

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta pedagogická

Bakalářská práce

LITERATURA A CHUDOBA:

**Americký román v období od občanské války
do počátku 20. století**

Petr Benda

Plzeň 2011

University of West Bohemia

Faculty of Education

Undergraduate Thesis

**LITERATURE AND POVERTY:
American Fiction from the Civil War
to the Beginning of the 20th Century**

Petr Benda

Plzeň 2011

Tato stránka bude ve svázané práci Váš původní formulář *Zadání bak. práce*

(k vyzvednutí u sekretářky KAN)

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracoval/a samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

V Plzni dne 27. dubna 2011

.....

Petr Benda

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the supervisor of my undergraduate thesis, Brad Vice, Ph.D., for his patience and guidance of my work. Furthermore, my thanks belong to Mgr. Ivana Dufková for the grammatical correction of the text. Eventually, I would like to express the uttermost gratitude to my family for their support and unceasing encouragement during my university education.

ABSTRACT

Benda Petr. University of West Bohemia. April, 2011. Literature and Poverty: American Fiction from the Civil War to the Beginning of 20th Century.
Supervisor: Brad Vice, Ph.D.

The object of this undergraduate thesis is to cover the period of time from the Civil War to the beginning of the twentieth century in literature of the United States of America. During this time the economics of the United States of America underwent the complete transformation from the agrarian nation into the industrial superpower. Nevertheless, this transformation also brought into the nation an enormous gulf which separated wealth from poverty with almost nothing in between and the poverty of people living in the American metropolises which is depicted in the publications of contemporary authors is the subject matter of this thesis.

The whole thesis is separated into two major parts. The first part called Cultural Background lists the four main factors which have enabled these phenomena to happen and also have been reflected in the literature such as construction of transcontinental railroads, excessive immigration into the United States, the problems of metropolises and the theory of Social Darwinism. In the second part of the thesis, there are analyses of the prominent publications dealing with the life in poverty in the urban metropolises such as Rebecca Harding Davis' "Life in the Iron Mills", Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* and Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. There is also biographical data of each author provided up to the date of publication of his or her prominent work in order to depict some potential background which could have been reflected in his or her book. Furthermore, the non-fictional publications written by the contemporary and also by the present authors permeated the whole thesis in order to comprehend the social problems delineated in the analyzed literature. Eventually in the conclusion, there is the summarization of the whole analytical part and there is also provided the answer, whether the authors have any potential connection between themselves.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. CULTURAL BACKGROUND.....	3
2.1 Construction of Transcontinental Railroads	5
2.2 Immigration	7
2.3 Problems of the City	10
2.4 Social Darwinism.....	11
3. REBECCA HARDING DAVIS	12
4. STEPHEN CRANE	18
5. THEODORE DREISER.....	23
6. UPTON SINCLAIR	31
7. CONCLUSION	39
8. BIBLIOGRAPHY	41

1. INTRODUCTION

The United States of America has always been considered to be the land of opportunity where individual freedom is guaranteed to everyone because “all men are created equal,” as it is proclaimed in the *Declaration of Independence*. The equality of opportunity and the freedom in conjunction with the eventual material success provided by hard work seem to be “dominant cultural values that have for so many years attracted immigrants to the United States” (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 9).

On October 28, 1886, one hundred years since the end of the War of Independence, France dedicated The Statue of Liberty to the United States of America which immediately became a symbol of the upcoming freedom. As a matter of fact, The Statue of Liberty was the very first thing the newly coming immigrants saw when they were approaching the New York harbor which was the final destination of their voyage.

When they eventually set their feet on the American soil their chasing of the American Dream commenced. By virtue of the most famous Americans like Benjamin Franklin, John D. Rockefeller or Andrew Carnegie, vast amount of immigrants endeavored to become as wealthy and influential as these self-made men whose hard work and particular aptitude for self-improvement enabled them to leave poverty where they had begun their race for success called “rags to riches” (Bradbury and Ruland 343).

Richard Gray notices the scheme of “rags to riches” was beginning to appear in literature for mass readership of that time:

That ideology, with its emphasis on success as the inevitable outcome of hard work and sturdy self-reliance, was carried to the public in the popular literature of the day, the exemplary tales for young adults and the new ‘dime novels’ that first appeared in the 1860s and quickly reached circulation in the millions. (248)

Probably, the most significant author of these “rags to riches” stories was Horatio Alger. His tales for juveniles about young boys’ lives in great cities who rise from poverty to respectable living conditions by the means of hard-work, honesty and self-reliance seemed to be giving reliability to this myth in which almost every American citizen believed or at least wanted to believe.

One of Horatio Alger's most notable novels is *Ragged Dick* published in the year 1868 after being serialized in *Students and Schoolmates*. The plot is situated in New York and follows the story of Richard Hunter, a young boot-black, who is on the one hand described as a boy with flaws, such as tendency to smoke or gamble, but on the other hand Alger gives him the qualities he possibly wants to be gained by the reader:

He was above doing anything mean or dishonorable. He would not steal, or cheat, or impose upon younger boys, but was frank and straight-forward, manly and self-reliant. His nature was a noble one, and had saved him from all mean faults. I hope my young readers will like him as I do, without being blind to his faults.

These characteristics Alger considers necessary for the young man who wants to improve his social standing and to accomplish something significant in his life. Dick eventually rises from penury and becomes "a young gentleman on the way to fame and fortune" (Alger) in the most part due to hard-work, his wit and soundness of heart.

However, there is always a stroke of luck helping him in the progress. Readers may ask themselves whether his improvement would be possible if he does not encounter Mr. Greyson or Frank. Without any doubt, these two characters afford Dick the opportunity to rise and probably are the important fluke in his way upwards whereby the novel appears to transform more into a fairytale. Alan Trachtenberg supports the fact that "the enormous role of luck in Alger's tales may contain a covert recognition that the route to success required some magical outside assistance" (81). Fundamentally, a presence of the unknown magic leads the story to a happy end and without it the vertical rise from poverty does not appear to be easily accessible as it is in Richard Hunter's case.

Nevertheless, a vast majority of fiction published in the second half of the nineteenth and in the beginning of the twentieth century, whose plot is situated in metropolises, is not as optimistic as Alger's fables and tend to end much more grievously. Stories of Rebecca Harding Davis, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair depict a life in the city from the entirely reversed approach. Selected works written by these authors are considered to be representatives of a literary style called naturalism. Fundamentally, it means that in most of the cases the essential values as the hard-work, the equality of opportunity and even the freedom do not function properly therefore no matter

how hard the major protagonists of these fictions endeavor they always leave the story in the worst possible outcome.

Hence considering the social and the economic transformation occurring in the nineteenth century in the United States of America, the above mentioned authors described the struggles and the life of people living in poverty more realistically (even though in some aspects more exaggeratedly) than Horatio Alger's "rags to riches" tales. However, their viewpoint of the cruelties which people at the bottom of social hierarchy were forced to undergo seemed to be the closest to real experience of the laboring American.

The major purpose of the thesis is to follow this stream in literature which diametrically differed from Horatio Alger's tales and subsequently discover any potential connections in analyses of the specimen of publications written by the selected authors whose work contain aspects of living and working conditions of impoverished people (many of them recent immigrants) residing in the city districts called the slums. Furthermore with the support of historical facts recorded by sociologists or economists of the day and also contemporary historians, the thesis endeavors to delineate life struggles of ordinary laborer during the period of time which transformed the society of the United States into the leading economic, political and cultural nation of the world.

2. CULTURAL BACKGROUND

On April 9, 1865 General Robert Edward Lee surrendered his Confederate army and the American Civil War was finally over. Even though the deadliest war in American history ended leaving approximately 620.000 lives behind, the United States must have faced further struggles (such as how to reunite the nation, how to treat the Confederate elites responsible for the war or what to do with liberated slaves), but the eventual suppression of these problems resulted in the United States of America being at the end of the nineteenth century the economic and military superpower in the world.

The most significant outcome the Union's victory brought was the end of the Institution of Slavery. In spite of the fact that African-Americans were formally free and Southern states accepted the 13th and 14th Amendment to the Constitution giving former slaves freedom and right to vote, in order to rejoin the Union as an equal member, the African-Americans never really tasted the actual freedom until the Civil Right Movement in the twentieth century. Although former slaves had the right to vote and the freedom, they had nothing else to work with in their lives, even an education. Moreover, the

Southern States were subsequently passing the so-called Black Codes, which were “laws to keep blacks in an inferior position” thereby African-Americans were essentially still slaves (O'Callaghan 55).

Nevertheless, as the publications of the latter half of the nineteenth century suggest, African-Americans were not the only slaves living in the United States of America at that period of time. The political economist Henry George in his essay "The Crime of Poverty", when discussing the new concept of land monopolization as one of the new forms of slavery, proclaims:

Talk about abolishing slavery - we have not abolished slavery; we have only abolished one rude form of it, chattel slavery. There is a deeper and a more insidious form, a more cursed form yet before us to abolish, in this industrial slavery that makes a man a virtual slave, while taunting him and mocking him with the name of freedom. Poverty! want! they will sting as much as the lash. Slavery!

As Henry George alleged, the transformation from agricultural into industrial nation that the United States underwent in the years after the Civil War did not bring the end of slavery but even enlarged it, because not only the African-Americans lived in poverty.

According to Alan Trachtenberg, the chain reaction, which resulted in the enormous difference in the social standing of employers and employees, might have started with the introduction of electricity which "offered new possibilities of conversion of power into heat, light, and motion, and permitted new efficiencies and economies in the design of factories, including decentralization, dispersion of work areas, and assembly lines" (55). This shift commenced the process of lowering the skill which was necessary to perform labor in factories and consequently made the traditional crafts almost disappear. More than skilled manual workers were needed the operators of machines or assembly lines and since there were so many unemployed men capable of performing this kind of work, people laboring in factories subsequently became the interchangeable parts of the production process. Therefore they were bound to their employer, as a provider of paid work, with invisible chains that were almost the same as in the old time when the institution of chattel slavery was permitted.

Most of the publications describe this relationship between the employer and employees as a new kind of slavery, the wage-slavery. Probably, due to the fact a worker

was paid an incredibly low wage for unbelievably hard toil in a factory. Without any doubt, they did not earn more than the starvation wages which means these earnings were not high enough to obtain decent living conditions or sometimes even food for workers. Henry George's research demonstrates that "taking all the trades, including some of the very high priced ones, where the wages are from \$6 to \$7 a day, the average earnings amount to \$1.77, and, taking out waste time, to \$1.40." However, the fundamental truth is that without a job one was almost certainly sentenced to death in the streets therefore it appears the employers or factory owners were the new slave-masters taking the advantage of the necessity for wage-earners having a paid occupation. Generally, they might have exploited their employees without being afraid of any further consequences resulting from such a behavior.

This scenario of people being exploited by factory owners came to life in the second half of the nineteenth century and its origin could be traced back to the growth of industrialization supported by the constructions of transcontinental railroads and the introduction of electricity to the cities as well as into the production process. Among other things the permanent search for laborers resulted in the migration of people from rural territories into cities, both on the Western or Eastern coasts, which subsequently became overcrowded for the national migration was joined by the great influx of immigrants from Europe and Asia. Everything was happening under a sort of supervision of the so-called robber barons who were the leaders of the largest corporations and even today they are still regarded as the most powerful men in the American history. All these phenomena are considered the major factors which led to so incredible an amount of people living in the actual poverty.

2.1 Construction of Transcontinental Railroads

The idea of transcontinental railroad being constructed in the United States of America was discussed even before the Civil War. In the year 1845 an American businessman and railroad promoter Asa Whitney endeavored to persuade the Congress of his project to construct the railroad across the continent and in the same year "the government, outfitted army explorations to find suitable routes for railroad lines to the Pacific" (Trachtenberg 19). Unfortunately, the construction was postponed due to disagreements over the directions of new railroads. However, since the secession of Southern states during the Civil War, Congress was able to agree upon the routes and in the year 1862 "it granted land and money to the Union Pacific Railroad Company to build

a railroad west from the Mississippi towards the Pacific. At the same time it gave a similar grant to the Central Pacific Railroad Company to build eastwards from California” (O’Callaghan 59).

The vast amount of work on the railroad was done after the Civil War and was almost entirely dependent on immigrant laborers. The Central Pacific Railroad Company employed nearly 12 000 workers from China in the year 1867. They were mostly attracted by the gold rush, the convenient offers of employment and their desire to chase the American Dream. However, as a matter of fact the Central Pacific was employing the Chinese from abroad, because it was able to pay them three times lower wages than to American workers. On the other side of the continent, the Union Pacific Railroad Company employed predominantly Irishmen along with the other recent immigrants from Europe, but in the most of cases due to the exactly same reasons.

Even though workers labored under poor and perilous working conditions and for minimum wages, the progress of their work grew rapidly. Eventually, on May 10, 1869 the Central Pacific Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad met at the Promontory Point in the State of Utah where Leland Stanford, the head of the Central Pacific Railroad Company, drove the Golden Spike in the tracks and finished the first transcontinental railroad. Subsequently, other railroads were constructed and by the twenty years since the Promontory Summit “in 1884 four more major lines had crossed the continent to link the Mississippi valley with the Pacific Coast” (O’Callaghan 60).

The system of railroads entirely modified the economy of the United States. According to Alan Trachtenberg, "the railroad seemed to ‘open’ places for settlement, for raw materials and transport to markets” (58). Since the time necessary to move from one place to another was rapidly reduced, farmers were able to enlarge their production of crops in order to sell it in the outlying cities as well as laborers were able to follow the employment offerings usually into metropolises like New York, Chicago or Pittsburg. The system of railroads also connected raw material deposits with factories, where the material was subsequently processed, and consequently helped to find purchasers of the final products on the distant markets. Eventually, this scheme of production and distribution resulted in establishing of the *laissez-faire* on the nationwide level and the last but not least it accelerated the growth of industrialization in the country.

Richard Gray considers the construction of railroads as one of the most significant factors that made the rise of the United States possible: "In short, the railroads were at once

an agent and paradigm, an enabler and an emblem, of a newer, more powerful and expansionist America" (101).

2.2 Immigration

“America is God's Crucible, the great Melting Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming! . . . Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians – into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American . . . He will be the fusion of all races, perhaps the coming superman.”

These lines appeared in a speech of Russian immigrant David Quixamo, the hero of the Israel Zangwill's play *The Melting-Pot* written in 1908, and were the reaction on the ceaseless flood of new immigrants from all corners of the world which was reaching its peak in the second half of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century and was having the most significant influence on the population growth and cultural diversity of the United States of America.

However, Israel Zangwill's idea of the Melting Pot does not seem to describe the United States of America properly because the more immigrants were coming to America the more cultural values they were bringing along themselves. Fundamentally, the most of the immigrants wanted to preserve their own culture instead of being melted into the major one and therefore tended to gather themselves in communities in order to maintain their cultural heritage. Consequently, this scheme of immigrants' behavior resulted in the idea of the United States being the Salad Bowl where each ingredient is blended but visibly separated.

People immigrated to USA for various reasons, for instance during the Civil War “one in a five of the soldiers in the armies of the North was a wartime immigrant”, mainly through the Homestead Act of May 20, 1862 which was the effort of federal government to provide convenient offers of free land to everyone who enlists as a volunteer to the army of the United States and fights against the rebellion (O'Callaghan 76). Another campaign lured many Chinese and Irish immigrants to construct the first transcontinental railroad. In fact job, hope for a better life and sometimes also a famine in an immigrant's home country were the biggest temptations that motivated people to board a ship for a voyage across the sea. However, some immigrants were also forced to escape to the United States because of a political persecution. For instance, the vast amount of Jewish immigrants came to the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century because they were

“being killed all over eastern Europe in bloody massacres called pogroms” (O’Callaghan 77).

Figures claim the flow of immigrants subsequently raised from 2,812,191 in 1870s to 5,246,613 in 1880s this rapid increase was predominantly caused by the growth of industrialization in the United States and a constant search for unskilled laborers. “Immigrants alone represented a third of the total population increase between 1860 and 1900, and by 1870 one out of every three industrial workers was an immigrant (the proportion would remain constant until the 1920's)” (Trachtenberg 54). This permanent search for unskilled labor to newly built factories was giving immigrants an opportunity to naively chase the American Dream, offering to everyone wealth and success irrespectively of one’s social standing, which the United States feignedly appeared to provide. Unfortunately for them, the reality showed the immigrants this scheme did not work except for few exceptions and the social strata remained impassable for the most of them.

Until the 1880s, the composition of immigrants was almost exclusively from Western and Northern Europe, but since that time it seemed the composition started to shift slightly and soon after the year 1890 the vast amount of immigrants came from Southern and Eastern Europe. George Tindall and David Shi took the notice of this alteration:

There were Italians, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Serbians, Croatians, Russians, Romanians even Greeks among them and they were remarkably different from Western Europeans in culture, language and religion, for example Hebraism and Catholicism. (658; translation mine)

Government began to perceive this cumulative invasion of immigrants as a menace and commenced with passing laws in order to stop this phenomenon. The first law focused on the prohibition of a particular nationality was the Chinese Exclusion Act passed on May 6, 1882 which restricted immigration from China and did not allow Chinese living in the United States to become American citizens. Expiration time of this law was ten years and after being extended for another ten years by the Geary Act of 1892, adding impossibility of Chinese being witness in the court, it became permanent since the year 1902. Another law aimed at the problem of immigration was the Immigration Act of 1882, by which every new immigrant was charged 50 cents tax and it also formed a few groups of people, like madmen or people presumably to being criminals, who could not have become the American citizens. In the year 1885 the law called the Alien Contract Labor Law forbade

factories luring new immigrants under the lucrative contracts to execute labor in the United States. Furthermore, the Naturalization Act of 1906 is considered to be the most important law, because it contained strict requirements for acquiring the citizenship. All these requirements along with simple directions are summarized in Nathaniel C. Fowler Jr.'s *How to Obtain Citizenship* published in the year 1913 in five languages. Even though the federal government endeavored to restrict the influx of immigrants as much as possible, generally, the figures remained almost the same.

Before new immigrants were allowed to touch the American soil, they had to undergo receiving procedure in immigrant inspection stations. These procedures consisted of medical examination, answering series of question and then waiting for new identification papers. All the time during the receiving procedure, immigrants felt an unceasing pressure because they were not sure whether they would be permitted to the United States. Eventually, the most of immigrants were allowed to Manhattan, but the few undesirables were forced to board the ships home. Unfortunately, these stations subsequently became extremely corrupt, as Tindall and Shi confirm: "Clerks changing money were deceiving the new immigrants, railroads were selling overcharged tickets and luggage porters were involved in the blackmail" (658; translation mine). Consequently, the Congress was forced to seal their doors.

Since the year 1892, immigrants were, on their way to New York, supposed to pass through the Ellis Island which was the newly built immigrant inspection station beneath the Statue of Liberty. Initially, it appeared like 400 feet long great barn but after the great conflagration in the year 1897, it was rebuilt into 220 000 square feet major building similar to European palaces with four massive copper covered copulas at the top. Figures claim that from 1892 until its closure 1954, "seventy percent of all European immigrants passed through the Ellis Island" (Tindall and Shi 662; translation mine).

Surprisingly, the most of the immigrants encountered life conditions which were the exact opposite to the gospel of American Dream, the one and only they pursued. They were forced to live in the overcrowded cities, labor for minimum wages and under cruel working conditions providing they have at least found a job. Immigrants also lived in a permanent fear of abuse, diseases and death. The vast amount of Americans and recent immigrants living under these environmental conditions relied themselves upon charities, because they promptly realized that the U.S. social stratum is not as passable as it seems from its demeanor and they were not able to achieve their dream. According to Alan Trachtenberg, these conditions "confused, angered, and frustrated masses of Americans, a

growing percentage of them recent immigrants recruited into the very industrial system which seemed destined to dash their hopes of social improvement” (54).

2.3 Problems of the City

Another phenomenon considered to be the inartificial consequence of the worldwide industrialization is the overpopulation of metropolises:

Between the years 1860 and 1910 the number of inhabitants of cities with population above 2500 was increased from six millions to forty-four millions, thus from twenty percent to forty-six percent of all population in the state. (Tindall and Shi 652; translation mine)

These figures convey the international immigration as well as the migration of the United States citizens from the countryside into the cities.

Initially, the rise of cities was proportional to the lengthening of transcontinental railroads which interlinked the whole continent. New cities such as Denver, Seattle or Kansas City were actually established along the tracks or near mines and were almost exclusively inhabited by track-builders and miners. Although there were vast areas of fertile land to be settled in the West, people were rather moving into the cities lured by unceasing search for factory laborers. Subsequently, the cities where factories were accumulated became overcrowded. The worst situation occurred in the metropolises such as New York, Chicago or Pittsburg which, over a relative short period of time, transformed into the giant industrial cities full of factories and swarming with laborers. Henry George was horrified when he witnessed the accumulation of people in the industrial cities and in his essay “The Crime of Poverty” claimed: “Go to a city like New York and there they are jammed together like sardines in a box, living family upon family, one above the other. It is an unnatural and unwholesome life.”

Even though these metropolises were spreading in height and width, their size was still insufficiently spacious for so great an amount of inhabitants. However the enlarging proceeded incidentally, it seemed to preserve the apparent division of districts which kept “visible poverty set aside from visible affluence” (Trachtenberg 117). According to this pattern, slums where the most of laborers and recent immigrants lived were filthy and overcrowded places and they differed significantly from the recently built residential areas with pavements, sanitation facilities, electricity and later also parks.

Furthermore, the parks were actually supposed to cure the cities of the overpopulation resulting in the spread of diseases, increase of mortality and criminality. Contemporary journalist Jacob Riis in his publication *How the Other Half Lives* alleged that “the younger criminals seem to come almost exclusively from the worst tenement house districts.” In most of cases these problems were caused primarily by vicious conditions in the overcrowded areas. Moreover, Frederick L. Olmsted, the architect and prominent city designer of the era, considered parks as “prime features of a system of order and security, apparently non-coercive means of control and stability” (Trachtenberg 109). Therefore, Central Park in the City of New York was created in the year 1857 according to Olmsted’s design in order to provide a peaceful haven whither city inhabitants might have escaped from the unceasing clamor of factories and swarming people.

2.4 Social Darwinism

Fundamentally, the most influential book of the nineteenth century was Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* published in the year 1859. It had a strong impact upon religion and the book of *Genesis* which Charles Darwin’s work apparently opposed. The publication gave evidences that proved the human population evolved from lower creatures over a long period of time through the process called *natural selection*. Since its publication, Darwin’s theory was eagerly discussed. Although the book was extremely controversial, the Church was not able to oppose the provided evidences and acceded to a compromise which adopted the concept of evolution as a natural process under the supervision of God.

Even though Darwin’s theory merely concerned organisms at the biological level, plenty of scientists saw the more general validity of this theory. An English philosopher Herbert Spencer became “the first eminent promoter of the so-called Social Darwinism and had, without a doubt, strong influence upon American thinking” (Tindall and Shi 670; translation mine). He is also well-known for coining the term *survival of the fittest*. It was a scheme which was, above all, applied in the *laissez-faire* capitalism, because the most successful and the most influential individuals set the rules on the market and the others were, indeed, sentenced to death. In another words, the process of natural selection was realized within the society.

Social Darwinism also appealed on the federal government not to support the less fortunate as well as not to intervene into the free market economy in order to keep the progress and to divest the community of weak individuals, because, according to the

natural selection described in Darwin's theory, this approach of supporting the poor would eventually prevent the society from survival of the fittest individuals. Alan Trachtenberg gathered opinions of the two most successful entrepreneurs of the era: "The growth of a large business . . . is merely a survival of the fittest, the working out of a law of nature and a law of God" stated John D. Rockefeller and "while the law may be sometimes hard for the individual, it is best for the race" added Andrew Carnegie (84-81). Unfortunately, in most of cases the race was not fair on everybody and many people did not obtain the same opportunities to join this competition the United States claimed to be equal for everyone.

John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie and J. Pierpont Morgan were together among the most successful entrepreneurs of the nineteenth century. They were called robber barons especially due to their wealth, influence, straightforward economic tactics and their remarkable capability of organizing their enterprise. These businessmen were the dynamos of the social progress and their wealth was considered the apparent evidence of their ability to survive. According to the census of 1890, "in the population as a whole, the richest one percent earned more than the total income of the poorest . . . commanded more wealth than the remaining 99 percent . . . about half of all American families lived without property" (Trachtenberg 99). These figures demonstrate the striking difference between almighty robber barons and the working poor.

3. REBECCA HARDING DAVIS

Rebecca Blaine Harding was born on June 24, 1831 in Washington, Pennsylvania, as the oldest of five children and died of a stroke on September 29, 1910 in Mount Kisco, New York.

Rebecca Harding spent the first five years of her life in the Big Springs, Alabama, however, in 1836 her family moved to Wheeling, Virginia. There she lived until her marriage with L. Clarke Davis on March 5, 1863, except for the years 1845 - 1848 which she spent in Washington Pennsylvania studying religion at the Washington Female Seminary. Together with Clarke, they had two sons Richard Harding Davis, Charles Belmont Davis and daughter Nora Davis.

Since her graduation from Washington Female Seminary in the year 1848, Harding commenced her carrier as a writer for the Wheeling's local newspaper the *Intelligencer*, where she was writing editorials, reviews, short-stories and poems. Nevertheless, the first significant publication of hers "The Life in the Iron Mills" appeared in the America's

leading magazine *Atlantic Monthly* in April 1861. "The story was immediately recognized as an important, innovative work, introducing a new subject to American literature: the bleak lives of industrial workers in the mills and factories of the nation" (Gray 219). Although the precise location where the plot is situated was never really identified, critics agreed it was based on Wheeling in Virginia, the town that was in the nineteenth century transforming into the industrial city. There youthful Rebecca witnessed vicious living conditions of the working class laboring in the local iron mills. The contact with this social group is considered to be the most influential aspect of her writing, moreover, it could not be debated that "The Life in the Iron Mills" is built upon this thrilling experience from her youth.

The narrator of "The Life in the Iron Mills" sits in a tenement house behind the window and introduces us to the atmosphere of the industrial town on a particular cloudy day. Nevertheless, the environment suffers more from breathings of crowded inhabitants and the iron-foundry chimneys smoke that represents "the idiosyncrasy of this town" than from a bad weather (Davis 430). Furthermore, the smoke and ashes from factories darkens skin and muscles of "masses of men, with dull, besotted faces bent to the ground, sharpened here and there by pain or cunning", which the narrator observes trudging down in the street (Davis 430). It is obvious, Davis endeavors, through the eyes of narrator, to depict a typical industrial town of the era with no "green fields and sunshine" and swarmed with these laborers living their vacant lives who know nothing more than hard toil in a factory and getting drunk in the latter part of the day (Davis 430).

Moreover, Davis offers the story rather as a message for the reader, whom she calls "amateur psychologist" because he or she is supposed to put oneself into the place of these laborers (430). In fact, Davis believes that there would be vast amount of readers persuaded to act or, at least, to ponder about the struggles which laborers are daily forced to overcome, because the narrative is full of the questions aimed at readers.

The actual narrative takes place thirty years ago and tells the story of Welsh immigrant, Hugh Wolfe, and his family who inhabits the same tenement where the narrator sits at the present time. The family, consisting of Hugh, his father and his cousin Deborah, lives in two cellar-rooms, along with a little Irish girl Janey, whose father is presently in the jail, while the rest of the house is "rented then to half a dozen families" (Davis 431). Considering that each family has at least two members and the fact that "only very few buildings were actually three or four storeyed, prior to the Civil War", Davis gives us an

apparent example of the overpopulation the most of industrial cities experienced in the nineteenth century (Tindall and Shi 654; mine translation).

The main protagonist Hugh Wolfe, as well as his father, works in Kirby & John's mill as a furnace-tender for, what can be deduced, less than a minimum wage. Hugh is depicted as a weary laborer who "had already lost the strength and instinct vigor of a man, his muscles were thin, his nerves weak, his face (a meek, woman's face) haggard, yellow with consumption" (Davis 435). According to his appearance, he is called "Molly Wolfe" by his co-workers and he is also not very popular among them, probably, due to the "taint of school-learning on him" (Davis 435). However, the characteristic, which apparently differs Hugh from the others, is "that God put into this man's soul a fierce thirst for beauty" resulting in "hideous, fantastic enough, but sometimes strangely beautiful" figures he sculpts out of Korl during his off-hours (Davis 435). Into these figures Hugh projects his suffering and desires and this artistic skill seems to fulfill his vacant soul destroyed by the unceasing toil and exploitation by factory owners, whence only death can save him.

Hugh's cousin Deborah works in a cotton-mill. She is "deformed, almost a hunchback", nevertheless, very similar to Hugh's appearance (Davis 432). Deborah conceals her love for Hugh because she knows he yearns "for whatever was beautiful and pure" and "his soul sickened with disgust at her deformity" (Davis 434). Although Hugh is always kind to her, Deborah needs a physical or, more importantly, spiritual intimacy in order to feed her starving soul for a "man cannot live by work alone" (Davis 432). This desire motives Deborah to deliver Hugh a supper every night to the factory even though he is not hungry and she is exhausted and starving after her own daily labor in the cotton-mill.

As Deborah marches to the factory with Hugh's supper, Davis endeavors to provide a vivid picture of streets beneath the great iron mills:

By night and day the work goes on, the unsleeping engines groan and shriek, the fiery pools of metal boil and surge. Only for a day in the week, in half-courtesy to public censure, the fires are partially veiled; but as soon as the clock strikes midnight, the great furnaces break forth with renewed fury, the clamor begins with fresh, breathless vigor, the engines sob and shriek like "gods in pain." (433)

By the expression of engines being gods, Davis apparently depicts the reversed relationship between machines and workers. Since the time when workers became mere

equipment of the factory, it was a machine which was responsible for their lives as long as the machine provided employment and means to mere survival of the laborers. However, the paradox of the Davis' description comes when Deborah proclaims: "'T looks like t' Devil's place!" (433). The Devil's place which offers to laborers nothing more than "a reality of soul-starvation, of living death, that meets you every day under the besotted faces on the street" (Davis 434). The answer to the question, which one of these two viewpoints is more faithful, is declared by one of the visitor of the factory, Doctor May, in a discussion with a son of the mill owner: "If it were not that you must have heard it so often, Kirby, I would tell you that your works look like Dante's Inferno" because if you go to the mill where Hugh works and "drag out from the hearts of these men the terrible tragedy of their lives, taking it as a symptom of the disease of their class, no ghost Horror would terrify you more" (Davis 436).

Doctor May and Kirby together with the factory overseer Clarke, a reporter writing an article about leading manufacturers Captain and Mitchell, who is one of Kirby's brothers-in-law and is a stranger in the city, visits the iron mill where Hugh works. They represent an apparent contrast to impoverished factory laborers. Hugh immediately recognizes the fact and alleges that between him and them there is "a great gulf never to be passed. Never!" (Davis 437). Where, the division between people origins is one of the unresolved mysteries of his life.

During the conversation Mitchell suddenly faces the Hugh's korl statue: "a woman, white, of giant proportions, crouching on the ground, her arms flung out in some wild gesture of warning" (Davis 437). Doctor May immediately notices a precision of the work and Hugh adds that she is starving, however, not for meal but for something "to make her live" (Davis 438). According to Davis, the statue is supposed to represent the sufferings of working class which is exploited by the factory owners, as Kirby indirectly reveals in the discourse.

Henceforward, the subject of the conversation is slightly modified. Doctor May enquires whether lives of the factory workers could be improved or redeemed. Whereupon young Kirby replies:

I have no fancy for nursing infant geniuses. I suppose there are some stray gleams of mind and soul among these wretches. The Lord will take care of his own; or else they can work out their own salvation. I have heard you call our American system a ladder which any one can scale. Do you doubt it? Or

perhaps you want to banish all social ladders, and put us all on a flat table-land,
- Eh, May? (438)

Considering the description of Hugh Wolfe's life and the conversation, Davis apparently disbelieves that the social strata in the United States is passable thought honesty and hard work. Consequently, Doctor May endeavors to encourage Hugh that it is his right to rise from his impoverished situation and Kirby closes the discourse by throwing a few coins upon the floor, believing it would wash his hands of the social problems such as this one, whereon they all depart.

Perceiving finances as the only remedy for their helpless lives, Deborah steals money from Mitchell's pocket before he leaves along with his companions. It was "a small green pocket-book containing one or two gold pieces, and a check for an incredible amount, as it seemed to the poor puddler" (Davis 442). After initial hesitation because "the Welsh Wolfe blood was honest" and a visitation in a church for the upper class, Hugh decides to keep the money because it is "his right" to become "free to work, to live, to love" (Davis 442-444). Unfortunately for him, he is not allowed to rise from his present conditions even with the financial means he has recently obtained and which the reader might assume are the real salvation, since he is arrested and sentenced for nineteen years while Deborah is imprisoned for three years as his accomplice.

After unknown period of time and a trial where Hugh has become an example case in order to tranquilize other mill workers who are almost unbearable, Hugh is sitting in his cell. His legs are ironed because of two "desperate efforts to escape" and he bleeds at his lungs due to consumption (Davis 445). Deborah is in the cell right next to Hugh's and she is allowed to visit him. She desperately endeavors to keep Hugh reasonable but once Hugh observes market-day, through a little cell window, and he realizes that "he was done with the world and the business of it" (Davis 446). Thereafter in the night, Hugh commits suicide paradoxically with "a dull old bit of tin, not fit to cut korl with" but sharp enough to cut man's veins (Davis 448). However, death seems to be the only escape from the harsh reality of Hugh's life. Hugh's body is promised to be buried in the hills by Quaker woman who next morning offers condolence to Deborah and invites her to the hills in order to become a member of Religious Society of Friends, which eventually fills her starving soul with love to God.

The end of the story is situated again in the narrator's present time. The reader actually never discovers the narrator's gender. There is a possibility that the narrator is

Mitchell because of his connection with the story and also the fact that he might keep the statue which has frightened him so deeply. However, many critics believe the narrator is a woman. Nevertheless, the korl statue remains hidden behind the curtain because “it is such a rough, ungainly thing” (Davis 451). Davis, probably, endeavors to bring forward the fact that most of the people, mostly from middle and higher class, ignore the misery of the poor rather than accomplish something to improve their conditions. The instance of this approach of people to heal the society ills could be illustrated by the line which appears in the discourse about improving living condition of factory workers between Doctor May and Young Kirby: “That is true philosophy. Drift with the stream, because you cannot dive deep enough to find bottom, eh?” (439). It is the simplest solution provided by people who, on the one hand, have the power to change something but, on the other hand, do not have the interest in supporting the less fortunate. However, Davis believes the story would eventually convince vast amount of readers to do something to amend living conditions of the poor or at least they should find the escape from poverty in religion, as the final line of the story suggests: “God has set the promise of the Dawn” (Davis 451).

In the “Life in the Iron Mills” Davis “emphasizes the typicality of her working-class characters, and the way they may be driven into crime by a system that appears to deny them any other possible avenue of escape” (Gray 219). The most significant aspects of the publication are the vivid pictures of the lives of factory laborers and Davis’ viewpoint upon the possible improvement which is not simple to be executed mainly due to the ignorance of people towards the other half. On the other hand, Davis seems to provide a straightforward religious solution, probably due to her religious education she received at the Washington Female Seminary, but this approach would not solve the miserable financial situation of the working poor which is considered to be the main problem of the era.

Unfortunately for Davis, the story was forgotten in the beginning of twentieth century and received significant literary attention in the year 1972 when it was resurrected by Tillie Olsen in the non-profit publishing house Feminist Press. Nevertheless, at its publication it caused a literary sensation and influenced authors who were publishing their works at the end of the nineteenth century and tried to discover and reveal all social ills in the industrial United States of America. Possibly, there is a difference between Rebecca Harding Davis and the other authors such as Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair in the way she appears to be the only one who uses religion as a way of punishment and also salvation because, at the end, she turns Hugh Wolfe into the sort of

martyr who redeems the whole working class. This is the aspect which does not appear in the publications of other writers.

4. STEPHEN CRANE

Stephen Crane was born on November 1, 1871 in Newmark, New Jersey, as the youngest of fourteen children of Methodist minister, the Rev. Jonathan Townley Crane, and died of tuberculosis on June 5, 1900 in Badenweiler, Germany, at the age of twenty-eight.

His numerous and strongly devout family moved regularly from one place to another. Initially, they moved from Newmark to Port Jervis, New York, where seven-year old Stephen commenced his education. However, after his father Jonathan deceased in the year 1880, they moved again and finally settled in Asbury Park, New Jersey, in the residence called "Arbutus Cottage" (D'Alessandro). There Crane's mother Helen became the head of Women's Christian Temperance Union and his brother Jonathan was a reporter for the local *New York Tribune* bureau whereby Crane discovered his interest in journalism and "started to write for the press when only sixteen" (Anonymous). Even though Crane's family was strongly devout, it seemed that almost no religious value was reflected in Stephen and his work, as it happened in the case of Rebecca Harding Davis, moreover Crane's life radically differed from the environment he experienced in his family.

Considering Stephen Crane's education, he was never fond of school attendance and several times was forced to change institutions. His last destination was Syracuse University, but perceiving education as a waste of time, in the year 1891 twenty-year old Crane left, after one semester, this institution, where he rather "distinguished himself as a baseball player" than attended classes regularly (Baym, Krupat and Reesman 741). Henceforward, he focused on his career as a freelance journalist. Furthermore, Malcolm Bradbury and Richard Ruland observes this period as a turning point in Stephen Crane's career: "his literary career began with the 'city-sketches' he wrote when he broke with his religious upbringing and settled, scandalously, in the bohemian poverty of New York City" (227).

Crane's life in New York City was a hard one. Although he himself lived in impoverished living conditions, this experience and his talent for observation of New York slums provided enough material to finish his first novel *Maggie: A Girl of the Street* which he eventually published under the pen name Johnson Smith, in the year 1893, at his own

expense because all publishers rejected it, mostly for its so much realistic an exposure of city slum's environment. Unfortunately for Crane, the novel did not sell well even when republished by D. Appleton and Company in the year 1896 and despite the favorable responses of Hamlin Garland and William Dean Howells, it remained almost unnoticed by the contemporary readership. In the same year Crane wrote another novel situated in Bowery district *George's Mother*, where Maggie makes a brief appearance as the protagonist's secret love. Even though neither of these publications secured Crane's fame or fortune in his lifetime, they even nowadays serve as "Crane's fullest treatment of how the have-littles in the burgeoning cities of America lived in the 1880s and 1890s" (Baym, Krupat and Reesman 742).

Fundamentally, the novel *Maggie: A Girl of the Street* might be divided into three main parts. In the first part, Crane introduces us into the impoverished background where Maggie with his brother Jim matures, then in the second part Crane follows Maggie's desperate effort to escape from her vicious environment to be inevitably sentenced to death in the last section of the novel.

The first part, where Crane introduces the slum's atmosphere as a major factor in a human life's evolvment, begins with a skirmish where young bruiser Jimmie, although "a very little boy", fights urchins from Devil's Row "for the honour of Rum Alley" (Crane 1). After he is rescued from being beaten to death by sixteen-year old Pete, Jim immediately engages himself in another struggle with his friend Blue Billie only to be consequently pacified by his father's kicks and taken home, whereupon Jimmie swears and curses his father repeatedly because it is "a degradation for one who aimed to be some vague kind of a solider" (Crane 3). Jacob Riis, in his testament *How the Other Half Lives*, confirms that for children from impoverished districts "kicks and cuffs are . . . daily diet."

When they approach a district where they live, Crane provides a vivid picture of the environment which, according to his belief, has significant impact upon human development:

Eventually they entered a dark region where, from a careening building, a dozen gruesome doorways gave up loads of babies to the street and the gutter. A wind of early autumn raised yellow dust from cobbles and swirled it against a hundred windows. Long streamers of garments fluttered from fire-escapes. In all unhandy places there were buckets, brooms, rags and bottles. In the street infants played or fought with other infants or sat stupidly in the way of

vehicles. Formidable women, with uncombed hair and disordered dress, gossiped while leaning on railings, or screamed in frantic quarrels. Withered persons, in curious postures of submission to something, sat smoking pipes in obscure corners. A thousand odours of cooking food came forth to the street. The building quivered and creaked from the weight of humanity stamping about in its bowels. (4)

The description gives us a clear illustration of a place overwhelmed with inhabitants, dirt and noises where, according to Crane's metaphor, the tenement houses function similarly as human bowels, that is they slowly drains beauty and spirit out of people who are eventually left only standing "in curious postures of submission to something" (Crane 4).

Exactly in this particular way are Maggie's parents depicted. Maggie's mother, Mary Johnson, is an alcoholic. She is drained out of even a little remnant of human kindness which makes her a vicious fury who turns the family environment into a "reg'lar livin' hell" as her husband proclaims in a saloon where he frequently flees from her rages (Crane 8). "Howls and curses, groans and shrieks" are common occurrence in Johnson's family and even when parents are asleep Maggie with Jimmie are terrified of their mother for since she is awake "all the fiends would come from below" (Crane 9-10). The only haven for children is provided by the old woman neighbor living in the next floor of the same tenement. She offers Jimmie a place to sleep in exchange for beer he is supposed to purchase in a local saloon. It is not a complication because, according to Riis, "the law prohibiting the selling of beer to minors is about as much respected in the tenement-house districts as the ordinance against swearing." Unfortunately for Jim, the beer is stolen by his father whereupon more screaming transpires.

In the first three chapters of the novel Crane endeavors to prove his viewpoint upon an influence of the environment on human beings. Later he writes to his friend, Hamlin Garland, about the novel: "it tries to show that environment is a tremendous thing in the world and frequently shapes lives regardless" (qtd. in Gray 303). Indeed, an illustration of the background where Maggie matures foreshadows the inevitable destiny which awaits her.

Stephen Crane then advances the story several years forward when Maggie's dad and her little brother Tommie are already dead. Jimmie matures into a brute and arrogant man who, after his father's death, assumes "the vague position of head of the family" and embodies the same behavior as his father (Crane 14). He is employed as a truck man and

he has already a decent criminal record, in most of cases, due to his tendency “to fight other drivers” because he considers himself superior human being (Crane 13).

On the other hand Maggie has blossomed into attractive girl who possess “none of the dirt of Rum Alley” (Crane 14). She works in a collar-and-cuff factory as a result of Jimmie’s suggestion that either she goes to work or she becomes a prostitute and since “having the feminine aversion to the alternative” she commences working (Crane 14). Maggie labors all day and night she spends with her drunken mother therefore as soon as Pete with his elegant demeanor makes an appearance in their cellar, she begins to perceive him as “a knight” who is able to save her from the oppressive surrounding wherein she is so incongruous (Crane 17). Crane illustrates her unspoiled humanity as well as little naivety when she realizes a necessity of vanishing from home: “Her dim thoughts were often searching for faraway lands where the little hills sing together in the morning. Under the trees of her dream gardens there had always walked a lover” (16). Nevertheless, Pete immediately senses an opportunity to seduce a youthful innocent girl and invites her to a show on Friday night, whereupon their relationship commences.

Pete introduces Maggie to places which she barely knows and as a result she becomes even more fascinated by him. Furthermore, she constantly fantasizes about him at her workplace and home because he represents an apparent contrast and possibility of escape from all these cruelties. However, she does not have anyone with whom she could talk about Pete thus she naively perceives him as a savior from “the difficulties she had had to combat in order to obtain a degree of comfort” (Crane 36). One of the places they frequently visit is a theatre where Maggie discovers rags-to-riches melodramas. These plays, where the poor heroine is “rescued from the palatial home of her treacherous guardian by the hero with the beautiful sentiments”, make Maggie ponder whether these tales “could be acquired by a girl who lived in a tenement house and worked in a shirt factory” (Crane 24-25). Later, Pete becomes the virtual hero for Maggie when he appears in her apartment while there is a “scuffle” between Jimmie and his drunken mother (Crane 26). Pete takes Maggie outside whereupon the inebriated Mary screams at her: “Yeh’ve gone t’ d’ devil, Mag Johnson, yehs knows yehs knows yehs have gone t’ d’ devil” (Crane 28).

Even though Jimmie himself seduces women regularly in the same way as Pete does because he himself has abandoned at least “two women“, as soon as Jimmie ascertains that Pete has ruined his sister he rushes with his friend Billie to Pete’s saloon in order to “wipe up d’ street wid ‘im” (Crane 13-30). After the struggle where the three

fighters destroy the whole saloon Jim leaves behind his friend who is along with Pete escorted by the policeman.

Henceforward, Crane uses each chapter as a separated image with no palpable connection between them. In one of these images, Maggie and Pete sit in a saloon which, the reader could assume, is one of the lower class brothels, considering the female singer “in a gown of flaming scarlet” who reappears several times always in “less gown” (Crane 35-36). Moreover, another night, while they are sitting in “hilarious hall”, which is a saloon very similar to the previous one, there is a shift in behavior between Maggie and Pete toward each other (Crane 40). Maggie’s submission to Pete is thorough but he seems to be distant and consequently he is easily seduced and lured away by a woman of “brilliance and audacity”, Nellie, right in front of Maggie (Crane 41).

The other scenes illustrate Maggie’s despair because nobody feels responsible for her miserable situation. Mary along with Jimmie ponders: “When a girl is bringed up d’ way I bringed up Maggie, how kin she go teh d’ devil?” (Crane 38) Nevertheless, instead of helping forlorn Maggie, they both throw her out of home. Again, only the leathery old woman with a music box offers Maggie a shelter because she “ain’ got no moral standin’” (Crane 46). Eventually, Pete also forsakes hopeless Maggie and leaves her on the street where the only opportunity for a young girl to survive is to become a prostitute.

Suddenly, Crane skips a few months forward in the story and follows a “girl of the painted cohorts of the city” walking through New York districts and “giving smiling invitations to men” (50). Even though Crane does not mention the girl’s name, it could be presupposed that it is Maggie. Crane endeavors to demonstrate Maggie’s sequential descent into prostitution while she meanders within the city from “more glittering avenues . . . into gloomy districts near the river” what proves to be the last destination of her life journey as Crane poetically portrays: “The varied sounds of life, made joyous by distance and seeming unapproachableness, came faintly and died away to a silence” (51). It is not clear whether Maggie commits a suicide or whether she is murdered by one of her customers she meets in the “gloomy districts” (51). However, it could be assumed that Maggie perceives the suicide as the only escape from the vicious reality where she has reached the social bottom and has lost her dignity similarly as in the case of Hugh Wolfe in Rebecca Harding Davis’ “The Life in the Iron Mills”.

Even though Pete has not perceived himself responsible for Maggie’s destiny, he presently sits in a saloon with Nellie and other five women buying drinks and assuring himself of his own righteousness and laments, probably, over Maggie’s death.

Furthermore, he drinks heavily and consequently loses consciousness whereupon Nellie steals his money and departs despite the fact Pete proclaims he is “stuck” on her thus he is abandoned in the similar way as he himself has abandoned Maggie earlier (Crane 54). However, Pete’s qualms of conscience seem to be more frank than Mary’s theatrical sob making comedy for the whole tenement house. Ultimately, while she is comforted by Miss Smith, Mary, not being aware of her own blunders, absurdly clamors: “I’ll fergive her! I’ll fergive her!” (Crane 56)

Beside the fact that Stephen Crane lived most of his life in poverty, he also had an affinity for brothels which he frequented regularly therefore he was able to recognize major factors that led young girls to become prostitutes. Moreover, Crane himself spent last three years of his life with “Cora Howorth Taylor, the proprietor of a bordello, the Hotel de Dream in Jacksonville, Florida” (Baym, Krupat and Reesman 742). They moved together to England where Crane befriended writers such as Joseph Conrad, Henry James and Herbert George Wells. Notwithstanding, Crane’s health rapidly worsened by his desperate effort to earn money by writing in order to overcome his impoverished life situation and passed away on July 5, in Germany. In August 1900 Herbert G. Wells wrote an article about Stephen Crane which commenced with the following lamentation: “The untimely death at thirty of Stephen Crane robs English literature of an interesting and significant figure, and the little world of those who write, of a stout friend and a pleasant comrade.”

5. THEODORE DREISER

Theodore Herman Albert Dreiser was born on August 27, 1871 in Terre Haute, Indiana, and died on December 28, 1945 of heart failure at the age of seventy-four. He was buried in Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Hollywood, California.

As the eleventh of thirteen children of German immigrant Johann Dreiser and Säräh Schänäb, who had Moravian ancestors, youthful Theodore matured in a highly religious family which struggled with poverty resulting from a failure of his father 's wool business mainly caused by "the fire [of the wool mill], the downturn of the wool industry after the Civil War, and the national economic depression of the early 1870s" (Riggio). The family, frequently moving from one town to another, never overcame these misfortunes and the sixteen year old Theodore was forced to find a job in Chicago. In addition, his oldest

brother Paul Dresser was a popular songwriter most famous for being the author of the Indiana official state song "On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away".

Theodore Dreiser's early education at German Catholic schools together with a strictly religious environment in his family were reflected in Dreiser's negative attitude towards the Catholic church later in his life. For his impoverished family was moving repeatedly, he never finished his high school education. Although he was not a keen student in any kind of school institution, Dreiser began "to educate himself, as did another famous autodidact, Benjamin Franklin, by reading widely in fiction, science, natural history, and philosophy" (Riggio). Nevertheless, Dreiser's former high school teacher, Mildred Fielding, paid him two semesters at Indiana University in the year 1889 because she perceived a great potential in Dreiser.

Prior to being recognized as a novelist, Theodore Dreiser commenced his writing career as a journalist in the year 1892 when Dreiser wrote his first article for *Chicago Globe*. His newspaper writing eventually brought him to New York City where he worked for *World* as a freelance reporter. After a short period of time, Dreiser left *World* and practically gave up his journalist career contributing mere few articles for magazines such as *Harper's Monthly* and *Success*. Subsequently in New York City, Dreiser initiated editorial profession in *Ev'ry Month*, "a magazine published by Howley, Haviland, his brother Paul's music firm" (Smith). In addition, it was New York City where Theodore Dreiser began writing his first novel *Sister Carrie* and due to the support of his friend, Arthur Henry, Dreiser was able to finish the publication in the year 1900 after a relatively a short period of time.

According to Thomas Riggio, the story of *Sister Carrie* is based on Dreiser's sister Emma's affair which an introduction of the Dover edition from 2004, written by T. Rogers, approves and subsequently provides more details:

The title evidently came from the way his sister, Emma (1863 - 1936), used to sign her letters to him: 'I remain your / Sister Emma.' . . . Emma Dreiser had left her Chicago lover, an architect, and taken up with a married man name L. A. Hopkins, the cashier of Chapin & Gore, a well-known bar in downtown Chicago. After eloping with Hopkins to Montreal, Emma learned that he had stolen \$3,500 from the safe at Chapin & Gore. Hopkins returned \$2,700 of the money, hoping to avoid prosecution, and he and Emma fled to New York. (iv)

Eventually, Theodore Dreiser submitted the story to publishing house Doubleday, Page & Company which initially refused to publish the book for its immorality although it was deeply admired by one of the company's readers Frank Norris. *Sister Carrie* was consequently published by Doubleday, mainly in order to preserve the company's reputation, on November 8, 1900, nevertheless, without being sufficiently promoted, it "sold fewer than 500 copies" (britannica.com). The disappointing public response and the total income lower than \$70 seemed to have a considerable impact on Dreiser's further writing in the first decade of nineteenth century as Thomas Riggio confirms in Dreiser's biography: "The inability to write was the result of an extended nervous breakdown, brought on, Dreiser later claimed, by the suppression of *Sister Carrie*."

In August 1889, the main protagonist of the novel, eighteen-year old, Caroline Meeber leaves her hometown Columbia City in a train whose final destination is supposed to be Chicago, "a giant magnet, drawing to itself, from all quarters, the hopeful and the hopeless" (Dreiser 10). Besides the fact she is pretty and timid, Dreiser does not mention anything about her history and describes Carrie merely through a list of her present belongings. However there is one characteristic of hers which lures her out of the hometown to Chicago city, she is "interested in her charms, quick to understand the keener pleasures of life, ambitious to gain in material things" (Dreiser 2). Carrie is almost obsessed with those material things and amusements that Chicago, as she believes, would offer. On the other hand, Carrie is a typical "wage-seeker" who leaves the countryside and moves to the industrial metropolis where she endeavors to earn a fortune in one of local factories or department stores (Dreiser 12).

While still sitting in the train, Carrie is addressed by a travelling businessman, Charles Drouet, a member of class in these days called "drummers" (Dreiser 3). Carrie is immediately fascinated by his demeanor and she realizes that there is "something promising in all the material prospect he set[s] forth" (Dreiser 4). However, Carrie notices the contrast between his expansive clothes and her shabby outfit for Drouet is one of those middle-class men who enjoy "fine clothes, good eating, and particularly the company and acquaintanceship of successful men" and his manners are sophisticated accordingly (Dreiser 30). They exchange addresses and since the train stops they both depart separate ways having arranged meeting on Monday afternoon.

In a moment the train terminates at the platform, Carrie meets her sister Minnie whose appearance promptly indicates the deep abyss between Drouet's and her standards of living. Subsequently in Minnie's flat, Carrie witnesses a grim reality of contemporary

clerks and laborers who live their “lean and narrow life” (Dreiser 8). Moreover, there are no signs of interest in Carrie’s presence unless she has an employment and pays four dollars a week since she is a mere boarder in her sister’s apartment. Considering the fact that Carrie strongly desires for all kinds of merriment such as frequenting theatres and purchasing sundry adornments, she feels “much alone, a lone figure in a tossing, thoughtless sea” in her current condition and immediately writes Drouet a letter for he is not supposed to see where she lives (Dreiser 7).

Being encouraged by Minnie’s dull husband, Sven Hanson, Carrie commences an employment search early in the morning. She finds herself in the middle of Chicago center whose “high and mighty air [is] calculated to overawe and abash the common applicant, and to make the gulf between poverty and success seem both wide and deep” (Dreiser 11). After few unfortunate attempts in Chicago center, she is recommended to endeavor some of the department stores which have started to being constructed recently. Alan Trachtenberg places a department store among railroads and factories as the major icons of transformation of the United States of America in the second half of the nineteenth century:

Of all city spectacles, none surpassed the giant department store, the emporium of consumption born and nurtured in these years. Here the citizen met a new world of goods: not goods alone, but a world of goods, constructed and shaped by the store into objects of desire. Here the very word "consumption" came to life. (130)

Accordingly, Carrie is entirely “affected by the remarkable displays of trinkets, dress goods, stationary, and jewelry” she observes in various large windows of those department stores (Dreiser 15). Nevertheless, she is not able to obtain a position as a shop girl in any of these stores, mainly for she is inexperienced. Eventually, desperate Carrie secures work at shoe factory, Rhodes, Morgenthau and Scott, for four dollars and fifty cents a week and with risen spirits as well as full of optimism and thinking of Drouet goes home.

However, the harsh reality returns with the first day of labor. Carrie is introduced to her task consisting of sitting on a stool in front of a machine that makes holes into pieces of leather. Even though the work itself is not difficult, as the time passes, the factory premises with low-ceilings fills with smell from oil and leather and the temperature rises. Consequently, she starts to feel “the need of a breath of fresh air and a drink of water”

(Dreiser 26). Her whole body aches from the mechanical movement by the machine, furthermore, she cannot even stretch her hands or legs for she might delay the assembly line. This is the same reason the talking between workers is prohibited. Even though Dreiser does not mention any penalties for disobedience of these rules in a factory, George Henry in his essay "The Crime of Poverty" brings a testimony from one Philadelphia forelady:

There is a fine for speaking to your next neighbour, a fine for laughing; . . . the girls in one place where she was employed were fined ten cents a minute for being late, though many of them had to come for miles in winter storms. She told me of one poor girl who really worked hard one week and made \$3.50; but the fines against her were \$5.25.

Dreiser is aware of these problems at workplaces, too, and subsequently adds: "Under better material conditions, this kind of work would not have been so bad, but the new socialism which involves pleasant working conditions for employees had not then taken hold upon manufacturing companies" (28). Hence, when the end of the shift comes at six o'clock, Carrie runs away thinking that she can "hardly endure such a life" because it proves to be diametrically different from her desires and expectations and for youthful Carrie almost unbearable (Dreiser 29).

Afterwards for the purpose of contrast, Dreiser delineates Drouet's ordinary evening which he usually spends in lavish restaurants or saloons, such as Rector's and Fitzgerald and Moy's, in order to meet members of higher social class with whom he longs to be equal. Even though he is a mere travelling salesman he is able, due to his demeanor, to mingle with the moneyed men. One of these is also George W. Hurstwood, the manager of Fitzgerald and Moy's, who is "a very successful and well-known man about the town" (Dreiser 31). His current status, "the picture of fastidious comfort", results from a long period of diligence and hard work as a barkeeper (Dreiser 33). Hurstwood is aware of the financial gulf between them but Drouet's occupation at acclaimed Barlett, Caryoe & Company, his sense of humor and eloquence have won him the place among Hurstwood's better acquaintances.

On the other part of social hierarchy, Carrie's situation keeps worsening. Apart from the fact she hates her job and her co-workers and her desire for material things is intensified, the winter comes and Carrie does not have enough money to even obtain

decent clothes to overcome the freezing weather. Consequently, she is ill and forced to stay in bed at least three days. The loss of her labor is the inevitable outcome of the three day absence. Her subsequent search for the job is more desperate than the preceding. However by lucky incident Carrie meets Drouet who promptly promises to take care of her, whereupon she manages to leave her sister's rigid apartment and is able to stay in Chicago, which is, according to Carrie, "the admirable, great city, so fine when you are not poor" (Dreiser 50). She will live at the apartment purchased by Drouet. For the first time, this relationship with Drouet provides Carrie with all the material things which could satisfy her desires, at least for a while.

Even though Carrie has finally obtained a sufficient financial means through her relationship with Drouet, her desire for material things does not cease but even grows instead. Dreiser, himself, is aware of the fact that in the end of nineteenth century "material wealth became a value to the American people" (Datesman, Crandall and Kearny 32). Moreover, the economist Thorsten Veblen in his publication *The Theory of the Leisure Class* coined the term *conspicuous consumption* which fundamentally means the unceasing consumer's desire of purchasing more and more goods as a demonstration of his or her social status: "Since the consumption of these more excellent goods [such as clothing, trinkets and jewelry] is an evidence of wealth, it becomes honorific; and conversely, the failure to consume in due quantity and quality becomes a mark of inferiority and demerit." Until her relationship with Drouet, Carrie is aware mere of people who have got money and people who have not, however through this affair and acquaintanceship with George Hurstwood and her neighbor Mrs. Hale, Carrie learns "to distinguish between degrees of wealth" and notices the superiority of Hurstwood over Drouet (Dreiser 81).

Subsequently, this apparent gap between the two men extends and Carrie commences a secret affair with Hurstwood who longs for Carrie even more, since his wife, Julia, has developed "a cold, common place nature" which considerably irritates Hurstwood (Dreiser 86). Mainly due to Hurstwood's flexible working schedule, they are able to meet regularly whereupon his affection for Carrie steadily grows. Nevertheless, Carrie seems to love neither of them. She is mere obsessed with her own naive image of marriage, which would secure her position as a consumer of goods which appears to be the only thing that could satisfy her, and, furthermore, she cannot decide who to choose unless one of them promises to marry her as soon as possible.

Before Carrie definitely leaves Drouet, she is given an opportunity to perform a small part in a play "Under the Gaslight" held by Order of Elks which Drouet is a

member (Dreiser 106). Since Carrie is “naturally imitative”, after an initial stage-fright, her performance is surprisingly good for the inexperienced actress, moreover, she finds herself excited about acting (Dreiser 74).

Consequently, Carrie and George’s affair is revealed and their previous relationships are ruined. Carrie’s budget, after she is separated from Drouet, dwindles therefore she is obliged to find work. Even though Carrie’s demeanor has improved significantly, she is still inexperienced and it proves to be the decisive factor again. Since Hurstwood is abandoned by his wife Julia, he lives in his office. After receiving a letter from “law offices McGregor, James and Hay” where Julia demands divorce and alimony, intoxicated Hurstwood steals ten thousand dollars perceiving them as the only means that could improve his current condition for he has got all his “property in her name” (Dreiser 168-162). Although he is not in such a miserable situation as the Wolfe family in “Life in the Iron Mills” he is forced to steal because he, as well as Rebecca, does not see any other realistic resort. In addition, Dreiser comments on the same moral dilemma Hurstwood experiences while standing in front of the company’s safe with the money in his hands:

Those who have never heard that solemn voice of the ghostly clock which ticks with awful distinctness, "thou shalt," "thou shalt not," "thou shalt," "thou shalt not," are in no position to judge. . . . The dullest specimen of humanity, when drawn by desire toward evil, is recalled by a sense of right, which is proportionate in power and strength to his evil tendency. We must remember that it may not be a knowledge of right, for no knowledge of right is predicated of the animal's instinctive recoil at evil. Men are still led by instinct before they are regulated by knowledge. It is instinct which recalls the criminal. (183)

Unfortunately for Hurstwood, this impetuous decision results in his slow decline and eventual death as in the case of Hugh Wolfe who has likewise decided to keep the stolen money. Furthermore, Hurstwood manages to convince Carrie to retreat with him to Montreal by telling her that Drouet “is in the hospital, injured, and wants to see her” (Dreiser 186).

After being tracked by a detective in Montreal and forced to send back the money, at least “the major portion of it”, George with Carrie gets married changing their surname to Wheeler and, consequently, moves to New York where George would “go into business again” (Dreiser 201-202). Nevertheless, his fortune steadily dwindles because “whatever a

man like Hurstwood could be in Chicago, it is very evident that he would be but an inconspicuous drop in an ocean like New York” since these two cities are incomparable considering a number of population and business opportunities at the end of nineteenth century (Dreiser 204). Although George still successfully conceals the robbery from Carrie, she notices it is “not the liberal, opulent Hurstwood” she has known in Chicago (Dreiser 209).

Since Hurstwood fails in his enterprise and is not able to find a job, they are obliged to move several times always into smaller apartments. Subsequently, George lacks an even slight interest in searching for inferior jobs, than he has been accustomed while working in Fitzgerald and Moy’s, and most of the time sits in a rocking chair and reads newspapers. The only employment, which however lasts only one day, he manages to obtain is working as a scab during the strike organized by “Knights of Labor” who demand higher wages and eight hours labor time for motormen and conductors at Brooklyn trolley company (Dreiser 283). Furthermore, he commences to purchase necessities on credit and regularly plays poker wherein he loses all his money. After Carrie’s departure, Hurstwood is completely broke and becomes a beggar. Eventually, he commits a suicide in a cheap lodging house by turning on the gas and gives up his life struggle while weakly lamenting: “What is the use?” (Dreiser 350).

On the other hand, Carrie becomes famous as a chorus girl named Carrie Madenda, the stage name invented by Drouet during her first experience with theater, and earns a fortune. Consequently, she leaves Hurstwood for he is not capable of supporting her and his demeanor irritates her. When describing Drouet at the beginning of the story, Dreiser illustrates imaginary line “which somehow divides for her those who are worth glancing at and those who are not [and] once an individual has passed this faint line on the way downward he will get no glance from her” (Dreiser 4). It should be mentioned that even before Carrie abandons Hurstwood, leaving him at least twenty dollars for food, she refuses to sleep with him in one bed which means he has already passed this faint line even before her proper departure. Nevertheless, although Carrie has got sufficient financial means to purchase whatever she wants and she becomes a famous actress, she is not content because she desires continuously for something she cannot even describe and she learns that in former Hurstwood’s world, “as in her own present state, . . . [has been] not happiness” (Dreiser 351). Therefore Carrie might be perceived as Dreiser’s contemporary image of *conspicuous consumer* whose desires cannot be satisfied.

It might be troublesome to clarify the factors which have led to Hurstwood's death and Carrie's success since both of them have initiated at diametrically diverse commencements in the story. Nonetheless, Roger W. Smith alleges in Dreiser's biography: "Spencer's works [have] greatly influenced Dreiser, impelling him towards a mechanistic or deterministic world-view which he [has] adopted and which is evidenced in his works." Considering this interest of Dreiser's and the fact that he has read Spencer's publications prior to writing *Sister Carrie*, it could be assumed that Dreiser has applied the Spencer's theory of *survival of the fittest* on Hurstwood and Carrie, too. This explanation could be supported by Carrie's ability to adapt to various environmental conditions for she never suffers except for her initial stay at her sister's. On the other hand, Hurstwood has not been able to accept the reality which has awaited him in New York and he has slowly descended into poverty for he has not been capable to cope with, for him, new living conditions.

6. UPTON SINCLAIR

Upton Beall Sinclair was born on September 20, 1878 in Baltimore, Maryland, and died on November 25, 1968 in the nursing home in Bound Brook, New Jersey, at the age of ninety.

As a son of an alcoholic Upton Beall Sinclair, Sr., and Priscilla Harden whose family possessed a handsome property, young Sinclair witnessed on the one hand life in poverty in New York City where the family moved after the liquor business of his father failed whereupon his father spent most of the time selling hats and sitting in a saloon. On the other hand youthful Upton also spent time with his grandparents whose wealth assisted him to distinguish the apparent contrast in material possession. According to Sinclair's profile at the City College of New York website, "witnessing of this disparity influenced his move towards socialism."

In the year 1893 Sinclair commenced his education at the City College of New York. Since his parents could not have provided him sufficient financial support, Sinclair was forced to write "dime novels as well as jokes, riddles, poems and short stories for publication in popular magazines" in order to fund his education (lion.chadwyck.co.uk). Subsequently, in the year 1897 he entered Columbia University where, however, he did not graduate, probably because of his furious attempt to publish at least one novelle a week usually "under the pseudonyms of Lieutenant Garrison and Ensign Clarke Fitch" (uptonsinclair.com).

After his education, Sinclair's career flourished with the novel *Manassas: A Story of the War* published in the year 1904. Even though the book did not sell well, it managed to be noticed by the socialist quarters, especially by "Fred D. Warren, editor of the socialist newspaper *Appeal to Reason*, and Isaac Marcossion, a reform-minded editor and publisher" (lion.chadwyck.co.uk). Both of them commissioned Sinclair to write a novel about living and working conditions of Chicago immigrants residing in the district called Packingtown. Therefore spending seven weeks in this district, observing the meatpacking process and talking to the local laborers resulted in Sinclair's most successful publication *The Jungle*.

Considering the fact *The Jungle* was at first rejected by several publishing houses, Sinclair was forced to publish the book in serialized form in Socialist paper *Appeal to Reason*. Nevertheless, *The Jungle* was promptly noticed and Sinclair received almost a thousand orders for copies. Accordingly, the notable publishing house Doubleday accepted the book for publication in the year 1906. Selling immediately over 150,000 copies, *The Jungle* became instant success which "won Sinclair fame and fortune" (Liukkonen). Consequently, the publication led to nationwide panic about "unsanitary methods of production in the stockyards" (Gray 330).

Probably due to Sinclair's attempt to depict the cruelties of Chicago Packingtown as thoroughly as possible, in consequence *The Jungle* is composed from the most part as a newspaper report rather than a novel. Apart from the fact it is narrated by unknown storyteller, Sinclair himself perhaps, almost each paragraph functions as a report of one social ill of a contemporary Chicago, such as interlinked corruption, working and living conditions of laborers, crime and the most important is the depiction of meat industry's practices. Little space is dedicated to descriptions of characters and actual discourses between them, at least, in the first half of the publication where Sinclair uses most of the space for delineating vivid pictures of "virtually every evil to be found in American industry, politics and society" (Gray 332).

The Jungle portrays the story of Jurgis Rudkus from his steady decline until his eventual salvation in a discovery of Socialism. Jurgis is Lithuanian immigrant who, with his extended family, moves to the United States of America in order to chase the American Dream in a Chicago district called Packingtown, because it is the place where their friend has become rich. They blindly believe that in America, "rich or poor, a man is free", however, their dream "of employment for thousands upon thousands of men, of opportunity and freedom, of life and love and joy" quickly vanishes (Sinclair 25-33). They are being deceived since they have reached the New York harbor and, furthermore, one

after another dies of vicious working and living conditions. Even constantly determined Jurgis, after being witness at first of his father's death and then of his son and wife's decease, leaves the rest of the family for taking chances on his own. Being a beggar initially, Jurgis subsequently enters "high-class criminal world of Chicago" and eventually he embraces the ideology of Socialism whereupon "the whole world . . . [changes] for him" (Sinclair 288-353).

Jurgis' family could be perceived as a typical example of nineteenth century immigrant family, at least, for their naive delineation of America being a land of guaranteed success. They have built this picture upon tales and general prejudices about United States of America, such as, that hard-work eventually leads to fortune and success. Nevertheless, already in "Life in the Iron Mills" Rebecca Harding Davis doubts the "American system [is] a ladder which any one can scale" (439). Consequently, Sinclair provides an answer that nobody is able to scale this ladder "in Packingtown by doing a good work" and the one who could scale it is usually "a knave" (68). Accordingly as an evidence, Sinclair comments on Jurgis' brief criminal experience: "A month ago Jurgis had all but perished of starvation upon the streets; and now suddenly, as by the gift of a magic key, he had entered into a world where money and all the good things of life came freely" (290).

Another social ill that Sinclair illustrates is the environment of Chicago at the beginning of twentieth century. This is the issue Theodore Dreiser in *Sister Carrie* barely mentions and, moreover, Dreiser significantly differs in his sporadic references to Chicago's environment. Since both Carrie and Jurgis at least once walk through Halsted Street, the atmosphere of the city should be similar however each author depicts the environment divergently. Where Dreiser illustrates "the sunshine of the morning, beneath the wide, blue heavens, with a fresh wind astir" (24) when Carrie goes to work and subsequently rather refers to a bustle behind great windows of department stores and "the huge factories over the way" (12), Sinclair conceals Dreiser's blue heavens with factory chimneys pouring "half a dozen columns of smoke, thick, oily, and black as night" (28). Even though they both agree on a presence of unceasing murmur which according to Sinclair resembles "the rumblings of a world in motion", mere Sinclair illustrates the open gutters and unpaved sidewalks full of mud, where Jurgis' child consequently drowns, and additionally let us even smell the contemporary city of Chicago whose odor is "rich, almost rancid, sensual and strong" due to omnipresent factories (Sinclair 28). As a consequence, considering the Stephen Crane's description of New York slums and Davis' illustration of

hell, which is supposed to be Wheeling, Virginia, Sinclair's industrial Chicago, at least the areas where the working poor live, appears to be more realistic than Dreiser's, even though Carrie initially resides in the area "inhabited by families of labourers and clerks" (Dreiser 8).

As there is the smoke and smell constantly present in Sinclair's Chicago, the corruption is always present too. At first, the family becomes a victim of a swindle when purchasing their own house. The house itself is fifteen years old with numerous flaws but it is sold as a new residence and the deed is filled with secret additional payments, which consequently ruins the family. These secret payments remain concealed for the family, even though in order to examine the deed, they obtain a lawyer who, unfortunately for them, promptly addresses "the [real estate] agent by his first name" (Sinclair 57).

The second instance of corruption is connected with elections and a buying vote scheme which is already mentioned in "Life in the Iron Mills" but Sinclair gives more space to this subject. Fundamentally, since Jurgis and Jonas become American citizens and acquire the suffrage, they never forget an election day because they are always told "how to mark a ballot" in order to being awarded with few dollars (Sinclair 107). Considering the fact that every extra dollar could save the family from dying for there are "literally not a month's wages between them and starvation" (Sinclair 115), this scheme functions properly as Alan Trachtenberg confirms when claims "that persuasion often took the form of cash for votes" (171).

Another example Sinclair demonstrates on the means whereby Jurgis' wife Ona, his father Antanas and little Stanislovas have obtained labor. Initially, old Dede Antanas is not capable of acquiring a job due to his age, unless he donates "one-third of his wages" for an occupation which eventually ruins his health (Sinclair 67). Subsequently, Ona is supposed to gratify her future forelady by giving a "ten-dollar bill into her hand" and the last example is a modification of thirteen year old Stanislovas' birth certificate by a local priest in order to acquire labor which is supposed to be prohibited for children under the age of sixteen (Sinclair 81). Even though the law clearly states that "children under sixteen must not be employed unless they can read and write English; none at all under fourteen", in this era children represents necessary additional income which could save a family from famine (Riis).

The list of corruption techniques provided by Sinclair would not be exhaustive without mentioning Jurgis being blacklisted for an assault on Ona's boss, who represents an apparent embodiment of corrupted Chicago, however, being in the blacklist means that

nobody in Chicago would employ Jurgis. In addition, references to these blacklists by Trachtenberg as well as by Tindall and Shi, suggest how desperate could have been the fight against those in charge in nineteenth century America.

An inevitable aftermath of the upper mentioned social environment, which surrounds Jurgis' and his relatives in Chicago, is the death of several members of his family. Whether consciously or not, Sinclair seems to follow Charles Darwin's *natural selection* or in this case Spencer's theory of *survival of the fittest* because initially the family loses Jurgis' old father Antanas whose desperate efforts to obtain labor, because nobody wants to employ an old man, forces him to work in "the pickle rooms of Durham's" whose working conditions and a pace of work, along with Antanas' consumption, eventually causes the old man's death (Sinclair 67). The Packingtown's next victim is Ona's little stepbrother Kristoforas, who is disabled and cannot even walk. He is a burden to the whole family therefore the only person who is truly mournful is his mother, Teta Elzbieta. However, Sinclair does not state apparently whether little Kristoforas deceases of his ailment or "of some of the tubercular pork" he has eaten two hours prior his death (145). The list completes Jurgis' wife Ona, who, as Sinclair claims at the beginning of the story, is "not fitted for such a life as this", followed by Jurgis' son little Antanas who drowns in mud in front family's tenement house whereupon Jurgis departs Chicago temporarily (85). In conclusion, the reader might assume that Sinclair could have been aware of Darwin's and Spencer's works, according to the fact the characters do not fit in the urban jungle, where people prey upon each other. Therefore, the least fit are eliminated from the story relatively early.

Nevertheless, since no character commits suicide, Sinclair provides an entirely divergent approach towards human endurance which differs him from all three preceding authors. The first character who commits suicide is Davis' Huger Wolfe who, beside the fact he is imprisoned for nineteen years, cannot endure a life without fulfilling his spiritual and artistic desires. The second protagonist is Stephen Crane's Maggie who becomes a prostitute and commits suicide perceiving it the only means of escape from her degradation and the harsh reality she has experienced in New York slums' environment. Eventually, the last character is Dreiser's George Huxstutson who is not able to accommodate himself to new environmental conditions which he perceives being below his standards of life. As a consequence, Sinclair's approach to his character's determination to live seems to make them a slightly unbelievable for story of *The Jungle* situates them in more vicious environment. In evidence, Jacob Riis in his photojournalist work *How the Other Half Lives*

admits that suicide has been a common occurrence in nineteenth century shanty town furthermore he offers several examples in order to prove his point. One of Riis' reports illustrates apparently similar situation where Jurgis and his family struggles:

There were nine in the family: husband, wife, an aged grandmother, and six children; honest, hard working Germans, scrupulously neat, but poor. All nine lived in two rooms, one about ten feet square that served as parlor, bedroom, and eating-room, the other a small hall-room made into a kitchen. The rent was seven dollars and a half a month, more than a week's wages for the husband and father, who was the only bread-winner in the family. That day the mother had thrown herself out of the window, and was carried up from the street dead. She was "discouraged," said some of the other women from the tenement . . .

Another social ill Sinclair refers to is indirectly related to Stephen Crane who already emphasizes an omnipresence of intoxicated people and saloons in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *George's Mother*. In *The Jungle*, Jurgis is tempted several times to various saloons in order to "escape from the horror" but he never enters because there is always his family for whom he is determined to fight (Sinclair 159). Nevertheless, when Jurgis struggles as a beggar, the saloons represent among other things a haven for him in furious winter. Fortunately for beggars, saloons have occupied almost every meter of space in the nineteenth century Chicago or New York as demonstrate figures from Jacob Riis' investigation when he has "counted to 111 Protestant churches, chapels, and places of worship of every kind below Fourteenth Street, 4,065 saloons." Even though most of beggars do not have financial means to purchase even one beverage, they are often allowed to "remain as a 'sitter'" (Sinclair 260). Fundamentally, this means the bartender usually invites few forlorn beggars into the saloon in order to lure moneyed customers who might subsequently sympathize with those miserable looking mendicants and purchase them drinks. However, every time one of those beggars falls asleep in front of the fireplace, which is supposed to be his territory, he is immediately expelled. On the issue of sitters Jacob Riis provides a vivid picture:

To make sure that they do keep awake, the wily bartender makes them sit constantly swinging one foot like the pendulum of a clock . . . It is said by those who profess to know that habit has come to the rescue of oversleepy

tramps and that the old rounders can swing hand or foot in their sleep without betraying themselves.

Moreover, Sinclair agrees with Riis in another role of saloon in this era. Many saloons function also as the so-called stale-beer dives, in other words inexpensive lodging houses. Generally, these saloons work as a regular bar, however, at nights they transform into stale-beer dives. Usually, employees of the bar owner steal empty beer barrels and deliver them to the particular saloon. These are subsequently sanitized with various chemicals and then sold as a bed for approximately two cents. These stale-beer dives could be considered as a common occurrence in the turn of twentieth century since both Sinclair and Riis describe this phenomenon in surprisingly identical terms including the fact that these lodging houses have been generally managed by "an Italian, sometimes a negro, occasionally a woman" (Riis).

Since usually male beggars frequent these inexpensive lodging houses and tend to commence drinking, women are generally lured into various houses of prostitution. As in the case of Stephen Crane's Maggie Johnson whose desperate situation leaves her no other choice except for being a prostitute. In *The Jungle*, Sinclair turns both youthful female characters, Jurgis' wife Ona and her step-sister Marija, into prostitutes in order to save the other members of family. They both sacrifice themselves for their family. At first Ona who is seduced by her boss Phil Connor and forced to attend regularly her forelady's house of ill fame in order to protect her family members from being dismissed from their labor. The second example is Marija who is forced to prostitution as the mere means of income for the whole family since Jurgis has disappeared. It is generally acknowledged that masses of women in the turn of twentieth century have perceived prostitution as the only path of their self-preservation because, according to Sinclair himself, there has been "no place in . . . [Chicago] where a prostitute could not get along better than a decent girl" (123).

Further social problem Sinclair delineates is a hard toil from which almost every character suffers throughout its sojourn in Chicago. Even though this issue has already been recognized by preceding authors, Sinclair dedicates considerably more space to survey this issue utterly. He perceives the major problem in abundance of laborers which allows factory owners not to consider well-being of their employees because there are always thousands of applicants whom they could employ instead. Therefore, the laborers suffer from constantly increasing pace of production, unsanitary working conditions, lowering of wages and irregular working hours, however, the factory owners do not need

to care about anything except their profits since there are "hundreds [of applicants] outside begging to try" (Sinclair 65). Furthermore, the labor unions, in which members of the family are signed, are not, according to Sinclair, unified therefore their attempts to improve working conditions of laborers are usually dispersed promptly.

Consequently, by the means of listing these problems from which the contemporary society suffers, Sinclair prepares a basis for his solution. The answer to these social ills, which Sinclair wants the readership to embrace, is Socialism. This ideology being the remedy is foreshadowed at the very beginning of *The Jungle* when Sinclair through Grandmother Majauszkiene illustrates the misfortunes that have happened to former inhabitants in Jurgis' family wretched residence. The fact that she is the only resident who is capable of survival for so many years to being witness of all these misfortunes along with the Sinclair's commentary that she is "a socialist, or some such strange thing" proposes ideology of Socialism, at least, as a means to survive (77). Furthermore, the commentary on strangeness of Socialism suggests that Sinclair would endeavor to clarify the whole problematic further in the publication, whereupon, he dedicates the last three chapters to mere explaining an essence of the major issue of the era called "wage slavery" and purposing to readership the socialist ideology which Jurgis embraces immediately (359). Eventually, Sinclair provides the figures of socialist's enormous success in the last election and, believing the novel is mere commencement of eventual redemption of Capitalistic society by Socialism, Sinclair foresees that "Chicago will be ours!" (395).

Nevertheless, the eventual public response to *The Jungle* radically differed from initial Sinclair's intentions. They were not the vivid images of Jurgis' family sufferings, cruel working conditions or filthy districts in Chicago's Packingtown, but the unsanitary processes of Chicago's meatpacking industry that Sinclair was investigating for seven weeks in the year 1905 which led eventually to concrete response from the public or rather from the authorities, namely Theodore Roosevelt himself. The public outcry was provoked mainly by the illustrations such as this one:

For they had set . . . [Dede Antanas] to cleaning out the traps; and the family sat round and listened in wonder while he told them what that meant. It seemed that he was working in the room where the men prepared the beef for canning, and the beef had lain in vats full of chemicals, and men with great forks speared it out and dumped it into trucks, to be taken to the cooking room. When they had speared out all they could reach, they emptied the vat on the

floor, and then with shovels scraped up the balance and dumped it into the truck. This floor was filthy, yet they set Antanas with his mop slopping the "pickle" into a hole that connected with a sink, where it was caught and used over again forever; and if that were not enough, there was a trap in the pipe, where all the scraps of meat and odds and ends of refuse were caught, and every few days it was the old man's task to clean these out, and shovel their contents into one of the trucks with the rest of the meat! (Sinclair 69)

As it was already mentioned, Theodore Roosevelt was among those readers who were entirely horrified by these testimonies and subsequently "invited Sinclair to the White House to discuss the issues" (Gray 330). The following investigation resulted in passing the two important laws in the year 1906, Pure Food and Drug Act and Meat Inspection Act, which significantly improved the quality of food production process. Eventually, an unexpectedness of the publication's response Upton Sinclair wittily commented: "I aimed at the public's heart . . . and by accident I hit it in the stomach." (qtd. in Gray 330)

7. CONCLUSION

The major purpose of this thesis was to discover any potential connection between Rebecca Harding Davis, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair whose work is generally acknowledged as being among the best fictions delineating life of impoverished people in the end of the nineteenth century metropolises.

The biographic research proved that all four authors witnessed or even experienced poverty in their lives prior to composing their prominent works. Moreover, considering the fact that they commenced their writing career as journalists, they developed a particular aptitude for observation which must have helped them to reflect the experiences with poverty in their publications. Therefore their work could be considered reliable testimony to daily struggles of destitute people.

Furthermore, the proper analysis of the selected publications with the support of non-fictional literature illustrated the common aspects of lives' of impoverished people residing in the urban jungles of the nineteenth century United States of America, where everybody prey upon one another. The vicious and hostile environment in those metropolises swarmed with laborers toiling in the omnipresent factories grounded people, who were at the bottom of social hierarchy, on their current position by the means of

corruption of superiors and their ignorance towards the poverty evoked predominantly by the ideology of *survival of the fittest*. Thus, the only apparatus of escape for those less fortunate people was, as the literature proved, a suicide resulting from the people being completely numbed by the unceasing toil and the presence of no merriment in their lives. Further remedies the protagonists of the selected works discovered in alcohol or larceny. Women were in most of cases lured into the prostitution which proved females struggled even more than men, considering the attitude of males towards them that was depicted in the specimen of literature and also the fact they still, even at the present time, have to fight for the equal rights. Moreover, most of the protagonists deceased during their desperate race to improve their social position or they were not able to rise from their current impoverished conditions, except for Theodore Dreiser's Carrie Meeber who becomes the wealthy and famous actress, however her success origins in her ability to adapt to various conditions and in her indirect taking advantages of her lovers. Therefore the description of the nineteenth century American metropolises as being urban jungles is very appropriate since only the rapacious methods, in most of cases, secured the reasonable life.

Additionally, the chronologically arranged publications from the Rebecca Harding Davis' "Life in the Iron Mills" published in the year 1861, where Davis depicted several social ills of the contemporary society and desperately endeavored to draw people's attention towards the problem of poverty, through Stephen Crane's inevitable descent of Maggie Johnson into prostitution and eventual suicide caused by vicious New York slums' environment and finally through Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, where he delineated the abyss between the wealth and poverty, the analyses revealed the most reliable testimony in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* published in the year 1906, where all the social problems illustrated by preceding authors completed the whole jigsaw puzzle of how the impoverished people in the urban jungle of the nineteenth century suffered. Furthermore, Upton Sinclair eventually managed to attract the nation's attention to this problem. Consequently, *The Jungle* led to the concrete response and, even though the response was not aimed at amelioration of the living conditions of the poor, it at least came in the form of Pure Food and Drug Act and Meat Inspection Act which improved the sanitary conditions in the food production process.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alger, Horatio. *Ragged Dick Or, Street Life in New York with the Boot-Blacks*. Project Gutenberg. May 1, 2006. Web. 17. 1. 2011.
<<http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5348/pg5348.html>>
- Anonymous. "Stephen Crane: Author of The Black Riders and Other Lines". 1895. *University of Virginia Library*. Web. 10. 3. 2011.
<<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=AnoCran.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=1&division=div1>>
- Byam, Nina, Arnold Krupat, Jeanne Campbell Reesman. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature: Volume C: 1865-1914*. W. W. Norton & Company. New York, 2007. Print.
- Crane, Stephen. *George's Mother*. Edward Arnold. New York, 1896. Print.
- Crane, Stephen. *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. Wordsworth Editions Limited. Hertfordshire, 1995. Print.
- D'Alessandro, Frank. "The Stephen Crane House". Web. 10. 3. 2011.
<<http://thestephencranehouse.org/main.html>>
- Datesman, Maryanne Kearny, JoAnn Crandall and Edward N. Kearny. *American Ways: An Introduction to American Culture*. 3rd ed. Pearson Education. London, 2004. Print.
- Davis, Rebecca Harding. "Life in the Iron Mills". *Atlantic Monthly Co.* 7:42. Boston, 1861: 430-451. Web. 24. 2. 2011.
<<http://digital.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=atla;idno=atla0007-4>>
- Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. Ed. T. N. R. Rogers. Dover Publications, Inc. New York, 2004. Print.
- George, Henry. "The Crime of Poverty". *History is a Weapon*. 1885. Web. 25. 1. 2011.
<<http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/georgecripov.html>>

- Gray, Richard. *A History of American Literature*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Oxford, 2004. Print.
- “Immigration to the US, Timeline”. *Harvard University Library Open Collections Program*. 2011. Web. 27. 1. 2011.
<<http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/immigration/timeline.html>>
- Jefferson, Thomas. *The Declaration of Independence*. Project Gutenberg. November 25, 2004. Web. 30. 1. 2011.
<<http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext90/when12h.htm>>
- Liukkonen, Petri. “Upton Beall Sinclair (1878-1968)”. *Pegasos*. 2008. Web. 30. 3. 2011.
<<http://kirjasto.sci.fi/sinclair.htm>>
- O’Callaghan, Bryn. *An Illustrated History of the USA*. Longman Group UK Limited. Harlow, 1990. Print.
- Reuben, Paul P. "Chapter 5: Rebecca Harding Davis." *PAL: Perspectives in American Literature-A Research and Reference Guide*. Web. 5. 3. 2011.
<<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap5/davis.html>>
- Riggio, Thomas. “Biography of Theodore Dreiser”. *Penn Libraries*. 2000. Web. 20. 3. 2011.
< <http://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/dreiser/tdbio.html>>
- Riis, Jacob. *How the Other Half Lives*. *The Authentic History Center*. 1890. April 5, 2009. Web. 25. 1. 2011.
<<http://www.authentichistory.com/1865-1897/progressive/riis/index.html>>
- Ruland, Richard and Malcom Bradbury. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature*. Penguin Books USA Inc. New York, 1991. Print.
- Sinclair, Upton. *The Jungle*. Signet Classics. New York, 2001. Print.
- “Sinclair, Upton, 1878-1968”. *Literature Online Biography*. 2008. Web. 30. 3. 2011.
<http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk/searchFulltext.do?id=BIBLIOG003185&divLevel=0&trailId=12E7330557E&area=ref&forward=critref_ft>

- Smith, Roger W. "Biography". *Dreiser Online*. 2008. Web. 20. 3. 2011.
< <http://dreiseronline.com/biography.html>>
- "Theodore Dreiser." *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online*.
Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011. Web. 20. 3. 2011.
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/171324/Theodore-Dreiser>>
- Tindall, George and David E. Shi. *Dějiny USA*. Trans. Alena Faltýsková, Alena Komárková, Markéta Macháčková, Svatava Raková, Ivo Šmoldas, Ivan Vomáčka, Eva Zajíčková. Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny. Praha 1998. Print.
- Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America. American Studies at the University of Virginia*. Web. 10. 1. 2011.
<<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/INCORP/toc.html>>
- "Upton Sinclair". *The City College of New York*. Web. 30. 3. 2011.
< <http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/prospective/humanities/profiles/usinclair.cfm>>
- "Upton Sinclair". *Upton Sinclair*. Web. 30. 3. 2011.
< <http://uptonsinclair.com/bio.html>>
- Veblen, Thorsten. *The Theory of a Leisure Class*. Project Gutenberg. January 21, 2011.
Web. 23. 3. 2011.
<<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/833/833-h/833-h.htm>>
- Wells, H. G. "Stephen Crane, from an English Standpoint". 1900. *University of Virginia Library*. Web. 10. 3. 2011.
<<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=WelCran.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=1&division=div1>>
- Zangwill, Israel. *The Melting-Pot*. Project Gutenberg. December 18, 2007.
Web. 12. 1. 2011.
<<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23893/23893-h/23893-h.htm>>

SUMMARY IN CZECH

Hlavním tématem této bakalářské práce je postihnout období od občanské války až po začátek dvacátého století v literatuře Spojených států amerických. V této době došlo k přeměně ekonomiky Spojených států amerických z agrární společnosti do průmyslové supervelmoci. Nicméně, tato přeměna sebou přinesla obrovskou propast mezi bohatstvím a chudobou s ničím co by vyplňovalo prázdňový prostor mezi nimi, a právě chudoba lidí žijících v amerických metropolích, která je popsána v dílech soudobých autorů, je hlavním předmětem této práce.

Bakalářská práce je rozdělena do dvou hlavních částí. V první části zabývající se kulturním pozadím jsou vyjmenovány čtyři hlavní činitele, které umožnily uskutečnění toho jevu a objevují se také v použité literatuře. Těmito činiteli jsou: výstavba transkontinentálních železnic, zvyšující se příliv imigrantů do států, problémy velkých měst, a teorie Sociálního Darwinismu. Druhá část práce je věnována analýze významných děl zabývajících se životem v chudobě v metropolích jakými jsou „Život v hutích“ Rebeccy Harding Davisové, *Maggie, dítě ulice* Stephena Crana, *Sestřička Carrie* Theodora Dreisera a *Džungle* Uptona Sinclaira. U každého autora jsou též předloženy životopisná data událostí, které předcházely vydání analyzovaných děl, aby mohly být zachyceny případné události, které se následně promítly v jejich dílech. Dále literatura faktu napsaná soudobými či dnešními autory prostupuje celou bakalářskou prací, aby vysvětlila některé sociální problémy zachycené v analyzované literatuře. V závěru jsou nakonec shrnuta analyzovaná díla a je zde odpovězeno na otázku, zdali existuje mezi autory potencionální spojitost.