

Naturalism and Muckraking in
Lincoln Steffens' *Chicago: Half Free and Fighting On*,
Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, and
William Hard's *Making Steel and Killing Men*
in Chicago during the Progressive Era

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Abstract

This thesis deals with positive and negative muckraking texts about Chicago in the Progressive Era through the use of three case studies. In these three case studies these texts will be analyzed through a naturalistic perspective. This thesis aims to examine muckraking texts by connecting them to the elements of muckraking and naturalism. The first case study involves Lincoln Steffens' *Chicago: Half Free and Fighting On*, the second case study Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, and the third case study William Hard's *Making Steel and Killing Men*. This thesis supports the claim that the three muckraking texts *Chicago: Half-Free and Fighting On*, *The Jungle*, and *Making Steel and Killing Men* attributed to the social and political change, through the appeal of the public, because of the use of popular elements of muckraking and naturalistic texts. This thesis aims to provide an understanding of muckraking, how it came into existence as well as its effects on the city of Chicago. In the case studies, each of the three muckraking texts are put into dialogue with the three elements, named in Cecelia Tichi's book *Exposés and Excess: Muckraking in America, 1900/2000*, and the elements of naturalism, named in Donald Pizer's book, *The Theory and Practice of American Literary Naturalism*. The case study on Steffens' text differs from the other two case studies, as the main impression of the text is not sheer 'muck being raked.' Instead of presenting the reader the corruptness of the city, *Chicago: Half Free and Fighting On* shows that, even though the city still needs to reform, there has already been a considerable amount of reform, even if the Chicagoans themselves do not realize this. This type of positive muckraking was different from 'normal muckraking,' yet just as inspiring to the people.

Keywords: Progressive Era, Chicago, Muckraking, Lincoln Steffens, William Hard, Upton Sinclair, Naturalism.

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Introduction

As an effect of the rapid industrialization, Chicago continued to grow, “reaching a population (not counting suburbs) of nearly 2.2 million in 1910, and perhaps 2.4 million in 1914, [and] (by some measures) it was still the world’s sixth largest city.” (Chicago 1900, par. 2) As a result, the cultural center of the country shifted towards the west, many of the leading writers moved to Chicago. (Schneirov 92-93) Chicago, around that time, was dealing with corruption, and terrible working- and living conditions. Prominent issues, as a direct effect of industrialization and urbanization, received a counter reaction: reform. The city needed reform, and the leading writers were keen on addressing the issues in the magazines and papers. These writers, or muckrakers as they are called, wrote exposés on many of the terrible events the city wanted to keep hidden. Throughout the Progressive Era, many exposés have sparked results nation-wide, however, not every one of these texts can be examined within the scope of this thesis, which is why this research is concerned with muckraking texts limited to the city of Chicago, as it was one of the largest cities, with prominent industries. This thesis uses three case studies to further examine muckraking in the Progressive Era. The texts of the three case studies are possibly the most popular muckraking texts about Chicago, which is why they are used as case studies.

This thesis first provides a general understanding of the field, including background information on muckraking, its origins and meaning. The first chapter on the history of muckraking contains a description of the three elements: facts, civic melodrama, and narrative. These elements are described in Cecelia Tichi’s book *Exposés and Excess: Muckraking in America, 1900/2000*, and are used in the case studies to examine if and how the muckraking texts have attributed to the social and political reform in Chicago in the Progressive Era. The three prominent forms of the reformation, including labor, social, and racial reform are broadly discussed in the second chapter.

During a time of transformation, like the Progressive Era, many things change, including art movements. Naturalism was movement popular in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Naturalism in literature goes beyond realism, and is concerned with observing and describing reality without distortion or idealism. In fact, naturalism is the opposing movement of romanticism, and features Darwinian characteristics, a deterministic take on life, where humanity is powerless against forces of heredity, the environment, or chance. Naturalism has many characteristics that could be apparent in muckraking texts. Naturalism was popular in the

same period of time in which the texts of the three case studies were published. This thesis examines if influences of this movement can be found in these texts. A broader definition and key elements, as described by Donald Pizer, can be found in chapter three.

Chapters four, five, and six, the case studies, contain an analysis of the elements of muckraking and of the elements of naturalism. This thesis deals with the texts through a naturalistic perspective to examine if this movement applies to the three muckraking texts *Chicago: Half-Free and Fighting On*, *The Jungle*, and *Making Steel and Killing Men*, and if naturalism is apparent in both negative and positive muckraking. The difference between negative and positive muckraking is further explained in the case study on Lincoln Steffens' *Chicago: Half Free and Fighting On*.

A lot of research has already been conducted on muckraking, on the Progressive Era, on Chicago, on naturalism, and on the three muckraking texts this thesis includes. However, this research only focuses on muckraking texts about Chicago, from a naturalistic perspective, including both positive and negative muckraking, which why this study is innovative. This thesis aims to bring the elements of muckraking and naturalism into dialogue with the three muckraking texts, in order to support the claim that the three muckraking texts *Chicago: Half-Free and Fighting On*, *The Jungle*, and *Making Steel and Killing Men* attributed to the social and political change, through the appeal of the public, because of the use of popular elements of muckraking and naturalistic texts.

Literature Review

Four works of literature, excluding the three muckraking texts of the case studies, are most relevant to this thesis, because these works are used to explain the premises of this thesis and provide support to the thesis. These four works in particular are supportive, because the arguments of the authors are in agreement with the chapters of this thesis. Therefore, these works are explained briefly in this literature review.

Richard Hofstadter's *The Age of Reform*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize, was published in 1955. Hofstadter provides a history of the United States from the 1890s to FDR's New Deal. In this thesis, his work serves as a basis to describe the transition from rural Chicago to urban Chicago. Hofstadter explains how muckraking became popular around that time, one of the reasons involving the nation-wide circulation of newspapers, which was made possible because of the urbanization. This information is fundamental for the first chapter of this thesis, which explains the field of muckraking.

Robert G. Spinney's *City of Big Shoulders: A History of Chicago*, published in 2000, is essentially a history of Chicago. He addresses the events from the 1600s until the Post-Daley years, ending in 1997. His book is of great importance to this thesis' second chapter on the Progressive Era in Chicago. Many other studies involve the progressive years, however, not many of them include Chicago. Spinney's research was therefore greatly applicable to this thesis, as the aim of this thesis is to obtain a broad understanding of the main issues of the Progressive Era. Spinney touched upon the most prominent problems that Chicago was dealing with, which included labor, social, and racial reform.

In Cecelia Tichi's *Exposés and Excess: Muckraking in America, 1900/2000*, published in 2004, Tichi deals with the two Gilded Ages, the first in the early 1900s, the second in the final years of the twentieth century. She addresses them from the muckraker's perspective, examining the balance between journalism and literature. Throughout her book, she parallels the work of writers from both Gilded Ages. In her book, she analyzed many muckraking articles, and demonstrates that there are three commonalities, found in the most prominent muckraking texts. Muckraking texts should be fact-based narratives, that include civic melodrama. Throughout this thesis, her elements are used in the case studies. For each of the case studies, examples from the text are put into dialogue with Tichi's elements, creating an in-depth analysis of three well-known muckraking texts about Chicago in the Progressive Era.

Donald Pizer's *The Theory and Practice of American Literary Naturalism*, published in 1993, addresses naturalist literature throughout the years, divided in to three timeframes. In these three timeframes, he provides thirteen essays and four reviews. All work combined, he provides an understanding of the basic character of the movement, as well as a historical progress of naturalism in America. Throughout this thesis, his definition of naturalism and the elements belonging to naturalism are used in the case studies. Pizer uses many textual examples from naturalist writers in his essays. However, Pizer does not include the authors and texts that are used in this research.

The aim of this research is to use this literature to first create a general understanding of muckraking, the Progressive Era in Chicago and naturalism, ultimately leading up to three case studies, showing how the muckraking texts attributed to the social and political change, through the appeal of the public, because of the use of popular elements of muckraking and naturalistic texts.

Methodology

The methodology that is applied to this research uses two different approaches. The first approach that was used is an analysis of the basic theoretical foundation of this research, including the different terms and definitions. The second part of the thesis takes the form of three comprehensive case studies that apply the theory from the first part of the thesis.

This research deals with Lincoln Steffens' *Chicago: Half-Free and Fighting On*, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, and William Hard's *Making Steel and Killing Men*. As there is a numerous amount of muckraking texts available, this thesis restricts itself to the city of Chicago, which decreases the amount of popular, widely-known muckraking texts to the three case studies used in this thesis.

First, this thesis creates a general understanding of the fields that apply to this research: muckraking, the Progressive Era, and naturalism. The first three chapters deal with these three subjects, in order to provide a necessary basis for the case studies. In chapter one and three, the definition and elements of muckraking and naturalism are explained.

Each case study is examined in the following manner. Each chapter begins with a small summary of the text, followed by other useful background information. Any influence on Chicago, political or social, is covered in the background information section. Each case study then turns to the elements of Tichi. The subchapters about Tichi's elements, deal with fact, civic melodrama, and narrative within each muckraking text.

Examples from each text are closely examined and put into dialogue with Tichi's elements. A close examination of these elements in the muckraking texts, shows in what way these texts have attributed to the social and political change in America. The use of these elements attributed to the appeal of the public. The subchapter on naturalism provides a unique perspective on these muckraking texts. These texts are put into dialogue with the elements of Donald Pizer, which might expose naturalistic influences in the muckraking texts. In-depth readings of these muckraking texts, considering both Tichi's and Pizer's elements, show the writers' techniques that attracted the reader, consequently sparking the urge for action and eventually even social or political movement and change in the city. Ultimately, this thesis supports the claim that the muckraking texts attributed to the social and political change, through the appeal of the public, because of the use of popular elements of muckraking and naturalistic texts

Chapter 1 - History of Muckraking

Investigative journalism became popular in the Progressive Era. Within this chapter it is explained how muckraking came into being as well as the emergence of the vastly spreading ‘muckraking madness’. This chapter explains what a muckraking text is and creates a list of common elements of muckraking texts.

1.1 Origins

In his speech, titled *The Man with the Muck-rake*, Theodore Roosevelt created the term muckraker. Roosevelt compared muckraking authors to the Man with the Muck-rake in Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. According to Roosevelt, the authors are like the man who “could look no way but downward, with the muck-rake in his hand; who was offered a celestial crown for his muck-rake, but who would neither look up nor regard the crown he was offered, but continued to rake to himself the filth of the floor.” (Roosevelt) Roosevelt’s new insulting description of muckraking authors was not received as negative, as he had intended. In fact, the authors started calling themselves muckrakers soon thereafter. Whereas Roosevelt thought of muckraking media as merely shoveling dirt to the surface, muckraking authors considered themselves to be something different. In *The Career of a Journalist*, muckraking authors are described as men with a mission. Their mission was

to set forth some new and wonderful truth of world-wide importance, in a manner to make the nations of the earth sit up and take notice – to cause the heart of humanity to throb and thrill, from Greenland to the Ganges – a message in words that would enthuse and enthrall, gleam and glitter, dazzle and delight. (Salisbury 150)

This mission of muckraking changes the mere filth, as described by Roosevelt, to groundbreaking news that is of high importance to the entire civilization of the world, leaving those who read it in total awe. Roosevelt had no issues with the fact that current issues were being addressed, however, he did think the way in which muckrakers were doing it, could do more harm than good. “Expose the crime, and hunt down the criminal; but remember that even in the case of crime, if it is attacked in sensational, lurid, and untruthful fashion, the attack may do more damage to the public mind than the crime itself...” (Roosevelt) However, the growing

popularity of muckraking media suggests that muckrakers are not being reprimanded by the public for their sensational writing.

1.2 The Rise in Popularity

There is an important factor that contributed to the expanding popularity of muckraking media. Richard Hofstadter, the author of *The Age of Reform*, argues that it was not the ideas or its existence that made muckraking so popular, but it was its reach. Circulation of publications had a nationwide reach, and there were vast resources for the exposés. (Hofstadter 187) Investigative journalism was not new, nor was the idea of exposés. The growing popularity could be explained by the capability of nation-wide circulation. “In 1870 there were 574 daily newspapers in the country; by 1899 there were 1,610; by 1909, 2,600. The circulation of daily newspapers increased during this time from 2,800,000 to 24,200,00.” (188) This expansion drastically changed the newspapers. Owners and editors used the newspapers and magazines to create a bond with the readers. Many rural migrants, farmers, and villagers were not yet accustomed with this new urban world, a world that was “strange, anonymous, impersonal, cruel, often corrupted and vicious, but also full of variety and fascination.” (189) The urban change was responsible for a disruption in the relationships with family, church, and neighborhood, and provided new, more superficial relationships to a larger crowd of people. Newspapers became the new village gossip. “It began to make increased use of the variety and excitement of the city to capture personal interest and offer its readers indirect human contacts. The rural mind, confronted with the city, often responded with shock, and the newspaper did not hesitate to exploit this.” (189) Essentially, muckraking became increasingly popular because it emerged at the right time, the time of urbanization.

As an effect, newspaper expansion meant that they became less dependent upon political parties for funding. As the newspaper expanded, so did the advertisement section in the newspaper. Newspapers were so greatly funded by ads, that they could now afford to challenge these political parties and expose corruptness. However, many newspapers had so much advertising space, that the paper needed ‘filler stories.’ This meant that they “*created* reportable events” (189) by sending famous people to newspaper-organized events, and also “*elevated* events” (189) that were not important enough to publish otherwise. Hofstadter calls muckraking the “exploitation of human interest.” (190) In effect, these filler stories made it easier to spot the premium writing, which was marked by its reporter more than its editor. In fact, “in the decade between 1903 and 1912, nearly two thousand articles of a muckraking variety appeared in the popular magazines, complemented by editorials, cartoons, and serials.

“[However,] close to a third were written by a small group of twelve men and one woman who concentrated on and professionalized this kind of journalism.” (Chalmers 88) Even though the muckraking magazines and newspapers were expanding, most leading muckrakers were few in numbers. The reason for this might be that leading muckrakers have some commonalities.

1.3 Muckraking Elements

Leading muckrakers have two factors in common, according to Marvin N. Olasky. The first factor is an elite education and the second factor is work experience with the newspapers of Pulitzer or Hearst. “Such apprenticeships often were vital in the development of writing styles that could both appeal to magazine readers and proselytize them for causes of the left.” (Olasky 116) But next to the elements muckraking authors have in common, there are also elements that the texts themselves often share. Cecelia Tichi, author of *Exposés and Excess: Muckraking in America, 1900/2000*, names three major elements of muckraking texts. The first element is facts, the second element is civic melodrama, and the third element is narrative.

“Whichever muckraker one may choose to read, one salient criterion is palpable on the narrative surface: a commitment to verifiable fact.” (Tichi 69) Simply said, without facts, a story cannot be proven to be true. “Fact was the muckraker’s antidote to rumor and to sensationalist yellow journalism.” (69) Often, muckrakers were not experts on the subjects they were writing on, and facts were their weapon against everyone who tried to attack their writing. Tichi notes that our understanding of facts, where they can be manipulatively used, had not yet crossed their minds in the Progressive Era. (70) The fact that people cannot argue true facts, makes this element indisputably important to muckraking texts.

Civic melodrama is a term that covers the author’s use of shock to urge for civic activism. Jeffrey D. Mason, defines the melodrama genre in his book *In Melodrama and the Myth of America*. Characteristics of this genre include electrifying accidents, an unconstrained display of dramatic scenes, an “open display of violence and catastrophe,” and “exaggerated expression of emotion” (Mason 17). Muckraking texts are known for the use of shock on their audience. “As in popular stage melodrama of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the muckrakers portrayed a world of societal ideals that had been frighteningly threatened or assaulted. The social script, so to speak, called for the forces of civic virtue to combat the villainous assailants, to defeat them and restore the good order of an earlier era—or to project an ideal, yet attainable, society into the future.” (Tichi 77) Melodrama was a popular genre in the Progressive Era, and muckrakers used it to their advantage. The use of a popular genre is a good way of turning one’s story into a popular one. Not to forget that “[muckraking narratives]

were meant to stimulate recognition of citizenly identity and its obligations.” (76) If people like the story, they are more likely to have strong feelings for the cause and are thus more inclined to take action.

“The muckrakers explicitly identified their projects as narratives. [...] The muckrakers’ concerns about crucial elements of a story’s pace, its pictorial composition, emotional stimulus, and documentation are well taken [...], because they are basic to any definition of narrative.” (83) Elements of a narrative are just as much present in the narratives of exposure, as it is in novels and other fiction. Tichi argues that muckraking narratives hold the same standards for narrative as other fiction, and she uses lots of examples from muckraking texts to prove it. The case studies in this thesis further explain the narrative element.

Conclusion

In this chapter the term muckraking was explained. The term came into being when Theodore Roosevelt compared the dirt-digging investigative journalists to the ‘Man with the Muck-rake’, who was too busy digging dirt, that he could not look up to receive the crown. This type of journalism was not new, but became immensely popular due to the nation-wide circulation of newspapers and magazines because of the urbanization. Even though muckraking media vastly expanded, most leading muckraking texts came from a small number of authors. These authors have in common their education, work experience, and writing style, as most muckraking texts contain facts, civic melodrama, and a narrative.

Chapter 2 - Chicago in the Progressive Era

This chapter addresses the situation Chicago was in during the Progressive Era. It deals with the different issues that Chicago was dealing with at the time. This chapter deals with three different issues: labor reform, social reform and racial reform. Even though these issues were a problem on a nation-wide level, this chapter aims to keep it as close to the city of Chicago as possible.

“The Progressive Era was a period of widespread social activism and political reform across the United States, from the 1890s to 1920s.” (Buenker 3) This activism and reform was sparked by Chicago’s conditions. Because of the massive industrialization and urbanization, the city became more and more crowded. Working and living conditions were dreadful, which sparked the need for reform. Robert G. Spinney, author of *City of Big Shoulders: A History of Chicago*, writes the following about the Progressive Era:

“Progressive Era reforms aimed at the dislocations that accompanied America’s transition from a nation of farmers and artisans to a nation characterized by immigration, industrialization, and urbanization. That transition [...] resulted in problems such as urban slums, poverty, unsafe working conditions, corrupt urban political machines that depended upon ignorant immigrants’ votes, and exploitative monopolies. Progressivism was the attempt to address these problems.” (146)

There were many different people that were determined to change Chicago for the better, however, not without resistance from those who were positioned on the ‘top of the food chain’.

2.1 Labor Reform

The day of the Haymarket bombing, May 4th 1886, was one of the most important days in the history of Chicago’s labor, as it is was an event that had an impact not only on the working class, but on all of Chicago. Everyone was struck by the violence of that day. It happened when strikers came into contact with the police at McCormick Reaper Works factory. Six workers were killed, which caused for the rally at the Haymarket square the next day. A bomb was thrown, which killed seven policemen, who in return fired at the crowd, killing four of the demonstrators. Eight demonstrators were arrested, because they were believed to have been involved in the bombing attack. All eight of them were convicted. Dyer D. Lum, author of A

Concise History of the Great Trial of Chicago Anarchists in 1886, believed that these eight men were not actually guilty, but that they were made into an example for all labor activists. “The eight social heretics of Chicago who dared to defend their beliefs when tried for an act, of which it was openly admitted they were not personally guilty, have challenged the attention of the world and the admiration of the oppressed of all lands.” (Lum 45) Their conviction was an attempt to get rid of labor activism.

Another influential event of labor activism was the Pullman Strike. George Pullman came to Chicago in 1855, where he invented the sleeper car, a railroad car in which people could sleep and rest, thus improving the quality of travelling. His booming business eventually created Pullman Town, a town around his factory, where his workers would stay. Pullman was a hands-on paternal ‘mayor’ and he had strict rules that all homes had to follow, and “worker welfare was not his primary objective.” (Spinney 96) He charged rent at a rate that was twenty percent higher than the rest of Chicago. “He insisted on squeezing every last cent out of his workers.” (96) In 1893, during the national depression, Pullman fired thousands of his employees and cut the wages of everyone still working for him, which resulted in the Pullman strike of 1894, a strike without permission from their union. Many strikers were members of the ARU, the American Railway Union, and the local strike made all members of ARU lay down their duties and refuse to handle any trains that included a Pullman car. It took Pullman assistance from the federal government to end the strike. (96)

2.2 Social Reform

The new urban economy was built with the hands of the cheap-labor immigrants. But with the large amount of people that now lived in industrialized Chicago, the city became more and more polluted, and vulnerable to disease. Additionally, people worked long hours in horrible conditions for low wages. With those low wages they paid for overcrowded housing in what was called the ‘slums’. The living conditions were appalling. Some Chicagoans tried hard to change these conditions, including Mayor Harrison II and Jane Addams.

Spinney notes how the Mayor of Chicago, Carter Harrison II, from 1897-1905 and from 1911-1915, was a firm believer of civic reform. “Improving the delivery of urban services to Chicagoans – cleaner water, better sewage disposal, more effective fire protection.” (152) Unfortunately, the power to policy making stayed with the aldermen, which meant that Harrison needed the city council votes of many aldermen for his civic reform projects. This hindered Harrison severely, as he wanted to show support to many progressives of Chicago, but by doing

so, he would lose the votes of the aldermen who supported him. Still, “Harrison’s civic reform was all that was possible. The failures of his mayoral successors make that clear.” (154)

Jane Addams was a well-educated native of Illinois, who seemed to be at a loss trying to uphold a position in life where her education mattered. At that time, it was still unheard of for women to uphold powerful positions in the economy. When she went to London, she was inspired by Toynbee Hall, a settlement house, after which she, together with Ellen Gates Starr, opened Hull House in Chicago. “It served as a school, infirmary, museum, cultural center, daycare facility, public bath, gathering place, kitchen, and home away from home for hundreds of thousands of Chicagoans.” (159) Hull House helped people, mostly immigrants, to either adjust to life in Chicago, or make it more endurable. Many followed Addams’ example, and “by 1911, 413 settlement houses had been established in the United States, including 32 in Chicago.” (160) Jane Addams was personally invested in the individual lives of the immigrants, always willing to help out where she can. But Addams helped more than just the immigrants from Europe, she was also active in regard to the African American community. Her interest in the rights and status of the black Chicagoans even predates the NAACP. She was involved in the civil status of black people since 1903, and actively tried to fight against school segregation. (Reed 76)

2.3 Racial Reform

The black society of Chicago lived together in ‘the Black Belt’ on the South-side of Chicago ever since the Chicago Fire of 1871. There were more immigrants than black people in Chicago, which made the black community a minority group. Where black people throughout the country had to face racial discrimination, Chicago “promised relief from the injustice that all southern black people knew firsthand.” (Spinney 168) Spinney also describes how one black newcomer was stunned by the public transport in Chicago, where she anticipated violence when she saw black people sitting beside white people on the train, but encountered nothing but normalcy. (169) The black people did live segregated, but their conditions were not as bad in Chicago as they were in other big cities of the United States. Towards the end of the Progressive Era, the number of black people in Chicago had more than doubled. The expanding black community eventually led to some political power in the city. Oscar DePriest was elected as alderman in 1915. He was the first black city councilman.

The Race Riot of 1919 proved that not all was well for the Black Chicagoans. The riot was caused by “several post-World War I dynamics that existed in multiethnic Chicago.”

(Spinney 171) The fact that more and more black people moved to Chicago, made the Black Belt an overcrowded ghetto, where frustrations were getting bigger and bigger. The riot was triggered by the tragic death of a black Chicagoan. He was swimming in the lake, and drifted to a white-people-only area, where white people threw rocks at him, which led to his drowning. (Chicago Race, par. 2) The police refused to arrest the white people responsible, which sparked reaction from the entire black community. “For 13 days Chicago was without law and order despite the fact that the state militia had been called out on the fourth day. By the end, 38 were dead (23 blacks, 15 whites), 537 injured, and 1,000 black families made homeless.” (par. 2) Segregation fueled the hatred between black and white. The Race Riot of 1919 is also called the Red Summer, because of the violence and bloodshed.

Conclusion

Because of the industrialization and urbanization, Chicago was booming in business, which meant that workers came from everywhere, including immigrants and African-Americans. The city expanded in a short amount of time, which created overcrowding and poor living conditions. The city was polluted. The major problems in Chicago had to do with the labor conditions, long working hours and low wages, and social welfare. Racial discrimination was also a prominent factor to Chicago’s issues. There were several strikes and events that sparked reform, including the Haymarket Affair and the Pullman Strike. Mayor Harrison II and Jane Addams were leaders for social reform, and the Racial Riot of 1919 was a clear indicator that the black community was no longer intending to stay segregated.

Chapter 3 – Naturalism

This chapter provides an understanding of naturalism. In this chapter, its definition and elements, as described by Donald Pizer, are explained. The texts of the three case studies are looked at from the naturalistic perspective that is provided in this chapter.

3.1 Defining Naturalism

Naturalism can be seen as an extension of realism. Realism in literature aimed at a representation of events and conditions as they truly were, without distortion or idealism. Realism depicts characters how they really are, which is more important than the plot itself. Naturalism, however, differs from realism through the use of pessimistic determinism, the idea that everything happens because of uncontrollable forces of nature. Previously existing causes are responsible for all actions, including moral ones. These previously existing causes include hereditary and environmental causes. Many naturalists base their beliefs on Darwin's Theory of Evolution, as the despairing fight against nature has the logical effect of natural selection and survival of the fittest. Characters are driven by instinct and are harassed by social and economic pressure. "As such, they had little will or responsibility for their fates, and the prognosis for their "cases" was pessimistic at the outset." (Naturalism, par. 1)

3.2 Elements of Naturalism

Donald Pizer, author of *The Theory and Practice of American Literary Naturalism: Selected Essays and Reviews*, has one chapter of his book devoted to the definition of naturalism and its elements. Pizer believes that the conventional definition of naturalism is too simplistic, and he feels like the "melodramatic sensationalism, and moral "confusion" that are often attacked in the naturalistic novel should really be incorporated into a normative definition of the mode and be recognized as its essential constituents." (Pizer 87) He praises naturalism for its ability to portray characters. "Even the least significant human being can feel and strive powerfully and can suffer the extraordinary consequences of his emotions, and that no range of human experience is free of the moral complexities and ambiguities." (87) Pizer sees the moral ambiguity of a poor protagonist as the charm of naturalism. It makes the character's life both ordinary and extraordinary, a wonderful contrast in Pizer's opinion.

Pizer divides naturalism into two tensions, that constitute the theme and form of the text. The first is between the subject matter of the text and the concept of man that emerges from this

subject matter. The second tension involves the theme of naturalistic literature, as the naturalist can struggle to represent the discomfiting truths of the world, as well as the desire to find meaning in the experience of the world. For each tension, Pizer notes some elements. For the first tension he names three. First, naturalistic texts mainly focus on characters from the lower middle class or the lower class. Second, the world in which this character lives is quite dull and ordinary, perhaps even unheroic. The third element requires that the character discovers heroic or adventurous qualities in this commonplace world, “such as acts of violence and passion that involve sexual adventure or bodily strength and which culminate in desperate moments and violent death.” (87) For the second tension Pizer describes two elements. Firstly, a character is controlled by heredity or the environment, instinct or chance. Secondly, a character should have a compensating humanistic value or a fate that supports the significance of the individual and of his life. (87)

According to Pizer, the goal of naturalists was not to “demonstrate the overwhelming and oppressive reality of the material forces in our lives. Their attempt, rather, was to represent the intermingling in life of controlling force and individual worth.” (100) Pizer regrets that naturalism is often looked at through the confinements of the beliefs of one of the most prominent naturalists, Emile Zola. Pizer advises readers to look more closely to naturalist literature and to truly appreciate the complexity of the texts.

Conclusion

Naturalism is an extension of realism that goes beyond realism by the use of pessimistic determinism. Donald Pizer believes that many definitions of the movement are too confined within the belief system of the most prevalent naturalist, but he encourages readers to look appreciate the complexity of naturalism. Pizer divides the movement into two tensions, each having its own elements. The first tension has three elements and the second tension has two.

Chapter 4 - Case Study: *Chicago: Half Free and Fighting On*

This case study focuses on Lincoln Steffens' *Chicago: Half Free and Fighting On*. This chapter contains a small summary of the text. Furthermore, the positive muckraking of Steffens is discussed, as well as *The Shame of the Cities*, the collection of articles to which *Chicago: Half Free and Fighting On* belongs. Additionally, there is a brief notion on the effects the book might have had on Chicago in the Progressive Era, and the elements of Tichi and Pizer are put into dialogue with Steffens' text.

4.1 Summary

In *Chicago: Half Free and Fighting On*, Steffens deals with the reform that Chicago has had. He starts by addressing the current state of Chicago, still poor and corrupt. He then moves to proclaiming Chicago's reform in comparison to other cities. He addresses the corrupt city council, and the mayor. He then moves on to examples, written as if he was there himself, between politicians and corrupt aldermen. He uses these examples to prove that there has been some reform, though it has been slow. He turns to the Municipal Voters League and how it was in need of a leader. The rest of the article deals with how this League, and a group of men called the Nine, have addressed corruption in Chicago's politics. They published records of the corrupt aldermen, forcing some to retire. Instead of corrupt aldermen, Chicago ultimately had reform aldermen, who worked slowly, but made progress nonetheless.

4.2 Positive Muckraking and Its Effect

Steffens could be called the first muckraker, since his story on St. Louis was the first muckraking article published. (Filler 55) In addition, Steffens has both factors that make a successful muckraker, according to Marvin Olasky. Steffens has had an elite education at Berkeley and has "Pulitzer/Hearst reporting experience." (Olasky 116) Additionally, Steffens already had nine years of working at New York City newspapers on his résumé when he became managing editor of *McClure's Magazine* in 1901. (Lincoln, par. 2)

However, the article on Chicago was not one to expose corruption, but one to expose signs of reform. The term positive muckraking therefore applies to this text. Different from the case studies on William H and Upton Sinclair, but still as inspiring to the people. *The Shame of the Cities* did not have a direct effect on legal policies, and did not achieve any governmental passing of bills. However, the collection of articles undoubtedly inspired many people that were

encouraged to have a voice in politics. Since Steffens was the first to publicize corruption on a nation-wide level, he sparked reaction from the people of the nation, including other (investigative) journalists. He created the desire to withstand and get rid of corruption, something which could only be achieved if the people supported the reform. Multiple times, Steffens mentions how Chicago does not realize its own reforming. After publication however, people could start to realize what they had already achieved and what else they could still achieve.

4.3 Shame of the Cities

The Shame of the Cities, was a collection of periodicals printed in *McClure's Magazine*, starting in 1902. The collection of these articles was published in 1904 as an entire book. The main idea was to expose municipal corruption in six major cities of the United States, including St. Louis, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York. In fact, Steffens had not planned to go to Chicago, as he had planned to move on to Boston. After Philadelphia, he felt that Boston was “the perfect situation in which to test [the] hypothesis [...] that corruption was a function of age, and not [...] part of the growing pains of lusty young cities like Chicago,” as discussed in Justin Kaplan’s biography of Lincoln Steffens. (125) McClure, however, was afraid readers would get tired of the same things being exposed everywhere, and wanted Steffens to go to Chicago, a city that was at least fighting for change. (125)

His article *Chicago: Half Free and Fighting On* was published in October 1903. He does not say that Chicago is a fine example in regards to its government, but neither is it a bad example. Chicago “should be celebrated among American cities for reform, real reform.” (Steffens 564) In his text about Chicago, Steffens deals with the work of the Municipal Voter’s League. This League was responsible for spreading the council records of the city council, which was made up of corrupt aldermen. The League used the records to persuade candidates to withhold from the elections. Eventually, the League had the majority in the city’s government. The League had trouble organizing the aldermen, which led to the resignation of George C. Cole. (571) His replacement Walter L. Fisher, or the Reform Boss, as Steffens calls him. “Reform in Chicago has such a leader as corruption usually has; a first-class executive mind and a natural manager of men.” (572) In the last paragraph, Steffens shows his trust in the people of Chicago. “A people who can support for seven years one movement toward reform, should be able to go on forever.” (577)

4.4 Facts

Tichi noted how every muckraking article should have a foundation of facts, in order to withstand attacks and keep the article's credibility. Since Steffens' text is not one of allegations and attacks, facts are not quite as relevant to this piece as in negative muckraking texts. Since he is writing about the history of the last couple of years of Chicago, he uses events to prove his arguments. He tells the story from his own perspective, describing what he saw, who he encountered and what they spoke of. Steffens repetitively uses his own experience in Chicago as a fact. For example, he uses quotes from conversations that he had with Chicagoans. "We had first to let people know we were there," said Cole, so he stepped "out into the lime-light" and, with his short legs apart, his weak eyes blinking, he talked." (568) With the last line, which describes how Cole looked when he talked, Steffens established himself as part the conversation, turning what Cole said into fact. He describes events that he did not personally attend in such a way that it seems like he was physically present at the scene.

Preib was stronger. Fisher went to Loeffler and accused him of not doing all he could for Preib. Loeffler declared he was. Fisher proposed a letter from Loeffler to his personal friends asking them to vote for Preib. Loeffler hesitated, but he signed one that Fisher dictated. Loeffler advised the publication of the statement in the Jewish papers, and, though he consented to have it mailed to the voters, he thought it "an unnecessary expense." (573)

Here, Steffens uses quotation marks at the end of the quote, enclosing what Loeffler said. This strongly suggests that he is quoting from conversation or written word. Here, quotation marks serve as the support to this event even happening.

4.5 Civic Melodrama

The author's use of shock to urge to civic activism is also not completely applicable to positive muckraking. Steffens does not discuss shocking events and there are little to none electrifying accidents. Neither is there an unconstrained display of dramatic scenes, an "open display of violence and catastrophe," and "exaggerated expression of emotion" (Mason 17) However, there is a strong urge to action. Throughout the entire text, Steffens is telling Chicagoans how they are on the right path and should continue to do so. In his book, Matthew Schneirov notes on Steffens usual pattern in his work. "Steffens tended to blame "the people" for their apathy, for allowing themselves to be fooled by political bosses into voting straight

party tickets and tolerating corruption because they might benefit personally through higher wages or tariff protection for their business.” (Schneirov 214) However, in *Chicago: Half Free and Fighting On*, Steffens continually praises the people of Chicago. He uses flattery to inspire the people to stay involved in the reform of the city.

The agents of reform have been many and efficient, but back of them all was an intelligent, determined people, and they have decided. The city of Chicago is ruled by the citizens of Chicago. Then why are the citizens of Chicago satisfied with half-reform? Why have they reformed the Council and left the administrative side of government so far behind? “One thing at a time,” they will tell you out there, and it is wonderful to see them patient after seven years of steadfast fighting reform. (577)

Here, the people are being named as most important factors of the reformation. He asks questions about the continuance of reform, yet praises the people for their patience. “And the people of Chicago stopped it; they have beaten boodling. That is about all they have done so far, but that is about all they have tried deliberately and systematically to do, and the way they have done that proves that they can do anything set out to do.” (564-565) Steffens provides Chicagoans with hope for the future, seeking to ignite in them the urge to action.

4.6 Narrative

The perspective of this text is through the eyes of Steffens himself. However, he writes as if it is written by an omniscient storyteller. In the following quote, Steffens writes about a conversation between Edwin Burrit Smith and Mr. Gage. Here follows the end of the conversation:

And so, as Mr. Smith said, they “fumbled.” But notice what they didn’t do. Fumblers as they were, they didn’t talk of more exposures. “Heavens, we know enough,” said one. They didn’t go the Legislature for a new charter. They needed one, they needed one today, and badly, too, but the men who didn’t know what, but did know what not to do, wouldn’t let them commit the folly of asking one corrupt legislature to legislate another corrupt legislature out of existence.” (566)

Where sometimes Steffens writes like he was part of the conversation, here he chooses to be on the outside, yet knowing the details better than the characters themselves do. This type of writing is common in narratives, where a close third-person narration, merges with the consciousness of the protagonist. (Prose 107)

Furthermore, the text has got a great hook, which is a literary device used to trigger readers' attention. The first thing Steffens says about Chicago engages the reader because of his unique choice of words. "Yes, Chicago. First in violence, deepest in dirt; loud, lawless, unlovely, ill-smelling, irreverent, new; an overgrown gawk of a village, the "tough" among cities, a spectacle for the nations." (563) Steffens uses contrast a lot; the positive together with the negative. "Decent and systematic bribery" (564) is another example of words that by definition should not be in the same sentence, as bribery could never be decent. "The Mayor has been able to make Chicago, criminally speaking, "honest"." (564) "Good-natured, honest thieves." (564) "Aggressive honesty." (568) These are all examples of how Steffens uses language and paradox, to create an interesting, thought-provoking text.

4.7 Naturalism

Pizer's first tension, between the subject matter of the text and the concept of man that emerges from this subject matter, could be applied to this text. The subject matter of this text is the reformation of a corrupt political system. The man that emerges from this subject matter is not one man, but the reformers of Chicago. The tension between subject matter and reformers is apparent throughout the text as the reformers had to struggle to achieve reform. However, not all elements can be discovered in this text. This text does not explicitly deal with the lower class. Steffens does portray Chicago as a poor city: "too poor to clean and pave the streets." (563) However, the reformers in politics are educated middle class and the world in which the characters live is not portrayed as dull and ordinary at all. On the contrary, a city that is "first in violence, deepest in dirt; loud, lawless, unlovely, [and] ill-smelling" (563) could not be considered as commonplace. Additionally, although Steffens praises the Chicagoan reformers for their progress, he does not portray their acts as heroic or adventurous.

Pizer's second tension involves the theme of naturalistic literature, as the naturalist can struggle to represent the discomfiting truths of the world, as well as the desire to find meaning in the experience of the world. The element of pessimistic determinism is visible throughout the text. Steffens says the following in the last paragraph of his text. "Every time Chicago wants to go ahead a foot, it has first to push its Mayor up inch by inch." (577) Steffens is very realistic in the small changes reformers have initiated. The changes are minimal in comparison to what still has to be done. "Everybody was for himself, none was for Chicago." (564) Change inevitably meant that business would be slow, and nobody wanted to see themselves go out of business. Survival instinct proves to be more important. The other element that belongs to the second tension, is less applicable to Steffens' text. There is no compensating humanistic value

or a fate that supports the significance of the individual and of his life apparent in *Chicago: Half Free and Fighting On*. The individual does not seem to have significant importance in this text. “Court trials may punish individuals, but even convictions do not break up a corrupt system; and a ‘reform law’ without reform citizenship is like a ship without a crew. [...] With all their ‘reforms,’ bad government persisted.” (566) This quote shows how individual actions could be seen as pointless action, because it should be all of Chicago that participates in the reformation.

Conclusion

The positive muckraking in Steffens has sparked positive reaction throughout Chicago. He places the people of Chicago in a spotlight in regard to reforming. Even though *The Shame of the Cities* had no direct impact on legislature, it still had an impact on the nation, as *The Shame of the Cities* was one of the first muckraking texts to be so widely circulated. Concerning Tichi’s elements, Steffens used conversations and quotation marks that could be seen as proof to its authenticity, used flattery to urge the Chicagoans to action, and used a first person perspective, although with omniscient characteristics. Lastly, he uses paradoxes to interest his readers’ attention. Concerning Pizer’s elements, the text could be seen as having naturalistic influences. However, not all elements could be applied to the text.

A contrast appears when dealing with both Tichi’s elements and Pizer’s elements. From Tichi’s elements it becomes clear that Steffens uses praise to urge the Chicagoans to action, however, from Pizer’s elements it becomes clear that change only works when all of Chicago would start to work together and when they would discard the survival of the fittest mindset.

Chapter 5 - Case Study: *The Jungle*

This case study focuses on Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. This chapter contains a short summary of the novel. Furthermore, this chapter will contain a notion on the effects the book has had on Chicago in the Progressive Era. Lastly, the elements of Tichi and Pizer are put into dialogue with Sinclair's text.

5.1 Summary

The Jungle is about Jurgis Rudkus and his family. The story starts with his wedding at the saloon, after which they owe the saloonkeeper a hundred dollars. His family quickly finds work to pay off their debt, and to pay for the house they bought, but its agreement had a lot of hidden costs. Then his wife became pregnant and she gave birth to a son, which they named after Jurgis' recently deceased father. Jurgis became injured because of the poor working conditions, but when he went back to the factory, they would not give him his job back. His wife's boss then forced his wife, who was recently pregnant with the second child, to sleep with him, after which Jurgis attacks him and was sent to prison. When he was released, his family was evicted and was now living in boarding houses. His wife then died during child labor, as did the child. Soon after, his other son drowned in the mud. He then decides to leave Chicago for a while, and when he returned, his job caused injury again. Again, he could not get his job back when he was recovered and so he became a beggar. One night, he received a hundred-dollar bill from a wealthy man, but he only got 95 cents back when he asks the bartender to change it for him. He attacks the man and got sent to prison again. He becomes a criminal when he gets out of jail. One day he sees the man who violated his wife again, attacks him, and is, again, sent to prison. After being released he gets back in touch with his remaining family, only to find that they are doing poorly too. One day, he walks into a socialist bar, where he finally felt enthusiasm for something again. He converts and then finds a good job. The story ends at a socialist rally.

5.2 The Aftermath: Sinclair and Roosevelt

When the novel was published, Sinclair sent a copy of the book to the President, to which he received a reply, stating that he (the President) would investigate the charges. Roosevelt sent back a letter to Sinclair, stating how "the specific evils you point out shall, if their existence be proved, and if I have power, be eradicated." (qtd. in Kantor 1204) The President would send two independent investigators to look into the matter and report back to him. Roosevelt later asked Sinclair, if he could remain silent on the matter, since Roosevelt did not want more scandal circulating in the papers. However, *The Jungle* was not receiving raving reviews. "The country was engrossed in fiction about New York Society (Glasgow, *The Wheel of Life*; Wharton, *The House of Mirth*), in mystery (Nicholson, *The House of 1000 Candles*), and in love and marriage in the old South (Wister, *Lady Baltimore*). A book of blood, viscera, and socialism held no place among these best-sellers. The first reviews of *The Jungle* ranged from distaste and contempt to bare tolerance." (Kantor 1204) Few bought Sinclair's book, which was cause for Sinclair to go against Roosevelt's wishes.

Sinclair wrote in the *New York Times* about the mission that Roosevelt had sent the two investigators on. The story became big news, and readers all over the country now expected to see the report of the investigators, immediately. Roosevelt tried to keep the report silent until he was forced to make it public after *The New York Times* released a letter that Roosevelt sent them. (1204) Soon thereafter, *The Jungle* became a bestseller.

The *New York Evening World* wrote, "Not since Byron awoke one morning to find himself famous has there been such an example of worldwide fame won in a day by a book as has come to Upton Sinclair. "I had now 'arrived'," Sinclair recalled. *The Jungle* was one of the best sellers of 1906, and was translated into more than 20 languages. (1205)

Senator A. J. Beveridge, upon reading the novel, decided to immediately solve the issue. The Meat Inspection Act, and the Pure Food and Drug Act, were then signed into law by Roosevelt on June 30th, 1906. Upton Sinclair's novel literally wrote history, as it was responsible for new legislation on the treatment of food and drugs. However, this was not Sinclair's intention. He sought out a reaction about the social conditions, and the positive sides of socialism, as he had been a socialist since 1903 himself. "I aimed at the public's heart and by accident I hit it in the stomach," (qtd. in Upton Sinclair) Upton declares. Even so, his novel had noteworthy effect in the Progressive Era.

5.3 Facts

For this novel, the element of facts is quite interesting. This muckraking text is an entire novel, a story that is fiction. Sinclair personally visited the meatpacking district to see the horror himself, and he spent seven weeks in the stockyard district. There, he spoke to many people, came to many people's homes, talked to hundreds of working men, as well as their bosses. Sinclair was shocked by what he saw, and inspired his novel on what he encountered. However, *The Jungle* is a piece of fiction, and through the novel itself, it cannot be decided if it is all true.

However, Upton Sinclair has published an article in *The Independent*, in which he stated that the family is fiction, however, the events and the attitudes of the family members are certainly true. "I intend '*The Jungle*' to be an exact and faithful picture of conditions as they exist in Packingtown, Chicago." (Sinclair Is "*The Jungle*" True 1129) Further arguments for credibility are offered by people who read the book, and found it to be an accurate description of the truth. Sinclair also quotes them in his article. "Having three years lived in that hell called the Chicago stockyards, I can say that you have given a full and true picture of the life in that community." (qtd. in Sinclair Is "*The Jungle*" True 1132) Sinclair continues to quote people backing him up further in his article as he tries to establish a credible and truthful 'Jungle.'

5.4 Civic Melodrama

The author's use of shock to urge to civic activism is highly present in this novel. The novel is known for its shocking, gruesome details and descriptions. The full description by Jeffrey Mason in chapter one is fully applicable here. Electrifying accidents, an unconstrained display of dramatic scenes, an "open display of violence and catastrophe," and "exaggerated expression of emotion" are all very present (Mason 17). The accidents that happen at the places where Jurgis worked are more than electrifying. Considering the summary, the entire novel is one dramatic event after another. In the scene where his wife, Ona, died, the following was said:

He stretched out his arms to her, he called her in wild despair; a fearful yearning surged up in him, hunger for her that was agony, desire that was a new being born within him, tearing his heartstrings, torturing him. But it was all in vain--she faded from him, she slipped back and was gone. And a wail of anguish burst from him, great sobs shook all his frame, and hot tears ran down his cheeks and fell upon her. He clutched her hands, he shook her, he caught her in his arms and pressed her to him but she lay cold and still--she was gone--she was gone! (201)

In this quote, both exaggerated expression of emotion and an open display of catastrophe are present. Upton Sinclair uses a lot of imagery in his novel and this quote is a good example. The pain Jurgis felt is really intense, because of the words Sinclair used. For instance, “faded from him,” “hot tears,” and “wail of anguish.”

In addition, there are many scenes so gruesomely depicted by Upton, that it can only bring a vivid image to those who read it. “Let a man so much as scrape his finger pushing a truck in the pickle rooms, and he might have a sore that would put him out of the world; all the joints in his fingers might be eaten by the acid, one by one.” (104) Sinclair describes the scene very well, and through the use of appalling examples, it is no wonder why he ‘hit the people in the stomach instead of the heart’. “It was too dark in these storage places to see well, but a man could run his hand over these piles of meat and sweep off handfuls of the dried dung of rats. These rats were nuisances, and the packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die, and then rats, bread, and meat would go into the hoppers together.” (143) Sinclair barely euphemized scenes in this novel, which creates a harsh and shocking narrative.

5.5 Narrative

The narrator of the story is an omniscient third person. Sinclair uses lots of imagery, to make the surrounding seem real. He uses enough detail in his scenes to provide a feeling of reality and empathy for the reader. “Here and there would be a great factory, a dingy building with innumerable windows in it, and immense volumes of smoke pouring from the chimneys, darkening the air above and making filthy the earth beneath.” (25) He uses a lot of adjectives, in order to create a certain feeling. From this particular quote, one could derive that there is negativity towards the factories. The entire feeling that one gets from this quote is that the factories are very dark. They look dark (dingy), the smoke darkens the area around the building, air as well as ground. One can interpret that the innumerable windows, are all dirty from the smoke, and from a distance may look like dark mirrors, affected by time and hardly see-through anymore. The scene from this chapter was not even a key event in the chain of dramatic events, and the entire description of how something the family encountered on their travels looks, is basically irrelevant. Yet, Sinclair’s use of such language is what makes his narrative so brilliantly imaginable.

5.6 Naturalism

Pizer's first tension, between the subject matter of the text and the concept of man that emerges from this subject matter, could be applied to this text. Jurgis' struggle to withstand and overcome the harsh urban environment is continually evident in *The Jungle*. This novel features all of Pizer's elements on the first tension. Jurgis belongs to the lower class and his life goal was to clock as many hours as possible, so he could pay off the debt. Pizer's third element requires that the character discovers heroic or adventurous qualities in this commonplace world, "such as acts of violence and passion that involve sexual adventure or bodily strength and which culminate in desperate moments and violent death." (Pizer 87) "It was only when half a dozen men had seized him by the legs and the shoulders and were pulling at him, that he understood that he was losing his prey. In a flash he had bent down and sunk his teeth into the man's cheek, and when they tore him away he was dripping with blood, and little ribbons of skin were hanging from his mouth." (Sinclair 162) This quote shows the passionate fighting frenzy that Jurgis underwent when he faced the man who slept with his wife. Considering that Jurgis has been sent to prison three times involving attacks of bodily strength, it could be said that the third element is present. Thus, *The Jungle* entails all three elements of the first tension.

Pizer's second tension involves the theme of naturalistic literature, as the naturalist can struggle to represent the discomfiting truths of the world, as well as the desire to find meaning in the experience of the world. The discomfiting truths in this novel were abundant, as many scenes about the working conditions and the conditions of the meat were revolting. Jurgis finds meaning in the world at the end of the book, where he realizes that the answer to life's perils is socialism. Jurgis was deeply controlled by heredity and the environment. Even though he tried really hard, he would always be struggling against forces beyond his control. In this novel, the significance of the individual and humanistic values are portrayed in the end. At the socialist rally, Jurgis realizes that socialism is the only thing that can provide change. "To you, the toilers, who have made this land, and have no voice in its councils! To you, whose lot it is to sow that others may reap, to labor and obey, and ask no more than the wages of a beast of burden, the food and shelter to keep you alive from day to day. It is to you that I come with my message of salvation, it is to you that I appeal." (323) Jurgis "had never been so stirred in his life. It was a miracle that had been wrought in him." (329) And thus, Jurgis sees the meaning in life again. Both elements of the second tension apply to *The Jungle* as well.

Conclusion

Sinclair's *The Jungle* not only influenced the readers, but U.S. law as well. After the novel came out, it was not very popular. After Sinclair had written to the nation that Roosevelt was examining Packingtown, the people demanded the truth. When the truth was delivered to them, Sinclair's novel became a bestseller. In regards to Tichi's elements, Sinclair's novel may or may not be truthful, but its vivid imagery and shocking dramatic events did lead to The Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906. In regard to Pizer's elements, *The Jungle* could be seen as a naturalist text, as all elements are applicable to the novel.

Chapter 6 - Case Study: *Making Steel and Killing Men*

This case study focuses on William Hard's *Making Steel and Killing Men*. This chapter contains a small summary, as well as a short introduction on the author and the effects the text might have had on Chicago in the Progressive Era. Furthermore, the elements of Tichi and Pizer are put into dialogue with Hard's text.

6.1 Summary

William Hard starts his article by noting down the number of people injured and killed in the steel industry in America. In accordance to the law of averages and numbers from the German government he shocks the reader with these numbers, proving that working in a steel factory is dangerous. Hard then turns to the story of Ora Allen, who died in one of the accidents that happen in the factory. Hard stresses that many of the accidents that happen in the steel industry were unnecessary if only the bosses had safeguarded their workers. But steel must be as cheap as possible, and Hard resents the industry for its greed. Hard then tells more stories of injured or killed employees, stressing each time that if the industry spent more money on safeguarding, many employees would still be completely healthy. He then offers two solutions. The first is total publicity, and the second is the granting of power to the public authorities to supervise all machinery in all industrial establishments. (Hard 590) Hard finished with the notion of the laws that have already passed.

6.2 Cause and Effect

William Hard was born in New York, but moved to Illinois for college at Northwestern University, from which he graduated in 1900, attaining "the highest scholastic record made by any student at that university until that time." (William 1) For many years, he worked as an editor for several newspapers. By the time muckrakers were sprouting up like mushrooms, Hard became interested in investigative journalism himself. He freelanced as a writer, with publications in several magazines, including some of which he was the editor.

More and more incidents in the steel industry came to light. "From 1902 to 1907 The Factory Inspector, unofficial journal of the International Association of Factory Inspectors, regularly published accounts gathered by state labor bureaus of industrial accidents. The steel industry produced some of the most violent accidents that this journal reported." (Progressive, par. 2) The industry became scrutinized as several muckrakers had already started to write about

the horrors of the industry. In Chicago, where the large Steel Corporation South Works was based, the horrible conditions of the workers were known to many Chicagoans. (par. 6)

In 1904, Hard's article *Making Steel and Killing Men* was published in *Everybody's Magazine*. In vivid detail, Hard described the terrible working conditions, causing horrific accidents that led to 386 permanently injured workers, as well as 46 deaths. (Leavitt 468) These numbers were just the casualties of one year. The companies had failed to provide safeguards for the workers, which resulted in molten metal furnace explosions and workers falling into the molten metal cauldrons. (468) David Rosner names *Making Steel and Killing Men* one of the most influential journalistic pieces about the Steel Industry. It captured the "public's attention with its juxtaposition of detail and powerful imagery." (Rosner 43)

The muckraking articles about the Steel industry, including *Making Steel and Killing Men*, forced the Steel companies to pay attention to the death and injury rates and come up with ways to safeguard their employees. John Fitch, author of *The Human Side of Large Outputs*, noted that *Making Steel and Killing Men* impelled the industry to launch a safety campaign. "Subsequently, U.S. Steel would boast of its impressive safety record without acknowledging the role that popular pressure played in forcing improvements." (Fitch 1149) The launch of the campaign had three great effects, according to Arwen Mohun. First, it meant that steel companies, for the first time, would collect and analyze data on the accidents and their causes. Second, it caused companies to invest a lot of money into making the factories safe for their workers. Third, safety inspectors were employed to visit plants and write reports on improvement. (Mohun 84) U.S. Steel's safety committee, launched in 1908, made sure the accident rate would be as low as possible. The safety campaigns had a lot of impact on the nation. By 1912, thirteen states had implemented Workmen's Compensation laws. (Weinberg 341) In 1915, the National Safety Council was created. (MacLaury, par. 5), and by 1917, forty states had passed the Workmen's Compensation laws. (Weinberg 341)

Muckraking articles, according to *Everybody's Magazine*, had an "unquestionabl[e] influenc[e on] much of the humanitarian legislation of the past few years." (Weinberg 340) The exposés led to a vast amount of attention towards the steel industry of Chicago, after which the companies were keen on improving their image, subsequently sparking a campaign and legislative achievements.

6.3 Facts

William Hard deals with facts in an ingenious way in his article. He is honest about what he does not know for sure, and uses reason in argumentative statements. He comes forward in

admitting that there are no records in Chicago, and he explains how using German records is perfectly reasonable.

But let us make an estimate (and it will have to be a rough one, for there are no local statistics) of the number of men burned and crushed and maimed and disabled in the plant of the Illinois Steel Company last year, as compared with the number of men actually killed. The best statistics on the subjects are those of the German Government, which, as it has established a system of compulsory insurance, is in a position to know exactly what is happening in the manufacturing establishments within its jurisdiction. [...] If the law of averages is the same in Chicago as it is in Berlin (and there is no reason to suppose that it isn't), the record of casualties at the South Chicago plant of the United States Steel Corporation would read as follows. (580)

Thereafter, he continues to use numbers as facts in the next paragraph, without referring to source, real or based upon German records. However, as a reader, they come across as very plausible numbers, and one would probably give second thought to its credibility. The entire tone of his article is very sincere, especially because he was very honest at the beginning of his article.

Furthermore, he continues to use examples of real worker stories to portray the horrors of the industry. He uses names and dates, which add to the credibility of the examples. "On the ninth of last October, at about ten o'clock in the evening, Walter Stemaszyk, a sample-boy, went to one of the blast-furnaces to get a sample of iron to take to the laboratory." (586) Hard writes in such a way, using statements of workers, and often he uses time and date to prove its authenticity. Additionally, he talks about the trial. In the case of Walter Stemaszyk, workers died because of an explosion of the furnace. Before the accident, the foreman had reported its faults to his superior, and advised to change the fire bricks. An easier solution was used, and patches of fire-clay were used to solve the problem. However, they wore out at a quick rate. "On the night of the ninth of October, according to all experts at the trial, the fierce molten iron ate its way through the fire-clay and came into contact with a water coil. The union of the hot iron with the water resulted in the explosion and in the sacrifice of four human lives." (587) William uses the words that experts used at the trial to furthermore strengthen his argument. He explicitly says he wants the article to be fair. "It would do no permanent good unless it were fair." (587) Hard aims to say that only a truthful article could bring forth change.

6.4 Civic melodrama

Using melodrama to reach the hearts of the readers is something Hard is quite good at. He uses multiple stories, with abhorrent accidents and dramatic imagery to convey his general idea that most the horribleness could have been prevented by the Steel companies.

On consideration of the numbers of casualties each year, Hard breaks ‘the fourth wall of writing’ and addresses the readers, including himself, as ‘we’.

Must we continue to pay this price for the honor of leading the world in the cheap and rapid production of steel and iron? Must we continue to be obliged to think of scorched and scalded human beings whenever we sit on the back platform of an observation-car and watch the steel rails rolling out behind us? Is this price necessary, or could we strike a better bargain if we were shrewder and more careful? (581)

Hard’s answers to these questions are obviously ‘no,’ but he promises that a partial answer to these questions will suggest itself in the following pages of the article. Hard never repeats the questions or refers to ‘we’ anymore in the rest of the article. It is not until the very last sentence that he involves the public again. “Is the public concerned? If it says it is, then it is.” (591) This could be interpreted as an aloof way of urging the public to care. People should think about the accidents, and should not be untouched by them. If it *says* it is, then it is. This could mean that the public must say it, out loud, before it can truly be. In other words, the people have to speak up in order to be heard.

Hard does mention the following: “Let society once provide the capable intellect of the United State Steel Corporation with a sufficient reason for preventing carelessness, and it will be the one best bet of the age that there will be no more carelessness in any of the United States Steel Corporation plants.” (585) He hereby flatters both parties. He calls the U.S. Steel Corporation smart, which might flatter them enough to accept the society’s cry for safeguarding and he suggests that *if* society chooses to do something, the effect will, without a doubt, be, the total annihilation of carelessness in the plants, if only they *would* speak up.

6.5 Narrative

The entire text, containing many examples of stories that prove that accidents could have been prevented, has the narrative of an omniscient third person. In these stories, Hard sometimes uses different techniques for dramatic effect. In the story on Ora Allen, he starts by describing a scene that sets place after the accident, in the morgue. “Ora is Inquest 39.193 in

the Coroner's Office in the Criminal Court Building downtown." (584) This is an interesting way of saying that Ora was just another number, just another inquiry, one of many. "On the fifteenth he was a corpse in the company's private hospital. On the seventeenth his remains were viewed by six good and lawful men at Griesel & Son's undertaking shop at 8,946 Commercial Avenue." (584) Hard then continues to go to the scene where the first witness recalls his memories of the accident. It may seem unusual to start a story at the very end, and then turn to the beginning, but it appears to be a good writing technique to catch the reader's attention. Newton Allen's perception of the accident is then described by the author. A very dramatic turn of events leads to a shocking discovery, well-written by Hard.

"He saw a man on his face. He heard him screaming. He saw that he was being roasted by the slag that had poured out of the pot. He ran up to him and turned him over. "At that time," said Newton Allen, in his testimony before the jury, "I did not know it was my brother. [...] I asked him if he was burned bad. He said, 'No, not to be afraid – he was not burned as bad as I thought.'" Three days later Ora Allen died in the hospital of the Illinois Street Company." (584)

The way in which Hard reveals that the person who was involved in the accident was actually the victim's brother, was unexpected. Where Ora says he is not burned as badly, but still dies after three days in the hospital, creates a strong juxtaposition, making the impact of Ora's death much more dramatic.

There is another interesting writing technique that Hard uses in this story. Ora's death was caused because a hook on a slag-pot slipped.

"But why did the hook on that slag-pot slip?"

Because it was attached merely to the rim of the pot, and not to the lugs. That pot had no lugs. It ought to have them. Lugs are pieces of metal that project from the rim of the pot, like ears. They are put there for the express purpose of providing a proper and secure hold for the hooks. But they had been broken off in some previous accident and they had not been replaced. On the twelfth of last December the ladleman had been obliged to use the mere rim, or flange, of the pot, and with that precarious attachment the pot had been hoisted and carried.

"Is it dangerous to carry a pot by its flange?" asked the deputy coroner. "It is," said Newton Allen. (585)

Hard answers the question in italics. Creating kind of a shift in the narrative, as if it was purely the third person's omniscience. Where the author's voice is appearing is marked with italics. The tone is quite accusing. Hard uses this technique in several places in his article, including both small and large parts of the story.

6.6 Naturalism

Pizer's first tension, between the subject matter of the text and the concept of man that emerges from this subject matter, could be applied to this text. However, this text has two prominent stories, written from the perspective of an omniscient third person. The two protagonists are both lower working class, working in the steel factory every day. Because of all the accidents that happen in the factory, the pessimistic future of injury and perhaps even death is a probable outcome. Pessimistic determinism is very apparent in this text. The discomfiting truths of the world, or in this case, the steel industry is portrayed through the stories that Hard tells. However, these protagonists stay trapped in this unheroic world, which means that one of the elements of the first tension is not present in this text, as characters involved in heroic or adventurous qualities in the commonplace world do not appear in this text.

Pizer's second tension involves the theme of naturalistic literature. Hard struggles for the importance of the individual. Four people dying in a year is too many if it could have been prevented. The protagonists are controlled by chance. The probability that they get injured as well is very probable, which means that one of the elements of the second tension conforms with the text. The second element is more difficult to answer as the author fights for individual rights, yet the protagonists are defeated without much hope for a better outcome. However, Hard does note the changes that have occurred. He does praise the steel companies for the change they are willing to enforce. "This argument is based only on considerations of humanity." (590) Hard mentions here that he has no ill will against the steel companies, but that he is only fighting for humanity, for the value of human life.

Conclusion

Hard's *Making Steel and Killing Men* was one of the muckraking texts that attributed to the change in safety for workers in the plants. From a safety campaign rose a council and legislation on a nation-wide level. When considering the elements of Tichi, Hard is honest about his facts and truthfulness of the article, he addresses the public directly in order to spark their initiative in the battle against carelessness of the plants, and he uses different writing techniques

for dramatic impact, which creates a very interesting narrative. When considering Pizer's elements, one could consider some influence from the naturalist movement, however, not all elements are present in Hard's text. For some elements it is difficult to say for certain if an element is present, because of the different stories and the perspective of the writer. Hard wrote the text with the only aim to change the steel industry so that individuals, employed by the industry, could work safely. The characters in the stories all have sad endings, or all witnessed terrible accidents in which co-workers were severely injured or killed.

Conclusion

Summarizing this research, it has demonstrated how muckraking media became as popular as it did. Theodore Roosevelt compared the investigative journalists to the Man with the Muck-rake, who was always busy raking dirt to the surface. The term 'muckraker' stuck, without the negative connotation that Roosevelt had given it. Because of urbanization, nationwide circulation of newspapers and magazines became a possible reality. Muckraking media became extremely popular. However, the filler-stories, that newspapers needed in order to maintain the balance between advertisements and stories, were not always of the best quality, which led to a clear distinction of filler stories, and 'real' muckraking media. However, a large percentage of these 'real' stories were written by a small group of muckrakers, who in all probability shared commonalities, like facts, civic melodrama, and narrative.

Due to industrialization and urbanization, Chicago faced issues on several matters. The issues created the need for labor, social, and racial reform. People of Chicago were no longer content with the way things were and started to act on it. The Haymarket bombing and the Pullman strike are examples of labor reform activism. Hull House is an example for social reform activism, as well as the attempts to reform by mayor Harrison II. The Race Riot was an example of racial reform, as well as Oscar DePriest, who became the city's first black city councilman.

The positive muckraking in *Chicago: Half Free and Fighting On* was an inspiration to the people of Chicago as well as to other muckrakers. Steffens flatters the people of Chicago, and tells them that they could achieve anything. Because Steffens' text is an exposé on reform instead of corruption, the elements of Tichi are not completely applicable. Steffens uses quotation marks for events that he attended, to support the fact that he was there and that his article is truthful. Steffens urges Chicagoans to reform even more, by using flattery, and by providing them with hopeful words for the future. Steffens uses the narrative voice to make it seem as though he is part of the conversations he describes. He uses paradox and contrast to grasp the readers' attention. From a naturalist perspective, this text is not in accordance with all naturalistic elements. The text lacks an environment that could be seen as commonplace. The tension between the subject matter, the corrupt political system and the people, the reformers of Chicago, is noticeable throughout the text, but the elements are missing. Steffens does use the naturalistic characteristic of pessimistic determinism. When looking at the progress so far, and the setbacks that the people have experienced, a naturalistic perspective creates a large

contrast between the analysis with Tichi's elements and the analysis with Pizer's elements. The people of Chicago have to struggle to move forward, when some people always put themselves before the greater good. A perspective through Pizer's elements shows that the future will bring slow change, whereas a perspective through Tichi's elements shows a brighter future, where Chicagoans can do all that is possible, if only they go out and do it.

Considering its effect, *The Jungle* was probably the most influential novel in the Progressive Era, as it had a direct effect on the laws of the United States. Sinclair had sent a copy of his book to Roosevelt, which sent investigators to look into the matter. When the report was released, the new laws, The Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Drug and Food Act, were signed into law by Roosevelt shortly after. The novel is a story of fiction, which makes the element of facts quite interesting, as, from the novel itself, authenticity cannot be proven. Sinclair's reaction to the credibility of the novel was his article, published in *The Independent*, explaining the novel's truthfulness. Upton uses a lot of imagery, which compliments the shocking, dramatic events, as well as the credibility of the scenery. He barely euphemizes anything, and perhaps even slightly exaggerates emotion. His narrative is therefore quite shockingly, disgustingly, well-written. *The Jungle* could be considered to be a naturalistic novel, as all elements of Pizer can be applied to the novel. The naturalistic perspective is probably successful on this novel because this exposé is fiction. Sinclair imagined the family, and was not restricted to real-life stories and events, something that was restricted for Hard and Steffens. Sinclair might have been inspired by naturalist writing, considering that all elements can be applied to his novel. Jurgis is lower class, working to support his family, struggling to support his family by events that were deterministic of nature. Jurgis only saw the meaning in life again when he was introduced to socialism. Sinclair, either willingly or unknowingly, used all characteristics of the naturalistic movement. Of the three texts, *The Jungle* can be seen as most successful, due to the applicability of most of Tichi's elements and all of Pizer's elements, and the social and political changes this book has brought forth .

William Hard's *Making Steel and Killing Men* was one of the muckraking articles on the Steel industry that had turned the unsafe plants into safeguarded plants. The media attention for the steel industry, sparked the safety campaign, followed by committees and councils that made sure factories stayed safe, or even improved more. Considering the element of facts, Hard has an interesting way of dealing with the truthfulness of his article. He creates believability through reason and through comparison with other country's statistics, as there were none of Chicago. Furthermore, Hard is very precise with the details of his stories, as he includes time and date for some of the stories. To urge the readers to action, he addresses the readers as a

collective through the use of the word 'we.' Additionally, his last sentence could be interpreted as a call for action. Hard's narrative contains a number of different writing techniques, which truly compliment his dramatic narrative. From a naturalistic perspective, Hard's text may have been partially influenced by naturalism. However, it is difficult to separate the author from the stories' protagonists when analyzing Pizer's elements. The author is optimistic about the future changes in the Steel Industry, but the protagonists' future does not seem any more bright. Misfortune has already taken their brighter futures away. Depending on how you look at this text, the naturalistic elements can either be applied very well, or not completely. However, concerning Pizer's second tension, Hard struggles for the importance of the individual, and fights for humanitarian causes, which complies with the elements of naturalism of the second tension.

Concluding, this research strengthens the idea that the muckraking texts, *Chicago: Half-Free and Fighting On*, *The Jungle*, and *Making Steel and Killing Men*, attributed to the social and political reform in Chicago in the Progressive Era. The case studies support this by demonstrating how shared elements of the texts, including facts, civic melodrama, and narrative, as well as the naturalistic elements, have influenced social and political reform.

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