

The Social Impact of a Classic Novel

Hana Stoklasová

University of Ostrava

Abstract

*This study is concerned with the way in which capitalism influenced the living and working conditions of the workers in Chicago's meatpacking plants, which were depicted in the novel *The Jungle* (1906) by Upton Sinclair. Even though advanced methods of production (such as the division of labour) are usually associated with progress, in the novel we see a completely different outlook, in which such methods more closely resemble regression. A great majority of Sinclair's workers were European immigrants who came to America in order to pursue the American Dream. The paper examines the way in which capitalism in the meatpacking industry controlled both the market and the lives of the helpless workers whose fortune was determined by it.*

Keywords: capitalism, meatpacking industry, socialism, European immigrants, labour abuse

This article is a result of the project SGS06/FF/2016 *America as the Promised Land? Representation of Immigration in Selected Works of American Literature - II.*