CHAPTER - III

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The themes both, in the popular sense of subject and the central themes, reflecting the author's vision of life, need to be considered. The dominating theme, in Jack London's writing was, struggle - the struggle of the individual, to survive in a hostile environment, or to be successful against heavy odds. In his social works, it was also the bloody struggle of the workers, against the capitalist class.

1

According to Gower, "The central theme which provides major attraction, in London's writing, is the concept that all life is a battle, that action, struggle, conflict, are the essence of life. Much of London's attraction, to immense audience, lies in his view of life as a constant struggle - for survival, for dominance, for social reform. It is this concept, that gives his writings its vitality and dramatic appeal."

2

Winsor comments, "From the bitterness of early poverty, he came to see life, in terms of man's unending struggle, against a ruthless environment."

3

According to McClintock, "The encounter
of limited man, with a mysterious cosmos, an encounter which defies the limit of rationality, is the major theme, of London's best fiction."

Commenting on his social works, 4 Foner writes, "Themes of hatred of oppression and the vision of a society which would abolish profit, exploitation and inequality, recur in his novels, stories and essays." Jack London deals with the major themes of the sagas: primitivism, atavism, ameliorative evolutionism, brotherhood, and the eternal conflict of man versus cosmos. We also find a sense of wide and infinite wonder, a cosmic curiosity, a sensitivity, to the marvellous and mysterious in life, in London's fictional world.

5 Cooper finds myth element in his themes. "Themes that recur in London fiction, such as abyss and summit, the white silence and atavism are archetypal elements, in the private London myth."

6 McClintock finds his themes confusing due to contradictions. "It has long been recognized that London's themes are confused and confusing. Partly this is due to the cursory
nature of his reading, undertaken with more excitement and energy than method and analysis, when he was discovering the strong truths he hoped to communicate."

The themes of Jack London's social works and 'The Iron Heel' will be considered, in the chapter, 'The Socialist in the works'.

The theme of Jack London's first novel, 'A Daughter of the North' consists of a triangle. There are two suitors, for the hand of Frona Wilse, the super-woman heroine of the novel. One is Gregory St. Vincent, who has already ensnared her heart. The other is, Vance Corliss, the Yale sissy, who had come straight, from the civilized world to the savage north. As the action proceeds, St. Vincent is exposed as a base creature and becomes a villain. On the other hand, Corliss, who was capable of responding atavistically, to the challenge of the frontier, gets ideal opportunities, to show his virtues. Finally virtues triumph and Corliss's love for Frona is rewarded. Frona and Corliss are chaste, loyal and courageous, whereas St. Vincent is ruthless, selfish and dominated by impulses.
The central character is Frona Wilse. She is beautiful and has a fine physique and sharp intelligence. Bred in the north, she was educated in the United States of America. The reader first meets her, as she is being rowed, from the steamer to the Alaskan town, she has not seen in years and immediately he is brought into contact, with a new type of American heroine. She can hold her own with the boatmen in the toughest of works. She says, "Oh ! I can swing clubs, box and fence, swim and walk on my hands." She obeys her own instincts. She believed in natural selection as well as sexual selection. She believes in the survival of the fittest theory, and glories in physical strength. "Only the strong could inherit the earth. She had been born of the strong and she chose her lot with the strong." Jack London created first in Frona Wilse, and then in other heroines of his novels, a new conception of American woman. Frona captivates every male, in Yukon territory with her feminine charm. Frona was Jack London's conception of a natural woman, who was frank, open, non-sentimental, tough, without the traditional
feminine wiles. Jack London associated the idea of love with the image of a free and strong woman. From these dreams, has evolved this character of Frona Wilse.

She was the prototype of Jack London's dream of a perfect woman, the mate worthy of the modern man. Frona voices her virality, when she says, "You are unused to consistent natural women, because men like you are only familiar with hot-house breeds - pretty, helpless, blissfully innocent and criminally ignorant. They are not natural nor can they mother the natural or strong." Thus, "The flush of morning was in her cheek and its fire in her eyes and she was a glow with youth and love. For she had nursed at the breast of nature." p. 214.

Frona's father, Jacob Wilse, is a mighty flourishing trader of Yukon. He is the embodiment of the economic strong man, and empire builder. In the background of the story, we find a number of scenes, in which conditions prevailing in Alaska, are depicted. Intense cold, gold hunting, starvation, trail rigours, ice-breaking and picturesque landscape are described realistically.
Such rigorous conditions, challenge man's strength and courage. We get a glimpse of the life, in the dance-halls of Dawson, with their gamblers and gay women. We come across adventurers, outcasts, misfits, scoundrels, miners, trades people, trappers, the police, Indians and half breeds.

A number of Jack London's pet ideas are voiced in this novel. First is, his belief in primordialism or atavism. See the description of the hero. "Some atavism had been at work, in the making of him. The din of twenty centuries of battle, was roaring in his ear, and the clamour for return to type, strong upon him."

"Thus in the young north land, frosty, grimy and menacing man stripped off the sloth of the south and gave battle greatly." p. 244.

Secondly London asserts the determinist orientation of universe. People's actions are the result of the forces working on them. "These be the ways of men, each as the sun shines upon him and the wind blows against him, according to his kind and the seed of his father and the milk of his mother."

Thirdly, Jack London's belief in
Nordic or Anglo-saxon supremacy - a theme repeated in more virulent and militant terms in his later novels, is pronounced in this novel, through the mouth-piece of Frona Wilse.

Fourthly, the theory of Darwin and his followers is reflected in the novel.

Jack London's environmentalism and joy through fitness ideas, are also expressed here.

In this novel, Jack shows talent for developing a relationship, between the theme and character, as he places man, in the presence of white silence. The ordeal of packing industry, is described in the novel. In 1902, the rates of packing were going higher due to heavy demands. Jack London praises the predatory business methods. The results of the conflict are dramatized forcefully, showing thereby, that Jack London was always alive to the problems of his day.

Character portrayal was lower on Jack London's list of values, than motif - that is the theme or archetype. In this novel, ideas assume precedence over characterization, consequently the characters are mere puppets. They
voice the views and ideology of Jack London. He has practically jammed a number of ideas, in a single novel, with the result that there is no consistency in the views expressed. The plot is episodic and disjointed. Dialogues are rather strained and are not at all lively. The form is sacrificed in preference to matter.

According to Bykov, "The daughter of snows, was written under the influence of local colour literary vogue and partly in genteel tradition, in order not to offend the bourgeois reader. There is no social conflict in the novel."

Franklin Walker comments, "In daughter of snows, he had tried to write a romance with little knowledge of pace and sustained character development or social comedy."

Kenneth Lynn says, "The socialist message of the novel is - absolute wealth corrupts absolutely and competition is the health of the state. It is an attack on American capitalism and indictment on the prevailing society."

In the 'Call of the Wild', 1903, Jack London wrote on that most satisfying of all themes - success. We have already seen, how this
is the story of Jack's own success.

In this novel, we also find an affirmation of the themes of, 'The struggle for existence', 'The survival of the fittest', and 'The adaptation to environmental conditions'. Buck was a splendid Californian ranch dog. He was a mongrel and weighted 140 lbs. He was stolen from his owner, Judge Miller's big house and sold in Alaska, to become a sled dog in the gold rush. From heart of civilization, this civilized dog is suddenly thrown into the savage primordial conditions. He quickly learns the law of the club and fang.

His first experience on the Alaska coast puts him on alert about the eternal struggle raging there. A friendly dog, Curly is knocked down in the fight, and instantly, "she was buried screaming with agony, beneath the bristling mass of huskies, who had been watching the unequal fight." Buck learns the lesson, "No fair play. Once down that was the end of you." Soon he is cunning enough to steal some bacon to supplement his meagre rations of dried fish, discarding the canine morality as a vain thing or handicap in the
new environment. Buck's struggle to adjust to his new life as a sled dog, brings out every element of adaptability, resourcefulness, and grit, which he possesses. Coping with men and dogs, he learns to defend his rights and thrusts on. His development was rapid. A sparkling scene describes how Buck learns to sleep, completely buried in a warm hole, under the Alaska snow. His muscles became hard as iron and he grew callous to all pain. Always it was the life impulse in him expressing itself. "There is an ecstasy, that marks the summit of life and beyond which life can not rise. And such is the paradox of living, this ecstasy comes, when one is most alive. Buck was mastered by the sheer surging of life." p.44.

Buck's adaptation is so perfect, that he defeats and kills spitz, the experienced lead dog, and takes his place. After several hazardous journeys, Buck was sold along with his team-mates, to three checaquos, Charles, his wife Mercedes, and her brother Hal, a nice family party, without any experience, of the Alaska conditions. Buck was practically, being beaten to death merci-
-lessly by Hal, when he was saved by John Thornton, who nursed him to complete recovery. Thornton was an ideal master. A great love grew between the two. He became devoted to his master and saved Thornton's life both in the camp and on the trail. Buck won a weight pulling contest, in Dawson and won one thousand six hundred dollars for his master. The long trip into the wild, in search of hidden treasure, is described brilliantly. The journey into the unknown east, is a sheer romantic thrilling awe-inspiring account, showing element of fantasy.

Once when Buck returned to the camp after four days, after a moose-chase, he found that Thornton had been killed by a raiding band of Yeehats. In utter fury, he killed and wounded many of those savages. Buck went back, into the wilderness, became one of the wolf pack, thus responding to the 'Call of the Wild'.

Jack London is at his best in this novel. It is a master-piece of thrilling, colourful, action-packed narrative. We find Jack London's brilliance of his own intuitions in the study of animal instincts. The theory of racial
instinct of memory, as inherited habit, was very clear here. Similarly the scene of Curly's death and in the scene when Buck kills Spitz, surrounded by a ring of huskies, waiting to kill and eat the vanquished, was a perfect instance of the son-horde theory of Fraser.

The novel is a study of atavism or reversion to type. It is also an allegory of man's condition in Jack London's times. It exemplifies the doctrines of social Darwinism. In the novel, the theme and action are in perfect tune. The character of Buck is fully realized. It is interesting to note that though Jack London was for pure breed, London's brave and dignified dog hero, was a mongrel.

According to Dodson, "The characters in London's works, fight against their surrounding forces. Buck explicitly embodies, the theory of naturalism. He is a product of biological environmental and heredity forces."

Labor comments, "Call is a mythic romance. The plot is animated by one of the most basic archetypal motifs: the myth of the hero. All the phases of myth are present in Buck's pro-
gress from civilized world, through natural to supernatural world."

According to Walker, "Call is a great victory and escape book in American Literature."

Rothberg feels, "In the Call he equated men with dogs and wolves and equated the harshness of the trail with the harshness of the society, implying that force, savagery and cunning, were equally the ways to success, in both areas. London's love of violence and bloodshed is rendered as wine of life."

Dale Walker says, "The Call deserves special mention for its fantastic element."

Walcutt feels, "The Call shines almost as a lyric rather than a novel, in which London achieved an ideal fusion of form and subject."

Joan calls, "The Call as London's greatest purely literary achievement."

According to Connor, "In Call, all the finest and purest elements of Jack's talents
happened to crystallize."

20

Geismar, "The Call is an admirable little tone poem or prose-poem which sang a song of the younger world."

In Jack London's next novel, 'The Sea-Wolf', 1904, a ferry boat sinks in San Francisco bay, in a fog. The passengers perish, but Humphrey Wain Woyden, a critic, aesthete, typical specimen of hyper-civilization, and a sissy is picked up by the seal-hunter, 'Ghost', and compelled by Wolf Larsen, the Captain of that hell-ship to become a cook's scullion. Woyden is a creature of over-developed brain power, physically a play-thing in the hands of Larsen. And thus arises a struggle between the primitive brutalities of a natural man and this finished product of the twentieth century. The theme of Sea-Wolf is the conflict between idealism and materialism.

The first part of the book describes the towering personality and the fascinating character of Wolf Larsen, his philosophy of life, and his brutality. The growth of Humphrey from an effete molly coddle into the dynamic manhood, provides a magnificent theme in the first
half of the book.

Captain Wolf Larsen, is the most memorable character, created by Jack London. What sticks in memory is his strength and superiority. The name Wolf certainly suggests the beast within. He is a moral, an individualist, a materialist and a hedonist. He is a man of intense will, who puts little value on human existence, and its sentimentals. But he is also an intellectual close to genius. He has read Spencer and Darwin and theorizes about the meaning of life, immortality and social reform. He asserts his nihilistic philosophy.

He is very harsh to his crew. Sailor Johnson is beaten, kicked and left unconscious. Steward Mugridge is in constant danger to his life from the cabin-boy, Leah. The entire crew hate the Captain.

The real plot of the novel begins when the 'Ghost' picks up a handful of survivors, from a ship wreck. Among them is a beautiful, gentle poetess named Maud Brewster. Humphrey falls in love with her. Larsen is also ensnared by her charms. By now, Humphrey has gained in
strength and toughness. He has adapted himself to stand on his own legs. He finds courage to defend Maud, against Larsen’s carnal advances. Humphrey and Maud both escape from the 'Ghost' in a boat, during one of Larsen's disabling headache attacks. After a dangerous and adventurous journey, they reach the Endeavour islands, a seal rookery. They establish themselves in the Robinson Crusoe way. The plot now becomes a desert island romance. They live in a chaste manner. By coincidence, they encounter the dismantled Ghost, with only Captain Larsen on board, who has become blind. It is a situation of great suspense. Humphrey could have killed him, but his morality comes in the way.

Humphrey tries to make the ship sea-worthy, but the blind Wolf thwarts his efforts. Fortunately Wolf is stricken by paralysis and Humphrey and Maud, while trying to sail on the Ghost are rescued by a U.S. revenue cutter. Thus, we find in the end the victory of moral idealism over egotistical self-assertion.

The novel is a hybrid of realism and romanticism. The first part is realistic. The
working of the ship, the way its crew lived, the battle against the cold northern seas off the Japanese and Siberian coasts, were brilliantly described. Its characters, were the kind of man Jack London knew and understood. This accounts for its survival as one of the realistic sea-novels.

But the second half of the novel is full of romance. Jack London had complained to Upton Sinclair, 'how much he hated writing principally because sex had to be sugar-coated to fabricate fiction.' We can cite the example of Humphrey-Maud relationship on Endeavour islands. According to Ambrose Bierce, "The love element, with its absurd suppressions and impossible proprieties is awful. I confess an overwhelming contempt for both sex-less lovers." O'Connor says, "Jack dripped glucose all over the relations between his stainless lovers and destroyed the validity of the novel."

The characterization is superior to that of his first novel. They are round characters who can stand as individuals or representative types. They are convincingly delineated.
We have an excellent cast, like Humphrey, Maud, Johnson, Mugridge, headed by that inimitable Captain, Wolf Larsen. The readers' sense of waste, in his life, causes his sympathy. With his power, he might have mastered the world but we find him living an obscure sordid existence.

Spiller praises Wolf Larsen as "London's most fully conceived character."

According to Labor, "Wolf Larsen is one of the most unforgettable figures in American literature. He can quote long passages of Browning's poetry or Bible and on the other hand can squeeze a man's arm to pulp. Larsen is a fascinating composite of Shakespeare's Hamlet, Milton's Satan, Browning's Caliban and Setebos and Nietzsche's Ubermensch. He is Captain Ahab of literary naturalism."

Rideout feels, "The fascination of the book lies, irresistibly in the brutal magnificence of Wolf Larsen."

Walcutt calls Larsen, "a mixture of egotism, cruelty, atavism and disillusionment and not a genuine Nietzschean superman, but feels that Larsen is an absorbing fascinating character."
Wolf Larsen holds the attention of the reader and captures his interest and sympathy in the first part of the book."

Geismar calls, "Wolf Larsen as a sort of nautical Nietzsche or a Lucifer of the sealing trade.

Many critics saw in Wolf Larsen the glorification of the superman concept. Jack told Charmian that the underlying motif of the novel, was that 'The superman is anti-social, and in these days of our complex society and sociology, he can not be successful in his hostile aloofness.'

O'Connor feels, "that in Sea... Wolf his point is missed perhaps, in the confusion of action and conflict. There is false sentiment, romance and love in the latter half of the novel."

No doubt Jack London has forcefully shown in the last chapters of this novel, that supermanship was folly, which was bound to end in raging futility and individualism was an anachronism. But Jack London has made Wolf Larsen fall by gradual physical deterioration - first headaches, then blindness and paralysis and finally death from a brain tumour, and not by a tragic flaw
in his character or philosophy. The flaw is physical rather than moral.

30 Fonár feels, "Larsen's ultimate self-destruction is a logical result of the failure of individualism."

31 Pattee finds the novel, 'The Sea-Wolf' faulty in construction.

32 According to Spiller, "In Sea-Wolf, the sudden appearance of the mate woman, Maud Brewster, afloat in mid-ocean, throws the whole plot off balance and turns a study of naturalism into a desert island romance."

33 Walcott feels, "that both Larsen and Humphrey can not be heroes of a single novel. In trying to develop them both into heroes, Jack London has been forced to abandon one story, just when the scene was set for action and turns to another story."

Roy Carlson, makes a strong case in support of his assertion that the 'Sea-Wolf' was London's most ambitious novel, in his work, 'Jack London Heroes'. According to Woodbridge's
bibliography, the novel has been made into
eight motion pictures, which shows its popula-
rity.

In the second dog novel, 'White
Fang', 1906, Jack London completely reverses
the thematic principles argued in 'The Call of
the Wild'. In 'The Call', he had shown how
Buck's inherently atavistic nature drew him back
to an ancestral way of life. In 'White Fang',
he shows the civilizing process, through which
a wolf becomes a domesticated dog.

The novel begins with the de-
scription of two men, Henry and Bill, travelling
through the arctic, with a dog team and a sled
carrying the dead body of Lord Alfred. The de-
scription of the wild, cold, frozen north land is
powerful. Jack London depicts nature here as a
vast intransigent force utterly hostile to puny
inconsequential man. The men and sled dogs are
being pursued and harassed by a pack of hungry,
emaciated wolves. A red she-wolf decoys and draws
out the sled dogs, one by one, into the jaws of
death, and only Henry was saved in time, by the
men of Lord Alfred.
The she-wolf Kiche ran away in the wild with the other wolves. There she gave birth to White Fang, who was three quarters wolf, and one quarter dog. Part two vividly describes the experiences that moulded White Fang's heredity, while he was becoming fit to survive in adverse surroundings. Fang's world in its hostility and its cold indifference is pictured most poetically.

"White Fang became quicker of movements, swifter, craftier, deadlier, more enduring, more cruel, more ferocious. He had to become all these things, else he would not have held his own or survived the hostile environment." p. 147.

We find struggle for existence, both in part one, which describes the condition of the grim northland and part two, which describes the wolves and their world. White Fang, with his mother Kiche is captured by Gray Beaver and his men. His puppyhood is full of misery. He is harassed by the other dogs and practically becomes an outcast. White Fang's allegiance to his first master is based on instinct, fear and respect. He learnt his way to become a leader of the sled-dog team.

He is sold to a cruel man, Beauty
Smith, a flint hearted monomaniac. He illtreats the dog, making him a hater, and a ferocious fighting machine. For earning money, Smith pits him, against other dogs, wolves and even a lynx. White Fang wins all the fights. Finally, he fights with a bull dog Cherokee, owned by Tim Keenan. It was a gruelling match. There is no more blood-curdling dog-fight in literature. The bull dog, gripped White Fang's throat in a death squeeze. Fortunately, he is saved by Weedon Scott, a rich mining expert and his dog-musher Matt. After a bit of hesitation and suspicion, White Fang understands the kind and sympathetic approach of these two men.

His brute nature is redeemed, by his new patient, kind hearted master, and for the love of such a master, he learns to endure, the restraints of civilization. He ends up in a civilized comfort, on a Santa Clara Valley ranch, where he is called a 'blessed wolf'.

White Fang is tamed by love and he is changed from a savage wolf into a loving and homely dog. He kills a desperate murderer, Jim Hall, saving the life of his master's father,
The key concept underlying both 'The Call of the Wild' and 'White Fang' is the idea of plasticity - the role of environment, in moulding animals into distinct personalities. White Fang through mistreatment becomes a savage and through love and kindness becomes docile and loyal.

According to Giles, "The Jim Hall episode serves as the thematic climax of both Buck's story and of White Fang. In Jim Hall incident, London simply underscores the idea, that environment or society can have the same moulding effect upon human beings also."

Labor writes, "The Jim Hall episode in White Fang is the dramatic confrontation between the two contrasting products of environmental determinism - the brutalized man and the civilized beast. White Fang is the effective dramatization of this theme."

It would be no exaggeration to call this novel a socialistic tract in disguise. Jack London has succeeded in interweaving in this story, so subtle a reminder of the pressure of feral con-
ditions, which can produce a savage brute like Jim Hall, in the midst of civilized human society.

The major theme, is the survival of the fittest animal, in a bleak and pessimistic setting. Most of the novel shows White Fang's struggle with savage nature, dogs, Indians, Whitemen, struggles as harsh as those of Buck in 'The Call'. The novel is a wonderful study of animal nature and development.

37 Labor comments, "structured upon ideas rather than upon myth, White Fang is a socio-logical fable intended to show London's theory of environmentalism."

38 Wilcox feels, "In White Fang, London reached the naturalistic peak. Dominant theme in the novel one feels is more naturalistic in concept than with any other genre in which the novel can be classified."

39 According to Rothberg, "White Fang is a study in progress, a case history of evolution of civilization, rather than of atavism."

40 Nielson calls it, 'The victory of
civilization over brute nature. The wild animal is tamed and becomes a faithful servant of man."

According to Pattee, "White Fang is a tract in disguise."

The short novel, 'The Game', 1905, is a story of the prize-ring. Its hero, Joe Fleming was a prize fighter. The logical climax, was his last fight, but the underlying theme of the novel, was a man's struggle to follow a career of his choosing against a woman's opposition.

Joe Fleming and his fiancée, Genevieve Pritchard, came from the working class. Joe a virtuous young man worked in Hansen's sail-loft. Genevieve was working as a Soda-fountain girl, in Mr. and Mrs. Silver Steins' Candy Store. They are a dignified pair of young lovers, who plan to be married, the day after, Joe's final bout.

Genevieve could not understand Joe's obsession and lure of boxing. She grows jealous of her rival the 'Game'. She offers him love, solace, tenderness and fidelity in place of the ring. Joe had agreed to give up boxing, but he persuades her to witness his last fight.
He arranges for her to come disguised as a male sport, so that she can watch the fight, through the peep-hole of the dressing room. We witness two types of fighters, one a fine specimen of manhood, represented by Joe, who is described, "And there he stood, all but naked, Godlike, in a white blaze of light. There was cleanness and grace about it." This is surely a romantic description of a fighter.

The other fighter, John Ponta, fashioned after a brute savage is described as, "the beast with beady eyes, flat nosed, thick lipped, sullen mouthed. He was too decided an atavism to draw the crowd's admiration." Ponta reduces the bout to a brutish level, the exchanges and the clinches are snarling affairs.

In a climax dominated by naturalistic irony, Joe's foot slipped on the canvas, Ponta hit him, flooring him on the canvas with a thud. Joe's skull is fractured and he dies. "The game had played him false." Physical death intervenes to destroy all their plans. Genevieve muses, "This then was the end of it all. She was stunned by the awful facts of this game, she did not understand."
Jack London described the Joe-Ponta contest like a sports correspondent. We feel as if we are witnessing it, before our own eyes. London narrates as a sports writer, and as a philosopher, comments on the action. We find a realistic description of the contest, along with darkly romantic interpretation of the potentially deadly sport. London elevates the game of boxing and its action to larger games of existence, life and death. The plot of the novel is medo-dramatic. There is idyllic romance too. London could explore his belief in atavism through boxing, where he could portray the primitive responses of the fighter in the ring and show his atavistic core asserting itself.

As Christian Messenger puts, "Joe was playing a 'fight game', Genevieve was playing 'the courting and mating game' but London had them play a life and death game."

According to Wilcox, "This novel is alleged to have prompted heavy weight champion Gene Turney's retirement from boxing, when he read it in 1900."
Jack London's dream vision, 'Before Adam', 1907, is one of his periodic experimentation in Fantasy fiction, which is supposed to describe writings about events, apart from common experience, and ideas totally imaginary and fantastic. Jack London writes, in preface, "the situation of Before Adam is really before Adam. It is the most primitive story ever written. It goes back before the caveman, before fire, before wearing of clothes, when man spoke no language and used sounds instead of words. There is a love motif, hero, villain, rivalry and a literary reproduction of the landscape and conditions of the younger world."

In brief, it is the story of a modern boys' nightmarish dreams of having been born in pre-historic times and tells what life must have been like in the days when men lived in caves with their muscular strength. These cave-folks carry on a struggle of existence, with the more primitive tree folk, and the more civilized fire people, who have bows and arrows.

The story is seen, through the eyes of one of the strugglers, the hero, Big Tooth. The hero is filled with terror, because of the
presence of the villain, Red Eye, the atavism within the folk tribe. No body could defy Red-eye. He could marry many times, beating his wives and killing many of them. Lop-ear is the bosom friend of the hero. Old marrowbone was the eldest member of the tribe. The hero is driven away by his step-father named Chatterer. The hero was forced to run away with Lop-ear, because he tried to defy the brutal Red-eye. The two youths wander in the vast unknown, "A desolate land of rocks and foaming streams." We find mythic element in the subsequent description.

Big tooth falls in love with Swift-one, the heroine of the story. By sheer chance and luck, the hero returns to his own region and tribe, along with Lop-ear. Big Tooth marries Swift-one and becomes father of many children, thus maintaining the long line of descent, between his primal world, and the civilized one, of the narrator.

In one generation, the primitive men in this story, could only invent the use of gourd for carrying of water and berries. The meat trail, was a dominant theme in the novel. We find Cannibalism. The firemen hunt down the cave folk,
smash their heads with rocks and eat them. The subject of Before Adam is inherited racial memory. The primeval imagery of dreams and sub-human world is very interesting. Jack London's imaginative art is at its height. There is violence, sudden death, pain, terror and fantasy. The presence of fierce animals and the feuds between the tribes, add to the nightmarish horrors. Before Adam is a thrilling novel of primitive life using an interesting dream device.

According to Geismar, "It is the world of dream, fantasy and desolate abnormal emotion that Jack inhabits far more completely than the world of people and society - for all his stress on that."

Evans feels, "The literary device which he uses, in which the narrator gets a glimpse of the younger world in his dreams, may be derived from London's memories of his childhood when his mother, who claimed to be a medium, tried to make use of him in her seances."

In 'Martin Eden', 1909, the theme of the story is the epic struggle of a highly talented, self-educated, individual to rise himself from
the social abyss and becoming superior to even the upper class and gaining fame, recognition, and money.

A sailor named Martin Eden saves the life of Arthur Morse, a well-to-do young man. He is invited to the latter's luxurious home and introduced to his sister Ruth Morse and his family. The twenty year old sailor is dazzled by the new world of upper middle class refinement, and culture. Lacking in manners and formal education, he is sensitive and intelligent. He falls in love with the 23 years old, Ruth who was studying in the University.

Martin's love for Ruth, stimulates him, to educate himself and become a cultured individual. Inspired to become worthy of this genteel goddess, he becomes ambitious. He quits drinking, smoking and swearing. He starts bathing and brushing his teeth regularly. He becomes a member of the Oakland free library and starts a programme of rigorous self-education. With incredible hunger, he devours Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, Marx, Hegel and a huge and varied body of sociological, philosophical and literary works. Martin learns with amazing rapidity.
His brothers-in-law are petty and conventional. We get a glimpse of the mean crabbedness of Bernard Higginbottom and the sullen stupidity of Hermann Von Schimdt. His sisters Gertrude and Marian pity him but fear that he will come to no good. They all belong to the working class and can not understand his quest for knowledge. All wish and hint that he should find and do a steady job.

It is not long before Martin sees through the hollowness and hypocrisy of the Morse family and realizes that Ruth, his idol shares their narrowness and smugness. She keeps nagging, that Martin should be respectfully employed. Her parents become alarmed about Martin's radicalism. Bourgeois Society, turns out, not to be gracious and intelligent, as Martin had imagined, but hypocritical and conventional.

Burning to become a writer, Martin devotes over a year of gruelling labour and incredible self-denial to the chosen task. Martin's search for identity is a persistent theme in the novel. He refuses to surrender his literary ambition and take the job of a mail carrier. The
desire to beat the enemy, at his own game, becomes his major concern. Martin's literary work is rejected and his manuscripts are returned back by the editors. He has to pawn his bicycle, a black suit, and a mackintosh. Broke and desperate, he takes a job in the laundry and becomes a work-beast. Only Brissenden, the consumptive poet and cynic, recognizes Martin's gifts. He assures him that his work shows genuine talents. He persuades him to join the socialist movement.

After a speech at the socialists' meeting, which was, in fact, the Nietzschean attack on socialist slave morality, he is wrongly reported in the press as a radical socialist. He is denounced by everybody. His brothers-in-law forbid him to visit their houses. Ruth breaks their engagement. In the meantime, Brissenden has committed suicide. Left alone, he becomes frustrated and disillusioned. He stops writing any more.

Suddenly the wheel of fortune turns in his favour. He receives a cheque. He sends all his manuscripts to different publishers. They are all accepted. Editors now scramble for
his material, when he succeeds by some unexplained fluke. At last, he succeeds as a writer. He becomes famous. He is lionized. He is invited to dinners and requested to deliver speeches in high class clubs. All the big guns and educators who had spurned him, now aspire for his acquaintance. Ruth also offers to marry him, but Martin turns down her request, telling her that it was too late. He becomes rich. He helps his land-lady, Maria, his sisters and brothers-in-law, Joe Dawson and Lizzie Connolly monetarily.

Disillusioned with the upper classes, he does not find any thrill in his own class. The lower class of society is barren to him. Maria, Lizzie, Joe are all kind and loyal, but stupid. His spiritual weariness arises from his resentment, that nobody, except Brissenden has respected him or recognized his talents. He hates the thought that he is acclaimed not for his ability, but for his fame. His success brought to him more disillusionment than all his previous defeats. Martin is fed up with the world. Disenchanted and passive he loses his sense of direction and becomes weary with the futility of his existence. He has become
a futile individualist - he does not belong. No wonder, he ends his life, through the port-hole of a ocean steamer.

Interpretation of this novel has from the beginning been controversial. Possibly Franklin Walker is closest to the mark, in saying that it is one of London's most puzzling books. Most of the critics, including socialist reviewers attacked the novel as an apology for individualism. Let us examine Jack London's own views, expressed in his letters about this novel.

48 He wrote to Johns, "Martin Eden is an attack on bourgeoisie and all that it stands for." London wrote on April 4, 1910, "Written as an indictment of individualism, it was accepted as an indictment of socialism. Written to show that man cannot live for himself alone, it was accepted as a demonstration that individualism is made for death. Had Martin been a socialist, he would not have died."

49 "Martin Eden was a proper individualist of the extreme Nietzschean type. He failed because, he got only as far as himself and the rest of the humanity did not count."

50 In October, 1916, he wrote to
Bland, "Martin Eden was a protest against the philosophy of Nietzsche, in so far as his philosophy expounds strength and individualism against co-operation, democracy and socialism."

Inspite of Jack London's explanations, it is quite likely that the average reader, even today, finishes the reading of the novel, without the slightest conception that it was meant to be an attack on individualism. But it was definitely an attack on bourgeois morality. The novel shows certain contradictions within its central paradox. The problems of the struggle between materialism, idealism, realism and Nietzschean ideologies are presented in it.

Martin's suicide in the end of the novel has been criticized in different ways by various critics.

52 Labor feels that, "London's closure of the book is artistically superb." Labor has skilfully brought out how the novel is archetypal both in theme and structure.

According to Sam Baskett, "Much
of the difficulty, stems from the apparent structural flaw, where the book breaks. Martin's unexpected loss of will to live, just when he begins to achieve his goals, a shift in the attitude which occurs so suddenly as to constitute a serious weakness in the novel."

54 Spiller discerns failure of resolution for Martin's suicide.

55 Lynn ascribes the suicide to loneliness and depression. "Martin reaches the height of his fame and the end of his rope at the same moment."

56 Walcutt finds, "the characterization of hero confused and the ending painfully false, the suicide becomes an act of sulky spite, of childish pique. The novel lacks sense of control."

57 According to Dunn, "The suicide becomes in part, the execution of his judgement on himself."

58 Frances W.Kaye feels, "Martin's depression and suicide seem illogical."
According to Erbentraut, "The novel is a panoramic paradox and contradictions to the student of London. Martin's death is due to London's innate melancholy and death wish. The work is a brilliantly dramatized revelation of the forces at odds - in London himself. In that dramatized revelation inheres, the book's stature."

According to Geismar, "the tone of the stories' conclusion in 'Martin Eden', was highly ambiguous."

O'Connor feels that, "Martin Eden was titled success, ironically, since it was the story of the tragic failure of what man called success."

According to Rideout, "London's assertion of Martin Eden being an attack on Nietzschean individualism does not convince. The author's sympathy is manifestly, with Martin in his struggles to succeed as a writer, for many of them were too intimately his own."

In Jack London's next novel, 'Burning Daylight', 1910, the theme is the glorification of a superman. It is a success story with a happy
ending. The first part describes the adventures in the life of Elum Harnish, the hero of the novel. He was called as Burning Daylight, because of his habit of routing his comrades out of their blankets, with the complaint that daylight was burning and a passion to hit the trail at the crack of the day. He was known throughout the gold rush country for his courage, endurance and good temper. He had come to Klondike at the age of eighteen, and for twelve years he had continued to grope for gold. He had lived life naked and tensely. "Desire for mastery was strong in him." He celebrates his 20th birthday in Tivoli, a saloon bar in circle city. He won the bet of a record trip of going to Dyea and return back with Yukon mail in sixty days covering a distance of two thousand miles.

Following his intuition and shrewd knowledge of the Yukon, he finally strikes it rich. He bought claims on Bonanza, and discovered gold worth half a million on his claim. He organizes a boom town, on his digging and discovers his entrepreneur's skill. At the age of thirty six, he became worth over eleven millions. He bid farewell to Yukon.
The second part of the novel describes his exploits in the states. He arrived in a blaze of glory in San Francisco. At Nevada, he netted a profit of over half a million in speculation. He was double crossed by Letton, Gruggenhammer and Dowsett, in a business deal. In a sensational hold up, he coolly recovered his investment of ten millions, from the New York thugs at the point of revolver. In San Francisco when his partner, Klinker betrayed him, Elam hit back with such vehemence, that Klinker had to commit suicide in a Felon's cell.

Elam was up against business and financial barons. He wanted to win over these suckers of the society. He was sympathetic to the poor. He wins a spectacular fight against the navigation companies. He had a lawyer, Larry Hagan with a Napoleonic legal brain and intrigue. Soon Elam becomes a highly powerful business titan but in doing so, he undergoes a dramatic moral and physical degeneration. "Power had its effect on him. He had faith only in himself. This led to an undue and erroneous exaltation of his ego." 

"Physically, he was not the man of iron muscles
who had come down from Arctic."

He begins to drink regularly. He became cynical, brutal and bitter. He became malicious towards his enemies and callous towards the rest of the world.

He is ensnared by his stenographer, Dede Mason with whom he falls in love. Dede is an intelligent woman. She maintains her fitness and her contact with nature by her Sunday-rides in the hills, astride her mare. Through Dede, he came to a closer discernment and keener appreciation of nature. Visit to Sonoma Valley inspires him. He says, "No room here for all the sordidness, meanness and viciousness, that filled the dirty pool of city existence." He purchases the ranch. Dede refuses to marry him because, "Your money possesses you, taking your time, thoughts and energy - I want much more than your money would permit you to give me."  

He takes a sudden decision, renounces his wealth of thirty million dollars and the corrupt life of the city. He left all his business to Mr. Hagan, protecting everybody's interest. They were married on the ranch.
In *Burning Daylight*, Jack London realistically describes the Californian life, strike movement and crisis that shook U.S.A. in 1907. Elam Harnish is an admirable blend of the strong, adaptable individual with a dash of Nietzsche, combined with a concern for social justice and compassion.

According to Pattee, "*Burning Daylight* is brilliant only occasionally, in episode. The second half of the novel is mere propaganda."

O'Connor feels, "*Burning Daylight* begins brilliantly but crumples midway when the romantic interest intruded. The book contains bursts of Jack's old narrative brilliance."

The novel, *Adventure*, 1911, describes the story of a young English planter, David Sheldon, the hero of the novel, directing a colony of woolly headed, black-skinned, head hunters in Berande, in the Solomon islands. Two hundred black slaves were working under him. They adorned themselves with barbaric ornaments and were endowed with a native cunning and cruelty. Pledged to mastery, Sheldon in the beginning of
the novel is shown as fighting the malarial sickness, falling unconscious in the verandah.

One young amazon, Joan Lackland, Hawaiian by birth arrives at the plantation with eight Tahitians. She was wearing a cow-boy stetson hat and .38 revolver in her belt. She brings him to consciousness and he recovers slowly. She becomes a business partner of Sheldon. Once she saves the life of Sheldon when he was surrounded by the natives, and he had no weapon with him, to defend himself. Christian Young brings a dog named Satan, who was a nigger chaser. Once, the dog saves the life of Joan, when she was confronted by the natives for slapping Gogomey, a notorious black.

An adventurous expedition to rescue John Tudor, one of the survivors of the gold-hunting expedition is described. His companions were eaten by the cannibals in the interior of the island. The experiences of David and Joan end in romance and they were married by Dr. Westmer.

The heroine sums up, "But to be among the islanders, controlling them, directing them, two hundred of them and to escape being
eaten by them - that at least, if it is not romantic, is certainly the quintessence of adventure."

Joan Lackland is Frona Wilse of the tropical Solomon islands. She is a compound of Joan D'Arc, Grace Darling and an American college girl, well up in domestic science. She is Jack London thoroughly feminized. Joan Lackland is a word play of Jack London. She is the most masculine woman. She was intolerant of any restrain. Her temper was quick and stormy. Her knowledge of literature and art was surprising. She could play on piano. She swam in deep waters, inspite of the presence of the crocodiles and Sharks. She did not like being dictated or dominated. She likes adventures. John Tudor, a lover of romance and adventure thrills her, but she slaps him, when he tries to kiss her. She was charmed to see the beauty of Gogomy's black naked body. The skill with which she acquires the three ships - Martha, Emily and Flibbertygibbet was heroic and praiseworthy. She manages to bring one hundred fifty new recruits. She brought two mares, two cows, sweet corn, orange,
limes, figs and mango seedlings to Berande. Her contribution to the management of the plantation made it a prosperous business proposition. She prevented a duel between the rival suitors, Sheldon and Tudor, for her charm. "White men should not go around killing each other." The novel asserts the theme of White supremacy, in a virulent form. Sheldon says, "Blacks must be ruled sternly. It is in our blood to rule."

'Adventure' is a dreadful romance. It is a version of the white man's burden and the willy niggers. The novel is presented as a justification of colonialism, of the right of the whites to lead the natives. In Adventure, Jack London shows an absorption with the abnormal and peculiar. Sadism, violence and the grotesque are common. It is a pot-boiler. According to Geismar, "In Adventure, there was the sadistic humour he extracted from the spectacle of the dog, Satan, who had been trained to attack the negro slaves and the underground sexuality, he suggested when the virtuous White heroine, watched the handsome naked Gogoomy being whipped in public."

In Smoke Bellew, 1912, London
goes back to the Klondike of the gold craze period, once again for the setting of his story. We find Christopher Bellew, comes in contact with the primitive conditions of the north. By his exploits, he wins the name of Smoke Bellew. Along with Shorty, a man of the open as a partner, he meets in various situations, Joy Castell, a woman of his own world, now doing battle with the adverse condition of north. The most vivid writing is in the last chapter, 'Wonder of woman', in which a man and woman fight off starvation. The picture of Klondike is realistic as usual. The theme is the same - struggle of man and woman against nature and horrid conditions.

The 'Abysmal Brute', 1913, is the story of a young giant Pat Glendon, trained in the wilderness by his father, an ex-fighter of the prize ring. With his splendid strength, innocence, trusting mind and clean heart, he comes down to the cities to fight his way, to become the champion. He defeats all his adversaries, including Jim Hanford and Nat Powers. Due to his smashing punch, which floored his opponents, in a flash, he was nicknamed, Abysmal
brute, by the press. He knows nothing of the corruption, attendant on his profession, and his astute manager Sam Stubener, keeps such knowledge from him. When he does learn about the malpractices, manipulation and corruption in boxing, through Maud Sangster, an intelligent press reporter, he creates a sensation, makes a speech from the ring, in which he denounces its promoters and followers, then wins his last fight against Cannam, and leaves the prize ring for ever. He marries Maud Sangster and they retire to rural Eden, far from the madding crowd.

The novel is trivial in plot and weak in execution, with traces of Jack London's narrative and descriptive powers in flashes only. But London not only revealed the perils and hardships of prize fighting, but has roundly condemned the corrupt practices of the prize-ring racket. He was for clean and healthy sports. He exposes the parasites like the managers and middle men that prey on the prize fighters, whose life is so arduous and risky. They are also exposed to physical suffering, risk of injury or even death. Once again London suggests escape to rural surround-
ing to avoid the corrupt urban world.

The theme of Jack London's novel, 'Joh'án Barleycorn,'1913, is summed up in its subtitle, 'Alcoholic Memoirs'. It was the first revelatory effort to understand the drinker and his compulsion. The autobiographical element and main contents of the book, have already been considered fully in the first two chapters.

The book was a strong and effective plea for prohibition and incidently for woman suffrage. The novel created a sensation and furore when it was first published. It immensely influenced the campaign, which succeeded six years later, in bringing prohibition in U.S.A. Ministers, used it as a sermon against intemperance. It became the text-book of anti-saloon league, Women's unions, Clergymen, educators, propagandists and professional crusaders, who joined the prohibition movement. Many drinkers were saved by reading the book. We have already seen, how the theme of Jack London's illegitimate birth, runs through the book as a secondary theme.

It is an excellent narrative, undeniably forceful. It is written with a direct
crisp style. The sentences are short. We find here Jack London's power of condensation, the knack of compressing much into little. His love for the primitive and virile in man, finds its best and freest outlet, in brief narrative incidents, in the novel. But we find that his vocabulary was gone, his imagination was failing him. He repeated himself. There is lot of exaggeration also.

The theme of Jack London's 'Valley of the Moon', 1913, was race, blood and soil. The story opens in Oakland slums, where the hero, Billy Roberts, a brawny teamster and a part-time prize fighter, meets the heroine Saxon Brown, who works in a steam laundry, at an Irish picnic. They inform each other of possessing pure Anglo-Saxon blood. They fall in love and marry. They have courage, strength and faith, when they start life together happily in a four room cottage. But they are doomed for disaster, because the grinding forces of industrialism, are rather too much for them.

Billy Roberts lost his job, in the general strike. He is sent to jail for assault. Saxon Brown lost her child through miscarriage,
when she was caught in a rioting mob. When Billy Roberts returns from jail, he is beaten by men, from his own union, who mistake him for a scab. The Union-leaders are killed. All is brutality and hopelessness. Utterly exasperated, they decide to quit the urban life, full of squalor and hunger and desire to take shelter in a freer, cleaner, rural countryside. Imbued with the pioneer grit of their ancestors, they tramp from one end of California to the other. In their wanderings, they halted at Carmel, watching the fresh air Bohemians at play. They find their farm paradise, that is to be their salvation in Sonoma Valley, which they called with prevision, 'The Valley of the Moon'. Billy becomes a horse-buyer for his former boss in Oakland and starts his own teaming business. Saxon develops and manages a quality truck farm. They settle down happily. In the end the book becomes the pastoral idyll. Once again Jack London's solution is one of escape from urban to rural area. City-wilderness anti-thesis is reflected in Saxon's meditations. "God has made the wind, the air and sun. The man-world was made by man and a rotten job it was."
Much of Jack London's mystic feeling for the soil is compressed in this work. The heroine's odd first name, was supposed to symbolize purity, strength and grace of the people, who founded the English race. Almost from the stories' start, we find continued stress on Anglo-Saxon Nordic white supremacy. The chosen people, Jack London made clear, were the English speaking, not the whole white race, nor even the Western Europeans. Democracy, itself is attacked as a dream of stupid people. Individualism was the only answer. His disgust with the world, his disillusionment with humanity was clearly stated in the novel. As an agriculturist, he propoganized for a return to soil or back to the land slogan. It is interesting to note that he urged the superior white farmers of native stock, to adopt the methods of intense agriculture, practiced by the incoming inferior immigrants against whom he was prejudiced.

There is a lack of restraint, but on the whole it is a notably faithful study of a variety of critical social conditions. There is realism but as usual the accent is on struggle,
bloodshed, violence and strikes. We find some fine description of California scenery. There is a bit of preaching also.

According to Bykov, "In Valley of the Moon", London succeeds in typifying the American labour movement, of the beginning of 20th century. Had there been not a third part, the novel could have been considered a significant work of critical realism. It is possible that London falsified reality in search of a happy ending."

Gelmsar condemns Valley of the Moon as racial paranoia.

Jack London's second sea-novel, 'The Mutiny of Elsinore', 1914, was serialized as 'The sea-gangsters'. Elsinore, a cargo-carrier, freshly loaded with coal, rated as one of the finest sailing ships afloat, was making its voyage from Baltimore to Seattle, reckoned 18,000 miles. Mr. Pathurst along with his Japanese servant, Wada and dog, Possum, was the honored passenger on board. Captain Nathaniel West was the captain of the cargo ship. He was accompanied on the voyage
with his daughter, Miss Margaret West. Mr. Pike was mate and Mr. Mellaire was the second mate.

Mr. Pathurst is the observer and narrator. The officers were perceivers, willers, doers and efficient. They had mental and muscular superiority. Their minds and their bodies had acted with swiftness and accuracy of steel springs. The crew was worthless, wretched and worst.

Mr. Pathurst who had spent an easy-going comfortable life so far, begins to grow hard at sea. He falls in love with Miss West, who was vivacious, robust, healthy young woman. Mr. Pike was determined to take revenge on the murderer of Captain Somers. Mr. Mellaire, whose real name was Sidney Waltham had murdered Captain Somers, eleven years ago, on board 'Jason Harrison'. Mellaire had a scar on his head.

When fifteen miles off Cape Horn, Captain West gave command to wear the ship. It was a blunder. In the morning all hands laboured hard to save the ship. Captain West dies of heart-attack, shocked by his blunder. Mr. Pike assumed command.

Once Pike saw the cleft or scar
in Mr. Mellaire's uncovered head. The mutiny had begun. The Poop was in the control of Pike, Pathurst, Miss West and Wada. There were many deaths in violent clashes. Mr. Pike disappeared mysteriously. Mr. Pathurst assumed command. His blood was red. He was no more the pallied scholar but was manly and a fighter. Mutineers failed to take control of the poop. In the end famine compelled the mutineers to surrender. Mutiny on Elsinore was quenched. Pathurst rises to the occasion when he finds himself in command of the mutiny stricken ship and single handed brings the ship to the port. Pathurst and Miss West were married at Valparaiso. Honey-moon was on Elsinore, from Valparaiso to all the way to Seattle.

The theme in this novel is the assertion of superiority and supremacy of the white race. There are realistic scenes of difficult passage round the Horn. We-inspiring description of storms, lashing rains, damage to the ship, tornado off the Plate region. The internal feuds and intrigue of the crew, the superstitions of sea, are also forcefully delineated. It is a
cruel and brutal story, a tale of adventure and stirring account of perilous sea-voyage. It has thrill of adventure, danger and conquest. Perhaps Jack London's purpose was to show that hardy romance has not gone from the sea and that the life of a seaman has not become one of ease and peace. It was designed as a protest against the way the American merchant, Marine was allowed to founder. It is a sea yarn of battle, murder and mutiny. The novel is an all out melodrama.

In 'Scarlet Plague', 1915, Jack London describes how early in 21 century in 2073 A.D. an infection Scarlet plague, hitherto unknown to science, breaks out in the form of cataclysmic epidemic, sweeping over the world, bringing out devastation, wiping out its population, with the exception of a few scattered survivors, of whom Professor James Howard Smith was one. In 2073 A.D. this same professor of English, a doddering old man, now known as Granser, is depicted, as telling the story of the great world and its civilization, that was, and of its downfall to a group of half-naked little barbarians, Edwin Harelip and Hoo-Hoo his great grand children.
The symptoms of the scarlet plague are described as follows, "Many died with ten to fifteen minutes of the appearance of first signs. Appearance of rash was followed by convulsions. There was rapid decomposition of the body of the dead person, releasing billions of germs to spread the disease rapidly." p. 73-75

The Scarlet Plague describes the post-catastrophic world and is a picture of the world that has reverted to savagery. Jack London's experience of the seamer side of human nature enabled him to imagine chaos which would follow a collapse of civilization and his memories of the scenes of the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, gave added vividness to his description of scenes of panic and destruction. Jack London brings out his idea, in the theme, that no man can escape the terrible realities of disease and death.

After three years of sheer exhaustion and loneliness, in the region of Temescal, California, Professor J.H. Smith finds signs of humanity. He is confronted by the atavism, a large, dark hairy man heavy jawed, slant bowed, fierce eyed, named 'Chauffeur'. We are reminded of Red-eye.
in *Before Adam*. This monster had survived the plague due to his animal strength. He had come from the slums. After the plague, he forcibly married another survivor, Vesta Van Warden, a beautiful young widow, of one of the then world's richest man, John Van Warden.

We find pessimism in the novel. There is powerful indictment of the twentieth century civilization, where the majority of its population was in bondage to a few, wealthy, degenerate upper classes. Jack London writes, "By 2013 A.D. in the midst of our civilization, down in our slums and labour ghettos, we had bred a race of barbarians of savages, and in our time of calamity, they turned upon us, like the wild beasts they were and destroyed us." ¶105-6.

It is a piece of imaginative work. The description of the infection, attacking the scientists, who lock themselves in their laboratories for safety, is ironic. The description of the devastating fires, loot, plunder, arson is heart-rending. The English professor as the old man, Granser becomes the symbol of civilization, tottering on its last leg, and his grand children, are symbols of
the new wild civilization.

According to Geismar, "The theme of a diseased life force was repeated in 'Scarlet Plague', where the artist saw the source of evolutionary development only as the abysmal fecundity."

Jack London's novel, 'Star Rover', 1915, describes the experiences of the hero, Darrel Standing, ex-professor of Agronomics at the California University, sentenced to life imprisonment in San-Quentin prison, for having killed a fellow professor, over a purely private matter. He was falsely accused of participating in a plot to smuggle dynamite, into the prison. He was confined to a solitary cell and subjected to the tortures, in strait-jacket, practically crushing the life out of him. This instrument of torture of lacing the body tightly in a canvas jacket, make the rack and rope of middle ages, seem gentle by contrast.

After he had learnt to carry out the injunctions of the fellow convict, Ed Morrel and willed his body to die in a form of trance or self-hypnotism, Darrel Standing found that he
could free his soul from his body and escape from the house of pain, to go winging off through space and time. Stone-Walls and iron doors, can hold the body in, they cannot hold the spirit in.

In a series of episodes, he relives his past, in previous incarnations. Darrel Standing, thus relives the experiences of the youth, Jesse Fancher, who travelling with a wagon train from Arkansas, was killed by Mormons and Indians, in the notorious mountain meadow massacre, a nameless 4th century hermit, on the Egyptian desert, who had fled, from the persecution of Arian heretics, of Count Guillaume de Saint-mauve, fighting a duel in medieval France, in Dumas style; of Adam Strong, an English adventurer in the orient, who married Lady Om of a Korean noble house and fought nobly against the yellow peril between 1550 and 1650, of a captured Dane, the herculean Ragnar Lodberg, serving as a Roman centurian during Pontius Pilate's administration of Jerusalem, and of Daniel Foss, a cast away, who lives for eight years, on a desert island, during the early 19th century.

In addition to these major expe-
-riences, other fragmentary reincarnations take Darrel, back to pre-historic existence. Thus it becomes a synoptic novel, of man's survival throughout history. All the efforts of the prison authorities to kill Darrel Standing by torture are frustrated and defeated. Finally, he was hanged for assaulting the guard, Thurston.

In this novel, there is a mixture of idealism, spiritualism, mysticism and Metempsychosis. Jack London wrote, "The keynote of the book is the spirit triumphant." Darrel Standing says, "We know nothing of the nature of intrinsic stuff of life - I say that matter is only illusion." "I am an unquenched spark ever flashing." Perhaps death and dissolution were not the final words. The body is mutilated. I am not mutilated. The spirit that is, is whole."

We find Darrel Standing possessed with supernatural powers, based on the theory of transmigration of souls. It suggests that Jack London must have inherited some of the mystic tendencies of his mother's spiritualism. Jack London has done something original in this novel. He has hit upon a new idea of fiction and worked
it out with patient, painstaking art and done it supremely well. The artistic triumph is in its new use of the reincarnation idea. It is worth remembering that Leslie Fiedler has nominated *Star-Rover* as one of the forgotten classics of American literature. In a wide-ranging survey of authors, educators, scholars, conducted in 1975, the *Star-Rover* was Mr. Fiedler's sole nomination, underscoring the significance of its selection.

The novel tells of five years of intermittent and prolonged punishing, vividly depicted. It is all virility and there is no sentiment. The book is vigorous in parts with some unpleasant realism. The fictional account of the novel is fantastic. The book is a flaming social document, an unswerving bitter attack on capital punishment, prison abuses and tortures. It is a terrible indictment of society for its treatment of convicts and criminals. In his journey through time, Darrel Standing learned that "the morality we practised in those old days, was a finer morality than what we practice today. We were clean. We did not dream of such depths of depravity as seen now."
The source of its principal weakness is structural. *Star-Rover* is a loose knit sequence of adventure stories. Where Jack London should have concentrated on one narrative, he tried to handle half a dozen, thus vitiating the effect of his central theme. There is lot of repetition. Capital letters are frequently used. The style is an absolute frenzy of hyperbole.

According to O'Connor, "It was a strange work, full of murky meta-physics, yet contained passages of great force and imaginative power."

Irving Stone calls it a magnificent literary achievement.

Geismar dismisses it as incredibly bad novel, disorganized and broken in structure.

Joan London comments, "Into this extra-ordinary little known book, he flung with a prodigal hand riches which he had hoarded for years, and compressed into brilliant episodes, notes originally intended for full length books. Of all his later work, only portions of this novel and a few short stories, reveal the fulfilment of
the artistic promise, so evident in his early writing."

According to Labor, "This novel is more complex, both thematically and structurally than either Before Adam or Scarlet Plague. This strange novel, ignored by most of London critics is perhaps the most difficult of all his work, to assess."

Jack London's last novel, 'The Little Lady of the Big House', 1916 is basically the story of a love triangle, with the heroine in love with both her husband, as well as, his best friend. Thus the theme was the break up of marital relationship through the wife's infidelity. But it is also another hymnal on the back to the land theme.

The hero, Dick Forrest was the heir to a fortune, which he invested in a huge ranch and Mexican mining property. He was married to Paula Desters, the daughter of his father's mining partner. He was an author of a number of agricultural classics, such as 'Silage practice', and 'Human destruction'. Dick Forrest is in every way a giant, learned alike in agriculture, lite-
-nature, philosophy, animal husbandry and adept, at all manly sports. The superman type character of the hero runs riot in the novel. Outwardly the couple looks happy. They have no children. The Theme of natural fecundity also permeates the book.

Dick's old friend, Evan Graham, a Yaleman, arrives in the ranch. Unintentionally Paula and Evan, fall in love with each other. The trouble is, she loves her husband equally well. She is full of pride at the thought of these two nice men, suffering for her. She admits to herself that she is in love with both men, only she does not know, whom she loves more.

Graham says to Paula, "I am mad over you, mad for you." He again says, "You cannot love two men at once." Oh but I do Evan. That is what I am trying to work out." replies Paula. Dick's feelings are well known. He says, "I love you most dearly." Paula says to Dick, "I want you, I want Evan. I want both."

All behave with nobility of character. But after all, there is tension. Dick gently suggests that she should make a choice between him and his rival. The dilemma, is too much for Paula.
Ultimately she can not stand it, and she commits suicide, by shooting herself. While she is dying, both men are by her side. She refuses to allow the doctor to give her morphine, until Evans sings the Gypsy trail, followed by Dick's song of Aikut or Eskimo lament. It is indeed, a lengthy, lyrical death scene.

The book shows two of London's vital interests love and land. It reiterates the urge to break away from the modern world and flee from the complexities of city life, to the rural life on soil. The novel contains immense information on modern farming and stock breeding methods.

The story has singularly little action. It is discursive and chaotic. The scenery is brilliantly described. There is maudlin sentimentality.

Irving Stone's estimate is hardly favourable. "Ostensibly an agricultural novel based on London's ideas for a modern ranch and the rehabilitation of Californian agriculture, it developed into a love triangle, written with all flowery sentimental hyperbole of the 19th century, a book artificial, strained and exaggerated."

Labor thinks it to be an important book.
Erbenraut comments, "One finds in the book Jack's sparkling philosophical conversation as between and among characters - lively argument and speculation about art, philosophy, literature, music, love, life in all its incandescent spectrum. Thus significant portion of the novel is realistically, strikingly, and often exuberantly presented."

According to Spiller, "The little lady of the big house' is a design for living, in which jealously defeats the supreme experiment of free mating and brings the old inconclusive answer, suicide."
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