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Passionate experience of Jones vs Strong facts of Fetherling

Mary Harris Jones, a distinguished labor and social activist, born in 1837 and still known 186 years after. Her life and work have been the subject of several books and texts, including her own autobiography and Fetherling's biography on Jones, "*Mother Jones, The Miners' Angel*". This essay will explore three chapters from "*The Autobiography of Mother Jones*," titled "*The Cripple Creek Strike*," "*Victory and West Virginia*," and "*Murder and West Virginia*." Jones was an influential labor activist and community organizer between 1877 and 1930. After the death of her husband and her children, she dedicated her life to fight for workers' rights, working for better conditions and social justice, making a big change on the labor movement. Dale Fetherling is a writer and journalist known for his works on diverse subjects, including biographies, technology, and culture. He has written several books, demonstrating his versatility and depth of knowledge. Although both texts address the life of Jones and her labor activism, they are shown with different perspectives and styles. Jones uses a variety of strong words and emotions, firsthand experiences and impassioned speeches that make her book a rich source of vivid images of the life of Jones. Another example is Fetherling text that informs readers about the era, communicating Jones actions in context of the labor movement, shows examples of changes that happened thanks to Jones and strong critical analysis of her, Fetherling text is a source of strong facts and good examples of data.

The autobiography of Jones shows a totally personal and emotional tone. Through her own words and experience, she transmits the struggles, injustices and sacrifices that she faced

with the workers. Jones firsthand experiences and passionate speeches evoke a strong emotional response from readers. Her strong words make the reader understand and sympathize with what she experienced. For example in “*The Cripple Creek Strike*”, Jones shows a determined, outraged tone as she describes the injustices miners faced due to treason by their northern workers brothers. For that reason Southern workers fought and were assassinated in a brutal way "The military had no regard for human life. They were sanctified cannibals”(Jones 44). The use of the phrase "sanctified cannibals" makes readers feel exactly what Jones wants to express, which is the disrespect and the terrible murders done to thousands of workers every day.

On the other hand, Fetherling's biography presents a more objective and analytical tone. Fetherling focuses on the historical and describes the life of Jones within a historical context of the labor movement. Fetherling Describes events in a way that provides only historical facts and records, not biased at personal experience or strong emotions. The formal, open tone demonstrates Fetherling's knowledge of Jones and the labor movement. In “*Medieval West Virginia*” he demonstrates the involvement of Jones in Virginia, calling it her home since he had participated in five major strikes where Jones learned and fought with the workers. Fetherling described Jones involvement as a “...40-year struggle to unionize its coal fields was marked by bloodletting, legal ruses, and illicit tactics honed to a merciless efficiency”(Fetherling 25). This factual presentation offers readers a comprehensive understanding of Jones's impact on the labor movement without explicitly evoking emotional responses.

Jones's autobiography contains a powerful and direct writing style that resonates with her working-class audience. Her language uses strong, emotional phrases to convey her

message. Using anecdotes from her own experiences allows her to connect with the miners and workers she fought for. Her speech contains vivid descriptions and storytelling techniques to paint a clear picture of the events. In "*Victory and West Virginia*", Jones holds the gun, used by a military man who caused harm to many workers. She said:

"Sir," said I, "my class goes into the mines. They bring out the metal that makes this gun. This is my gun! My class melt the minerals in furnaces and roll the steel. They dig the coal that feeds furnaces. My class is not fighting you, not you. They are fighting with bare fists and empty stomachs the men who rob them and deprive their children of childhood. It is the hard-earned pay of the working class that your pay comes from. They aren't fighting you."(Jones 62)

Jones's biography conveys her great courage through her words she spoke at the most crucial moments on the strikes. Her powerful writing style and experiences makes her connect with her readers.

In contrast, Fetherling's biography is more formal and narrative in style. It narrates in a more general way, speaking of the labor movement, focusing on the actions that Jones did. Fetherling decides to inform his readers of the general context by providing Jones as evidence of major changes, he prefers to include some quotes of her to reflect what is happening in the moment and how Jones acts. For example, he includes information about what is happening at the moment such as, "In 1903, the average pay per ton of coal mined in West Virginia was 49.5 cents. It was 64.4 cents in Illinois, 88 in Indiana, 76.1, in Ohio, and 59.3 in western Pennsylvania"(Fetherling 36), or Fetherling gives general information about what happened in west virginia in relation with Jones and the labor movement, "After 1903, holding tactics were employed, and it would be 10 years before a major strike again occurred there—and

Mother Jones once more would play a vital part"(Fetherling 36). This style of writing presents a historical and contextual analysis of the life of Jones within the historical context of labor struggles. This appeal allows Fetherling to reach a larger audience and provide a comprehensive understanding of Jones's role in shaping employment history.

The evidence used in Jones's autobiography is based on her personal experiences and anecdotes, which reinforces her credibility and emotional appeal. By sharing the struggles and stories of the miners, she presents herself as a true defender of their cause. Jones describes her environment, exposing the miners' fight for justice. In "*Murder and West Virginia*" Jones expresses the situation of the miners in Virginia, "Men who joined the union were blacklisted throughout the entire section. Their families were thrown out on the highways. Men were shot. They were beaten. Numbers disappeared and no trace of them found"(Jones 25). What Jones narrates emotionally impacts her readers by instilling a sense of urgency and empathy for the plight of the working class. Readers are motivated to support her cause and demand a change in the labor system. Jones leaves a big effect on her readers due to her correct use of evidence that appeals to the emotional reasoning of the readers.

On the other hand, Fetherling's evidence is based on historical records, newspapers and testimonies that provide a complete account of the life of Jones and the labor movement. Fetherling presents multiple perspectives and contextualizes events, which increases the credibility of his narrative. Fetherling reports data on the United Mine United Mine Workers (UMW), a prominent American labor union formed in the 1900s, advocating for coal miners' rights and improved working conditions. In "*Mother Jones The Miners' Angel*" he mentions phases like, "In 1894, the UMW had struck in West Virginia but without much success"(Fetherling 26) and "UMW membership nationally would spurt from 10,000 in 1898

to 115,500 in 1900 as John Mitchell became president”(Fetherling 27). Reinforcing historical facts that appeal to their credibility. This approach allows readers to engage critically with the complexities of the labor movement and the challenges that faced Jones and other activists. Increasing the interest of readers to know more about Jones and the movement.

Jones, the esteemed labor and social activist who dedicated her life to fighting for workers' rights, remains as a prominent figure in history. Both texts offer different perspectives and styles in portraying Jones and her labor activism. Jones's autobiography stands out for its personal and emotional tone, which draws readers to empathize with the struggles, injustices, and sacrifices that Jones and the workers underwent. Through passionate discussions and firsthand experiences, Jones creates a strong emotional connection with the audience. Her powerful and direct writing style brings out in readers a courageous spirit in the face of adversity. In contrast, Fetherling's biography stands out for its objective and analytical tone, representing the life of Jones within a historical context of the labor movement. Focusing on strong historical facts, records, and multiple perspectives, Fetherling provides an overall understanding of Jones's impact on labor struggles. Her writing style appeals to a broader audience which facilitates the critical approach of readers. The combination of these two texts creates a significant understanding of the life of Jones. When readers read these two perspectives on Jones they understand what she did through her own words and experiences, and through a more historical context of the labor movement. For those who are interested in the life of Jones and how the labor movement changed, they should read these two books.

Works Cited

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