

Critique of the American Dream in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*

Karolína Žáková

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Mgr. Libor Marek, Ph.D.
děkan


L.S.


Mgr. Roman Trušník, Ph.D.
ředitel ústavu

Ve Zlíně dne 27. února 2020

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce si klade za cíl analýzu a kritiku Amerického snu v novele *Džungle* od Uptona Sinclaira. Práce je rozdělena do jedenácti částí. První dvě části se zabývají historickým pozadím dob Pozlacený věk a Progresivní éra. Následující část se zabývá postupným vývojem Amerického snu. Čtvrtá část této práce zahrnuje informace o životě autora Upton Sinclaira a také o následných dopadech románu *Džungle*. Posledních sedm částí práce se zabývá analýzou samotného románu.

Klíčová slova: Americký sen, Pozlacený věk, chudoba, imigrace, Upton Sinclair, Deklarace nezávislosti

ABSTRACT

The main goal of this bachelor's thesis is the analysis and critique of the American Dream in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. This thesis is divided into eleven parts. The first two parts deal with the historical background of the Gilded Age and Progressive era. The following part focuses on the forming of the American Dream throughout time. The fourth part covers the information about Upton Sinclair and the impact of *The Jungle*. The last seven parts deal with the analysis of the novel.

Keywords: American Dream, Gilded Age, poverty, immigration, Upton Sinclair, Declaration of Independence

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of the American Dream has been and still is interpreted and understood differently over the years. In general, it could be said that the American Dream is a belief in freedom, equal opportunity and pursuit of success. The notion of the dream is embedded in the Declaration of Independence, and it became an integral part of the American nation. However, the ambiguity of the American Dream has also been criticized.

This phenomenon occurs in Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle*, published in 1906 when a Lithuanian family decides to move to America to pursue their dream of economic opportunity. They picture America as a dreamland, but instead of achieving the dream, they face harsh the reality that most of the immigrants in the late 19th century did.

The main goal of this thesis is the analysis and critique of the American Dream in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, by which a Lithuanian immigrant family was beguiled to come to America to pursue their dream of economic opportunity. Instead, the family encounters corrupted American society and economic exploitation. Thus, this thesis is going to argue that despite the family's values, good morals, determination, and work ethic, they could not achieve the American Dream.

The first chapter deals with the Gilded Age and describe the life of immigrants in the late 19th century. The Progressive era during which the novel was published is described in the second chapter. The third chapter, Forming of the American Dream, describes the different perception of the dream throughout time and its impact upon the American nation. The information about the author and the power of his novel is described in the fourth chapter, and the last seven chapters focus on the analysis of the novel from which a conclusion will be drawn.

I. THEORY

1 THE GIDLED AGE

The Gilded Age was a period during which the United States experienced great industrial development. The US transformed itself from a mostly rural to an urban country, and by 1890 became the world's leading industrial power.¹

The Gilded age was an era of “the robber barons” who dominated various types of industries, such as oil, steel, alcohol, refining and others. Because of their expansion and power, they joined their forces to get rid of the competition and take control over the specific markets and transformed themselves into “trusts”. They controlled all the stages of their production and set prices and conditions for everyone.²

A new ideology called Social Darwinism occurred, which served as an excuse and justification for the inhumane and immoral behaviour of the trusts. One of the most known Social Darwinist was Herbert Spencer, who came up with the phrase “survival of the fittest.”³ Similarly, as the Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection of species, Social Darwinism applied this on society. To be more specific, “the survival of the fittest” was measured according to economic stability, where only the wealthy ones were worthy of survival and the poor, namely the factory workers, were not. Social Darwinists saw the enormous gap between the rich and poor as progressive and as a contribution to the economic growth of the country. The ideology also served as a “moral justification for harsh working conditions and growing economic inequality,” states Norton Garfinkle in his book *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth*.⁴

1.1 Immigration in the 19th century

In the 19th century, America experienced great waves of immigration. Each wave differed in numbers and nationalities of the newcomers. The first wave came in the first half of the century, second in the second half of the century and the third and the biggest at the turn of the 20th century.

¹ Sean Dennis Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age: From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 15, accessed April 18, 2020, <https://archive.org/details/americaingilded00cash>.

² *Ibid.*, 50–53

³ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁴ Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth: The Fight for a Productive Middle-Class Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 53, accessed April 25, 2020, https://archive.org/details/americandreamvsg00garf_0.

The reasons why so many people emigrated to the United States in the 19th century were religious prosecutions, political situation, population growth, and economic situation.⁵

The means by which America was advertised to immigrants also played a huge role. The advertisements could be found in various printed materials, highlighting the wages, opportunities, religious freedom and all sorts of other reasons why they should move to the United States and were provided with instructions how to get there.⁶

The immigration waves into America were significantly important when it comes to increase in national population. As Hochschild observes: “Millions of immigrants and internal migrants have moved to America, and around with it, to fulfil their version of the American dream.”⁷ Stating this, Hochschild also points out how significant influence on people’s will to relocate the phenomenon of the American dream had.

Foreigners were also interested in coming to America because of the Industrial Revolution which led to many job vacancies. If it was not for immigration, the American’s industry would not have grown as much as it did.⁸

The waves of immigrants also led to overpopulation of the cities and their pollution. Some of the big cities were covered in waste and dirt that led to a spread of diseases. The problem causing the spread of diseases was the litter on the streets and the waste material, such as human urine and feces, being dumped in rivers.⁹

1.2 The Melting Pot Theory

The basis of the theory of a melting pot has been present since late 18th century but throughout centuries it has been interpreted in various ways, as well as criticized.¹⁰ John Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur was the first to describe this theory in his Letters from an American Farmer published in 1782.¹¹ He suggests that a definition of an American man has changed with the wave of immigrants from Europe of different races and cultures and claims

⁵ Sean Dennis Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age: From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 95–96, <https://archive.org/details/americaingilded00cash>.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁷ Jennifer L. Hochschild, *Facing Up to the American Dream: Race Class, and the Soul of the Nation* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁰ Heike Paul, “Pilgrims and Puritans and the Myth of the Promised Land,” In *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies*, 260. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014, accessed April 4, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1wxsdq.9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 261.

that these immigrants together created a “new race of men”.¹² In 1909 Israel Zangwill popularized the term by writing a play that was called *The Melting Pot*. The main character of the play is a Russian immigrant who, despite the obstacles he faces, in the end assimilates to American culture.¹³

Nevertheless, this theory represents a description of the creation of new American society together with immigrants from all over the world. The new society which is united and lives in harmony despite their differences of race, religion, culture and background.¹⁴ Instead of that, in the late 19th century Americans saw the new immigrants as a threat and blamed them for the drop of wages and for invading their country, taking their jobs and land, which resulted in racism, hostility and hatred. This situation led to separation of the society that divided the immigrants from the native-born Americans. The aftermath of social unrest was the birth of “nativism”.¹⁵

1.3 The life of immigrants in Packingtown

With the growing market, the Chicago’s Union Stockyards needed to speed up the process and cut costs. Therefore, the influx of immigrants was good for the factories as they needed more workers what would help them to adapt to the pace of economy. The newcomers were forced to work long hours for the lowest wages.¹⁶ Nevertheless, immigrants faced more problems, such as job insecurity, as most of them had seasonal jobs.¹⁷

In the early 20th century the number of injuries and deaths at work was also enormously high. James R. Barret states that “In one house alone, Swift and Company, 3,500 injuries were reported for the first six months of 1910, and this number included only those requiring a physician’s care.” Such accidents happened due to dangerous working conditions and speeded up process to produce as much and as quickly it was possible.¹⁸ Many of the immigrant workers also died from bronchitis, tuberculosis and other diseases as they were

¹² Heike Paul, “E Pluribus Unum?: The Myth of the Melting Pot.” In *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies*, 262, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014, accessed April 20, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1wxsdq.9.

¹³ Ibid., 268–270.

¹⁴ Ibid., 258–259.

¹⁵ Sean Dennis Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age: From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 111–14, <https://archive.org/details/americaingilded00cash>.

¹⁶ James R. Barret, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago’s Packinghouse Workers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 37.

¹⁷ Ibid., 44.

¹⁸ Ibid., 69.

living in terrible and filthy conditions. They were living in disintegrating houses overpacked with people, often with no outside light and bad airflow.¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibid., 71–72.

2 THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

A period, following the Gilded age, and lasting from 1900 to 1920 is called the Progressive Era. During this era, a movement, attempting to resolve the problems that occurred during the Gilded Age, emerged.²⁰ The Progressive movement fought for better and safer working conditions for workers, end of child labour, fair government and businesses free of corruption and supported women's suffrage. People who fought for these changes are called the Progressives, and although they all fought for a different cause, their conjoint goal was a reform.²¹

2.1 The Muckrakers

The muckrakers played a crucial part in the Progressive Era.

They were investigative journalists, writers, photographers determined to expose corruption and poor, dangerous and unsanitary working conditions to inform and influence the public and the government to take actions.

One of the influential muckrakers was also Upton Sinclair who did not consider himself as a muckraker but with his novel *The Jungle*, published in 1906, he became one. His focus was on exposing social, economic and working injustices.²²

Among other most influential muckrakers were Ida Tarbell, a writer who exposed the corruption of the Standard Oil Company owned by Rockefeller which led to Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890 that enabled the division of the company into smaller ones and, therefore, strip Rockefeller of his enormous power over the oil industry.²³ Frank Norris wrote a novel *The Octopus* that addressed the problem of railroad monopolies that held power over farmers which led to the Hepburn Act in 1906. This limited the company's ability to distribute free railroad passes and set the maximum railroad rates.²⁴ Also, Jacob Riis published several photographs of the shocking living conditions in the urban slums.²⁵

²⁰ Walter Nugent, *Progressivism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1–3, https://archive.org/details/progressivismaveryshortintroduction_376_P.

²¹ Ibid., 4–5.

²² Richard C. Brown, "The Muckrakers: Honest Craftsmen," *The History Teacher* 2, no. 2 (1968): 51–56, accessed April 29, 2020, doi: 10.2307/3054228.

²³ Herbert Shapiro, *The Muckrakers and American Society* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1968), 104, <https://archive.org/details/muckrakersameric00shap/page/26/mode/2up/search/tarbell>.

²⁴ Ibid., 26–27, 60.

²⁵ Ferenc M. Szasz, Ralph F. Bogardus, and Ralph H. Bogardus, "The Camera and the American Social Conscience: The Documentary Photography of Jacob A. Riis," *New York History* 55, no. 4 (1974): 408–36, accessed April 30, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/43460145.

2.2 Labour Unions

The number of Labour Unions and their numbers rose rapidly in this era. These organizations demanded an improvement of the working conditions and in wage increase. When the employers were ignoring such requests, the union members held strikes and stopped the production. One of the most famous strikes is The Haymarket Affair that happened in Chicago in 1886.²⁶ The protestants demanded eight-hour workdays. Although the law called the Fair Labour Standards Act which set the forty-hour workweek was passed after the Progressive era, in 1938, the riot was an important impulse that led to this change.²⁷

2.3 The Amendments of the Progressive Era

During the Progressive Era, also four fundamental amendments were added to the List of Amendments to the United States Constitution. In the 16th Amendment, it is stated that direct income tax should be collected by the Congress, regardless of the census of the States and can collect income taxes directly from all individuals and not from the state, as it was before this Amendment. The goal of the 17th Amendment was to create more democratic government. The Amendment states that the Senate should be consisting of two Senators from every state and would be directly elected by the voters, therefore the state legislature had no longer the power to elect the Senators itself. With the 18th Amendment, alcohol beverages were prohibited on the national scale. The reason behind this Amendment was the belief of mora improvement.²⁸ And the last but not least was the 19th Amendment, which was the last Amendment of the Progressive Era. This Amendment says that the right to vote should not be denied to the people based on their sex, and therefore, with this Amendment women of the United States gained the right to vote.²⁹

²⁶ Vivian Vale, *Labour in American Politics* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1971), 12-13, <https://archive.org/details/labourinamerican00vale>.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 58–64.

²⁸ Barbara Silberdick Feinberg, *Constitutional Amendments* (New York: Twenty-first Century Books, 1996), 54–60, <https://archive.org/details/constitutionalam00fein>.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 38–39.

3 FORMING OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

3.1 Origin of the phrase

Although the origin of the American Dream dates as far back as the era of Puritans, the creation of the term is quite new. The person who is said to be the first to use the term is an American writer and historian James Truslow Adams. He wrote it in his book *The Epic of America* in 1931.³⁰ He describes it as;

The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.³¹

3.2 The dream of religious freedom

In 1630 the Puritans left their country and came to New England where they started the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Puritans were in theory members of the Church of England, unlike Pilgrims, also known as the separatists, who separated from the Church because of its corruption and unholiness to search for religious freedom.

The initial plan of Puritans was not to separate from the Church of England as they believed that the members who stayed in England would change and restore the long-lost puritan path they once followed and become corruption-free. It is a paradox that this group of Puritans did not want to separate, but in the end, they recreated their own Church in New England pursuing their dream of reform and followed their beliefs and strict religious rules.

For puritans, the reform represented a fresh start of their life and the life of their families while creating a new society consisting of firm believers in God. They did not leave their homes just for themselves because they hoped to secure a better life for their children as they feared that if they stayed in England, their children would become vitiated.³²

³⁰ Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4.

³¹ "The American Dream," Library of Congress, accessed March 22, 2020,

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/american-dream/students/thedream.html>

³² Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 14–16.

This belief in reform and better future for their children became the Puritans' legacy and was a fundamental part of their American Dream.³³ The core value of Puritans was discipline. "Discipline was the key. With its connotations of sustained inquiry, an attractive capacity for deferred gratification, or a punitive approach to regulating behaviour," states Cullen.³⁴

The Puritans were believers in predestination. They were sure they are meant to go to the New World. They did not acknowledge the belief that they have absolute power over their lives and can influence the path of their lives with their actions and decisions. The Puritans believed they are predestined from the first day of their lives to their last, thus believed in fate and incapability of changing one's destiny by his actions.³⁵

The Puritans believed that they are the people chosen by God and that their arrival in the New World and founding their colony is God's will.³⁶

John Winthrop, one of the founders of Massachusetts Bay Colony, preached a sermon called *A Model of Christian Charity*, which was greatly inspired by the story from The Bible mentioned in the previous paragraph.

For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us, so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and by-word through the world. We shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God, and all professors for God's sake. We shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us.³⁷

Winthrop's use of word expressions "We shall be a city upon a hill" and "eyes of all people are upon us" evokes a feeling of the Puritan's superiority over others and therefore refer to their uniqueness of their community. In his sermon he highlights the importance of their community as an example, a model, for other puritans or even the whole world.³⁸

At the same time, Winthrop also talks about evil, failure, and God's punishment. In this sermon he represented the consciousness of the puritans leaving their home. These protestants were scared and in doubt but at the same time full of hope which was stronger

³³ Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 16.

³⁴ Ibid., 14.

³⁵ Ibid., 18.

³⁶ Heike Paul, "Pilgrims and Puritans and the Myth of the Promised Land." In *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies*, 150. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014, accessed April 8, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1wxsdq.7.

³⁷ Ibid., 152.

³⁸ Ibid.

than the negative thoughts and fears.³⁹ Winthrop's dream can be considered as one of the American Dreams. His dream is based on the vision of a unique community that benefits each other and cares for each other.⁴⁰ "We must delight in each other, make other's condition our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before your eyes our commission and community in the work, our community as members of the same body." continued in his sermon.⁴¹

As it was already mentioned, Puritans were devoted to God and believed that a man without the God's guidance is lost in his life.⁴² Even though they believed that one's actions could not alternate their direction in life and afterlife, they still felt responsible for their fate which is connected to the fate of others.⁴³ Although they were highly focused on their afterlife, they fought for making the life a better, purer and sacred place.⁴⁴

To sum up, the enterprise of Puritans was chiefly focused on their dream of religious freedom and hope of a better future for their children and families as well as the belief of one's improvement.

3.3 Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence

To understand the connection between the Declaration of Independence and the American Dream, it necessary to mention why the Americans wanted to be independent of Great Britain, such thoughts about the independence occurred during the reign of King George III which led to American Revolution.

The Americans were oppressed by the King, and Thomas Jefferson argued, that they should no longer remain under his tyranny and that they have rights to govern themselves and that the British Government's power should be limited.

Although John Adams, Roger Sherman, Robert R. Livingston, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson were commissioned to write the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson was the one entrusted by the rest of the committee to put together a draft of the Declaration.⁴⁵ When Jefferson was writing the Draft, he was highly inspired by texts of others,

³⁹ Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 24.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 12.

⁴¹ Ibid., 23.

⁴² Andrew Delbanco, *The Real American Dream: A Meditation on Hope* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 26.

⁴³ Ibid., 40,41.

⁴⁴ Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 34.

⁴⁵ Catlett B. Lowell, *Thomas Jefferson: A Free Mind* (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2004), 79.

mainly by John Locke.⁴⁶ In the *Second Treatise of Government* John Locke listed natural rights that were “Life, Liberty, and Property” which Jefferson modified into “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness”⁴⁷ as he did not believe that property, unlike life and liberty, was a part of people’s true nature, and therefore could be alienated.⁴⁸

The document was divided into three parts, a statement of every man’s rights, complaints about the reign of King George and therefore the justification of independence, and the statement of declaring the independence of the original thirteen American colonies from England.⁴⁹ In the document, there are listed 27 complaints about the reign of King George III and his actions against the American colonies.⁵⁰ Some of the strongest grievances were imposing taxes without America’s representation in the British Parliament, controlling the trade and prohibiting trade with other companies, the obligation of accommodating British soldiers on their lands, taking away America’s right to govern itself and alternating its government forms, partnering with the Indians and turning them against the Americans, and a prevention of influx of new immigrants.⁵¹ On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was agreed by the Second Continental Congress.⁵²

According to Cullen, to this day, the Declaration of Independence affects the way of Americans’ lives, whether they realize this fact or not. They were taught about this document for centuries, and its words stick to their minds. The description of The American Dream can be observed in the Declaration, mainly, in the opening sentence of the second paragraph.⁵³

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.— That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,— That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new

⁴⁶ Allen Jayne, *Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence: Origins, Philosophy, and Theology* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 44, accessed April 2, <https://books.google.cz/books?id=CIwfBgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁴⁹ “Declaration of Independence,” Bill of Rights Institute, accessed April 1, 2020, <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/founding-documents/declaration-of-independence>.

⁵⁰ Catlett B. Lowell, *Thomas Jefferson: A Free Mind* (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2004), 79–80.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 80–81.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 79.

⁵³ Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 37–38.

Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.⁵⁴

During Jefferson's time the economic system of the New World was dependent on slavery, so when it comes to the part of the Declaration where Jefferson is saying that "all men are created equal" it is not entirely true. He himself was an owner of more than 170 slaves and slaves were not treated equally and they most certainly were not free. Jefferson's opinions on slavery were contradictory. He was against slavery and wanted to stop the expansion of slaves, but at the same time, he was sure the economy would have collapsed. He believed the blacks were unable to live side by side with whites because of their behaviour and lack of intelligence, so he was firmly of the view they should live outside the US. Although Jefferson freed some of his slaves, he believed most of the slaves were not prepared to be free, and he felt responsible for their well-being by holding them in captivity, dressing and feeding them, and therefore taking care of them.⁵⁵ In the Declaration draft, Jefferson blamed King George III for slavery, but it was removed by the Congress as they did not want slavery to be mentioned in such document at all.⁵⁶

Moreover, it is essential to think about the actual meaning of these words. Firstly, the Declaration states that all men are equal. The Founding Fathers, following their own perception of men, meant those who were civilized, educated, white people of the male gender. In the Declaration they, therefore, excluded not only women but also men of another race, because they did not acknowledge them as equals or even human. The Founding fathers shared the same attitude towards non-whites, and that is that all men are equal concerning the ability to differentiate between good and bad.⁵⁷

3.4 Benjamin Franklin's dream of moral perfection

"More than any other Founding Father, he embodied the ideal of upward mobility" states Cullen in his book *The American Dream*. Benjamin Franklin grew up in poverty. His parents were not wealthy enough to afford proper education for their son, so his father sent Franklin to become an apprentice in his brother's printing company. Later on, Franklin's brother

⁵⁴ "Declaration of Independence," Constitution Society, last modified May 5, 2020, https://constitution.org/us_doi.htm.

⁵⁵ James A Blackman, "Confronting Thomas Jefferson, Slave Owner," *The Phi Delta Kappan* 74, no. 3 (1992): 220, accessed April 4, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/20404838.

⁵⁶ "Declaration of Independence," Bill of Rights Institute, accessed April 1, 2020, <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/founding-documents/declaration-of-independence>.

⁵⁷ Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 51–52.

James started to print his newspaper called *The New England Courant*. At this time, Franklin started to write, and his papers were published anonymously in the newspaper.⁵⁸ After his brother was put in jail Franklin had to run the newspaper by himself and thus expanding his skills in writing. Later on, he decided to leave his hometown, Boston, and moved to Philadelphia where his journey of upward mobility began.⁵⁹

He started as a poor printer and worked his way to become a Founding Father of the United States. He was a role model for all the working-class because of his humble beginnings, and which gave them hope they could manage the direction of their lives by following his footsteps.⁶⁰

In the mid 19th century, Franklin was praised and represented as the man who defined the American nation. These newspaper representations of Franklin were targeted mostly to appeal to the new immigrants and young people generally. His story was meant to serve as a guide for assimilation to nation's values as Franklin was thought to be the one who helped to shape the American nation.⁶¹ He became a role model for immigrants, as he was the one who achieved a dream of upward mobility as he came up from nothing and made it to the top. His *Autobiography*, that is covered in the following chapter, was even taught in schools in the 19th century as a guide to morals.⁶²

According to a historian Gordon Stewart Wood, Benjamin Franklin sets a good example of what to be a self-made man really looks like.⁶³ In 1832, Henry Clay said “we are a nation of self-made men” in his speech. This term coined centuries ago, remains in the minds of Americans to this day.⁶⁴ To be a self-made man meant to achieve success without outside influence, for instance, family heritage, connections and other privileges as graduating from expensive prestige universities.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 62.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁶⁰ Gordon S. Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 238, <https://archive.org/details/americanization00wood>.

⁶¹ Carla Mulford, “Figuring Benjamin Franklin in American Cultural Memory,” *The New England Quarterly* 72, no 3. (1999): 423, accessed April 13, 2020, doi:10.2307/366890.

⁶² Gordon S. Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 3, <https://archive.org/details/americanization00wood>.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁴ Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 69.

⁶⁵ Gordon S. Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 241, <https://archive.org/details/americanization00wood>.

His story of success and upward mobility became well known and is admired by many Americans to this day.⁶⁶ The historian Frederick Jackson Turner even considers Franklin as “the first great American.”⁶⁷ Although Franklin thought of himself as a man of good morals who wanted to inspire others, he was later criticized for his compulsion to achieve success, and materialistic thinking.⁶⁸

3.4.1 Benjamin Franklin’s *Autobiography*

Although Benjamin Franklin did not deny the presence of deity and had some religious values, he did not have a strong belief in God as he found some parts of religion doubtful. He was more focused on education and self-improvement.⁶⁹ In his book *Autobiography*, Franklin lists several virtues by which he tried to live. He wanted to inspire and set an example for his readers so that they could achieve prosperity, success and moral improvement in their lives.⁷⁰

Those virtues are “Temperance” which is described as “Eat not to dulness; drink not to elevation.”, “Silence” as “Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.”, “Order” described as “Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.”, “Resolution” elaborated as “Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.”, “Frugality” described as “Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; that is, waste nothing.”, “Industry” as “Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut all of unnecessary actions.”, “Sincerity” as “Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; and if you speak, speak accordingly.”, then he continues with “Justice” elaborated as “Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.”, “Moderation” as “Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.”, “Cleanliness” described as “Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes or habitation.”, “Tranquillity” as “Be not disturbed at trifles, or accidents common or unavoidable.”, “Chastity” on which he does not elaborate, and ends with “Humility” by which he means “Imitate Jesus and Socrates.” Franklin describes the adoption of these virtues as a process. He adopted one virtue at a time and once he had fully

⁶⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁹ Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin: published verbatim from the original manuscript* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1884), 73–75, <https://archive.org/details/autobiographyofb1884fran>.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 85–86.

embraced it, he moved to another one and proceeded in this way till would manage to adopt all of them.⁷¹

Franklin's priority was to become a better man, so he created a plan for every day to achieve moral improvement. He came up with an idea how to track his development and created a daily plan in which he marked the virtues he has acquired.⁷² Implementing all these virtues every day is challenging and even Franklin admitted, that mostly "Order", which can be understood as a daily plan of managing his time, made him question himself and he was close to giving up.⁷³ Nevertheless, he considered following the listed virtues as a success even though he did not acquire all of them. At the instigation of his friend, he added the last virtue called "Humility" to his list, as he was told he was too proud. Regarding "Humility", Franklin wrote that despite the changes of his word expressions he has made to sound more modest, he admits, humility is probably the hardest virtue to fully achieve.⁷⁴ He wrote "*Disguise it, struggle with it, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive, and will every now and then peep out and show itself... For, even if I could conceive that I had completely overcome it, I should probably be proud of my humility.*"⁷⁵

3.5 The Dream of Upward Mobility

The mobility comes in many forms. Americans were always keen on stories of poor and unprivileged people who made it to the top and completely changed their unfortunate life into a successful one defined by having a great fortune. Nevertheless, there are other types of mobility than just economic, for instance in terms of education, earning some higher level of degree can be considered as a social mobility, or getting a better job, promotion and other.⁷⁶

In the 19th century, the form of the American Dream has changed compared to the Puritans' perception. Puritans believed that one can achieve upward mobility by making it to heaven, as they believed they are predestined and cannot change their fates. The 19th

⁷¹ Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin: published verbatim from the original manuscript* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1884), 76, <https://archive.org/details/autobiographyofb1884fran>.

⁷² Gordon S. Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 205, <https://archive.org/details/americanizationo00wood>.

⁷³ Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin: published verbatim from the original manuscript* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1884), 80–81, <https://archive.org/details/autobiographyofb1884fran>.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁷⁶ Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 60–61.

century perception of the dream of mobility is altered in a sense, that hard work altogether with determination became the instrument for self-fulfilment of individuals.⁷⁷

According to Cullen, the upward mobility was in the 1800 to 1850 possible to achieve only by certain criteria. Such criteria were being white, being a male and, also the upward mobility was not meant to be achieved by slaves.⁷⁸ Indeed, slavery was the reason which challenged the preservation of the Dream of Upward Mobility. Abraham Lincoln was well aware about that fact and was determined to take action to secure the American Dream.⁷⁹

3.6 Abraham Lincoln's dream of Upward Mobility and liberty

Based on the Declaration of Independence and its three unalienable rights, Lincoln was firmly of the opinion that all the American men, including African Americans, should have the same rights, and also the right to vote. Thus, he suggested they were eligible as any other man of pursuing the dream of Upward Mobility.⁸⁰ For Lincoln, liberty was the essential condition for a country to prosper.⁸¹

The northern states, wanted to abolish slavery, the south was against the idea because their economy was based on slaves, these two opposite opinions on slavery, therefore It gradually led to Civil War⁸²

Years before the Civil War the American country was divided into the North and the South, as they were based on two different economic policies.⁸³ Meanwhile the politicians of the northern states were trying to improve the economic situation of its citizens by building an infrastructure, the southern slave owners immensely benefited from the slave-based economic situation and had no intention of changing it.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the economic prosperity of the northern citizens and southern was significantly different. Whereas a strong middle-class society dominated the North, there was a big gap between those who were immensely rich and those extremely poor.⁸⁵

⁷⁷ Ibid., 59.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 71–72

⁷⁹ Ibid., 74.

⁸⁰ Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth: The Fight For a Productive Middle-Class Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 28–29, https://archive.org/details/americanreamvsg00garf_0.

⁸¹ Ibid., 44.

⁸² Ibid., 29.

⁸³ Ibid., 41.

⁸⁴ Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth: The Fight for a Productive Middle-Class Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 39, https://archive.org/details/americanreamvsg00garf_0.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 46.

Lincoln was inspired by the American statesman Henry Clay, but in contrast with Clay, Lincoln's mission was to help the citizens of America to achieve better economic position and moving up in the social class, rather than focusing on the nation's power. He believed that as long as he is persistent, determined and willing to work hard, every man can better his condition. Lincoln was of that opinion because he also started from the same position of the fellow men. His vision was the Government's power should be limited and, therefore, should facilitate enough freedom for the citizens to pursue their economic dream of upward mobility.⁸⁶

3.6.1 Upward Mobility after the Civil War

After the Civil War, America changed its face and throughout tens of years transformed into a nation of great industrial power, from its original agrarian nature. But the landscape and Industry was not the only aspect that changed. The whole economic system changed, as the big corporations were joint into even bigger so-called trusts. Thus, some held the power over specific markets. To be more specific, Garfinkle suggests an example of John D. Rockefeller and his Standard Oil Trust, by which he held the power over almost the entire oil industry. These trusts were enormously profiting at the expense of its workers. These workers were mostly immigrants which came to America in millions, they were a source of cheap labour for the industries. The influx of immigrant also led to rise of poverty and social unrest. These industries were profiting on a big scale which led to wealth inequality in America. Only few held the power and owned over half of the population's wealth.⁸⁷

Since the Civil war a lot had changed for the working-class society. During the following decades, the arrival of millions of immigrants entailed a "labor surplus" which resulted in enormous competition among the workers.⁸⁸

As the time passed since Lincoln's death, America was changing in terms of economy, labour, and a way of thinking.⁸⁹ A new era of economy emerged during the Gilded Age, an ideology that the government should not intervene in the economic sphere called the "laissez-faire". In practise of such economic system, it meant that the economy should regulate itself. The implementation of this system resulted in only few ones running the

⁸⁶ Ibid., 35–37.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 47–48.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 54–55.

⁸⁹ Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth: The Fight for a Productive Middle-Class Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 50, https://archive.org/details/americandreamvsg00garf_0.

economy and the rest had to bow down before them. The corporations aimed to rise their profits and cut costs, regardless of wellbeing of the workers.⁹⁰ Thus the workers had to work for long hours to earn low wages and had to work under unsanitary and dangerous conditions in order to survive.⁹¹

Furthermore, in the second half of the 19th century, the corruption in America arose in the federal government, and was then copied in many cities that were run by “political machines.” Such machines were made of politicians who run the cities and were soaked in corruption. The politicians traded votes for favours and economic support for the manipulated poor people including immigrants.⁹²

⁹⁰ Ibid., 52.

⁹¹ Ibid., 52–53.

⁹² Ibid., 49.

4 UPTON SINCLAIR

Upton Sinclair was an American novelist writer who wrote about social and political matters. He is best known for his novel *The Jungle* that is analysed in this thesis. The issue of his book *The Jungle* is considered as one of the main impulses towards the change of consumer protection laws known as the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906 which are more elaborated in the following chapter. The jungle was originally serially published in a socialist newspaper the *Appeal to Reason* in 1905, a year later *The Jungle* was published as a book.⁹³

Sinclair grew up having an experience of both rich and poor worlds. His father struggled to make a good living but on the other hand, Sinclair often visited his mother's rich family members in Maryland and had seen the high-class standard of living. Because of his experience of both worlds, he was deeply troubled by this matter that he decided to focus on it and reflect it in his writing.⁹⁴ Upton Sinclair was one of the muckrakers who contributed to the regulation of food and drugs. Due to the exposés of the muckrakers, the public became more aware and demanded changes.⁹⁵

4.1 The Jungle

The Jungle tells a story about Jurgis and his extended Lithuanian family that decided to change their lives and move from a village in Lithuania to the big city of Chicago in America to pursue their American Dream of a better life filled with success and wealth. To their surprise, their plan does not go as they expected. As time goes by after they arrive in the dream country, the family begins to realize that their American Dream was just a dream that is impossible to achieve and turn into reality, despite the fact they work hard for it. The family learns about the horrors of Meatpacking industry and political corruption from their neighbours, co-workers and their own experience, and over time the enthusiastic people full of faith and determination become drained and powerless puppets that have completely changed their view of the world and their fate.

The family faces big financial challenges as they are constantly in and out of work due to injustice, political corruption, and labour exploitation. The whole family, including

⁹³ Daniel E. Slotnik, "Upton Sinclair, Whose Muckraking Changed the Meat Industry," *New York Times*, June 30, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/cp/obituaries/archives/upton-sinclair-meat-industry>.

⁹⁴ Anthony Arthur, "Upton Sinclair," *New York Times*, accessed March 2, 2020, https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/ref/timestopics/topics_uptonsinclair.html.

⁹⁵ Richard Curtis Litman, and Donald Saunders Litman, "Protection of the American Consumer: The Muckrakers and the Enactment of the First Federal Food and Drug Law in the United States," *Food, Drug, Cosmetic Law Journal* 36, no. 12 (1981): 648, accessed March 1, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/26658789.

children, is forced to work in order to survive. They do not have enough financial resources to pay for their essential human needs so they have to work all the time but they get easily sick and injured mostly at the workplace, which results in not being able to go to work and thus not earning money so they find themselves in this never-ending vicious circle of helplessness. Some of the family members die, in most cases because they could not afford to pay for the doctor and medication they desperately needed and because of the terrible and unsanitary working conditions they had to face at work on daily basis.

At the end after Jurgis barely overcomes all the obstacles life had put in his way, he is fascinated and drawn to the idea of socialism and he is strongly persuaded that socialism represents his new American Dream and gives his life new purpose and hope.

4.2 The impact of *The Jungle*

In Chicago, 1904, the members of the meatpacker's union went on a strike to demand improvement of the working conditions and rise of their wages. Nevertheless, the companies were not affected by this strike and found their ways not to lose their time and money. They simply replaced the strikers with those who were not participating in the strike and wanted to work. After this strike, Sinclair was sent undercover by the socialist newspaper *Appeal to Reason* to Chicago to expose the working conditions of workers in the meatpacking industry.

He spent a couple of weeks there interviewing the working families and observed the conditions in the meat-packing factories himself. Sinclair's detailed description of the meat processing and inhumane treating of the animals in his book caused that people were profoundly more focused on this rather than on social injustice and terrible conditions of the immigrants of Chicago. That is why he said: "I aimed at the public's heart and by accident I, hit it in the stomach."⁹⁶

4.2.1 The Pure Food and Drug Act and The Meat Inspection Act

Sinclair decided to send a copy of his book and a letter to the president Theodore Roosevelt, suggesting that he should investigate the meat-packing plants and see the terrible working and unsanitary conditions for himself.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ "Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*: Muckraking the Meat-Packing Industry," Constitutional Rights Foundation, accessed March 11, 2020, <https://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-24-1-b-upton-sinclairs-the-jungle-muckraking-the-meat-packing-industry.html>.

⁹⁷ James Harvey Young, "The Pig That Fell unto the Privy: Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle" and the Meat Inspection Amendments of 1906," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 59, no. 4 (1985): 468, accessed March 7, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/44441902.

After reading the letter, Roosevelt decided to launch an investigation to verify the truthfulness of the conditions in stockyards and slaughterhouses Sinclair had described. It was proven he did not exaggerate, as most of the claims of unsanitary conditions that appeared in *The Jungle* were confirmed by Roosevelt's commission in a report. The report persuaded Roosevelt to send it to the House of Representatives and demand enforcement of new regulations.⁹⁸ In 1906, both the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act were enacted.⁹⁹

The Pure Food and Drug Act regulated the labelling of products to avoid misleading and missing product description and ingredients, as well as it prohibited the addition of chemicals to food and drugs that could lead to health problems and therefore could be dangerous to humans.¹⁰⁰ The Meat Inspection Act mandated inspection of all livestock before and after being slaughtered and then processed. The Act also set a strict sanitary norm which had to be followed.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Richard Curtis Litman, and Donald Saunders Litman, "Protection of the American Consumer: The Muckrakers and the Enactment of the First Federal Food and Drug Law in the United States," *Food, Drug, Cosmetic Law Journal* 36, no. 12 (1981): 653, accessed March 1, 2020, www.jstor.org/stable/26658789.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 663.

¹⁰⁰ "Part I: The 1906 Food and Drugs Act and Its Enforcement," Food and Drug Administration, last modified April 24, 2019, <https://www.fda.gov/about-fda/fdas-evolving-regulatory-powers/part-i-1906-food-and-drugs-act-and-its-enforcement>.

¹⁰¹ "Overview: Celebrating 100 Years of FMIA," United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, last modified February 21, 2014, https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/fsis-content/fsis-questionable-content/celebrating-100-years-of-fmia/overview/ct_index.

II. ANALYSIS

5 THE DREAM COUNTRY VS. THE REAL AMERICA

In Lithuania, Ona and her family get into financial distress as Ona's father dies. They are forced to sell their property and are left with some small amount of money. Jurgis, who is in love with Ona, wants to marry her and save her from this misery, but she refuses to leave her family. Jonas, a brother of Ona's stepmother, suggest the idea they all should move to America because he has heard about his friend who moved there and made a fortune. Jurgis likes the idea, as he also heard of the land where a man could earn three roubles in a day which was a lot more than he would make in Lithuania. He holds fast to that thought and decides he wants to leave and become this wealthy married man he wishes to be. "In that country, rich or poor, a man was free, it was said; 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."¹⁰²

It can be observed that Jurgis thinks of America as a dream country, a land of opportunity where he could lead a better life and be free. As it was mentioned before, this is how most of the immigrants thought of America. This country was advertised to them as a great opportunity to build a brighter future of higher wages, religious freedom and equality. With the growing market, companies needed more workers and targeted immigrants because they were easily manipulated and were willing to work for less money because they had no other option but to work in this foreign country to make a living.

Jurgis, by comparing himself to "any other man", sees himself as equal to American citizens. As mentioned before, this notion of equal rights is written in the Declaration of Independence, which is considered to be the document where the American Dream is rooted. He also holds onto the same values as Americans, such as hard work, determination and self-realization. Many times, when the family deals with financial problems in America, he responds with "I will work harder."¹⁰³ Jurgis' belief in success can be compared to Benjamin Franklin or Abraham Lincoln's theory that any man despite his origins and beginnings is entitled to and is capable of upward mobility through strong work ethic and determination.

Jurgis believes that once they get out of Lithuania, their problems will end. He does not realize he knows nothing about the American economy, as he is naively thinking of earning three roubles a day. He compares it with prices in Lithuania, not realizing that in America, not only the wages but also the prices and the living costs are much higher too.

¹⁰² Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), 24.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 18.

The group of twelve that decide to pursue happiness in America is composed of Ona, Ona's cousin Marija and stepmother Teta Elzbieta, her six children and brother Jonas, Jurgis and his father Antanas.

At the beginning of their journey, they are tricked by a travel agent in Lithuania, and then again by some officer in New York, which results in a shrinkage of their savings. From New York, they are headed to Chicago, Stockyards, as this is the place where the Jonas' friend had made a great deal of money. After some time wandering around not knowing where to go, a policeman helps them to arrange their transportation to Stockyards.

A full hour before the party reached the city they had begun to note the perplexing changes in the atmosphere. It grew darker all the time, and upon the earth the grass seemed to grow less green. Every minute, as the train sped on, the colours of things became dingier; the fields were grown parched and yellow, the landscape hideous and bare. And along with the thickening smoke they began to notice another circumstance, a strange, pungent odour.¹⁰⁴

What they see on the way, is the reality of the consequences of industrialization, immigration and poverty. The cities are filthy and dirty because of the waste being dumped in the streets and rivers which are dangerous to the health of its citizens and lead to spread of diseases.¹⁰⁵

“And this was the fact, for Jurgis had never seen a city, and scarcely even a fair-sized town, until he had set out to make his fortune in the world and earn his right to Ona.”¹⁰⁶ Jurgis and the rest of the group are used to rural life and are struck with the urbanization of America and it is not what they expected. The new country is completely different from what they were familiar with in their home country but at this point they are just beginning to find out what America and its dream is actually about.

When they finally arrive in the Stockyards, they run into Jonas' friend Jokubas, the one he was talking about back in Lithuania. He helps them and find them an accommodation in a boarding house.

There would be an average of half a dozen boarders to each room—sometimes there were thirteen or fourteen to one room, fifty or sixty to a flat. Each one of the occupants furnished his own

¹⁰⁴ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), 26.

¹⁰⁵ Sean Dennis Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age: From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 131, <https://archive.org/details/americaingilded00cash>.

¹⁰⁶ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), 23.

accommodations—that is, a mattress and some bedding. The mattresses would be spread upon the floor in rows—and there would be nothing else in the place except a stove.¹⁰⁷

Jame R. Barret describes the living conditions of the immigrants in his book *Work and Community in The Jungle*. The immigrants often got sick and died of diseases, on account of the living conditions. Most of them usually lived in dark cramped rooms with lack of light, surrounded by filth.

They feel betrayed, as they are starting to realize that nothing seems as they have imagined it. Their dream starts to crumble when they see the conditions in which they are supposed to live. When they are accommodated, Jurgis remains optimistic and tries to calm down the party and assure them he will go the next day and get a job, so they can leave this filthy place and start living their dream life. Although the Lithuanians are shocked with this side of America, they had no information about, they still hold fast to the American Dream and believe that their life will change for the better.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

6 CLASH OF MORALS

After a few months of ups and downs, the family finally puts all their savings together to organize a traditional Lithuanian wedding for Jurgis and Ona. At the wedding there is plenty of food and beverages served to all the guests. The family lets even uninvited people feast because according to their customs, no one should be left out to be hungry on the wedding day. The highlight of the wedding is a traditional dance with the bride and everyone who gets to dance with her is supposed to contribute financially to help the newlyweds start their life together. Instead of that, most of them do not contribute at all and only exploit their hospitality and leave. The family does not understand the behaviour of their guests and are left in fear they will not be able to pay the bills.

When the family dreamt of America, they did not think about anything else than just getting away from their financial troubles in Lithuania and starting a new life. They were good people at heart and wanted everyone to feel taken care of and. Their kindness and generosity can be observed in this excerpt. “There was no time during the festivities which ensued when there were not groups of onlookers in the doorways and the corners; and if any one of these onlookers came sufficiently close, or looked sufficiently hungry, a chair was offered him, and he was invited to the feast.”¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, they are cheated by the owner of the saloon in which they hold the wedding. He serves the guests low quality food and drinks instead of what they agreed upon. They can do nothing but accept the reality and pay the bills.

The American mentality is based on greed. Everyone tries to improve their financial situation at all costs. In this, the family’s mentality differs as they cannot understand the behaviour that works on the principle that people try to enrich themselves in any way possible and at the expense of others.

Another example of the family being deceived is when they decide to buy a house to escape the terrible living conditions in the boarding house and the never-ending paying of the rent. The agent selling them the house withholds the information regarding additional charges. Furthermore, the family learns the truth about the real estate market. The houses are old and built from the cheapest material, the company owning the house profits by cheating the immigrants as they are never meant to afford the house for a long time and when they cannot pay anymore, the house is sold to a new family again.

¹⁰⁸ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), 3.

This is the harsh reality the Lithuanian family experienced. The Lithuanian immigrants left their home country in a search for the American Dream, completely unaware of the depraved morality of the American society.

7 A FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

After the wedding that leaves the family in debt, their life is turning into a nightmare. Not only are they struggling financially again, but the winter season together with appalling working conditions turns into a fight for survival.

During winter Jurgis' father Antanas dies from heavy cough, as he was working in a cell without heating. Additionally, he also worked in a place where his feet were constantly covered with chemicals that found their way through his shoes and burned his feet over and over that he could not stand anymore. "Sometimes their faces froze, sometimes their feet and their hands; sometimes they froze all together—but still they came, for they had no other place to go."¹⁰⁹

As the workers have gotten sick or injured and missed some days of work, they were usually immediately replaced by other ones waiting for an opportunity to be given a job. The bosses have no compassion over their employees and do not care they are dying, as there are plenty of others who are willing to work because they need money to survive.

This could be compared to the Social Darwinism theory. Those workers who are strong and healthy should and will survive, and those who were weak, get sick or injured are left to die. "The cruellest thing of all was that nearly all of them—all of those who used knives—were unable to wear gloves, and their arms would be white with frost and their hands would grow numb, and then, of course, there would be accidents."¹¹⁰

As was already mentioned, Norton Garfinkle states in his book *The American dream vs. Gospel of Wealth*, that people used this theory to justify the established inhumane working conditions.¹¹¹ This behaviour can be observed when the bosses in Packingtown feel no regret and remorse for their workers who are every day exposed to dangerous conditions at work. For them, it is the case of natural human selection.

The number of injured people at work in the late 19th and early 20th century was around 500,000 per year, in the terms of mortality, approximately 35,000 workers died due to working conditions.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), 87.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹¹¹ Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth: The Fight for a Productive Middle-Class Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 53, accessed April 25, 2020, https://archive.org/details/americandreamvsg00garf_0.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 55.

8 CHILD LABOUR

At the beginning of their stay in Chicago, Jurgis does not want Ona and Elzbieta's children to be working. He believes that together with his father and Jonas, they can financially protect the whole family. Over time, however, the family gets into such financial problems, that everyone who is capable must start working, including children.

Jurgis has an accident at work, he twists his ankle, and even though the pain he is determined to come back to work, unfortunately, he is in such pain, he is unable to walk or even stand anymore. The accident is not caused by his clumsiness but because of the terrible working conditions in which all the immigrant workers had to work every day. Due to this accident, Jurgis is unable to work for months. Furthermore, one day Jonas does not come back from work, and the family cannot find him anywhere. Due to the fact that two people in the family cannot work and thus make money, the family is in a terrible economic situation again because their earnings are too low to pay their bills. In this challenging situation, the family decides that the children must leave school and start working.

They live in a world where child labour is common, and although there are some restrictions on the age limit, the immigrant parents lie about their children's age so they can get a job and contribute financially to keep the family alive.

How can the immigrant family ever achieve the American Dream when they are repeatedly knocked down? All of them are determined to work as much, and as best as they can, they are continually trying to improve their situation to finally get out of their misery. The family travels to America with a vision of high earnings and the opportunity to ensure a better life for themselves and their children. Instead, they find themselves in a much worse situation than in Lithuania. Children, whom they wanted to protect and provide with a bright future, now have to work so they would not starve and lose the roof over their heads. Instead of living the American Dream, they are trying to survive the American nightmare.

9 WAGE SLAVERY

When Jurgis starts working, he gets to see the system by which the business operates. By using a technique called “speeding up the gang,” the factory wants to maximize and accelerate the production at the expense of the physical draining of its workers.

there were portions of the work which determined the pace of the rest, and for these they had picked men whom they paid high wages, and whom they changed frequently. You might easily pick out these pacemakers, for they worked under the eye of the bosses, and they worked like men possessed. This was called ‘speeding-up the gang’, and if any man could not keep up with the pace, there were hundreds outside begging to try.¹¹³

In this excerpt from the *Jungle*, the narrator describes the situation of the labour market in the United States. As it was previously mentioned, the inflow of the immigrants led to the overpopulation of the big industrial cities.¹¹⁴ The population growth caused an increase in competition among the workers trying to get a job in order to survive.¹¹⁵

This is how all the factories operate, including the canning factory in which Marija is employed. The “speeding up”¹¹⁶ system and its impact on workers and their wages are described in the following excerpt.

In piece-work they would reduce the time, requiring the same work in a shorter time, and paying the same wages; and then, after the workers accustomed themselves to this new speed, they would reduce the rate of payment to correspond with the reduction in time!¹¹⁷

The family experiences this abominable treatment of immigrant workers which they are forced to endure in every job they get. In America, immigrants and the poor are not respected but rather despised.

The factory workers are not perceived as people with their rights but as a source of cheap labour force needed to make products. The ultimate goal of factory owners is to make a profit. Therefore, they want to keep the costs as low as possible and pay their workers low

¹¹³ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), 62-63.

¹¹⁴ Sean Dennis Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age: From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 131, <https://archive.org/details/americaingilded00cash>.

¹¹⁵ Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth: The Fight for a Productive Middle-Class Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 54–55, https://archive.org/details/americanreamvsg00garf_0.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 123.

wages. They do not think about improving working conditions because it means additional expenses, and they focus on quantity rather than the quality of their products.

Just when the things seem to be getting a little bit better, the family is struck down again with the “slack season”¹¹⁸ which causes the closing of some factories and less work. Marija loses her job at the can painting factory and Jurgis together with the rest of other workers are cheated and exploited by the bosses with their unjust and rigid rules. “One of the rules on the killing beds was that a man who was one minute late was docked an hour; and this was economical, for he made to work the balance of the hour—he was not allowed to stand round and wait.”¹¹⁹

Furthermore, the workers are forced to be at work every day from seven in the morning until late at night even though there is not enough work to do and they spend hours of waiting. The bosses are paying them only for the time they spend by working, which means that despite the fact that they are forced to spend the same number of hours at work as during a regular season, they receive half the salary.

After Ona gives birth to her son Antanas, she has to get back to work only a week after childbirth because otherwise, she would risk losing her job as she has no assurance, she will not be replaced.

Womb trouble’ to Ona did not mean a specialist’s diagnosis, and a course of treatment, and perhaps an operation or two; it meant simply headaches and pains in the back, and depression and heart-sickness, and neuralgia, when she had to go to work in the rain.¹²⁰

Most women of Packingtown who go back to work shortly after giving birth suffer from the same symptoms as Ona. Based on this, she thinks there is no reason to see a doctor and starts trying proprietary medicine containing alcohol and similar substances her friends recommended her.

To sum it up, the workers are being exploited in several ways. Whether they are forced to go to work for long hours and are far from being adequately paid, or they are forced to go to work even when they are on the verge of exhaustion and suffer from serious health problems. Nevertheless, immigrants have to go to work despite the circumstances, to have some income they need to meet their basic needs such as food or paying for their

¹¹⁸ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), 96.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 122.

accommodation. For example, Ona, who goes to work a few days after giving birth, does so because she, together with the majority of the workers, has no job security. They can end up without work and money without any warning. Every day of these workers is more about survival than about living.

Due to the lack of government intervention, the laissez-faire economy provided the corporations with enormous power over their businesses and their practices. The immigrant workers are powerless against these corporations who exploit them, pay them ridiculously low sums of money, force them to work long hours in unsanitary and life-threatening conditions.¹²¹

¹²¹ Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth: The Fight for a Productive Middle-Class Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 52–53, accessed April 25, 2020, https://archive.org/details/americandreamvsg00garf_0.

10 CORRUPTION AND THE POWER OF THE RICH

The first time Jurgis encounters corruption on a higher level than just bribery among workers and their superiors is when he is approached by a guard offering to help him obtain American citizenship. The guard explains he will get a paid half-day off and when the election is held, he will be eligible to vote. Jurgis accepts the offer and together with other workers is granted citizenship. Later, when the elections come, they are shown how to vote and most importantly, whom to vote for. Every man gets two dollars for the marked ballot. Later, Jurgis learns that: “Jonas, who had taken the leader aside and whispered to him, offering to vote three times for four dollars, which offer had been accepted.”¹²²

The workers are being used to gather votes for the political party the bosses want to win. They are excited to earn some extra money without realizing how they are being exploited. As was previously mentioned, in the late 19th century, politics were corrupted at the state level as well as in the cities, the votes were usually traded for various kinds of favours.¹²³

The great power and influence of the rich ones can be observed when Jurgis confronts Conor. When Ona does not repeatedly come home after work, Jurgis is becoming suspicious. He finds out, she has been lying to him about where she was staying and after Jurgis' pressuring her to tell him the truth, Ona tells him she was forced to sleep with her boss. When she is trying to explain how it happened, she says:

“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. Then one day he caught hold of me—he would not let go—he—he—”¹²⁴

Conor holds great power over Ona and her family, he threatens her he will put out of work all of her beloved ones if she does not submit to him. Ona is so frightened to lose her job and make her family's life miserable and is forced to let him rape her. Otherwise, he would ruin them.

Jurgis, furious with anger, runs towards the building where Ona was working to confront the man who raped his wife. When he finds Conor, he cannot stop himself and attacks him. Jurgis is unable to control his anger and beats him unconscious. After a while, some men run

¹²² Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), 104.

¹²³ Norton Garfinkle, *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth: The Fight for a Productive Middle-Class Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 49, accessed April 25, 2020, https://archive.org/details/americanreamvsg00garf_0.

¹²⁴ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), 169.

up and pull Jurgis away from Conor. Jurgis ends up in jail waiting for his trial, which he loses because the judge does not believe a word he says about Conor. While he is in jail, he learns from Stanislovas who pays him a visit one day, that the whole family is out of work and they have no money left. Finally, after thirty days in jail, Jurgis is released only to find out that his family could not pay for the house anymore and moved back to the boarding house. When he tries to find a job, he finds out he was blacklisted by Conor.

Conor makes sure Jurgis never gets a job in Packingtown again. He holds power over his life because, without work, a man is sentenced to die. The poor are powerless against those in power. When a man has the money, not only he can buy anything, but he can also buy anyone. The power of money is one of the most visible themes in the novel.

After not being able to find work in Packingtown due to Conor's power, Jurgis continues to look for a job in a different area than in the Meatpacking industry. Still, every time he finds some, he loses it soon again. Due to his accident in the last job, he is unable to work and tries to earn some money by begging people on the streets. One day a man offers him food and one-hundred-dollar bill, later Jurgis tries to change the money in a bar, but he is cheated by the bartender. Jurgis attacks him, and again, he is arrested and jailed. After serving his time, he goes to find Jack Duane, whom he met in prison. Duane with his friends show Jurgis the crime side of Chicago. At this point in his life, Jurgis finally sees the interconnections and mutual dependency of crime, politics, and trade.

Chicago is ruled by the big businesses that join forces. Whenever there are elections, a period of fraud, bribery and corruption begins so that they can remain in power. Every person who is willing to be bought and pay something in exchange can be a part of this. Whether a policeman, a politician, a salesman of diseased food and beverages, an owner of unhygienic houses, a moneylender, all of them are bonded together. "On election day all these powers of vice and crime were one power; they could tell within one per cent what the vote of their district would be, and they could change it in an hour's notice."¹²⁵

Knowing this information, Jurgis comes to understand how this country actually operates. Jurgis with his family never had a chance for a better life. Their naivety and innocence have led them to a land full of corruption, where people are trying to get ahead of the others, and where mutual support and alliances work only on the basis of and how much money and power one has.

¹²⁵ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), 286.

11 DEATH OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

As was already mentioned in the previous chapter, when Jurgis is released from prison after attacking Conor and finds out the family have moved to the boarding house, he rushes to get there. What he sees is a group of women and Marija who was once a strong and muscular woman is amongst them looking emaciated and sick. Ona is in labour, and she is screaming with pain because she is so weak, and the baby comes prematurely. Although Jurgis tries to find someone to help Ona deliver the baby, when he comes with Madame Haupt, whom he begged to help him, it is too late. The baby had died, and Ona too.

She was covered in a blanket, but he could see her shoulders and one arm laying bare; she was so shrunken he would scarcely have known her—she was all but a skeleton, and as white as a piece of chalk. Her eyelids were closed, and she lay still as death.¹²⁶

After some time since Ona's passing, when things are starting to look for the better, as Elzbieta, Marija and Jurgis are all working again, the family is shaken by another terrible incident. One rainy day, Jurgis returns home from work and finds the women in the kitchen crying and utterly dismayed. When he asks what happened, Marija tells him his son, Antanas, died. Jurgis insists on knowing how it happened, and Marija explains to him "He went—he went out to play," then she continues "We couldn't make him stay in. He must have got caught in the mud!"¹²⁷

Death is omnipresent in the Packingtown. Whether it is Antanas, Ona, Jurgis' father or other workers, most of them do not die of natural causes. Often, they die because of the dangerous and unhygienic conditions at work. People get injured at work daily, and whether it is a minor or severe injury because they keep returning to work out of fear of losing their place. The injury is, therefore, getting worse, and eventually, it leads to their death. The working conditions are, however, not the only cause, as some people die because of the filth they are always surrounded by. Whether it is in the cities, on the streets or in their house, diseases are spreading fast, and one of the insidious diseases is tuberculosis.

Because of pursuing the American Dream, which was never meant to be achieved by poor immigrants, but only by morally corrupt and wealthy people in power, Jurgis loses almost his entire family. With each experience, Jurgis gradually realizes that the American

¹²⁶ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), 213.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 239.

Dream is just a fictional story. It is a devised strategy to lure people from all around the world to work for below-subsistence wages and to use them as a source of cheap labour.

CONCLUSION

In the first chapter of the thesis is described the Gilded Age which was an era of great Industrial revolution that led to great changes of the United States. America went from a rural country to urban in a short period of time. The Industrialization boosted the waves of immigration and America became overpopulated which led to a disastrous state of the highly urbanized cities. It led to spread of diseases and people were living in terrible conditions. The chapter also provides the reader with the reality of the workers in Packingtown and a theory called the Melting Pot which was used to define the new nation of many nations. The second chapter focuses on the Progressive era and the progressive movement that lead to changes and addressed the problems of the Gilded Age. The Muckrakers played a great role in this era because their investigations and exposés lead to new law enforcements such as the Hepburn Act and others. During this period four new amendments were added to the List of Amendments to the United States Constitution, such as direct election of Senators, the direct income tax, the prohibition of alcohol and women's suffrage. The third chapter deals with the forming of the American dream and its variations throughout time. Firstly, it focuses on the Puritan's dream of religious freedom and their perception of the American Dream. They were strong believers in God and thought of themselves as the chosen ones that they should serve as an example to others and believed in reform, one's improvement, and building a better future for their children. After Puritans, the thesis focused on the Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson. This chapter serves as an example of the ambiguity of the American Dream because the declaration omitted the rights of slaves and women. The declaration is, however, considered as the document in which the American Dream is rooted. In another part of this chapter is mentioned Benjamin Franklin's dream which is focused on attaining a moral perfection and upward mobility. After Benjamin follows a part that deals with the upward mobility which can be described as a belief in improving one's condition and chance at achieving success by hard work and dedication, despite one's beginnings and background. Lincoln's dream of upward mobility is connected with the Civil War. He wanted to free the slaves because he believed that a country cannot prosper if everyone is not free. Furthermore, based on the declaration and its unalienable rights, he believed that every man should be eligible to have these rights, including slaves. After the civil war a lot has changed. The laissez-faire economy advocated for a system in which the Government should not intervene, and the businesses with the economy should regulate itself. The American society changed, and the market was owned by few powerful

people and the gap between the wealthy and poor was enormous. The big businesses exploited its workers and underpaid them in order to cut costs and make profit. The fourth chapter focus on Upton Sinclair, his life, and his novel *The Jungle* and its impact on the people and laws. The analysis of the novel is covered in the last seven chapters of the thesis.

The main goal of this thesis is the analysis and critique of the American Dream in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. The analysis is divided into seven chapters, and each of them is addressing the problem that the Lithuanian family was facing. The analysis focuses on the criticism of the American Dream by which the immigrants are beguiled to come to America. They are full of hope but are struck down by the reality of American society and economy. The immigrants are honest, hardworking and determined people who want to achieve upward mobility and success. Nevertheless, their determination and work ethic are not enough because the factory bosses do not care about these qualities, they only care about making a profit. The family have to work in terrible conditions and some of them pay the highest price with their own life. They are being exploited by their bosses who force them to work in dangerous and unsanitary conditions. The corruption and the power of the rich also plays a big role in the family's dream of success, Jurgis is unable to find work because his boss puts him on a blacklist, Ona is being raped at work under a threat of her boss who tells her if she does not do what he wants he will fire her and her whole family. The children are also forced to work, because the immigrants are in such financial distress. Jurgis realises the American dream is not meant to be achieved by immigrants but only by the corrupted and wealthy people.

In conclusion, Jurgis and his family cannot achieve the American dream because they are lured to America only to become the slaves of the mass production and the economic system. The economic system together with corrupted society do not allow them to become upwardly mobile. They are trapped in a world where they have no economic opportunity nor a chance for success.

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