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Portrayal of Tramps in British and American Literature at the Beginning of the
20th Century

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Předmětem zkoumání budou dvě díla memoárové literatury - *The Road* (1907) Jacka Londona a *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) George Orwella. Autorka se ve svém výzkumu zaměří na jejich zobrazení postavy tuláka a tuláctví. Těžištěm práce bude komparativní analýza těchto témat v kontextu sociálním, kulturním i literárním (např. pikareskní román). Autorka se bude soustředit zejména na zobrazení tuláků ve spojení s otázkami svobody, volby, jejich vztahu ke společnosti, znaků levicové ideologie, apod. Obecným cílem výzkumu je definovat a zmapovat povahu shodných a rozdílných rysů v otázkách zobrazování tuláctví v dílech, která vzešla z jiného kulturního prostředí, ale byla napsána autory s podobným politickým přesvědčením.

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- WICKS, Ulrich. "The Nature of Picaresque Narrative: A Modal Approach." 1974. *PMLA* 89, no. 2 (March 1974): 240-249.

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Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně.

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ANNOTATION

This work focuses on the contrasts and similarities between the portrayals of the British and the US characters of a tramp and the tramp cultures in memoirs *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) by George Orwell, and *The Road* (1907) by Jack London. The integral part of the paper is a subsequent critical assessment of the dominant culture and ideology, which played a substantial role in the establishment and formation of the tramp culture.

KEY WORDS

tramp, poverty, capitalism, oppression, George Orwell, Jack London, *The Road*, *Down and Out in Paris and London*

NÁZEV

Zobrazení tuláků v britské a americké literatuře počátku 20. století

ANOTACE

Tato práce se zaměřuje na rozdíly a podobnosti mezi zobrazením britských a amerických tuláků a tulácké kultury v memoárech *Na dně v Paříži a Londýně* (1933) autora George Orwella a *Cesta* (1907) autora Jacka Londona. Nedílnou součástí této práce je zároveň kritické zhodnocení dominantní kultury a ideologie, které hrály významnou roli při vzniku a formování kultury tuláctví.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

tulák, chudoba, kapitalismus, utlačování, George Orwell, Jack London, *Cesta*, *Na dně v Paříži a Londýně*

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Introduction

Travelling, either aimless or purposeful, has always been a part of human destiny even before the birth of the first civilizations. Subsequently, it is one of the oldest motifs and themes in literature. It is thus no wonder that characters, such as pilgrims and vagrants, appear in early works of literature such as Homer's *Odyssey*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* or Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*.

The term "tramp" is tightly connected with the era of industrialization. The origin of the word dates back to the fourteenth century Middle England.¹ However, the word reemerged and became widely used during the Victorian period in Britain.² According to Meriam-Webster Dictionary, the word tramp means "a person who travels from place to place and does not have a home or much money."³ In America, there are various terms for vagrants based on the vagrant's willingness to work and mobility: "a hobo" is a person in search of a job moving from one place to another; "a tramp" is a person unwilling to work and moving from one place to another; "a bum" is an individual who does not work and stays at one place.⁴ Todd DePastino, a professor of history, argues that dividing the terms according to various historical periods is more accurate, with tramps emerging after the Civil War and bums during the WWII.⁵

This paper focuses on the contrast and comparison of the portrayals of the tramp and the tramp culture in the memoirs *The Road* by an American writer Jack London and *Down and Out in Paris and London* by a British writer George Orwell. Great attention is given to the impact of the dominant culture and the prevailing social and economic aspects, which contributed to the formation and to a large extent further influenced the life of a tramp in both countries.

The paper is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter gives a social and cultural background with emphasis on the aspects that more or less affected the tramp culture and lifestyle in Britain and the United States with a brief summary of a historical approach of

¹ "Tramp," Merriam-Webster, accessed November 29, 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tramp>.

² Henry Mayhew, "Letter XXX," in *The Morning Chronicle: Labour and the Poor (1849-50)*, accessed November 29, 2015, <http://www.victorianlondon.org/mayhew/mayhew30.htm>.

³ "Tramp."

⁴ Nels Anderson and Raffaele Rauty, *On Hobos and Homelessness* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago, 1998), 60.

⁵ Todd DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 19.

the American and British societies towards the tramp problem together with the measures and policies aimed at the institutionalization of this minority group.

The second chapter, which is divided into two parts, is devoted to the critical perspective of the perception and treatment of tramps by the society and the system. The aim of the first part is to compare the viewpoints of the authors on the approach of the general public towards tramps together with their view of the outcome of the legal steps aimed to deal with the tramp issue, as both authors questioned the peculiarities of the British and American vagrancy laws. The experiences among the poor had the same effect on the authors, as they both inclined towards socialism. In this respect, the second part is devoted to the analysis of the influence of socialist views on the prevailing social and economic system in the context of Marxist theories and views on capitalism.

Based on the distinctive social and cultural backgrounds of the authors, the memoirs offer two different depictions of the tramp lifestyle and culture. The third chapter therefore focuses on the differences between the character of the British and the American tramp in the memoirs. The aim of the chapter is to compare and contrast the two portrayals, which is achieved through a comparative analysis in terms of their cultural differences, approach to the dominant culture, and the authors' perception of tramping and tramp lifestyles with respect to the influences and personal beliefs of the authors.

1 The Cultural and Social Background

In *The Road*, London gives his account of the experiences and adventures among the American tramps during the economic slump in the 1890s. In the late nineteenth century the United States became the global industrial power. The country experienced massive immigration waves and rapid expansion of the railroads and industry. However, the “Gilded Age,” as Mark Twain called this period, produced wealthy industrialists such as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie on one side, while the industrial workers struggled for survival on the other.

Down and Out in Paris and London is set in the late 1920s in Paris and London. This was a period of contrasts as well. While the aristocracy and the wealthy classes were enjoying the period of “Roaring Twenties,” the working-class experienced first-hand the impact of WWI. During that time, Britain was still suffering with drained economy and mass unemployment, which escalated in unsuccessful general strike in 1926 and climaxed with Great Depression in 1929.

At the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, the social conventions, beliefs and views of the mainstream cultures were still based on the Victorian values in Britain and the ideal of the American dream in the US. The key values such as self-reliance, hard work and responsibility, family and respectability were shared by many industrialized and urbanized countries, including the USA and Britain.⁶ However, there was a great contrast between the two class systems. While Britain was famous for its traditional and rigid inheritance-based class system, the US class system was achievement-based. Therefore, in Britain, holding such values was perceived as deeply rooted. In effect, gaining respect and dignity from the society was the most important aspect for a British citizen. Meanwhile, in the US, the values were implemented into the concept of the American dream. Therefore, holding those values was a promising way to achieve one’s economic independence.

The character of a tramp triggered a whole range of emotions in the rest of the society based on various generalized portrayals in media as well as personal experiences.⁷ Taking into account that the typical portrayal of a tramp was a rootless anonymous masculine male,⁸ and the fact that the number of tramps was constantly increasing, their presence often aroused fear. They posed a danger to communities, especially to females and children, the most

⁶ William E. Burns, *Brief History: Brief History of Great Britain*, (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2010), 234.

⁷ Stephen Pimpare, *A People’s History of Poverty in America*, (New York: The New Press, 2008), 66.

⁸ Tim Cresswell, *The Tramp In America*, (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2001), 94.

vulnerable members of society, and the social order.⁹ They were looked on with disgust and scorn when perceived as uncivilized, idle and drunken.¹⁰ Some of the members of society treated them with pity and sympathy, attributing homelessness mainly to economic downturns.¹¹ According to the accounts of tramps depicted in literature and other various sources, all of the attitudes are justifiable to some extent.

The first legal attempts related to vagrancy were forced by the elite. The roots of vagrancy laws can be traced back to England as far as the fourteenth century. Such laws were issued to maintain serfdom, as the population was weakened with Black Death enabling peasants to refuse their status by escaping. Such behavior threatened the interests of the ruling class, as a potential peasant revolt could have led to the disintegration of the feudal system.¹² At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the need to maintain order and to prevent the poor from starvation at the same time, led to design of the system of poor relief, known as English Poor Laws. Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 established the outdoor and indoor poor relief at the local level in form of houses of correction, workhouses and almshouses according to the health of an individual and the reason of becoming homeless. Some argued that the law resulted in the lack of mobility for the homeless and therefore in the inability to search for work outside the parishes. To eliminate any typical behavior of the undesirable and assumingly idle individuals, and to maintain social order, the Vagrancy Act of 1824 was issued making it a criminal offence to beg or sleep in the streets.¹³ The expenditures being constantly on the rise, the legal attempts were made to lower the number of vagrants. Therefore, The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 was passed. The main objective of the law was to discourage the dependency of the poor and homeless upon state funds and to motivate such individuals to join the free labor market. This was to be achieved by the prohibition of the outdoor relief and by applying the so-called principle of “less eligibility.” This principle was based on the conviction that becoming homeless was solely a matter of choice, and thus that the treatment and living conditions in workhouses and casual wards had to be worse than those of a poorest labourer, so as to deter the poor from applying for relief unless necessary. Casual wards, among tramps known as ‘spikes’, were usually parts of workhouse complexes. Given that workhouses were designed to provide long-term care for the destitute and

⁹ Cresswell, *The Tramp In America*, 50.

¹⁰ Cresswell, *The Tramp In America*, 40.

¹¹ Cresswell, *The Tramp In America*, 57.

¹² Bob Roshier and Harvey Teff, *Law and Society in England*, (London: Tavistock Publications, 1980), 30.

¹³ Eric M. Sigsworth, ed., *In Search of Victorian Values: Aspects of Nineteenth-century Thought and Society*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 83.

homeless locals only, the wandering poor were allowed to enter any one casual ward once a month only, facing imprisonment if trying to violate the law.¹⁴

For similar reasons, many of the British measures were adopted, adjusted and applied in the United States. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the number of tramps roaming across the states had been constantly on the rise. A great number of states thus applied the vagrancy laws concerning people who beg or sleep in public spaces, which were applied on mobile individuals without any established residence or lacking any visible means of support.¹⁵ The types of punishment varied from state to state from imprisonment to, e.g. three months of hard labor in Mexico to servitude in Kentucky for up to a year.¹⁶

¹⁴ William Andrews Holdsworth, *The Handy Book of Parish Law*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 231.

¹⁵ DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*, 22.

¹⁶ Cresswell, *The Tramp In America*, 53.

2 Tramps and Society

According to the punitive attitude toward the tramps, it is clear that from the two vastly different views on the tramp issue – a misfortune and an offence – the latter prevailed. Therefore, in this manner, legal steps were taken to solve the tramp issue. The nature of vagrancy laws seemed to be very peculiar. Tim Cresswell states that “In Europe since the fourteenth century, vagrants had been arrested and punished not for an action they had committed but because of who they were and the threat to order they represented.” To this he adds: “The ‘crime’ of vagrancy is importantly not a quality of an act a vagrant commits but a consequence of the application of rules and sanctions to an offender. Law and legal definitions created the legal type *vagrant*, just as it would the legal type *tramp*.”¹⁷ In other words, vagrancy laws were based on a state of being and a social status rather than an act, and a potential than an actual threat posed by the members of the vagrant minority. According to A. L. Beier, such laws are an example of what Marxists historians call a “social crime”¹⁸ – a crime of challenging the lifestyle and values of the majority.¹⁹ Thus, the actual outcome of such precautions was questionable. To some extent, both London’s and Orwell’s tramp accounts serve as a criticism of the attitude of the majority towards tramps, the nature of vagrancy laws, the practices of various state institutions and the prevailing economic system.

2.1 Stigmatization and Criminalization of the Tramp

In *Down and Out in Paris and London*, Orwell describes the overall negative attitude of society toward tramps: “People seem to feel that there is some essential difference between beggars and ordinary ‘working’ men. They are a race apart—outcasts, like criminals and prostitutes.” The position of the tramp is the one of an outsider of the society. To this he adds: “Working men ‘work’, beggars do not ‘work’. He is a mere social excrescence, tolerated because we live in a humane age, but essentially despicable.”²⁰ As Orwell implies, the general public believed that the state of homelessness was a result of disinterest of an individual to become self-reliant and hard-working.

However, with reference to the chapter three, Orwell refused the preconceived notion held by majority about the tramps. He concluded that the tramp minority in Britain had been established due to the socioeconomic circumstances and sustained because of many harsh and

¹⁷ Cresswell, *The Tramp In America*, 56.

¹⁸ Cresswell, *The Tramp In America*, 56.

¹⁹ Gordon Marshall, and John Scott, *A Dictionary of Sociology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 699.

²⁰ George Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 174.

repressive measures aimed at the homeless. Orwell criticizes the Vagrancy Act of 1824. He implies that any deviation from the social norms was not only frowned upon, but also punishable by law. This, in effect, led to the criminalization of homelessness as such:

I had been in London innumerable times, and yet till that day I had never noticed one of the worst things about London—the fact that it costs money even to sit down. In Paris, if you had no money and could not find a public bench, you would sit on the pavement. Heaven knows what sitting on the pavement would lead to in London—prison, probably.²¹

As a result, the poorest individuals were forced to search for relief in a workhouse or a casual ward. A British pauper, who was not supported by the parish, had only the second option left. However, the act of entering a casual ward more than once during the period of one month was considered an offence punishable with imprisonment, as Orwell states: “A tramp tramps, not because he likes it, but for the same reason as a car keeps to the left; because there happens to be a law compelling him to do so.”²² Therefore, tramps were made to travel long distances to another casual ward every day: “There are regular beaten tracks where the spikes are within a day's march of one another.”²³ Their freedom of movement was therefore to a large extent restricted.

The loss of basic human rights due to the state of poverty is one of the major themes in Orwell's memoir. Besides the restrictions on the public demonstration of homelessness and limitations of their freedom of movement, Orwell also implies that tramps were often treated by authorities as inferior. Such authoritative behaviour was encouraged by the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834, based on the principle of “less eligibility.” Orwell argues that the act contributed to both physical and psychological degradation of tramps, as there was an open possibility of abuse and that any act of resistance against the authorities would be quickly solved to a tramp's disadvantage. Orwell shows that a tramp was not even worthy of any legal prosecution: “Under the Vagrancy Act tramps [...] can be prosecuted for almost anything; but the authorities generally save the trouble of a prosecution by turning disobedient men out of doors.”²⁴ Such degradation was achieved by various other aspects such as the creation of a prison-like environment and conditions in workhouse complexes. This further signaled a loss of a place in a respectable society. London describes the casual ward at Romton as a building with iron gates, barred windows, “long double rows of stone cells” without beds and the overall atmosphere presented as “a bare, gloomy place of stone and whitewash,

²¹ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 155-156.

²² Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 204.

²³ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 144-145.

²⁴ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 155.

unwillingly clean, with [...] a cold, discouraging, prisonish smell.”²⁵ The prisonlike atmosphere only accentuated the approach of the workhouse staff. His experiences gained there strongly resembled the typical process of entering prison from a brief interview, strip-search, while any money and tobacco were being confiscated. Therefore, tramps were not allowed to keep any savings: “It is against the law to enter the spike with more than eightpence, and any sum less than this one is supposed to hand over at the gate.”²⁶ A bath with fresh water was allowed only for the individuals having a complete bath. Any requests were perceived as an offence by the authorities: “I asked if I might swill out the tub, which was streaked with dirt, before using it. He [the porter] answered simply, ‘Shut yer [*sic*]—mouth and get on with yer [*sic*] bath!’ That set the social tone of the place, and I did not speak again.”²⁷ The tramps were then given a grey workhouse shirt, a symbol of depersonalization, arousing the feelings of shame and embarrassment, similar to wearing a prison uniform: “the thing really hated in the workhouse, as a stigma of charity, is the uniform.”²⁸ The tramps were then locked in the cells until the morning. A medical check followed: “The inspection was designed merely to detect smallpox, and took no notice of our general condition.”²⁹ This again showed disregard for the basic needs of tramps. To accentuate the prison-like environment, such accommodation was usually offered to either one or other gender, which led to separation of the whole families: “there are very few houses with accommodation for married couples.”³⁰

According to Orwell, the British tramp was exhausted not only because of the everyday enforced roaming, but also, ironically, for the accommodation provided for the underclass was generally unsatisfactory due to various sleep distracters. Orwell’s account gives several examples of sleep distracters from the beds being uncomfortable or totally absent: “It appeared that no bed was quite a normal condition in the spike.”³¹, or a presence of a diseased individual that disrupted others from sleep: “It appeared that Pip, as the others called him, slept regularly in the shelter, and he must have kept ten or twenty people awake every night.”³² or other aspects: “We slept in a cell, and there were bedsteads and straw palliasses, so that one ought to have had a good night’s sleep. But no spike is perfect, and the

²⁵ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 145-146.

²⁶ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 145.

²⁷ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 146.

²⁸ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 199.

²⁹ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 149.

³⁰ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 212.

³¹ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 147.

³² Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 159.

peculiar shortcoming at Lower Binfield was the cold.”³³ Therefore, sleep deprivation was quite a usual aspect in the life of the British tramp.

Another burning issue was a constant undernourishment as a result of poor diet. Orwell indicates that a typical meal consisted of a slice of bread with margarine and a cup of tea. He further demonstrates the effect of such diet on his Irish friend Paddy, picturing him as slowly weakening with his pale skin accentuating his skinny ill-looking body: “He was probably capable of work too, if he had been well fed for a few months... He had lived on this filthy imitation of food till his own mind and body were compounded of inferior stuff.”³⁴ On the treatment of leftovers of permanent residents at Lower Binfield, Orwell demonstrates that this issue was again rather connected with the ‘less illegibility’ policy than with the economic situation of the nation:

After dinner the cook set me to do the washing up, and told me to throw away the food that remained. The wastage was astonishing and, in the circumstances, appalling. [...] I filled five dustbins to overflowing with quite eatable food. And while I did so fifty tramps were sitting in the spike with their bellies half filled by the spike inner of bread and cheese.³⁵

To understand the overall effect of such aspects, it is necessary to put it into the context of the psychology of poverty based on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs,³⁶ an illustration of Maslow’s theory in psychology. The hierarchy is based on physiological needs, while at the top is self-realization. This indicates such lack of satisfaction at the fundamental level as is sleep deprivation or hunger causes that any higher obligations or aspirations are no longer a matter of concern for such an individual, as Orwell observes: “Hunger reduces one to an utterly spineless, brainless condition, more like the after-effects of influenza than anything else.”³⁷

The only way to escape such desperate conditions was to find a stable job. Ironically, due to the constant dissatisfaction of the basic needs and the everyday marches to another tramp ward it was almost impossible to search for work: “It’s hell bein’ on de road, eh? It breaks yer [*sic*] heart goin’ into dem [*sic*] bloody spikes. But what’s a man to do else, eh?”³⁸ Orwell describes his attempt to get a job: “One morning we tried for a job as sandwich men. We went at five to an alley-way behind some offices, but there was already a queue of thirty or forty men waiting, and after two hours we were told that there was no work for us.”

³³ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 159.

³⁴ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 154.

³⁵ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 199.

³⁶ Saul McLeod, “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs,” accessed November 30, 2015, <http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>.

³⁷ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 36.

³⁸ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 152.

According to Orwell, the working conditions gradually worsened due to the high unemployment rate and the lack of state regulations: “The number of unemployed men who are ready to do the work makes them powerless to fight for better treatment.” Such inability to escape the tramp lifestyle was already substantiated roughly thirty years earlier in Jack London’s account of the East End slums called *People of the Abyss*, as he recorded a conversation with an old British carpenter and his choice between a casual ward and a search for a job: “S’pose I don’t walk. S’pose I look for a job? In no time there’s night come, an’ no bed. No sleep all night, nothin’ to eat, what shape am I in the mornin’ to look for work? [...] An’ there I am! Old, down, an’ no chance to get up.”³⁹

According to Orwell, charitable organizations lost their primal unbiased role. The charity workers tended to accentuate their position by behaving condescendingly toward tramps, and therefore induced a sense of inferiority and dependence: “‘they can’t even give you a twopenny cup of tea without you go down on you—knees for it.’”⁴⁰ The act of being patronized and forced to perform religious practices to show appreciation was perceived as a reminder of the tramps’ dependence on others. The sense of moral superiority based on one’s social position was obvious: “It is curious how people take it for granted that they have a right to preach at you and pray over you as soon as your income falls below a certain level.”⁴¹

Ironically, although tramps were perceived as parasites of society, they were often the victims of parasitism. Such a parasitism was demonstrated by the members of the majority who tended to misuse their powers and deprive the homeless of their benefits: “The tea appeared to be made with tea dust, which I fancy had been given to the Salvation Army in charity, though they sold it at three-halfpence a cup. It was foul stuff.”⁴² Orwell furthermore criticizes the abuse of meal ticket system, which he encountered several times: “It appeared that the shop habitually cheated the tramps of twopence or so on each ticket; having tickets instead of money, the tramps could not protest or go elsewhere.”⁴³

With reference to the chapter three, London’s tramp in *The Road* rather represents a picaresque character, an outlaw mocking the lifestyle of the majority in comparison with his British counterpart. Therefore, with regard to his frivolous attitude towards vagrancy laws as well as his firm avoidance of any state institutions and charities, London does not pay as much attention to the criticism of the tramp laws in *The Road* as Orwell does in his account. However, there are several conflicts with the mainstream society signaling that the

³⁹ Jack London, “The Carter and the Carpenter,” in *The People of the Abyss*, (Seattle: PublishingOnline, 2001), 68-69.

⁴⁰ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 143.

⁴¹ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 183.

⁴² Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 158.

⁴³ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 150.

perception and treatment of tramps was similar. In the chapter called “Hoboes that Pass in the Night,” London witnesses the outcome of a railway accident. Commenting on the process of clearance of the train wreck, London foreshadows the overall attitude of society towards tramps: “A wreck ahead blocked the line. The dead engineer had been brought in, and his body attested the peril of the way. A tramp, also, had been killed, but his body had not been brought in.”⁴⁴ The disregard for the dead body of a tramp shows that tramps were perceived as inferior. Furthermore, they were regarded as vermin of society: “That train-crews have not stopped short of murder is a current belief in the tramp world.”⁴⁵

Based on London’s tramp tales present in *The Road*, the punitive nature of the measures aimed at homelessness was even more straightforward – in the form of forced labor and imprisonment. London expresses his belief regarding the forced labor as an act of oppression:

It is surprising, the money that is made out of stone-broke tramps. All through the South—at least when I was hoboing—are convict camps and plantations, where the time of convicted hoboes is bought by the farmers, and where the hoboes simply have to work. Then there are places like the quarries at Rutland, Vermont, where the hobo is exploited, the unearned energy in his body [...] being extracted for the benefit of that particular community.⁴⁶

He argues that such repressive precautions failed to serve their original purpose to solve the tramp issue. On the contrary, the vagrancy laws were perceived not as an act of punishment, but as a form of enslavement and exploitation of the tramps. This resulted in decrease of the motivation of tramps to reenter society and to adapt to the lifestyle of the productive majority.

Imprisonment was another form of punishment for vagrancy. London’s description of the 30 days of imprisonment undermined the major purpose of a prison as a component of a correctional system is deterrence and justice. In the same way the British workhouses reproduced the very vices they were supposed to erase, Erie County Penitentiary flourished with violence, a complex web of underground black market and corruption. He describes the pen as one of the most “awful abysses of human degradation.”⁴⁷ Stating that “man-handling was merely one of the very minor unprintable horrors of the Erie County Pen,”⁴⁸ London shows that violence among the inmates and from the authorities was not uncommon. Having quickly adapted to the situation, he gains the position of a hall-man, a right hand of the prison

⁴⁴ Jack London, “Hoboes That Pass in the Night,” in *The Road*, ed. Todd DePastino, (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 105.

⁴⁵ London, “Holding Her Down,” in *The Road*, 32.

⁴⁶ London, “Bulls,” in *The Road*, 148.

⁴⁷ London, “The Pen,” in *The Road*, 89.

⁴⁸ London, “The Pen,” in *The Road*, 88.

guards: “Thirteen against five hundred, and we ruled by fear. We could not permit the slightest infraction of rules, the slightest insolence.”⁴⁹ He further reveals that “there were many grafts in that prison.”⁵⁰ London clearly demonstrates that instead of correction, the stay at penitentiary further motivated individuals for criminal behavior:

Heaven knows we put bread into circulation in the Erie County Pen. Ay, and we encouraged frugality and thrift . . . in the poor devils who forewent their tobacco. And then there was our example. In the breast of every convict there we implanted the ambition to become even as we and run a graft. Saviours of society—I guess yes.⁵¹

In comparison with Orwell’s observations of the life of a tramp in Britain, London in the same way both explicitly and implicitly demonstrates the negative outcome of the breadth and vagueness of such laws that aimed at mobile individuals lacking any visible means of support, which encouraged considerable discretionary powers to police and courts. This aspect, as well as it is demonstrated in Orwell’s account, led to severe oppression of tramps and a variety of restrictions of fundamental freedoms.

Throughout the memoir, London ascertains that he was denied one of the most democratic human rights, which is the presumption of innocence. Instead, he observed that the tramp was burdened with a presumption of guilt. In the chapter “Bulls” London vividly recounts the rampant police brutality. Witnessing illegal street gambling in the New York City, London proceeded on his way when unexpectedly assaulted by a police officer: “I wanted an explanation. And I got it. Bang! His club came down on top of my head, and I was reeling backward like a drunken man.”⁵² Although he was guilty of no misdemeanor, he was attacked for a crime he did not commit, due to the false presumptions of the authorities. Furthermore, London foreshadows the potential outcome:

And in that dizzy moment I had a vision. [...] I saw myself, bloody and battered and hard-looking, in a police-court; I heard a charge of disorderly conduct, profane language, resisting an officer.[...] I lost all interest in explanations. [...] I turned and ran.⁵³

The fact that London’s case was not rare and that tramps were a frequent target of the police is well demonstrated in London’s description of a part of a prison where minor offenders are taken: “Since hoboos constitute the principal division of the minor offenders, the

⁴⁹ London, “The Pen,” in *The Road*, 89.

⁵⁰ London, “The Pen,” in *The Road*, 77.

⁵¹ London, “The Pen,” in *The Road*, 86.

⁵² London, “Bulls,” in *The Road*, 154.

⁵³ London, “Bulls,” in *The Road*, 154.

aforesaid iron cage is called the Hobo.”⁵⁴ London claimed that the police officers were financially motivated to hunt tramps, stating that “the tramp enables thousands of men to earn honest livings, educate their children, and bring them up God-fearing and industrious.”⁵⁵ He believed that it was no longer a question of morality, but rather of the level of material well-being of the law-enforcement officers: “At one time my father was a constable and hunted tramps for a living. The community paid him so much per head for all the tramps he could catch.”⁵⁶

Although the history in the United States is based on movement, migration and mobility, London fiercely criticized the violation of the right of the freedom of movement. The restrictions of mobility of the poor were caused by the vagrancy laws, which were created in order to institutionalize the groups of roaming tramps. Being arrested in Niagara Falls for vagrancy, London claims: “I had not even violated their ‘sleeping-out’ ordinance. I had slept outside their jurisdiction [...]” To this he adds: “I had not even begged for a meal, or battered for a ‘light piece’ on their streets. All that I had done was to walk along their sidewalk and gaze at their picayune waterfall.”⁵⁷

In London’s description of the way the trial was conducted, the question of social inequality became even more prominent. London briefly describes the administration of justice: “‘Vagrancy, your Honor,’ said the bailiff, and his Honor said, ‘Thirty days.’ And so it went, fifteen seconds and thirty days to each hobo. The machine of justice was grinding smoothly.”⁵⁸ Therefore, London reflects upon the maladministration at the court, of which the tramp was the victim. Subsequently, all the hoboes present in the courtroom were deprived of basic legal rights, as London briefly summarizes:

I had been denied my right of trial by jury; I had been denied my right to plead guilty or not guilty; I had been denied a trial even (for I couldn’t consider that what I had received at Niagara Falls was a trial); I had not been allowed to communicate with a lawyer nor any one.⁵⁹

The act of the jury not only symbolizes the process of dehumanization of the tramp, but also the failure to provide justice, as a consequence of the prejudice toward the tramps, with reference to a full denial of any socio-economical factors. London describes a disregard on the side of jury for a common migrant worker by prolonging the standard period of imprisonment

⁵⁴ London, “Pinched,” in *The Road*, 69.

⁵⁵ London, “Bulls,” in *The Road*, 147.

⁵⁶ London, “Bulls,” in *The Road*, 147.

⁵⁷ London, “Pinched,” in *The Road*, 81.

⁵⁸ London, “Pinched,” in *The Road*, 71.

⁵⁹ London, “Pinched,” in *The Road*, 81.

for the only suspect that was given the right to speak, presenting himself as a former teamster from Lockport, presumably a typical migrant laborer searching for a job:

“Why did you quit your job?” his Honor asked.

Now the teamster had already explained how his job had quit him, and the question took him aback. “Your Honor,” he began confusedly, “isn’t that a funny question to ask?”

“Thirty days more for quitting your job,” said his Honor, and the court was closed. That was the outcome. The teamster got sixty days all together, while the rest of us got thirty days.⁶⁰

2.2 Criticism of Capitalism

Having experienced the hard toils of the poor, the authors further searched for the hidden roots of the negative attitudes and corresponding oppressive measures towards the tramps. What both London and Orwell had in common was that the influence of a life in poverty had the same effect—they advocated socialism as a result of their strong opposition towards capitalism. Orwell explains that his inclinations to socialism were triggered rather by “disgust with the way the poorer section of the industrial workers were oppressed than out of any theoretical admiration for a planned society.”⁶¹ In a similar manner, in his essay “Why I Became a Socialist” London explains his “conversion” to socialism through his realization that only his good health, strength and youth separates him from the so called “submerged tenth,” where he found former “sailor-men, soldier-men, labor-men, all wrenched and distorted and twisted out of shape by toil and hardship and accident, and cast adrift by their masters like so many old horses.”⁶²

The observations and experiences of the authors correspond with the idea of Marxist principle of “base and superstructure.” Marxists claim that the base, i.e. the economic factors, determines the superstructure, which is constituted of nonmaterial aspects of a society such as culture, legal and political system, education or religion.⁶³ In connection with this principle, Antonio Gramsci developed a term “cultural hegemony” to describe his concept based on his idea that the values, beliefs and morals of the majority were manipulated and adjusted to the needs of the ruling class, i.e. the owners of capital, in order to achieve a sustainable basis for the capitalist system in the new age of urbanization and industrialization.⁶⁴ Naturally, the deviations from the established moral norms and values among the working class were

⁶⁰ London, “Pinched,” in *The Road*, 71.

⁶¹ Harold Bloom, *George Orwell's Animal Farm*, (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 48.

⁶² Jack London, “Why I Became a Socialist,” in *War Of the Classes*, accessed March 17, 2016, http://www.jacklondon.net/became_a_socialist.html.

⁶³ Pramond K. Nayar, *Contemporary Literary And Cultural Theory: From Structuralism To Ecocriticism*, (Delhi: Pearson Education India, 2010), 136-137.

⁶⁴ John R. Hall, Mary Jo Neitz, and Marshall Battani, *Sociology On Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 183.

contributing to the schism between the social classes. Yet, both authors imply that the schism was rather created artificially to cover the contradictions stemming from the capitalist system.

Orwell admits that criminality, alcoholism and violence were all seemingly natural aspects in everyday life in both Paris and London slum communities, when he states that “[o]n Saturday nights about a third of the male population of the quarter was drunk,” adding that “[t]here was fighting over women, and the Arab navies who lived in the cheapest hotels used to conduct mysterious feuds, and fight them out with chairs and occasionally revolvers.”⁶⁵ Yet, he shows the influence of Marxist ideas on his thought. He illustrates that the ignorance of such moral deviation was a result of exploitation of the working-class and underclass people. Having witnessed a murder one night in a Parisian street right in front of the hotel he was staying at, he states: “We just made sure that the man was done for, and went straight back to bed. We were working people, and where was the sense of wasting sleep over a murder?”⁶⁶ Orwell implies that such a lack of satisfaction of needs at the fundamental level causes that moral obligations are no longer a matter of concern for such an individual. The life of a working-class man was simply reduced to the animalistic satisfaction of the basic needs. Getting drunk was perceived as one of the limited means of entertainment and a way to escape the bitter every-day routine: “For many men in the quarter, unmarried and with no future to think of, the weekly drinking-bout was the one thing that made life worth living.”⁶⁷

In his writings, rather than the inability to hold the traditional values London illustrates his disillusionment and the consequent disavowal of the values. Although the USA was considered a classless society, as implemented in the American dream, London undermined the core of the ideal. He claimed that the classless society offered by the ‘promise land’ was an illusion: “I still believed in the old myths which were the heritage of the American boy when I was a boy.”⁶⁸ Hard work together with diligence and persistence was no longer the price to pay to achieve the American dream, but rather a necessity to make ends meet. He implied that it was the economic system based on exploitation of labor that made the equality of opportunity merely impossible: “The dignity of labor was to me the most impressive thing in the world. [...] I was as faithful a wage slave as ever capitalist exploited.”⁶⁹ Striving for economic independence, London came to a local power plant with the aspiration of becoming an electrician, being told that he had to start as a coal shoveler first. In the end, his co-worker revealed to London that he was doing work for two men: “I thought [the superintendent] was

⁶⁵ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 2.

⁶⁶ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 91.

⁶⁷ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 96.

⁶⁸ Jack London, *John Barleycorn*, in *Novels and Social Writings*, (New York: The Library of America, 1903), 1032.

⁶⁹ Jack London, “Why I Became a Socialist,” in *Novels and Social Writings*, 1118.

making an electrician of me. In truth and fact, he was saving fifty dollars a month operating expenses to the company.”⁷⁰ Furthermore, the absence of the proper state support for the old, crippled or diseased laborers led London to a realization of his dim future: “All my days I have worked hard with my body and according to the number of days I have worked, by just that much am I nearer the bottom of the Pit.”⁷¹

Both authors therefore undermined the assumptions towards the working class that the poor were inherently idle, immoral and prone to criminality. They imply that crime stems from poverty, social inequality and exploitation of labor. Such idea was analyzed by the Marxist criminologists, who portray the deviant as a “passive victim of adverse socio-economic conditions.”⁷²

However, the misconception of the roots of criminal behavior, and the subsequent social class schism are not the only suggested outcomes of the influence of the base on the superstructure. Taking into account the nature of vagrancy laws, among other oppressive measures aimed at the poor, the speculations arise over the breadth of the influence of capitalism on the superstructure. In connection with this suggestion, Marx stresses the importance of the existence of the relative surplus-population, i.e. the unemployed and homeless people, as it allows the competition for employment and therefore the possibility of reducing wages for the benefit of the bourgeoisie.⁷³ Yet, especially during the economic slumps, the growing army of the unemployed workers rather posed a threat to the capitalist class, due to the potential increase in the crime rate, and riots that could have threaten their property and dominant position, as Orwell expresses: “Very few cultivated people have less than (say) four hundred pounds a year, and naturally they side with the rich, because they imagine that any liberty conceded to the poor is a threat to their own liberty.”⁷⁴ In “The Tramp” London explicitly states his opinion that the law creation and law enforcement are the important instruments of the ruling class to keep their dominant position:

And so the pygmy capitalists of that post-Plague day found their existence threatened by this untoward condition of affairs. To save themselves, they set a maximum wage, restrained the workers from moving about from place to place, smashed incipient organization, refused to tolerate idlers, and by most barbarous legal penalties punished those who disobeyed. After that, things went on as before.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ London, *John Barleycorn*, 1035.

⁷¹ London, “Why I Became a Socialist,” 1119.

⁷² Pamela Ugwu-dike, *An Introduction to Critical Criminology*, (Bristol: Policy Press, 2015), 87.

⁷³ Karl Marx, *Karl Marx: selected writings*, ed. David McLellan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 518.

⁷⁴ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 121.

⁷⁵ Jack London, “The Tramp,” in *War of the Classes*, (New York, Berlin: Mondial, 2006), 21.

In this context, Herman Mannheim observes that “[t]he history of criminal legislation, in England and many other countries, shows that excessive prominence was given by the law to protection of property.”⁷⁶ This statement supports the idea that the laws were passed to protect the property and interests of the capitalist class rather than people. Richard Quinney further claims that the legal system is an important tool of the capitalist class. By manipulation of values, the measures were masked as a “public interest” to punish those who challenged the social order.⁷⁷ Therefore, state institutions such as police forces, courts or workhouses reflected capitalist interests and further assured the society of the flawlessness of the system. Thus, the tramps as the epitome of the surplus labor, i.e. the by-product of capitalism, were targeted by the police, dehumanized through the oppressive vagrancy laws and denied basic human rights in order to remain under control.

The idea that the biased law creation towards the working class affected the process of law enforcement is further supported by another implication. While the law enforcement was severely applied on street crime, it was rather lenient in cases of white-collar crimes, as implied in Orwell’s comment on the position of the tramp:

He is honest compared with the sellers of most patent medicines, high-minded compared with a Sunday newspaper proprietor, amiable compared with a hire-purchase tout—in short, a parasite, but a fairly harmless parasite. He seldom extracts more than a bare living from the community, and, what should justify him according to our ethical ideas, he pays for it over and over in suffering.⁷⁸

In *The Road*, the same idea is illustrated through a satirical portrayal of the capitalist society. London applies Marx’s Theory of exploitation, based on the surplus value, which is withheld from the working class by the owners of capital.⁷⁹ During his imprisonment in the Erie County Penitentiary, London becomes a ‘hall-man.’ Hall-men represent the owners of capital, who, by illicit practices gain the surplus of food supplies, i.e. the surplus value, which was supposed to be given to the inmates, i.e. the working class. The hall-men traded it, grafted, and bribed and prospered while the rest of the inmates did not get any profit:

We were economic masters inside our hall, turning the trick in ways quite similar to the economic masters of civilization. We controlled the food-supply of the population, and, just like our brother bandits outside, we made the people pay through the nose for it.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Hermann Mannheim, *Comparative Criminology: A Text Book*, vol. 2, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 460.

⁷⁷ Richard Quinney *Critique of the Legal Order: Crime Control in Capitalist Society*, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 61.

⁷⁸ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 175.

⁷⁹ George Ritzer, ed., *Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 2005), 266.

⁸⁰ London, “The Pen,” in *The Road*, 85.

London illustrates the corrupted system in jail as a miniature model of capitalism. His acts are perceived as the imitation of the processes of gaining power and prosperity by the respected and prosperous members of capitalist society: "Besides, we but patterned ourselves after our betters outside the walls, who, on a larger scale, and under the respectable disguise of merchants, bankers, and captains of industry, did precisely what we were doing."⁸¹ The irony lies in the very existence of exploitation practiced on a large scale without any efforts or measures to eradicate such an issue, which was a proof that the state served the interests of the ruling class.

Both authors argue that the perception of the morality is distorted by the capitalist values. Orwell claims: "In all the modern talk about energy, efficiency, social service and the rest of it, what meaning is there except 'Get money, get it legally, and get a lot of it'? Money has become the grand test of virtue." He further applies such idea in the context of the tramp issue: "By this test beggars fail, and for this they are despised. If one could earn even ten pounds a week at begging, it would become a respectable profession immediately."⁸² Both authors believed that in a capitalistic society, success was no longer achieved by holding to the cultural values, one's personal qualities or skills, but rather on the wealth and possession. Therefore profit wins over humanity. Among the police hunting American tramps for fees, or the British public houses misusing the meal ticketing system, further examples are traceable in the memoirs, as Orwell states: "Of course, the owners of lodging-houses would be opposed *en bloc* to any improvement, for their present business is an immensely profitable one."⁸³ London compares a public beating of a woman and a child in the gypsy camp with the child labor as an outcome of the unrestrained capitalist society: "Worse pages of life than what I have described? Read the reports on child labor in the United States [...] and know that all of us, profit-mongers that we are, are typesetters and printers of worse pages of life than that mere page of wife-beating on the Susquehanna."⁸⁴

⁸¹ London, "The Pen," in *The Road*, 85-86.

⁸² Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 175.

⁸³ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 214.

⁸⁴ London, "Pictures," in *The Road*, 64.

3 The Lifestyle and Culture of the British and American Tramp

One of the most striking differences between the two portrayals of the British and American literary tramps is based on the motives of the authors of the works concerned to go on the road and write an account of their personal observations and experiences, which had a great influence on the main focus and the atmosphere of each memoir.

After publishing *The Road* in 1907, Jack London put the record straight about the opinion held by the public that the main driving force behind his becoming a tramp were his socialist views and tendencies. He explained his socialist inclinations were rather the result than the purpose of writing *The Road*:

I learn that it was in order to study sociology that I became a tramp. This is very nice and thoughtful of the biographers, but it is inaccurate. I became a tramp—well, because of the life that was in me, of the wanderlust in my blood that would not let me rest.⁸⁵

Although born into a working-class family, London lived quite a rich life in terms of his experiences. It was London's lust for adventure that brought him inspiration for most of his writing. His famous novels such as *White Fang* (1906) and *Into the Wild* (1903) or a short story called "To Build a Fire" (1908) are all based on his adventures in the North when searching for gold in Klondike. Similarly, *The Sea-Wolf* (1904) stories were based on London's sailing experiences and voyages in the Pacific. Likewise, his experiences of being a tramp led to the birth of *The Road*.

George Orwell, on the other hand, was born into and raised by a middle-class family. The motives for writing his memoir *Down and Out in Paris and London* were quite the opposite from London's. Due to the rising class-consciousness in the 1930s, Orwell, along with other British middle and upper-class writers of his generation, started to explore the lives of the working-class people, which Valentine Cunningham calls metaphorically "going over."⁸⁶ Having worked as an Indian Imperial Police officer in Burma, Orwell was left with a sense of guilt for assisting the creation of the imperial colonies while knowing the conditions of the poor usurped native people: "I was conscious of an immense weight of guilt that I had got to expiate."⁸⁷ To relieve the burden of his guilt, he decided to speak for the rights of the oppressed in his own country. This was done through the documentation of his sociological investigations of the living conditions among the working class and underclass in Britain: "I

⁸⁵ London, "Road-kids and Gay-cats," in *The Road*, 120.

⁸⁶ Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 241.

⁸⁷ George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958), 180.

wanted to submerge myself, to get right down among the oppressed, to be one of them and on their side against their tyrants. And, chiefly because I had had to.”⁸⁸

3.1 The Portrayal of the American Tramp

London’s act of entering the tramp communities was with no doubt a matter of choice; it was a way of escaping the restraints of society, including the denial of social conventions. With reference to the previous chapter, London’s main driving force behind becoming part of the American tramp counterculture stemmed from the frustration with the unfulfilled promises of the American dream, as the core values of the ideal only contributed to further exploitation of the working class.

There was an essential factor that was very specific of the American tramp culture in general.⁸⁹ In his essay “The Tramp and the Railroads,” an American sociologist Josiah Flynt includes two illustrations: the American tramp sitting in a freight car and the British tramp traveling on foot, in order to contrast their typical modes of transport.⁹⁰ Thus, for the American tramp, freight hopping is represented as a vital cultural aspect, as well as the greatest cultural contrast between the two cultures.

Therefore, to satiate his wanderlust, London set on a journey with no destination, collecting humorous and picaresque anecdotes full of adventure and danger. London in general wrote in quite an optimistic and enthusiastic tone. Although he avoided colorful descriptions of the landscape, the notion of freedom of roaming the country and traveling vast distances across North America is obvious from his brief comments: “I chased clear across Canada over three thousand miles of railroad.”⁹¹ He further reflected upon America’s varied landscape, travelling across “those hundreds of miles of Nevada desert,”⁹² “the cold crests of the Sierras”⁹³ or “the sweet plains of Nebraska,”⁹⁴ while showing his fascination by “wonder-vision of down-rushing water”⁹⁵ of Niagara Falls and other natural wonders of America. Excited by the constant unpredictability of the life on the road, London creates a portrayal of a romantic vagrant – an explorer, wanderer, outcast, and adventurer:

I lay on my back with a newspaper under my head for a pillow. Above me the stars were winking and wheeling in squadrons back and forth as the train rounded the

⁸⁸ Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, 180.

⁸⁹ Cresswell, *The Tramp in America*, 23.

⁹⁰ Josiah Flynt, “The Tramp and the Railroads,” *Century Illustrated Magazine*, 58 (1899): 259.

⁹¹ London, “Hoboes That Pass In the Night,” in *The Road*, 99.

⁹² London, “Hoboes That Pass In the Night,” in *The Road*, 104.

⁹³ London, “Hoboes That Pass In the Night,” in *The Road*, 116.

⁹⁴ London, “Hoboes That Pass In the Night,” in *The Road*, 116.

⁹⁵ London, “Pinched,” *The Road*, 67.

curves, and watching them I fell asleep. The day was done—one day of all my days. To-morrow would be another day, and I was young.⁹⁶

This romantic tinge is, however, only one aspect of the American tramp culture. As London's character of the tramp perceived the working class as the slaves of society, his main aim was to differentiate his lifestyle from the ideals of the mainstream culture as much as possible. A tramp portrayed by London was, therefore, driven from the order, discipline and monotonousness of the mainstream culture towards the captivating beauty of wilderness, roughness and primitivism of nature. This led to the creation of the tramp counterculture.

The tramp counterculture was a response to the continuous waves of immigration throughout the nineteenth century and the loss of masculinity in the over-civilized society. Todd DePastino describes this new adaptation of the hobo counterculture that thrived in and expanded from the West:

While the bourgeois West offered individual escape and regeneration from an East plagued by immigration, feminism, and corporate domination, the West of hobo folklore provided a uniquely masculine environment for the collective expression of revolutionary class power.⁹⁷

Furthermore, on account of the American tramp, DePastino wrote that “the privileges of mobility that hobohemia drew upon and fostered accrued almost exclusively to white men.”⁹⁸ Thus, the groups that represented the American tramp counterculture are depicted as merely ethnically homogeneous. London's portrayal of the American tramp and the tramp community corresponds with DePastino's description of the typical American tramp. The cause for racial exclusion lay in the need to differentiate oneself from the incoming masses of immigrants, in order to claim the right to rule the established underworld: “And be it known, here and now, that the profesh are the aristocracy of The Road. They are the lords and masters, the aggressive men, the primordial noblemen, the *blond beasts* so beloved of Nietzsche [emphasis in original].”⁹⁹ The thought of racial supremacy is implied in the term “blond beast,” which Nietzsche used in his work *On Genealogy of Morals*. The meaning of the symbolic “blond beast” is rather controversial, seemingly referring to a lion, a predator, and also an embodiment supremacy and power described as inherent rather than evil.¹⁰⁰ Applied on human behavior, it refers to a biological, and therefore natural, urge of a race to become the privileged one, as Nietzsche describes in his work:

⁹⁶ London, “Pinched,” *The Road*, 66.

⁹⁷ DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*, 118.

⁹⁸ DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*, 81.

⁹⁹ London, “Road-Kids and Gay-Cats,” in *The Road*, 133.

¹⁰⁰ Stephen Hicks, “On the ‘Blond Beast’ and Racism,” accessed May 28, 2016, <http://www.stephenhicks.org/2010/01/24/on-the-blond-beast-and-racism/>.

One cannot fail to see at the bottom of all these noble races the beast of prey, the splendid blond beast, prowling about avidly in search of spoil and victory; this hidden core needs to erupt from time to time, the animal has to get out again and go back to the wilderness: the Roman, Arabian, Germanic, Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings--they all shared this need.¹⁰¹

Being of Anglo-Saxon origin, London perceived the racial supremacy from a biological perspective, i.e. as a result of a natural selection. This belief is not fully expressed in the memoir. However, it is traceable in one of his personal letters from June 1899:

Anglo-Saxon stands for the English speaking portion of the Teutonic branch. That the Teutonic is the dominant race of the world there is no question. [...] The negro races, the mongrel races, the slavish races, the unprogressive races, are of bad blood — that is, of blood which is not qualified to permit them to successfully survive the selection by which the fittest survive, and which the next few centuries, in my opinion, will see terribly intensified.¹⁰²

London's description of the tramp communities shows that there was also a hierarchy among tramps. The long-term tramps that had fully adapted to the life on the road and had learned all the rules and skills necessary to survive, gained the admirable title of the "profesh," while the term "gay-cats" was used in a tramp vernacular to refer to the amateurs on the road. The pride of becoming a tramp is also manifested through the test of an individual's potential: "No kid is a road-kid until he has gone over 'the hill'—such was the law of The Road I heard expounded in Sacramento. All right, I'd go over the hill and matriculate. 'The hill,' by the way, was the Sierra Nevadas."¹⁰³ London described himself as an epitome of the master of the road: "I acquired the unmistakable airs and ear-marks of the blowed-in-the-glass profesh."¹⁰⁴

The reason of the absence of women among the American tramp communities is tightly connected with their position in the society. Put in the larger picture, there was an ideology known as the "Cult of Domesticity," the beliefs about gender roles in the nineteenth century America, as a response to the call for preservation of the old traditional values and lifestyle. The domain of a woman was therefore at home, and her main task was to create a balance between work and family. In that spirit, a woman was the bearer of the traditional civilized bourgeoisie values, a symbol of domesticity and rootedness. Her role was, therefore, also to encourage the working morals of men as the breadwinners of the family. The true

¹⁰¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, transl. Carol Diethe, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 23.

¹⁰² Jack London, *The Letters of Jack London: Volume 3, 1913-1916*, ed. by Earle Labor, Robert C. Leitz III, and I. Milo Shepard, (California: Stanford University Press), 1988, 87.

¹⁰³ London, "Road-Kids and Gay-Cats," in *The Road*, 125.

¹⁰⁴ London, "Road-Kids and Gay-Cats", in *The Road*, 133.

woman was supposed to cultivate four characteristics: piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness.¹⁰⁵ Taking this into account, a woman was an embodiment of everything that the tramp counterculture despised and opposed. DePastino agrees that “young hoboes in the thrall of hobohemia saw domesticity as a threat to their ‘manly’ independence.” For the tramp, women were perceived as “sources of charity or sex.”¹⁰⁶ In *The Road*, London mentions women merely in the role of charity. The best example is a woman in Reno, who gave him food and clothes. London even accentuated her maternal affection: “She mothered [her son] with her voice, with an ineffable tenderness in it that I yearned to appropriate.”¹⁰⁷

London expresses his lust for power, freedom and individuality by any means using Milton’s famous quote: “At that time I had not read ‘Paradise Lost,’ and later, when I read Milton’s ‘Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven,’ I was fully convinced that great minds run in the same channels.”¹⁰⁸ A tramp portrayed by London denied the working morals, as the sense of freedom and individuality would be restrained by hard work, long working hours and low wage. He would search for work only in critical cases, or when forced by law. He thus denied the role of the breadwinner. For London’s tramp, escaping domesticity meant escaping the working-class exploitation.

There is a noticeable duality in London’s opinions, as the author focuses both on the social issues and the freedom and individuality connected with the nomadic lifestyle. Leaving the world of restraints, poverty and monotony, London’s transformation strongly resembles his naturalistic works such as *The Call of the Wild*, where the protagonist Buck fully embraces the philosophy of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection and Herbert Spencer’s “survival of the fittest.”¹⁰⁹ Therefore, the driving force behind the tramp’s acts was not only the need to survive, but also the lust to dominate. Through this notion, London justifies his denial of the socially constructed laws and morality during the process of adaptation to the tramp lifestyle.

Thus, living out of the reach of domesticity and corporal masters, London adjusted the elusive American dream to his newly acquired lifestyle. Masculinity, strength, individuality and absence of morality were necessary when one wanted to gain freedom and a dominant

¹⁰⁵ Catherine Lavender, "Notes on The Cult of Domesticity and True Womanhood," (New York: The College of Staten Island), accessed May 28, 2016, 1-2, <https://csivc.csi.cuny.edu/history/files/lavender/386/truewoman.pdf>.

¹⁰⁶ DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*, 84.

¹⁰⁷ London, “Confession,” in *The Road*, 26.

¹⁰⁸ London, “Road-Kids and Gay-Cats,” in *The Road*, 120.

¹⁰⁹ Samuel J Umland, *CliffsNotes on London's The Call of the Wild & White Fang*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1982), 52.

position. He manifests his influences through the illustration of a group of tramps using a 'wolf pack' as a metaphor referring to their aggressive animosity and brutality:

Road-kids are nice little chaps—when you get them alone and they are telling you “how it happened”; but take my word for it, watch out for them when they run in pack. Then they are wolves, and like wolves they are capable of dragging down the strongest man. [...] More than once have I seen them do it, and I know whereof I speak. Their motive is usually robbery.¹¹⁰

London's tramp is portrayed as a lawless and predatory nomad preying even among his class: “‘Bindle-stiffs’ [working tramps] are favorite prey of the road-kids.”¹¹¹ With regard to the roughness of the tramp culture, a good physical condition of the American tramp was a necessity. London describes his first encounter with hoboes “I ‘lined’ myself up alongside those road-kids. I was just as strong as any of them, just as quick, just as nervy, and my brain was just as good.”¹¹²

Furthermore, having depicted the loss of morality and, also, the absence of shame in his encounters with the dominant culture, London's character shares some features with a literary character of *picaro*: “Unlike the idealistic knight-errant hero, however, the *picaro* is a cynical and amoral rascal who, if given half a chance, would rather live by his wits than by honourable work.”¹¹³ London the ‘profesh,’ parasitizes on society as a real-life roguish hero, who is willing to lie, steal or beg from necessity, but also for entertainment. For example, having lost his hat in a fight, he decides to steal a hat straight from the head of a Chinese passerby:

I lifted the hat from the Chinaman's head and pulled it down on my own. It was a perfect fit. Then I started. I heard Bob crying out, and I caught a glimpse of him blocking the irate Mongolian and tripping him up. I ran on. I turned up the next corner, and around the next. This street was not so crowded as K, and I walked along in quietude, catching my breath and congratulating myself upon my hat and my get-away.¹¹⁴

For London, begging was a sign of weakness at first. To protect his ideal of masculinity, he took advantage of the anonymity that tramp life offered and created stories of his unfortunate life events: “I developed in the days to come all right, all right, till I came to look upon begging as a joyous prank, a game of wits, a nerve-exerciser.”¹¹⁵ To justify his immoral

¹¹⁰ London, “Road-Kids and Gay-Cats,” in *The Road*, 129.

¹¹¹ London, “Road-Kids and Gay-Cats,” in *The Road*, 132.

¹¹² London, “Road-Kids and Gay-Cats,” in *The Road*, 124.

¹¹³ “picaresque novel,” Encyclopædia Britannica Online, accessed June 1, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/art/picaresque-novel>.

¹¹⁴ London, “Road-Kids and Gay-Cats,” in *The Road*, 129.

¹¹⁵ London, “Road-Kids and Gay-Cats,” in *The Road*, 125.

and lawless acts as a tramp, he claims the right to benefit from the middle and upper classes, as in the same way he was being exploited as a former member of the workers by them:

And right well I scratched their soft palms with the callous on my own palms—the half-inch horn that comes of pull-and-haul of rope and long and arduous hours of caressing shovel-handles. This I did, not merely in the braggadocio of youth, but to prove, by toil performed, the claim I had upon their charity.¹¹⁶

Seeing from the bottom up, he encountered various examples of moral hypocrisy. Asking for food at the back-door of a middle-class man's house, his proposal is refused while hearing the typical preconceived opinion: "I can see it in your face. I have worked and been honest. I have made myself what I am. And you can do the same, if you work and are honest." London outwitted the man, swiftly realizing that there always has to be someone to do the hard work: "'But if we all became like you,' I said, 'allow me to point out that there'd be nobody to toss bricks for you.'"¹¹⁷

A great attention was also paid to "riding the rails," and the cat-and-mouse game between the roguish tramp and the train staff. In the chapter "Holding her down," London celebrates his victory over the train staff, who were trying to 'ditch' him: "No Croesus was ever prouder of his first million. I was holding her down in spite of two brakemen, a conductor, a fireman, and an engineer."¹¹⁸

3.2 The Portrayal of the British Tramp

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the British society was still strictly layered. Due to the rooted tradition of the rigid class system, there was no promise of such an opportunity as in the US to rise from "rags to riches." What was more, once an individual had become a tramp, it was hard to climb the social ladder due to the intolerance and harshness of the British laws aimed at vagrants. With reference to the second chapter, Orwell clearly demonstrated that becoming a tramp in Britain was not a matter of choice, but rather a matter of chance. Therefore, the portrayal of the British tramp is closely related to the second chapter, which focuses on the analysis of the influence and the outcome of the measures that were aimed to institutionalize the roving masses of tramps.

The overall gloomy and pessimistic mood of his memoir indicates the absence of the romantic tinge present in *The Road*; the memoir is rather closer to the tradition of social realism, as the social aspect the tramp culture is the most prominent. The life of the British

¹¹⁶ London, "Pictures," in *The Road*, 56.

¹¹⁷ London, "Confession," in *The Road*, 20.

¹¹⁸ London, "Holding Her Down," in *The Road*, 38.

tramp is based on monotony, restrictions and orders, and a constant lack of basic needs: “You discover the boredom which is inseparable from poverty; the times when you have nothing to do and, being underfed, can interest yourself in nothing.”¹¹⁹ Based on Orwell’s viewpoint, the British tramp culture was to a large extent influenced and determined by the British laws and society as such. Orwell argued that the values and principles of the British tramps were not in conflict with the values held by the general public. Thus, Orwell portrays the British tramp as a social outcast, who is well aware of and concerned with his position in society. Consequently, the typical British tramp, according to Orwell, was not a parasite, but rather a victim of society. Among others, Orwell mentions the story of Bozo, a former house-painter who lost his French fiancée in a car accident, and after a week of drowning his sorrows he got back to work and “the same morning he fell from a stage on which he was working, forty feet on to the pavement, and smashed his right foot to pulp.” Having received little compensation, and after series of struggles to find a job, he lost his money finding himself finally in London’s underbelly as a crippled “screever” (a pavement artist).¹²⁰

While the American tramp depicted in *The Road* refuses to live in constraints of the majority of society, the British tramp does not share the same view. It was presumably due to the rooted tradition of the rigid class system, together with the absence of any promise of change such as was symbolized through the American dream in The US culture. With regard to his refusal of the typical view of a tramp as a malicious idler, Orwell implied that there was a sense of morality in the British tramps. For example, he observed that, even though undernourished, the majority of tramps did not turn to begging, which was outlawed.

The casual ward gives them a ration which is probably not even meant to be sufficient, and anything beyond this must be got by begging—that is, by breaking the law. The result is that nearly every tramp is rotted by malnutrition; for proof of which one need only look at the men lining up outside any casual ward.¹²¹

The nature and behavior of the British tramp was not perceived as something natural to the person, but rather as an outcome of the process of degradation and constant undernourishment causing that such a person showed lack of courage, determination, strength, individuality, the traits that were especially important for men, for their association with masculinity: “It was malnutrition and not any native vice that had destroyed his manhood.”¹²²

¹¹⁹ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 15.

¹²⁰ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 167.

¹²¹ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 241.

¹²² Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 154.

With reference to the second chapter, the tramp is pictured as slowly physically deteriorating. Due to malnutrition, various health issues and sleep deficiency, he loses his strength:

To see him as he really is, unmitigated, you must see him naked. Flat feet, pot bellies, hollow chests, sagging muscles—every kind of physical rottenness was there. Nearly everyone was under-nourished, and some clearly diseased; two men were wearing trusses, and as for the old mummy-like creature of seventy-five, one wondered how he could possibly make his daily march. Looking at our faces, unshaven and creased from the sleepless night, you would have thought that all of us were recovering from a week on the drink.¹²³

Orwell observed that the typical British vagrant was rather obedient and submissive. Encountering several tramps himself, he presents Paddy, an Irish unskilled worker, who lost his job two years ago and accompanied Orwell for several days, as an epitome of the British tramp: “there are tens of thousands in England like him.”¹²⁴ Orwell describes Paddy as broken, self-pitying, uneducated, yet generous and good by nature, adding that he had “the regular character of a tramp—abject, envious, a jackal’s character.”¹²⁵ Presenting Paddy as the archetype of a tramp, Orwell comments on his submissive nature: “he would sooner take a blow than give one.”¹²⁶ Not only the individuals, but also larger groups of tramps are rather depicted as a mass of destitute and submissive poor:

A casual ward will often admit a hundred tramps in one night, and these are handled by a staff of at most three porters. A hundred ruffians could not be controlled by three unarmed men. Indeed, when one sees how tramps let themselves be bullied by the workhouse officials, it is obvious that they are the most docile, broken-spirited creatures imaginable.¹²⁷

A prominent theme in Orwell’s memoir is shame and loss of self-respect. This is tightly connected with a tramp’s perception of the absence of work and the necessity of turning to charity. The main source of Paddy’s envy was contradictory to what the general public at that time would expect: “And he had a low, worm-like envy [...] of men in work. He pined for work as an artist pines to be famous.”¹²⁸ Orwell believed that the absence of work not only affected the physical condition of the tramp, but that it also had a very negative impact on their mental state: “there is no doubt about the deadening, debilitating effect of unemployment upon everybody.”¹²⁹ He stressed the importance of work in the life of the British uneducated

¹²³ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 148-149.

¹²⁴ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 151.

¹²⁵ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 154.

¹²⁶ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 148-149.

¹²⁷ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 204.

¹²⁸ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 153.

¹²⁹ Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, 81.

worker; the absence of labor equaled the lack of purpose, which only deepened his sense of unworthiness:

People are wrong when they think that an unemployed man only worries about losing his wages; on the contrary, an illiterate man, with the work habit in his bones, needs work even more than he needs money. An educated man can put up with enforced idleness, which is one of the worst evils of poverty. But a man like Paddy, with no means of filling up time, is as miserable out of work as a dog on the chain.

The British tramp was fully aware that the dependence on the state and charity was against the notion of self-reliance. Therefore receiving charity was perceived with rage: “a man receiving charity practically hates his benefactor – it is a fixed characteristic of human nature,” and humiliation, as the tramp had no other choice than to receive charity with a “worm-like gratitude”¹³⁰ in order to survive.

As for the tramp communities, Orwell describes the tramp culture as egalitarian with no signs of hierarchy. He implies that once one belonged among the underclass, they also got below the level of any social constructs; a tramp found himself in the underground of the society, where one’s roots or former identity were no longer important. Racism, therefore, dissolves in a tramp community:

All races, even black and white, mixed in [the lodging-house] on terms of equality. There were Indians there, and when I spoke to one of them in bad Urdu he addressed me as ‘tum’ – a thing to make one shudder, if it had been in India. We had got below the range of colour prejudice.¹³¹

For clarity of the excerpt, the pronoun *tum* is used in Hindustani to address a very close friend. Orwell further demonstrates how the former social background of one had no longer any value once slipping down the social ladder: “[...] and I dared not to speak to anyone, imagining that they must notice a disparity between my accent and my clothes. (Later I discovered that this never happened).”¹³² During his stay at a Salvation Army shelter Orwell ascertains, that also middle-class people were to be found among underclass: “There is such hopelessness about some of the people there—decent, broken-down types who have pawned their collars but are still trying for office jobs.”¹³³

Although Orwell noticed that, apart from former laborers, there were different minorities of tramps like idlers, smugglers, etc., and conflicts among individuals, there is no mention of any social interaction that would indicate any existence of social hierarchy among

¹³⁰ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 154.

¹³¹ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 170.

¹³² Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 130.

¹³³ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 157.

tramps and tramp groups. The absence of hierarchy again betokens not only a rather submissive nature of the British tramp. On the

The majority of tramps depicted in the memoirs were men, which indicated that women were scarcely found among tramp communities. Therefore, a question of the cause and effect of gender imbalance arises. The reasons of the absence of women in tramp communities were quite contrastive according to the authors. Orwell ascribed the cause of this phenomenon to the tendency of women to leave their partner and attach themselves to more successful men in order to escape the underbelly of society.¹³⁴ This indicated that tramps were forced to live in celibacy or forced homosexuality. Orwell considered the perpetual celibacy one of the most physically and psychologically degrading aspects: “Cut off from the whole race of women, a tramp feels himself degraded to the rank of a cripple or a lunatic. No humiliation could do more damage to a man’s self-respect.”¹³⁵ Moreover, they perceived themselves as men who failed at their role of family breadwinners: “But deeper than these there is the degradation worked in a man who knows that he is not even considered fit for marriage.”¹³⁶

Unlike London, Orwell fully embraced the socialist view. He concentrated on the importance of altruism, sympathy and compassion present in the tramp culture. The absence of money, possessions or social classes seemed to be a connecting aspect among the poor. Orwell observes the solidarity among tramps during his stay at the lodging-house in Pennyfields: “There was a general sharing of food, and it was taken for granted to feed men who were out of work.”¹³⁷ And this did count for the ill too: “A little pale, wizened creature, obviously dying, referred to as ‘pore Brown, bin under the doctor and cut open three times’, was regularly fed by the others.”¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 206.

¹³⁵ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 207.

¹³⁶ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 206.

¹³⁷ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 135.

¹³⁸ Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 135.

Conclusion

Having the opportunity to observe the society from the bottom up, the authors noticed various injustices towards the tramp communities. Both Orwell and London question the nature of the legal measures aimed at solving the tramp issue. Therefore, in both memoirs, the consequences of the aspects of the vagrancy laws became the subject of relentless criticism. First, the choice of repressive and punitive nature of the vagrancy laws over the preventive one is by the authors perceived as highly ineffective, even contra-productive. Second, the memoirs explicitly or implicitly express the criticism of the breadth and vagueness of the vagrancy laws.

Orwell perceives the failure to find the balance between the need of charity and the social order as an outcome of the application of several vagrancy laws, such as the Poor Law of 1824, which led to the prohibition of any manifestation of homelessness in public. Thus, the poor were forced to apply for relief in casual wards. Due to the overnight admission to a casual ward once a month, the poorest individuals were forced to travel long distances every day to another casual ward. He further criticizes the Poor Law of 1834, which incorporated the “less eligibility” principle, originally intended to repel the idle individuals from applying for relief. In effect, the paupers suffered with undernourishment, sleep deprivation and overall poor health. Therefore, the combination of the above mentioned precautions, which were originally intended to reduce the numbers of the roaming homeless, ironically, led to the creation of a vicious circle of a constant lack of basic needs. This prevented tramps from finding a job, which was the only chance to escape the tramp lifestyle.

Based on London’s tramp tales present in *The Road*, the punitive nature of the measures aimed at homelessness was even more straightforward such as imprisonment or hard labor. London, as well as Orwell, questions the real outcome of the legal efforts to eradicate the tramp problem. The penal servitude was only seen as an aspect of oppression and enslavement rather than a corrective measure. This, ironically, resulted in decrease of the motivation of tramps to reenter society and to adapt to the lifestyle of the majority. In the same way the British workhouses reproduced the very vices they were supposed to erase, the Erie County Penitentiary flourishing with illicit practices like bribery, graft, underground black market and violence only encouraged the prisoners to further practice criminal activities.

They also reflect on the negative outcome of the breadth and vagueness of the vagrancy laws which encouraged considerable discretionary powers to state institutions. This,

in effect, led to severe oppression of tramps and a variety of restrictions of their fundamental freedoms from the side of courts, police, workhouses and other institutions involved in solving the tramp issue. Such disrespect led to further degradation and dehumanization of the tramp. In both accounts it is possible to find instances where, ironically, various institutions or individuals abused their power and subsequently victimized and parasitized on the tramps, exploited their benefits and violated their basic rights. The implication is that all the steps aimed to solve the tramp issue were not in order to fight against the poverty, but rather to fight against the poor.

Based on this conviction, the authors searched for the hidden driving force behind the uneven treatment of the poor. The influence of a life in poverty had one particular effect on both authors—they became advocates of socialism as a result of their strong opposition towards capitalism. This leads to deduction that their answer to the driving force lay in the prevailing economic system.

The authors undermined the assumptions towards the working class that the poor were inherently idle, immoral and prone to criminality. They illustrate that the real motives of such deviations were not intrinsic, but rather caused by external factors such as constant exploitation, poverty and social inequality. Their observations and experience correspond with the Marxist principle of ‘base and superstructure’—the idea that the economic system determines the nonmaterial aspects of a society. Gramsci uses a term “cultural hegemony,” which refers specifically to the act of the manipulation with the beliefs and values of a society by the ruling class. The implication, therefore, is that the high levels of crime and unemployment were seen by the general public as a result of the working-class deviations, in order to cover the real causes stemming from the contradictions of the capitalist system.

In the context of the oppressive character of the vagrancy laws, the speculations arise over the breadth of the influence of capitalism on the superstructure. Marx claims that the relative surplus-population, including tramps, is an important aspect in the capitalist society, as it allows the competition for employment and therefore the possibility of reducing wages, which is, beyond dispute, a beneficial factor for the bourgeoisie. Yet, if unrestrained, such population posed a threat to the possession and dominant position of the capitalist class by means of criminal behavior or riots. The fact that there was a great prominence given to the creation of property rights over human rights supports Richard Quinney’s argument that due to the ideological control over the superstructure, the legal system was one of the key tools of protection of the capitalist class’ interests. Both Orwell and London explicitly and implicitly express the opinion that the dehumanizing vagrancy laws were created to protect the

possession and interests of the ruling class. This does not only include the process of law creation, but also the process of law enforcement. In his satirical portrayal of the capitalist society through the corrupted system in Erie County Penitentiary, London not only applies Marx's Theory of exploitation, but ironically implies that while the street crime is severely punished, the very exploitation, among other white-collar crimes, remains unnoticed. Throughout the memoirs the authors furthermore illustrate the negative impact of the capitalist values on morality of society, where profit wins over humanity. The examples are among others the denial of the owners to improve the lodging-houses for the poor, the existence of child labor, or fees granted to police officers for hunting of tramps. It can be also concluded that the primary aim to preserve the prevailing economic system of the vagrancy laws has not changed since the feudalist period with the exception that this time it was under pretence of serving the common good.

Based on the distinctive social and cultural backgrounds of the authors, the memoirs offer two different portrayals of the tramp lifestyle and culture. *The Road* offers a romantic perspective on the life of a tramp, a celebration of the open road. This romantic tinge—the unpredictability of the life on the road, danger, wanderlust and freedom of movement was even accentuated due to the option of “train hopping” and therefore roaming the vast distances across the diverse landscapes of North America. Train hopping is represented as a vital and distinctive cultural aspect which is absent in the British tramp culture. According to London, becoming a tramp was a way to escape from the chains of social conventions of the mainstream culture and the denial of the middle-class values, morals, and monotony exploitation of the working-class life.

Orwell, on the other hand, follows the literary tradition of social realism concentrating mainly on the social purpose of the memoir. In contrast with the lifestyle of the American tramp, the life of the British tramp is based on monotony, restrictions, measures, and a constant lack of basic needs. He believed that the tramp culture in Britain was neither triggered intrinsically by a lust for adventure nor any nomadic tendencies, but rather due to the socioeconomic circumstances and various repressive measures aimed at tramps. While the American tramp finds his shelter in nature, the British tramp is fully institutionalized through the systems of workhouses and charities. He is caught inside of the rigid class-ridden society, while constantly degrading. Therefore, while movement, the crucial aspect of the tramp lifestyle, is presented on one side of the Atlantic Ocean as an act of free will, it is seen as an involuntary act on the other.

The great divide between the cultures lies in the contrastive approaches towards the traditional values. The memoirs, therefore, offer two diametrically opposed portrayals of the tramp cultures. *The Road* can be perceived as an adjusted alternative to the elusive American dream. The tramp lifestyle offered a sense of freedom, self-reliance, but also adventure, the aspects seemingly unreachable in the safety of restraints of the over-civilized majority of society. Being no longer bound to the chains of society, London incorporates his philosophy based on Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection and Herbert Spencer's "survival of the fittest," which is present in many of his literary works and brings the aspects of masculinity and brutality, which are necessary for survival in nature. In his encounters with the dominant culture, London's tramp is portrayed as a roguish hero, who parasites on society, is willing to lie, steal or beg and "ride the rails" to maintain his dominant position. His previous years of exploitation by the ruling class served him as a justification for such outlawed practices.

Unlike the American tramps, Orwell observed that the majority of the British vagrants maintained a sense of morality. He noticed that, even though undernourished, the British tramps usually did not turn to outlawed activities with respect to the dominant culture. Another contrastive aspect is the loss of masculinity. In comparison to London's celebration of strength, individualism and courage, the nature of the British tramp is rather described as submissive and obedient. Orwell ascribed this behavior to the outcome the physical and psychological degradation. The most prominent theme in Orwell's tramp account is a loss of self-respect. According to Orwell, the reason was mainly due to the incapability of being self-reliant due to the absence of work and the necessity of turning to charity. While London perceives work as equal to slavery, Orwell believes that the absence of work in the life of an uneducated worker is devastating for his self-esteem, as it equaled the lack of purpose for an illiterate person. A tramp painfully realizes that he failed to fulfill his role of a family breadwinner and a contributor to his community. The loss of his respectable position in society resulted in the alienation from the rest of the society.

According to the memoirs, there were some major differences between the two cultures in terms of ethnicity, social structure and former class belonging. Yet, in terms of gender, the female counterpart of the tramp was almost or fully absent in both works. The above aspects between the British and American tramp communities serve to demonstrate the contrastive perception of their culture. In terms of ethnicity and social structure, the British tramp minority is described merely as egalitarian. Orwell implied that once one belonged among the underclass, they also got below the level of any social constructs; a tramp found

himself in the underground of the society, where one's former life is devalued, and therefore his roots or former identity is no longer important. The absence of hierarchy among tramps again indicates the submissive nature of the British tramp.

London, on the contrary, considered entering the American tramp community an escape out of the boundaries of the dominant culture. His description of the "road-kids" using Nietzschean terminology implies a racial exclusivity of the white male to rule the tramp underworld. Moreover, London portrays the structure of the tramp society as hierarchical, based primarily on their level of mastering of the survival skills and the adaptation to the life on the road. The honorability of the title 'profesh', which was used to address the most skilled members, is another indicator of London's pride and glorification of the tramp lifestyle.

According to the authors, the reason and effect of the absence of women in both tramp countercultures again shows another contrast resulting from the different approaches toward the dominant values. Women were scarcely found among the British tramp communities, for they often managed to escape poverty. This was a painful aspect, as the absence of women among the communities rather led to the tramps' involuntary celibacy and, moreover, to the realization of their separation from the traditional family life. This only led to further feelings of humiliation and loss of self-respect. For the American tramp, the situation was quite different. A woman was excluded from the tramp communities, for she represented a symbol of domesticity, submissiveness, work ethic and other aspects corresponding with the middle-class values that tramps despised. In *The Road*, a woman is merely depicted as a source of charity.

Therefore, while the British tramps were operating on the basis of equality without any racial or gender prejudice, the members of the American tramp communities saw such membership as a natural exclusive right that belonged only to the male working-class Anglo-saxon descendants.

Embracing the lifestyle of the American tramp, there is an obvious duality between London's advocacy of socialism and his strive for individualism and dominance. In this respect, Orwell's acts and beliefs remain consistent. In comparison with the individuality, brutality and bravery of London's American tramp, Orwell emphasizes the presence of unity, altruism and sense of compassion for the weak among the tramps.

5 Resumé

Tato práce se zaměřuje na rozdíly a podobnosti mezi zobrazením britských a amerických tuláků a tulácké minority, zejména z hlediska kulturního a sociálního, v memoárech *Na dně v Paříži a Londýně* (1933) autora George Orwella a *Cesta* (1907), autora Jacka Londona. Ačkoliv Londonovo dílo vykresluje americkou tuláckou minoritu na přelomu devatenáctého a dvacátého století, zatímco Orwell vystihuje život britských tuláků ve dvacátých letech dvacátého století, povaha děl značí, že se kulturní vývoj a postoj společnosti a systému vůči tulákům výrazně nezměnil.

Práce je rozdělena na tři kapitoly, z nichž první dokládá historický, sociální a kulturní kontext, který hrál důležitou roli při vzniku a formování tulácké minority. Druhá kapitola následně zkoumá a porovnává pohledy autorů na vlivy majoritní společnosti a systému na tuláckou populaci a její kulturu, zatímco třetí kapitola se zaměřuje na dvě odlišná vykreslení tuláků a tulácké minority.

První kapitola začíná stručným popisem historických kontextů obou děl s důrazem na podobné rysy, které se projevují prohlubováním sociálních nerovností na pozadí ekonomické krize. Dále jsou v této kapitole zmíněny společné kulturní aspekty obou zemí v podobě kulturních hodnot, které vycházely z viktoriánského období na jedné straně, a z ideálu amerického snu na straně druhé. Naopak z hlediska sociálního v Británii stále panovalo rigidní sociální uspořádání společnosti, zatímco americká sociální struktura byla dle podstaty amerického snu založena na meritokracii. V neposlední řadě je prostor věnován stručnému popisu vnímání tuláků ze strany majoritní společnosti. Postava tuláka ve společnosti vyvolávala řadu emocí, ať již na základě obrazu poskytovanému médiu či osobních zkušeností. S ohledem na tradiční vyobrazení tuláků jakožto vykořeněných a statných mužů, společně s jejich narůstajícím počtem, mezi jinými emocemi, jako byl odpor či soucit, přirozeně panoval strach. Důležitým aspektem je také historický vývoj legálních kroků, které úzce korespondovaly s vnímáním postavy tuláka společností. První znaky legálních opatření, které se zaměřovaly na problematiku tuláků, jsou datovány již od čtrnáctého století, kdy v Anglii následkem morové epidemie došlo k nadbytku práce a naopak nedostatku pracovních sil, a tak k udržení feudálního systému bylo nutné učinit represivní opatření, která by nevolníky odradila od útěku od svých pánů. V roce 1601 byly následně zřízeny farní chudobince, které poskytovaly přístřeší tamním chudým a nemocným. Hlouběji je pozornost věnována dobovým zákonům, které se zaměřovaly na institucionalizování tulácké minority s důrazem na motivy jejich vydání. Mezi nejvýznamnější zákony patří tzv.

„Vagrancy Act of 1824”, který vedl ke kriminalizaci typického chování tuláků na veřejnosti včetně žebrání a spánku. Dalším významným zákonem byl tzv. „New Poor Law of 1834”. Hlavním účelem tohoto zákona bylo odradit bezdomovce schopné práce od využívání státních prostředků a motivovat je k opětovnému vstupu na pracovní trh. Tohoto cíle mělo být dosaženo pomocí zrušení státní podpory, a tudíž byla podpora k dispozici pouze v chudobincích. Dalším aspektem byl tzv. princip „snížené způsobilosti”, který stanovil, že životní podmínky v chudobinci nesmí být lepší než podmínky nejchudšího pracujícího jedince. Oddělenou součástí chudobinců potom tvořily tzv. noclehárny. Tyto noclehárny byly určeny pro jedince, kteří vyhledávali pouze krátkodobou podporu, případně kteří nebyli zdejší, a tudíž jim byl přístup do chudobince odepřen. Součástí pravidel pro využití noclehárny byla možnost přijetí pouze jednou v rámci jednoho měsíce, přičemž při porušení této podmínky hrozil žalář.

Druhá kapitola, jak již název „Tramps and Society“ napovídá, se soustředí převážně na vztah společnosti vůči tulákům. V úvodu kapitoly je vystižen specifický charakter zákonů zaměřených na problematiku tuláctví. Povaha těchto zákonů je zřetelným odrazem vnímání tuláctví majoritní společností. Je tedy zřejmé, že společnost na tuláctví nahlížela spíše jako na delikt pramenící z nedostatku či absence kázně nežli jako na důsledek vnějších okolností. Velmi charakteristickým rysem protituláckých zákonů dle profesora historie Tima Cresswella je jejich zaměření na potenciální hrozbu, kterou tulák představoval, spíše nežli na čin, který spáchal.

Tato kapitola je rozdělena na dvě části nazvané „Stigmatization and Criminalization of the Tramp“ a „Criticism of Capitalism“. První část se soustředí na hledání tematických spojníků ve vnímání a vykreslení vlivu a dopadu amerických a britských zákonů, které řešily problematiku tuláctví v obou memoárech. Tyto spojníky jsou založeny na specifických rysech těchto zákonů, kterými jsou výrazně kárný a represivní charakter a zároveň přílišná generalizace a vágnost legálního významu pojmu tuláctví. V první řadě obě díla utvrzují celkový negativní pohled na tuláckou minoritu, která byla do velké míry vnímána jako parazitující. V souvislosti s represivním a kárným charakterem zákonů oba autoři zpochybňují důsledky, které ze zavedení těchto zákonů měly plynout. Autoři tak činí vyobrazením reálného dopadu zákonů na život tuláka. Zákony proti tuláctví jsou v memoárech vykresleny jako krajně neefektivní či dokonce s protikladným výsledkem. Dle Orwella byl v důsledku zákona z roku 1824 tulák zcela vyčleněn ze společnosti. Možnost využití noclehárny pouze jednou měsíčně vedlo ke vzniku mas chudých, kteří se vydávali na celodenní pochody do dalších nejbližších zařízení tohoto typu. Dle Orwellova popisu se jednání a praktiky autorit se

v těchto institucích příliš nelišily od vězeňského standardu. Snaha zhoršit podmínky v těchto institucích, kde cílem bylo donutit tuláky zapojit se do řad produktivní společnosti, vytvořila armádu degradovaných jedinců, kteří trpěli nedostatkem základních potřeb. Jejich nemožnost konkurovat na trhu práce v důsledku celodenního pochodování a zbědovaného stavu tuláků uzavřela tento bludný kruh. Oproti Orwellovu dílu byly v Londonových vyprávěních restriktivní a opresivní snahy majority přímočařejší a charitativní instituce zde nahradilo vězení a tresty nucené práce, které měly spíše odrazující než nápravný účinek. Během svého měsíčního pobytu za mřížemi London popisuje vězení Erie County jako propast vyděděnců společnosti, kde paradoxně kriminalita bujela. Namísto morální nápravy se tak London přiučil násilí, podvodům, chodu černého trhu a dalším nezákonným praktikám. Autoři dále kritizovali přílišnou generalizaci legálního pojetí postavy tuláka, což vkládalo do rukou institucí nezávaznou moc, která se negativně promítla v podobě soudní korupce, brutality policejních složek, parazitování na podpoře určené pro tuláky a dalších aspektů, které vedly k celkové sociální degradaci tuláků. Konečným efektem byla dehumanizace postavy tuláka v důsledku konstantního porušování lidských práv ze strany majoritní společnosti.

Povaha těchto legálních kroků naznačuje, že snahy nebyly cíleny na boj proti chudobě, jakožto spíše na boj proti chudým. Právě tato myšlenka je rozvedena v druhé části kapitoly. Zkušenost autorů mezi tuláky měla na autory jeden společný efekt – oba se stali zastánci socialismu v důsledku silné opozice proti kapitalismu a vlivu tohoto systému na společnost. Na základě toho lze dedukovat, že jako hlavní hybnou sílu za utlačováním chudých autoři považovali právě převládající ekonomický systém. Cílem této části tedy bylo nalézt v dílech autorů společné znaky levicových myšlenek. Cíle bylo dosaženo nalezením a analýzou těchto znaků v kontextu marxistických teorií, které se do značné míry věnují zkoumání nedostatků a vnitřních rozporů kapitalistického systému. Analýza počíná vyobrazením dělnické třídy jakožto líných jedinců, kteří mají vrozený sklon k nemorálnímu chování a ke kriminalitě. Oba autoři naopak tyto zakořeněné předsudky vůči dělnické třídě vyvrací, a toto chování připisují jako důsledek chudoby, vykořisťování a výrazných sociálních nerovností. Zatímco Orwell vnímá násilí, alkoholismus a kriminalitu jako důsledek degradace lidskosti na animální instinkty, pro Londona byla důsledkem vykořisťování deziluze plynoucí z falešných slibů amerického snu, která ho přesvědčila o tom, že vykonáváním tvrdé práce je pouze blíže těm nejchudším vrstvám společnosti. Toto přesvědčení koresponduje s myšlenkou marxistických kriminologů, kteří tvrdí, že většina kriminálních deliktů je motivována socio-ekonomickými faktory. Jejich pozorování souvisí s Marxovým principem „základny a nadstavby“, kde základna představuje ekonomický systém, který do velké míry ovlivňuje

nadstavbu, termín, který zastřešuje veškeré nemateriální aspekty společnosti včetně kultury, legislativních procesů a dalších státních institucí. V užším slova smyslu je možné použít termínu „kulturní hegemonie“, jež popisuje jev manipulace s přesvědčením a hodnotami společnosti. Autoři svými výroky implikují, že vnímání příčin deviací dělnické třídy bylo pokrouceno ve snaze zakrýt kontradikce kapitalistického systému. Na základě Marxova výše zmíněného principu autoři dále implikují, že proces vytváření zákonů a proces vymáhání práva byly značně ovlivněny vládoucí třídou kapitalistů. Marx prohlásil, že k udržení kapitalismu je zapotřebí existence rezervní armády pracujících. Důkazem snah o udržení této armády a zároveň demonstrace moci kapitalistů je právě opresivní povaha zákonů zaměřených na tuláckou problematiku. Jako další důkaz autoři dále naznačují, že zatímco pouliční zločinnost byla tvrdě postihována, zločiny vládoucí třídy byly vnímány se značnou shovívavostí. Oba autoři implikují stejný názor, a to jest, že hodnoty společnosti v kapitalistickém světě jsou značně pokrouceny materiálním aspektem, a tudíž majetek a peníze vyhrávají nad morálkou a lidstvem. Zároveň lze implikovat, že se základní záměr těchto zákonů od svého prvopočátku příliš nezměnil, pouze byl oproti přímému výkladu feudálních protituláckých zákonů maskován pod záminkou obecného blaha společnosti.

Vzhledem k rozdílnému sociálnímu a kulturnímu původu Jacka Londona a George Orwella nabízí memoáry dvě odlišná zobrazení života a kultury tuláků. Třetí kapitola se tak soustředí převážně na rozdíly mezi vyobrazením britských a amerických tuláků ve zmiňovaných memoárech. Cílem této části byla komparativní analýza vyobrazení ve smyslu literární tradice, kulturní rozdílnosti, jejich přístupu vůči dominantní kultuře a vnímání tuláctví. Tato kapitola je rozdělena na dvě části, přičemž první se zabývá specifiky vyobrazení amerického tuláka a druhá se věnuje vyobrazení tuláka britského a zároveň je v této kapitole již prováděn kontrast. Jedním z nejnápadnějších rozdílů je odlišná atmosféra děl. Zatímco *Cesta* nabízí romantickou perspektivu na život tuláka, nepředvídatelné dobrodružství, útěk od civilizace s nádechem nebezpečí i svobody, *Na Dně v Paříži a v Londýně* ve tradici sociálního realismu čtenáře zavádí do pochmurného prostředí slumu londýnského East Endu. Jedním z nejvýraznějších kulturních aspektů byla možnost amerického tuláka přepravovat se na vlacích, která hrála významnou roli z pohledu romantického ztvárnění. Otázka svobody je v kontextu rozebíraných memoárů jedním z nejdůležitějších kontrastních prvků. Zatímco London vstoupil do tulácké komunity za účelem vyhnout se dalšímu vykořisťování dělnické třídy, konvencím a monotónnosti společnosti, Orwellův tulák je zobrazován výhradně jako oběť externích vlivů a jedinec, který byl ze společnosti násilně vyloučen. V otázce přístupu ke společnosti London odmítá veškeré hodnoty a morálku majority. London si vytváří vlastní

americký sen na základě amorality, maskulinity a brutality, kde plně aplikuje filozofii práva silnějšího. Vrací společnosti dluh a pro změnu parazituje on na ní po vzoru pikareskních románů. Orwellův tramp si naopak morálku ponechal. Stále uznává tradiční hodnoty, a tak je prakticky pravým opakem amerického tuláka – submisivní, slabý, a bojácný. Na rozdíl od Londona je jeho hlavním cílem znovuzачlenění do společnosti. Zatímco London vnímá práci jako otroctví, Orwell věří, že práce podstatně naplňuje smysl života jedince, který pochází z dělnické třídy.

Rozdíl tuláckých kultur je nejvýrazněji poukázán na složení jednotlivých tuláckých komunit, které se lišily v etnicitě a sociální struktuře a genderu. Orwell vnímá tuláckou komunitu jako egalitářskou, která se dostala mimo sociální konstrukty. London vnímá tuláckou komunitu naopak jako exklusivní privilegium bělochů dělnické třídy. Komunita nese výrazné znaky hierarchie. Ženy se v obou kulturách objevovaly velmi sporadicky či vůbec, což podle Orwella mělo za následek další degradaci tuláka, zatímco podle Londona byla žena pro svou roli nositelky tradičních hodnot vyloučena. Zatímco v Londonově pojetí vzniká rozpor v jeho socialistických postojích, Orwellovo pojetí zůstává věrné socialistickým ideálům a zdůrazňuje přítomnost jednoty a altruismu.

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