melodramatic way. On the one hand, Disraeli, as a way of understanding class division, frames the class struggle as one between the Saxons, working class, and the Normans, aristocrats and bourgeois. On the other hand, Hugo draws the class struggle through one between the factory owners and the workers. Nonetheless, before discussing the conflict between the two classes and how each author offers his own perception of a solution to the conflict through the notion of progress that I will thoroughly analyze in the next chapter, one needs to explore the way those classes are racially represented in both novels. This overloaded representation is not only a result of the way

the authors represent this sociopolitical conflict as races at war but also due to the novels' characters and the romantic stories which are used as ideological representations of the unbridgeable gulf.

On the one hand, in *Sybil*, the exploited are represented as the Saxons and the exploiters as the Normans; in reference to the conquest of the Saxons by the Normans. Disraeli clearly states that when he mentions the book "The History of the Conquest of England by the Normans" that Sybil is reading. This book triggers a conversation between Sybil, Egremont and Walter Gerard; during which the latter clearly explains that "'It must interest all and all alike,' said her father, 'for we are divided between the conquerors and the conquered'" (Disraeli 148), i.e. the Normans and the Saxons respectively. This sentence assuredly evokes the frame within which Disraeli portrays the sociopolitical conflict between the two classes in his novel. He also mentions the Normans, who ruled because they owned the land "and the land governs the people" (Disraeli 147).

On another note, in several passages in the novel, the ruling class, mainly through the characters of Lord Marney and his brother Charles Egremont, is labeled as the Normans. When talking about the past of the Egremont family, Disraeli says: "In the civil wars, the Egremonts pricked by their Norman blood, were cavaliers and fought pretty well" (Disraeli 13). Even Lord Marney mentions that they indeed belong to Norman blood when he says: "'Royal and Norman blood like ours', said Lord Marney, 'is not to be thrown over in that way'" (Disraeli 226). Nonetheless, Disraeli highlights the difference between the original Normans and those who buy this title with money when M. Hatton explains this to Sir Vavasour: "my client is to defray all the expense of attempting to transform the descent

of the silkweaver of Lyons into to heir of a Norman conqueror” (Disraeli 209). Meanwhile, the miserable inhabitants of Marney are identified as “Saxon peasantry” (Disraeli 50). The workingmen who take part in the Chartist movement, which emerged in the 1830s when the working class was demanding democratic reform, are described as “Saxon multitude” (Disraeli 244). Moreover, at the end of the first book, Disraeli also mentions that Queen Victoria has Saxon blood because her mother was a Saxon Duchess, and he also touches upon “Saxon thralldom” (Disraeli 39), which is about how the Norman Yoke took away the liberties of the Saxons. Therefore, we can see how Disraeli paints the two classes who are the two ends of the sociopolitical conflict as the Normans and the Saxons. Thus, this is the lens through which the analysis of the overloaded representation of the sociopolitical conflict and the characters in *Sybil* will be studied.

On the other hand, Hugo also represents the sociopolitical conflict in *Les Misérables* in an overloaded way through the notion of races. In *Les Misérables*, the exploited are represented as the working class and the exploiters are represented as the bourgeois factory owners. On the one end of the conflict, we have the ruling class who are the aristocrats and the bourgeois, and on the other end there’s the working class. When describing the grandfather of Marius, M. Gillenormand, Hugo mentions that he is bourgeois when he says “the genuine bourgeois of the eighteenth century” (Hugo 1: 402), and he spends his time with aristocrats and “the royalist salons” (Hugo 1: 409). M. Gillenormand is a bourgeois who is strictly against the new republic and all Napoleonic beliefs and adores the Bourbons; “if any young man ventured to eulogize the republic in his presence, he turned black in the face, and was angry enough to faint” (Hugo 1: 405). There is also

Marius, his Grandson who is described at the beginning as “a royalist” (Hugo 1: 419); he eventually turns his back on the bourgeois class, which will later be discussed in more details. The second race is the working class who are against the bourgeois and the aristocrats whom the bourgeois uses to exert their power on the workers. The working class are the Thénardiens, his daughters, Cosette, the members of the Friends of the ABC and the revolutionaries. Hugo also makes sure to talk about “the mines and the miners” (Hugo 1: 480) who are the working class. He, in addition, represents the working class through the dialects he uses in his novel of the Parisian working-class argot and words such as “Merde!” (Hugo 1: 232), to which he dedicates a chapter. Having said that, one can see how the representation of the sociopolitical conflict in both novels is overloaded due to the different racial frames that the authors use. Furthermore, the main characters, through their exaggerated personas, as ideological representations of the gulf between the races and the melodramatic romance both play a significant role in the overloaded representation of the sociopolitical conflict.

In his *Sybil*, Disraeli uses the characters of Charles Egremont and his brother Lord Marney to represent the upper class while making it a point to highlight their differences. “The countenance of Lord Marney bespoke the character of his mind; cynical, devoid of sentiment, arrogant, literal, hard. He had no imagination, had exhausted his slight native feeling, but he was acute, disputatious, and firm even to obstinacy” (Disraeli 40-41). Lord Marney is only concerned with having a place in the Parliament. “He eulogized the new poor law, which he declared would be the salvation of the country, provided it was ‘carried out’ in the spirit in which it was developed in the Marney Union; but then he would add

that there was no district except their union in which it was properly observed” (Disraeli 43). He is strictly against allotments, rented lands for the purpose of growing vegetables, and was unmerciful. Lord Marney does not have a full and complete education; thus, he does not have a great knowledge of economics but is always ready to apply economic doctrines nonetheless “except that of the landed proprietary, which he clearly proved ‘stood upon different grounds’ to that of any other ‘interest’” (Disraeli 43). He is overly protective of the lands. He despises trespassers and thieves, and what he hates even more is a charter, which made his character utterly bitter. In the 1830s, the People’s Charter, which urged for a democratic reform, emerged and wrote down the first petition, which was rejected by the House of Commons. Consequently, many violent demonstrations occurred for a period of time until 1848 when the peaceful Great Chartist meeting took place.

Lord Marney loathes any kind of subscriptions, donations or contributions. Nonetheless his name does figure amongst other contributors to all sectarian institutions, which greatly pleased him. “The vicar of Marney, who had been presented by himself, was his model of a priest: he left every body alone” (Disraeli 43); this is because, when the monasteries were dissolved, the incomes that the religious houses controlled became the responsibility of the land patrons and owners. His cruelty shows even more when he decides to stop the work of the church of remodeling the schools even when some areas of land are already donated for the project: “Lord Marney soon stopped all this. ‘No priestcraft at Marney,’ said this gentle proprietor of abbey lands” (Disraeli 43). In addition, he is even as cruel when it comes to the salaries and wages of the poor workmen; “‘Oh! as for that,’ said Lord Marney, ‘I have generally found the higher the wages the worse the workman. They only spend their money in the beer-shops. They are the curse of this country.’”

(Disraeli 96). Disraeli conclusively demonstrates Lord Marney's inhumanity when the latter says:

It comes to the same thing,' said Lord Marney. 'Nothing can put this country right but emigration on a great scale; and as the government do not choose to undertake it, I have commenced it for my own defense on a small scale. I will take care that the population of my parishes is not increased. I build no cottages and I destroy all I can; and I am not ashamed or afraid to say so (Disraeli 96-97).

Throughout the novel Lord Marney does not show pity or is portrayed as having some virtue in his character, which is not the case with Egremont.

Disraeli highlights the difference between Lord Marney and his brother Charles Egremont when they are having a conversation about the poor wages of the workmen to show that not all aristocrats are the same. Lord Marney demands his brother's respect as he reminds him that he is Egremont's only way into society, the society that Egremont describes as a society built upon claims "founded in selfishness, cruelty, and fraud, and leading to demoralization, misery and crime.'" (Disraeli 134). The Lord of Marney never agrees with his brother's thoughts or beliefs concerning the working class, nor with his love for Sybil. On the contrary, despite the fact that Egremont is of the same race as his brother, Disraeli portrays his character and actions as a way to draw a difference that can be found in the same race, which serves the problematic overloaded representation of the sociopolitical conflict.

Egremont is the younger brother of Lord Marney; he is a young nobleman of Norman blood (Disraeli 13) who received, as mentioned in previous chapters, a complete and excellent education at Oxford and Eton. When Egremont comes back to London, his

mother does her best to get him a family seat in the Parliament, which Egremont, at the beginning, does not seem to be against. Nonetheless, at the Abbey church, he encounters a female character, Sybil, and, fascinated by her voice and figure, he decides to go under cover as Franklin the journalist to get closer to her. It is his interest and immediate love for the lovely Sybil that leads him to the truth about the gulf between the rich and the poor. Therefore, during his stay with Sybil and her father Walter Gerard, Egremont begins to form his beliefs concerning the terrible conditions of the working class, and he discusses these conditions several times with his brother as he defends the right of the workingmen when he asks Lord Marney: ““What should you know about it? Did you ever live on seven or eight shillings a-week? What can you know about the people who pass your time at London clubs or in fine country houses?”” (Disraeli 132).

On another note, Egremont also makes fun of those belonging to the same class; this mockery constituted another way that Disraeli emphasizes the difference that exists within the same race. Egremont says:

there is a great question for you and Lady Firebrace to ponder over. This is a lesson for you fine ladies, who think you can govern the world by what you call your social influences; asking people once or twice a-year to an inconvenient crowd in your house; flattering yourselves all this time, that to have the occasional privilege of entering you saloons and the periodical experience of your insolent recognition, is to be a reward for great exertions, or if necessary an inducement to infamous tergiversation (Disraeli 186).

However, it is not until Egremont’s identity is revealed to Sybil that he actually takes actions instead of words that comport with the new beliefs he acquired during his stay with the Gerard family. Especially when Sybil refuses Egremont’s love because they both belong to different races, he defends himself and tells her: ““I am a man, Sybil, as well as a

noble” (Disraeli 237). It is then that he explains to Sybil that the working class needs a leader in order to be able to obtain their rights and reach their goals; nonetheless, this leader must be from the new aristocracy: “The new generation of the aristocracy of England are not tyrants, not oppressors, Sybil, as you persist believing [...] They are the natural leaders of the People, Sybil; believe me they are the only ones” (Disraeli 238). He, thus, proceeds to give his first speech in the parliament; a speech that argues for the labor rights; he talks of a “principle of English politics [that] will seek to ensure equality, not by levelling the Few, but by elevating the Many” (Disraeli 253). Thus, Disraeli, through Egremont, wants the readers to believe that the mob, i.e. working class, are atrocious and need Egremont, i.e. a Norman, to lead them. The idea that the workingmen need an aristocratic leader can in fact be seen when the working class is also alluded to as Africans and is thus purposefully racialized into a different race, making it easier to exert violence over them, which is what Foucault talks about when he mentions the notion of managing the population. This is where Disraeli is seen to advocate the use of violence contra the working class and with bourgeois power. The mob is at a point called “Negro” (Disraeli 122). Another example of the brutality of the mob that needs to be controlled according to Disraeli is that of the Bishop, the leader of the people of Wodgate, the Hell-Cats, and his violent aspect when he says: “I came here to burn down this place” (Disraeli 339); the place is Mr. Trafford’s factory. They are revolting for the working class rights, however violently.

However, despite this change in Egremont’s character and new political beliefs, we can notice how, as soon as his mother Lady Marney sends for him, he abandons the character of Franklin and comes back. Nonetheless, what keeps him faithful to the cause of the working class is his love for Sybil, and because he wants to prove to her that his race is

not as horrific as she might think; this suggests the extent to which the romance and Sybil's beauty reinforce the overdetermined representation of the sociopolitical conflict. The one time Egremont actually endangers himself is when he comes to the rescue of Sybil during the rioters' attack on the factory. "He cut down one man, thrust away another, and placing his left arm around Sybil, he defended her with his sword" (Disraeli 357). This scene is one of the most melodramatic scenes in Disraeli's novel, during which Egremont, who, as suggested earlier, may be seen as representing the ruling class, rescues Sybil, who is the representation of the working class. However, Sybil later discovers that she belongs to race of Normans, the conquerors and not the conquered. This can be interpreted as Disraeli's way of making it acceptable for Egremont and Sybil to marry, and Egremont's way of staying in control of the working class and making sure that they are not leveled to his and his equals' race, which is the opposite of what Chartism, through Walter Gerard, is demanding. Here, one notices the difference in the leader figure between Egremont, who wants to rule over the working class, and Walter Gerard, who wants to level the working class so that it becomes equal to the bourgeois and aristocrats.

Walter Gerard is one of the characters whom Disraeli uses to represent the working class as a distinct individual race. Gerard's character is highlighted by the image of leader of the Chartists movement, a movement that started in the 1830s demanding a democratic reform by writing a Charter petition that was rejected by the House of Commons and led several violent revolts. He is the one the People trust, and his daughter admires him: "I was proud to be his daughter; and I gloried in a race of forefathers who belonged to the oppressed and not the oppressors" (Disraeli 216). Gerard is even admired by Egremont, the representation of part of the ruling class, when he tells Sybil that "I honor your father

[...] I know no man whose character I esteem so truly noble; such a just compound of intelligence and courage, and gentle and generous impulse” (Disraeli 252), even though Egremont still believes that he and his race should lead the people instead of Gerard. Walter Gerard does not encourage violence, on the contrary he is against it, especially when it comes to Mr. Trafford, who is considered to be a decent man and factory owner. Gerard explains to the mob the goodness of Mr. Trafford when he tells them: “The master here has done his best to soften you lots, He is not one of those who deny that Labor has rights (loud cheers). I say Mr. Trafford has always acknowledged the rights of Labor” (Disraeli 340). Nonetheless, he is killed off at the end of the novel in order for the marriage between his daughter Sybil and Egremont to take place after the latter saves her from the mob. Sybil herself with her exaggerated persona also delivers an overloaded representation of her race before she discovers her true origins.

Sybil’s exaggerated persona and beauty play a significant role in the overloaded representation of the sociopolitical conflict in the novel. Sybil’s beauty was incomparable; “everyone was captivated by her beauty, her grace, her picturesque expression and sweet simplicity” (Disraeli 347). She has an angelic voice and is well educated. Walter Gerard, because he is a friend of Mr. Trafford the owner of the factory where he works, is able to get Sybil into the Mowbray Convent where she receives a full education, which was not the case of the daughters of most, if not all, workingmen. The only things Sybil thinks and cares about are the Church, the People, and her father. She is completely dedicated and proud of belonging to the working class race as she says: “I never leave my home. I am one of the lower order and live only among the lower order” (Disraeli 165). Naturally her education and stay at Mowbray Convent offer her a decent life, one that is not wealthy but

not poor also. In addition, her education allows her to be able to read books; one in particular that Disraeli makes a point of mentioning is “The History of the Conquest of England by the Normans” (Disraeli 148). Therefore, due to her education and ability to have access and read such books, Sybil is able to construct her own political opinion, which she clearly expresses to Egremont: “I am one of those who believe the gulf is impassable [...] utterly impassable” (Disraeli 212). Thus, we can see how, through her education and exaggerated persona, Sybil’s character constitutes a problematic representation of social class.

Moreover, later in the novel, Sybil discovers that she is “a direct descendent of the invaders” (Shrimpton xvii) and is saved by the aristocrat Egremont, whom she promises to spend the rest of her life with and eventually marries. With that being said, Sybil, the daughter of a working man, is not a just representation of the working class race due to her overloaded exaggerated character and features. Therefore, one can notice how, aside from the sociopolitical conflict being represented in an overloaded way due to the race terms, the characters, their overloaded personas, the romance and the melodrama also contribute to the overloaded representation of the sociopolitical conflict in this novel, which is also what Hugo does in *Les Misérables*.

In *Les Misérables*, Hugo makes use of his characters as ideological representations of the unquenchable war between classes. He uses Marius and his grandfather, Monsieur Gillenormand, as characters who represent the ruling class while also pointing to the differences between them, focusing especially on how their exaggerated personas make for an overloaded representation of the social classes. M. Gillenormand is “the genuine of the

eighteenth century a very perfect specimen, a little haughty, wearing his good old bourgeoisie as marquises wear their marquisates” (Hugo 1: 403). He is against Napoleon and the revolution: “he said authoritatively: *The French Revolution is a mess of scamps*” (Hugo 1: 404). Hugo also narrates his resentment to the revolution when he says:

“Monsieur Gillenormand worshipped the Bourbons and held 1789 in horror [...] if any young man ventured to eulogize the republic in his presence, he turned black in the face, and was angry enough to faint. Sometimes he would allude to his ninety years of age, and say, *I really hope that I shall not see ninety-three twice*” (Hugo 1: 405).

M. Gillenormand considered his son-in-law, Marius’s father, to be “*the disgrace of my family*” (Hugo 1: 407), and he even dismisses his grandson when the latter defends his father and his faith in the revolution.

Nonetheless, despite M. Gillenormand’s cruelty, Hugo makes it a point to highlight some goodness in M. Gillenormand’s character as a way to raise hope for the ideal progress of France’s situation. At first, M. Gillenormand does not realize that money is not everything in life; nonetheless, when Marius leaves the house, we, as readers, can begin to feel the soft side of the grandfather who feels lonely and empty at the absence of his grandson. “Monsieur Gillenormand worshipped Marius” (Hugo 1: 458), but his pride and beliefs will not allow him to forgive Marius and welcome him back into his house while the latter still believes in the revolution, although he has his moments of weakness when he realizes that he cannot live without Marius:

‘But I could not do anything else than turn him away,’ said the grandfather, and he asked himself: ‘If it were to be done again, would I do it?’ His pride promptly answered Yes, but his old head, which he shook in silence, sadly

answered, No. He had his hours of dejection. He missed Marius (Hugo 1: 458).

Hugo makes sure to highlight that, behind M. Gillenormand's cruelty, the latter still possesses a soft heart that loves especially Marius; "M. Gillenormand, without however acknowledging it to himself, for he would have been furious and ashamed at it, had never loved a mistress as he loved Marius" (Hugo 2: 701). Thus, he will eventually agree to the marriage of Marius and Cosette. That being said, when Marius is brought back to his grandfather wounded and knocking on death's door, M. Gillenormand immediately forgives his grandson and confesses his deep love for him when he says as he sees him in terrible condition: "he knew very well that I was waiting for him, and I that I had had his room arranged for him, and that I had had his portrait of the time when he was a little boy hung at the head of my bed!" (Hugo 2: 892). Moreover, eventually after the two reconcile, he accepts Marius and Cosette's love and is even the guardian at their wedding. Through M. Gillenormand's character, who represents the old regime, we can see how Hugo is portraying the ruling class. He does point to the cruelty and brutality of this class, but he also highlights a ray of goodness in them in an attempt to portray hope for the working class and equality among the classes.

Another character Hugo uses to portray the hope for a better future and serves the overloaded representation is the character of Marius who represents the new republic as he turns his back on his own race and joins the revolutionaries. Marius's encounter with the truth about his father and the revolution and his love for Cosette aid his change of character from being a bourgeois who went to the royalist salons to a bourgeois who not only witnessed but also experienced the difficult conditions of the poor and fought with the

revolutionaries at the barricades. Marius is the son of Colonel Georges Pontmercy, an officer of Napoleon whom the latter named as colonel and baron, and the grandson of M. Gillenormand, an old bourgeois who adored the Bourbons. Marius is, obviously, a bourgeois who “was a royalist, fanatical, and austere [...] he was an ardent but cool lad, noble, generous, proud, religious, lofty; honorable even to harshness, pure even to unsociableness” (Hugo 1: 419). Despite the fact that he belongs to the bourgeois class, his encounter with the truth about his father and later his love for Cosette change his attitude.

During his visit to his dying father, he meets several characters, which change his suppositions about his father and makes him see the truth. Consequently, Marius takes on his father’s beliefs in Napoleon and the revolution, which has made him fight with his bourgeois grandfather who was strictly against the new republic and all Napoleonic beliefs. Marius has gone to live by himself after leaving his grandfather’s house and experiences extreme poverty because he uses the money he possess to help others instead of himself. His pride did not allow him to take money from others, be in someone’s debt, or accept the money his aunt sent him every month. A little while after leaving his grandfather’s house, Marius joins the Friends of the ABC, a fictional group of students who belong to the revolutionary French Republic. He makes it a point to care for the less fortunate, and helps his neighbors with the rent; and even then, he still felt that he needed to do more: “Paying their rent was a mechanical impulse; everybody would have had that impulse; but he, Marius, should have done better” (Hugo 2: 507). The change in Marius’s character plays an important role in the overloaded representation and serves Hugo’s purpose of highlighting a better more hopeful future.

Aside from the truth about his father, Marius's love for Cosette also aids in a melodramatic way his change of character. Marius encounters Cosette, and his love for her brings out the gentlemanly features in his character and goes deeper to the extent where he desires death if Cosette leaves him. He tells Cosette: "Cosette, I have never given my word of honor to anybody, because I stand in awe of my word of honor. I feel that my father is at my side. Now, I give you my most sacred word of honor that, if you go away, I shall die" (Hugo 2: 699). His love for Cosette forces him to do the one thing he did not want to do, which is to go and ask his grandfather for help. Nonetheless, when he does so, his grandfather insults Cosette when he tells him: "Stupid! make her your mistress."; as a result, Marius stands up and decides to leave his grandfather's house for the second time. However, before he leaves, he tells him: "Five years ago you outraged my father; today you have outraged my wife. I ask nothing more of you, monsieur. Adieu." (Hugo 2: 708); but, at that point, Cosette is not his wife yet. When everything fails, and Valjean decides to take Cosette to England, Marius is devastated and feels he has nothing left to do but die, which is why he joins the fight at the barricades, where Hugo describes him as a hero and a fighter.

His love for Cosette is the reason he joins the fights at the barricades also emphasizes the overloaded representation of the sociopolitical conflict. Despite his injury, Marius keeps fighting till he faints and is pulled to safety by Jean Valjean. After recovering from his injuries at his grandfather's house, Marius reconciles with M. Gillenormand and marries Cosette. His nobility is also highlighted when he finds out that Valjean is an ex-convict and that Cosette's money might be tainted because of the crimes he committed; thus, he does not accept it and makes Cosette distance herself from Valjean. Nonetheless,

when he is told the truth about Valjean, who saved his life at the barricades, he takes Cosette, and they both go to Valjean's bedside. Therefore, one may interpret Marius as representing the awakening of the bourgeois class since, of course, he is part of that social class but, because of his encounter with truth and love, he changes his beliefs and becomes a revolutionary and joins the revolt of the working class. Cosette's exaggerated character is what encourages Marius in a more profound way to join the revolution, and thus her character as well as that of Valjean play a noteworthy part in the overloaded representation.

Jean Valjean, through his overloaded and exaggerated persona is Hugo's representative of the working class, and his changing fortunes portray a hopeful future. Valjean is introduced as an ex-convict who, recently out of prison, is not accepted in society. Nonetheless, Hugo does inform the readers of the background of Valjean and the events that forced him to become a convict, which makes the readers pity Valjean and feel for him. It is society that made Valjean steal and be convicted; when his poor situation forced him to steal bread for the children of his sister who were dying of hunger, Valjean gets caught and arrested. He tries several times to escape from prison for the same reason; he needs to check on his sister and her kids and provide food for them. Valjean is the perfect example of how the French society and law created the criminals that they wished to keep off the streets.

Nonetheless, Valjean's changing fortune is Hugo's way of evoking a feeling of hope for the working class. However, the overloaded persona of Valjean as almost a 'saint' does not make him a proper representation of the working class. When Valjean is fortunate enough to meet Bishop Muriel, who changes his life and provides him with enough money

to build his own factory, the latter becomes the best version of himself; later his fatherly love for Cosette fortifies his will to stay noble. He helps others and saves the lives of those who despised him at first, like Fauchelevent. He, then, saves Fantine from prison and promises to take care of her daughter Cosette, whom he rescues from the Thénardier's inn and takes on as his own daughter. He teaches her everything he knows and provides her with a decent life at the convent. Valjean's change is portrayed when he is teaching Cosette:

sometimes, while teaching the child to spell, he would remember that it was with the intention of accomplishing evil that he had learned to read, in the galleys. This intention had now been changed into teaching a child to read. The old convict would smile with the pensive of angels (Hugo 1: 298).

His morals do not even allow him to leave Marius, the man who wanted to take Cosette away from him, to die at the barricades. He not only saves Marius's life but also spares the life of Javert, the policeman who threatens his life in the novel, which suggests the way in which his nobility is a melodramatically generated one due to the narration of his actions in the novel and not from his social class. Therefore, we can notice the overloaded representation of the working class through the development of the character of Valjean, and his exaggerated persona, who changed from being a liar and a cheat to a savior and father because of his love for Cosette. Here we see how the melodramatic role overloads representation, as is also the case with Cosette via the love melodrama.

The Character of Cosette, with her embellished beauty and persona, is Hugo's way of representing the working class, however in a surcharged way. Cosette's misery is also the result of society. Cosette's bourgeois father left her mother Fantine while she was

pregnant with the child. When Fantine finds herself alone with a child whom she could not take care of, she decides to leave Cosette with the Thénardiens, a family who she thought would treat her as their own daughter, because she knows that she no one would hire her to work if they knew that she has an illegitimate child. Cosette lives a horrible life with the Thénardiens, who treat her like a maid: “Cosette ran upstairs and downstairs; washed, brushed, scrubbed, swept, ran, tired herself, go out of breath, lifted heavy things, and, puny as she was, did the rough-work” (Hugo 1: 259). As the events of the novel unfold, Cosette is saved by Valjean who takes her away from the Thénardiens’ inn and offers her a better life and education at the convent. In addition to her new education, Cosette has an unparalleled beauty: “beautiful with a beauty which combined all of the woman with all of the angel, a beauty which would have made Petrarch sing and Dante kneel” (Hugo 1: 475). Through the novel, we notice that Cosette does not take part in any evil actions when she is being mistreated as well as when her fortune changes when she is rescued by Valjean and eventually marries Marius. Hugo makes it a point to highlight her virtue through misery and through wealth. Hugo’s purpose of this representation is to portray the difference between her character and that of another, Eponine, who also belongs to the same class. This melodramatically realized difference accentuates the overloaded representation of the social classes.

Conversely to Cosette though from the same class, Eponine, one of Thénardier’s daughters, lived a better childhood than that of Cosette and still managed to have a foul character. She constantly tries to separate Cosette and Marius and even puts Marius’s life in danger. Nonetheless, it is vital to mention that she eventually dies saving his life at the

barricades due to her deep love for him. Having said that, one can notice how both Cosette and Eponine, due to their exaggerated personas, offer a dramatically weighted representation of the working class. Thus, we can notice how, in both novels, the portrayal of characters as belonging to a specific social class is used as the mode of representation, which comes off as overloaded due to the exaggerated personas of the characters. On the other hand, Hugo's *Les Misérables* also sheds the light on other characters of the working class, the Friends of the ABC, who take part in the revolution in the name of the working classes (they are students and intellectuals as well as working class men), i.e. the violence that takes place at the barricades, which can be compared to other working class characters who have taken part in malicious violent acts. The difference between the Friends of the ABC and other workingmen also provide an overloaded representation of the working class.

A part of the working class that Hugo is portraying, The Friends of the ABC, are "All these young men, diverse as they were, and of whom, as a whole, we ought only to speak seriously had the same religion: Progress" (Hugo 1: 440). The letters ABC in French are pronounced like the word *abaissé*, which means abased, or the oppressed, in English. As mentioned earlier and in previous chapters, the Friends of the ABC is a fictional association of revolutionary French republican students as well as workingmen. They are firm believers in democracy and desire the overthrow of French Royalty; they speak up for the poor and advocate their rights. Hugo uses this association to represent many revolutionary groups of the time that came out to defend the rights of the working class against the oppression of the French bourgeois, i.e. factory owners. Hugo praises this

association and labels its members heroes. Enjolras is a political radical and the leader of this association; he courageously dies at the barricades. In addition, through Enjolras, Hugo criticizes the working class's enemy through the association, i.e. the French Army used by the bourgeoisie to repress the revolt of the working class; he says: "'the fools!'" said he. 'They are getting their men killed and using up our ammunition, for nothing'" (Hugo 2: 823). The bourgeois know they need someone to control the situation, and so they made Louis Philip King and indirectly possessed the French Army. Even Gavroche, the eldest son of the Thénardier, attacks the bourgeois while he sings his last song at the barricades (Hugo 2: 827).

In contrast to the Friends of the ABC, Hugo mentions criminal characters belonging to the working class as well. In *Les Misérables*, the friends of Thénardiens are four criminals: Babet, Gueulemer, Clasquous and Montparnasse who also belong to the working class; they are at some point called "negroes or demons" (Hugo 2: 550) when they kidnap Valjean and threaten to violate Cosette. They do not have the same high-minded intentions as the Friends of the ABC when it comes to the use of violence. These criminals' wickedness, as Hugo portrays them, is not the result of society, as it is for the Friends of the ABC or Valjean, but rooted in their characters alone. This distinction between the use of violence that the Friends of the ABC resort to during the fights at the barricades, and the violence exerted by Thénardier and his friends the criminals emphasize the overloaded or problematic representation of the working class.

In a nutshell, one can observe how Disraeli and Hugo are different in their representations of the social classes through the notion of race because race in *Sybil* is

different from race in *Les Misérables*. Despite the fact that both novels portray the gulf between the exploited and the exploiter, in *Sybil* the exploited are represented as the Saxons and the exploiters are represented as the Normans. In *Les Misérables*, on the other hand, the exploited are represented as the working class and the exploiters as the bourgeois factory owners. This racial representation that we find in both novels is not only what leads to an overloaded representation of the already existent sociopolitical conflict, but the characters are also used as ideological representations of this gulf thanks to their exaggerated personas. In *Sybil*, the aristocrats and bourgeois factory owners, i.e. the Normans, racialize the working class as the Saxons while in *Les Misérables* the working class is also racialized as a different race by the bourgeois factory owners. The ruling class and bourgeois racialize the lower class, even though they are notionally from the same socially constructed “race,” in order to exert violence and power upon them; that is what Foucault’s *Society Must Be Defended* argues. Therefore, killing them becomes acceptable because they belong to a different race; similar to when the Normans demonized the Saxons, killed them and ruled the survivors.

According to Hobsbawm “from the point of view of capitalists, however, these social problems were relevant to the progress of the economy only if, by some horrible accident, they were to overthrow the social order” (Hobsbawm 57). Despite the fact that Hugo highlights the difference between what is considered to be good violence and negative violence, this violence is portrayed as necessary in order for progress and change to happen in both novels. The notion of violence in both novels is an idea that I will explore through a Marxist reading of the novels in the last chapter of this thesis. On that note, we

notice that the sociopolitical conflict already exists in both novels, however melodramatized and racialized. Therefore, after having hollowed out and analyzed the overloaded representation of the conflict, the next chapter will analyze the ways the authors deal and resolve it through violence and 'magical' marriages.

CHAPTER V

MARXIST CLOSE READING OF PROGRESS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS IN BOTH NOVELS

The opposition between the impoverished conditions of the working class and the luxurious conditions of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie and how to solve this conflict is the main issue in both novels. In “From Progress to Catastrophe,” Anderson mentions that “central to the purpose of the novel became the counter-projection of a fictive unity of peasantry and aristocracy” (Anderson). Nonetheless, as discussed and analyzed in the previous chapter, Disraeli and Hugo are different in their representations of the social classes at war. Despite the fact that both authors overload and exaggerate the conflict by using the notion of race, race in *Sybil* is different from race in *Les Misérables*. As previously observed, the ruling class racializes the working class in both novels in order to exert power and violence upon them. In making the working class appear as a different race, killing them becomes admissible to the ruling class. After having analyzed melodrama, romance, exaggerated personas, and the notion of race in both novels, it is safe to say that the class conflict already exists beneath the overloaded racial representation. Therefore, we need to explore, through this racial frame and the characters who are ideological representation of the gulf, the solutions that both authors offer to resolve this conflict. Analysis in this chapter will focus on a Marxist close reading of the themes of violence, poetic awakening of the characters as well as that of the authors, and marriages in *Sybil* and *Les Misérables* to find that Hugo is more progressive than Disraeli.

The progress of the events along with the characters in both novels can be mirrored with the development of the real historical events, yet not completely since the novels are imbedded in melodrama and, as has been discussed previously, may be seen as constituting examples of Transcendental Immanence and Transcendental Transcendence. However, what I want to point out, through a Marxist close reading of both novels, is that the ‘progress’ that Disraeli tries to portray through the progression of his characters and the violent acts leading up to the marriage, i.e. resolution, are different from Hugo’s ‘progress’ through the latter’s characters.

Seeing that both novels deal with the conditions of the working class, a Marxist lens seems compulsory to further understand the class conflict mainly because “Marxism is the ideology of the proletariat [...] and the spiritual weapon of all working people in their struggle for national liberation, peace and socialism” (Marx and Engels 9). In their works, Marx and Engels discuss “the division of society into a small, excessively rich class and a large, propertyless class of wage-workers results in a society suffocating from its own superfluity, while the great majority of its members is scarcely, or even not at all, protected from extreme want” (Marx and Engels 70). The division of society between the rich and the poor can be observed in both novels since both works revolve around this sociopolitical conflict. The division of society had already worsened, as explained in the first chapter of this thesis, in the eighteenth century with the agrarian problem leading to the industrial revolution; Marx and Engels also observe this division in their works:

The men who in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries labored to create the steam engine had no idea that they were preparing the instrument which more than any other was the revolutionize social relations throughout the world. Especially in Europe, by concentrating wealth in the hands of a minority and dispossessing the huge majority, the instrument was destined at

first to give social and political domination to the bourgeoisie and proletariat which can end only in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the abolition of all class antagonisms (Marx and Engels 367).

The domination of the working class by the bourgeois factory owners is the conflict that both novels are representing, however in an overloaded way through melodrama and race war discourse. “The development of the productive forces creates social relations based upon private property, but now we see that this same development of the productive forces deprives the majority of their property and concentrates it in the hands of an insignificant minority” (Marx and Engels 17). In *Sybil*, the aristocracy and the bourgeois factory owners, who are represented as Normans, are in possession of the lands and of the wealth of England, and Disraeli mentions that “the land governs the people” (Disraeli 147). The working class, who are represented as the Saxons, were not able to vote nor did they have their rights, which was a major cause of the conflict. In *Les Misérables*, the conflict is between the bourgeois factory owners, who possess the factories and the wealth as well as have as their allies the aristocracy and monarchy, and the workingmen who do not have even the most basic rights. In order to solve this conflict, Hugo and Disraeli resort to a poetic awakening of the main characters, which can be mirrored with that of the authors themselves, and to violence in order to get to the ‘magical’ marriages, an allegory in quest of a resolution. Through the analysis of these marriages that are portrayed in the novels as the resolutions uniting the social classes at war we will see that Hugo is closer to “the abolition of all class antagonisms” that Marx and Engels are talking about than Disraeli.

The first chapter of this thesis described the history of France and England during the period in which the novels were written in as well as the biographies of Disraeli and Hugo to prove that these two aspects affected their literary works. Both authors found

through literature a way to convey their political and social positions as a way of leaving their prints through their novels. In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye mentions how literature is one way through which writers can leave their mark in the world:

The literary works we have so far been considering are works of fiction in which the plot is, as Aristotle called it, the ‘soul’ of shaping principle, and the characters exist primarily as functions of the plot. But besides the internal fiction of the hero and his society, there is an external fiction which is a relation between the writer and the writer’s society (Frye 52).

The relation between the authors and their society is mirrored in the characters of the novels and society as portrayed in the novels. Thus, the authors’ poetic awakening in the social and political world can be compared to that of the main characters in the novels and one may infer that it is a key element in effecting the characters’ evolution in the novels, notably Egremont and Marius. However, the difference is that, through *Les Misérables* and the poetic awakening of the main characters, Hugo is presenting himself as an enlightened public intellectual while, through *Sybil* and the poetic awakening of the main characters, Disraeli is portraying himself as a political leader.

In *Sybil*, Egremont, an aristocrat, is enlightened about the gulf between the rich and the poor, racialized as Normans and Saxons, but he does not literally experience the conditions of the working class. When Egremont encounters Walter Gerard and Sybil, he is captivated by Sybil’s beauty and voice and decides to go undercover as a journalist named Franklin to get closer to her. During his stay with them, he comes to see the poor conditions of the working class and, driven by his love for Sybil, realizes that he must act on the poor conditions. This can be first seen when he is having a conversation with his brother Lord Marney when he tells his brother: “‘ a curse on the society that has fashioned such claims,’ said Egremont in an heightened tone – ‘claims founded in selfishness, cruelty, and fraud,

and leading to demoralization, misery, and crime” (Disraeli 134). This awakening to those miserable conditions can also be observed when Egremont tries to defend himself to Sybil who does not accept his love because he is part of the aristocracy. He tells her:

you look upon me as an enemy, as a natural foe, because I am born among the privileged. I am a man, Sybil, as well as a noble [...] ‘and can I not feel for men, my fellows, whatever be their lot? I know you will deny it; but you are in error, Sybil; you have formed your opinions upon tradition, not upon experience” (Disraeli 237).

Through Egremont Disraeli is trying to say that there is a part of the aristocracy that can understand and feel with the working class, as was also observed when Disraeli highlights the difference between Egremont and his brother Lord Marney. However, when Sybil refuses his love, he decides to put words in action and gives a speech siding with the working class at the parliamentary meeting. In the parliament, Egremont is “the voice of a noble, who without being a demagogue, had upheld the popular cause; had pronounced his conviction that the rights of labor were as sacred as those of property” (Disraeli 250). Nonetheless, we can also observe that Egremont does not really experience the conditions of the poor; he only stays with Sybil and Gerard for a while and then leaves (Disraeli 212). In addition, as this chapter will further explain, he does not at any point become a part of the working class or fight with them; on the contrary, he wants rule over them, which makes him different from Marius in *Les Misérables*.

In *Les Misérables*, we can observe the poetic awakening of Marius who actually lives and experiences the poor conditions of the working class as well as joins their revolt. When Marius discovers the real identity of his father and is acquainted with the latter’s past, his view on the revolution changes: “the revolution and the empire set themselves in

luminous perspective before his straining eyes” (Hugo 1: 424). Hugo describes Marius’s awakening as follows:

Gleams of the true came at every instant to complete his reasoning. It was like an interior growth. He felt a sort of natural aggrandisement which these two new things, his father and his country, brought o him [...] From the rehabilitation of his father he had naturally passed to the rehabilitation of Napoleon (Hugo 1: 424).

He, thus, joins the Friends of the ABC, a revolutionary group, and lives a poor life after fighting with his grandfather over his new beliefs and dedication to his father’s cause, which Hugo dedicates a chapter to: “Marius needy” (Hugo 1: 455). However, despite his poverty, Marius displays his moral traits as he starts paying for his poor neighbors even when he needs the money himself. He gives money to the owner of the building where he lives and tells her: “‘Here’ said he, to the old woman, ‘there are twenty-five francs. Pay for these poor people, give them five francs, and do no tell them that it is from me’” (Hugo 1: 465). On the other hand, his strong belief in Napoleon and the revolution is also clearly stated when he says: “‘God forbid that I should lessen France! But it is not lessening her to join her with Napoleon’” (Hugo 1: 451). Through Marius, Hugo is encouraging the revolution. Not only does Marius encourage the revolution but he also joins the fight at the barricades and bravely combats: “Enjolras was at one end of the barricade, and Marius at the other [...] Marius fought without shelter. He stood with more than half his body above the summit of the redoubt” (Hugo 2: 846).

That being said, we can notice how Marius’s poetic awakening concerning the gulf between the social classes is not only portrayed in his words but also in the change of his life and him personally joining the revolution, conversely to Egremont. The difference between the poetic awakening of Marius and that of Egremont is the first reason as to why

Hugo, through Marius, is more progressive than Disraeli. Nonetheless, the poetic awakening of Marius and Egremont are a part of the progress portrayed in both novels, which thus cannot happen without any loss.

In *The Historical Novel*, Lukács observes the notion of progress as a loss of old folkways and a way to embrace history; “this vigorous and militant defense of the traditions of human progress, which assumes the mantle of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, produces an important change in the history of literature” (Lukács 278). We can observe this change in both novels because they are not only concerned with history as re-telling of events; rather, the authors’ own lives affect their writings and that is:

precisely because they were great writers, and felt really deeply with the people in their misfortunes, it was impossible for them to be unconditional admirers of capitalist progress. Together with the economic progress they always portrayed the fearful sacrifices which it cost the people (Lukács 346).

These sacrifices can especially be portrayed, as I will shortly analyze, in the way the lives of the characters change. Lukács continues:

True a contrast is made between past and present here as well, but it is no longer a decorative antithesis between picturesque poetry and grey prose. The antithesis here has a political and social aim: knowledge of the great struggles of the past, familiarity with the great forefathers of progress will inspire men in the present with aims and ideals, courage and consolation amid the brutal terrors of Fascism. The past will show the way mankind has gone and the direction in which it is moving (Lukács 271).

As a way of applying Lukács’s idea on having necessary knowledge of the past as a necessary precondition to moving forward, both novels insert historical backgrounds of the situations of France and England and the way it is moving forward through the events that take place and the evolution of the characters. Therefore, despite the differences between Hugo and Disraeli, the authors present their own opinions on the progress that needs to

occur through the racialization of the conflict as well as the resolutions they present at the end, i.e. the ‘magical’ marriages. Nevertheless, the novels still present the readers with the loss of old folkways that Lukács analyzes when he says:

with this realization of the contradictory character of progress the representatives of the classical historical novel do not glorify the past uncritically. But nevertheless their works do clearly mourn the passing of many moments in the past: in the first place the fruitlessness of the heroic upsurge of past popular movements of liberation; secondly the many primitive democratic institutions, and the human qualities associated with them, which the march of progress has pitilessly destroyed (Lukács 346).

These ways that “progress has pitilessly destroyed” are depicted in the novels in the loss of the traditional ways of life of the social classes at war through the progress of the characters who lose their previous ways of life as the novels develop.

In *Sybil*, the loss of old folkways can be observed in the change that Sybil experiences when she marries Egremont. She no longer lives at the Mowbray Convent but moves to Mowbray Castle when she marries Egremont. Similarly, Cosette loses her solitary life when she is rescued by Valjean and lives temporarily at the convent until she marries Marius and lives with him at his grandfather’s house. She is no longer a maid or a girl at the convent but becomes the wife of Baron Pontmercy. On the other hand, Valjean also leaves his old criminal life behind when he meets Bishop Myriel and becomes a rich factory owner who helps the poor and rescues Cosette from her old life. In addition, Marius loses his old life when he moves out of his grandfather’s house and lives in a poor apartment with only a couple of changes of clothes to live by. These changes go hand in hand with the poetic awakening of the characters and the progress that occurs in the novels; proving the more that in order for progress to happen, loss is inevitable. However, the difference that makes Hugo more progressive than Disraeli is the fact that Hugo portrays

the loss of both classes while Disraeli only highlights that of Sybil, working class, and not aristocracy through Egremont.

As we have just seen, progress does not come without a price; the loss of old folkways as well as violence, which both novels portray. Violence is unavoidable and Marx and Engels observed that because “[they] believed that the social revolution was inevitable. Equally inevitable was the violent nature of this revolution. This inevitability of the revolution and its violent nature was determined by the very structures of the bourgeois system” (Rustam 9). In both novels, the themes of violence and revolt are dominant and significant ones, seen as both authors resort to highlight violent scenes and acts. However, Hugo and Disraeli each, while keeping the racialized representation and exaggerated personas of the characters in mind, appears to have a different purpose for these violent scenes and revolutions. Marx and Engels continue this train of thoughts when they say:

[Violence events] were the chief factors which characterized the European class struggle between bourgeoisie and working class and by mean which we proved that every revolutionary upheaval, however remote from the class struggle its goal may appear to be, must fail until the revolutionary working class is victorious, that every social reform remains a utopia until the proletarian revolution and the feudalistic counter-revolution measure swords in a world war (Marx and Engels 72).

Thus, violence plays a major part and a necessary role in the process leading up to progress and the solutions for the conflict. Each author uses these themes as a stage to convey different messages which, as we will see, make Hugo more progressive than Disraeli.

In *Sybil*, in order for the resolution of the sociopolitical conflict the way Disraeli represents it to happen, i.e., the marriage of Egremont and Sybil: ideological representations of the classes at war, violence needs to occur. The need for violence can be observed and analyzed in several instances of the novel where the brutality of the mob

serves as a tool for Disraeli to convey his idea concerning the need of an aristocratic leader. Egremont explains to Sybil that the working class need a leader from the aristocracy to lead them and help them in order for them to obtain their demands because they will not be able to do it by themselves seen as they are disrupted. Thus, through the portrayal of the violent mob, Disraeli is assuring Egremont's opinion for the need of an aristocratic leader for the working class, which is his own. In *Sybil*, we can observe how Disraeli represents violence as serving the bourgeois power and playing a role against the working class through his description of the leader of the violent mob. The Bishop and leader of the Hell-Cats, is portrayed as a "ruthless savage" (Disraeli 356). Disraeli illustrates the revolt and rise of the mob as a violent one when he recounts their actions as following: "the Hell-cats were coming, they said; they were on the other side of the river, burning mills, destroying all they could put their hands on, man, woman and child" (Disraeli 343). In addition, Disraeli describes their activities as they take possession of the castle in a savage way: "in the meantime the castle was in the possession of the mob. The first great rush was to the cellars [...] the heads of the bottles were knocked off with the same promptitude and dexterity as if they were shelling nuts or decapitating shrimps" (Disraeli 351) and "papers and books and works of art – over the floors of the apartments [...] many of these last grew frantic, and finished their debauch by the destruction of everything around them" (Disraeli 352). Therefore, it is clear how Disraeli is presenting the mob and their violent acts in a negative way to express the need for a leader that is not of the working class but of the aristocracy, which is also why Walter Gerard's character is killed off.

As previously examined in the third chapter, the difference between the leader figure of Egremont and Walter Gerard is that the former wants to rule over the working

class so he can make sure that they will not be a threat to his class while the latter wants to level the working class. Here violence plays a significant role as Disraeli encourages it in his novel for the sole reason of proving that what Egremont is saying about ruling the working class is the solution. Therefore, Walter Gerard is killed off during the fight between the mob and Lord Marney's troop: "the father of Sybil was picked out – the real friend and champion of the People – and shot dead" (Disraeli 354). His death makes it easier, on the one hand, to apply what Egremont was talking to Sybil about since the people lost their Chartist leader. On the other hand, the death of Walter Gerard aids the marriage of Egremont and Sybil because her father was against this union. Thus, the death of the Chartist leader, Walter Gerard, can be interpreted as an invitation to eliminate anyone who is against the union that Disraeli is trying to make happen; which is also the case for Lord Marney.

The violence of the mob effortlessly kills Lord Marney, Egremont's older brother: "the people returned to their prey, nor did they rest until Lord Marney fell lifeless on Mowbray Moor, literally stoned to death" (Disraeli 355). Consequently, Egremont inherits the Marney fortune. The violence of the mob also serves the union of Egremont and Sybil because it presents Egremont with the perfect situation during which he saves Sybil as "he cut down one man, thrust away another, and placing his left arm round Sybil" (Disraeli 357). Therefore, in return, being grateful to her hero savior, Sybil promises to marry him: 'We will never part again,' said Egremont. 'Never,' murmured Sybil" (Disraeli 357). The way Disraeli portrays Egremont as a hero saving the girl protagonist from the violent mob recalls what Frye says about the hero figure in the novel: "hence the hero of romance is analogous to the mythical Messiah or deliverer who comes from an upper world, and his

enemy is analogous to the demonic powers of a lower world” (Frye 187). Egremont is the hero coming from the upper world, aristocracy, while the mob, working class, are from the lower world. In essence, Disraeli’s way of portraying necessary violence serves the bourgeois power against the working class, which is the opposite in the case of Hugo’s *Les Misérables*.

In *Les Misérables*, violence is also needed for the union of Cosette and Marius, which is the resolution that Hugo is giving to resolve the sociopolitical conflict seen their ideological representations of the two classes at war. However, in *Les Misérables*, the violence of the fights at the barricades is not only necessary for change to happen but is also encouraged. To support such violence of the revolution, Hugo labels the Friends of the ABC as heroes: “the friends of the ABC were not numerous, it was a secret society in the embryonic state; we should almost say a coterie, if coteries produced heroes” (Hugo 1: 434). This need for violence can also be seen when Combeferre, a member of the Friends of the ABC says: “Tragedy in a wig has its reason for being, and I am not one of those who, in the name of Aeschylus, deny it the right of existence” (Hugo 1: 445). In another instance, Hugo idolizes the violence that accompanies revolution when he says: “revolutions have a terrible arm and a fortunate hand; they strike hard and choose well” (Hugo 2: 568). Hugo does not deny the negative aspect of violence but transforms it into a heroic act when he says:

They were savages, yes; but the savages of civilization. They proclaimed the right furiously; they desired, were it through fear and trembling, to force the human race into paradise. They seemed barbarians, and they were saviors. With the mask of night they demanded the light (Hugo 2: 584).

He explains that “the revolutionary sense is a moral sense” (Hugo 2: 681). The tone Hugo uses to describe the revolution glorifies the violence that took place: “men cry: ‘To arms!’ they run, they tumble, they fly, they resist. Wrath sweeps along the *émeute* as the wind sweeps along a fire” (Hugo 2: 723) and “suddenly the drum beat the charge. The attack was a hurricane” (Hugo 2: 845). Therefore, we can see how violence is a glorious act in Hugo’s novel. This same violence, other than it being necessary and idolized, is needed so that Valjean can save Marius; “Jean Valjean, in the thick cloud of combat, did not appear to see Marius; the fact is, that he did not take his eyes from him. When a shot struck down Marius, Jean Valjean bounded with agility of a tiger, dropped upon him as upon a prey, and carried him away” (Hugo 2: 852). The fact that Valjean saves Marius makes the latter trust Valjean’s nobility of character and except the money Valjean gives to Cosette, which he earned and is not tainted with crimes. On another note, the violence that takes place at the barricade also leads to Javert killing himself. After being captured by the members of the Friends of the ABC, Valjean is given the opportunity to kill Javert, but he does not act on it. This leads Javert to feel guilty for always pursuing Valjean in order to imprison him. This can be interpreted as the law feeling sympathy for the working class. Therefore, we can conclude how violence plays a beneficial part for progress in *Les Misérables*, and how Hugo encourages educated violence through revolution.

After having analyzed the violent scenes and revolutionary acts in both novels, we can thus deduce that Hugo is more progressive than Disraeli. Disraeli encourages violence because he can use it against the working class and coopt them while Hugo encourages educated violence. This difference is especially seen not only through the way violence is portrayed but also because the Friends of the ABC who are participating in the revolution

in *Les Misérables* are educated students while the mob in *Sybil* who use violence are not. The mob when they take possession of the castle destroy the books. Nonetheless, despite the difference in the portrayal, both novels show how violence is necessary for progress to happen and to lead to the resolutions the authors present, i.e. the marriages as allegories in quest of resolution.

In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye says that: “genuine allegory is a structural element in literature: it had to be there, and cannot be added by critical interpretation alone” (Frye 54). In the case of both *Les Misérables* and *Sybil* the most obvious allegory that needs to be analyzed is that of marriage in quest of resolution. However, seen the way the conflict is presents as one between races and through the exaggerated personas of the characters who are ideological representations of the gulf, what needs to be studied is how ideal or realistic these solutions are.

In *Sybil*, the marriage between Egremont and Sybil can actually be considered a domestication of class conflict more so than a solution. As previously explained, Egremont is seeking to rule the working class and not elevate the working class. His purpose is not to equate the working class to the aristocrats and the bourgeois, on the contrary, he wants aristocracy to rule the working class. He does recognize their needs and believes they should have their rights but wants to control them to make sure that they do not in any way effect negatively the privileges of the aristocrats and bourgeois. This marriage can thus be more considered as a way to divert the people from the People’ charter rather than a solution; it is a domestication of the class conflict. According to Marx and Engels, this solution is more about silencing the Chartists because, for Marx, the only solution to this conflict is a proletarian revolution. This is also voiced by Engels when he says that “in

order to divert you from the People's Charter, the only goal important to you, they spawn all sorts of projects for superficial reforms" (Engels, 466); this marriage can be interpreted as such. Despite his beliefs in the rights of the working class, Egremont would rather marry one girl as a way to solve this conflict, who conveniently discovers that she belongs to the race of Normans and inherits money and land. Her true origin is revealed when Hatton tells Gerard: "I believe on every principle of justice, that Mowbray Castle is as much yours as the house that is built by the tenant on the lord's land" (Disraeli 217). Hatton is determined to give back to Sybil what rightfully belongs to her when he clearly confirms: "I'll make his fortune, or my name is not Simon Hatton" (Disraeli 335). Sybil's inheritance is affirmed when Disraeli informs the reader that Hatton was successful in his mission: "how successful he was in pursuing her claim, the reader has already learnt" (Disraeli 359). Her inheritance to Marney Castle goes straight back to Egremont, which is why their marriage can be questioned as a solution.

Conversely, in *Les Misérables*, the union between Cosette and Marius is different. They depend on each other. He needs her money, which she inherits from Valjean and Marius accepts after he realizes that Valjean saved his life, and she needs his love and protection. This interdependence can be seen when Marius decides to fight at the barricades; he is actually ready to die fighting because he cannot be with his love Cosette. In other words, in order for Marius to survive and have meaning to live he needed Cosette. On the other hand, Cosette's love for Marius is so powerful and strong that she basically leaves Valjean, her protector and savior, because he wants to keep her away from Marius and take her to England. She gets married to her love instead. Seen as they are both ideological representation of the gulf between the classes at war, their relationship as both

depending on each other can be mirrored with the bourgeois needing the working class and vice versa. Therefore, we can observe how the union that Hugo portrays in the marriage of his characters is equalizing the two classes in their role in the relationship. The interdependence of the bourgeois, through Marius, and the working class, through Cosette, is another reason why Hugo is more progressive than Disraeli who wants to keep class antagonisms.

In the end, after having analyzed the progress leading up to the resolutions in both novels, one can see that Hugo is more progressive than Disraeli. When it comes to the poetic awakening of the characters, Marius's awakening is more progressive than that of Egremont's because he actually experiences the conditions of the poor and joins their revolt while Egremont does not. What Egremont wants is to rule the working class. In addition, violence in *Les Misérables* is idolized as a heroic act necessary for progress to happen while in *Sybil* violence serves Disraeli's belief that the working class need an aristocratic leader to rule them as well as effecting the marriage that enables this conservative position. Finally, the marriages studied as allegory in quest of resolution for the political conflict also make Hugo more progressive than Disraeli. The union of Marius and Cosette and their interdependence make the social classes they represent relatively equal while, in *Sybil*, it is not the case because she eventually turns out to be of the same fictional race, i.e. Normans.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The aftermath of the French Revolution drove many French and British writers to engage the sociopolitical conflict and the conditions of the different social classes within the story lines of their novels. Victor Hugo and Benjamin Disraeli are no exception to this situation and are actually perfect examples of it. The historical events of France and England and the authors' political lives greatly influenced Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Disraeli's *Sybil*. Through these novels and the main characters, it is clear that both Hugo and Disraeli resorted to writing these novels as a way to leave their prints in History and situating their authorial personas in their respective public spheres. While Hugo is trying to present himself as an enlightened public scholar, Disraeli is presenting himself as a political leader.

Far from being historical novels according to Georg Lukács's definition of the genre in *The Historical Novel*, Hugo's *Les Misérables* and Disraeli's *Sybil* explore what lies behind the upfront love stories of the characters since they critically expose the conflict between the bourgeois factory owners and the aristocracy on one hand and the working class on the other in both France and England as the true key to the alienating gulf. However, since both novels are embedded in melodrama and the fact that they both use Jameson's categories of Transcendental Transcendence and Transcendental Immanence then the authors can only partially represent the history of sociopolitical conflict. Despite

the fact that both novels share the same genre and literary elements, the way the authors employ them is different and show that Hugo is more progressive than Disraeli.

While studying the characters in both novels as ideological representations of the gulf between the two classes at both ends of the sociopolitical conflict, their exaggerated personas, their poetic awakening that can be mirrored with that of the authors, and the racial discourse used result in an overloaded representation of this conflict. Through the characters, the social classes that they represent, and their poetic awakening, the authors are conveying their political beliefs concerning the sociopolitical conflict.

As a way of resolving the sociopolitical conflict represented through racial discourse, both authors resort to the allegory of marriage in the quest for a resolution. Nonetheless, these resolutions come as the product of an overloaded representation of social classes as false race categories and the narration embedded in the melodramatic genre. The need for violence that can be observed in both novels is used differently and shows why Hugo is more progressive than Disraeli. While the former idolizes violence as a necessary heroic act serving progress, the latter highlights violence in a negative way to convey his idea of the need of an aristocratic leader for the working class. Hugo's union of Cosette and Marius puts the social classes they represent at a more equal level than Disraeli, while the latter's union doesn't even try to eliminate class antagonisms, seeing that Sybil rediscovers her origin as belonging to the race of conquerors. It is therefore safe to say that Hugo's *Les Misérables* functions in a more progressive way than Disraeli's *Sybil*.

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