

University of Pardubice

Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

The American Dream and the Issues of Class in
Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*

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Master Thesis

2021

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta filozofická
Akademický rok: 2019/2020

ZADÁNÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

(projektu, uměleckého díla, uměleckého výkonu)

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Osobní číslo: **H19338**
Studijní program: **N0231A090011 Anglická filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglická filologie**
Téma práce: **The American Dream and the Issues of Class in Upton Sinclair's
The Jungle**
Zadávací katedra: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

Zásady pro vypracování

Závěrečná diplomová práce se bude věnovat románu *The Jungle* amerického autora Uptona Sinclaira, který zobrazuje život v přistěhovalecké komunitě v Chicagu v době převratných společenských a ekonomických změn počátku dvacátého století.

V úvodní části diplomant nastíní historický kontext díla (např. sociální problémy, imigrace) a zařadí dílo do širšího literárního kontextu. Dále vysvětlí přístupy marxistické literární teorie a kritiky a zdůvodní svoji volbu tohoto teoretického rámce. Jádrem práce pak bude analýza zvoleného díla z hlediska vyobrazení sociálních problémů, situace imigrantů, kritiky amerického snu a rozdílů mezi sociálními třídami. Diplomant bude k dílu přistupovat z hlediska marxistické literární kritiky. Závěrem své analýzy shrne, zhodnotí Sinclairovy interpretace sociálních problémů USA prvních dekád 20. století a obecněji posoudí dílo z hlediska marxistické literární kritiky.

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:
Rozsah grafických prací:
Forma zpracování diplomové práce: **tištěná/elektronická**
Jazyk zpracování: **Angličtina**

Seznam doporučené literatury:

Dawson, Hugh J. „Winston Churchill and Upton Sinclair: An Early Review of “The Jungle.” American Literary Realism, 1870-1910 24, no. 1 (1991): 72-78.
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Datum zadání diplomové práce: **30. dubna 2020**
Termín odevzdání diplomové práce: **31. března 2021**

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Mgr. Olga Roebuck, Ph.D.
vedoucí katedry

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, doc. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D., for her valuable insight and advice.

Prohlašuji:

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ANNOTATION

This master thesis is concerned with the analysis of Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle* (1906) with respect to the interpretation of its themes according to the tenets of Marxist literary criticism. The theoretical part of this thesis is dedicated to the description of the developments of the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era and their influence on American society of the early 20th century. Furthermore, it describes the context of the novel's publication and introduces the concepts of Marxist analysis with emphasis on establishing the needed research questions for the analytical part of the thesis. The analytical part of this thesis is dedicated to the analysis of the depiction of the American dream as well as to the interpretation of the issues of class.

KEYWORDS

American dream, class, Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*, Marxist analysis, Chicago, capitalism, ideology

ANOTACE

Tato diplomová práce se zaměřuje na analýzu románu *Džungle* (1906) autora Uptona Sinclaira z hlediska interpretace vyobrazených motivů z pohledu marxistické literární kritiky. Teoretická část práce je věnována popisu převratných společenských změn, které nastaly během tzv. pozlaceného věku a později během progresivní éry a jejich vlivu na vývoj americké společnosti na počátku 20. století. Dále tato část práce popisuje kontext publikace románu a představuje koncepty marxistické analýzy, které jsou následně využity k vytvoření potřebných výzkumných otázek pro analytickou část práce. Analytická část této diplomové práce se věnuje analýze vyobrazení amerického snu a interpretaci problematiky třídy.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Americký sen, třída, Upton Sinclair, *Džungle*, marxistická analýza, Chicago, kapitalismus, ideologie

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Introduction

This master thesis focuses on the analysis of Upton Sinclair's depiction of the immigrant experience in the industrial labor hierarchy and society of the United States at the turn of the century as it is captured in his most successful novel, *The Jungle*, which was published in 1906.

The novel is often perceived as a muckraking exposé on the treatment and production of meat products in the meatpacking businesses of Chicago because these topics raised the most questions at the time of the novel's publication and resulted in several reforms which were, however, mostly related to the protection of consumers. Nevertheless, the novel primarily epitomizes the social struggles of a fictive immigrant family from Lithuania in a society substantially influenced by the power of these businesses and their owners. For this reason, it is not only a novel dedicated to the treatment of meat but also primarily a novel dedicated to the treatment of the working-class employees. Sinclair's protagonist, Jurgis Rudkus, comes to the United States in pursuit of the American dream, which is, however, hindered by a multitude of social issues. By the depiction of Jurgis's difficulties, Sinclair provides a commentary on the position of the common laborers in the capitalist class hierarchy as well as on the general conditions in society at the turn of the century.

The novel exhaustively describes the privations of urban life and industrial work from the point of view of a man from the lowest social class in a country that was originally established with the vision of egalitarian values and principles. These values and principles, however, prove to be disrupted in consequence of the mechanization of production and the developments of society which accompanied the ongoing technological progress. The novel illustrates the concomitant social problems of this society such as poverty, corruption and crime but most importantly, it focuses on the immense divisions between classes that were partly brought about by the relationships which stem from the ownership of the means of production under capitalism. For these reasons, this novel has been chosen for the purposes of conducting a Marxist analysis of its contents. In general, the goal of this thesis is to evaluate Sinclair's depiction of the American dream, social issues, and class relations from the Marxist viewpoint to analyze the ideology working within the text. Accordingly, it will be examined how the text reflects the presence of the dominant social class in society based on the depicted socioeconomic differences in order to establish whether the novel can be perceived as a critique of capitalism, as a literary work with a Marxist agenda, and provided it can in revealing and analyzing the reasons for this classification.

This thesis is divided into two main sections. The first section of this thesis is dedicated to establishing the needed historical, social, and literary context of the novel. It captures the developments of Gilded Age America. It focuses on topics such as the rising industrialization, urbanization and immigration and describes their concomitant issues to discuss these developments with respect to their impact on the contemporary society in the United States that was depicted within the novel. Furthermore, it describes the reformist tendencies of the Progressive Era, it focuses on the description of Upton Sinclair's motivation and attitude in writing the novel and establishes the needed literary context while introducing some of the possible considerations for the analysis itself. The last part of this section is dedicated to establishing the needed analytical framework and simultaneously the research questions for the second section of this thesis. It discusses Marxist literary criticism and focuses on the creation of research questions that attempt to use the Marxist theory as their basis. These questions are related to the notion of ideology, they mostly include concerns related to Sinclair's depiction of social and economic conditions in society, generally serving the purpose of analyzing his depiction of the capitalist class hierarchy.

The second section of this thesis focuses on the analysis of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906) with respect to the previously established theoretical and analytical framework. Firstly, the depiction of the American dream, which serves as a reflection of Sinclair's portrayal of the contemporary American society and its problems, is discussed with respect to the contrasts between the immigrant characters' expectations and the reality of their experience with life in the United States. Secondly, this section deals with Sinclair's depiction of class relations and with their Marxist interpretation. The analysis includes the interpretation of topics such as class struggle, consumerism, and class consciousness, accompanied by suitable examples from the novel to uncover the meaning behind their depiction. In short, the analysis establishes whether and how the novel challenges the ideologies it depicts through the portrayal of the chosen topics and determines which of them could be perceived as a critique of capitalism. The last portion of this part of the analysis is dedicated to the possible interpretation of the novel's underlying message.

The conclusion summarizes the main points and results of the analysis with some remarks to the theoretical background, revealing the novel undoubtedly carries a Marxist agenda and serves as a critique of capitalism. It recapitulates the reasons for this conclusion which were gathered by the interpretation of several selected themes from the novel in the second section of this thesis.

Historical, Social and Literary Context

The present chapter deals with the political, social, and cultural phenomena which all had varying degrees of influence on the developments of the early 20th century society in the United States. Upton Sinclair's novel, *The Jungle* (1906), contains serious political and social implications that are mostly related to or directly based on the contemporary matters of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, tied to aspects such as industrialization, immigration, laissez-faire economics and progressivism. Therefore, these aspects are all to be introduced in the following paragraphs to establish the needed historical, social, and literary context for the analytical part of this thesis.

1. The Gilded Age

The term 'The Gilded Age' is used to refer to the period in the history of the United States which began after the end of the Civil War in 1865, continued up until the late 19th century and ended approximately just before the turn of the century. As Remini mentions, the Gilded Age was an era of various technological advancements in many industries which undergone immense growth during this period, dramatically changing the nation.¹ These changes could be traced back to the increasing industrialization that stemmed from the effects of the Second Industrial Revolution. These developments effectively turned the focus of American economics from agriculture to industry, subsequently leading to the transformation of society from a predominantly rural one into an urban one. In this sense, Campbell interprets industrialization as a process of change from localized harvesting and extracting to a range of highly diversified commercial relationships dominated by manufacturing, technological innovation, factors driven by six major components, including: "...technology, railroads, corporations, finance capitalism, labor, and retailing."² The focus of American economics during the Gilded Age, therefore, no longer rested on agriculture and farming to the same extent as it did at the beginning of the 19th century. However, as Porter mentions, agriculture was not necessarily on the decline, but fewer and fewer workers were needed in agricultural work because of the rising mechanization. Consequently, by the turn of the century,

¹ Robert Vincent Remini, *A Short History of the United States: From the Arrival of Native American Tribes to the Obama Presidency* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009), 172, <https://coralscs.entest.org/Remini-ShortHistoryUSA.pdf>.

² Ballard C. Campbell, "Understanding Economic Change in the Gilded Age," *OAH Magazine of History* 13, No.4 (Summer 1999): 18, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25163305>.

only about 4 in 10 workers were engaged in agriculture, compared to the beginning of the 19th century when almost three-quarters of the workforce depended on agricultural work.³

1.1. Industrialization and ‘Big Businesses’

As suggested above, the construction of the railroad in America was an important milestone in the ongoing process of the nation’s industrial transformation. McNeese mentions that the development of the transcontinental rail line across the West in 1869 was such a large-scale project that its construction was dependent on the existence of the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific Railroads, two large corporations which essentially represent the beginnings of the existence of first giant business in America.⁴ The construction of the railroad was undoubtedly crucial for American economy based solely on its importance in transportation of goods and people across the country. Nevertheless, as Porter mentions, the railroads were the pioneering industry which brought about many important changes in financing, labor relations, competition, management and most importantly created a new type of relationship between the business and the government.⁵

According to Barret, these large businesses were much more reliant on federal government intervention in terms of the necessary reforms and policies, resulting in an increased integration of the big businesses and the federal government.⁶ The railroads and other domestic businesses and industries alike were simply reliant on government investments and protective tariffs which, as Remini mentions, stimulated industrial manufactures such as, steel, copper or wool.⁷ In other words, this era was ideal for the growth of such industrial giants since the government simultaneously supported domestic industries by tariff protection while generally applying a laissez-faire attitude towards their regulation, for example, with the non-existence of income taxes. In this manner, according to De Santis, government intervention was perceived by most Americans as unnecessary, unjust or outright immoral while the ideas of laissez-faire and Social Darwinism

³ Glenn Porter, “Industrialization and the Rise of Big Business,” in *The Gilded Age: Perspectives on the Origins of Modern America*, ed. Charles W. Calhoun (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2007), 14, <https://books.google.cz/books?id=XrZTTCaCRAUC>.

⁴ Tim McNeese, *The Gilded Age and Progressivism (1891-1913)* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2010), 40.

⁵ Glenn Porter, *The Rise of Big Business 1860-1920* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, 1992) 34, <https://books.google.cz/books?id=XPJjBAAAQBAJ>.

⁶ James R. Barret, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago’s Packinghouse Workers, 1894-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 2.

⁷ Remini, *A Short History*, 167.

prevailed.⁸ Any form of government regulation was, therefore, commonly perceived as unjustified since many Americans believed that the success of the wealthy and the exploitation of the poor under laissez-faire capitalism is justified and natural.

In this period, these big businesses have also secured their strong market positions, leaving virtually no room for competition on the market by creating ‘trusts’ reliant on sophisticated production systems and corporate bureaucracies which dominated the American market in various sectors of economy.⁹ As Remini mentions, the businessmen were trying to maximize their profits by converting their businesses into a managerial form of capitalism that was already applied in railroading and proven to be an effective tool for dominating the industry and creating monopolies to keep control.¹⁰ According to Porter, the manufacturers’ efforts to control prices and avoid competition created highly concentrated industries that were characterized by the domination of a small number of large companies.¹¹ This effectively meant these companies could set the prices of their products with no regard for competition since the trusts contained a number of competitive firms from their respective industries under one large corporation. As a result of the above-described changes, many industrial giants came into existence during the Gilded Age in areas related to oil, finance, steel production or meatpacking. According to Porter, it was the first period when these trusts came to be associated with the names of powerful men who owned them such as Andrew Carnegie in steel production, Cornelius Vanderbilt, E. H. Harriman and James J. Hill in railroading, J. P. Morgan in finance, John D. Rockefeller in oil, James B. Duke in tobacco and Gustavus Swift and Philip Armour in the meatpacking industry.¹²

In the context of the Gilded Age, these industrialists and their immense wealth that came from their ruthless business practices are typically used to highlight the prevailing, tremendous divide in the distribution of wealth in society that was in conflict with the original egalitarian vision of the United States. As McNeese mentions, the wealth accumulated by these business tycoons during the last decades of the 19th and the early years of the 20th centuries effectively made them the wealthiest men in America. Nevertheless, such wealth remained unreachable for the majority of

⁸ Vincent de Santis, “American Politics in the Gilded Age,” *The Review of Politics* 25, No. 4 (October 1963): 554.

⁹ Barret, *Work and Community*, 4.

¹⁰ Remini, *A Short History*, 188.

¹¹ Porter, *The Rise*, 78.

¹² Porter, “Industrialization,” 18-19.

the American working-class as the one percent of richest people held seven out of every eight dollars of the U.S. economy while the remaining eighty percent of families lived on the edge of poverty.¹³ On the one hand, the Gilded Age was, therefore, undoubtedly an era of tremendous technological progress and growth in many industries as well as in the wages of many skilled workers. On the other hand, it was also an era of great extremes, enormous disparities and social problems since the wealth was accumulated by a limited number of individuals while many common laborers still lived in poverty.

Furthermore, the Gilded Age was an era of rising political corruption. In fact, the very expression that is used as a name of this era is quite suggestive in this regard. The term ‘The Gilded Age’, coined by Mark Twain in 1873 in the title of his novel *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*, indicates that all the progress, wealth and success is only superficial, masking the harsh reality of poverty and political corruption upon which it is built. As Remini mentions, the business magnates often used their resources to influence legislators and legislation that was meant to regulate their businesses, often using the influence of lobbyists and corrupt congressmen which earned them the critical title the “Robber Barons.”¹⁴ This derogatory title might not understandably be an entirely fitting description of all industrial magnates as some of them were also quite charitable philanthropists but the mere existence and use of the term itself might nonetheless be quite revealing in regard to the social and political atmosphere of the Gilded Age in America.

Remini further describes the political corruption by mentioning that bribery, blackmail, conspiracy, conflict of interest and other borderline criminal methods were all common practice during the Gilded Age. The railroads, he mentions, for example offered stock in the company, free passes or even outright financial compensation to legislators and chairmen of key committees who perceived providing favors through legislature and their position of power in turn for appropriate compensation as being nothing out of the ordinary.¹⁵ Consequently, as De Santis mentions, these decades mark the period of time when the standards and ideals deteriorated under the effects of capitalism since it became a part of the democratic creed, perverting democracy by making its aims

¹³ McNeese, *The Gilded*, 48.

¹⁴ Remini, *A Short History*, 178.

¹⁵ Remini, *A Short History*, 167.

identical with the aims of business.¹⁶ In a like manner, Zinn comments on these arrangements by mentioning that the government was:

...pretending neutrality to maintain order, but serving the interests of the rich. [...] the purpose of the state was to settle upper-class disputes peacefully, control lower-class rebellion, and adopt policies that would further the long-range stability of the system.¹⁷

The themes of unity and integration of government officials and large-scale corporations of the Chicago meatpacking industry, as well as their dominance on the market can be observed and are described throughout Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle* (1906) in a particularly negative way and shall be of major importance in the analytical parts of this thesis. For instance, when Jurgis Rudkus, the protagonist of the novel, describes the Beef Trust as: "...a gigantic combination of capital, which had crushed all opposition, and overthrown the laws of the land, and was preying upon the people."¹⁸ Nevertheless, the issues connected to the unscrupulous businessmen, politicians and their questionable practices were scarcely the only problem during the Gilded Age. Many of these issues were tied to the concomitant effects of the rising urbanization that had occurred because of the Second Industrial Revolution. As Martin mentions, the advances tied to the industrial revolution resulted in a greater demand for labor, which simultaneously greatly contributed to the rising numbers in immigration.¹⁹ For this reason, the following paragraphs are dedicated to the description of immigration and urbanization and to the characterization of their consequences as well as to the reformist tendencies that occurred as a response in the following decades.

1.2. Consequences of Immigration and Urbanization

The Gilded Age was not only an era of technological advancements and big businesses but also an era when the number of immigrants who wanted to enter the United States significantly increased. According to Campbell, the massive relocation of people during the Gilded Age can be explained by the simultaneous developments both in agriculture and industry that created lucrative job prospects as well as increased business opportunities.²⁰ Additionally, Martin mentions that large-

¹⁶ de Santis, "American Politics," 554.

¹⁷ Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), Kindle e-book, under "Chapter 11: Robber Barons and Rebels".

¹⁸ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1906), 376, http://moses.law.umn.edu/darrow/documents/The_Jungle_Upton_Sinclair.pdf.

¹⁹ Susan Forbes Martin, *A Nation of Immigrants* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 105, <https://books.google.cz/books?id=qBmnUlVVOIIC>.

²⁰ Campbell, "Understanding Economic," 17.

scale immigration was supported by business leaders and politicians alike as the American economy was largely dependent on immigrant labor with its voracious demand for workers that was shared across many different industrial cities and their factories.²¹ The end of the 19th century in the United States thus marks the period when a new era of immigration to the country began, partly due to the developments in industry, agriculture and their ever-increasing need for labor.

The rising tendency in immigration can be best observed on the sheer number of people who came to the United States during this period. As Martin mentions, in each individual decade from 1860 to 1880, the number of immigrants who entered the United States was around 2,5 million and these numbers doubled in the 1880s to about 5,2 million. Nevertheless, the biggest influx of immigrants came with the new century. In the first decade of the 20th century, around 8.8 million people reached the United States and 1,285 million of them did so in 1907 alone.²² The national and ethnic composition of the immigrants who came to the country during this period was also much different from the so-called ‘Old Immigration’ which started earlier in the 19th century and mostly revolved around immigration from western European countries such as Germany or Ireland. As Martin mentions, the new immigration waves were much more diverse in terms of the immigrants’ ethnic and national origins because most of them no longer came from the British Isles or the western European states but rather from southern and eastern Europe. This wave of immigration is typically called the ‘New Immigration’ to differentiate between the immigrants who came from the east and south of Europe and the ones who had come from the west and the north.²³

However, as Wittke points out, the constant contrasting of the ‘New Immigration’ with the old generally rather proved to be a disadvantage for the newly arrived immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Their affiliation to this ‘new’ wave of immigration was much more apparent on first sight. The new immigrants were more distinctive even to the regular observer because they differed so much in aspects such as their customs, culture, and personal living standards. Their languages were also distinguishably different in comparison with German or some of the Scandinavian languages the US citizens were already accustomed to.²⁴ According to Spinney, the major groups among these new immigrants consisted of Poles, Italians and Russian Jews who

²¹ Martin, *A Nation*, 105.

²² Martin, *A Nation*, 105.

²³ Martin, *A Nation*, 105-6.

²⁴ Carl Frederick Wittke, *We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University), 407, <https://archive.org/details/wewhobuiltameric00witt>.

usually spoke no English, were impoverished, uneducated, and unskilled which meant they could not perform any skilled jobs and instead mostly depended on performing unskilled manual labor.²⁵ This meant these new immigrants coming from the underdeveloped countries of southern and eastern Europe were often socially disadvantaged compared to the ‘Old Immigrants’ who had arrived to the United States from the economically and culturally developed countries of northern and western Europe as literate and skilled artisans.

Additionally, as Johnson mentions, the nation-wide image of these ‘new immigrants’ coming from southern and eastern Europe in the United States, consisted of seeing them as: “...racially inferior, poor, and inclined toward anarchism, communism, and other anti-American political ideologies.”²⁶ The vast numbers of immigrants coming to the United States itself could have been one of the factors which contributed to the creation of such a negative and dogmatized image of the new immigrants. Elliott suggests that the attitude of people living in America was becoming increasingly antagonistic towards immigrants because many people feared what the admission of so many of them might do to the country. Furthermore, he mentions that people often associated the many pitfalls of industrialization like crime, labor unrest and the existence of urban slums with the increasing number of immigrants in the country.²⁷

During the fifty years between 1860 and 1910 the number of people who lived in cities rose from 6 million to 44 million, especially marking the last three decades of the nineteenth century as the years of enormous growth in American urban population. Over twelve American cities reached over 100,000 inhabitants by 1870 and one in seven Americans lived in a city with more than 250,000 inhabitants by 1900, marking one of the greatest demographic developments in American history.²⁸ According to Martin, the industrial cities during this period simply became the New Frontier for many as they attracted labor both from the rural areas of the United States as well as from the ever-increasing number of countries in Europe.²⁹

²⁵ Robert G. Spinney, *City of Big Shoulders: A History of Chicago* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2020), Kindle e-book, under “The New Immigration, 1880-1920”.

²⁶ Kevin R. Johnson, *The Huddled Masses Myth: Immigration and Civil Rights* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 9, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14bt04r>.

²⁷ Robin G. Elliott, “The Eastern European Immigrant in American Literature: The View of the Host Culture, 1900-1930,” *Polish American Studies* 42, No. 2 (Autumn 1985): 25, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20148178>.

²⁸ McNeese, *The Gilded*, 20-21.

²⁹ Martin, *A Nation*, 107.

However, with the increasing number of immigrants coming into the American cities, immigrants were often subjected to work in sweatshops under the industrial tycoons which seldom provided the necessary income to meet the workers' essential needs.³⁰ Accordingly, Valentine describes that immigration significantly transformed the urban areas which became severely overpopulated with many people living in crowded spaces with high risk of disease and crime. As a result of the rising industrialization, there was also an increased number of job opportunities which, however, rarely provided a satisfactory income. The continual flow of new unskilled immigrants into the country meant that the employers could easily decrease wages as the immigrants accepted working for a minimal wage and because they universally appreciated any opportunity of employment, they were willing to do unsafe and difficult work that other Americans might have refused doing.³¹ In the growing American industrial hubs such as New York or Chicago, it was, therefore, not uncommon for many of these immigrants to work for a minimal wage, live in appalling conditions of the local tenement houses, suffer from wage cuts and constantly fear for their employment.

For many unskilled immigrants the job opportunities in these seemingly unfavorable conditions of urban American areas nonetheless provided a plausible alternative in comparison to their previous life in the countries of southern and eastern Europe and their substandard economic situation, or political and religious oppression. On the account of the immigrant conservatism in questions of hardships such as oppression and low wages, Vanneman and Cannon provide a range of explanations. On the one hand, it is argued that the immigrant employees might have disapproved with the hardships they faced in America but considering they have not had any experience with work in America prior to industrialization, this state did not appear as being illegitimate as it did in the eyes of the many American-born workers who felt betrayed by the disruption of the Jeffersonian ideal of independent citizenry. On the other hand, since many immigrant laborers were used to poverty and hardships prior to their life in America, even low wages seemed to be adequate in their standard of comparison.³²

³⁰ Remini, *A Short History*, 179.

³¹ Rebecca Valentine, *Gilded Age and Progressive Era: Primary Sources* (Detroit: Cengage Gale, 2006), 23.

³² Reeve Vanneman, Lynn Weber Cannon, "Fear and Loathing? Ethnic Hostility and Working-Class Consciousness" in *The American Perception of Class* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 207-208, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv941wv0.15>.

2. The Progressive Era

Nevertheless, the general attitude towards the myriad issues of social and political nature that accompanied the rising power of big businesses and their controversial practices in Gilded Age America began to shift in the last decades of the 19th century. Many of these inequalities and social problems were starting to be perceived as a threat to American democracy and its core values. In the words of an influential contemporary economist and journalist, Henry George, which were presented in his 1879 publication *Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth: The Remedy*, exposing the dangers which rested in the Gilded Age relation between progress, poverty and wealth that were essentially responsible for the deterioration of the core values upon which the nation had been initially built:

The march of invention has clothed mankind with powers of which a century ago the boldest imagination could not have dreamed. But in factories where labor-saving machinery has reached its most wonderful development, little children are at work; wherever the new forces are anything like fully utilized, large classes are maintained by charity or live on the verge of recourse to it; amid the greatest accumulations of wealth, men die of starvation, and puny infants suckle dry breasts; while everywhere the greed of gain, the worship of wealth, shows the force of the fear of want. The promised land flies before us like the mirage.³³

As Remini mentions, the existence of these social and economic injustices towards the end of the 19th century helped trigger the beginning of the Progressive movement which attracted a large amount of people from various sections of the country. They began to voice their demands for improving the laborers' working conditions with regard to their working hours, wages, safety as well as women and child labor laws, marking the fact that the United States became a country where wealth served as a basis for the division among classes.³⁴ According to Nugent, the belief in the existence of a public interest or common good was consistent among nearly all Progressives.³⁵ In the same manner, he summarizes that the common thought of Progressivism consisted of: "...a belief in society, a common good, and social justice, and that society could be changed into a better place."³⁶ In other words, the Progressive Era was a period when American people started voicing

³³ Henry George, *Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth; The Remedy* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1886), 7-8, <https://books.google.cz/books?id=CjcqAAAAYAAJ>.

³⁴ Remini, *A Short History*, 184.

³⁵ Walter Nugent, *Progressivism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3, <https://books.google.cz/books?id=jP5oAgAAQBAJ>.

³⁶ Nugent, *Progressivism*, 5.

their demands for an increased involvement of the government in questions of social and political reforms for the improvement of the society as a whole, protecting American core values.

This attitude was, for example, reflected in the federal reforms aimed at managing the increasing power of the monopolies among corporations such as the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887 or the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890.³⁷ As Remini mentions, the Progressive movement was also important for the development of American democracy in terms of legislation and the power of the electorate. It aimed to secure reforms that would provide voters with the ability to initiate beneficial legislation, approve or disapprove measures of state legislatures or recall elected officials who they thought were not serving the public interest.³⁸ Additionally, it was embodied within the Social Gospel movement that set out to address many moral and social issues tied to the rise of monopoly capitalism by applying religious ethics to problems such as the inhumane working conditions, poverty, drunkenness, prostitution and the unequal distribution of wealth, which were perceived as unjust and harmful to society.³⁹

Nevertheless, one of the most relevant developments among the many Progressive Era reforms in the context of this thesis can be associated with the changing tendencies in the investigative use of journalism in the United States. As Nugent mentions, the developments in technology such as the invention of the linotype in 1884 and the introduction of high-speed rotary presses made it possible for publishers to reduce their costs while simultaneously increasing the circulation of newspapers and magazines.⁴⁰ According to Valentine, the focus of journalists also changed since many of them were formally educated and trained in writing accurate and truthful articles as opposed to the previous tendencies in journalism when the main focus was often producing sensational articles in order to attract a wider audience and increase sales.⁴¹ Nugent provides a list of these authors and their works, including journal articles such as the research into the practices of the Standard Oil Company that was made by Ida Tarbell which appeared in *McClure's* in 1902 or *The Shame of the Cities*, an exposé of corruption between corporations and city governments that was written by Lincoln Steffens in 1904 for *McClure's*. However, he goes on to explain that these works were not limited to the genre of journal articles but they also included novels such as

³⁷ Nugent, *Progressivism*, 13.

³⁸ Remini, *A Short History*, 198.

³⁹ Nugent, *Progressivism*, 59-60.

⁴⁰ Nugent, *Progressivism*, 62.

⁴¹ Valentine, *Gilded Age*, 164.

H. D. Lloyd's 1894 exposé of the Standard Oil Company, Frank Norris's 1901 novel *The Octopus* that revealed the practices of the Southern Pacific Railroad or Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel *The Jungle*, which exposed the unsafe working conditions of the Chicago Union Stockyards.⁴²

2.1. Upton Sinclair, Progressivism and *The Jungle*

Upton Sinclair was born in Baltimore on September 20, 1878 to a family with ties to the southern aristocracy and, therefore, to conditions of relative prosperity. However, in 1888, Sinclair's family moved away from his mother, Priscilla's, wealthy family to New York where they had to face substandard conditions of the local boardinghouses. His father had developed a drinking habit and it was often Upton who had to go looking for him in the local saloons, giving him insight into the lives of the working-class poor. He and his mother would, nevertheless, often go visit their wealthy relatives in the country or in Baltimore. These visits provided Sinclair with the needed perspective of the world of the rich, he perceived it as a world riddled with wealth, snobbery, and pretension. These memories are believed to have had influence on his perception of society since it was his conviction that all societal flaws stem from the issues that are ingrained in economics rather than the human nature itself and they are, therefore, remediable.⁴³

In his autobiography, Sinclair explains that in the wake of his interactions with people from the upper classes, he would develop hatred towards the: "...atmosphere of pride and scorn, of values based upon material possessions."⁴⁴ He would develop a resolute mindset to: "...never 'sell out' to that class."⁴⁵ In order to financially support himself and his mother during his college studies, Sinclair would write sketches, stories, jokes and other filler content for the local newspapers and magazines which essentially turned him to the career of a writer. During his studies of literature and philosophy at Columbia University, he discovered the works of Shelley, Carlyle, Emerson or Walter Scott, authors whose work is said to represent or directly embody the tendencies of

⁴² Nugent, *Progressivism*, 62.

⁴³ Anthony Arthur, *Radical Innocent: Upton Sinclair* (New York: Random House, 2006), 3-5, <https://books.google.cz/books?id=8YXJ6N6nXSkC>.

⁴⁴ Upton Sinclair, *The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962), 12, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015005125375>.

⁴⁵ Sinclair, *The Autobiography*, 12.

revolutionary idealism.⁴⁶ Accordingly, as Sinclair mentions in his autobiography, he eventually: “...became obsessed with the desire to write a serious novel.”⁴⁷

In his earlier novel *Manassas* (1904), Upton Sinclair depicts the issues of chattel slavery in the context of the American Civil War. He comments on the significance of this novel in his autobiography by mentioning it had been met with a response of great enthusiasm by the editor of *The Appeal to Reason*, Fred D. Warren, who prompted him to write a novel in the same fashion while instead focusing on the contemporary issues of wage slavery in the American industry.⁴⁸ Following this exchange, Upton Sinclair eventually embarked on a journey to Chicago in 1904 with the intention of conducting: “...a searing examination of Big Beef, its power and corruption, and the grisly working conditions of the immigrant poor.”⁴⁹

The information he had collected in Chicago would be later used by Sinclair as a basis for the creation of his most well-known and successful novel *The Jungle* (1906), which revolves around the meatpacking industry and depicts the conditions that prevail in the meatpacking facilities, as well as in the adjacent community near the Chicago Union Yards, mostly settled by immigrants, known as Packingtown or the: “back of the yards.”⁵⁰ Nevertheless, even though that on the outside the novel itself follows the struggles of an immigrant family from Lithuania, the author also supposedly used it to project his own experience of urban life and mentions that: “...internally it was the story of [his] own family”⁵¹ and that “... he was willing for himself and his whole family to descend into the social pit and to experience all the degradation, physical, mental, and moral, of the wage-slaves of the stockyards.”⁵² For this reason, the setting and the conditions Upton Sinclair describes in the novel could be seen as a tragic reflection of the actual circumstances many people had to endure on a daily basis in the early 1900s Chicago slums and meatpacking facilities.

⁴⁶ Arthur, *Radical Innocent*, 7.

⁴⁷ Sinclair, *The Autobiography*, 52.

⁴⁸ Sinclair, *The Autobiography*, 108.

⁴⁹ Brooke Kroeger, “Of Jack London and Upton Sinclair,” in *Undercover Reporting: The Truth About Deception* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 84, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt22727sf.10>.

⁵⁰ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 2.

⁵¹ Sinclair, *The Autobiography*, 112.

⁵² Upton Sinclair, “Is ‘The Jungle’ True?,” *Independent*, May 17, 1906, 1133, <https://undercover.hosting.nyu.edu/files/original/d5f6471bacf1b69be35ba1274aedbcba5c89377b.pdf>.

As suggested above, besides Sinclair's own experience of poverty and substandard living conditions, the novel was based on the observations he made in the Chicago Union Stockyards during his six-week 1904 visit. Sinclair mentions he conducted interviews with foreign-born and native workers alike who told him horrid stories from the workplace in the Chicago Union Stockyards. Nevertheless, he did not construct the novel based solely on the experience of the meatpacking workers. He would also interview people like lawyers, doctors, policemen, politicians, and real-estate agents to get a better insight into the inner workings of society in 'the back of the yards'. He would walk around the yards dressed in rugged clothes observing the everyday reality of this environment while also taking tours of the meatpacking plants with the help of workers who were employed there and who were willing to show him around the sites.⁵³

Therefore, considering the research-based nature of the novel, many scholars typically associate Upton Sinclair's 1906 piece with the Progressive Era movement of muckraking that focused on uncovering institutional corruption and social injustice, on their:

...patient quest for information that men have done their best to conceal and the fearless publication of what these same men are determined, by whatever means necessary, to keep unknown.⁵⁴

Unlike many of the muckraking exposés of his contemporaries, which were predominantly associated with non-fictional genres of investigative journalism and based on factual interpretation of collected evidence, Sinclair decided to employ the approach of demonstrating the findings of his investigation via the means of fiction. Accordingly, Lovett describes it as the first time since the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852 when someone used the means of fiction to attack a great business interest in the United States.⁵⁵ As Arthur mentions, Sinclair understood that a only a novel with a comparable magnitude to Stowe's 1852 piece would prompt his readers to the needed action because of its emotional appeal even though that the journalistic exposés of his muckraking contemporaries such as those of Charles Edward Russell and William Randolph Hearst were able to cause significant public outrage nonetheless.⁵⁶

⁵³ Sinclair, *The Autobiography*, 109.

⁵⁴ Granville Hicks, "The Survival of Upton Sinclair," *College English* 4, No.4 (1943): 215.

⁵⁵ Robert Morss Lovett, "Upton Sinclair," *The English Journal* 17, No. 9 (November 1928): 709.

⁵⁶ Arthur, *Radical Innocent*, 46.

However, Sinclair himself commented on the credibility of his research in *The Independent* by mentioning that he:

... intended 'The Jungle' to be an exact and faithful picture of conditions as they exist in Packingtown, Chicago. [He] mean[t] it to be true, not merely in substance, but in detail, and in the smallest detail. ... as true as it should be if it were not a work of fiction at all, but a study by a sociologist; ... so true that students may go to it, as they would to a work of reference.⁵⁷

Regarding the accuracy of Sinclair's fiction, Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin mentions that Sinclair still rather remained a spectator in the whole process compared to, for example, Jack London who fully immersed himself in the reality of the slums of London while conducting research for his novel *The People of the Abyss* (1903). Nevertheless, she concludes that many of Sinclair's findings revolving around the lives of the Chicago wage-slaves must have clearly been accurate considering the uproar the publication of the novel has caused in the United States.⁵⁸

The reaction of the public after the publication of the novel was quite fitting to what was revealed by Sinclair's descriptions of the horrors in the meatpacking businesses, even though it was not necessarily the reaction Sinclair was hoping to achieve. As Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin mentions, it is assumed that his work directly contributed to the passing of the 1906 Meat Inspection Bill as well as the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Bill. The novel even got the attention of the US President, Theodore Roosevelt, himself. However, the public outcry was mainly caused by the horrid descriptions of how unprocessed meat was handled and how the various meat products were made. On the contrary, the issues of industrial workers and their toil in dehumanizing working conditions were mostly met with readers' indifference.⁵⁹ In a like manner, Morris mentions that the political effects of the novel were mostly related to the quality of canned meat instead of serving as a reaction to the author's socialist thoughts and beliefs.⁶⁰

In any case, it is quite difficult to categorize Upton Sinclair's novel, *The Jungle* (1906), within the boundaries of a specific literary movement or a genre. On the one hand, Jacqueline Tavernier-

⁵⁷ Sinclair, Is 'The Jungle', 1129.

⁵⁸ Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin, "The Call of the Wild and The Jungle: Jack London's and Upton Sinclair's Animal and Human Jungles," in *The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism: From Howells to London (Cambridge Companions to Literature)*, ed. Donald Pizer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 251.

⁵⁹ Tavernier-Courbin, "The Call," 254.

⁶⁰ Matthew J. Morris, "The Two Lives of Jurgis Rudkus," *American Literary Realism, 1870-1910* 29, No. 2 (Winter 1997): 52.

Courbin mentions that Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906) shared, like the works of many other late 19th century American writers, the characteristics of the naturalistic novel defined by Emile Zola in *The Experimental Novel*.⁶¹ On the other hand, according to Taylor, the association of Sinclair with naturalism might be explained as a simple consequence of his acquaintance with other canonical American naturalists like Sinclair Lewis, Jack London, or Theodore Dreiser.⁶² However, many of the novel's components such as the fate of Sinclair's characters from the family of the Lithuanian immigrant, Jurgis Rudkus, could be easily interpreted in naturalistic terms. Including their poverty, their daily struggle for survival and their initial inability to escape the conditions that prevail in the industrial slums of Chicago where they reside. These factors combined are, indeed, reminiscent of the deterministic nature that can be universally observed among a multitude of naturalistic novels.

The deterministic effects of the natural or social environment are undoubtedly an important component in naturalistic fiction. Nevertheless, according to Morris, Sinclair's socialist political views influenced the way of his perception of human behavior in accordance to a specific social environment. As he mentions, Sinclair believed that even though the environment definitely shapes human behavior, humans are not necessarily fully determined by it and they are ultimately able to reshape their destinies.⁶³ In case of *The Jungle* (1906), the protagonist is eventually able to overcome the obstacles that stem from the environment and he, therefore, violates the deterministic workings of the novel. In this sense, Taylor argues that Sinclair's novel rather resembles the concept of the French 'roman à these' because it is written in the realistic mode while promoting the author's own political program which is a feature naturalists typically tend to avoid.⁶⁴

J. A. Cuddon defines the thesis novel in his *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* as a novel: "...which treats of a social, political or religious problem with a didactic and, perhaps, radical purpose [which] ... certainly sets out to call people's attention to the shortcomings of a society."⁶⁵ As Louise Carrol Wade mentions, Sinclair revealed, in a 1906 interview for the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, that he saw himself as a proletarian writer whose intent was to scare the

⁶¹ Tavernier-Courbin, "The Call," 238.

⁶² Christopher Taylor, "'Inescapably Propaganda': Re-Classifying Upton Sinclair outside the Naturalist Tradition," *Studies in American Naturalism* 2, No. 2 (Winter 2007): 167.

⁶³ Morris, "The Two Lives," 51.

⁶⁴ Taylor, "Inescapably," 169.

⁶⁵ J. A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 720.

United States by painting a picture of the exploitation workers endured under their industrial employers.⁶⁶ Sinclair's novel could, therefore, be also characterized as a proletarian novel, which is among other things defined by Cuddon as a novel: "...which focuses on the experiences of working people."⁶⁷ In any case, all the above-discussed observations are consistent with Brooke Kroeger's description of Sinclair's work who mentions that Sinclair: "...approached his subject form the inside out and then crafted his story about the lives of the immigrant 'wage slaves' of Chicago's meatpacking district to support his own fervent political agenda."⁶⁸

The focus of the author's political agenda was the contemporary society and the capitalist owners of the meatpacking industries in Chicago who: "...cheated cattle raisers, set high market prices on their meat products, bribed federal inspectors to pass diseased animals, and chiseled on workers' wages."⁶⁹ For this reason, Upton Sinclair's most-well known novel, *The Jungle* (1906), could be perceived as politically motivated fiction or fiction of social protest and the analytical part of this thesis shall reveal, analyze and comment on the specific means that were employed by the author to address the social and political issues with respect to the described experience of the common laborers. In the analytical part of this thesis, it will be discussed how Sinclair's allusions to the worker's situation can be perceived as his criticism of capitalism and consequently as his general standpoint towards the socialist cause in the United States at the turn of the century.

⁶⁶ Louise Carroll Wade, "The Problem with Classroom Use of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*," *American Studies* 32, No. 2 (Fall 1991): 85.

⁶⁷ Cuddon, *A Dictionary*, 775.

⁶⁸ Kroeger, "Of Jack London," 83.

⁶⁹ Wade, "The Problem," 85.

Theoretical Background and Analytical Framework

3. Marxist Theory and Marxist Literary Criticism

The present chapter introduces the concepts of Marxist literary criticism and the Marxist theory as such. The essence of these concepts will consequently form a basis for the analytical framework that will be used to evaluate *The Jungle* (1906) from the viewpoint of Marxist literary criticism in the analytical part of this thesis. Additionally, it is important to establish the concepts that will be used throughout this thesis such as literary criticism, interpellation, and ideology.

According to Lois Tyson, the link between critical theory (literary theory) and literary criticism is that critical theory sets out to explain the numerous assumptions and values that make up the basis of various forms of literary criticism. The practical application of a specific critical theory on a literary text can be then described as literary criticism.⁷⁰ In this sense, the aim of literary criticism can be seen in interpreting and analyzing the works of literature. Consequently, Barbara Foley describes the Marxist philosophy as a method of interpretation which provides a framework for understanding the relationships between literature and society, especially for understanding the connections between ideas, attitudes and emotions and their roots in historical forces.⁷¹ Similarly, Eagleton mentions that the main aim of Marxist criticism is to explain the literary work more fully, by explaining its various forms, styles and meanings as products of a particular history.⁷² Such analysis thus considers the contents of the novel itself but also the historical or political context of its time. Therefore, the specific critical theory that shall be employed in the analysis of the novel *The Jungle* (1906) by Upton Sinclair is, as suggested above, the theory of Marxist literary criticism that should prove useful in analyzing the novel's themes with respect to the socioeconomic and political conditions of the early 20th century capitalist America that are depicted in it.

To begin with, it is important to establish some of the key concepts of the Marxist theory because, as Peprník points out, Marxist literary criticism has roots in the philosophy of Karl Marx

⁷⁰ Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 6, <https://books.google.cz/books?id=xzEkSQgSsfoC>.

⁷¹ Barbara Foley, *Marxist Literary Criticism Today*, (London: Pluto Press, 2019), under "Prologue".

⁷² Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 2, <http://dtllc.fflch.usp.br/sites/dtllc.fflch.usp.br/files/Eagleton%20-%20Marxism%20and%20Literary%20Criticism.pdf>.

and Friedrich Engels.⁷³ However, Terry Eagleton suggests that neither Marx nor Engels themselves took any major part in the formulation of a complete aesthetic theory. In fact, their opinions on the subject are described as fragmentary and scattered allusions, as being anything but developed positions.⁷⁴ In other words, the teachings of Marxism are not primarily related to the interpretation of literary texts. Therefore, it can be assumed that Marxist literary criticism does not directly follow the teachings of political economy developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels even though its main tenets are undoubtedly related to this philosophy. For this reason, it is still necessary to establish and explain some of the terms and concepts of Marx's thoughts as their understanding remains significant in the process of conducting a Marxist critique of a literary text.

According to Marx, the social being of men determines the way they perceive the world and participate in society because, as he argued: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."⁷⁵ As Selden suggests, Marx's view was a reversal of the Hegelian thought that ideas, culture, religion, or legal systems are the creations of human and divine reason. In his interpretation, however, all mental systems were seen as products of the real social and economic existence.⁷⁶ In other words, the human experience in life could be mostly perceived as being predetermined by the economic structure of society in which people live and its material reality such as the organization of production. In this sense, as Foley explains, the material organization of a given society is related to the grounding of thought and behavior in that society.⁷⁷ Therefore, it could be established that the main idea behind the aforementioned concepts of Marx's thoughts and their relation to the creation of a Marxist critique of a literary text is that economics inevitably influence every other aspect of society such as the law, religion, culture and, therefore, even art and literature.

To elaborate on these thoughts, following Terry Eagleton's interpretation of Marx's teachings presented in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), it is important to

⁷³ Michal Peprník, *Směry literární interpretace XX. století (texty, komentáře)* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2004), 171. (author's translation)

⁷⁴ Eagleton, *Marxism*, 2.

⁷⁵ Karl Heinrich Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1859), 11-12, <https://gruppegrundrisse.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/a-contribution-to-the-critique-of-political-economy-marx.pdf>.

⁷⁶ Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* (London: Pearson Education Ltd., 2005), 82, <https://www.uv.es/fores/contemporary-literary-theory-5th-edition.pdf>.

⁷⁷ Foley, *Marxist Literary*, 4.

establish one of the key principles in Marxist theory fundamentally related to the inner workings of society that is based on Marx's interpretation of economics and society. Firstly, Eagleton mentions Marx's concept of the 'economic base' or the 'infrastructure' that is formed by various 'forces' and 'relations of production' which in unison create 'the economic structure of society'.⁷⁸ Foley explains the term 'forces of production' as a combination of labor and the means of production which are the tools and materials used in the production of something. The term 'relations of production' then denotes the ownership and use of those means of production, including looking at the forms of property-holding in terms of the relationships they create between the owners and the producers. Their combination then denotes different forms of social organization or the 'mode of production'.⁷⁹ Capitalism, for example, could be described as one of the 'modes of production' where the means of production are privately owned, which fundamentally shifts the economic and, therefore, the social relationships in society.

Secondly, the 'superstructure' that builds on the foundation of that 'economic base', which, according to Eagleton, contains certain forms of law and politics that essentially justify the position of power in society for the social class that owns the means of economic production.⁸⁰ Accordingly Tyson mentions the attainment and sustainment of economic power is the motive that drives many social and political activities such as religion, education, science and the media and, therefore, economics is the base for the superstructure of such social, political and ideological realities. The economic conditions in society are then described by the Marxist terminology as the 'material circumstances', whereas the social, political and ideological atmosphere these conditions generate is referred to as the 'historical situation.' Moreover, all human productions are said to have specific material and historical causes and the Marxist analysis of such productions depends on the relationships between different socioeconomic classes within society and explains them according to how economic power is distributed between them.⁸¹ The important consideration that arises here is that economic power in society also includes social and political power, shaping the conditions and relationships in society as suggested above.

⁷⁸ Eagleton, *Marxism*, 3.

⁷⁹ Foley, *Marxist Literary*, 5-6.

⁸⁰ Eagleton, *Marxism*, 3.

⁸¹ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 53-54.

Consequently, it could be established that the terms described above such as ‘base’ and ‘superstructure’ are especially useful for the interpretation of social relations and ideological implications and their projection in cultural products. Foley sees the advantages of focusing on the base-superstructure paradigm in the connection it creates between social institutions and class rule. According to her, it has the power to reveal the otherwise concealed practices of institutions which are generally perceived as neutral for being complicit in the preservation of social hierarchies. Furthermore, it is said to reveal the political implications of literature and hint at the historical embeddedness of almost every social aspect and practice.⁸² Eagleton suggests, the superstructure:

...also consists of certain ‘definite forms of social consciousness’ (political, religious, ethical, aesthetic and so on) that also serve to legitimate the power of the ruling class, which is what Marxism designates as ideology.⁸³

In a very broad definition, ideology could be perceived as an illusion, distortion, or a mystification of reality.⁸⁴ In the Marxist theory, it is also perceived as a belief system that comes from cultural conditioning and, for example, capitalism, religion, communism or Marxism are all believed to be ideologies.⁸⁵ However, as suggested above, it refers not only to belief systems but it also relates to the questions of power as it legitimizes the power of a dominant social group or class by promoting beliefs that are compatible with their interests, naturalizing and universalizing those beliefs in an attempt to make them appear inevitable and self-evident, criticizing ideas which might be used to challenge their interests or simply by obscuring the social reality.⁸⁶ Therefore, it could be established that ideology generates a distorted image of the world and the social relationships that prevail in it to promote the interests of the dominant class. According to Fuchs ideology: “...tries to naturalize domination, exploitation, and the ruling class by methods such as scapegoating, distortion, dissimulation, misrepresentation, and manipulation.”⁸⁷

As Selden suggests, it simply conceals the interests of the dominant class and promotes them as the universal truth. Consequently, people live under the influence of the dominant ideology without ever questioning it or seeing its presence because it is so deeply naturalized by the

⁸² Foley, *Marxist Literary*, 23.

⁸³ Eagleton, *Marxism*, 3.

⁸⁴ Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), 3.

⁸⁵ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 56.

⁸⁶ Eagleton, *Ideology*, 5.

⁸⁷ Christian Fuchs, *Communication and Capitalism: A Critical Theory* (London: University of Westminster Press, 2020), 232, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv12fw7t5>.

dominant classes' attempts to secure their interests.⁸⁸ It is described as a construct which is responsible for the repression of imagination and ambition among people who might act in their self-interests and see the world objectively were it not for the presence of ideology.⁸⁹ Accordingly, Eagleton perceives ideology as a concept which essentially: "...signifies the way men live out their roles in class-society, the values, ideas and images which tie them to their social functions and so prevent them from a true knowledge of society as a whole."⁹⁰ The process of adopting and internalizing a specific social role under the influence of ideology as means of maintaining the predominant social order is what was described by the French philosopher, Louis Althusser, as the process of 'interpellation.'⁹¹

As a result, Tyson describes these ideologies as undesirable because they are in their very essence repressive and distortive. These ideologies ensure that in the eyes of an ordinary man the world is just as it is supposed to be. However, even though Marxism itself could be also perceived as an ideology, it is a non-repressive one because it acknowledges itself as an ideology and tries to expose the repressive ideologies which subject people to the rule of the dominant class.⁹² The goal of Marxist literary criticism is then seen in identifying the presence of ideology in cultural productions and in analyzing its relationship to the power structure in that socioeconomic system.⁹³ For this reason, Marxism can be perceived as a suitable tool for the critique of ideology and for the analysis of the class hierarchy and the presence of the dominant class within cultural productions.

There are several ways in which ideology can be manifested within a literary text. As Foley mentions, literature can plainly try to maintain the existing state of affairs in society and, therefore, function as evident ruling-class propaganda.⁹⁴ In other words, the literary work can be perceived as having the tendencies of reinforcing or promoting the ideology it carries and the intention of conducting a Marxist analysis of such texts lies in revealing the presence of its ideologically motivated agenda as well as in its consequent criticism. However, some texts might be interpreted as a direct criticism of the ideology they contain. In this respect, the concern of conducting a

⁸⁸ Selden, *A Reader's Guide*, 98.

⁸⁹ Foley, *Marxist Literary*, 65.

⁹⁰ Eagleton, *Marxism*, 8.

⁹¹ Foley, *Marxist Literary*, 75-6.

⁹² Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 56-7.

⁹³ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 60.

⁹⁴ Foley, *Marxist Literary*, 132.

Marxist analysis lies in determining whether the text can be interpreted as a direct critique of the ideology depicted within the text. As a result, the texts which reveal the oppressive socioeconomic forces and invite the readers to denounce them can be classified as texts with a Marxist agenda.⁹⁵

Having established the necessary theoretical background of Marxist theory and Marxist literary criticism, the following set of research questions for the purposes of conducting a Marxist critique of Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle* (1906) can be introduced. The following questions will be used in the analytical part of this thesis as a basis for interpreting the novel's themes with respect to the presence of ideology and to the author's depiction of socioeconomic conditions that prevail in the urban environment of the early 20th century America. The potential research questions related to the concept of ideology and the social situation to be answered by analyzing the novel through the lens of Marxist criticism could be, therefore, based on the following considerations.

In general, the manifestations of ideology in the novel will be discussed to determine whether the novel can be perceived as a text with a Marxist agenda. In case of *The Jungle* (1906), to determine whether it condemns the values associated with capitalism and provided it does in the analysis of the specific ways in which they are denounced. As suggested above, the analysis will be concerned with the potential set of questions that stem from the author's depiction of the relationships based on the socioeconomic conditions related to issues such as the organization of property, power, and wealth. Therefore, the analysis should explore the ways and the purpose of the author's depiction of class relations related to issues such as class struggle, poverty, and the differences in the standards of living among the distinct socioeconomic classes.

In this sense, it will be determined which class is depicted as the class in power, which class is conversely depicted as the powerless one and whether the members of the inferior class are aware of their disadvantageous position in society. Moreover, the source of this power and its availability to the members of either one of the classes will be discussed. As a result of addressing these issues, the analysis should reveal the novel's overall attitude on the depiction of class relations and could, therefore, show which one of these classes is the author trying to condemn and conversely which one of these classes is the author trying to advocate for and how is this approach generally depicted within the novel. Finally, it will be examined whether the novel proposes a solution to the described

⁹⁵ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 66-8.

problems associated with the prevailing organization of society in form of its depiction of either reformist or revolutionary ideas.

Answering these above-mentioned questions should provide an interesting outlook on the novel's depiction of ideology and on its description of the socioeconomic conditions and the relationships these conditions generate among Sinclair's characters. Furthermore, the analysis will be concerned with the research of Sinclair's depiction of the American dream, which is an essential component of the novel because all of the above-described matters are primarily captured through the perspective and experience of Sinclair's Lithuanian immigrant family in Chicago. In a sense, the concept of the American dream and its projection in the novel could be thus perceived as a form of a commentary on the conditions that prevail in American society.

Analysis of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*

4. Depiction of the American Dream

One of the major, reoccurring themes in *The Jungle* (1906) is the idea of pursuing the American dream by the immigrant family from Lithuania that comes to America to try and improve their living conditions. The American dream serves as an important factor for the analysis of Sinclair's depiction of the capitalist society because it directly reflects the conditions that prevail in it by contrasting the immigrants' experience with the values and ideals perpetuated by the American dream itself. Therefore, the present chapter focuses on the depiction of this phenomenon within the novel and discusses its presence and the ideological implications this concept carries as well as the interpretation of the author's motivation for depicting this phenomenon.

The concept of the American dream itself may be quite difficult to interpret and there might not even be a complete consensus on what it really is. However, Jim Cullen argues that it is exactly its ambiguity that establishes its mythic power among the masses. He argues that besides money, there is an endless list of possibilities which might be included in one's American dream, including religious transformation, political reform, the attainment of education or sexual expression.⁹⁶ To generalize Cullen's definition, it could be established that the premise of the American dream generally lies in improving one's situation in one or more of the suggested areas. According to Jennifer L. Hochschild, the very essence of the American dream relies on the mindset shared by many, that sees America as: "...a new world where anything can happen and good things might."⁹⁷ This mindset proved to be true throughout history as many people saw America as a land where they would be given a chance to start a new life, or improve their living conditions in general. Hochschild suggests that similar expectations of their new life in America might have attracted the millions of immigrants who moved to America to pursue their vision of the American dream.⁹⁸ This mindset reflects the ideas of what Jim Cullen sees as one of the most familiar American dreams: "...that of upward mobility, a dream typically understood in terms of economic and/or

⁹⁶ Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 7,

https://books.google.cz/books/about/The_American_Dream.html?id=yM96DK4ELZkC&redir_esc=y.

⁹⁷ Jennifer L. Hochschild, *Facing Up to the American Dream: Race, Class, and the Soul of the Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 15, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7rhtn>.

⁹⁸ Hochschild, *Facing Up*, 15.

social advancement.”⁹⁹ According to Vanneman and Cannon, the New World often served as a refuge for immigrants who wanted to avoid the class barriers of Europe. They mention that America offered the promise of hard work and talent to be the determining factors in the organization of wealth and position in society.¹⁰⁰ In this sense, hard work is often described as one of the universal aspects of the American dream, suggesting that anybody who devotes the required amount of work is automatically entitled to a better life. As suggested above, the number of American dreams might be endless and different for each individual, however, upward social mobility and generally the attainment of a better life shall be the main focus of this analysis in regard to the American dream and its presence within the analyzed novel.

At the very beginning of *The Jungle* (1906), the protagonist, Jurgis Rudkus, immigrates to the United States from Lithuania along with his wife-to-be, Ona Lukoszaite, and her extended family of nine other individuals and with Jurgis’s father, Antanas, in search of better social and financial circumstances. They are driven by their belief in the American dream which is enforced and advertised among them by their closest acquaintances in Lithuania as a universal truth. Thus, they truly succumb to the idea and have high expectations related to America where: “...rich or poor, a man was free ... he did not have to go into the army, he did not have to pay out his money to rascally officials – he might do as he pleased, and count himself as good as any other man.”¹⁰¹

It could be established that their collective knowledge of America and the conception of the opportunities granted by the American dream mostly comes from what they have heard from others because they clearly have no experience of their own. They all believe that America is the land where Jokubas Szedvilas, a friend of Ona’s relative Jonas, had gotten rich and instantaneously decide to go there the following year based on that testimony alone. Jurgis Rudkus figures that he would become a rich man in America while earning approximately three rubles per day. However, he fails to consider the costs of living and other possible expenses once they are there. In his view, influenced by his indoctrinated conception of the American dream of prosperity and equality, he would simply: “...go to America and marry, and be a rich man in the bargain.”¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Cullen, *The American Dream*, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Reeve Vanneman, Lynn Weber Cannon, “The American Dream” in *The American Perception of Class* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 257, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv941wv0.17>.

¹⁰¹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 25.

¹⁰² Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 25.

As suggested above, the focus of Marxism is that of analyzing how the material and historical forces such as politics and ideologies of socioeconomic systems shape the behavior of people.¹⁰³ For this reason, the belief in the American dream itself might be perceived as an ideology as it promotes the idea that there exists the possibility of improving one's condition in society, achieving social mobility, or getting ahead of others by means of hard work with little to no obstacles. The belief in the American dream, therefore, undoubtedly shapes the behavior of people such as Jurgis Rudkus and his relatives, who decide to come to the United States with a clear vision of improving their living conditions in society, as it promotes that hard work in America is justly rewarded. The family are clearly influenced by the ideology of the American dream. Their American dream is that of economic and social advancement. Under the influence of the ideology of the American dream, they initially see America as an uncorrupted land of freedom, opportunity, and equality. These values should be all attainable through hard work by virtually anyone. America should allow them to achieve some form of upward social mobility unattainable in their previous life in Lithuania.

In fact, one of the reoccurring themes of the protagonist's firm belief in the American dream is his perception of hard work as means of improving his and his family's living circumstances and solving any issues they might face in the new country. For instance, Jurgis and Ona decide to marry in the Chicago Stockyards in accordance to the traditional Lithuanian custom of *veselija* despite the impending financial insecurity they face. This traditional custom implies that anyone from the street is welcome to attend the wedding feast and to freely consume whatever they would like if they donate to the newlyweds afterwards to help them cover their expenses.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, Ona and Jurgis rely on their expectations of solidarity and decency among their countrymen, however, they eventually find out that most of the guests have secretly left without donating any money.¹⁰⁵

It could be argued that this passage is meant to hint at the imperfections of the very individualistic component within the belief of the American dream because the guests rather choose to be greedy and selfish to prioritize their personal interests. As Morris mentions, the erosion of their ethics, values and their sense of communal obligation stems from the narrow understanding of self-interest that prevails in America which is only enhanced because of the pressures people

¹⁰³ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 64.

¹⁰⁴ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 76.

¹⁰⁵ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 16.

face in its free market.¹⁰⁶ In this sense, the guests rather choose to save their money instead of following their ethnic customs which are a matter of course and common decency back in Lithuania, hinting at the author's attempt to condemn the unscrupulousness of the very values upon which the American dream is built. Even then, after the betrayal of his ethnic customs this early in his life in the new country, Jurgis perceives hard work as an all-powerful solution to all his problems: "Leave it to me; leave it to me. I will earn more money – I will work harder."¹⁰⁷

As established above, the protagonist's belief was also that they would not have to face any oppression and exploitation of "rascally officials"¹⁰⁸ in the United States because in Lithuania: "...one official had taken his passport from him, and another had arrested him for being without it, and the two had divided a third of his belongings."¹⁰⁹ However, corrupt officials who exploit their naïve attitude and the lack of their experience in the immigration process swindle them all the same once they arrive to the United States and before they even reach Chicago, their savings are greatly reduced due to the recurrent fraud.¹¹⁰ In addition, they are cheated by the saloon-keeper who agrees to host their wedding feast and later provides services and goods of a very questionable quality.¹¹¹ In this sense, the family immediately find out that the previously envisioned universal promise of equality in the supposedly non-corrupted society does not necessarily apply to anyone who does not have connections and therefore especially not to them, because:

The saloon-keeper stood in with all the big politics men in the district ; and when you had once found out what it meant to get into trouble with such people, you would know enough to pay what you were told to pay and shut up.¹¹²

The opening chapters of the novel thus illustrate the falseness of their view of life in the United States that stems from their indoctrinated, idealized, and misconceived interpretation of the American dream and the social relations it should supposedly create. The naïve attitude and the trust the immigrants had in their new life in America is to be expected when their former life in the impoverished, corrupt, and oppressed Lithuania is considered. In the provided examples, however, it is apparent that the reality of everyday life of a common person in America does not at all seem

¹⁰⁶ Morris, "The Two Lives," 57.

¹⁰⁷ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 22.

¹⁰⁸ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 25.

¹⁰⁹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 19.

¹¹⁰ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 26.

¹¹¹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 17.

¹¹² Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 18.

to differ from the experience of oppression and corruption back in the old country. Nevertheless, even after facing these obstacles, the protagonist's resolve and trust in the American dream remains and his pursuit becomes even more resolute. Jurgis Rudkus simply believes that the outstanding debt from the wedding feast and their difficult financial and social situation in general could be easily overcome in the land of opportunity: "We will pay them all somehow. I will work harder. That was always what Jurgis said."¹¹³

Another instance when the validity of the American dream is challenged is the character named Jokubas Szedvilas, initially introduced as a person who has been successful in his pursuit of the American dream, who was after all the very reason behind the family's decision to immigrate to the United States. Jokubas Szedvilas is an independent business owner, a testament to the attainability of the promised improvement in the new country and a reflection of success many immigrants could strive for in the pursuit of their American dream, he was: "...the mythical friend who had made his fortune in America."¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, the family's judgement and admiration of the business owner's success appears to be quite flawed and superficial because in reality his business does not prosper in the slightest, in fact: "...Jokubas Szedvilas had just mortgaged his delicatessen store for two hundred dollars to meet several months' overdue rent."¹¹⁵

The author's depiction of Jokubas' unsuccessful business ventures therefore undermines the core premise of the American dream that hard work directly translates into success or social mobility. As Tyson suggests, the American dream is a belief system that similarly to other ideologies does not provide an accurate reflection of the natural workings in the real world.¹¹⁶ In this sense, the real experience of people like Jokubas Szedvilas, who try to live out their American dreams in the United States, often suggests that success does not, in fact, come even though they have tried their hardest to climb the social ladder. Even despite their genuine effort, these people are unable to improve their conditions and climb the social ladder, as Sinclair writes: "...it was so hard on the few that had really done their best."¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 19.

¹¹⁴ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 29.

¹¹⁵ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 18.

¹¹⁶ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 58.

¹¹⁷ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 18.

Furthermore, the character of Jokubas is important when the depiction of his general attitude is considered in contrast to the attitude of the newly arrived Jurgis. On the one hand, there is Jokubas Szedvilas, already betrayed by the promises of the American dream, who is rather skeptical and generally disillusioned, who: "...understood all the pitfalls of this new world, and could explain all of its mysteries."¹¹⁸ On the other hand, there is Jurgis Rudkus, hopeful and unable to understand the cynical attitude of Jokubas Szedvilas that straightforwardly infuriates Jurgis as his friend makes sarcastic comments about the establishment.¹¹⁹

On the whole, the difference here is in the amount of practical and personal experience each of these immigrants has with life in the United States and, therefore, Jurgis cannot understand why Jokubas condemns life in America unless he is exposed to the same effects as the seemingly unsuccessful Jokubas. As Tyson suggests, the American dream reinforces the idea that financial success stems from initiative and hard work and poor people must therefore be lazy and shiftless.¹²⁰ Accordingly, Jurgis seems to be influenced by this attitude when his behavior towards Jokubas is considered. Even when he is warned by others about the pitfalls of the American dream in the Chicago Stockyards, when he would hear: "...stories about the breaking down of men, there in the stockyards of Chicago, and of what had happened to them afterwards – stories to make your flesh creep, ... [he] would only laugh."¹²¹

When he first starts working in the meatpacking industry, he is quite hopeful and feels as if the: "...whole huge establishment had taken him under its protection, and had become responsible for his welfare."¹²² The promise and prospect of a stable income and this imagined security truly seems to have an effect on his attitude towards working in the meatpacking industry which: "...seemed a dream of wonder ... of employment for thousands upon thousands upon men, of opportunity and freedom..."¹²³ Jurgis simply cannot grasp the skepticism Jokubas has unless he himself is exposed to the effects of the material conditions which stem from the social relations that prevail in the highly industrialized America of the early 20th century.

¹¹⁸ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 29.

¹¹⁹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 43.

¹²⁰ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 57.

¹²¹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 23.

¹²² Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 47.

¹²³ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 34.

One of the most powerful manifestations of the author's attempt to uncover the American dream's failures within the novel could be perceived in the events that lead the immigrant family into the purchase of their own house in a neighborhood adjacent to the Chicago Stockyards instead of living in the terrible conditions of the local boarding houses. As established above, Jurgis Rudkus is depicted as a firm believer in the premise of hard work and its importance in the pursuit of one's American dream and, therefore, he was: "...at a loss to understand why, with wages as they were, so many of the people of this district should live the way they did."¹²⁴ The purchase and ownership of a home, a pinnacle of one's success in the pursuit of their American dream, thus seemed to be a reasonable option considering the family still kept some savings from the old country.¹²⁵ However, they are swindled by an agent who exploits their lacking knowledge of the English language and coerces them into signing a contract to rent the house instead of outright buying it. The contract is constructed in such a way that the family cannot continue the payments due to the monthly interests, the company simply: "...existed to make money by swindling poor people"¹²⁶ and their idea was: "...that the people who bought them would not be able to pay for them. When they failed ... they would lose the house and all that they had paid on it."¹²⁷

Accordingly, this section of the novel could be perceived as the breaking point in the protagonist's perception of the American dream. At first, Jurgis believes that he would simply: "...work all day, and all night, too, if need be; he would never rest until the house was paid for and his people had a home."¹²⁸ However, his firm belief in hard work and family values is assaulted by the pitfalls of the capitalist society that inherently promotes individualism, greed and the exploitation of others, rendering hard work as rather insignificant and pointless in the pursuit of one's American dream. In fact, Hornung mentions that the harder Jurgis works, the less he prospers and the worse his overall condition becomes, thus perverting the myth of success that was usually the common narrative pattern among Sinclair's dime novels and romances.¹²⁹ Therefore, the assumption that could be observed from this novel is that hard work in a capitalist society is ironically what makes people fail in the pursuit of their American dream, contrary to the common

¹²⁴ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 54.

¹²⁵ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 55.

¹²⁶ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 77.

¹²⁷ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 77-8.

¹²⁸ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 57-8.

¹²⁹ Alfred Hornung, "The Political Uses of Popular Fiction in the Muckraking Movement," *Revue Française D'études Américaines* No. 17 (May 1983): 345.

assumption that success stems from hard work and initiative, as Jurgis: "...thought he was going to make himself useful, and rise and become a skilled man; but he would soon find out his error for nobody rose in Packingtown by doing good work."¹³⁰

This attitude is further reflected in the author's depiction of the gradual process of transformation Jurgis Rudkus and some other members of his family have undergone when exposed to the conditions that prevail in the capitalist society of Chicago. Initially, the characters are depicted as inherently good people with high moral standards who uphold the importance of their family, ethnic customs, and hard work above anything else. These immigrant characters are the people who should theoretically be worthy of achieving their American dream because their attitude ultimately embodies a variety of its ideals. Therefore, they should be justly rewarded by the improvement of their material conditions.

However, as Sinclair's characters are continually subjected to many unfortunate events brought upon by the privations resulting from the capitalist economic system, they are ultimately forced to abandon these values and turn to dishonesty instead. Accordingly, the irony in the author's depiction of this process can be observed on the fact that their situation effectively improves when their ethics and morality are completely dismissed. When Jurgis briefly joins the world of political corruption and election fraud as a result of his participation in the world of muggings and thievery, he simultaneously enters a world: "...where money and all the good things of life came freely"¹³¹, as opposed to the world of hard work and upholding moral standards, which yields little to no benefits for the immigrants, contrary to the protagonist's initial beliefs.

In Chapter 25 when Jurgis encounters the character named Jack Duane who introduces him to the practices of the criminal underworld in Chicago, he initially feels remorse for his actions and hurting his victims but it is soon explained to him that: "...it was the way of the game, and there was no helping it."¹³² This passage ultimately illustrates the notion that in order to survive in the capitalist society, poor people like Jurgis have effectively no choice but to be criminalized by the social conditions should they want to avoid the poverty and exploitation themselves. This degradation of moral standards can be also observed on the character of Marija Berczynskas who comes to the United States as an honest, hard worker but eventually turns to prostitution because

¹³⁰ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 70.

¹³¹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 303.

¹³² Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 301.

the family's financial situation demands it and prostitution virtually becomes her only solution. She understands it as nothing to be ashamed of because she simply has no other alternative.¹³³

Nevertheless, her attitude towards hard work also changes when she is exposed to prostitution as she expresses that she should have done it as soon as they came to America along with Jurgis's wife Ona: "When people are starving and they have anything with a price, they ought to sell it ... I guess you realize it now when it's too late. Ona could have taken care of us all, in the beginning."¹³⁴ From Marija's point of view, prostitution is thus even depicted as a better alternative to honest work similarly to muggings and participation in political corruption in the previously described case of Jurgis. In any case, these examples show how impossible it is to advance by being honest in Sinclair's capitalist Chicago, contrary to turning to crime and dishonesty, which are depicted as being the better alternative. In other words, this contrast exposes the irony of the fact that these characters achieve financial stability and security only by such seemingly undesirable and dishonest practices, which nonetheless become their only option.

Following the above-mentioned interpretations of the depiction of the American dream within the novel, it could be established that people like Jurgis Rudkus, who blindly follow the premise of the American dream, thinking that improvement can be achieved through hard work and that people who do not prosper do not work hard enough, are thus indisputably influenced by the ideology of the American dream. In Sinclair's depiction of the early 20th century industrial Chicago, hard work is dismissed as insignificant in the pursuit of one's American dream in the profit-driven, capitalist society fueled by the insatiable greed of individuals who benefit from the exploitation of others in the pursuit of their self-interest, an attitude best captured by Lovett who describes the novel as: "...[a] story of the Lithuanian peasant family which comes to America with ardent hope and meets exploitation and degradation at the hands of a system based nakedly on human selfishness."¹³⁵

This view is also reflected by Tyson who mentions that it is the power of ideology that embodies the perception of fairness and naturalness in the belief of the American dream that nonetheless ultimately masks the harsh reality that the success of the wealthy rests on the hard work and misery of others.¹³⁶ In the social and historical context, this attitude could be perceived

¹³³ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 347.

¹³⁴ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 348.

¹³⁵ Lovett, "Upton Sinclair," 709.

¹³⁶ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 58.

as quite accurate because, as Senn and Eidintas mention, the prospects to accumulate money and, therefore, achieve some social mobility was quite hopeless for unskilled Lithuanian immigrants in the urban environment of early 20th century industrial America.¹³⁷ The depiction of the American dream in *The Jungle* (1906) rests on this principle, it reveals how flawed the promise of the American dream is from the poor Lithuanian immigrants' point of view by portraying the contrast between the imagined conditions perpetuated by the power of ideology in the belief of the American dream and the harsh reality of life experience among immigrants in the United States.

Therefore, from the point of view presented in the novel, it appears that the portrayal of the protagonist's belief in the American dream is used to serve as a critical commentary on the imperfections of the capitalist free market society. A society where exploitation, individualism, greed, and inequality seem to be the true underlying principles instead of the imagined and idealized premises of equality, opportunity and social mobility contained in a perpetuated by the ideology of the American dream. At the beginning of the novel, the characters are affected by their indoctrinated perception of these core values and they, therefore, have no reason not to perceive them as universally true, but in the real experience of the protagonist and his relatives, these values prove to be quite elusive or outright impossible to achieve. Their belief in the ideology of the American dream could be perceived as relatively influential in the general scheme of the novel as it ultimately propels the family's decision to come to the United States and, therefore, arguably drives the characters' actions. Its skeptical portrayal, however, seems to be purposefully implemented within the novel to promote its underlying agenda. In short, it seems that all the perils encapsulated within the characters' belief in the American dream depicted in *The Jungle* (1906) rest on the author's disapproval with the many imperfections that are related to the capitalist organization of society and to the conditions that prevail in it. For this reason, Sinclair's immigrant family primarily fall victim to a ruthless economic system that does not allow them to pursue a better life, they are driven to become criminals and prostitutes by these conditions and, as Elliott writes: "Through no fault of their own, the American Dream has become a nightmare."¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Alfred Erich Senn, Alfonso Eidintas, "Lithuanian Immigrants in America and the Lithuanian National Movement before 1914," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 6, No. 2 (Spring 1987): 12.

¹³⁸ Elliott, "The Eastern European," 29.

5. Depiction of Class Relations

Throughout *The Jungle* (1906), Upton Sinclair repeatedly alludes to the issues of class relations. The notion of class could be consequently perceived as one of the main themes of the novel which also inevitably serves as a form of a commentary on the capitalist organization of society. For this reason, it is important to establish the needed concepts in relation to the notion of class and its understanding in Marxist theory and to analyze the presence of these concepts within the novel while substantiating their analysis with suitable examples from within the narrative itself. According to Foley, the concept of class is as one of the prominent components of Marxist analysis.¹³⁹ Therefore, the following paragraphs are dedicated to the description of this concept and its uses in Marxist theory and Marxist literary criticism. Firstly, however, it is important to establish the specific meaning of ‘class’ in the context of the Marxist theory because there may be various diverse definitions of this concept across different fields of inquiry.

As Weedon explains, the typical association the term ‘class’ creates is usually in connection to denoting one’s subjectivity and identity. However, apart from interpreting class as a distinct form of identity, it is also seen as an important factor that helps in the conceptualization of social relations that can help in understanding the inequalities within society.¹⁴⁰ Similarly, Day mentions the term ‘class’ could be perceived as a notion generally referring to the divisions that are prevalent in society.¹⁴¹ These divisions could be seen in many different social and cultural contexts because the individual’s identity is shaped by the meanings that are created by different factors. It could be influenced by factors such as the contrasting ways how people dress, the ways they speak, what kind of education they have or with which particular organizations they associate but, most importantly, it is said to influence the way of interaction between individuals in society.¹⁴²

However, as suggested above, the focus of this part of the analysis is to interpret Upton Sinclair’s depiction of the notion of class and its interpretation in the novel from the Marxist viewpoint. According to Day, the basis of this approach could be traced back to the mid-

¹³⁹ Foley, *Marxist Literary*, 14.

¹⁴⁰ Chris Weedon, *Identity and Culture: Narratives of Difference and Belonging* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2004), 10, https://books.google.cz/books/about/Identity_And_Culture_Narratives_Of_Diffe.html?id=fiiklgzDHBAC&redir_esc=y.

¹⁴¹ Gary Day, *Class: The New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge, 2001), 2.

¹⁴² Weedon, *Identity*, 11.

seventeenth century because this period proved to be decisive in the formation of capitalism as the social relations of feudal systems between the landlord and the tenant were substituted by the purely monetary relation of employer and employee of capitalism. The word ‘class’ in this context is, therefore, used as a reference to the changes in economy and their effects on the relations in society.¹⁴³ According to Weedon, in the Marxist tradition, both society and the individuals that live in it are shaped by the economic relations and class itself could be, therefore, understood as an economic category because it is essentially used to characterize the relations different social groups within society have to the mode of economic production.¹⁴⁴ Accordingly, as Day suggests, the Marxist tradition interprets class in economic terms.¹⁴⁵ For this reason, it could be established that in the context of this analysis, the term ‘class’ is primarily used to address the characters’ position in society and, therefore, in the class hierarchy according to their relation to the means of economic production rather than to describe the specific connotations of their subjectivity and identity.

In this sense, the class construction of society is essentially grounded in its division into two separate socioeconomic classes. Firstly, the ‘bourgeoisie’, the class that is in control of the means of production and, therefore, in control of the economic, natural, and human resources. Secondly, the ‘proletariat’, the most numerous class that, however, usually lives in substandard conditions and predominantly performs manual labor for the bourgeoisie.¹⁴⁶ Thus, the term ‘class’ in the Marxist context mainly relates to the organization of individuals in society into separate groups with varying degrees of power that stems from their relation to the means of economic production.

In Sinclair’s novel, the former is represented by the depiction of an immigrant worker, Jurgis Rudkus, his family members and other working-class characters in the meatpacking industry who collectively embody the proletariat. The depiction of the proletariat will consequently be used in contrast with Sinclair’s depiction of the latter, the rich factory owners of the meatpacking industry and the delegates of their power who represent the other socioeconomic class, the bourgeoisie.

¹⁴³ Day, *Class*, 6.

¹⁴⁴ Weedon, *Identity*, 11

¹⁴⁵ Day, *Class*, 6.

¹⁴⁶ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 54.

5.1. Issues of Class Struggle

To begin with, Sinclair's primary aim in depicting the issues of class relations in the American society generally seems to be to reveal how inhumane and vicious the conditions were for the common wage earner at the turn of the century. In fact, according to Mookerjee, it was his intention to depict the relations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in such a way which would reveal that the cause of the suffering and misery of the proletariat is a direct result of the ruthless and greedy attitude of the rich.¹⁴⁷ To explain this attitude in a Marxist context, it is important to conceptualize the kind of relationship these two socioeconomic classes have in the labor and class hierarchy present in capitalist societies. As Day suggests, the relation of these two socioeconomic classes is fundamentally opposed because the bourgeoisie want to make as much profit as possible while paying the workers as little as possible, expecting their productivity remains the same.¹⁴⁸

This exploitative nature of the relationship is one of the main manifestations of the interaction of socioeconomic classes within the novel. The bourgeois factory owners are universally depicted as rapacious, ruthless, and rich people whose main goal seems to be making as much money as possible with no regard to how they accomplish that objective. One of the most powerful manifestations of this attitude of the bourgeoisie and the general description of the relationship between the two socioeconomic classes could be observed on Sinclair's depiction of one of the big businesses, Durham's, a meatpacking plant which was described as a company that was:

...owned by a man who was trying to make as much money out of it as he could, and did not care in the least how he did it; and underneath him, ranged in ranks and grades like an army, were managers and superintendents and foremen, each one driving the man next below him and trying to squeeze out of him as much work as possible.¹⁴⁹

In Marxist terms, the relationship between the meatpacking giants like Durham's and their proletarian employees could be generally described as being depicted to illustrate the issues of 'class struggle'. It could be established that the notion of class struggle mostly reflects the concern of individual members of either one of the classes to promote the political and economic interests of their class at the expense of the other. According to Foley, this struggle includes not only the possibility of an open social conflict but also the daily struggles between bosses and their

¹⁴⁷ R. N. Mookerjee, "Muckraking and Fame: The Jungle," in *Upton Sinclair's The Jungle (Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations)*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2002), 77.

¹⁴⁸ Day, *Class*, 7.

¹⁴⁹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 70.

employees over their wages and working conditions. However, because the struggle includes the struggle for both economic and political power, it is also said to not only include issues such as economic coercion but also issues related to the manipulation of the legal system such as bribery and other forms of political corruption.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, these are the main topics that shall be discussed in this part of the analysis. As suggested above, the class struggle in in the capitalist mode of production is especially antagonistic because both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have conflicting interests. Sinclair's depiction of the class relations often hints at the antagonistic nature of the class relations prevalent in the Chicago Stockyards, according to the novel, the workers: "...hated their work. They hated the bosses and they hated the owners; they hated the whole place, the whole neighborhood – even the whole city, with an all-inclusive hatred, bitter and fierce."¹⁵¹

Nevertheless, the critical commentary on the issues of class struggle and the antagonism it creates between the two socioeconomic classes does not always occur in such an explicit manner within the novel but rather stems from Sinclair's descriptions of the work process and from the segments of the novel which describe the hierarchical organization of the capitalist society itself. As Day suggests, in such society, class struggle mainly arises from the fact that the dominant class owns the means of production, whereas the other class owns nothing but the labor power they are pressured to sell to ensure their survival.¹⁵² Accordingly, in the novel, the workers are often depicted as dependent on the work provided by the packers even despite the harrowing, brutalizing or unsafe working conditions they commonly have to endure in their meatpacking plants. In the Chicago Stockyards depicted by Sinclair, the working-class, mostly foreign population was:

...always on the verge of starvation, and dependent for its opportunities of life upon the whim of men every bit as brutal and unscrupulous as the old time slave-drivers; under such circumstances immorality was exactly as inevitable, and as prevalent, as it was under the system of chattel slavery. Things that were quite unspeakable went on there in the packing-houses all the time, and were taken for granted by everybody.¹⁵³

The theme of the workers' helplessness and dependence on the provided work opportunities as well as their acceptance of these conditions despite their unfavorable and exploitative nature can

¹⁵⁰ Foley, *Marxist Literary*, 14.

¹⁵¹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 67.

¹⁵² Day, *Class*, 6.

¹⁵³ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 126.

be, for example, observed on the portrayal of the interaction between characters called Ona Lukoszaite, Miss Henderson, and Phil Connor, illustrating the power of economic coercion.

Both Miss Henderson and Phil Connor are portrayed to represent the bourgeoisie's proxy of power, dominance, and authority in the Chicago Stockyards. The two of them are the supervisors of the meatpacking plants, whereas Ona Lukoszaite is their subordinate. She possesses no power; she has no option to oppose her bosses' demands. Consequently, Miss Henderson and Phil Connor can use and abuse their superior power in the work process to exploit Ona's economic vulnerability. They do so by forcing her to submit to Connor's sexual advances: "... he threatened me. He knew all about us, he knew we would starve. He knew your boss – he knew Marija's. He would hound us to death, he said – then he said if I would – if I – we would all of us be sure of work – always."¹⁵⁴ Fearing for her family's wellbeing under the impending risk of them possibly never being able to find employment again should she refuse Connor's demands, Ona is essentially forced to succumb to her bosses' demands even despite her obvious resentment to do it. To keep her job and, therefore, a steady income for the family, she has no choice but to let Connor sexually abuse her. Similarly, Ona's forelady, Miss Henderson, abuses her superior power and economic pressure forcing Ona and her other female employees to work as prostitutes in her brothel in downtown Chicago.¹⁵⁵

Sinclair's depiction of Marija Berczynskas's situation can be also used as an example of how the novel captures the economic side of class struggle. Marija, who works as a can painter in one of Packingtown's factories, is not given a fair wage for her work and she, therefore, decides to voice her complaints to the lady who is responsible for the calculation of the employees' wages in the factory. When the cheating on her wage starts to occur repeatedly, Marija tries to address the issue with her forelady and when she has no success, she tries to approach the superintendent himself, which in itself is described as an: "...unheard-of presumption."¹⁵⁶ As a result of Marija trying to advocate for her rights of receiving a fair wage, she immediately gets dismissed from the job by the forelady who moreover expresses that: "The next time she would know her place."¹⁵⁷

In any case, these depictions of class struggle fundamentally reveal how powerless the working-class wage laborers truly are in Sinclair's capitalist society and its labor hierarchy. In a

¹⁵⁴ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 179.

¹⁵⁵ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 126.

¹⁵⁶ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 123.

¹⁵⁷ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 123.

like manner, neither Marija nor Ona can try to defend their interests and dignity under the constant economic pressure that is applied by their employers. Sinclair's proletarian characters are depicted as greatly disadvantaged, voiceless and the labor hierarchy as unjust, exploitative, and coercive.

Therefore, the novel portrays the above-described notion that poor people like Ona simply had no choice but to accept the brutalizing conditions since their survival depended on the jobs provided by the bourgeoisie. As Foley suggests, the wage-laborers are simply bound to the class that employs them because coercion and ideology allows them to take away the workers' only means of survival should they refuse to be exploited.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, Arthur mentions the workers simply could not choose to stop working provided they wanted to stay alive.¹⁵⁹ As established above, this attitude is reflected in the depiction of Ona and her relatives, who are bound to work in the Chicago meatpacking plants and other factories even despite the unfavorable conditions because they are obliged to provide for the necessities of life such as food, clothing or accommodation. As Sinclair mentions, the workers were: "...tied to the great packing-machine, and tied to it for life."¹⁶⁰

Moreover, due to the scarcity of work opportunities, the members of the proletariat generally have no negotiating power, as illustrated on the example of Marija, and they are, therefore, unable to plead with their employers for better working conditions or wages. This attitude is strengthened by Sinclair's depiction of the fact that there was always a continuous flow of poor working-class employees in Packingtown who were basically forced to work in the appalling conditions and for low wages by their adverse economic situation, which meant these conditions could be always sustained by the factory owners whose work nonetheless attracted a multitude of poor laborers.

To this end, Sinclair provides a commentary by mentioning that in Packingtown: "...the packing-houses were besieged by starving and penniless men; [who] came, literally, by the thousands every single morning, fighting with each other for a chance for life."¹⁶¹ In addition, the author's description of the desperate willingness of working class laborers to do virtually anything caused by their substandard economic conditions only seems to deepen their disadvantageous social position throughout the novel, because, as Sinclair describes: "The workers were dependent upon a job to exist from day to day, and so they bid against each other, and no man could get more

¹⁵⁸ Foley, *Marxist Literary*, 41.

¹⁵⁹ Arthur, *Radical Innocent*, 44.

¹⁶⁰ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 121-2.

¹⁶¹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 92.

than the lowest man would consent to work for.”¹⁶² The issues of class struggle depicted in the novel, therefore, not only seem to hint at the struggles of the workers and their employers but also at the stratification of the working-class itself caused by the competition for employment among the ranks of the working-class laborers, strengthening the position of power of the bourgeoisie.

The issues of class struggle and the general concept of the proletariat’s helplessness are additionally reinforced by Sinclair’s allusions to the prevalent corruption that takes place in the legal and political system of the early 20th century America. It can be best observed on the two contrasting interactions of the protagonist that directly subject him to the questionable practices of the judicial system. When Jurgis faces charges in court after his retaliation on Phil Connor, who had sexually abused his wife, the judge completely dismisses all his attempts at defending himself by trying to expose Connor’s crimes and abuse of power. Nevertheless, the judge willingly and unhesitatingly accepts Connor’s claims of innocence because they are already affiliated with one another due to their common interests in the meatpacking business. In fact, the judge, Pat Callahan, is described as: “the first finger of the unseen hand whereby the packers held down the people of the district”¹⁶³ who was known for: “his strong conservatism and his contempt for ‘foreigners.’”¹⁶⁴

In general, Jurgis’s attack on Connor represents his attempted but unsuccessful act of defiance towards the unjustness of the system itself. In this sense, Jurgis’s testimony is for the most part dismissed because he is poor, from a lower class, foreign, and unaffiliated, whereas Connor manages to exploit his position of power and connections to pervert the course of justice. Therefore, the depiction of Jurgis’s unfavorable position in this encounter could be simultaneously interpreted as a reflection of the powerlessness of the whole proletariat. Similarly, when Jurgis encounters the justice system in the position of the defendant for the second time but under different circumstances, similar charges are hastily dismissed by the judge because of Jurgis’s brief involvement with the corrupt political schemes of Bush Harper who was: “...a right-hand man of Mike Scully, the Democratic boss of the stockyards”¹⁶⁵, a man who held power in Chicago.

Consequently, Sinclair’s depiction of the American justice system reveals how perverted it has become. The law is flagrantly manipulated to protect and favor the interests of the powerful and

¹⁶² Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 372.

¹⁶³ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 187.

¹⁶⁴ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 188.

¹⁶⁵ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 309.

the wealthy, whereas the interests of the powerless and the poor are entirely disregarded. Thus, the law no longer represents security and justice but rather becomes one of the many repressive forces readily available to the bourgeoisie and by extension also to the unscrupulous delegates of their power like Phil Connor. As stated by Jurgis: “There was no justice, there was no right, anywhere in it – it was only force, it was tyranny, the will and the power, reckless and unrestrained!”¹⁶⁶

Furthermore, regarding the contemporary issues of the politics and the law, Sinclair repeatedly comments of the deeply symbiotic nature of the relationship between the local political apparatus and the big meatpacking businesses in Chicago. According to his descriptions, the effect of democracy was only superficial because the city was effectively: “...owned by an oligarchy of businessmen, [but] being nominally ruled by the people.”¹⁶⁷ Therefore, the novel primarily portrays democracy as a mere illusion of the people’s ability to have some influence on changing the prevailing system or improving their conditions. Democratic elections are manipulated by extensive voter fraud schemes through what Sinclair calls: “a huge army of graft” which encompasses a large group of people from various layers of society, including aldermen, legislators and lobbyists, who are accused of being complicit in the perversion of the democratic processes by manipulating them under the effects of bribery to closely represent the interests of the Beef Trust.¹⁶⁸

For this reason, the novel not only condemns the questionable practices that debilitate the justice system but also the ongoing process of deterioration of American democracy in general. According to the descriptions of the Beef Trust: “Bribery and corruption were its everyday methods ... [and] the city government was simply one of its branch-offices.”¹⁶⁹ Therefore, in *The Jungle* (1906) corruption fundamentally erases the boundaries between the city government and the big businesses, their interests become unanimous and the extent of their power remains unchecked. The legislation is either completely disregarded or created by the factory owners themselves. The repressive forces such as the judicial system and the police, which should be impartial are mostly corrupt and enforce the law in favor of the wealthy. For these reasons, Sinclair’s depiction of these issues criticizes the state of many components that comprise the political apparatus of the early 20th century America. In fact, it is ultimately depicted as one of the very aspects responsible for the

¹⁶⁶ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 191.

¹⁶⁷ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 302.

¹⁶⁸ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 302.

¹⁶⁹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 377.

continuous exploitation and subjugation of the proletarian workers because it serves as a repressive force subservient to the bourgeoisie instead of protecting the interests of the whole society.

On the whole, the above-described practices of the factory owners, their perversion of the law and of democracy in general, the poverty of the employees, their constant threat of unemployment and other instances of economic coercion could be all primarily interpreted as particularly condemning depictions of the political and economic system through which the issues of class struggle are perpetuated in the society presented within the novel. In any case, these considerations show how the novel reflects the Marxist notion that having economic power consequently translates to having both social and political power as well. In fact, Sinclair's workers' fates are defined by their inability to escape the economic and political order that confines them to live in poverty with virtually no hope for future improvement. They are essentially obliged to work for a minimal wage and under the oppression of the factory-owning elite, they are at mercy of their exploitative and cruel superintendents and foremen because of the unfavorable economic and political conditions that prevail in Sinclair's depiction of the capitalist social hierarchy.

5.2. Divergent Standards of Living, Sign-Exchange Value and Consumerism

The previously described interactions of the two socioeconomic classes are mostly related to their relationship in the production process itself, nevertheless, the author provides a depiction of a more direct encounter of the poor and the rich in Chapter 24. As Morris mentions, the characters which were often used in the Progressive Era fiction were typically made to observe or possibly even experience the contrasting realities of the rich and the poor, which ultimately convinced the reader that the American society is corrupt by differences in class. In fact, *The Jungle* (1906) is said to epitomize Sinclair's desire to reveal the invisible workings of class society from top to bottom by depicting the issues of class struggle in a direct confrontation of a rich man and a poor man and thus making them remediable.¹⁷⁰ As suggested above, such confrontation occurs in Chapter 24 of the novel, and the following paragraphs are, therefore, dedicated to the analysis of these events and to the possible Marxist interpretation of their meaning, which should prove useful in further analysis of Sinclair's depiction of class relations in the novel. In this sense, the following paragraphs not only discuss class in terms of its relation to the means of production but rather from the viewpoint of power, status and wealth which nonetheless innately stem from this relationship.

To explicitly depict the workings of class society in the early 20th century Chicago, Sinclair juxtaposes two characters from the two opposite extremes of the contemporary social ladder. While begging in the streets on the verge of starvation, Jurgis conveniently encounters a drunk rich man, Frederick Jones, and confronts him for some money. However, from the initial descriptions of their interaction, it is quite clear the general purpose of this passage is to illustrate how ignorant and oblivious wealthy people might be to the situation of the working-class poor. This attitude could be observed on the way the wealthy man repeatedly misinterprets the situation Jurgis is currently in. For example, when Jurgis states he is hungry, the man sincerely asks him why he does not just buy something to eat, completely dismissing the fact that poor people like Jurgis could not even afford a necessity of life like food. Similarly, this attitude is reflected in their exchange when the wealthy man states that he is just on the way home for supper and asks Jurgis why he does not just do the same. When Jurgis responds that he does not have a home to come back to, the man

¹⁷⁰ Morris, "The Two Lives," 53.

completely dismisses the possibility of Jurgis's homelessness and poverty and immediately responds that Jurgis must be a newcomer to the city because he does not have a home of his own.¹⁷¹

Moreover, their conversation shifts to the question of money and when Jurgis tries to justify his begging in the streets by stating he has no money, the man responds that he is facing the same situation but later pulls out a roll of bills which was: "...more money than Jurgis had ever seen in his life before."¹⁷² However, it was not enough for Frederick who was accustomed to a different kind of lifestyle than Jurgis. In general, this section of the novel illustrates how Frederick belittles and undermines Jurgis's attempts at explaining the harshness of his situation by comparing his minuscule issues such as the problems he has with his wealthy parents with those of Jurgis that essentially threaten his very survival. The irony of this interaction lies in the fact that Frederick is simply detached from reality because of his status and wealth. Therefore, he has no understanding of what it means to be poor or face any genuine difficulties in life. Nevertheless, he keeps comparing himself with Jurgis even though they, or their situations have nothing in common. For this reason, it could be established that Sinclair uses the character of Frederick to depict the ignorance of the upper classes whose perception of the world and their appreciation of the worth of money is portrayed as awfully twisted under the influence of their status and wealth.

To further illustrate the differences between the lives of the working-class poor and the wealthy, the author's depiction of Frederick's family house and the subsequent reaction of Jurgis who is invited there for dinner can be analyzed. When the two men first arrive, Jurgis is shocked by the lavishness of the Lake Shore Drive neighborhood as well as the house itself because: "...it was inconceivable to him that any person could have a home like a hotel or the city hall."¹⁷³ The house itself seemed like: "...an enormous granite pile, set far back from the street, and occupying a whole block ... it had towers and huge gables, like a mediaeval castle."¹⁷⁴ Jurgis's astonishment with the opulence of the house and the surrounding neighborhood is further reinforced by the unconventional approach in the choice of language and literary devices. When Sinclair describes other parts of the city, the meatpacking plants, or the factory processes in other chapters of the novel, their descriptions are quite technical and precise, however, his description of Jones' house

¹⁷¹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 281.

¹⁷² Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 281.

¹⁷³ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 283.

¹⁷⁴ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 282.

is presented almost in a fairytale-like manner. Sinclair's depiction of Frederick's house even alludes to a well-known folk tale by comparing Jurgis's excitement to enter the house with the popular folk tale's protagonist, Aladdin's, excitement to enter the magic cave.¹⁷⁵ When Jurgis finally enters the house, it feels like a completely different world to him, he is simply bewildered by the lavishness of the house. It seemed to him as if: "...it was some work of enchantment, that he was in a dream palace."¹⁷⁶ At the same time, Sinclair illustrates Frederick's ignorance towards the class divide in his immediate assumption that Jurgis must come from the countryside to be bewildered by such a house.¹⁷⁷ He fails to consider the standards of living might be considerably different across the individual districts of Chicago based entirely on one's wealth and status

In that manner, Sinclair's description of Jurgis's former, modest house at the Chicago Stockyards can be used as a point of comparison in the attitude of capturing the divide between the lives of the poor and the rich. On the one hand, at the beginning of the novel, the author describes Jurgis's modest house in the Chicago Stockyards district, built on an unpaved and unlighted street which: "...contained four rooms, plastered white; the basement was but a frame, the walls being unplastered and the floor not laid."¹⁷⁸ Frederick's house, on the other hand, had floors of tessellated marble covered with bear and tiger skins, walls covered by paintings and murals, the rooms equipped with expensive furniture and also: "...a swimming pool of the purest marble, that had cost about forty thousand dollars."¹⁷⁹

Overall, the above-described depictions seem to be employed to reveal and eventually condemn the existence of the tremendous differences in the standards of living between the rich and the working-class poor. Nevertheless, the portrayal of these differences could be also analyzed from the viewpoint which focuses on the general attitude of discontent with the ostentatious attitude of the rich. In this sense, the depiction of the contrast between the wealthy family's mansion and the modest immigrant's house also inexplicitly condemns the opulent wastefulness of money among the members of the bourgeoisie on seemingly unnecessary, luxurious household equipment

¹⁷⁵ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 283.

¹⁷⁶ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 284.

¹⁷⁷ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 285.

¹⁷⁸ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 55-56.

¹⁷⁹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 287.

which has virtually no utility apart from its embodiment of status. The described possessions of Jones's family merely serve as an expression of their inconceivable wealth for the outside world.

This attitude could be used to illustrate the Marxist notion of commodification. In this sense, as Tyson suggests, Marxists analyze the harmful effects of capitalism with respect to its effects on the behavior of people according to their relationships to commodities. This relationship is, however, not based on the commodities' use value but rather on their exchange or sign-exchange value when they serve either as objects of trade or simply as an expression of social status of the commodity's owner.¹⁸⁰ Accordingly, Freddie and the members of his family could be described as affected by a process described by Tyson as 'conspicuous consumption', which is based on the excessive purchase of costly goods or services for the purposes of impressing others with no regard to their actual use value.¹⁸¹ As established above, they purchase costly goods such as the art in their house only as an expression of their status and wealth. The effects of the sign-exchange value of Frederick's possessions can be observed on Jurgis is his immediate admiration of these possessions.

Consequently, this passage of the novel could be interpreted as quite critical towards this aspect of commodification in capitalist societies because one's worth and success are often assessed based on the amount of goods the individual owns. In fact, such state creates unhealthy competition among consumers who purchase goods with high sign-exchange value only for the expression of their status and wealth, whereas poor people like Jurgis suffer the consequences of this attitude as the passive victims of the interaction with their employers in the work process. According to Sinclair's descriptions of the early 20th century society in America, it was a society:

...dominated by the fact of commercial competition, [where] money [was] necessarily the test of prowess, and wastefulness the sole criterion of power ... a society [where] thirty per cent of the population [was] occupied in producing useless articles, and one per cent [was] occupied in destroying them.¹⁸²

For this reason, it could be established that one of the possible interpretations of Sinclair's depiction of the direct encounter between the poor and the rich realized by the interaction of Jurgis and Frederick in Chapter 24 of the novel could be also be interpreted as his attempt to criticize the rising consumerist tendencies in American society. According to Tyson, the Marxist perspective

¹⁸⁰ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 62.

¹⁸¹ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 62.

¹⁸² Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 403.

suggests that the survival of capitalism is dependent on consumerism, which is why sign-exchange value becomes the primary mode of relating to the surrounding world.¹⁸³ Accordingly, Sinclair's depictions reveal that consumerism was starting to become a widespread problem of the whole social body in America as others, even the poor, were beginning to imitate the wealthy lifestyles:

Beneath the hundred thousand women of the elite are a million middle-class women, miserable because they are not of the elite, and trying to appear of it in public; and beneath them, in turn, are five million farmers' wives reading 'fashion papers' and trimming bonnets, and shop-girls and serving-maids selling themselves into brothels for cheap jewellery and imitation sealskin robes.¹⁸⁴

Thus, Sinclair's depiction of the consumerist tendencies in society appears to be highly critical of the unhealthy consumers' habits it creates among the poor members of the highly stratified class hierarchy whose impersonation of the wealthy paradoxically only seems to worsen their conditions and simultaneously enriches the bourgeoisie who are in control of the means of production.

Coincidentally, Sinclair's narrative eventually reveals that Frederick is, in fact, a son of the meatpacking factory owner: "...Jones the packer – [the] beef-trust man"¹⁸⁵, whose ruthless practices are essentially depicted as one of the exact sources of Jurgis's suffering. The ironic and allegorical subtone of this passage can be observed on the utterance of Frederick Jones who states that his father had made all the wealth Jurgis could observe during his visit of their lavish mansion on Lake Shore Drive: "...all out of hogs, too, damn ole scoundrel."¹⁸⁶ However, from the analysis of the previous segments of the novel, it could be indisputably established that Sinclair's tendency is to suggest that the success of the packers does seldom stem from their elaborate and cost-efficient procedures in the meatpacking industry but rather from the vile exploitation their workers are subjected to in their factories. As Morris mentions, the irony of this interaction is that the young man's fortune rests on the exploitation of people like Jurgis which nonsensically and casually rewards people like him with large sums of money.¹⁸⁷ In this sense, the proletarian workers themselves are the figurative hogs who are only used for the generation of the bourgeoisie's wealth.

As Jurgis recollects him witnessing the ruthless and savage treatment of hogs at the beginning of the novel, being glad he himself is not one of the hogs at the time but later realizes: "...a hog

¹⁸³ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 62-3.

¹⁸⁴ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 403.

¹⁸⁵ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 285.

¹⁸⁶ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 285.

¹⁸⁷ Morris, "The Two Lives," 62.

was just what he had been – one of the packers’ hogs. What they wanted from a hog was all the profits that could be got out of him; and that was what they wanted from the working-man.”¹⁸⁸ In any case, Frederick is depicted as either completely unaware or plainly indifferent to the fact that the wealth of his family rests on the hard toil of the common laborers who are coerced into wage-slavery and constantly kept in their substandard conditions of poverty to sustain the factory owners’ lavish lifestyles both as their workers and as the consumers of their products.

¹⁸⁸ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 376.

5.3. Class Consciousness, False Consciousness

The previous two subchapters of this analysis focused on the Marxist interpretation of how the issues of class struggle and overall, the divisions in society are depicted within the novel. Nevertheless, the last two subchapters of this analysis are dedicated to the analysis of how these issues are exposed and consequently resolved within the scope of the novel's narrative itself.

For the most part of the narrative, Sinclair puts emphasis on depicting the protagonist's lack of awareness of the class inequalities which exist in the capitalist society based on one's relations to the means of production. In case of Jurgis, the novel suggests he is mostly content with the provided job opportunities because they are essentially the only option he has and knows that he can use to secure a living for his family. Even despite his personal involvement with the harsh realities of the working-class experience in the work process, Jurgis basically does not seem to question neither his unfavorable position of a wage-earner, nor its accompanying issues such as the brutalizing working conditions, the low wages or his encounters that directly display the tremendous divide between the world of the proletariat and the world of the bourgeoisie. In other words, he initially seems to lack the required knowledge to be able to understand the reality in which he lives and works for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, Jurgis prolongedly remains a mere passive victim to the capitalist system. There is no sense of human agency, no desire to question or challenge the order to achieve some form of improvement because he does not initially perceive, nor understand its illegitimacy. According to Sinclair's commentary, Jurgis Rudkus:

... had no wit trace back the social crime to its far sources – he could not say that it was the thing men have called 'the system' that was crushing him to the earth; that it was the packers, his masters.¹⁸⁹

Accordingly, as Tyson suggests, the people who are part of the proletariat are typically not conscious of the exploitation they undergo at the hands of the bourgeoisie in their pursuit of profit and they are typically the last ones to understand this reality.¹⁹⁰ In the context of the novel, for example, people like Jurgis think their hard work will secure benefits for themselves, when in fact, their employers are the only ones who prosper from their arrangement, as suggested above: "They were wage-earners and servants, at the mercy of exploiters whose one thought was to get as much

¹⁸⁹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 192.

¹⁹⁰ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 54.

out of them as possible.”¹⁹¹ In other words, an unsuspecting or oblivious member of the proletariat like Jurgis Rudkus, who fails to recognize the extent to which he is being exploited and oppressed by the bourgeoisie in the work process, could be described as not being ‘class conscious’. The Britannica Encyclopedia explains that having class consciousness could mean having the self-awareness of one’s membership in a social class.¹⁹² Therefore, being class conscious might include perceiving the overall class hierarchy and understanding the extent of exploitation the class is subjected to by those who hold power in society. Consequently, Jurgis’s initial misperception of the workings of class in society could be interpreted as influenced by his false consciousness, a state in opposition to class consciousness, which is described by Tyson as being employed with the purpose of fostering the interests of the ones in power.¹⁹³ Jurgis fails to recognize the social hierarchy and the extent of his exploitation because of all the concealing, distorting factors employed to mask this reality, ultimately legitimizing this state, and promoting it as natural.

Following Fuchs’s view that false consciousness is created by the success of ideology¹⁹⁴, Jurgis Rudkus himself could be, therefore, understandably described as being under the influence of the distortive capitalist ideology. It could be argued that Sinclair’s effort to reveal this reality by depicting the protagonist’s initial failure to correctly interpret and uncover the position in society into which he is interpellated could be perceived as an attempt of unmasking the workings of the capitalist ideology hidden in the previously described interactions among the bourgeois employers and their proletarian employees. For these reasons, the following paragraphs are dedicated to the analysis of one of the factors which Sinclair depicts as one of the distortive elements that supposedly keeps Jurgis and other proletarian characters in the novel from being class conscious.

To exemplify, Sinclair’s commentary on the oppressive role of organized religion can be analyzed. Religion is essentially described as complicit or at least partly responsible in the process of distorting the proletariat’s consciousness and thus maintaining their false consciousness. According to Morris, Sinclair wanted to expose the hypocritical and venal nature of organized religion as one of the components of his task of exposing both the subtle and overt forms of

¹⁹¹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 387.

¹⁹² André Munro, “Class consciousness,” Encyclopedia Britannica, last modified July 19, 2013, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/class-consciousness/>.

¹⁹³ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 58.

¹⁹⁴ Fuchs, *Communication*, 232.

subjugation in society.¹⁹⁵ In this sense, as Tyson mentions, organized religion is perceived by Marxists as a ‘tranquilizer’ that maintains the satisfaction of poor people with what they have in life, or at least it makes them tolerant of their current situation. Additionally, even though organized religious groups indulge in charitable activities such as providing the poor with food, housing and clothing, the religious principles they advocate for also include the notion that the reward for the nonviolent and obedient believers awaits in heaven.¹⁹⁶As Sinclair states: “...[t]he working-man was to fix his hopes upon a future life, while his pockets were picked in this one.”¹⁹⁷

Accordingly, the descriptions of this issue present in the novel point towards Sinclair’s dissatisfaction with this aspect of organized religion which promotes the virtues of: “frugality, humility [and] obedience”¹⁹⁸ which are all condemned to simultaneously be: “...the pseudo-virtues of capitalism.”¹⁹⁹ As Tyson suggests, this aspect of Christian faith was often exploited throughout history by the minority of the wealthy who universally promoted these tenets of Christianity among the masses of the poor for their personal gain.²⁰⁰ For this reason, the novel seems to portray religion as one of the ideological components of the capitalist society because the virtues it praises and promotes inevitably coincide with the virtues that are required to be spread and maintained among the poor for the preservation of the prevailing social organization. Therefore, organized religion in *The Jungle* (1906) simply tries to mask the unjustness inherent to the capitalist mode of production by providing the poor with a false promise that their unjust treatment in their earthly lives will be justly compensated in the afterlife provided they closely adhere to the values that are universally promoted as religious virtues even despite the fact they coincide with the interests of the capitalists.

Sinclair additionally addresses the blatant irony in the differences between the preachers and the poor to whom they preach about the alleged privations of life. Accordingly, the evangelist preacher depicted in the novel preaches to the poor about overcoming the privations of poverty and suffering in the urban environment, however, he himself could not possibly grasp the reality of the

¹⁹⁵ Morris, “The Two Lives,” 55.

¹⁹⁶ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 59.

¹⁹⁷ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 398.

¹⁹⁸ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 398.

¹⁹⁹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 398.

²⁰⁰ Tyson, *Critical Theory*, 59.

workers' everyday lives because, as Sinclair mentions, he preaches: "...with his smooth, black coat and his neatly starched collar, his body warm, and his belly full, and money in his pocket."²⁰¹

In fact, the above-described notion of charitable activities of religious groups is criticized because the ability of clergymen to provide the poor with the necessities of life such as a warm refuge, food, money or clothing allegedly translates into them having control over the poor who need these things to survive: "...they might preach to hungry men, and the hungry men must be humble and listen!"²⁰² In Sinclair's interpretation, religion does not offer any solution to the problems of the poor but rather functions as a tool for controlling them. In fact, Sinclair describes the preachers themselves as complicit, they: "...were part of the problem, they were part of the order established that was crushing men down and beating them!"²⁰³ Thus, the portrayal of organized religion within the novel ultimately represents one of the components of society responsible for the sustainment of the proletariat's false consciousness. In short, religion is criticized for promoting the interests of the capitalists by spreading false virtues among the ranks of the poor who often have no choice but to obey provided they want to continue receiving material support from the clergy, thus suppressing the proletariat's ability to challenge the unjustness of the system.

²⁰¹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 273.

²⁰² Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 273.

²⁰³ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 273.

5.4. Sinclair's Socialist and Marxist Message

The thoughts of Karl Marx, according to Day, reflected the notion that class struggle is what drives history. The antagonism among classes in society based on their divergent relations to the means of economic production is also seen as the primary impulse that makes these classes and their members aware of themselves as being a part of the classes, which inevitably leads to conflict and consequently to change.²⁰⁴ In a like manner, the development of class consciousness is said to possess the needed power for uniting the working class against their employers.²⁰⁵ Accordingly, the gradual process of the protagonist's transformation towards the development of his class consciousness caused by the suppression of his false consciousness begins roughly towards the end of Chapter 27 and is further reinforced and explained in the chapters that follow, up until the end of the novel in Chapter 31. These sections of the novel fully embody the concluding message of Sinclair's novel that primarily reflects the concept of conflict and subsequent change.

In these sections of the narrative, Jurgis Rudkus becomes homeless and unemployed again amid the beginning of winter. He has no choice but to constantly wander around the city, begging for money, food and looking for shelter to survive. By chance he encounters a political meeting of "the Grand Old Party"²⁰⁶ and decides to attend to take shelter from the unpleasant weather. Jurgis tries to pay attention while listening to the Republican speaker preach about "the extent of American prosperity"²⁰⁷ because he was afraid of being removed from the meeting should he fall asleep and snore. Nevertheless, he eventually falls asleep and gets removed by a policeman as a bum, and with the crowd cheering and the Republican speaker, who was only interested in attracting a large crowd of people to the meeting for the newspaper headlines, laughing at his misfortune, finds himself: "...out in the rain, with a kick and a string of curses."²⁰⁸

This negative experience of the protagonist can be analyzed in juxtaposition to the events of the following day that take place at the beginning of Chapter 28. When Jurgis wanders around the same venue from the previous night, he encounters another: "...meeting, and a stream of people pouring in through the entrance."²⁰⁹ What distinguishes the depiction of this meeting from the

²⁰⁴ Day, *Class*, 6.

²⁰⁵ Vanneman, Cannon, "Fear and Loathing," 206.

²⁰⁶ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 341.

²⁰⁷ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 341.

²⁰⁸ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 341.

²⁰⁹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 356.

previous one is the emphasis placed on capturing the genuine interest of the crowd, contrary to the previous Republican meeting. There were no fireworks, no decorations or a band in the hall, there was simply nothing but a modest sign announcing the meeting, which nonetheless attracted: “[a] crowd, which ... had packed the hall to the very doors.”²¹⁰ Nevertheless, Jurgis disillusioned by his experience of legal corruption and election fraud, dismisses the crowd’s excitement and condemns them for their foolish trust in politicians. Even though he fears being removed from the meeting again, Jurgis falls asleep, dreading his previous experience of: “the angry exclamations, the hostile glances; ... the policeman striding toward him reaching for his neck.”²¹¹ When he is woken up, however, it is by a gentle and sweet voice of a woman sitting next to him which attracts Jurgis’s attention by the following exclamation: “If you would try to listen, comrade, perhaps you would be interested.”²¹² In fact, this is also the first indication the meeting is a socialist political meeting.

In contrast to the protagonist’s previous experience of ridicule and hostility that he had experienced at the Republican political meeting, he gets overwhelmed by the inexplicable feeling of comradeship and equality that resulted from this short interaction with a woman of a seemingly higher social standing who: “...was what is called a ‘lady’”²¹³ but seemed to accept him as an equal even despite the imagined gap in the social status of the two characters.

On the one hand, Sinclair depicts the protagonist’s interaction at the Republican meeting held by senator Spareshanks, a relentless supporter of laissez-faire capitalism. Spareshanks and his actions in this passage essentially embody the overall attitude of the old and prevailing social order. It is thus condemned as an order established by the wealthy for the benefit of the wealthy, disregarding the interests of the poor. On the other hand, the Socialist meeting in the following passage represents a stark contrast in this attitude and functions as a depiction of a possible alternative to the prevailing social order. Contrary to the Republican meeting, the meeting of the new party in the context of this passage represents both a literal and a figurative refuge for Jurgis and, therefore, for anyone regardless of their appearance, status, or wealth. In any case, it could be argued that the differences in the depiction of the Republican and Socialist political meetings foreshadow the overall intention of the novel’s closing chapters. It could be interpreted as Sinclair’s

²¹⁰ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 356.

²¹¹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 357.

²¹² Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 357.

²¹³ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 357.

allegorical attempt at establishing the basis for the upcoming argument that focuses on the advent of the Socialist Party in the United States and argues for its superiority over the practices of the Democratic and Republican parties that represent the old social order.

Consequently, the effects of the protagonist's contrasting experience with the two political meetings combined with his bewilderment of seeing the young woman's sheer expressions of excitement for the speaker's message likewise make him interested in the substance of the meeting and in the speaker's message.²¹⁴ However, upon closer examination of this passage, it is apparent the subsequent monologue of the socialist speaker was carefully created by Sinclair to precisely reflect the protagonist's horrific experience with the system from all the preceding chapters of the novel. As Sinclair writes, Jurgis felt that: "...suddenly it seemed as if the speaker had begun pointing straight at him, as if he had singled him out particularly for his remarks."²¹⁵ In this respect, as Taylor mentions, the arguments are created with an impression they result from the protagonist's real-world experience to counteract the notion they are imposed from the outside by the narrator.²¹⁶

Nevertheless, the socialist speaker's message clearly reflects Sinclair's condemning attitude towards the many social problems of early 20th century America. They are mostly presented as a direct consequence of the capitalist social order. Through the voice of the speaker, Sinclair exposes the exploitative nature of the capitalist class hierarchy that, however, remained hidden and unknown in the previous chapters of the novel, prior to Jurgis's exposure to the socialist thought at this meeting. It is suggested the proletariat workers are "the wage-slaves; who toil every hour they can stand and see, for just enough to keep them alive" in comparison to the bourgeois factory owners "who are the masters of these slaves, who own their toil"²¹⁷, who control "all the wealth of society"²¹⁸ because "[t]he whole of society is in their grip, [and] the whole labor of the world lies at their mercy."²¹⁹, which essentially summarizes the entire point of the speaker's message, explaining the dynamics of exploitation and power in the capitalist class hierarchy to Jurgis.

In this sense, according to Morris, the novel induces the readers with the assumption that the American society is corrupt, divided by class differences and the only possible solution for these

²¹⁴ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 358.

²¹⁵ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 358.

²¹⁶ Taylor, "Inescapably," 173.

²¹⁷ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 364.

²¹⁸ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 364.

²¹⁹ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 364.

issues is to turn to socialism.²²⁰ The following chapters of the novel are then used to further advocate for the cause of socialism through a range of similar characters whose sole purpose seems to be providing an exhaustive explanation of the basic principles of socialism to the protagonist and, therefore, simultaneously to the reader. Accordingly, as Mookerjee points out, from this point in the novel and forward, the sole focus of the author becomes describing the history and philosophy of socialism and what needs to be done for it to succeed in the United States.²²¹

A character called Ostrinski, a Polish socialist, who directly embodies the struggle of the proletariat, is briefly introduced in Chapter 29 to elaborate on the thoughts presented by the socialist orator in the previous segment of the novel. According to Folsom, Ostrinski offers explanations which to a greater or lesser extent reflect Sinclair's own authorial voice.²²² This character then provides Jurgis with an extensive analysis of the capitalist class hierarchy, of a society where:

...two classes were forming, with an unbridged chasm between them, – the capitalist class, with its enormous fortunes, and the proletariat, bound into slavery by unseen chains ... a thousand to one in numbers, but ... [too] ignorant and helpless, [who] would remain at the mercy of their exploiters until they were organized – until they had become 'class-conscious.'²²³

Therefore, socialism is presented as the illuminative notion, through its ideas and principles Jurgis finally becomes able to see the true strength of the proletariat and the reality of exploitation and distribution of wealth the dominant class was trying to conceal. According to the socialist orator, it removes: "The scales ... from his eyes, the shackles from his limbs ... he will stride forth a free man at last! [he will become] a man delivered from his self-created slavery!"²²⁴

The protagonist's sudden epiphany caused by the development of his class consciousness and the subsequent improvement of his social conditions are depicted as the result of his recognition, acceptance, and adoption of the socialist thoughts. Thus, as suggested above, Sinclair presents socialism as the necessary remedy for the ills of capitalism. He portrays it as something that has the power to reveal the hidden workings of the capitalist ideology and class hierarchy to the

²²⁰ Morris, "The Two Lives," 52.

²²¹ Mookerjee, "Muckraking and Fame," 86.

²²² Michael Brewster Folsom, "Upton Sinclair's Escape from The Jungle: The Narrative Strategy and Suppressed Conclusion of America's First Proletarian Novel," in *Upton Sinclair's The Jungle (Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations)*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2002), 37.

²²³ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 373.

²²⁴ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 361.

common laborers who were conditioned to overlook it and perceive it as natural. In any case, socialism is depicted as something that has the power to free these people from their false consciousness, it allows them to: "...tear off the rags of [the world's] customs and conventions – [to] behold [the world] as it is, in its hideous nakedness!"²²⁵

However, even though Jurgis is made to realize that he was being exploited as an individual by understanding the divide between the socioeconomic classes, the Marxist message the novel ultimately conveys is that it is important this realization occurs across the whole working class. It embodies the message that the class as a whole needs to realize the extent of their exploitation, to achieve such consciousness collectively and, therefore, instigate the battle against the other class.²²⁶ As Elliott mentions it was Sinclair's goal to appeal to the minds and hearts of the readers who needed to be made aware of the corruption of the present for them to reject it and instead accept his ideal of a socialist utopia.²²⁷ In short, Jurgis's previous misfortune accompanied by the sudden abolition of his false consciousness helps him understand he could have escaped the poverty, injustice, and interpellation he was subjected to under the capitalist system by turning to socialism.

His conversion to the socialist cause is consequently used to provide a figurative paradigm of how others, including the readers, could be enlightened too. According to Mookerjee, the novel made thousands of workers and wage laborers in America conscious of the conditions they were living in by increasing their awareness and giving them faith for a better arrangement.²²⁸ In the same manner, as Taylor suggests, the didactic purpose of the novel includes the demand on the readers to: "...put into action the lessons Jurgis has learned."²²⁹ The novel thus evidently advocates for the advent of a social revolution in the United States, as Sinclair writes: "...the thing was to get hold of others and rouse them, to organize them and prepare for the fight!"²³⁰

As Øverland explains, Jurgis's previous experience served as his education about the present but as he becomes acquainted with the facts of his social existence, he also needs to become educated in what is to come in the future which is something that, however, cannot be learned from

²²⁵ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 362.

²²⁶ Day, *Class*, 55.

²²⁷ Emory Elliott, "Afterword to The Jungle," in *Upton Sinclair's The Jungle (Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations)*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2002), 90.

²²⁸ Mookerjee, "Muckraking and Fame," 88.

²²⁹ Taylor, "Inescapably," 175.

²³⁰ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 369.

experience and he, therefore, needs to be exposed to the theory of Marxism: "...that explains not only what is but also what must become."²³¹ In this sense, Sinclair's depiction of Jurgis's transformation and its subsequent effects seem to follow the tenets of proletarian literature, described by Foley as a future-oriented body of texts which embody a sense of an anticipatory utopia of a better world characterized by the need for, and the possibility of rejecting the current social order. Such literature is consequently perceived as: "...a practical tool for transforming the world."²³² In case of *The Jungle* (1906), the transformation of the world is reliant on the rejection of the capitalist social order and on the subsequent introduction of socialism as the alternative for the creation of a superior social order and thus a better world. A transformation which would supposedly redress the existence of the social injustices adherent to the capitalist mode of production by replacing the existing social systems with systems based on socialist principles.

Sinclair explicitly voices his support for the socialist reorganization of the capitalist society in the argument of his two profound socialist characters, Schliemann, and Lucas, who are, similarly to Ostrinski, said to be given the task summarizing Sinclair's own opinions on the possible future of the socialist movement.²³³ In their exchange, Sinclair establishes the two founding pillars of the socialist thought with respect to the reorganization of American society, according to them:

...a socialist believes in the common ownership and democratic management of the means of producing the necessities of life ... [and in] that the means by which this is to be brought about is the class-conscious political organization of the wage earners."²³⁴

In this sense, the thoughts of socialism in Sinclair's novel present a prospect of a desirable future of the country, a utopian vision of America that is freed from the seemingly unjust limitations that prevail in society that is ran by the wealthy capitalists. An America transformed by the socialist thoughts, a place where the power and wealth are justly redistributed among all people in a society with no boundaries imposed by the inequalities and divisions between social classes, closer to the initial vision of the United States perpetuated by the American dream. Accordingly, Folsom describes Sinclair's approach as "distinctly Marxian" because of his approach in advocating for

²³¹ Orm Overland, "The Jungle: From Lithuanian Peasant to American Socialist," *American Literary Realism* 37, no. 1 (Fall 2004): 19.

²³² Foley, *Marxist Literary*, 155-6.

²³³ Folsom, "Upton Sinclair's Escape," 45.

²³⁴ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 401.

class conflict and because of his expectations of a revolutionary seizure and redistribution of both the industry and the government from the hands of the capitalist class.²³⁵

Consequently, Sinclair's socialist views presented within the novel mostly reflect the need for the participation of the state in the ownership and management of the indispensable components of society, such as the meatpacking industry, which is essentially used as a case point for exposing the countless shortcomings of the capitalist society throughout the novel:

The people were tremendously stirred up over its encroachments, but nobody had any remedy to suggest; it was the task of Socialists to teach and organize them, and prepare them for the time when they were to seize the huge machine called the Beef Trust, and use it to produce food for human beings and not to heap up fortunes for a band of pirates.²³⁶

One of the subsequent allusions the author makes to the desired transformation of the social, political and economic system and the relations it could possibly foster can be observed on the depiction of the relationship between Jurgis and his new employer, Tommy Hinds, who is described as a hotel owner sincerely and fervently committed to the socialist cause. When Sinclair describes the professional relationship between Jurgis and his new employer Tommy, the word 'boss' is purposefully placed in quotation marks to reflect the notion that under the effect of the socialist principles, Jurgis and Tommy are essentially equals: "Jurgis was known to his "boss" as "Comrade Jurgis," and in return he was expected to call him "Comrade Hinds."²³⁷

The job of a porter in the hotel Tommy provides for Jurgis yields a stable income and even though the work itself is described as demanding, the conditions are humane and the pay is appropriate.²³⁸ Therefore, Tommy Hinds represents an obvious contrast to the previously described approach of the bourgeois meatpacking factory owners such as Durham or Jones, who are conversely criticized for their indifferent, exploitative, and oppressive practices. As Tavernier-Courbin mentions, Tommy Hinds foremost represents: "...a compassionate and understanding employer."²³⁹ Thus, Sinclair's depiction of the relationship between Jurgis and Tommy fostered by the socialist mindset mostly represents the idealized promise of equality and fairness between two conflicting layers of the work process even despite the fact that Tommy is an owner and Jurgis is

²³⁵ Folsom, "Upton Sinclair's Escape," 38.

²³⁶ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 378.

²³⁷ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 380-1.

²³⁸ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 386.

²³⁹ Tavernier-Courbin, "The Call," 259.

an employee. Furthermore, Tommy Hinds effectively embodies the notion that socialism is the universal solution to every problem a person might face in the capitalist society, as Sinclair writes:

He had one unfailing remedy for all the evils of this world, and he preached it to every one; no matter whether the person's trouble was ... he would say, "You know what to do about it – vote the Socialist ticket!"²⁴⁰

Accordingly, further analysis of the novel's socialist message reveals that Sinclair's intention seemed to be bringing the advent of his socialist utopia by the means of progressive reformist activities rather than by revolution. According to Mookerjee, the social revolution suggested in *The Jungle* (1906) was to be carried out by peaceful and democratic means because Sinclair did not consider violence and bloodshed as the appropriate means for the upcoming transformation.²⁴¹ To this end, the novel portrays the just success of the Socialist Party in democratic elections as the only appropriate means for the upcoming transformation of the American capitalist society, glorifying the Socialist's triumph in the ongoing elections across the United States and especially in the Chicago Stockyards that is thoroughly described in the closing sections of the novel: "We shall bear down the opposition, we shall sweep it before us and Chicago will be ours!"²⁴²

In short, the previously analyzed descriptions of the enormous divide between classes, the horrifying reality of the wage-laborers' daily struggles and the invalidity of the American dream could be all perceived as means to an end for Sinclair's political agitation. All societal shortcomings are attributed to capitalism, which is depicted as the ultimate incarnation of human evil and greed. It is depicted as a flawed system ran by the bourgeoisie that is only supposed to be remediable by an extensive reorganization of society that is described as being fully reliant on the political enlightenment of the masses, realized by the means of spreading socialism, adopting its thoughts and thus positively altering the reality of economic, social and political life in the United States.

²⁴⁰ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 381.

²⁴¹ Mookerjee, "Muckraking and Fame," 84.

²⁴² Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 413.

6. Conclusion

This master thesis focused on the analysis of Upton Sinclair's most successful novel, *The Jungle* (1906), which epitomizes many of the issues tied to the prior developments of the 19th and early 20th centuries that ultimately shaped the conditions in American society at the turn of the century. The technological advancements had significantly propelled industrialization and attracted many workers to the urban environments of the country which achieved immense growth during these periods. The industrial hubs in the United States had effectively turned into a New Frontier for many immigrants from the eastern and southern European countries who arrived literally by the millions with the vision of improving their conditions. However, the overpopulated cities were riddled with crime and poverty and the unskilled laborers were frequently forced to work for a minimal wage in the abhorrent conditions of the industrial sweatshops and factories. The turn of the century shift into the Progressive Era nonetheless marks the time when the struggle to address the issues tied to industrialism and the ongoing urbanization started to become more pronounced than ever before. This attitude was, for example, reflected in the muckraking reformist movement that aimed to expose the abhorrent conditions of poverty and corruption in the country. In fact, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906), which served as the basis for the analysis in this thesis, is often considered to be one of the prime examples of this approach.

Upton Sinclair focuses on the depiction of these issues primarily by portraying the experience in the capitalist society from the point of view of an immigrant family from Lithuania who arrive to the United States with a vision of improving their living conditions and thus achieving some form of social mobility. Therefore, one of the first aspects of the novel which was analyzed was Sinclair's portrayal of the American dream.

In this respect, the analysis of the novel revealed that the American dream is portrayed as hollow and flawed, essentially ruined by the values of individualism and greed of the capitalist free market economy. The American dream is also criticized as a belief system or an ideology because it unequivocally supports the worldview and the interests of the dominant class by promoting hard work as a reliable source of improvement. It shapes the behavior of people by promoting hard work as the most reliable means for improving one's conditions or getting ahead of others, condemning the unsuccessful people as incompetent and lazy to mask the shortcomings of the prevailing social order. The novel addresses the flaws of the American dream with emphasis on the process of

degradation the ideal has undergone in the experience of Sinclair's immigrant workers in consequence of the highly competitive and individualistic atmosphere in society of early 20th century America. The values of equality and hard work are fundamentally dismissed as useless in the pursuit of one's American dream, whereas immorality and greed are presented as the only means by which Sinclair's characters can at least partially overcome their difficult situations and achieve some stability or improvement in their otherwise miserable lives.

Moreover, the characters' immigrant identity is essentially dismissed in the overall scheme of the novel and the only important factor of their identity becomes their affiliation with the working class. After all, Sinclair himself chose to dedicate the novel: "To the workingmen of America." For this reason, this master thesis mainly focused on the depiction of class relations in the capitalist society and on their analysis from the Marxist point of view, as a possible critique of capitalism.

When analyzed from the Marxist viewpoint, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906) primarily depicts a political and economic system that is condemned for its perpetuation of class struggle. In such a system, the proletarian characters are essentially devoid of their power and equality, whereas the bourgeois characters possess all the power that stems from their possession of the means of production, granting them the ability to freely exploit and oppress the common laborers. The law, the judicial system and the democracy are all thoroughly influenced by their power which has essentially ruined the system. Furthermore, the enormous divide between the two socioeconomic classes is exhaustively criticized in Sinclair's depiction of the contrast in the standards of living between the wealthy and the poor. The contrasts generally seem to be depicted to point towards the fact that the success of the wealthy in such society substantially rests on the suffering of the poor, which simply fuels the conspicuous consumption and the lavish lifestyles of the wealthy elite.

On the one hand, the bourgeoisie, represented by Sinclair's depiction of the factory owners and other delegates of their power, symbolize the villains of the novel. They are demonized and all the suffering and social problems of the capitalist society are universally accredited to their unscrupulous practices and greed. On the other hand, the proletarian characters, who have little to no human agency, are in consequence typically depicted as the passive victims of these "capitalist monsters". Overall, it is apparent that Sinclair pleads for the case of the working-class poor by depicting the horrendous story of the Rudkus family which ultimately serves the purpose of

revealing and condemning capitalism by portraying the continuous destruction of a family that was prolongedly exposed to the conditions of this society and its class hierarchy.

The economic and political system is also denounced for concealing the reality of class and exploitation from common laborers like Jurgis Rudkus because it creates a false consciousness that limits the ability for them to become aware of their unfavorable position in society. Moreover, it completely hinders their efforts to devise an alternative system created based on the seemingly commonsense principles of equal power and opportunity in the economic and political system. The proletariat's false consciousness is, for example, described to be partially perpetuated by organized religion which is consequently criticized to be one of the factors complicit in the process of keeping the proletarian workers restrained and obedient. In general, Sinclair's working-class characters are simply limited by the economic, social, and political privations which confine them to accept their interpellation and the prevailing conditions despite their illogical, unjust, and brutalizing nature.

However, Sinclair eventually allows Jurgis Rudkus to achieve class consciousness in the portrayal of his sudden socialist conversion at the end of the novel. The protagonist's exposure to the socialist principles ultimately allows Jurgis to perceive the need for an alternative system and, therefore, frees him of his false consciousness. In this sense, the novel exposes and denounces the dominant capitalist ideology. In other words, Sinclair's proletarian characters initially accept the current social order as the conventional and legitimate worldview. It is, however, eventually exposed to be employed to protect the interests of the dominant class after the protagonist's enlightenment achieved by him joining the socialist movement, which stimulates him to perceive the current social and political circumstances as utterly illegitimate. Thus, Sinclair's depictions of the evils of capitalism undermine and challenge the legitimacy of the ruling class worldview and violate the previous seemingly deterministic tendencies of the novel.

Consequently, the revelations of the system's illegitimacy caused by the combination of all the above-described factors constitute the novels conclusive Marxist message. It can be perceived in Sinclair's allusions to the needed transformation of society where the indispensable means of production would be justly redistributed among people or would be governmentally owned to decrease the power of the unscrupulous factory owners and increase the ability of the government for the regulation of such businesses. The main argument of *The Jungle* (1906) is that such transformation would supposedly create a society where the economic and political systems would

not trample and violate people's basic human rights based solely on the distinction in their socioeconomic class, or their relation to the means of production. In fact, socialism is portrayed as a miraculous solution to all the problems that exist in the capitalist society. It is presented as a notion which would constitute greatly in the creation a superior social order based on equality, brought into existence by the means of impartial democratic elections.

Therefore, besides being a muckraking exposé on the unsanitary practices and dangerous working conditions in the early 20th century Chicago meatpacking industry, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906) primarily embodies Sinclair's own utopian visions of the needed societal transformation brought about by rejecting capitalism and turning to socialism. In this sense, the character Jurgis Rudkus and his development fundamentally serve as a reflection of what needs to occur among the masses of the working-class laborers in the United States for it to be successful. Similarly, the descriptions of the horrid conditions that prevail in the capitalist society as well as the portrayal of the degradation of values associated with the American dream primarily provide the needed arguments for the novel's socialist message. For all these reasons, it is safe to assume that the novel can be indeed classified as a literary work with a clear Marxist agenda which serves as a direct critique of capitalism by elaborately portraying its faults and simultaneously inviting the readers to condemn them and thus making them accept the thought that change is needed.

Resumé

Tato diplomová práce se zabývala analýzou románu *Džungle* (1906) amerického autora Uptona Sinclaira, a to především jeho vyobrazením motivů amerického snu, sociálních problémů a rozdílů mezi sociálními třídami a jejich možnou interpretací z hlediska marxistické literární kritiky.

Román *Džungle* vyobrazuje zkušenosti se životem v americké společnosti na počátku dvacátého století z pohledu fiktivní postavy chudého litevského přistěhovalce Jurgise Rudkuse a dalších členů jeho rodiny. Vyobrazením života těchto imigrantů, kteří se vydali do Chicaga s vidinou zlepšení pracovních, finančních a celkově i životních podmínek Sinclair nabízí bližší pohled na problematiku městského života a kapitalismu v Americe na počátku 20. století. Popisem způsobu života v místní přistěhovalcecké komunitě a pracovních podmínek v Chicagském jatečném průmyslu obecně pak především odkazuje na problematiku sociálních problémů a třídních rozdílů, které v kapitalistické společnosti panovaly v souvislosti s přerozdělením moci a bohatství na základě vztahu jednotlivců k výrobním prostředkům. Z těchto důvodů byl román zvolen pro vyhotovení analýzy s ohledem na využití přístupů marxistické literární kritiky, které za pomoci analýzy autorova vyobrazení amerického snu, sociálních problémů a ekonomických rozdílů ve společnosti pomohly s odhalením ideologické motivace tohoto díla a zodpovězením otázky, zda a z jakých důvodů na dílo může být nahlíženo jako na Sinclairovu kritiku kapitalismu.

První segment teoretické části práce sloužící jako úvod do sociálního a historického kontextu románu se zabíral především průřezem významných změn 19. století, které v Americe proběhly v průběhu tzv. pozlaceného věku a následně popisem jejich kulminace a dopadů ve společnosti během počátku progresivní éry na konci 19. století a v první dekádě 20. století. S technologickým pokrokem se v průběhu 19. století americká společnost značně proměnila v důsledku probíhajících průmyslových revolucí a postupné přeměny zaměření ekonomiky ze zemědělské na průmyslovou výrobu. V této době se po vzoru železnic v Americe začaly vyskytovat první monopolistické podniky, které do velké míry spoléhaly na spolupráci s vládou z hlediska ochranných tarifů a investic, ale také z hlediska její neintervenci politiky s ohledem na pracovní reformy. Na jednu stranu byla tato doba jednoznačně dobou technologického pokroku, ale na druhou stranu také dobou politické korupce, značných sociálních problémů a rozdílů, jelikož průmyslová výroba byla řízena ziskem a řadoví pracovníci oproti průmyslovým magnátům pochopitelně žili v chudobě. Tyto problémy byly v městském prostředí navíc umocněny novou vlnou imigrace, která začala

koncem 19. století a přivedla do USA miliony imigrantů z východní a jižní Evropy, kteří byli značně znevýhodněni, jelikož byli často chudí a nekvalifikovaní. Jejich příval značně zvýšil městskou populaci napříč průmyslovými centry Ameriky a jelikož tito imigranti často pracovali v otřesných podmínkách a za malé mzdy a tím pádem běžně žili v chudobě, bylo na ně negativně nahlíženo a často byli označováni za zdroj sociálních problémů v městském prostředí.

Na konci 19. století ale tyto problémy a kontroverzní praktiky napříč průmyslem začaly být vnímány jako hrozba americké demokracii a jejím základním hodnotám, což dalo začátek americkému progresivnímu hnutí hlásajícímu potřebu pro nástup změn, které by přivedly společnost do lepšího stavu. To mělo být na příklad dokázáno reformami omezujícími moc podniků, zlepšujícími pravomoci vlády v jejich regulaci a obecně reformami pracovních a hygienických podmínek v průmyslu, či řešením sociálních problémů v aspektech běžného života. Mezi představitele tohoto reformního hnutí patřila i skupina novinářů tzv. „muckrakers“, kteří odhalovali korupci a odsuzováním nekalých praktik politiků a businessmanů se snažili řešit sociální a politické problémy. Řadil se mezi ně i Upton Sinclair, jehož román *Džungle* je právě často popisován jako dílo investigativních rozměrů s ohledem na autorovo vyobrazení podmínek zpracování masa a výroby masných výrobků v Chicagských masokombinátech, které jsou v románu podrobně vyobrazeny. Upton Sinclair se roku 1904 osobně vydal do Chicaga a během této doby sbíral informace o podmínkách v Chicagu, které později společně s jeho vlastními zkušenostmi s chudobou, městským životem a rozdíly mezi sociálními třídami využil při psaní románu *Džungle*. Oproti investigativním článkům dalších „muckrakers“ se ale román *Džungle* liší především v tom, že je sice založen na reálném podkladu, ale i přesto se jedná o fiktivní příběh. Román často bývá řazen i mezi díla naturalistů, se kterými sice sdílí určité parametry, ale svou podstatou se od nich i významně liší, jelikož Sinclair do svého románu promítnul i jeho vlastní politické přesvědčení, které ve výsledku výrazně narušilo původní deterministický nádech díla. Z těchto důvodů může být román *Džungle* označen spíše za dílo sociální kritiky, které odsuzováním podmínek ve společnosti a praktik v průmyslu volá po reformách kapitalistické společnosti a zároveň tedy slouží i jako odraz Sinclairovy vlastní socialistické agendy.

V poslední sekci teoretické části práce byly nastíněny základní principy marxistické literární kritiky, které byly následně použity k vypracování souboru výzkumných otázek a analytického rámce k analýze románu *Džungle* pro druhou část této diplomové práce. Literární kritika obecně

spočívá v aplikaci určité kritické teorie na daný text. V tomto případě se jednalo o teorii marxistickou založenou na myšlenkách Karla Marxe a Friedricha Engelse, která ale primárně neslouží jako rámec pro interpretaci literárních textů. Z hlediska Marxových myšlenek byly všechny mentální produkty interpretovány jakožto výsledky skutečných sociálních a ekonomických podmínek. Proto byly dále představeny Marxovy myšlenky zabývající se strukturou společnosti a jejím rozdělením na ekonomickou základnu a její nadstavbu, jež mimo forem sociálního vědomí a ideologie zahrnuje i literaturu. Dále byl nastíněn koncept ideologie a představeny možné interpretace tohoto konceptu s ohledem na interpretaci marxistické literární kritiky jakožto nástroje na odhalení ideologie v produktech kultury a jejich analýze z hlediska jejich vztahu k mocenskému uspořádání socioekonomických systémů. Dále bylo nastíněno, že se ideologie může v textu projevovat několika způsoby. Literatura ji může buď upevňovat nebo rozvracet a cílem kritika je tyto tendence odhalit. Z tohoto důvodu byly vypracovány otázky k analýze zabývající se ideologickou motivací textu a vyobrazením sociálních a ekonomických podmínek s ohledem na to, jak román zachycuje problematiku třídy a jakým způsobem na tyto motivy lze nahlížet jako na kritiku kapitalismu.

První částí analýzy románu *Džungle* bylo vyobrazení motivu amerického snu, který byl použit jako odkaz na autorovo vyobrazení socioekonomických podmínek převládajících ve společnosti na začátku 20. století a poukazoval na jejich kontrast s hodnotami, které ideologie amerického snu propaguje. Americký sen protagonisty Jurgise Rudkuse a jeho rodiny bylo zlepšení jejich životních podmínek oproti chudobě ve zkorumpované Litvě. Amerika byla mezi budoucími imigranty v jejich domovině vykreslována jako země rovnosti, kde jsou tvrdá práce a řádné odhodlání odměněny bohatstvím a zlepšením životních podmínek. Sinclairovo vyobrazení ale poukazuje na to, že tvrdá práce není vždy řádně odměněna po vzoru ideologie amerického snu, jak je například ilustrováno na postavě Jokubase Szedvilase, obchodníka, který je neúspěšný i přes jeho veškerou snahu. Jurgis ale tuto realitu nechápe a například odsuzuje Jokubase, protože je ovlivněn ideologií amerického snu, která udává, že kdo není úspěšný musí nutně být líný a neschopný. Nerozumí ale tomu, že Jokubasův neúspěch nespočívá v jeho lenosti, ale je spíše zapříčiněn nepříznivou situací, která ve společnosti panuje pod vlivem hodnot podporujících individualismus a chamtivost. Ideologie amerického snu ale tuto realitu maskuje a z toho důvodu ji může Jurgis reálně pochopit pouze potom, co je sám těmto podmínkám vystaven. Poté co se Jurgis opakovaně stane obětí korupce, chamtivosti a vykořisťování teprve pochopí, že tvrdá práce automaticky nezaručí úspěch

jako si původně myslel pod vlivem ideologie amerického snu. Naopak, Sinclair vyobrazuje motiv tvrdé práce jako něco, co životní podmínky v kapitalistické společnosti paradoxně jen zhoršuje. Tato myšlenka je dále umocněna autorovým vyobrazením degradace morálních hodnot imigrantů, kteří původně vyzdvihují význam hodnot tvrdé práce, etnických zvyků a rodiny nad vše ostatní. Právě oni by měli tedy být po vzoru amerického snu po právu odměněni zlepšením jejich životních podmínek, ale to se nestane, jelikož jsou opakovaně vystavováni neblahým podmínkám kapitalistické společnosti, které je eventuálně donutí ignorovat jejich morální přesvědčení a stát se tak součástí zkorumpovaného systému založenému na chamtivosti a nepoctivosti. I přesto že se Jurgis stane zlodějem a jeho příbuzná Marija prostitutkou, jejich životní podmínky se zlepší, a tak román ilustruje podobné nežádoucí praktiky jako lepší alternativu k tvrdé práci, kterou odsuzuje jako bezcennou pro realizaci jejich amerického snu. Vyobrazením amerického snu a jeho neplatnosti tedy Sinclair primárně kritizuje podmínky převládající v kapitalistické společnosti na začátku 20. století, která není založena na rovnosti, volnosti a tvrdé práci, ale spíše na vykořisťování, chamtivosti a prosazování vlastních zájmů nad zájmy ostatních. Vyobrazením amerického snu a jeho neplatností tedy Sinclair primárně prezentuje svoji agendu, která všechny tyto problémy odsuzuje jako nedostatky kapitalistické společnosti.

Druhá část analýzy se blíže zabývala právě problematikou kapitalismu, a to především z hlediska Sinclairova vyobrazení třídních vztahů v Americké společnosti za zohlednění přístupů marxistické teorie. Nejdříve byla marxisticky definována třída jakožto ekonomická kategorie, která je závislá na vztahu jednotlivců k výrobním prostředkům a jejich rozdělení ve společnosti na buržoazii, která tyto prostředky ovládá a tím pádem má moc a na proletariát, který ve prospěch buržoazie provádí manuální práci. První podkapitola se zabývala tzv. třídním bojem a autorovým vyobrazením vztahů, které v Sinclairově vyobrazení společnosti panují jakožto jeho důsledek. Sinclairův román vyobrazuje třídní boj hlavně z hlediska ekonomického nátlaku a politické korupce. Prvním příkladem může být například postava jménem Ona Lukoszaite, která je pod ekonomickým nátlakem a hrozbou ztráty práce nucena se podrobit sexuálnímu zneužívání jejího nadřízeného Phila Connora. Dále je tato problematika vyobrazena narážkami na politickou korupci, která se v Chicagu odehrává. Podle Sinclaira je legislativa tvořena samotnými vlastníky výrobních prostředků, demokratické volby jsou zmanipulované a represivní složky jako je policie a soudní systém jsou taktéž pod jejich vlivem a jsou tak hlavně využívány k potlačování zájmů proletariátu. Obecně jsou pak členové proletariátu v knize pod konstantním ekonomickým a politickým

nátlakem buržoazie a kvůli těmto převládajícím podmínkám nemají pro přežití jinou možnost než nadále pracovat v těchto nepříznivých podmínkách. Z tohoto důvodu tedy Sinclairovo vyobrazení problematiky třídního boje v románu *Džungle* slouží především jako kritika kapitalismu.

Druhá podkapitola se zabývá analýzou vyobrazení rozdílů mezi třídami, a to především z hlediska rozdělení moci a bohatství ve společnosti a možnou interpretací této problematiky v části románu, kde autor blízce kontrastuje život bohatých a chudých v jejich přímé interakci. Na postavě Fredericka Jonese, který je synem jednoho z Chicagských masokombinátních magnátů Sinclair ilustruje především lhostejnost dominantní třídy. Popis Frederickova přístupu a ignorance k situaci chudých společně s popisem jeho životního stylu a bohatství jsou použity jako kritika společenských rozdílů, ale zároveň i jako kritika vztahů ke komoditám, které vznikají v kapitalistické společnosti v ohledu na to, jakým způsobem odráží status a bohatství jejich vlastníků. V tomto smyslu je také možno interpretovat román jako kritiku vzrůstajících konzumních tendencí v Americké společnosti. Běžní pracovníci jako Jurgis jsou poté především zneužívání pro udržování těchto životních podmínek bohatých, kdežto oni sami zřídka prosperují.

Třetí podkapitola se zabývala otázkou vyobrazení problematiky konceptu třídního vědomí. Z počátku byl Jurgis Rudkus vyobrazen v románu jako člověk bez třídního vědomí, protože nebyl schopen rozpoznat ilegitimnost převládající společenské hierarchie a tím pádem byl pod vlivem tzv. falešného vědomí. To zahrnuje způsoby, kterými dominantní třída udržuje legitimitu stávajících sociálních podmínek a tím skrývá realitu nerovnosti a vykořisťování před členy podřízené třídy. Jedním z prvků, který je v románu prezentován jako součást kapitalistické ideologie, která svým způsobem udržuje pracovníky v jejich falešném vědomí je náboženství. V tomto smyslu podle Sinclaira náboženství pouze propaguje hodnoty, které jsou v souladu se zájmy dominantní třídy a jelikož je třída podřízená často odkázaná na materiální pomoc náboženských skupin reálně nemá možnost tuto pomoc a hodnoty, které s ní neodmyslitelně přicházejí odmítnout.

Čtvrtá a poslední podkapitola této analýzy se zabývala interpretací Sinclairovy socialistické agendy, která je založena na celku negativních zkušeností protagonisty s kapitalismem napříč románem. Socialismus je v románu *Džungle* prezentován jako řešení všech sociálních problémů kapitalismu, které pomůže Jurgisovi s překonáním jeho falešného vědomí. Díky myšlenkám socialismu začne Jurgis vnímat společenské problémy jako důsledek třídního rozdělení společnosti. Jeho osvícení socialistickými myšlenkami poté v románu figuruje jako způsob, kterým Sinclair

myšlenky potřeby sociální revoluce zároveň prezentuje čtenářům. Jeho socialistické postavy jako jsou Ostrinski, Schliemann a Lucas poté v románu slouží jako prostředníci pomocí kterých je Sinclairova zpráva o nedostacích kapitalismu a výhodách socialismu komunikována, a to především jejich myšlenkami potřeby reorganizace společnosti na základě socialistických principů. Sinclair explicitně zmiňuje potřebu přerozdělení moci a výrobních prostředků závislé na rozvoji třídního vědomí proletariátu a jejich následnému politickému uspořádání, které by vedlo k úspěchu socialistů v řádných demokratických volbách. Velká část motivů, které byly v této analýze zpracovány tedy poukazuje na to, že byly Sinclairem využity primárně jako prostředky jeho politické agitace sloužící jako základ jeho utopické vidiny socialistické budoucnosti Ameriky.

Závěr práce shrnul výše popsané poznatky předchozích částí analýzy, ze kterých jasně vyplývá záměr románu jakožto Sinclairovo přímé odsouzení a kritika kapitalismu. Americký sen je v kapitalistické společnosti neplatný pod vlivem nemorálních hodnot, které tato společnost vytváří a udržuje. Navíc svým způsobem tento ideál podporuje zájmy dominantní třídy, jelikož vyobrazuje tvrdou práci jako prostředek možného zlepšení životních podmínek a maskuje společenské problémy. Obecně Sinclair kritizuje také nerovnosti a nespravedlnosti ve společnosti, které vyplývají ze vztahu postav k výrobním prostředkům. Buržoazie je kritizována z důvodu, že její moc ji dovoluje za pomoci manipulace práva či ekonomického nátlaku volně vykořisťovat proletariát. Veškeré společenské problémy jsou dávány za vinu buržoazii. Proletáři jsou naopak vyobrazeni jako pasivní, bezmocné oběti třídních vztahů, jejichž kritikou Sinclair zastává zájmy proletariátu a odsuzuje tak převládající uspořádání společnosti. Tento ekonomický a politický systém je také kritizován, protože záměrně vytváří v proletářích falešné vědomí, a tak maskuje ilegitimnost převládajícího uspořádání společnosti a nadále zaručuje jeho nenarušený chod. Za pomoci Jurgisova socialistického obrození a prozření ale Sinclair postupně zpochybňuje legitimitu světonázoru vládnoucí třídy. Socialistickými principy svobody a rovnosti závislé na přerozdělení výrobních prostředků pak Sinclair nabízí svou utopickou vidinu Ameriky závislou na přechodu společnosti z kapitalismu na socialismus. S ohledem na tyto zjištění román *Džungle* Uptona Sinclaira může být označen za dílo s marxistickou agendou, protože jednoznačně odsuzuje kapitalismus a tím i jeho čtenáře vyzývá k jeho kritice a myšlenkám přijetí alternativního systému.

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