

Literary Analysis: Chimamanda Adichie and Upton Sinclair's Narrative Strategies

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Abstract: This article explores the thematic intersections between Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. Despite their different eras and contexts, both authors address societal issues such as inequality, discrimination, and corruption. Through comparative analysis, this study examines their literary approaches and their impact on public consciousness and policymaking, highlighting their shared advocacy for social justice.

Keywords: Upton Sinclair, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, social justice, *The Jungle*, *Americanah*

1. Introduction

No doubt, literature is the vehicle on which all woes, agonies, happiness, cheerfulness, joy, entertainment are being loaded on. Moreover, hopes, aspirations, dreams of better life are also loaded on the same vehicle of literature. Across the history, from Plato, Aristotle, Homer, Euripides, and Socrates ...etc. They expressed via imagination how to amend reality; their approaches were not restricted only to the literary themes but rather extended to help better protect and maintain the social norms of society.

Literature never stands alone, never isolated from actual life, in the past and present, we have seen writers with abundant hearts and minds were always interested in their communities' concerns and issues. Writers played great roles in building up values, ethics and principles and guarding the inheritance of human legacy. In this article, I will combine between two writers and novelists from different centuries, but they met in unexpected appointment sharing, at the same moment, the same subject matter. They were Upton Sinclair, the American writer from the twentieth century of Chicago, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the American novelist of the Nigerian origin, of the twenty first century.

Their processing was in a different way, but the target and objective was the same. They have the same track to cross to the other bank to achieve their target and materialize their dreams. They were Upton Sinclair from the twentieth century writing about the corruption and pollution in the meatpacking industry. At the same time, about another corruption on societal relationships featured with inequality, injustice, tyranny of the capitalism and lacking of labor and healthy laws. His masterpiece the *Jungle*, expressed all the issues of inequality, injustice, dirty work environment, and lacking labor laws.

On the other hand, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was the diaspora and ambassador to the three continents writing on the human issues concerning the people here and there. She adopted a unique prestigious diagnostic approach, diagnosis the problems and concerns, and setting up the road map to the recovery and panacea. Both writers influenced presidency, Upton Sinclair with Theodore Roosevelt, and Adichie with Barack Obama.

Undoubtedly, it is amazing to see a writer from the twentieth century meet with the same subject matter of his writings with a writer from the twenty first century. It is a fact that Upton Sinclair, the writer of the *Jungle*, met with Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche of her masterpiece *Americanah*. The two writers have shared, unintentionally, the same subject matter. They sailed in the human beings' concerns of selfishness, agony, discrimination, distinction and underestimation. Upton Sinclair diagnosed the reasons of corruption in meatpacking, labor market, real estate, immigration treatment, and slaughtering houses. (Duvall, The Literary Encyclopedia 25 January 2011, 2011)

On the other hand, Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche has diagnosed and analyzed the discrepancies in dealings met by immigrants based on their color, origin, and race. She expressed all the human beings' emotions, feelings and tensions. In *Americanah*, one of the masterpieces of Adiche, she elaborated the societal relationships that comprising Whites and Blacks, local and immigrants, and expatriates working abroad. It is a different kind of corruption in another way. The core in both novels is humans, the individuals, how they are estimated and addressed. Sympathizing with the marginal categories and classes are the sharing signs the two writers have shown towards their heroes and heroines. (Gurracio, 2014)

Jurgis in the *Jungle*, immigrated from Lithuania bearing in his head the dreams of luxury life, instead, he has suffered a lot of agonies and shortcomings along with his wife Ona. Moreover, he worked in very bad circumstances suffering from long hours working against low rates. *The Jungle* has embodied tyranny of capitalism along with the discrimination and distinction as well as mistreatment of the immigrants. Therefore, the woes, suffering, and agonies of the people were all the subject matters of the *Jungle*. Furthermore, the meatpacking industry, healthy food was also the mainstream of the novel. Several times repeated this phrase by Upton Sinclair, I aimed at the public's heart, and by accident I hit it in the stomach".

His streamline efforts and tremendous dedication to the cause impacted President Roosevelt, he, in turns, applied to the Congress drafting two acts. The first act was the one of the pure food and drugs upon which the Food and Drugs Administration FDA has been established. FDA became the

regulatory body aiming at regulating all food industries and commodities traded and consumed by the people. Furthermore, no drugs to be allowed for use unless otherwise approved by FDA. Moreover, in each food packing or canning all the ingredients should be shown in details and labelling on pack or the can. In this regard, as for the drugs, should be packed and to be attached by a pamphlet in which all the privileges, functions, effects, and even the side effects should be indicated. (Snow C. P., 2013)

The second law submitted as result of *the Jungle* is the meatpacking act. Yes, the meatpacking industry was full of corruption. The packs where the main cause of poisonous cases were let to kill many of the American soldiers in Vietnam and cause diseases to both the laborers working in packing and generally the consumers. The act has been issued regulating meatpacking in hygienic way helping the industry integrity and maintaining the health of the consumers as well (Snow C. , 2020) Adiche in her journey expresses her concerns about humans about races, about equality, integrity, about humans' origin where they are all the same.

She has managed to draw a comprehensive picture on all the agonies and troubles encountered by man on three continents. She was an ambassador of diaspora transmitting the leader from Africa, Europe, and America. She focused on emotions, feelings resulting in discrimination and distinction. Ifemelu, the heroine of *Americanah*, showed how much agony being she is black living in America, how the people address, react, and deal with the blacks. (Thommpson, 1966) She portrayed characters speak frankly about their sufferings, agonies, woes, feelings, and emotions. They were all spokesmen and spokeswoman of their age. They were not characters of the story and novel, but they were individuals of the living life. Therefore, all their situations are attributed to actuality and reality. Ifemelu and Obinze were people that we might meet in our life, therefore, they were able to diagnose the problems exactly and convey a clear message to the readers. (Guarracino) While, Upton Sinclair managed to attract the public opinion, policy makers, decision makers represented in Mr. President of USA Mr. Theodore Roosevelt as well as the legislation authority represented in the Congress. Yes, the two acts issued as result of the publishing of the Jungle, made drastic changes in the history of health and the history of industry in the USA.

The first act established a very important regulatory body aiming at the pure foods and drugs, it has been founded under the name of Food and Drugs Administration FDA. It is operating up till now under the same name, its main function is to regulate and arrange trading and validating foods and drugs before being used by the end users and the consumers. (Thompson, 1966). Upon FDA, the foods and drugs should not be traded or commercially used by the consumers unless otherwise to be approved and validated with trading terms and conditions. One of these terms and conditions should be indicated by labels on each product or commodities highlighting the origin, materials and the ingredients of each product.

Moreover, the drugs never traded and used by patients unless otherwise to be validated and approved by FDA. In this respect, no medicine or drug to be traded unless otherwise to

be attached by a pamphlet indicating or the benefits of the drugs, the cases to be taken and the cases in which it is prohibited to taken, furthermore, the benefits, advantages, disadvantages, and the side effects that might be occurred by using the medicine. Undoubtedly, the act has been copied in many countries afterwards and became one of the best practices adopted and followed in both foods and medicine.

On the other hand, the second act issued because of the *Jungle*, was related to the meatpacking. It helped to protect the community against pollution and corruption of the packing products. For the first time, in the history of USA to have standards of hygienic products based on the scientific rules and regulations. Therefore, the *Jungle* made a turning point in both socially, scientifically, and industrially impacting levels helping both producers and consumers better as well. Undoubtedly, the *Jungle*, was not just a story and novel, but it was the one generating many successful and enhancement stories and novels of triumph on bureaucracy, corruption and inequality.

One of the amazing and fantastic impacts of Adiche's *Americanah*, drawing a new social contract amongst all human beings, it has been declared loudly in *Americanah* that the 'the only race matters is the human race'. Ifemelu was a spokeswoman of her age, she didn't express her agonies, shortcomings, deficiencies, inequalities and underestimation of the Blacks, but she managed to convey a message to everywhere that equality, integrity, respect of identity, and recognition of all humans regardless color, race, and origin are all rights not less than the right of life. Moreover, success in life and achieving dreams are not restricted only to western life or living in the western countries. Go back, reverse immigration, return to your origin, it is not shameful to come back to search for your identity again. (Tayo, 2015) Obinze in his coming back to Nigeria, provided a unique example, not only just an example but was being deemed as role model for the youth and young people. He insisted on refusing the legal help at the Police cell, and rejected to have a lawyer to file his lawsuit in front of the London Immigration Department. Obinze insisted to go back and start his new life in his country Nigeria, where the good news, we have read, afterwards, that he became successful businessman. Adiche managed to draft a new constitution bearing the values of transparency, equality, recognition of human race regardless of any other distinct matters based on origin, race, and color. (Morton, 1999)

2. Conclusion

We are in front creative and innovative writers used literary merits to express their societal concerns in a fantastic manner attracted both the public and the top officials, the Presidents. Yes, they were writers of mission, they dedicated their time and efforts to achieve a reform, a recovery and shaping a new life based on equality, dignity and identity recognition. They drafted new social contracts reinforcing balance between the employer and employee, between man regardless color, origin and race. They were lanterns for justice, integrity, disclosure and transparency. They set the rules for social governance before anticipation of the rules of corporate governance.

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This article has been drafted, reviewed, corrected under the supervision of my Professor Dr. George Shaduri, Professor of the American Literature and American Studies, at the International Black Sea University IBSU.