

Introduction it
exposed the
unsanitary practices
which went



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Introduction

The Jungle was a literary novel written by Upton Sinclair to expose the plight of American immigrants and the rot of corruption that went on in the American meatpacking sector (Sinclair 1). Fast Food nation on the other hand, was written by Eric Schlosser to explain the influence of the American fast food industry in the world market (Schlosser 1). The Jungle was written in a fictional setup which reflected the industrial revolution period of America and Fast food nation is no different because it was also written in a fictional setting. Fast Food Nation was a controversial book when it was published and its fortunes have not changed with its recent publication in 2005. The controversy can be attributed to the fact that, the world still holds very diverse views regarding nutrition, food, production, environment, animal rights and all similar issues highlighted in the book (Kuhl 2). Part of the controversy was also attributed to claims that, Eric Schlosser was trying to advance the opinion that, all engaged in the business of Hamburger production and beef production did not have peoples' interest at heart. The Jungle also had its fair share of controversy because it exposed the unsanitary practices which went on in some of Chicago's meatpacking industry; thereby rubbing all stakeholders explicitly or implicitly mentioned in the novel the wrong way. Though the books were published at different times, a lot of comparisons have been made between the two publications and consequently, a lot of similarities and differences arise as a result.

However, this study establishes that the two books have very little in

common. Objectives The intentions of Eric Schlosser in writing Fast food

Nation cannot be equated to the intention of Upton Sinclair in writing The

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Jungle. Though both books talk about the food industry and the ills that plague it, it is important to establish that, Eric Schlosser's aim of writing *Fast Food Nation* was to make the public know the problems that plague the American fast food industry and more so, to expose the dishonest practices of managers operating in the sector (McConnell 1). However, Upton Sinclair's intention of writing *The Jungle* was not to expose the ills that plagued the meat industry or food industry, but rather, to expose the plight of American immigrants working in America's industries.

This fact can be exposed from the observation that, through *Fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser is seen to focus on the ills that plague the meat industry but in *The Jungle*, only a few pages are dedicated to exposing the ills of the meat industry (Sinclair 2). This observation can be traced to comments made by some observers that *The Jungle* did not achieve its main objective which was to sensitize the American public about the plight of the American public because the public was more focused on the corruption that went on in the American meat industry. This observation is affirmed by McConnell who states that: "The impact of those stomach churning descriptions on readers sadly caused his true intention to be lost, as Americans demanded something be done about what they were eating. Overtime, Sinclair's novel came to be described as one about the Chicago meatpacking industry, likely by those who have never read the complete text" (McConnell 6). The focus on the plight of American immigrants in *The Jungle* can be further emphasized from the focus on the life of Jurgis Rudkus who was an American immigrant.

The book focuses not only on his life working in the American meat industry but also on his life as a union leader and a miller (Sinclair 12). The focus of the book (*The Jungle*) is therefore centered on the treatment America gave Jurgis Rudkus as he tried to make a living and fend for his family. *The Jungle* also focuses on the shortcomings of the American immigration and labor laws and how they were used by several technocrats to trample over the rights of the immigrants because they viewed them as expendable. Upton Sinclair gives a thorough insight into the life of an American immigrant by giving repeated accounts of the plight of Jurgis Rudkus and how he struggled to walk in the snow with nothing more than socks on his feet.

He also gives an account of how immigrants lived in old houses and got taken advantage of by ruthless landlords who felt no sympathy for their plight. More accounts of the suffering immigrant children had to go through (like prostituting to put food on the table) are given in the book (Sinclair 22). The author further focuses on the plight of Jurgis Rudkus and how he lost his family and more especially, his wife, to a rogue public official who never granted her maternity leave which caused her death because she suffered complications from her pregnancy. These events show the author's focus on the plight of immigrants as opposed to the intrigues of the American meat industry.

Accomplishments

From the differences exposed between the aim of writing *Fast food Nation* and *The Jungle*, we see that, both books are very different from each other.

Despite the fact that, the authors of both books were great scholars and revolutionists of their time, it is incorrect to compare the two books because they are completely different from each other. Both authors also have a different sense of accomplishment in delivering their points to their target audience and frankly, Eric Schlosser does a better job at communicating with his audience when compared to Upton Sinclair (Graydyl 2). Eric Schlosser seems to have a better understanding of his facts and he seems to better understand how the capitalistic and socialist systems work. For instance from his deep understanding of capitalism, Eric Schlosser identifies that, it is difficult to change the status quo prevailing in the fast food industry but more specifically, he acknowledges that it is difficult to change the fast food culture itself (Graydyl 2). On the other hand, the Jungle seems to explore only what is wrong with capitalism and suggest socialism as the better alternative. For instance, Upton Sinclair states that “ Socialism was simply a necessary step towards a far-distant goal, a step to be tolerated with Impatience” (Sinclair 337). Such statements are made in an abstract manner without concrete proof. Eric Schlosser’s authority in writing is well framed than Upton Sinclair’s and this is why The Jungle was misunderstood to talk about the ills that plagued the American meat industry as opposed to the ills that plagued American Immigrant workers.

Message Delivery

Fast Food Nation also seems to be more logically structured than the jungle because Fast Food Nation is written to appeal to the general American population but the jungle is written to relate to only a section of the American public (immigrant workers and the working class). Fast Food

Nation is also written from an informed point of view with correct utilization of facts and personal experiences to back up the same facts. Most importantly, Eric Schlosser shows how the information advanced in his book can be utilized in the real life.

The Jungle uses a reverse approach, in the sense that, it tries to appeal to the emotional side of human beings by justifying its emotional appeal through logic and reason (an approach which often does not work) (Graydyl 2). This is true because advancing facts via emotions is an abstract method of understanding, and it may fail to hold true in the minds of readers (once the emotion disappears). However, advancing facts through logic and reason is a guaranteed way of making people understand what one has to say and advancing emotions to supplement the fact is bound to make the information advanced even more effective. Furthermore, considering the fact that, The Jungle is based on a fictional setup, it becomes difficult for the audience to differentiate facts from fiction.

Conclusion

The Jungle and Fast Food Nation are very different books which were written to advance different concepts.

This study establishes that, Fast Food Nation was written to expose the ills that plagued the American Fast food industry but the Jungle was written to expose the plight American Immigrant workers faced when they worked in American industries. From this point of view alone, it becomes difficult to compare the two books because they were written with different objectives in mind. Moreover, this study establishes that, the two books do not share

much commonality because the authors adopted different concepts of analysis in their writing. *Fast Food Nation* was written to appeal to the logic and reason of its target readers while *The Jungle* was write to appeal to the emotions of its readers. From this understanding, it becomes clear that, *Fast food nation* had a stronger impact of comprehension when compared to *The Jungle* because the major points advanced sunk in. However, *The Jungle* failed to communicate its true objectives because of the ambiguities evidenced in its communication strategies. Due to these differences, this study establishes that, comparing *The Jungle* and *Fast food Nation* is a misguided concept because the books are totally different from each other.

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