

**RELOCATING THE ROOTS OF MARXISM IN THE  
SELECTED NOVELS OF JACK LONDON**

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
award of the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**  
in  
**ENGLISH**

By  
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*Transforming Education Transforming India*

**LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY**  
**PUNJAB**  
**2022**

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**Place: Phagwara**

**Dated: 24 March, 2022**

*Neetu Sharma*

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## **Certificate by Advisor**

I hereby affirm as under that

- 1) The thesis presented by Ms. Neetu Sharma (41700226) entitled “Relocating the Roots of Marxism in the Selected Novels of Jack London” submitted to the Department of English, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara is worthy of consideration for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
- 2) She has pursued the prescribed course of research.
- 3) The work is the original contribution of the candidate.
- 4) The candidate has incorporated all the suggestions made by the Department Doctoral Board of the university during the pre-submission seminar held in 2021.

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## Abstract

The present study titled: Relocating the Roots of Marxism in the Selected Novels of Jack London is focused on the pervasive vogue of oppressive capitalism of America and the dramatization of the class conflict in the novels of Jack London. He came under the influence of Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci who virulently attacked the power structure of the capitalists. London was a passionate journalist who pursued his career as a writer and earned money by writing for the *Cosmopolitan* and *The Evening Post*. London was not comfortable with his journalistic career and devoted himself to the writing of fiction. London became famous in America as a staunch critic of the capitalist system of America and the critics and reviewers expressed their divergent views about his radical vision. London has virulently attacked the greed of the business tycoons of America. Jack London realized the workers of the factories and the mines were treated like animals. The democratic system was only on paper but in reality, the workers had no rights. Freeman Champney (1947) says: “The proletariat was kept homeless, voteless, and close to or below the starvation point, with the gulf between it and the dominant group widened by racial differences (Champney 338). Jack London made up his mind to expose the evils of the capitalist system. He used the art of writing as a powerful medium to expose the evils and inspire the workers to unite and follow the commands of Karl Marx.

In the Introduction part of the study the social vision of Jack London; the major writings of the novelist and the review of literature is described. A brief discussion of the novels of Jack London and the objectives of the study are highlighted.

In the first chapter of the study entitled: The Emergence of Marxism: A Theoretical Insight the main ideas and philosophical thoughts of Karl Marx, Lukacs, Althusser and Raymond Williams are described. The philosophical thoughts of Foucault are particularly described to give strength to the study while examining the texts of Jack London such as *The Call of the Wild*, *Martin Eden*, *The Iron Heel*, *The Daughter of the Snow* and *The Sea Wolf*. Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* and *Das*

*capital* brought Revolution in Europe and America. Marx was the first social philosopher who gave to the world the concept of socialism and the concept of class struggle.

In the second chapter of the study entitled: Jack London: His Life, Ideology, and Contribution the adventurous life of the novelist is described. He belonged to the grass roots level and his multiple experiences in the coal fields, mines factories and mills is specially highlighted because these individual experiences were used as material for the plots of his novels. He joined the Socialist Party of America and advocated the cult of Socialism in his lectures, novels and seminars.

In the chapter entitled: The Revelation of Marxian Socialism the basic concern of Jack London writing his novels is discussed. London wrote tales and novels to launch a struggle against institutions and political systems that crush individual liberty. The journey of Socialism of Jack London is depicted in this chapter. After World War 1 America emerged as an industrial country as many industries were set up and millions of poor workers migrated from the towns and cities to New York, Chicago, Manhattan, and Los Angeles for employment. The wave of human degradation was brought about by the forces of greed and selfishness. At the turn of the century of Jack London, there was an unprecedented growth of industrialization. This led to the massive development of capitalistic institutions.

In the fourth chapter of the study entitled: Capital Society and Cultural Transformation the emergence of the destructive capitalist society and the socialistic vision of Jack London is discussed. The emergence of capitalism was a revolutionary step in the culture of America. With the growth of huge industries, the workers in large numbers were employed by the guilds and the institutions. America emerged as a super economic giant after World War 1 as a large number of factories and mills were set up by the capitalists. With the massive growth of industrialization, the forces of capitalism dominated society. The cultural transformation was the need of the hour. The old values were scrapped and money culture, greed, profit mongering flourished in America. London investigated the ideas on history expressed by Marxist thinkers such as Althusser and George Lukacs. He was greatly impacted by

Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* and *Das Capital*. London concluded that Marxian ideology alone can solve the problems of the workers and bankers, and landowners are the real evil mongers in America.

In the fifth chapter entitled: Contextualizing Marxian Ideology and Class Conflict the socialistic concerns of Jack London are highlighted and the textual analysis is done relying on the theories of Karl Marx. The plots of his novels are replete with images of Socialism. London firmly believes that capitalism is evil and must be eliminated by the forces of socialism. Ernest and his socialism are at the centre of the plot as he fights for the poor and the downtrodden workers.

In the Conclusion of the study, the social relevance of the thesis and the main contribution of Jack London in the domain of fiction is discussed. It is asserted that in the modern world of science and technology when the world is growing industrial the tenets of Marx are very helpful to solve the challenges and the problems of labour unrest, strikes and capitalistic oppression. Dos Passos, Sinclair Lewis came under the influence of Jack London and wrote novels such as *One Man's Initiation* (1917), *The Three Soldiers* (1920), *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) *The 42nd Parallel* (1930), *1919* (1932), and *The Big Money* (1936) (*U.S. A.- The Trilogy*); *Adventures of a Young Man* (1939) and *Mid Century* (1961) to fight against the forces of capitalism.

The study ends with the bibliography in which all the citations occurring in various chapters are well acknowledged.

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Praise to the Almighty for bestowing me with the necessary courage, vision, determination, and faith; so that I could make this endeavour a reality.

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## Introduction

The massive cultural transformation after World War I brought a drastic change in the thoughts of people who were fired with the ambition to amass wealth by fair and foul means. The Americans discarded all the ideals of the American Dream. Scott Fitzgerald, highlighted the mood of the age and the money mania in his famous novel *The Great Gatsby*. The main focus of this study is on the emergence of the middle-class consciousness and the pervasive vogue of the virus of greed and hypocrisy that infected the middle-class Americans living in the small villages and towns of America. This study explores the evolution of the forces of Socialism propagated by Jack London at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This study relies on the forces of cultural materialism to explore and investigate the novels of Jack London, who made a significant contribution in art and literature. London had a philosophical vision about American society as he evolved new ideas and themes to depict the middle-class consciousness of the Americans. He realized that there were two Americas: the first living in New York, Chicago, and Washington populated by the elite class and the business tycoons and the second living in Rochester, Laredo, Miami, Fresno etc. populated by the poor and the downtrodden working classes.

After World War I there was an unprecedented growth of science and technology and this led to the pervasive vogue of labour consciousness. Jack London took a keen interest in the life and problems of the working-class people since he was also a poor working man. In his novels, Jack London expressed his distrust for the traditional American Dream and the myth of success. London was a keen observer of nature and society of growing mercantile America. This research work is an investigation of Jack London's Marxian socialism and the growth of class consciousness.

Jack London became the trendsetter, as in all the famous novels he articulated his serious concern about the uncertainties, challenges, and fears of survival of the middle-class Americans. He was not interested to depict the absurdities and challenges confronted by the elite Americans deviating from the American tradition established by Henry James, Melville, Hawthorne, and Mark Twain. He wrote about

the life and beliefs of the working classes trapped in the bog of violence, exploitation, and wretchedness. London's novels demonstrated the lack of unity among the workers and the growing trends of the hegemony of the power structure of the capitalists. According to James Lundquist, London was ultimately concerned with the question of how to live in American culture after World War I rather than with what that culture was like (35). In modern times, the popularity of the theories of Karl Marx has increased manifold, as the modern critics are taking an active interest in historical documents from the perspective of social vision.

Raymond Williams and Adorno argue that literature can be evaluated through the lens of social ideas. Society, people, and culture have great significance and no one can ignore the impact of these forces. Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer propounded new theories of evolution reacting against the traditional concepts of the Christian thinkers. Darwin with his *Origin of Species* brought revolution in art and culture stating that man has not descended from Adam and Eve but is the result of evolution from the apes. His radical ideas changed the direction of the thinkers. Nietzsche and Karl Marx were the torch bearers of this new light of thinking. Karl Marx championed the cause of freedom. All these great thinkers became Jack London's intellectual mentors and thus paved the way for Jack London's personal struggle to be dramatized in stories so arresting and exciting. In fact, it is not easy for us now to imagine how revolutionary and shattering the ideas of Darwin and Spence were. London comes under the influence of Marx's *Das Capital* and his famous *The Communist Manifesto* and all his novels and tales depict the scenes of violence, exploitation, and hegemony of the oppressive power structure of capitalism. This was the time when the workers led a miserable life and the political leaders were silent spectators.

The thesis entitled "Relocating the Roots of Marxism in the Selected Novels of Jack London" is focused on the pervasive vogue of oppressive capitalism of America and the dramatization of the class conflict in the novels of Jack London. Jack London had the first-hand experience of the miserable condition of the workers. He had worked in the mills and mines and virtually starved on the road. There was no job security as the capitalists hired and fired the workers to satisfy their egos. London

has virulently attacked the greed of the business tycoons of America who resorted to fraudulent malpractices. He launched a militant attack on the capitalists who exploited and oppressed the poor farm-workers. In this study, the idealistic and radical vision of London is explored relying on the theories of Karl Marx. It is averred that the novels of London brought social and cultural awareness about the growth of middle-class consciousness. Johnston said, "Suffering from the rejection of his mother and bitterly ashamed of his family's poverty, he began to see his struggle to succeed as part of a cosmic drama" (19).

Jack London realised that the workers of the factories and the mines were treated like animals. The democratic system was only on paper but in reality, the workers had no rights. Freeman Champney (1947) said that the proletariat was kept homeless, vote less, and close to or below the starvation point, with the gulf between it and the dominant group widened by racial differences" (338). The main mission of Jack London was to confront the forces of growing capitalism and for that he needed a direction. Interestingly he got real inspiration from the theories of Karl Marx who advocated revolution against the capitalists. London read about the history of the October Revolution of Russia and got impacted by the totality theory of Marx. Later on, Steinbeck wrote *of Mice and Men*. Dos Passos wrote *The 42<sup>nd</sup> Parallel* depicting the plight of poor workers like Mac, Charley Anderson, and Joe Williams seeking inspiration from Jack London. James D. Hart (1983) observed that "Jack London depicts the class conflicts and the emergence of the Communist Party in San Francisco" (13).

Frederick J. Hoffman (1916) observes that "Jack London was motivated by the most dramatic events of their times are those of class conflict" (Hoffman 185). In *The Cultural Front* Michael Denning traces the growth of working-class culture in America. Walter B. Rideout (1992) defines the radical novel in his book *The Radical Novel in the United States* thus, the human suffering imposed by some socio-economic system and advocates that the system is fundamentally changed (12). Barbara Foley in her book *Radical Representations* observes that after World War I Jack London wrote on the working-class experience deviating from the traditional themes. But Jack London like Dos Passos was of a different temperament; he had

keenly observed the plight of the young Americans. Jack London's novels are examined through the lens of Socialistic Ideology of Karl Marx. Michel Foucault in his book *Power* (2000) also states thus:

Power consists in taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point. To use another metaphor, it consists of using this resistance as a Chemical catalyst to bring to light power relations. Locate their position find out their point of application and the methods. (320)

Sara Mills (2003) observed that the workers are treated like animals by the institutions of the capitalists. It is a historical fact that the novels of the fiction of Jack London roused a better understanding of America and ushered in an era of change and cultural transformation propagating new social and cultural ideology. The ideas and thoughts of London changed the mind and sensibility of the American social and political thinkers of his age. Matthew Arnold observed that literature should be a criticism of life, and John Milton explored that literature should teach human beings how to live in this world. The characters of London openly asked the question: What life was all about? London was dissatisfied with the answers provided by society. He found the pervasive vogue of materialism, consumerism, and conformity; and people were crazy to achieve material wealth and ready to flout all the norms of the American Dream. The American society had grown a valueless society and the contagion of violence, exploitation had infected the middle classes. London emerged as a social critic who exposed and ridiculed the growing malaise of the age. He sought to condemn the mentality of lack of unity of the workers living in America. He launched a crusade against the business tycoons who amassed wealth by fraudulent means. His novels depicted the dynamic social vision as all his characters struggled to change their environment.

Materialism stands for the lust for material goods and the material comforts of life. As civilization develops it is natural for man to run after material prosperity. George Simmel in his book *Philosophy of Money* (1900) observes that money plays a vital role in society and human relationships. George Simmel is a prominent economic philosopher as he believes that money is the basic need of man and it is the

money force that governs all social, political, and economic relationships. In postmodern society, money is an important factor in bringing about changes in society. Simmel believes that lust for money dehumanizes human beings. The virus of lust for money spreads in America; most of the people resort to unlawful activities. Scott Fitzgerald depicts the craze for money in his novel *The Great Gatsby* and discusses how the Americans carry out bootlegging to make easy money. Materialism results in love for money and faith in the material comforts of life. In the capitalistic society of America, materialism has become very popular as money culture has gripped the psyche of the Americans.

In America, the role of media had been tremendous and with the growth of print media, a large army of journals and newspapers appeared. Many colleges and universities were set up during the time of Jack London and newspapers and journals also appeared. With the growth of democracy, the media became very popular and proved as a powerful tool to spread the waves of cultural materialism. The novels of London brought about tremendous cultural transformation as his novels were widely read by the Americans living in the remote villages of America.

The socialistic stance of Jack London is being massively researched in this research work relying on the theories of Karl Marx given in his *Das Capital and The Communist Manifesto*. Jack London exposes violence, power struggle, exploitation, liberty, and the identity of the working class people in his works. In this study, the main focus is on the socialistic views of Jack London expressed in his novels. His novels reflect the beliefs, values, and forms of power that are observed and experienced by him. Current R. in his book *American History: A Survey* observes that America experienced and witnessed a bitter conflict between the forces of modernism associated with the new urban–industrial society and the forces of traditionalism associated with the more provincial and often rural communities (28). London is shocked to find that the new America has become a hell for the poor working classes. He gives a vivid picture of the crushing forces of capitalist society and the victimization of the poor and downtrodden workers. Current holds that the process of production and reproduction virtually determines the social and political structure. Karl Marx talks of the production forces and T. Robert Malthus discusses

about the forces of reproduction. Malthus says: New Historicism is a development of Historicism and thus shares an awareness of the fact that writing history involves interests far beyond those of retrieving some sort of objective past. History is always reconstructed and rewritten in the present and is thus a reflection of the culture of society (123).

Indeed, Jack London brought new awareness to society through his tales and novels. His novels were read by millions of people in America including political leaders and social reformers. He depicted the problems of the people living in the small towns and villages and became a mouthpiece of the poor and the neglected workers of America. All the major novels of London dealt with the theme of consciousness of the middle-class workers of America who were in the abyss of darkness. The majority of the workers were treated like animals by the capitalists. Individual liberty was crushed by the forces of capitalism and bureaucracy. The middle classes had lost interest in growth and transformation and London depicted the rusted spirit of the workers for his efforts to bring consciousness to them.

### **Contribution of Jack London: His influence on Sinclair Lewis**

Sinclair Lewis came under the influence of Jack London and wrote *Main Street* to expose the mean and backward main street mentality of the middle classes. The titles of all his novels became catchphrases and reached every home and office of America. His novels are social critique and the main themes are greed; meanness and main street mentality; wretchedness and dehumanization of the rich capitalists. Sinclair Lewis became the trendsetter since in all his famous novels he articulates his serious concern about the uncertainties, challenges, and fears of survival of the middle-class Americans. He was not interested to depict the absurdities and challenges confronted by the elite Americans deviating from the American tradition set by Henry James; Melville, Hawthorne, and Mark Twain. He was not interested in drawing an accurate and detailed map of his contemporary America. Through his satire, he seemed determined to expose much of what he did not appreciate in American society. His portrayal of America was not meant to be comprehensive or “objective.” He wrote about the middle class, *for* the middle class. It seems that he wanted to shake his

audience into an awareness of their situation, to change their attitudes and awaken their moral consciousness. All his characters embody the Marxian ideology believing in revolution and furthering the socialistic vision. They organize themselves and form a Union to fight the destructive forces of capitalism.

### **Jack London and Dos Passos**

Dos Passos radical ideology is depicted in all his novels. It is argued that Dos Passos sought inspiration from Jack London and realized that his commitment to a single party would ruin the aesthetic sense of his art. Dos Passos wrote about the trapped nature of the working-class people with a mission to restore their freedom. The famous novels of Dos Passos: *One Man's Initiation* (1917), *The Three Soldiers* (1920), *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) *The 42nd Parallel* (1930), *1919* (1932), and *The Big Money* (1936) (*U.S. A.- The Trilogy*); *Adventures of a Young Man* (1939) and *Midcentury* (1961) created a sensation in America as he was praised by the critics as a “messiah” of the middle-class workers. The critics of past and the present have analyzed novels of Dos Passos applying the Marxian theories of base and superstructure and the class struggle.

### **Review of Literature**

There are plenty of critical books and research papers on Jack London and his radical vision. V.F. Calverton published his book *The Liberation of American Literature* (1932) and examined the fiction of Jack London relying on the theories of Marx. Granville Hicks was also greatly influenced by the Marxian principles and wrote *The Great Tradition* (1933). Bernard Smith provided a Marxian interpretation in his book *Forces in American Criticism* (1939) and hailed Jack London as the great socialist writer of America.

Friedrich Engels discussed in his book *The Principles of Communism* (1847), what the foundations of communism essentially were and the reasons for this political ideology's existence. One of the greatest impacts on communism was the Industrial Revolution of Russia.



Philo M. Buck in his article “The American Barbarian” published in *The Methodist Review* (1912) called Jack London a primitive writer “a purely primitive individualist” of the age, whose stories *The Sea of the Wolf*, *The Call of the Wild*, *Burning Daylight*, and *Martin Eden* became popular among American readers because of the elements of romance and wonder.

Oliver Madox Hueffer (1916) in his book *Jack London* observed that London was a marvelous writer like Alexander Dumas as he wrote many stories to articulate his socialistic vision of life. In each story, Jack London lashed at the capitalist system and in forty-two years he gave an amazing amount of work to American fiction. The writer nowhere talked about the social Darwinism of Jack London.

Hartley Grattan (1929) in his book *The Novels of Jack London* described that the active life and the primitive life were two chief concerns of Jack London. His intensity was physical and muscular. He believed in action and for him, deep learning was a fraud and a delusion. For London, the growth of civilization was glory, despair, and death. London invented new intellectual ideas in his life but the specters, he conjured up, in his novels were indeed gruesome. In many of his characters, he gave the traits of his own life as Martin Eden committed suicide like Jack London. *The call of the Wild* is his spiritual autobiography.

Hartley Grattan reviewed London’s novel *The Call of the Wild* in his article “Jack London published in the *New York Times* (February 1929) contending that this famous novel epitomized the real ideals of Jack London and his passion to advocate the theory of struggle and domination. He lavished all his admiration on the dog Buck symbolizing power and hegemony. London rejected all human civilization leading to an era of exploitation and oppression and he gave the term call of the wild referring to Darwinism.

Granville Hicks (1935) reviewed London’s famous novel *The Valley of the Moon* in which Jack London seriously dramatized the conflict of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the novel. London referred to the strike and the plight of the working-class people fighting against the forces of capitalism.

Leon Trotsky (1937) observed that London was greatly inspired by the Russian Revolution of 1917 when he wrote his novels launching a relentless crusade against the forces of capitalism in America. Jack London belonged to the poor class so he was well versed with the struggles of the poor and the downtrodden. The plots of the novels hinged upon the growth of power and wealth and the resultant growth of misery and destitution.

On the other hand, the famous critic Alfred Kazin (1942) observed that Jack London was probably the first writer of his time who with his zest and energy dramatized the plight of the working classes and emerged as a social reformer. Van Wick Brook (1952) observed that the Alaskan stories of Jack London are written in an enchanting style. His characters fought against the harsh weather and desperately struggled to survive in cold weather. His stories gave an insight into the working of human nature and had a deep philosophical vision as they were the illustrations of the theories of Karl Marx.

Sam S. Basket in his article “Jack London’s Heart of Darkness” published in *American Quarterly* (1958) discussed the themes of the novels of Jack London. He explored the racist ideology of Jack London. Basket contended that London’s novel *A Daughter of the Snows* was among his most racist works representing the theory of the white race’s supremacy in its purest form of atavism, based on the Anglo-Saxon moral superiority. London’s *The Call of the Wild* was about his militant socialism.

Charles A. Sandburg (1960) in his article “Criticism on Jack London” published in *Modern Fiction Studies* depicted the valuable contribution made by Jack London contributing to the growth of proletariat consciousness in pursuance of the Marxist theories. Sandburg in his essay “Jack London: The Common Man (1906)” reviewed London’s novel *The War of the Classes* giving a vivid presentation of the facts of the class struggle. Jack London grew very popular in the middle classes because he wrote for the workers belonging to the middle-class Americans. Upton Sinclair reviewed the short stories of Jack London. He expressed his real concern for the plight of working-class Americans.

Lukács George (1885) in his *The Theory of the Novel* (1962) stated that the world had changed since the advent of Industrial revolution. The world was not the same as it had been in the past, the First World War changed and ended lives of millions of people and new developments altered their lives.”

Tony Tanner reviewed Jack London’s novel *The Call of the Wild* in his article “Jack London’s *The Call of the Wild*” published in *The Spectator* (July 1965). Tanner was a great American critic who explored the contradictory themes of gender and eroticism in the novels of Jack London. Tanner explored the impact of naturalism on the mind of Jack London who created heroines capable of living in the wilderness. London’s stories, of his experience in Klondike, were filled with the themes of naturalism. His heroines possessed animal instincts needed for survival.

Earl J. Wilcox reviewed the novel of Jack London in his essay *Literary Naturalism in Jack London’s The White Fang*” published in *Jack London Newspaper* (August 1970). Wilcox observed that Jack London was a realist by instinct. He was a powerful writer as his novels excited a great interest among people of all ages. His stylistic techniques were splendid in his novels; he employed the memories of his personal experiences. His novels were romantic and adventurous but packed with the real message of life and the mysteries of the class struggles.

James L. Mc Clintock reviewed Jack London’s novel *The Call of the Wild* in his research article “White Logic: Jack London’s Short Stories” published in *Wolf House Books* (1975). Clintock investigated the elements of fantasy and romance in the novels of Jack London. He contended that London had given a graphic portrayal of his characters in this novel and the structure of the plot was allegorical. His magnetic ardor and earnestness of thought were quite appreciable. He lashed at the power structure of the capitalist dramatizing the struggle of man against the forces of nature.

Gordon Mills in his article “The Transformation of Material in a Mimetic Fiction” published in *Modern Fiction Studies* in 1976 reviewed the novels of Jack London. Gordon Mills observes that Jack London explored the myths of America and became the “best seller” in the world for his wonderful and enchanting tales and

novels. He used the images of dogs, and wolves in his stories to dramatize the struggle for the survival of man. London visited half the world; accumulated material and wrote stories and novels on various themes of human interest. The burden of his literary output was full of romanticism under which he hid his despair.

John Frazil in his article “Politics and Art: The Integrated Sensibility of Jack London” published in *Newsletter* (1979) explored in detail the various themes adopted by Jack London. Frazil opined that London was a modern novelist who explored the relationship between man and society. He projected his social vision in his novels and created a galaxy of characters who struggled for survival. In his *Valley of the Moon*, his protagonists were trapped in the web of an urban culture where they felt suffocated. The learned critic had discussed in detail the main concerns of Jack London suggesting the return to Nature to enjoy the happiness of life like Rousseau who gave the call of Back to Nature.

Clarice Stasz's (1996) study is mainly focused on the racial issues prevalent in the novel *The Call of the Wild* of Jack London. In this novel, London describes the conflicts between the native people and the colonizers in the natural settings. There are references to his travels to Klondike, the South Sea Islands, and Hawaii. Joan Lackland is a worker in a colonial plantation who assumes an anti-racial attitude.

Andrew J. Furer (1996) explored the racist ideology of Jack London when he reviewed London's novel *A Daughter of the Snows*. London gave in this novel the conflict between the natives and the white imperialists who oppressed and dominated the natives of America. Furer reviewed the novels of Jack London but his approach was to explore the themes of racism. He didn't touch upon the theory of Marxism and the theme of class conflict.

Scott Derrick (1996) explored the contradictory themes of gender and eroticism in the novels of Jack London. Earl J. Wilcox (1983) explored the impact of naturalism on the mind of Jack London who created heroines capable of living in the wilderness. London's stories were filled with the themes of naturalism as he had mentioned his experiences during his life in Klondike in these stories.

William Irvine speculated, “It was, of course, inevitable that Marx, with his emphasis on class war, violent revolution, and the purely partisan character of the state, should not have gained a great following in a nation traditionally devoted to legality and compromise” (57).

John Frazil in his Article “Politics and Art: The Integrated Sensibility of Jack London” published in *Newsletter 1979* investigated in detail various themes of Jack London. He was a modern novelist who explored the relationship between man and society. Frazil argued that the novels of Jack London vividly gave a clear and realistic picture of the American society.

Manish Kumar Jha in his book *Thematic and Artistic concerns in Jack London's Fiction* (1991) explored in detail the main currents of Marxian ideology and the contribution made by Jack London in propagating the cult of Marxist Revolution in America.

Andrew J. Furer in his review of London's novel *A Daughter of the Snows* (1996) explored the oppressive power structure of the capitalistic institutions of America that dehumanized and oppressed the working classes. Many workers like Billy left the American city and migrated to other parts to escape from the cruelty of the capitalists.

S. Iyyappan in his book *Jack London: A Study* (2001) described and analysed the socialistic vision of Jack London. He investigated in detail the political and social forces that motivated London to fight for the rights of the working classes.

N Vijaya Samundeeswari in his book *Selected novels of Jack London* (2009) evaluated the rise of industry and technology and the growth of money culture in America at the turn of the new century. He contended that there was a massive change in cultural production in America after World War I and Jack London was the product of social and economic forces.

Gunjan Aggarwal's book *Jack London: A study in Existential Dilemma* (2010) is the latest study available on the art and achievements of Jack London. She has explored the emergence of the existential class antagonism in the novels of Jack

London. She contends that the main existential dilemma of Jack London was to fight for the rights of the working people who were treated like animals by the capitalists.

### **Research Gap**

The intensive review of literature based on the books and articles on the texts of Jack London clearly reveal that there is no full-length study available which could examine the texts of Jack London through the lens of Marxism and Socialism. There are stray research papers but this study entitled: Relocating the Roots of Marxism in the Selected Novels of Jack London” is a serious attempt to investigate the growth of socialism and Marxism found in the novels of Jack London. In this study the important philosophical ideas of Karl Marx are applied on the texts of Jack London. It is found that in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a new wave of capitalism started and the growth of science and technology led to the growth of the institutions of capitalism which oppressed and exploited the working classes in America. Jack London keenly observed these cultural changes and he wrote novels and created characters to expose and ridicule the oppressive forces of capitalism with a mission to launch a vigorous attack on capitalistic institutions.

### **Objectives**

The following are the objectives set for the present research work:

- 1) To trace the roots of Marxism
- 2) To study the evolution of the socialistic vision of Jack London
- 3) To explore the growing effect of money culture and other changes on the society
- 4) To analyze the reflection and implication of Marxian ideology
- 5) To formulate the analytical outcomes

### **Selected Novels**

Jack London’s following novels are selected:

- 1) *A Daughter of the Snows* (1902)

- 2) *The Call of the Wild* (1903)
- 3) *The Sea Wolf* (1905)
- 4) *White Fang* (1906)
- 5) *The Iron Heel* (1908)
- 6) *Martin Eden* (1909)
- 7) *The Valley of the Moon* (1910)

### **Research Methodology**

The research is of qualitative nature and is based on area-specific knowledge. The selected novels of Jack London are studied from the perspective of Marxism and to meet the objectives, the researcher has adopted the method of content analysis. The guidelines of the MLA style sheet 8th edition are strictly followed.

This study explores the socialistic vision of Jack London who had practical experience of the plight of the proletarians of America. Interestingly, Jack London had the first-hand experience as he worked as a laborer in the jute mills and coal mines; he was subjected to all forms of physical and psychological tortures. This study is very fruitful to understand the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariats. Although, Jack London wrote in the early twentieth century but his social vision depicted in his novels and stories is relevant in all ages and in all times. In this thesis, the growth of proletariat consciousness and the wave of socialism in America are explored while analyzing the texts of Jack London.

The following chapter will provide a good insight about the emergence of Marxism and the related constrains which will lay a sound theoretical foundation upon which the deep and constructive analysis of the Jack London's select works can take place.

## Chapter I

### The Emergence of Marxism: A Theoretical Insight

Fredric Jameson wrote in his seminal book *Marxism and Form* that the contemporary capitalist society needed the theories of Karl Marx to bring harmony between the bourgeoisie and the proletariats. No wonder, in the 1960s and after, the cult of Marxism became the only hope for the working classes who were suffering from the oppression of the power structure of the capitalists. Marx was born on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1818 in Trier, Prussia, and died on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1883. His father was a lawyer who fought against the injustices and segregation of the Jews. Marx joined the University of Bonn and studied law, theology, and philosophy at the University of Berlin. He joined the Doctor Club and came in contact with the Young Hegelians and his study of Hegel helped him later on to formulate the theory of economic determinism and historical materialism. He wrote fiction and poetry during his college years to woo his girlfriend, Jenny Von Westphalen.

Marx was a philosopher, sociologist, historian, and revolutionary socialist as his revolutionary ideas had a tremendous impact on Max Weber, Emile Durkheim. Marxism became a creed in the world and when Jean-Paul Sartre visited America he declared that Marxian ideology is the best example of historical analysis and some of the theories of Karl Marx are universal and can be adopted in the capitalist system of America. Marx was a student at the University of Bonn and the University of Berlin where he became interested in the dialectical theories of Hegel. After his studies, he wrote for the *Cologne* which was a radical newspaper. He shifted to Paris in 1843 and developed an association with Fredrick Engels. Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* and *Das capital* brought Revolution in Europe and America. The greatest contribution of Karl Marx is his analysis of the historical process and his theory of class antagonism. In 1847, the Communist League in London asked Marx and Engels to draft *The Communist Manifesto* which was published in the following year depicting the history of class struggle. Marx believed that there was an eternal struggle going on between the capitalists and the proletariats. Marx moved to London



and remained in London till 1867 and published the first volume of *Capital* in which he articulated his vision of Socialism. He raised the slogan: “The workers of the world unite” (Marx, *Capital Vol. 2*) which became the clarion call for the workers to destroy capitalism. The revolutionary ideas of Marx threatened the existence of the governments of France and Belgium so he was expelled from these countries. The October Revolution of Russia, which overthrew the rule of Tsarist, had its roots in the revolutionary beliefs of Karl Marx. Lenin established his new proletariat government based on the communist ideologies of Karl Marx and it is no wonder that Karl Marx became an international celebrity after 30 years of his death. Marxian ideology took the form of Trotskyism, Maoism, and Stalinism in the world which brought about massive political and cultural transformations.

### **Alienation of Karl Marx in London and *Das Capital***

Karl Marx propounded the theory of alienation and this concept brought a massive transformation in art and literature and criticism. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* defines “alienation as the act, or result of the act, through which something, or somebody, becomes alien to something, or somebody, else” (76). George Lukacs in *Young Hegel* (1938) gives his own “theory of alienation in the spirit of Marxism” (23). Bernard Murchland (1971) observes that “alienation has multiple manifestations disorders such as loss of self, anxiety, anomie, depersonalization, rootlessness and meaninglessness, isolation and lack of community” (4).

In Marxian philosophy of economic determinism, alienation leads to the sufferings of the workers. Marx sees alienation as a curse in society. Marx wrote in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1845) arguing that “the philosophical abstract concepts such as beauty, spirit and truth” (159). For Marx “the actual economic condition of the people suffering abject poverty and unemployment, and hunger is important and the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point is changing it (158). Marx argued that “the world needs to be transformed because modern society is inequitable and millions of people today are living in poverty and are confronting diverse economic disparities. The concept of alienation is the product of capitalism and Marx has discussed this in his critique of

capitalism (158). Paul Edwards in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2004) observed thus: “For Hegel alienation means self –alienation; it is the process or result of the process, by which a self (God or man) through itself that is through its action becomes alien to itself that are to its nature” (78). Bernard Murchland observed that “Alienation manifests in multiple disorders such as loss of self, anxiety states, anomie, depersonalization, rootlessness, and meaninglessness, isolation, and lack of community” (4). According to Bernard Murchland this condition is obvious in segments of our society among the poor, blacks, women, students, individuals, workers, the mentally ill, and dope addicts, etc” (8). Marx argued thus:

Alienation is an outcome resulting from political and economic conditions. He sees alienation as the reduction of human essence to the status of a commodity. Feuerbach uses this concept to criticize religion. He argues that religion is a kind of alienation that leads human beings to be alienated and severed from themselves. For him, the idea of God is no more than our idea of our human essence. (33)

Europe was engulfed by the tempest of revolution in 1848 and Marx was compelled to leave Belgium. He shifted to England where he decided to live till his death. He was denied British citizenship but he continued working as a journalist for *The New York Daily Tribune*. He never got a regular job and remained lonely and moneyless most of his life. He was financially supported by his friend Engels managed to survive in London. In 1867, Marx published his first volume of *Capital* in which he propounded his economic theory and he expressed his desire to reveal the economic law of motion of modern society. He gave his theory of economic determinism contending that capitalism as a dynamic system that contained the germs of self-destruction and the triumph of proletariats.

Karl Marx’s philosophy and socialistic ideas dominated the nineteenth and twentieth century. He impacted the mind and sensibility of the prominent philosophers and thinkers who supported the doctrines of class communism and historical materialism. Jon Elster in his book *Making Sense of Marx* (1990) observed that “Marx’s vision of good life contains an uncompromising to ethical

individualism, the view that the ultimate value and good of human societies is the realization of individuals” (8). Marx’s critique of the division of labour stated that the powers of the capitalists cannot be tolerated at the expense of individuals. “Marx was committed to the view that community is necessary for self-realization (8). In *Marxism and Morality* (1985) Steven Lukacs observed thus: “Marx’s vision of a future of society is extremely thin; vague and uninformative” (9). Jonathan Wolff in his book *Why Read Marx Today?* (2005) contended that “although Marx provides the sharpest tools for criticizing the existing society he was mistaken in his arguments and assumptions” (3). It is pertinent to note that the writings of Marx were not available to the public until the 1950s and in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; he was regarded as an economist. Marx took a keen interest in the good life of the individuals in his article *Comments on James Mill*. After World War I, there was an interest in the revival of socialism. The collapse of communism in the Soviet Union forced the intellectuals to revise their ideas about Marxism.

Karl Marx belongs to the galaxy of thinkers such as Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein who brought social and scientific revolution. He wrote more than ten major books in the sixty-five years of his life bringing drastic changes in the domain of Economics, History, Political Theory, Philosophy, and Sociology. His penetrating analysis of the social consequences of economic forces has a far-reaching impact on contemporary thoughts and philosophy. Lenin analyzed the intellectual inheritance of Karl Marx in an article written in 1913 entitled *Three Sources of Component Parts of Socialism* (1947). Lenin argued that “Marx’s work arose as a direct and immediate continuation of the teachings of the greatest representatives of philosophy, political economy and socialism” (59). Lenin further argues that “Marx’s philosophy is a synthesis of German philosophy, English Political economy, and French Socialism” (60). He emphasized:

Throughout the modern history of Europe and especially at the end of the eighteen centuries in France materialism has proved to be the only philosophy that is consistent, true to all the teaching of natural science and hostile superstition, can’t and so forth; he enriched philosophy with his revolutionary ideas. (60)

Marx left Berlin and shifted to Paris where he continued his radical activity espousing the cause of socialism. He struggled in Paris to achieve a synthesis of three streams of thoughts: socialism, political economy, and religion. He expressed his views on the Hegelian ideas and devoted his time to explore the economic problems that concerned the common man. In 1844, Marx published *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* in which he investigated the theories of Hegel. His *Das Capital* was the culmination of his economic and Hegelian ideas. He and Fredrick Engel formed a lifelong association and together they wrote *The Holy Family* (1845). Marx was expelled from France being a hard-core Socialist and Revolutionary. He moved to Brussels where he started writing with Engels *The German Ideology*. Here he formed “The League of the Just” which later became famous as The Communist League. He left Paris and fled to London where he lived for the rest of his life in poverty.

He got a job as a correspondent for *The New York Daily Tribune* and wrote regularly on the American slavery crisis in London. Marx wrote his first volume of *Das Capital* which established him as a prominent socialist thinker. He came in contact with Mikhail Bakhtin who disagreed with his philosophy of socialism. Marx died in 1883. Marxian ideology was hotly debated among intellectuals and socialist thinkers and he was recognized as the interpreter of events. Marx continued in his *Preface to A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* observed thus:

At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production. From forms of development of the productive forces, these relations turn into their fetters there after begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure. (263)

Adam Smith and David Ricardo were great political economists who shaped the major theories of Karl Marx. Marx realized that the French Revolution brought about the cult of freedom but soon the freedom was replaced by another form of oppression and slavery. In the later version of *Capital*, Marx argued that “a community of free

individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which labour-power of all the different individuals is consciously applied in the combined labour-power of the community” (35). In his *Civil War in France*, (1866) Marx contended that communism is not the realization of a pre-conceived vision of the good life. Marx further observed that:

The working class, have no ready-made utopias to introduce. They know that to work out their emancipation and along with it that higher form to which society is irresistibly tending. They will have no ideas to realize but to set free elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant. (335)

After World War I America emerged as an industrial country as many industries were set up and millions of poor workers migrated from the towns and cities to New York, Chicago, Manhattan, and Los Angeles for employment. The rich Americans set up huge industries and employed millions of workers to make huge profits. This lust for money degraded them. The thesis entitled *Relocating the Roots of Marxism in the Selected Novels of Jack London* explores the destructive effects of the growing capitalism in America after World War I and the loss of individuality of the middle-class Americans working in the factories and mills.

### **Marx’s Theory of Base and Superstructure**

Marx contended that there are two major aspects in a society; the base and superstructure. Marx contended that the entire wealth of the society is concentrated on few people. There exists a culture of exploitation and dehumanization. Marx lashed at the capitalistic system thus:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production. The need of a constantly expanding market... chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. (Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto* 7)

He emphasised, “The bourgeoisie creates a world after its image” (Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto* 9). The Marxists believe that in the world of capitalism all

human relationships are measured in terms of money and profit. Marx traces the history of mankind and contends that “since antiquity there had been only two classes in the world; bourgeoisie and the proletariat (Karl Marx, *Capital* II 24). “The conflict was there in the beginning also between slaves and freemen, patricians and plebeians, lord and serfs” (Marx 24). Marx states thus, “Consciousness is a social product. So, the realms of ideology, politics, law, morality, religion, and art are not independent but are an outcome of an individual’s material behaviour because Life is not determined by the consciousness, but consciousness by life” (*The German Ideology* 51).

Foucault (1978) directed against the established institutions generated great interest in the cultural critics. He commented thus, “May be philosophy can still play a role on the side of counter-power, on condition that it gives itself the task of analyzing, elucidating and making visible, and thereby intensifying the struggles that take place around power” (540).

Foucault uses historical episodes to investigate the different modes of power. Jameson observes that Marx’s view of history is the unfolding of progressive stages of history in which new cultural ideas develop leading to cultural growth. Marx’s contacts with the French and German communist societies in Paris were his first experience of an organized working-class movement. The impact was enormous. He wrote to Feuerbach in August 1844:

You would have to attend one of the meetings of the French workers to appreciate the pure freshness, the nobility which burst forth from these toil-worn men....It is among these ‘barbarians’ of our civilized society that history is preparing the practical element for the emancipation of mankind. (*Collected Works Vol. III* 355)

Jameson explored the nature of working of Marxian ideology in detail in his book and concluded thus:

Only Marxism can give us an adequate account of the essential mystery of the cultural past, which, like Tiresias drinking the blood, is

momentarily returned to life and warmth and allowed once more to speak, and to deliver its long-forgotten message in surroundings utterly alien to it. These matters can recover their original urgency for us only if they are retold within the unity of a single great collective story; only if, in however disguised and symbolic a form, they are seen as sharing a fundamental theme. (*The Political Unconscious* 19)

Jameson argues that “a literary work is disguised and symbolic in theme and form. Literary works are cardinal episodes in a single unfinished plot” (20). It is essential to “reinterpret the old theories and works of classical thinkers such as Karl Marx. The process of investigation and rewriting explores the mystery of the intrinsic relation a text has with history. The process of reinterpretation is helpful to comprehend the hidden meanings of the texts and their relevance in contemporary society” (20). Jameson argues that “the Marxist critics attempt to rewrite the texts in an allegorical mode. There is a consistent attempt to reconstruct a historical text. Marxists such as Adorno, Benjamin, Althusser, and Raymond Williams expressed their views on Marxism. Marxian approach to literature is an attempt to describe the relationship between literature and society (20). Foucault observes thus: To use another metaphor, it consists in using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods” (320).

Althusser gives a new theory of ideology and argues that “ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (294). This means that “the identity of people is constituted within ideology so that ideology is not only a matter of performing but also of living in ideology (294). Althusser observes thus, “Ideology acts or functions in such a way that it recruits subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or transforms the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation” (301).

### **Karl Marx and the View of History: The Dialectical Approach**

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels launched a virulent attack on the bourgeoisie who exploited the proletariats. Hegel provided them with a dialectical and logical approach to examine the historical process. They contended that “The struggle of the workers ultimately leads to a class society and helps the workers to gain a higher form of human society based on justice and equity. Hegelian Dialectic relies on the theory that human experience is dependent on the perceptions of the mind. Marxist dialectics emphasize the significance of class and labour and the socio-economic forces (23).

Marx defended Hegel’s theory of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis to defend his economic determinism and materialism (23). Marx argued that “the evolution of social organization manifests the true spirit of material growth (23). Marx rejected “Hegelian dialectic and his idealist views and developed Marxist dialectics and gave the materialist view of society. He argued that economic forces govern the growth of human civilization (23).

His theory of “base and superstructure are the basis of his theory of economic determinism. Out of these grows the superstructure that is determined by the base. Precisely, the shape of the superstructure depends upon the shape of the base (23). Marx contended in *Das Capital*, vol. I (1957) that the world is material and materialism is a realist philosophy of science as all matter in the universe consist of matter of motion. Hegel is concerned with the process of the human brain (23).

### **Marx’s Theory of Revolution**

Marx argues in his *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that the purpose of the Socialist Revolution is to save the workers from the chains of the capitalists. The Socialist Revolution will transfer power from the capitalists to the proletariats. The process of history reveals that a time will come when all the destructive institutions of the capitalists will be extirpated and the rule of the proletarians will emerge, “We have seen above, that the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of the working class, is to raise the first step in the



revolution by the working class to win the battle of democracy” (Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* 241).

Marx exhorted the proletariats to capture the power and throw away the chains of slavery. Marx guided them that it will not happen easily as a major change in the relations is required. He contended that “the proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state” (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 227). Marx further argued that “the achievement of political power by the proletarians is identical with the capture of the machinery of state as it is predominantly through such machinery that the ruling class exercises its power” (227). Marx observed in *The German Ideology* thus: “The state is nothing more than the form of organization the bourgeois necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests” (79). Marx advocated “the use of force for the transfer of power from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. They openly declare their ends can be obtained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions” (Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 241).

### **Karl Marx and Dialectical Materialism**

Karl Marx was the father of the theory of economic determinism. George Lukacs observed that Marx was a revolutionary activist. He said that “the philosophers have interpreted the world; the point however is to change it (227). This suggested the very essence of Marxian dialectics. Zizek had put forward his views of Marxian ideology pursued by radical writers such as Sinclair Lewis, Dos Passos and John Steinbeck. Zizek wrote in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1994) thus “For Marx, as much as for Nietzsche and Freud this materiality is embodied in, and still, more is constituted by conflicts of power” (18). Zizek in his book *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1994) observed thus:

Marx is associated with the theory of economic determinism. His theory has impacted art and literature for a century because he believes that economic factors determine non-economic spheres of life such as

politics, religion, and ideology. The man enters into a definite relationship between the forces of production and his free will. (18)

Marx believes that “the mode of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life of the individuals living in society” (Marx, *The German Ideology* 55). Precisely Marx opines that “the life of man is conditioned by material forces and there is always a conflict between the capitalist and the proletariat. The capitalist thrives on the profit motive; exploitation of the proletariat and the hegemony and power that he enjoys over the proletariat” (Marx, *The German Ideology* 55). Marx talks of the “economic structure and the ideological superstructure that rises on it, and how to change in the economic foundation leads to a transformation of the entire immense superstructure” (55).

### **The Theory of Alienation of Karl Marx**

Alienation is a prime concept in contemporary thought and in the works of Marx. Alienation occupies a significant place in Marxian ideology. The poets, novelists, and dramatists have taken a special interest in the role of alienation and its impact on the mind and sensibility of individuals. This concept is closely associated with Karl Marx. He propounds this theory under the influence of Hegel. Marx in his *Das Capital Vol. III* observes that in Hegel’s writings the term alienation is mystical and transcendental but in Marx, it deals with the relationship of labor with his product. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* defines “alienation as the act, or result of the act, through which something, or somebody, becomes alien to something, or somebody, else” (76).

Bernard Murchland in his book *The Age of Alienation* (1971) observes that “alienation has multiple manifestations of disorders such as loss of self, anxiety, anomie, depersonalization, rootlessness, and meaninglessness, isolation and lack of community” (4). Lukacs in *Young Hegel* (1938) argues that “in Marxian philosophy of economic determinism, alienation is something that causes the control to be lost from hands. It is an outcome; resulting from political and economic conditions” (23). Marx observes thus in *Das Capital Vol. II* that “alienation is the reduction of human

essence to the status of a community. It is alienation from the product of labor and alienation from the labor process (54).

Marx discarded the philosophical abstract concepts such as beauty, spirit and truth and he expressed his concern for the actual economic condition of the people suffering from abject poverty, unemployment and hunger. Marx wrote in 1845 in *The Communist Manifesto* that “the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it (158). Marx argued that “the world needs to be transformed because modern society is inequitable and millions of people today are living in poverty and are confronting diverse economic disparities (54). Marx's “theory of alienation belongs to his earlier philosophy; Marx wrote *Estranged Labour* (1844) and his theory of exploitation belongs to his later philosophy. Karl Marx's theory of alienation is the pillar of his socialistic ideology (54). He holds the view that “There is the conspicuous estrangement of people from aspects of their species-essence as a consequence of living in a society. Although the worker is an autonomous economic entity this worker is directed to goals and activities that are dictated by the bourgeoisie who own the means of production” (158).

Jack London took up the cause of the downtrodden and exposed the greed and degradation of the capitalist who transcended all the values of the American Dream in their lust for power and money. In Marxian philosophy of economic determinism, alienation leads to the sufferings of the workers. It is an outcome resulting from political and economic conditions. Marx sees alienation as a curse in society.

### **Marxian Class Consciousness**

Karl Marx's greatest contribution is his theory of class consciousness. The practical operation of the class consciousness is very important. There “are two major classes the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie controls the means of production in the society and they enjoy a labour force that generates wealth for them” (54). George Lukacs (1923) opines that “a good plot of a novel must serve the interests of the society in promoting the proletariat consciousness. *Lukacs* talks about the problem of reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat” (54). Marx contends in *Das Capital Vol II* thus, “A capitalist society has two basic structures: the

bourgeoisie and the proletariats. The bourgeoisie owns the means of production, while the proletariats use the means of production while generating wealth for the bourgeoisie. These means of production include: capital, assets, such as tools, machinery, and factories” (54).

George Lukács developed an ideology and referred to it as the base and superstructure. Bressler (2011) commented thus: Lukács believes that the superstructure reflects the economic base” (123). Theodor Adorno’s book “*Late Marxism* (1990) is a sophisticated analysis of the Marxian ideology” (123). Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious* (1980) remains as his fervent critique of Marxism as it includes a lengthy discussion of the ideas and relevance of Marx’s ideas. Italian critic, Antonio Gramsci, declared that a complex relationship exist between the base and the superstructure which he calls hegemony” (172). The bankers, landowners, sequester crushed the identity of the proletariats in America. In his *War of the Classes* (1905) London explored the main cause of the class conflict thus:

But the socialists, fanatics and dreamers though they may well be, betray a foresight and insight, and a genius for organization, which put to shame the class with which they are openly at war. Failing of rapid success in waging a sheer political propaganda, and finding that they were alienating the most intelligent and most easily organized portion of the voters, the socialists lessoned from the experience and turned their energies upon the trade-union movement. To win the trade unions was well-nigh to win the war, and recent events show that they have done far more winning in this direction than have the capitalists.  
(10)

### **Causes of the Rise and Popularity of Marxian Ideology**

Karl Marx was born in an age of the Industrial Revolution which brought massive cultural and social changes in society. In Russia, the life of the proletariats was horrible as they were treated as serfs and were exploited by the bourgeoisie. The capitalists controlled the means of production and the workers worked day and night

to generate wealth for the bourgeoisie. The life of the proletariat was extremely miserable; the same situation prevailed in the European countries. The socialist ideas and philosophy of Karl Marx gave new hope to the proletariat who wanted to free themselves from the shackles of the capitalists. They demanded proper conditions in the workplaces and better wages to survive. Marxian ideology supported the cause of the workers as it gave them a dream of the end of capitalism and the emergence of a new society ruled by the working classes. The Marxian ideology motivated the workers to unite and as a result, in all the countries of Europe, the Communist Party was formed which aimed to fight for the rights and survival of the workers. The ideas of Marx were based on a sound logic of dialectical materialism and the thinkers of his time supported his ideology. In America, Fredric Jameson wrote *Marxism and Form* and supported the historical base of Marxism.

### **The Doctrine of Marxism: Main Principles**

The main principle of “Marx’s philosophy is its materialism and totalitarianism. “On the surface level, Marxism looks very attractive but in reality, Marx’s ideas are very dangerous and cannot be accepted by liberal American society (172). He argues that “philosophers should work to make society better and worth living for the poor and the needy (172). In the *German ideology* Marx virulently opposed capitalism thus, “Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all-natural premises as the creatures of men.. its organisation is, therefore, essentially economic” (36).

There is a lot more to society and culture than just economics. Marx contended that “all the things we observe in human life, from poverty and wealth to religion, art, politics, and even sport, are all *determined* by the economic relations between people; determined means that these things derive from economic roots” (36). Marx outlined his philosophy of human relations thus:

The model Marx developed to express these relations in society was that of *base and superstructure*. The base of all societies, according to Marx, is economic: baldly, it is all about money and who owns the

means to make money. Out of this base grows or is constructed a superstructure that is determined by this base. The shape the superstructure takes always depends upon the shape of the base. The superstructure consists of things like the forms of law and political representation of the society: so, for example, an economic base that is all about private property and owning things is going to produce a super-structural set of laws that are primarily designed to protect property. (*Das Capital II* 36)

### **A Deterministic Economy of Power**

Foucault explored the various phases of history and concluded that power structure in each society is pervasive and is the main cause of the loss of individuality. Rousseau also observed that Man is born free but he is everywhere in chains and this idea became the main cause of the French Revolution of 1889 in France. The writings of Foucault have greatly influenced the modern social and political thoughts of Jameson because his analysis of power structure is based on scientific and rational observations. He has analyzed power through discourses, practices and techniques. Foucault is of the firm opinion that in each society the power structure operates, as he studied multifarious events and processes that shape the mind and thinking of the individuals. Foucault investigated the nature of “knowledge” and its relation to power. The Foucauldian analysis leads to the question that who holds the knowledge has the power. The radical mission of Foucault (1978) directed against the established institutions generated great interest in the cultural critics. He commented thus, “May be philosophy can still play a role on the side of counter-power, on condition that it gives itself the task of analyzing, elucidating and making visible, and thereby intensifying the struggles that take place around power (Foucault 540).

Foucault uses historical episodes to investigate the different modes of power. He writes *Archeology and Genealogy* to analyze the operations of the institutions wielding power. Jameson’s hermeneutics is an investigation of the economical policies of Karl Marx; his theory of base, superstructure and totalitarianism. Jameson is clear in his revision of an interpretation of Marxist philosophy; he gives a

perceptive and deep analysis of Marxian ideology through the lens of pragmatism. Jameson turns to Hegel to investigate the dialectical approach to history. Jameson was greatly impacted by Hegel's view of history and Marxian deviation from Hegel's idealism. Jameson observes that Marx's view of history is the unfolding of progressive stages of history in which new cultural ideas develop leading to cultural growth. Jameson argues:

Only Marxism can give us an adequate account of the essential mystery of the cultural past, which, like Tiresias drinking the blood, is momentarily returned to life and warmth and allowed once more to speak, and to deliver its long forgotten message in surroundings utterly alien to it. . . . These matters can recover their original urgency for us only if they are retold within the unity of a single great collective story; only if, in however disguised and symbolic a form, they are seen as sharing a fundamental theme. (*The Political Unconscious* 19)

### **Marxism and Totality Culture**

Marx argued that “if we try to unite all the pieces together the result will be strength and power which is good for the healthy growth of civilization and culture. Knowledge gives power and learning is a constant process. The capitalists are materially comfortable but most of the people in the world are poor suffering in their life. They are quite powerless to do anything (54). The concept of “totality is the backbone of Marxism. The mode of production refers to the tools to produce goods and services. Human beings act as producers and consumers. They enjoy real power when they control the mode of production (54). London investigated the ideas on history expressed by the Marxist thinkers such Althusser and George Lukacs who observed thus:

History as a totality (universal history) is neither the mechanical aggregate of individual historical events, nor is it a transcendent heuristic principle opposed to the events of history, a principle that could only become effective with the aid of a special discipline, the

philosophy of history. The totality of history is itself a real historical power - even though one that has not hitherto become conscious and has therefore gone unrecognised – a power which is not to be separated from the reality (and hence the knowledge) of the individual facts without at the same time annulling their reality and their factual existence. It is the real, ultimate ground of their reality and their factual existence and hence also of their knowability even as individual facts. (Lukacs 151)

To conclude, Karl Marx's theory of economic determinism has widely impacted the writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the postmodern age, Frederic Jameson wrote many books to reinterpret the Marxian ideology. Jean-Paul Sartre visited America in the 1950s; he was warmly welcomed by the Americans who were surprised to know that he advocated Marxism as the suitable remedy to cure the ills of capitalism. Marxism is based on sound logic and convincing historical analysis. His theory of the class struggle is sound and is relevant to modern societies.



## Chapter II

### Jack London: His Life, Ideology, and Contribution

John Griffith Chaney was born on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1876 in San Francisco as an illegitimate son to his father Henry Chaney. His mother Flora Wellman tried to commit suicide twice but married to John London whose surname he took up when he grew up. In his whole life, Jack London experienced alienation and the starvation of love and affection. His family suffered from homelessness and abject poverty. The experiences of London before he started writing were traumatic. In 1895, Jack London was thrown into a cell and this imprisonment led to his awakening to socialism. He came back to San Francisco and fell in love with a rich girl Mabel. She didn't like his middle-class mentality and broke his heart. Jack London started hating the bourgeoisie and started to work for the middle-class Americans. Jack London himself confessed, "mine is not realism but it is idealized realism" (14). Jack London's work is relevant to the history of America because he was the first radical American thinker who exposed and ridiculed the reality of the Progressive Era. Jack London published an essay, "What Socialism Is?" propounding his theory of socialism defending justice and equal opportunity for everyone. Lou Neal in his book *The Death of Jack London: Fact and Fiction* (2016) observed that London joined the local "Socialist Labour Party". Jack London wrote *The War of the Classes* (1905) and expressed his concern for the working classes and depicted the oppressive forces of capitalism. In this thesis, the novels of Jack London are investigated through the lens of Marxism. He turned to Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*; Malthus's *Theory of Population*; Ricardo's *Theory of Distribution*, J.S. Mill's *Theory of Shares in Distribution*. He was an international celebrity and a very popular novelist:

London has been the best-selling American writer in the world, that his writings have been translated into sixty-eight languages, that his fifty books have been best-selling classics for over seventy-five years, that the world sales of books such as *The Call of the Wild* have been astounding (over seven million copies since 1903), and one can find

editions of his complete works in various major languages - as many as nine separated collected works in Russia- while many of his books are out of print in English. (Tavernier and Courbin 1)

### **Jack London: A Juxtaposition of Darwinism and Socialism**

Jack London was from the grassroots level of society and he was also his biographer. Neil Smith observed that London started writing tales to depict his dialectical concept of the metabolism of nature and society. There is an interesting blending of socialism and social Darwinism. London explored the dialectical relationship between naturalism and materialism in his tales and novels. In the early phase of his writing career, London ventured to blend the ideas of Spencer with the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx. He investigated the historical process of Karl Marx and Engels intending to understand the genesis of class conflict.

Interestingly, London wrote tales dealing with wilderness adventure to establish his name in the domain of American fiction. No wonder, his writings became popular reflecting the oppression of the working classes in the Progressive Era of socialism. His writings range from the tales of wilderness adventure to the exploration of active *Socialism*. Interestingly, in his tales, he infused politics with Social Darwinism. Donald Pease (2002) observes that “the works of Jack London depict material conception of history” (39). He participated in the Klondike Gold Rush of the 1890s to become rich overnight. London was always obsessed with grim poverty and he struggled to overcome hunger and poverty. Abraham Rothberg writes in “The House that Jack Built” that:

Actually, [London] was committed to an earlier heritage of absolutist ethics, fundamental to the thinking of the mid-19th century. These ideas were derived chiefly from 18th century ideas of nature and moral law. Here nature was favourable to man rather than indifferent or hostile; the concept of historical development was both progressive and optimistic rather than retrogressive and pessimistic; rather than a view of life in which man's nature is conceived of as beastly and irrational operating in a completely determined fashion ruled by blind

forces or brute forces, man's nature was conceived as reasonable and his behavior was based on free will operating in a universe governed by a benevolent providence. (330)

Earle Labor (2003) observes that London was reputed in America as a “sexist, racist, pugilistic, and plagiaristic drunk. A pioneer in the world of commercial magazine fiction, Jack London was one of the first writers to become a worldwide celebrity and earned a large fortune from writing (12). He started from scratch but by hard work and love for literature, he scaled the heights of fame and material rewards. He was a great success story in America and the secret of this great fame was his passionate love for the working-class people. Johann Hari (2010) observes thus: Jack London was “the most-read revolutionary Socialist in American history, agitating for violent overthrows of the government and the assassination of political leaders and he is remembered now for writing a cute story about a dog (2).

### **Jack London: Making of a Radical Socialist**

Jack London belonged to the lower middle class; he had witnessed and experienced the hardships of life. Life at his home was difficult due to the illness of his stepfather. Jack London was compelled to work in a jute mill where he had to work ten-hour at ten cents an hour (29). In the jute mill, London came in contact with the poor workers of all classes and he closely observed their miserable conditions. They lived in slums; many of them died without medicines and their children were infected with lung diseases. Their masters were quite insensitive to the plight of the workers. He also worked in the power plant of the Electric Railway shoveling coal. These early labour jobs brought Jack London into the contact of the working-class Americans.

In 1895, Jack London came back to San Francisco and fell in love with a rich girl Mabel. She didn't like his middle-class mentality and broke his heart. Jack London started hating the bourgeoisie and started to strive for the middle-class world. It is on record that “London used to live in a dark and dingy room and many times he had to sleep on a rain-soaked street or in one of the city's homeless shelters, known as spikes. In Kent, he was shocked to see how many young Americans had to do endure everything just to earn a few extra pence. He remained attached to the

American working class till the end of his life. He devoted his valuable time, money and energy to the social cause and launched a crusade against the oppressive American capitalists” (13). Jack London published an essay *What Socialism Is?* propounding his theory of socialism defending justice and equal opportunity for everyone. Walcott (1966) observes that London joined the local “Socialist Labour Party”. He contested elections for the Mayor as the Socialist leader but lost elections twice. Socialism was the real religion of Jack London as he devoted his entire life to the promotion of social causes and to extirpate the evils of society. His *The War of the Classes* (1905) reflects his socialistic ideas and his faith in Socialism. He expressed his concern for the working classes being inspired by the ideology of Karl Marx.

The life of Jack London was an adventurous tale of conflicts and struggles and the success story of the famous Horatio Alger; from rags to riches. He got the material of his books from his own experiences; his adventures in seas and trips around the world helped him to write many stories and about twenty novels. He lived just for forty years but preached the proletariat revolution. Being a model, he was very popular among the masses and his novels were the best sellers. Stow Persons (1952) in *Socialism and American Life* observed that the “writings of Jack London did more to spread the ideas of socialism in America than those of any other American author (60). His biographer Earle Labor discussed in detail his passion for exploited and oppressed. Joan D. Herdick in his book *Solitary Comrade: Jack London and Work* (1982) discussed in detail the journey of Jack London from the lower class to an international celebrity through his writings. The critic was of the view that the novel *Martin Eden* is autobiographical as its hero Martin Eden is also passionate to become a writer and committed suicide like Jack London.

James Lundquist in his book *Jack London Adventures: Ideas and Fiction* (1987) explores the romantic and adventurous passion of Jack London. He was very fond of travels as he visited many countries of the world and built a boat *Snarl* as he had the ambition to go round the world with his wife. London used all his travelling material in his adventurous stories packed with the themes of social Darwinism. Philip S. Foner in his book: *Jack London: American Rebel* (1947) discusses the

Marxian ideology of Jack London who wrote fiction to propagate his views. The learned critic has traced the circumstances that motivated and compelled London to become a socialist and address rallies during elections. The approach of Foner is historical and political. Carolyn Johnson in his book: *Jack London: An American Radical* (1984) discusses in detail the major themes of his stories and novels. He has reviewed his *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang* from the perspective of social Darwinism. London hated the upper classes and he dedicated his life for the working class of America because he had experienced the miserable condition of the workers when he worked in the jute factory and in the electric plant of the railway.

After World War I America had emerged as a Super Power in the world and there followed the massive and unprecedented rise of science and technology and the massive growth of the industry. The labour force increased manifold as the young Americans flocked to Manhattan, New York and Chicago in search of employment. His work “ranges from well-known tales of wilderness adventure to less well-known expositions of socialist politics infused with Social Darwinism to early twentieth-century poverty journalism” (Labor 21). Jack London came under the influence of Marx, Darwin, Spencer and Nietzsche. He read Spencer’s famous book *First Principles* twice and was virtually blown away by the philosophy of Spencer.

The term socialism has been interpreted as a theory of social organization based upon regard for and interest in the masses. Incidents that indicate adaptability to the environment, the brotherhood of man, sympathy for the working class as opposed to the capitalists have been interpreted as socialistic. Individualism is treated as the antithesis of socialism, being indicated by greed, self-interest, race prejudice, and a desire to dominate others. Jack London was a practical realist and he advocated proletarian activism. An analysis of the novels of Jack London reveals several valuable insights into American politics. There are two important books on the life and achievements of Jack London that are useful for understanding his growth of socialism and radicalism. Philip S. Foner’s *Jack London: American Rebel* give a detailed analysis of the class struggle. He was a serious novelist dedicated to the upliftment of working classes:

His literary credo was a complex mixture of naturalistic premises -the desire to produce human documents, the overwhelming concern with accuracy and truth, the belief in the value of objectivity in the portrayal of life, and the inclusion of philosophical and scientific theories in the novel -and a mythopoetic and archetypal method of presentation. It is a hopeful sign for London's future literary reputation that scholars are now turning toward an analysis of his achievement rather than toward continuing denunciation of the ideologies he dramatized in his work. (Tavernier and Courbin 18-19)

His political novels reveal his passion for the life of the working classes who led a wretched life in America. A comprehensive analysis of the novels of Jack London reveals his socialist commitment and his concern for the working classes which were subjected to oppression. London was a prolific writer who wrote about fifty novels, essays and delivered many lectures, and even participated in the political life of America. He preached the gospel of revolutionary socialism at the turn of the century when America emerged as an industrial and capitalist country. Jack London's life is full of trials and tribulations; he had multiple experiences as he worked in factories; in the mines and had first-hand knowledge of the plight of the workers. He was the great success story of American history. His skill of narrating tales and novels was exceptional. His contribution is discussed below by Taverniers and Courbin in their *Critical Essays on Jack London* (2009):

As London explained in his pamphlet *Eight Great Factors of Literary Success* Herbert Spencer's *Philosophy of Style* taught me the subtle and manifold operations necessary to transmute thought, beauty, sensation, and emotion into black symbols on white paper; which symbols, through the reader's eye, were taken into his brain, and by his transmuted into thoughts, beauty, sensations, and emotions that fairly corresponded with mine. Among other things, this taught me to know the brain of my reader, in order to select the symbols that would compel his brain to realize my thought, or vision, or emotion. (115)

London experienced abject poverty and had to do menial jobs to survive in the oppressive capitalist society. He wrote life stories and gave a new message to the American people as he said, "If my stories are fierce, then life is fierce, I think life is strong, not fierce, and I try to make my stories as strong as life is strong" (qtd. in Irving Stone, 319). London "created characters like Buck, White Fang, Burning Daylight, Martin Eden, Wolf Larsen, Ernest Everhard, and Darrell Standing struggling to survive in the harsh society of America and launching a crusade against cruelties and injustices of the bourgeoisie people" (Labor 23). His greatest pride was his active participation in the Socialist Revolution. He was extremely poor and wanted to be rich in America. He was very handsome but suffered from acute poverty. His passion for love and life would not allow him to starve on the road. He wrote to Cloufesley John on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1905 expressing his ambition of life and the dark clouds that enveloped his life. This was recorded by Tavernier and Courbin in their book *Critical Essays on Jack London* (2009)

So, you are going to begin writing for money! Forgive me for rubbing it in. You have changed since several years ago when you pleaded ART first and dollars afterward. You didn't quite sympathize with me in those days. After all, there is nothing like life; and I, for one, have always stood and shall always stand for the exalting of the life that is in me over art, or any other extraneous thing. (4)

Jack London believed in individualism; he came under the influence of Spencer and Nietzsche and evolved a new World Nietzschean Superman" infected with the zeal of imperialism. The biographer of Irving Stone in his book *Jack London: His Life, Sailor on Horseback* discusses in detail the forces that led to the formation of his radical and individualist vision:

All his life he remained an individualist and a socialist; he wanted individualism for himself because he was a superman, a blond-beast who would conquer and socialism for the masses who were weak and needed protection. For a number of years, he was to be successful in riding these two intellectual horses, each of which was pulling in an opposite direction. (108)

Following Marxian ideology, Jack London worshipped violence and glorified brutality to end the capitalists. London offers an insight into the psyche of the working classes of America. In the age of London, many American writers were still clinging to the romantic themes and wrote sentimental stories, But London rejected the conventional approach of romantic writers. London was a great orator and had an exceptional ability to analyze complex problems and his confidence in socialism was immense. The members of the Socialist Party were so much impressed by the forceful and persuasive speeches that he was asked to deliver a lecture to the masses each Sunday night. He accepted the invitation and managed to deliver the lectures without any remuneration. He wrote novels such as *The Sea Wolf*, *The Iron Heel*, and *Martin Eden* reflecting his Marxian socialism. The novels of Jack London have historical significance as they chronicle a new aggressiveness in American politics. In his books, London created a galaxy of characters and explored multiple themes such as poverty and class antagonism of American society. He got impacted by Darwinism and read about the evolutionary theory of Darwin and the scientific and deterministic ideas of Spencer. He preached the proletariat revolution. Eghert in his book *Socialism and American Life* (1952):

His work was exciting; more importantly, the brutal realism of his whole style broke the ground for new realms of literary protest. In writing about the working class, London radically departed from the trend of his times. He rejected the concept of Christian charity for the less fortunate and couched his criticizer. In terms of exploitation, bread, and revolution, London was not a great political thinker, but he was well enough informed to see the working relationship between the needs of his day and the promise of Marxist Socialism. (603)

Jack London's social vision is the product of his first-hand knowledge of the sufferings of the working classes. He virtually adored Karl Marx, Darwin, Spencer, and Nietzsche. Jack London had multiple experiences; he was a cannery worker, turned to the open waters, and decided to become an oyster pirate. At the age of fifteen, London became an adventurer as a pirate in a world of men. The young adventurer developed an appetite for the sea and on his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, he joined a ship



as a sailor. His eight months journey taught him a lot as he gathered information about the sufferings of the lower-class workers. When he came back to San Francisco, he found his economic condition horrible. He had to work for ten cents an hour in a jute mill. He soon came in contact with the leaders of the Socialists and joined the Socialist Labor Party in 1896. He was called the Boy Socialist of Oakland. Marx was fascinated by the concept of Revolution discussed in *The Communist Manifesto* (1947):

The whole history of mankind has been a history of class struggles, connects, between exploiting and exploited, ruling and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggle forms a series of evolutions in which now-a-days, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class-the proletariat cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting, the ruling class-the bourgeoisie-without at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at the large from all exploitation, oppression and class distinctions and class struggle. (21)

Marx and Engels justified the class struggle describing it as a historical process. Marx observed in his famous book *The Communist Manifesto* (1947) that the proletariat ought to “maintain to the fullest extent possible work against the bourgeois measures of pacification, and compel the democrats to carry into action their present terroristic phrases. They must keep it going as long as possible” (21). London accumulated real knowledge and explored the Darwinian struggle for survival. His socialist writings created a sensation in the middle-class Americans who took a keen interest in his socialistic vision. He saw in this human abyss the talent of the individuals being wasted because of the oppressive policies of the capitalists. London noted that a new class in the industrial setup had grown called the “Scabs.” A scab, according to London is “one who gives more value for the same price than another” (21). London differentiates between the scab that is utilized by employers to break strikes and a labourer who does more work for the same wage than another. The emergence of the scabs was a great threat to the growth of socialism. London fought against these disruptive forces and inspired the workers to

the unit and follow a clear policy to revolt against the capitalists. The struggle becomes easier with the power to struggle and with superior strength. In his novel *Martin Eden*, London preached this philosophy to create class consciousness among the workers. Jack London comments thus, “When one man, fifty years old who has worked all his life, is compelled to beg little money to bury his dead baby, and another man, fifty years can give ten million dollars to enable his daughter to live in luxury and bolster up a decaying foreign aristocracy, do you see nothing amiss?” (254).

Jack London depicted the misery of the workers and the scenes of deprivation in lyrical style inventing new fantasies of violence and depicting the class conflict. London was under pressure to prove himself in literature, he needed a philosophy and Karl Marx helped by giving him a socialistic vision to change the face of American society. Johnston comments thus: Suffering from the rejection of his mother and bitterly ashamed of his family’s poverty, he began to see his own struggle to succeed as part of a cosmic drama” (19).

Jack London learned the spirit of comradeship in the Klondike. He found that men there could live and struggle against the forces of nature collectively. They could share their wealth. Whenever one man discovered gold there, he would invite others to share in his wealth by buying drinks for them. In the Klondike Valley, London learned the lesson of class consciousness. London aimed to liberate the working classes from the snares of the capitalists. The capitalist is concerned to destroy modern society. London stated in *The War of the Classes* thus: Socialism like capitalism was based upon the inequality of man and that socialism deals with what is, not with what ought to be (London xix). In a “Letter to the Central Labour Council in Alameda County, London wrote that the future strength of society lies in comradeship and brotherhood, not in a cut-throat cutting struggle where every man’s hand is against every man. The growth cannot be stopped” (London, *Letters from Jack London* 481). London argued that “socialism is irresistible because the socialist preaches that through the economic process the ripening of the capitalistic society and the coming of the new co-operative society is inexorable” (London, *Wanted* 254).

Industrialization inevitably leads to the growth of exploitation, oppression, and humiliation of the working classes. The ranks of the proletariat would increase in the course of time and the backdrop of revolution would be inevitable. The class struggle forced “classes and the capitalist class exploit the working class, the proletariat, the Socialist sets to work to capture the political machinery, so that he may make illegal the capitalist’s ownership of the means of production, and make legal his ownership of the means of production” (London, *Wanted* 256). The radical vision of London is based upon his utopian ideology of the future of society. Like Karl Marx he wanted man to throw away the chains of slavery to enjoy freedom and identity in society. In explaining the Marxist theory, Tyson (2006) conveys:

For Marxism, getting and keeping economic power is the motive behind all social and political activities, including education, philosophy, religion, government, the arts, science, technology, the media, and so on. Thus, economics is the base on which the superstructure of social/political/ideological realities is built. (53-54)

Irving Stone, his biographer notes that the year 1905 was important in the life of London. He was invited to speak at the University of California being the famous writer of his time. He was expected to speak on the themes or his experience as a novelist but he shocked the American public when he spoke on the *The Revolutionary Spirit of the American Proletariat*.”He narrated the existing conditions of the slums; he talked of poverty, low wages and the policies of oppression of the big business men and the rising spirit of the workers who are feeling discontented and are on the verge of launching a revolution to uproot capitalism from America. He quoted the lines from Robert Hunter’s *Poverty* and told the public that millions of children in America are recruited in the mills and factories on low wages and inhuman environments.

London published his first novel *A Daughter of the Snows* (1902) which was not received well by the critics and his reviewers. The main heroine in the novel is Frona Welse; a symbol of the pioneer spirit, courageous and energetic. She expresses her pride thus, “We are a race of doers and fighters. We toil and struggle (Jack London, *Daughter of the Snows* 83). She is torn between the love of two lovers; one

Gregory who is rich and a capitalist and the other Mr. Vance who belongs to the labor class. The class conflict is the main focus of the plot of the novel. Mr. Venice is a mining engineer who becomes a victim of the capital system of America. London depicts his faith in the struggle of the American people. As Fredric Jameson observes in his *Marxism and Form* that Marx's system was terrifyingly huge and complex, but, as an engine for the destruction of capitalists theorists, it was, Shaw himself had discovered, a severe disappointment; it was always breaking down (62).

Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* (1903) brought immense name and fame to him and he became an international celebrity. London dramatized the Marxian ideology of oppression and exploitation through the struggles of Buck. The hero of this novel is Buck whose journey is from the pampered pet to master of the wild who uses all his powers to survive in the harsh capitalistic environment. At the end of the novel, Buck emerges powerful; resourceful, and a conqueror of all dogs and ultimately the oppressor and the ruler like the oppressive capitalist.

Jack London's *The Sea Wolf* is also based on his personal experiences. In this novel also the socialist beliefs infiltrate the plot. The plot is analyzed in this study from the perspectives of Marxism. Jack London was convinced that human life in this universe is conditioned by two contradictory factors; capitalism and socialism. The story is narrated by Humphrey Van Weyden, who is a writer and a critic rescued by the captain of the Ghost Wolf Larsen.

The hero of the novel is White Fang, a wolf-dog who is born in the wild but adopted into the lives of man, White Fang has to face many trials and tribulations in his life and his life is an interesting history of transformation and assimilation becoming fully integrated into civilization. Jack London depicts the individualistic strength of the hero relying on the theory of Darwinism. He was a unique creature whose body and brain was a more perfected mechanism. Not that he was to be praised for it. Nature had been more generous to him to the average animal that was all (137). London borrows the socialistic idea from Marx and depicted the conflict between man and the forces of production. Jack London forces of capitalism are inevitable with the rise of the machine age. Jack London comments thus:

They were his environment, these men, and they were moulding the clay of him into another a more ferocious thing than had been intended by Nature. Nevertheless, Nature had given him plasticity. Where many other animals would have died or had its spirit broken, he adjusted himself and lived. (156)

Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (1908) is a true testimony of his radical vision and faith in the operation of Marxian ideology. In *The Iron Heel* (1908) Jack London launches a crusade against the hegemony of the rich. His proletarian hero Ernest Everhard is the mouthpiece of Jack London expressing the Marxian philosophy and fighting for the rights of the proletariat. The story is narrated by Avis Everhard whose husband Ernest Everhard fought and died for poor workers. His Marxian ideas were later on followed by John Steinbeck who got a Nobel Prize and depicted the themes of growing lust for money and growing discontentment of the working classes. He fought against the forces of capitalism and spoke against inequality, poverty, and labor exploitation. John Cunningham observes thus:

And you are mad cosmos-makers. Each of you dwells in a cosmos of his own making, created out of his own fancies and desires. You do not know the real world in which you live, and your thinking has no place in the real world except in so far as it is phenomena of mental aberration. (Jack London, *The Iron Heel* 10)

Like Huxley's *Brave New World*, London's *The Iron Heel* deals with the theme of "doom and gloom. The Marxian approach of the novel excites a great human interest and it has become a classic icon of Jack London relevant and fruitful for all ages. The themes are universally dealing with historical materialism. Like Huxley and Orwell and Bernard Shaw, Jack London launches a vigorous attack on the growing capital society of America. He raises the voice of the working class predicting a global revolution as Marx (1874) says:

And then the peasant would embark on a merry life with song and music ... his pockets would be full, not of coppers but of gold ducats.

He would have all kinds of beasts and poultry in the farmyard, as many as he desired. On the table he would have every kind of meat, and festive cakes, and sweet wines, and the table would be laid from morn to night. And he would eat and drink as much as his belly would hold, but he would work no more than he had a mind to. And there would be no one who dared to force him: go, eat-go, lie down on the stove. (Marx 47)

At the end of the novel, he tells them of the revolution warning them of dire consequences as the iron heel would crush them. He warns them that the working people are going to take control of everything. The production of everything in America is of a high standard but even then, the workers are starving on the road because of mismanagement of the capitalists. More than fifteen million people are poorly fed and sheltered, “A million and a half of the men of the working class say that they are going to get the rest of the working class to join with them and take management away from you. This is revolution my masters, stop it if you can” (87).

Jack London's *Martin Eden* (1907) is a masterpiece of socialism presenting the hero Martin Eden belonging to the lower class. Martin is an orphan and homeless; his parents are dead, and he has “never found his permanent abiding place”, never really “taken root” (Jack London, *Martin Eden* 239). Jack London used the material of his own life in writing the plot of *Martin Eden* reflecting his commitment to Marxian socialism and Darwin's evolution. The story deals with the theme of the self-education of a sailor and the collapse of individualism. Martin moves from place to place in the quest for home, from his dingy rented room to the cell at Maria Silva. He realizes that he has found no new home and has no old one to return to (363). Jack London has taken up the theme of alienation in this novel. Frederick J. Hoffman observes that Jack London was “motivated by the most dramatic events of their times are those of class conflict (185). He took “a keen interest in the life and struggles of the proletarian lifestyle (185). Michael Denning in his book *The Cultural Front* traced the growth of working-class culture in America. Both high culture and mass culture took on a distinctly plebeian accent (xx).

Barbara Foley in her book *Radical Representations* observes that “after World War I Jack London wrote on the working-class experience deviating from the traditional themes (20). But Jack London like Dos Passos was of a different temperament; he had keenly observed the plight of the young Americans. London believes that rich business tycoons amassed wealth by illegal means and the other of the have-not and the powerless. London took his moral responsibility to depict the struggles of the working classes. In this study, all the major novels of Jack London are examined through the lens of Karl Marx and his theories of the power structure. The novels of Jack London expose and ridicule the callous and inhuman attitude of the bankers, industrialists who crush the identity and the individuality of the middle-class workers in the mad race of making more profits and accumulate wealth. Each novel of Jack London is an attack on the capitalists depicting the theme of class antagonism and espousing the cause of the farm workers and the workers of the industry.

## Chapter III

### The Revelation of Marxian Socialism

The socialistic vision is very popular in the world today. Bernard Shaw and George Orwell were famous socialist thinkers who wrote to propagate the ideas of Socialism. Fredric Jameson discarded the traditional ideas of Marxism and gave a new impetus to the Marxian ideology. London “keenly observed all the important cultural changes of American society and the growth of capitalism. He wrote about the trapped nature of the working-class people with a mission to restore their freedom. London wrote tales and novels to launch a struggle against institutions and political systems that crush individual liberty” (Labor 23). Michel Foucault (1982) observed, “We lacked an adequate understanding of power as something other than a reflection of economic structures. Two alternatives were available; one that equates mechanism of power with repression, another that locates the basis of the relationship of power in the hostile engagement of forces” (*Introduction*, xv). Foucault observed thus, “I would like to suggest another way to go further towards a new economy of power relations, a way which is more empirical, more directly related to our present situation, and which implies more relations between theory and practice” (28).

Jack London intended to bring Cultural Revolution in, era through his novels. He observed thus, “All class consciousness... including ruling class consciousness... is in its very nature utopian and adds that the index of all class consciousness is to be found in the dawning sense of solidarity with other members of a particular group” (290).

The journey of Socialism of Jack London is depicted in this chapter. The wave of human degradation was brought about by the forces of greed and selfishness. Industrialization led to the massive development of capitalistic institutions. The business tycoons employed millions of workers in the cotton mills, factories, and power loom mills. The rapid growth of technology resulted in innovations. There was a massive revolution in all fields and the result was slums and the gap between the rich and the poor. The bankers and the owners of the ranches employed workers in



large numbers and exploited them. They were denied all fundamental rights and treated like animals. Althusser gives a new theory of ideology and argues that “ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (294). This means that the identity of people is constituted within ideology so that ideology is not only a matter of performing but also of living in ideology. Althusser observes thus, “Ideology acts or functions in such a way that it recruits subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or transforms the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation” (301). Jack London is a prominent American novelist known for his radical and socialistic vision. He strongly opposed the trends of materialism and capitalism. The critics hailed London as a prophet of social conflict after World War I. The novels of Jack London give an insight into the mind and art, the changing beliefs, and the stages of the growth of the novelist in simple and lucid prose. London believed that the real America lives in the slums of New York and Manhattan; millions of workers begin their tiresome journey in the morning to work in the factories and mills. Rosen appreciates the complexities of the political views and the artistic experiments of the writer. He admirably gave a critical analysis of the historical and political currents of his time and his rational and innovative approach to the problems of society are quite evident in his novels. Terry Eagleton talks of the socialistic idea of Karl Marx who was passionate to bring about social transformation through his Marxian ideas. He launched a crusade against capitalism and against the forces of the bourgeoisie which oppressed and exploited the working classes. He says in his *Why Marx was Right?* (2011) thus, “Marxism is a critique of capitalism—the most searching, rigorous, comprehensive critique of its kind ever to be launched. It is also the only such critique that has transformed large sectors of the globe. It follows, then, that as long as capitalism is still in business, Marxism must be as well” (2).

Eagleton paints a dismal picture of the idyllic bureaucracy that is supposed to be preferable to capitalism’s cruel and bloodstained markets:

The broad parameters of the economy, including decisions on the overall allocation of resources, rates of growth and investment, energy, transport and ecological policies and the like, would be set by

representative assemblies at local, regional and national level. These decisions about, say, allocation would then be devolved downwards to regional and local levels, where more detailed planning would be progressively worked out. At every state, public debate over alternative economic plans and policies would be essential ... determined by social need rather than private profit. (25)

Blaming the current financial crisis on capitalism as a system, Eagleton spots the cancer amidst the nexus of complex market processes and central banking flubs by flourishing his time-worn credo of “capitalist greed” like a schizophrenic neurosurgeon wielding a chainsaw as a scalpel. “Capitalist economies,” writes Eagleton, “have been prevented from imploding only by the appropriation of trillions of dollars from their hard-pressed citizens” (15). The influence of the doctrines of Karl Marx is distinctly clear in the writings of Jack London. He wrote *The War of the Classes* (1905) to articulate his passion for the teachings of Marxian ideology reflecting his own experiences during the years of economic and poetical discontentment in the 1980s of America. He wrote thus in his book *The War of the Classes*:

The community branded me a red shirt because I stood for municipal ownership...And far be it from me to deny that socialism is a menace. It is its purpose to wipe out, root and branch, all capitalistic institutions of present-day society. It is distinctively revolutionary, and in scope and depth is vastly more tremendous than any revolution that has ever occurred in the history of the world. (London 4)

London published *The Call of the Wild* and sold his rights to Macmillan Company for two thousand dollars. The novel was a grand success as it raised his name and fame in the literary circle. He depicted the beauty and natural style as the plot exhibited a sustained effort of literary perfection. He achieved a high degree of sophistication in his *The Call of the Wild*. The novel was published in more than thirty-three languages of the world. During his travels, Jack London obtained a copy of *The Communist Manifesto* which provided him with socialist ideas. He wrote

stories and novels to propagate the socialist philosophy of Karl Marx. He is the real founder of modern economic life. He explored all the economic problems that confronted the modern man in the industrial setup and his life in the capital system. His empirical method helped Marx to give concrete results of the class struggle. Jack London was excited by the powerful ideas of Marx:

Here is a man who might have owned cattle on a thousand hills, been a lumber baron or a railroad king, had he been born a few years sooner. As it is, he remains in his class, is secretary of the United Garment Workers of America, and is so thoroughly saturated with the class struggle that he speaks of the dispute between capital and labour in terms of war,—workmen *fight* with employers; it is possible to avoid some *conflicts*; in certain cases *truces* may be, for the time being, effected. (Marx, *Capital Vol.1* 7)

In his article entitled: “How I Became a Socialist” published in *The Comrade* recorded the views of London thus:

Since that day I have opened many books, but no economic argument, no lucid demonstration of the logic and the inevitableness of Socialism affects me as profoundly and convincingly as I was affected on the day when I first saw the walls of the Social Pit Rise around me and felt myself slipping down, down, into the shambles at the bottom. (London 365)

London’s novels are full of examples of his individualistic ethics. London's *The Call of the Wild* is a Marxist tale of Buck presented as the super-dog fighting against the forces of oppression and violence. He is an allegorical hero of London giving the message of power, unity, and strength to fight with the forces of capitalism. London argued that the weak and the coward have no place in society. John Steinbeck imitated Jack London and wrote the protest novels. Both White Fang and Buck in *The Call of the Wild* may be managed by brute force, but then it is only their bodies that are made subservient. They become far more efficient workers when they become emotionally attached to their owners. For Buck, John Thornton is the perfect manager:

Other men saw to the welfare of their dogs from a sense of duty and business expediency; he saw to the welfare of his as if they were his own children, because he could not help it. And he saw further. He never forgot a kindly greeting or a cheering word, and to sit down for a long talk with them ('gas' he called it) was as much his delight as theirs. (61)

London was the main inspiration of John Steinbeck who highlighted the devastating effects of capitalism. Steinbeck expressed his sympathy and moral concern to depict the plight of the outsiders, the alienated, the defeated, and the oppressed working class. Steinbeck launched a vigorous attack on the merchants and bankers and money lenders denouncing the capitalist doctrine promoting greed, profit, exploitation, and materialistic instincts" (Murchand 5). He wrote "*The Grapes of Wrath* is about the Joad family consisting of Ma and Pa Joad and their six children. Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* is a revolutionary novel challenging the American literary culture which never represented the working classes" (Rideout 34). Nicholas Coles and Janet Zandy (2007) highlighted the revolutionary nature of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Marx discusses in detail the concept of surplus value and the roots of class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariats thus:

At first sight a commodity presented itself to us as a complex of two things-use-value and exchange-value. Later on, we saw also that labour, too, possesses the same two-fold nature; for, so far as it finds expression in value, it does not possess the same characteristics that belong to it as a creator of use-values. I was the first to point out and to examine critically this two-fold nature of the labour contained in commodities. As this point is the pivot on which a clear comprehension of Political Economy turns, we must go more into detail. (Vol. I 10)

The workers have to get united to battle with the oppressive institutions of capitalism. Kazin in his book *Jack London and His Science Fiction* (1924) observes that "It is examined that violence is the main trait of the heroes of London which

brings success and dignity to the heroes of London. Violence expressed the truth of life. It was violence that the greatest characters came to life” (87). The novel *The Call of the Wild* gives the message of omnipotence and self-confidence. Buck is not an ordinary dog but has allegorical and symbolical significance. London has dramatized the class conflict through the character and participation of Buck. The exceptional dog plays several roles to fight the forces of capitalism. He is very cunning and diabolical in nature exhibiting his ferocity and cruelty. He has an exceptional skill to fight with his master. He emerges as a superhero in the novel. The novel became very popular in America as millions of copies were sold and the American youth was thrilled by the passage: “He did not pause to worry the victims, but ripped it passing, with the next bound tearing wide open the throat of a second man” (London 98).

Jack London believed firmly that the best way to fight the capitalists was the untitled organization. He wrote tales and novels to propagate the theories of Marxism. Interestingly, London belonged to the grassroots level. He had done menial jobs in the mills and factories. He had closely observed the sufferings of the workers employed by the rich capitalists. The critics contend that London was the first American novelist who understood the pulse of the American working class and used the simple style to depict the miserable condition of the working people. Jack London started writing the novel and produced his masterpiece and became an international celebrity. His second wife Charmian London declared (1921) thus: “It was a story that was destined to ring around the world and be treasured in the universities of his country as a jewel of English Literature” (225).

The critics and the reviewers of Jack London wrote positive responses to London’s new novel. Kershaw wrote: “It was instantly hailed as a “classic enriching American literature; a spellbinding animal story.” (24). Alex Kershaw in his book *Jack London* (1997) commented thus: “The novel was a brilliant dramatization of the law of nature” (24). Hamilton W. Mabie in his book *The Fort Worth Telegram* (1903) observed that “Too many, it was above all, an absorbing tale of wild life, full of pictorial power and abounding in striking incidents of a frontier town, camp, and an adventure” (Mable 4). James Lundquist (1987) observes that “London’s novel *The*

*Call of the Wild* was a kind of experiment in which he wanted to test what happens to men and beasts when they are thrust into the wild, savage, frozen-hearted Northland Wild” (78). He further added that the novel gives the message to man how to survive in the wild. Granville Hicks (1935) contends that “for men whose lives industrial society has made and ugly and narrow, London provided the relief of vicarious adventure. He could take these people into a dreamland of heroic opportunity” (196). Jack London’s novel *The Call of the Wild* excited great interest among the critics. Walker commented thus, “The part of the Buck that Jack London was escaping from the confining elements in society. For the contemporary reader, the call represents the tug on all civilized men to get away from routine tasks, to find adventure in nature far from cities and family responsibilities” (228).

Earl J. Wilcox confirms that “Buck’s quest for life in the primitive environment is at the core of the novel” (13). Tavriner and Courbin (1969) observed that “the novel *The Call of the Wild* is regarded as the masterpiece of Jack London. It is unique in its appeal to readers of all ages, social classes, and civilization” (28). Liu Ningning (2009) concentrates on the themes of the novel. He loves naturalism and the main theme is the survival of the fittest. Buck has to fight for food, water, and leadership. Jack London in his *War of the Classes* observes that “class struggle in a society is inevitable and the big fish always eat the small fish” (21). Mark Seltzer (1992) examined the superman traits of Buck in the novel. He is bold, daring, and adventurous. Cai Yigan (2009) holds that “*The Call of the Wild* dramatizes the Marxian ideology through the plot of the novel” (12). Marx observes thus in his *The Communist Manifesto*:

It is the prime impeachment of socialism that the struggle is a class struggle. The working class, in the process of social evolution, is bound to revolt from the sway of the capitalist class and to overthrow the capitalist class. This is the menace of socialism, and in affirming it and in tallying an adherent of it. (3)

The plot is loaded with the images of primitivism, individualism, and the feature of superhuman Nietzsche. Christopher P. Wilson comments thus: “we encounter a dog

de-civilized into a wolf, yet one clubbed into the experience. Buck the wolf, therefore, is educated into a language of survival and toughness, much like many London heroes” (198). At the heart of the novel are the struggles of the working people who are ill-treated by the rich businessmen. Socialistic steps, of course, were hardly compatible with the thinking of the new frontier but were being accepted by some, instead of escape through romantic fiction, -as a real solution. The privileged few who took, part in emigrations apprehended the actual romance, if not the wealth, which their immobile neighbours could only dream about, and they were seldom disposed to either social reform or romantic fiction. The allegorical pattern of the novel is very impressive and is a convenient methodology to articulate the social vision of London. The novel is famous for its critical examination of the structure of society and the application of Marxian ideology. London's *The Call of the Wild* depicts the issues such as labor theory, alienation, reification, and the theory of value and the class antagonism of Karl Marx. The themes of oppression and resistance dominate the plot of the novel. Buck and his relationship with the traffickers are faithfully and vividly portrayed by London. Buck, the wonder hero of *The Call of the Wild* throws off sloth of civilization, and becomes, a specimen of strength and vitality. During the first four years of his life, the dog lives the life of a sated aristocrat as his physical being becomes adapted to the strain and hardship of the Arctic, he grows physically excellent mentally shrewd and indomitable. Similar to London's human heroes, Buck is Jack London symbolically an exploited person. Each novel of London is packed with images of social revolution and transformation. He refers to the special devices that structure his tales and novels helping him to give a critique of the capitalist society of America. His focus in “each of his novels is to give an analysis of the sociological climate of a culture” (Geismer 140). At the age of eighteen, London was frustrated with the futility of the labour market. During his lifetime, he had witnessed and read about the historical march of Jacob S. Coxey who inspired the youth of America to unite and fight against the forces of capitalism. Coxey called for direct government action to help the millions of unemployed workers. Jack London used his writing potential to serve the working classes. He was passionate to uproot the evils of capitalism and for this, he needed to change the mind of the people. He delivered several lectures; he wrote novels to propagate his

ideas of socialism. He read Das Capital of Marx and made of his mind to spread the cult of Marxism. There is a large number of critics such as E.P Thompson, Louis Althusser, Ralph Miliband, and George Lukacs and Michale Foucault, and Zizek who believe in Marxian ideology.

Jack London wrote *The Call of the Wild* after the trip to London slum in which he crated his canine hero; a Nietzschean superman whose spirit could not break. He wanted to create a hero who could fight bravely and endure all the calamities of weather having the strong motivation to win the battle of life. London wrote the novel at a time when the forces of capitalism were very powerful. With the expansion of trade and industry new business culture emerged. Thorstein Veblen in his book *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (1904) reveals the insidious nature of the institutions of the capitalists. London lived in an age of business enterprise in which the scope and method are supplied by the machine. The emphasis was on standardization. Veblen observes that “Human beings are no exception to the standardization” (11).

Buck is a large dog, “weighting only one hundred and forty pounds-for his mother Shep had been a Scotch shepherd dog” (Jack London, *The Call of the Wild* 9). He belonged to California and lived in Santa Clara Valley. He lived here for four years like a king because he was neither “house-dog nor kennel dog. The whole realm was his” (9). His sufferings began when the gardener Manuel kidnapped him and sold him to pay off his debts. He often clubbed to teach him to obey authority. London expresses the agony of Buck thus: “Never in all his life had he been so vilely treated, and never in all his life had he been so angry. But his strength ebbed, his eyes glazed...” (11). Buck was subjected to all forms of torture, he experienced “intolerable pain from throat and tongue” (13). He was sold to Perrault who was a Canadian courier and later on Francois took him to Klondike. Buck is presented as the superior hero having the potential to perform multiple roles in the world of Northland. He learns the art to survive in an oppressive society. “Yet once he has absorbed this blow to his dignity, he discovers that “though the work was hard...he did not particularly despise it” (55).



Gradually, he accommodated himself to the harness and experienced “the nameless, incomprehensible pride of the trail and the trace-that pride which holds dogs in the toil to the last grasp” (80). His attitude towards work is ambivalent. Two dogs Dave and Sol-leks are passionate workers devoted to their nature of work. They are “utterly transformed by the harness. The labor of rail-trail seemed the supreme expression of their being” (55). Francois and Perrault are inspiring leaders as under the leadership the work gets harder “more routine, and less rewarding. Though Buck continues to take pride in it” after the manner of Dave and So-leks” (110). As the plot progresses “it is found that Buck takes pride in his work as he takes delight to join” (83).

Buck learned new things every day and became used to his new life. He learned to pull a sledge. The Huskies killed Curly, a dog that travelled together with Buck, and this tragic death taught Buck that he must be careful so he learned the typical ways of the new environment including the art of pulling a sledge. In a team of sledge dogs, Buck saw Spitz’s “white teeth broke its back in mid-air,” the dogs raised “a hell’s chorus of delight” (92) and the death struggle was on. Buck “seemed to remember it all; the white woods, and earth, and moonlight, and the thrill of battle. Over the whiteness and silence brooked a ghostly calm” (93). Spitz sees “the silent circle, with gleaming eyes, lolling tongues, and silvery breaths drifting upward, closing in upon him as he had seen similar circles close in upon beaten antagonists in the past” (99) until finally “the dark circle became a dot on the moon-flooded snow as Spitz disappeared from view” (99). In this case, Marx observes thus, “The work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is the simplest, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him (38-39).

Buck is made to learn the values of the club symbolizing the destructive tendencies of capitalism. When Buck sees Curly murdered, he becomes cautious and gives the old beliefs of “rest and laziness.” He learns that life is a continuous struggle in the competitive society of capitalism. His battle with Spitz typifies the fact that only the fittest leader will survive. When “Francois and Perrault make Sol-leks the new team leader, Buck feels indignant. Buck believes it was his by right. He had

earned it, and would not be content with less” (25). On the surface, the plot of the novel is about the adventures of Buck but the critical analysis of the text reveals the class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie. Buck becomes a sledge leader and a new relationship with the labor class is established. London was a tramp when he wrote this novel. He was sentenced to thirty days by a judge in thirty seconds of hearing. He was handcuffed, shaved, and put in convict stripes. He like his dog hero Buck learned the rule of the club revolutionizes their moral universe. The capitalist survives on the exploitation of the labor class. Marx observes in *Das Capital II* volume thus about the exploitation of labor:

Why, if the laborer can be brought to feed on potatoes instead of bread, it is indisputably true that more can be exacted from his labor, that is to say if when he fed on bread, he was obliged to retain for the maintenance of himself and family the labor of Monday, and Tuesday, he will, on potatoes, require only the half of Monday; and the remaining half of Monday and the whole of Tuesday are available either for the service of the state or the capitalist. (26)

Marx is the father of modern science of economic relationships as he spent his whole life arriving at a scientific analysis of modern economic life. He explored in his writings the scientific analysis of capitalism as a system. Buck “speaks about the tough work under the Scotch half-bread and he took pride in it after the manner of Dave and Sol-leks and seeing that his mates...did their fair share” (27). Karl Marx (2004) observes thus about the working conditions of the workers:

They feel at home when they are not working and away from home when they are working. Their work is therefore not voluntary but forced: obligatory work. Finally, the externality of the work appears to workers as if the work were not their own, but belonged to another person, and as if it did not belong to them, but to another person. Thus, in the way that religion and people’s internal fantasies of the brain and heart act independently of the individuality of individuals and on them, i.e., as strange, divine, or diabolical activities; likewise,

worker's activities are not their own activities. They belong to others and are lost to the workers themselves. (82)

In California, Buck led a lazy and meaningless life. Jack London observes this in *White Fang* (1944): "Denied their usual food supply, weakened by pangs of hunger they fell upon and devoured one another, only the strong survived" (179). When Buck is living in California and a kind master gives him the food the problem of survival does not exist but when he is transferred to the North, he learns to steal meat from other dogs and learnt the art to survive. The moral sense is lost and he behaves like a dominant primordial beast" (110). Furthermore, "The blood-longing became stronger than ever before. He was a killer, a thing that preyed, living on the things that lived, unaided, alone by virtue of his own strength and prowess, surviving triumphantly in a hostile environment where only the strong survived" (77).

Jack London has depicted the theory of alienation of Marxism through the character of Buck. He is alienated from his labour force following the principles of Marxism. He is sure that a day will come when all the forces of capitalism will be destroyed. He led a luxurious life and was considered a part of the bourgeoisie. When he was kidnapped and sold away, he becomes stronger and abandoned all his laziness since he had to survive. He learnt the law of the club and the fang: when he saw Curly killed by the other dogs. His fight with Spitz gave him new learning as he came to believe that only strong would survive. Buck believed "it was his by right, and would not be content with less" (25). Buck found himself in a micro-society of sorts on the sledge team; he was disturbed to know that the society is not ruled by rules but by the force of power structure. All the conflicts in civil society are settled by co-operation and arguments but in the new society of Buck, the fittest survived.

Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (1908) depicts the passionate desire of London for a socialist revolution. The novel is considered as an epitome of the Bolshevik Revolution about America. The storyline is the expression of his socialist views and their application to the capitalist society of America. The plot is remarkable for its multi-layered dimensions and for the autobiographical narrative of Avis Everhard, who was a renowned socialist. In the first section of the novel, Avis's meeting with

Ernest is described and London gives hints of the early socialist uprisings. He uses the word “Oligarchy” to describe the destructive hegemony of the capitalists thus, “One of the decays of self-seeking capitalism, it was held, would arise that follower of the ages, the Brotherhood of Man. Instead of which, appalling alike to us who look back and to those that lived at the time, capitalism, rotten –ripe, sent forth that monstrous offshoot, Oligarchy” (Jack London, *The Iron Heel* 5).

The social and political situations greatly influenced Jack London so it is essential to understand the genesis of the novel. It is essential to understand the genesis of the novel *The Iron Heel*. When London wrote this novel, he was shocked to witness the social and political unrest. There was a class conflict in America as the rich were becoming richer and the poor were jobless and neglected by the capitalists. The phrase “Iron Heel” is very effective in the novel symbolizing the oppressive power structure of the capitalists. The capitalists crushed the workers with their steel boots. They could be thrown away from their jobs and there was no law to protect their wages and life. Raymond Williams gave his theory of hegemony elaborating the meaning of hegemony in *Culture and Materialism* as:

It is whole body of practices and expectations...It is a set of meanings and values which as they experience as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most of their lives. (38)

London’s *The Iron Heel* is a heart-rending story of the oppressed working classes and the culture of Socialism. London has documented the rise of the organization of the workers against the capitalist Oligarchy. Everhard is portrayed as the champion of the movement of the proletariat. He is symbolized as the spirit of revolt. The capitalists exploited the workers who treated the workers like animals. Everhard is the main narrator who launched a struggle against the forces of capitalism. C. H. Grattan (1929) observes that “the novel *The Iron Heel* is replete with many faults; the novel is aimed at documenting the imminent class conflict, but it becomes bogged

down in the characterization of Everhard as the hero of the movement” (669). Geismar observes that “London’s *The Iron Heel* is unique among London’s works as it followed a new line which included Aldous Huxley’s novel *Brave New World* and George Orwell’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*” (163). Anthony Meredith says: “the utterance of a single word could negate the generalizations of serious research and think. Such a word was the adjective utopian” (334). Leon Trotsky, in his book *Literature and Revolution*, noted that Jack London “not only absorbed creatively the impetus given by the first Russian Revolution of 1905 but also courageously thought over again in its light the fate of capitalist society as a whole...” (123). Trotsky further argues that London was far in advance of

All the social-democratic leaders of the time taken together. Beyond that however, at the time of the novels’ writing, not one of the revolutionary Marxists, not exceeding Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, imagined so fully the ominous perspective of the alliance between finance capital and labor aristocracy. This suffices in itself to determine the specific weight of the novel. (123)

Everhard in his speeches mentions the fallacies of the capitalist economic system. He predicts a bloody class conflict as the power of the Oligarchy is increasing and the workers are being crushed under the steel boots. K Whipple (1943) exposed the “oppressive policies of the capitalists who opposed the rising trends of the socialists. London’s *The Iron Heel* is symbolical of the current of Marxian Revolution and the novel was welcomed by the working classes as the Bible of the poor and the downtrodden” (102).

The plot of the novel begins with the journey of Avis; her transformation from the capitalist to the socialist; her association with Ernest and her contribution to the growth of the Socialist Revolution. London has dramatized the love affair of Ernest and Avis to build up the interest in the novel since the main current of the novel is political and socialistic. She comes under the influence of the Marxian ideas of Ernest and joins him in the Socialist uprisings. They fight the capitalist machine but at last, are crushed by the iron heels of Oligarchy. Jack London depicts the plight of Ernest thus:

Small wonder that I am restless. I think, and think, and I cannot cease from thinking. I have been in the thick of life so long that I am oppressed by the peace and quiet, and I cannot forbear from dwelling upon that mad maelstrom of death and destruction so soon to burst forth. In my ears are the cries of the stricken; and I can see, as I have seen in the past, all the marring and mangling of the sweet, beautiful flesh, and the souls torn with violence from proud bodies and hurled to God. Thus, do we poor humans attain our ends, striving through carnage and destruction to bring lasting peace and happiness upon the earth. (7)

The text begins with a forward from Anthony Meredith who is a scholar from “Brotherhood of Man”, an old organization. “Little did I dream the fateful part Jackson’s arm was to play my life” (3) says, Avis. In the chapter entitled: “Jackson’s Arm” London expresses his passion for socialism thus: “The more I thought of Jackson’s, the more shaken I was” (41). Jack London dramatizes the scenes of loss, death, void, fragmentation through the imagery of the loss of arm of Jackson. Avis introduces Ernest Everhard thus: “We have with us a member of the working class” (8). She further comments thus: “His behavior was what was to be expected by a member of the working class” (51). Everhard argues:

There is a greater strength than wealth, and it is greater because it cannot be taken away. Our strength, the strength of the proletariat, is in our muscles, in our hands to cast ballots, in our fingers to pull triggers. This strength we cannot be stripped of. It is the primitive strength, it is the strength that is to life germane, it is the strength that is stronger than wealth, and that wealth cannot take away. (110)

Ernest Everhard is described “as a member of the working class of the Philomath Club” (51). She “perceives him as a natural aristocrat and this even though he was in the camp of the non-aristocrats” (8). Ernest is hailed thus: “He had been in the working class; through he was a descendant of the old line of Everhard that for over two hundred years had lived in America” (19). He is a member of the proletariat; the

messiah of the working class of America. Ernest Everhard “belongs to the suburbs like Jackson. He earns a “meagre living by intellectual work translating scientific and philosophical works and collecting royalties from his own economic and philosophical works” (19). London has described the traces of his social climb. Avis talks of his “rise in society” (53). Karl Marx (1844) expresses his opinion thus, “It is a question of what the proletariat is, and what in accordance with the being, it will historically be compelled to do?” (*The Holy Family* 37).

At her first dinner party at Berkeley, California, Avis meets Ernest for the first time and is deeply impressed by his ideas and the dashing personality of Everhard. She falls in love with him. Avis says: “You see, I was a creature of environment, and at that time had strong class instincts.” London presents Everhard and his profile thus:

We know that Ernest Everhard was an exceptionally strong man, but not so exceptional as his wife thought him to be. He was, after all, but one of a large number of heroes who, throughout the world, devoted their lives to the Revolution; thought it must be conceded that he did unusual work, especially in his elaboration and interpretation of working-class philosophy. Proletarian science and proletarian philosophy were the phrases for it, and therein he shows the provincialism of the mind—a defect, however, that was due to the times and that none in that day could escape. (3)

Avis is basically from the elite class having the instincts of the capitalists. Karl Marx observes as, “Thus, the highest development of productive power...would coincide with the depreciation of capital and the degradation of labour, and these regularly recurring catastrophes...would lead to their repetition on a higher scale and finally to its violent overthrow” (*Economic Manuscripts of 1957* 133).

She is disturbed because the company gave no compensation to Jackson for the loss of his arm. Avis lashes at the oppressive structure of the capitalist system thus: “The case would not have been decided against him had there been no more to the affair than you have mentioned” (41). Ironically, Jackson is called guilty but in

reality, he is suffering mentally and physically. She goes to his lawyer to investigate the matter and to seek legal opinion in the case of Mr. Jackson. The lawyer says: “All my reading and studying of law books have taught me that law is one thing and right is another thing. Ask any lawyer. You go to Sunday school to learn what is right. But you go to those books to learn law” (47). Avis’s approach is capitalistic. She holds the ideology of the bourgeoisie. She admits the impact of new experiences on her mind and sensibility, “I was confronted by the concrete. For the first time, I was seeing life. My university life, and study and culture, had not been real. I had learned nothing but theories of life and society that looked all very well on the printed page, but now I had seen life itself” (59).

Jack London has depicted the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariats and the growing discontentment of the working classes. Avis’s journey from childhood to adulthood is conspicuous in the novel. London has depicted the scenes of change in her behaviour and attitude and her new perceptions and ideas about life. Ernest exposes the false bourgeoisie culture of Avis thus:

You herd with the capitalist class in another locality. And why not? It is the capitalist class that pays you, that feeds you, that puts the very clothes on your backs that you are wearing to-night. And in return, you preach to your employers the brands of metaphysics that are especially acceptable to them, and the especially acceptable brands are acceptable because they do not menace the established order of society. (16)

William James observes thus: “Our minds thus grow in spots...but we let them spread as little as possible: we keep unaltered as much of our old knowledge, as many of our old prejudices and beliefs, as we can” (168). James argues that the cultural transformation began with the emergence of science and technology in America after World War I. He comments thus: “When the individual experiences something new, the mind must take that pragmatic truth into account, which may mean the complete shift of beliefs” (168). He continues: “New truths are resultants of “new experiences and of old truths combined and mutually modifying one another”



(James 169). Avis is also impacted by the forces of change as she explores the flaws in the judicial system. Avis calls Ernest a “superman, a blond beast such as Nietzsche has described” (6). Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* becomes a superman through the fact that there is no God. Despite contradictions, the religious language flows through the text of *The Iron heel*. In the words of Aaron Shaheen, “Given Ernest’s near-one dimensionality, his occasional reference to the Bible in Avis’s company provides a sharp counterpart to his scientific idealism: as a result, this tension creates the impurities that in turn give Ernest some glimmer of inferiority” (48).

Ernest symbolizes the force of socialism operating in the world of America. He is the eye of the camera and all socialistic ideas are expressed through his commitment to Socialism. There is chaos and disorder among the rank and file of the leaders. Ernest Everhard tries to achieve unity and solidarity the intellectual strength is drained away from the working classes. Plotting, conspiracies, and killings take place in the course of the Socialist Revolution. Avis describes the revolutionary secret service thus, “In the shadow world of secret service, identity was nebulous. Like ghosts, the agents came and went, obeying commands, fulfilling duties, following clues, making their reports often to officers they never saw or co-operating with other agents they had never seen before and would never see again” (194).

Avis becomes very active in expressing her passion to strengthen the socialistic commune in American capitalist society. She warns the bourgeoisie to take care of the interest of the working classes who are forming a strong organization to fight against the power structure of the capitalists. Robert C Tucker in his book *The Marx-Engels Reader* (1978) observes thus: “The relationship of the worker to labour engenders the relation to it of the capitalist, or whatever one chooses to call the master of the labour” (76). Jack London observes thus in *The War of the Classes*:

Man being man and a great deal short of the angels, the quarrel over the division of the joint product is irreconcilable. For the last twenty years in the United States, there has been an average of over a thousand strikes per year; and year by year these strikes increase in magnitude, and the front of the labor army grows more imposing. And

it is a class struggle, pure and simple. Labor as a class is fighting with capital as a class. (7)

London concluded that only the Marxian ideology can solve the problems of the workers who are denied the rights and are exploited in every possible manner. He expressed his socialistic vision in his *The War of the Classes* thus, “It is distinctively revolutionary, and in scope and depth is vastly more tremendous than any revolution that has ever occurred in the history of the world” (London 123).

Jack London continues his commitment to fighting for the working classes and in each novel, he depicted the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. He articulated the mood of the people thus in his *The War of the Classes* thus:

Their aim, is to organize the working class, and those in sympathy with it, into a political party, with the object of conquering the powers of government and of using them for the purpose of transforming the present system of private ownership of the means of production and distribution into collective ownership by the entire people. (19)

London investigated the theories of Karl Marx and their significance and relevance in contemporary society. He realized that the time has come to resolve the problems of the working classes. Marx and Engels observed that work lost all appearance of personal manifestation in capitalism:

It is only through appropriating of the personal instruments of production would it be possible to achieve personal manifestation. Marx further argues that only in this state would personal manifestation coincide with material life, which would correspond to the transformation of individuals into complete individuals. (Jack London, *Martin Eden* 93)

Lundquist (1900) observes thus: “This is by far the best piece of work which has come from this gifted author. The critics observe that the plot of *Martin Eden* is replete with autobiographical elements. Ruth Morse is the model of his beloved

Mabel Applegate. In his novel *White Fang*, London created a character who is forced to live in a harsh environment and struggles for survival in the oppressive capitalist society portrayed as the jungle of life. Walcutt, Charles Child (1966) observes thus:

Hated by his kind and by mankind, indomitable, perpetually warred upon and himself waging perpetual war, his development was rapid and one-sided. ... The code he learned was to obey the strong and to oppress the weak. ... He became quicker of movement than the other dogs, swifter of foot, craftier, deadlier, more lithe, more lean iron-like muscle and sinew, more enduring, more cruel, more ferocious, and more intelligent. He had to become all these things; else he would not have held his own nor survived the hostile environment in which he found himself. (43).

*Martin Eden* is simple in plot structure. The main theme is the quest of a rude and uncouth man to civilize and educate himself. Martin Eden is a simple sailor. Frederic Tabor Cooper (1909) observes that "the hero moves from port to port with no ambitions, no standards, no definite scheme of life, companioned by vile man and viler women." (212). The main focus of the novel is to depict the impact of bourgeois individualism on the working classes. Sometimes during his travels, he obtained a copy of *The Communist Manifesto* which was to provide him with the basis of his socialist thinking throughout the rest of his life. From this revolutionary pamphlet, London found that his own experiences in the class struggle were no accident. He learned that all history had been a conflict between opposing forces and that he lived in the era of the final conflict. The part of *The Communist Manifesto* which excited Jack London was the powerful battle cry:

The socialist's disdain to conceal their aims and views They openly declare their ends can be attained only by a forcible overthrow of all existing conditions. Let the ruling class tremble at the socialistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They, have a world to gain, working men of all countries, unite. (Marx 44)

The main focus of Jack London is on the narration of the ugliness of the capitalist system. The tragic journey of Martin Eden is symbolic of the struggles of the working classes in capitalist America. In the first pages of the novel, Martin Eden is presented as an aesthete with a passion for beauty and knowledge. He struggles to raise his social status as he meets Ruth Morse and her family. When he enters the house Ruth, he notices a pile of books lying on a table. London depicts his reaction thus: "Into his eyes leaped a wistfulness and a yearning as promptly as the yearning leaps into the eyes of a starving man at the sight of food" (1). His meeting with a middle-class University student Ruth Morse brings drastic transformation in his life. London was greatly influenced by the ideas and ideology of Karl Marx who observed thus:

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. (qtd. in *Early Marx* 23)

He says: "Ruth was a pale, ethereal creature, with wide, spiritual blue eyes and a wealth of golden hair. She was a spirit, a divinity, a goddess; such sublimated beauty was not of the earth" (4). During his rise, Martin is trapped into two worlds; the working class and the world of the upper-middle class bourgeoisie. He becomes intellectually successful, which empowers him to converse with members of the middle-class on their level. When he begins working with Joe in the laundry to earn enough money to continue writing, Martin shows distinct self-awareness, "Martin knew of the enormous gulf between him and this man- the gulf the books had made, but he found no difficulty in crossing back over that gulf. He had lived all his life in

the working-class world, and the *camaraderie* of labor was second nature with him” (85).

London expresses the mood of Martin thus when he leaves her home after the dinner: Martin “feels the prod of desire to win to the walk-in life whereon she trod” (9). Martin is a representative of the poor classes suffering the oppression of the power structure of the capitalist machinery. The gulf between Martin and Ruth is quoted as apparent and this antagonism forms the core of the novel. Martin makes some strides to bridge the chasm between himself and Ruth. But in this process, he moves away from his family and the ideals of Marxism. He speaks in a dialect quite different from the language and style of Ruth, “It wasn’t nothin’ at all... any guy ‘ud do it for another. That bunch of hoodlums was lookin’ for trouble, an’ Arthur wasn’t botherin’ ‘em none. They butted in on ‘m, an’ then I butted in on them an’ poked a few... I wouldn’t ‘a’ missed it for anything. When I seen” (11).

Martin belongs to the working class and his speech pattern is that of a poor working man. At this point, Martin is still tethered to his working-class culture, which is manifested through speech patterns. Ruth devoted himself to improve his language and manners. She teaches him the culture and mannerism of the bourgeoisie and no wonder Martin begins to leave his working-class brethren. Martin asks, ““but then, may not I be peculiarly constituted to write?” he queried, secretly exulting at the language he had used” (48). At this point, Martin is still financially insolvent, which allows him to identify with Joe and other members of the working-class. His financial struggles are their financial struggles, and so they operate under many of the same societal structures. The mental stress rises in him as he becomes aware of the real gulf between him and the world of Ruth:

He began to doubt that editors were real men. They seemed cogs in a machine There was no human editor at the other end, but a mere cunning arrangement of cogs that changed the manuscript from one envelope to another and stuck on the stamps... It was the rejection slips that completed the horrible machine likeness of the process... not one editor had given... proof of existence. (117-118)

According to William James's psychological theories, "conversion is essentially the profound changing of habits, both mentally and physically, leading to tensions and anxieties. In his quest for social status, he realizes that the force of Oligarchy will destroy his identity" (123). Karl Marx observes that "surplus-value of the capitalist class leads to profit and economic change" (Marx, *Das Capital II* 34). The scenes of class antagonism are distinctly dramatized by Jack London in the novel. The whole plot of the novel is regulated by the class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The idea that Marx has a vision of the good life may strike some readers as strange. After all, Marx did not think of himself as a visionary of the good society but as a social theorist who attempted to explain the nature of the modern social world and the dynamics of its history. Furthermore, Marx saw his social theory as underpinning a deflationary account of ethics according to which ethical ideas are determined by the needs of the prevailing economic structure. Terry Eagleton articulates his Marxian views and the relevance of Marxian ideology in the contemporary society. Our present economic situation gets even worse in Eagleton's eyes: capitalism, as a ruthless system of "cutthroat economic competition" (89), is itself responsible for "extravagant levels of unemployment and the millions of criminals now pent up in Western prisons" (29). By attempting to keep wages low, capitalist employers fight against the proletarian "wage earners" who attempt to push wage rates higher, thus leading to the inevitable Marxian revolution. Eagleton does not follow his own class conflict theory to its logical conclusions: "the proletariat's desire for an equal division of profit is itself responsible for massive unemployment due to the proletariat's advocacy of State-imposed minimum wage restrictions, collective bargaining, and other medieval guild privileges" (21).

The spirit of Socialism moves through the novel. Marx (1867) observes thus: "From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into fetters. Then begins the epoch of social revolution" (20). Marx contended that "art has a social role to play in the society and it is applied to spread proletarian ideology" (20). Tyson (2006) describes the Marxian ideology thus: "Thus, economics is the base on which the superstructure of social/political/ideological realities is built" (53-54). Soon, Martin gets the awareness of his social homelessness. The consternation fell on

him when he is rejected by Ruth. Martin gets new awareness when he visits the house of Ruth and he was inspired by the classics of the great philosophers of Socialism:

On the one shelf at the library, he found Karl Marx, Ricardo, Adam Smith, and Mill, and the abstruse formulas of the one gave no clue that the ideas of another were obsolete. He was bewildered, and yet he wanted to know. He had become interested, in a day, in economics, industry, and politics. Passing through the City Hall Park, he had noticed a group of men, in the centre of which were half a dozen, with flushed faces and raised voices, earnestly carrying on a discussion. He joined the listeners, and heard a new, alien tongue in the mouths of the philosophers of the people. One was a tramp, another was a labor agitator, a third was a law-school student, and the remainder was composed of wordy workingmen. For the first time he heard of socialism, anarchism, and single tax, and learned that there were warring social philosophies. (37)

Martin is the victim of a divided habitus, which Markov defines as “the conflict within a person drawn to two classes but truly belonging to neither” (20). This is the point in the novel in which Martin’s suicide becomes inevitable. Alone, metaphorically homeless, Martin begins a descent into an abject depression from which he never returns. Renny Christopher (2002) in her article: *Rags to Riches to Suicide: Unhappy Narratives of Upward Mobility* observes thus, “The fortitude needed for the struggle [to be upwardly mobile] is fostered by working-class culture, but it is the working-class culture one must abandon to achieve upward mobility and fit into the middle-class world one has achieved” (6).

The growing capitalism led to the growth of greed; profit hunting and accumulation of wealth. This was the period when the philosophy of Karl Marx became popular and the workers took a keen interest in the Marxian ideology to fight with the forces of capitalism and the oppressive power structure. In this study, the researcher has taken a fresh perspective of the proletariat consciousness of Jack London.

Jack London's *The Sea Wolf* is another way of dealing with the theme of social revolution. The plot is analyzed in this study from the perspectives of Marxism. The story is narrated by Humphrey Van Weyden who is a writer and a critic rescued by the captain of the Ghost Wolf Larsen. He describes the storm saying: "Old Mother Nature's going to get up on her hind legs" (Jack London, *The Sea Wolf* 605). He boasts that he has independent income: "Who earned it, eh? I thought so. Your father. You stand on dead man's legs. You've never had any of your own" (500). London alludes to the artificial legs depicting the plight of the workers. "Stumping gallantly on mechanical limbs just before the ferry founders, the seaman helps women don life jackets, at the same time expressing disgust at their behaving hysterically, screaming wildly, and losing control as he undertakes to calm them down" (485). Maud Brewster admits the reality of the sufferings of the workers: "we may be feeble land- creatures without legs" (66). Maud Brewster realizes as if "for the first time what a delicate, fragile creature a woman is" (620). She expresses her anguish thus:

I was surprised, and joyfully, that she was so much the woman, and the display of each trait and mannerism that was characteristically feminine gave me keener joy. For I had been elevating her too highly in my concepts of her, removing her too far from the plane of the human, and too far from me... I hailed with delight the little traits that proclaimed her only woman after all, such as the toss of the head which flung back the cloud of hair... She was woman, my kind, on my plane, and the delightful intimacy of kind, of man and woman, was possible, as well as the reverence and awe in which I knew I should always hold her. (687)

The most dramatic moment occurs in the life of Larsen when he is thrown overboard but he struggles to rise "to has feet" (584). He rises again to continue the struggle of his life: "Step by step, by the might of his arms, the whole pack of men striving to drag him back and down, he drew his body up from the floor till he stood erect. And then, step by step, hand and foot, he slowly struggled up the ladder" (588). He discusses his crippled leg endlessly and boasts of "learning to walk" (510). Poor



Weyden “sank helplessly” (516) and his “feet went out from under him” (547). He tried “to rise, but...was knocked back on hands and knees” (610) before “standing erect” (587). The scene of the struggle of Weyden and his crippled existence symbolizes the heart-rending struggles of the poor workers to survive. As a cub, White Fang learns the laws of the wild by experience:

The gray cub was not given to thinking – at least, to the kind of thinking customary of men. His brain worked in dim ways. Yet his conclusions were as sharp and distinct as those achieved by men. He had a method of accepting things, without questioning the why and wherefore. In reality, this was the act of classification. He was never disturbed over *why* a thing happened. *How* it happened was sufficient for him. (141)

Maud Brewster is also a tormented soul lying down "in the stern-sheets, on the bottom" (619), at the "verge of physical collapse" (621). After having escaped the ship, she is completely exhausted and "lies on her back on the hard deck, arms stretched out and whole body relaxed" (682). Van Weyden adds, "It was a trick I remembered of my sister, and I knew she would soon be herself again." (62). London has depicted the intellectual bankruptcy of Weyden: "He was firmly planted on his legs; his feet struck the deck squarely and with surety... Though this strength pervaded every action of his, it seemed but the advertisement of a greater strength that lurked within" (494). The most sensational and interesting part of the novel is when both Van Weyden and Wolf are seen engaged in discussion. The debate depicts the dissolution of Wolf's physical prowess:

“The curse of it is that I must lie here, conscious, mentally unimpaired, knowing that the lines are going down, breaking bit by bit communication with the world. I cannot see; hearing and feeling are leaving me; at this rate, I shall soon cease to speak; yet all the time I shall be here, alive, active, and powerless.”

"When you say you are here, I'd suggest the likelihood of the soul," "I said. "Bosh!" was his retort.

“It simply means that in the attack on my brain the higher physical centers are untouched. I can remember, I can think and reason. When that goes, I go. I am not. The soul?" He broke out in mocking laughter” (753).

Wolf gets exhausted and he still looks terrible and stiff like a rock. There is no change in his self as Jack London comments:

The man of him was not changed. It was the old, indomitable, terrible Wolf Larsen, imprisoned within that flesh which had once been so invincible and splendid. No more would he conjugate the verb to do in every mood and tense. To be was all that remained to him-to be, as he had defined death, without movement; to will, but not to execute; to think and reason and in the spirit of him to be alive as ever, but in the flesh to be dead, quite dead. (754)

Wolf is not competent to express his will and London has dramatized his intellectual bankruptcy in the novel. He is so much fractured in identity that he lacks the conversation skill and London writes:

The last line was down. Somewhere within that tomb of the flesh still dwelt the soul of the man. Walled by the living clay, that fierce intelligence we had known burned on; but it burned on in silence and darkness. And it was disembodied. To that intelligence, there could be no objective knowledge of a body. It knew nobody. The very world was not. It knew only itself and the vastness and profundity of the quiet and the dark. (764)

In the opening scene, Weyden plunges into cold water: "I could not swim a stroke. And I was alone, floating apparently in a gray primordial vastness. I confess that a madness seized me, that I shrieked aloud as the women had shrieked and beat the water with my numb hands" (487). The passage suggests the growing deflation of the self of Weyden. London describes the slavish mentality of Weyden thus, “And thus, it was that I passed into a state of involuntary servitude to Wolf Larsen. He was

stronger than I, that was all. But it was very unreal at the time. It is no less unreal now that I look back upon it. It will always be to me a monstrous, inconceivable thing, a horrible nightmare” (505).

Larsen’s face, his hands, and his entire body exhibit physical strength. He can jump “nine feet across the desk, and with the swing of one hand lift a deck hand off his feet” (14). The first chapters of the novel describe the actions of the characters that have taken place “during yesterday's second dog-watch" (523). He continues his conversation in the present tense: "Johansen, who is rather overcome by his promotion" (524); "Johnson seems to spend all his spare time" (536); "the speed we are making" (536); He expresses his psychological poignancy thus “The loneliness of the man is slowly being borne in upon me" (555); "My intimacy with Wolf Larsen increases" (555). In particular, Van Weyden's difficulties with Cooky are endless. He admits that "Mug ridge is becoming unendurable" (527). Later he admits that "not only does Thomas Mug ridge continue to hate me, but he has discovered a new reason for hating me" (580). Once seven mutinous sailors attacked Larsen but with his strength of a giant, he crushed the attackers, “Step by step, by the might of his arms, the whole pack of men striving to drag him back and down, he drew his body up from the floor till he stood erect. And then, step by step, hand, and foot, he struggled up the ladder” (138).

Wolf Larsen is an intellectual giant also; Van Weyden is surprised to see the pack of books in the racks in his bedroom by Shakespeare, Browning, Poe, and Darwin. He is shocked to know that Van has never worked in his life and had been living off his father’s money. Wolf Larsen understands the value of labour in pursuance of Marxian ideology and he criticizes Van Weyden for this attitude: “You stand on dead man’s legs. You’ve never had any of your own. You couldn’t walk alone between two sunrises and hustle the meat for your belly for three meals” (3). Wolf Larsen is projected as a spokesman of Marxian ideology who values work in life. Van Weyden is portrayed as an effete; weak in body indicative of frailty: “his muscles were small and soft, like a woman’s or so the doctors had said time and again in the course of their attempts to persuade me to in for physical culture fads” (4). Marx observes that idleness is cancerous in man; it drains the energies of the

spirit depriving him of gratification which is possible only through labour power. Wolf Larsen believes that man's usefulness is decided by his work as he explained to Van Weyden: "Your body was made for use" (15). Arguing that he doesn't have a purpose in life but "utility." In other simple words, a body is simply a tool to be used. Van Weyden is not used to working who feels uncomfortable: "I did not dream that work was so terrible a thing" (6). Wolf Larsen is not an idealist like Van Weyden; he is practical believing in the values of work essential for the growth of civilization. He doesn't believe in the empty ideas and conventions and has no faith in immortality as he says:

I believe that life is a mess. It is like yeast, a ferment, a thing that moves and may move for a minute, an hour, a year, or a hundred years, but that is, in the end, will cease to move. The big eat the little that they may continue to move, the strong eat the weak that they may retain their strength. The lucky eat the most and move the longest, that is all. (50)

Wolf Larsen uses the terms of revolution and Marxism. In economic terminology, he talks about demand and supply as the basic principle operating in the world. Larsen firmly believes that life is "the cheapest thing in the world" (68). Marx comments thus:

Labour is central to one's self-conception and sense of well-being. Labour is as much as an act of creation and the formation of one's identity as it is a means of survival. Capitalism as the system of private ownership of the means of production deprives human beings of this essential source of self – worth and identity and expropriates the products of their labour which are sold for profit. (66)

Wolf Larsen believes in the Marxian ideology and works hard day and night. His philosophy is consistent with his selfish individualism. Van Weyden became happier on the Ghost since he devoted himself to hard work. In Endeavor Island, both Van Weyden and Maud work hard to survive. They erect living quarters to protect themselves from cold, rain, and wild animals. Miss Maud is also excited with her

manual labour: “And yet Maud declared that she had never felt better off or stronger in her life. I knew this was true of myself” (31). He was full of excitement and a sense of achievement as he cried out” “I did it! I did It! With my own hands, I did it!” Wolf Larsen is a symbol of strong individuality and selfishness. Jack London destroys him in the novel to follow the dictates of Marxian ideology. He represents capitalism which thrives in selfishness and individual profit hunting. Wolf Larsen’s breakdown begins with severe attacks of headaches and subsequent blindness. He grows weak and is haunted by his death as he expresses his anguish, “Hump, I must get into my bunk. Lend me a hand, I’ll be all right in a little while. It’s those damn headaches, I believe. I was afraid of them. I had a feeling—no, I don’t know what I’m talking about. Help me into my bunk” (253).

Wolf Larsen is nervous and broken; becomes completely blind and is paralyzed. He is destroyed by Jack London and his fall symbolizes the destruction of individuality and all the capitalistic system operating in America. The hero of the novel is White Fang, a wolf-dog. White Fang has to face many trials and tribulations in his life and his life is an interesting history of transformation and assimilation becoming fully integrated into civilization. Jack London depicts the role of instinctive drives in the making of an individual. The will to survive is imperative and the instinctive drives condition the personality of man. He got the first emotional shock when his beloved broke up with him. Johnston says,

London’s greatest source of unhappiness was his ill-fated marriage. He was not in love with Bessie, and to complicate matters he fell in love with Anna Strunsky, a beautiful Jewish radical whom he had met through his socialist activities. He was anxious to encourage their friendship and yet felt embarrassed, like a barbarian, lacking in the cunning of speech and deftness of touch. (73)

London relies on the biological and genetic theory of Mendel characterizing the inheritance of White Fang in the novel. His appearance is described thus: “He was the one little grey cub of the litter. Nature had been more generous to him to the average animal, that was all” (137). There are two dominant characteristics in *White*

*Fang*; instincts and the learning capacity. He used his instincts of survival when he found himself in the frozen north of Alaska. Jack London argues that each individual in this universe is born to confront the force of nature. He has to struggle against the forces of oppression and exploitation. Jack London describes thus in *The War of the Classes*:

If between these two classes there be a clear and vital conflict of interest, all the factors are present which make a class struggle; but this struggle will lie dormant if the strong and capable members of the inferior class be permitted to leave that class and join the ranks of the superior class. The capitalist class and the working class have existed side by side and for a long time in the United States; but hitherto all the strong, energetic members of the working class have been able to rise out of their class and become owners of capital. (5)

The novel is the epitome of Marxian theory of survival as the plot echoes the survival of the fittest ideology again and again. White Fang realized that in the harsh environment “denied their usual food supply, weakened by hunger, they fell upon and devoured one another. Only the strong survived” (128). In the capitalistic system if the workers are not united, they would be crushed by the cruel capitalistic forces. White Fang became the leader of the dogs by strength. He adapted himself to the wilderness: “His dominant nature asserted itself, and he had to thrash the other dogs and forced them to acknowledge his superior position” (189). White Fang learned the art of defeating his enemy and overpowering the fear: “He had no conscious knowledge of death, but like every animal of the Wild, he possessed the instinct of death” (23). Marx (1998) uses the term “alienation to refer a situation in which our own activities and products appear to take on an independent existence and to be hostile powers working against us” (5). Marx observes that the bourgeoisie rule capitalist society by owning land and property and all the means of production. The proletariat has no option but to sell their labour power to survive in society and this process ultimately leads to his alienation and frustration (4).

Jack London's *The Valley of the Moon* (1910) projected the themes of socialism and social Darwinism in his novel *The Valley of the Moon* depicting the struggles of the life of Saxon Brown and Billy Roberts. They are laundress and teamsters and fall in love at first sight. The first section of the novel deals with their courtship and marriage. The third section deals with their flight from Oakland and searches for the fabled Valley of the Moon and the theme of naturalism. Billy finds life very hard in Oakland as he observes the helplessness of the working-class community. They lose their strength, beauty, and love in their struggle for survival in Oakland. London shows the miserable conditions of the workers in his novel; the overcrowded streets, lack of food supplies, and outbreak of diseases are common things. The working classes have to cope up with all these hardships. Billy expresses his disgust thus:

I like to hear about old people of the old days. My people were alone in there too, and somehow, I think it was a better world to live in than now... But it's like this: I don't understand life today. There are the labor unions and employers' associations and strikes, and hard times, and hunting for jobs and all the rest. (Jack London, *The Valley of the Moon* 53)

During the strike Billy becomes crazy, he begins to drink heavily and is filled with rage and violence. He is sent to jail for assault and battery and leaves Saxon to her fate. Now Saxon decides three things when her husband is in jail: she concludes that Oakland is a vicious trap, the city is not worth living. She must not conceive for more children and there is no justice in this world. The man-made world is full of evil so she must escape into the god-made world. She wants to go into the Valley of the Moon in quest of peace and harmony. When Billy comes out of jail, Saxon persuades him to leave the polluted city and seek his fortune in the countryside. In this part of the novel, London introduces his social Darwinism. They cross California and reach Oregon and are excited to find the Valley of the Moon at last. Billy begins the horse-trading business far away from the slums and dirt of Oakland. Billy and Saxon escape from the destructive forces of capitalism and are happy to confront the forces of Nature to survive. They are away from the snares of machine and industrialization and return to the rejuvenation of the land.

To conclude, Jack London's novels depict a multiplicity of Marxian ideas as he talks of historical materialism and class antagonism. The interesting thing about Jack London is his blending of naturalism with materialism following the ideology of Engels and Marx. During his lifetime, the naturalist philosophies toward socialist ends were very popular. Jonathan Berliner in his book *American Literary Realism* (2008) offers an interesting reading of the works of Jack London. He observes that "London became popular in America because he juxtaposed material history and class struggle as a dialectical one, with the social processes supported by the natural one" (60). London observed in his lifetime the brutalities of unbridled capitalism shaping the poor proletariat into an "abysmal brute" preparing for him to revolt against the bourgeoisie. Buck is created as a strong individual with the instincts of revolt and primitive strength. Karl Marx observes in his *Das Capital Vol, III* that "Capitalism would turn the worker into a crippled monstrosity" (461). Marx argues that when a man is estranged from himself, he becomes estranged from his co-workers:

The estrangement of man, and in fact every relationship in which man stands to himself, is realized and expressed only in the relationship in which a man stands to other men. Hence within the relationship of estranged labor each man views the other in accordance with the standard and the relationship in which he finds himself as a worker.  
(32)

Jack London wrote the story *The Strength of the Strong* in 1914 in which he depicted the evolution of civil society and the emergence of the class conflict discussed by Karl Marx. The story is set in primitive land dramatizing the conflict between the fish-eaters and the meat-eaters. The civil society; the concept of private property, labor, and wages were the result of the evolution of class antagonism and the strong and powerful were the rulers who oppressed and exploited the weak and the dependents. They are forced to obey the club and the fang and in this class conflict, the seeds of revolution are sown which will ultimately end capitalism. Jack London has dramatized the socialistic ideas of Marx through the allegorical story of Buck and his struggle in this novel.



Jack London dedicated his life and works for the cause of the poor and downtrodden workers exploited and oppressed by the capitalists of America. He was a real sufferer since he belonged to a poor family and had to work as a worker from one place to the other. He was greatly impacted by the Marxian ideology and he depicted the themes of class war in all his major novels.

## Chapter IV

### CAPITAL SOCIETY AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Fredric Jameson published *Marxism and Form* in 1971 and brought about the forces of postmodernism. He rejected the totality concept of Marx in the context of the American culture and observed that the Americans loved liberty and freedom. Marx had advocated even violence and asserted in his *Das Capital* that the end of capitalism is inevitable. Jameson supported the historical process of Marx but rejected his ideas about violence and capitalism. He argued that Marxism is acceptable in America and can help to alleviate the sufferings of the working classes but violence, force and totality have no place in American culture. In his *Marxism and Form*, Jameson “developed his own Left Marxism by bringing his Marxist critique taking into consideration the time and culture of postmodernism in his works Jameson says: “Marxism is a critical rather than a systematic philosophy. Jameson argued that Marxism presents a “correction of other positions rather than a doctrine of a positivistic variety existing in its own right” (121).

Jack London was the pioneer in America to investigate the operation of the forces of capitalism at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His theories of socialism were followed by Sinclair Lewis, John Steinbeck, Dos Passos, and Fredric Jameson in the 1960s. London advocated that Marxism is a part of American culture as Marxism is the only tenable ideology to fight with the oppressive forces of capitalism. John Steinbeck imitated Jack London and promoted the cause of the proletariats to heal the wounds of the fruit pickers. Dos Passos averred that the class struggle between the bourgeois and the proletariats has become an inescapable cultural reality in America. The emergence of capitalism was a revolutionary step in the culture of America. With the growth of huge industries, the workers in large numbers were employed by the guilds and the institutions. A large number of factories and mills were set up by the capitalists in America. With the massive growth of industrialization, the forces of capitalism dominated society.

The cultural transformation was the need of the hour. The old values were scrapped and money culture, greed, profit mongering flourished in America. According to Marx, “surplus-value of the capitalist class leads to profit and economic change. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was an inevitable reality of the capitalist society” (20). The structure of the society changes as the various guilds of the workers appeared. They had no security of jobs and the capitalists used force to crush them mercilessly. Jack London visualized the signs of social revolution in America. He travelled throughout America and championed the rights and freedom of the workers. Marx observes thus, “The antithesis of propertilessness and property, so long as it is not comprehended as the antithesis of labour and capital still remains an antithesis of indifference, not grasped in its active connection, its internal relation - an antithesis not yet grasped as a contradiction” (98).

Althusser argues that “ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (294). Althusser observes thus, “Ideology acts or functions in such a way that it recruits subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or transforms the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation” (301).

The workers took a keen interest in the Marxian ideology to fight with the oppressive power structure. London observed that there are two Americas; one enjoying all powers and positions and the owners of means of production and the other America populated by the miserable and wretched workers. Lukács believed that “the superstructure reflects the economic base, Italian Antonio Gramsci declares that a complex relationship exists between the base and the superstructure which he calls hegemony” (172). In the words of Malcolm Bradbury:

After 1945 the novel showed every sign of reasserting its realistic potential, its moral and social concern, its sense of life as progress. The lessons of the great moderns...had been taken, but they were

assimilated back into a spirit relative realism, and technical and epistemological questions were not strongly pressed. (10)

The capitalists use all strategies to oppress the workers; deny them the basic freedom of life. He opposed the concept of totality advocated by Althusser and George Lukacs who argue thus:

History as a totality (universal history) is neither the mechanical aggregate of individual historical events nor is it a transcendent heuristic principle opposed to the events of history, a principle that could only become effective with the aid of a special discipline, the philosophy of history. The totality of history is itself a real historical power - even though one that has not hitherto become conscious and has therefore gone unrecognized – a power which is not to be separated from the reality (and hence the knowledge) of the individual facts without at the same time annulling their reality and their factual existence. It is the real, ultimate ground of their reality and their factual existence and hence also of their knowability even as individual facts. (151)

Steven Lukacs (1985) states that “Marx’s vision of a future of society is extremely thin; vague and uninformative” (9). Jonathan Wolff (2005) avers that “although Marx provides the sharpest tools for criticizing the existing society he was mistaken in his arguments and assumptions” (3).

Marx theory of base and superstructure forms the backbone of his economic system. Marx investigated the economic ideas of Marx who gave secondary place to the institutions of law, marriage, religion, and literature. He believes that the pillar of each society is the economic structure as food, jobs and money are the prime needs of each individual. Marx lashes at the capitalistic system thus:

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of

struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed. (*Communist Manifesto* 3)

The “bourgeoisie creates a world after its image” (Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto* 9). The Marxists believe that “in the world of capitalism all human relationships are measured in terms of money and profit. Marx traces the history of mankind and contends that since antiquity there had been only two classes in the world; bourgeoisie and the proletariat” (Karl Marx, *Capital II* 24). The conflict was there in the beginning also between slaves and freemen, patricians and plebeians, lord and serfs (24). Marx states thus, “Consciousness is a social product. So, the realms of ideology, politics, law, morality, religion, and art are not independent but are an outcome of an individual’s material behaviour because Life is not determined by the consciousness, but consciousness by life” (*German Ideology* 51).

With the passage of time, he becomes aware of his exploitation and the oppressive policies of the bourgeoisie. He discusses his issues with his friends and comrades and soon the unity of the workers is launched in the name of the Socialist Revolution. So, the realms of ideology, politics, law, morality, religion, and art are not independent but are an outcome of an individual’s material behaviour because: “Life is not determined by the consciousness, but consciousness by life” (Marx, *German Ideology* 51). Georges Lukacs wrote *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) and *The Historical Novel* explored the relationship of the capitalist and the working class. In the western world, Raymond Williams gave a cultural materialist criticism relying on the theories of Marx. For Marx, the base of all societies is economic; it is all about money and who owns the means of production to make money. Out of these grows the superstructure that is determined by the base. Precisely, the shape of the superstructure depends upon the shape of the base. The law of society, ethics,

religion, art and culture, and political power comes under the superstructure. He talked of exploitation and poverty which were the real culprits in society. In *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845), Marx defended his theory of “Dialectical Materialism” and rejected the language of the thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis. Marx held that the world is material and materialism is “a realist philosophy of science as all matter in the universe consists of matter of motion” (53). Marx says that Hegel is concerned with “the process of the human brain” (53). Hegel’s ideas are based on dialectical idealism but the ideas of Marx are based on dialectical materialism. Marx argues that the world of production and economic activity dominates the society. To sustain itself, capitalism must spread its tentacles all over the world. Marx stated thus explaining the stages of revolution thus:

*The Critique the Gotha Programme* is mainly concerned with the Marxist theory of the state and socialist revolution. Marx revealed the class, exploitative nature of bourgeoisie state. He stated that between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. (95)

Jack London belonged to the lower class and his life experiences form the material of his novels. He had keenly observed the life of the working classes of America oppressed by the power structure of the capitalists. The workers were treated as slaves and they had no identity at all in the society. London earned name and fame through hard work. He lived in abject poverty and the greatest pride of London was to become rich and famous. He joined the Socialist Movement; wrote the famous book *The War of Classes* and delivered many lectures and shared the stage of the Socialist Party of America. He worked for the working classes and organized a movement to fight against the capitalist forces.

Jack London’s *The Call of the Wild* is an allegory of the conflict between capitalism and the proletariats. It is the first important novel of Jack London an epitome of the cultural transformation of America. The main hero of the novel is Buck who is the

super-dog. London depicts the struggles of the poor workers through his character. The message of Socialism is given through the struggles Buck. If the workers want to enjoy dignity and respect in the capitalist society, they have to follow the fruitful journey, Buck. They have to follow the million-dollar slogan of Karl Marx and the only way to fight capitalism is unity and strength. London portrayed Buck as the role model for the workers stating that weaklings have no place in the capitalist society. Marx's main argument is that the spirit of competition is generated by the capitalist in the workplace among the workers for his lust for profit. The workers unconsciously begin treating each other as objects. Workers degrade and objectify each other and this attitude is beneficial to the capitalists who don't want any unity in the workers. Following Marx, London is in favour of violence and force. He wants to spread the power and the dictatorship of the working classes. Marx (1970) clearly articulated in his book *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part 1 thus:

The means of production may be robbed directly in the form of slaves. But in that case, it is necessary that the structure of production in the country to which the slave is abducted admits of slave labour, or (as in South America, etc.) a mode of production appropriate to slave labour has to be evolved. (203)

London believes that “violence that the greatest characters came to life” (Kazin 87). His diabolical and cunning ferocity owe to the canine protagonist of *Batard*; a short story written by London in 1902. Buck is rough and tough and soon he learns the art of surviving in the harsh environment. He emerges as a fiend living in the natural world. The novel became very popular in America as millions of copies were sold and the American youth was thrilled by the following passage:

In a flash Buck knew it. The time had come. It was to the death. As they circled about, snarling, ears laid back, keenly watchful for the advantage, the scene came to Buck with a sense of familiarity. He seemed to remember it all, -the white woods, and earth, and moonlight, and the thrill of battle. Over the whiteness and silence brooded a ghostly calm. There was not the faintest whisper of air—

nothing moved, not a leaf quivered, the visible breaths of the dogs rising slowly and lingering in the frosty. (34)

When Jack London wrote his novel *The Call of the Wild*, he was in a deep economic crisis. His family suffered from acute poverty and the family was almost on the verge of starvation. He was a very hard-working boy but the forces of capitalism were very powerful and men like Jack London had no chance to flourish. He decided to go to Klondike in 1897 to seek his fortune. His efforts to find gold there failed and he was forced to come back because of his physical ailment. Jack London's wife Charmian London declared in *The Book of Jack London* (1921) thus: "It was a story that was destined to ring around the world and be treasured in the universities of his country as a jewel of English Literature" (225). The critics and the reviewers of Jack London wrote positive responses to London's new novel.

Alex Kershaw in his book *Jack London* (1997) commented thus: "The novel was a brilliant dramatization of the law of nature" (24). Hamilton W. Mabie in his book *The Fort Worth Telegram* (1903) observed that "Too many, it was above all, an absorbing tale of wild life, full of pictorial power and abounding in striking incidents of a frontier town, camp, and an adventure" (4). Granville Hicks in his book *The Great Tradition: An Interpretation of American Literature since the Civil War* (1935) contends that "for men whose lives industrial society has made and ugly and narrow, London provided the relief of vicarious adventure. He could take these people into a dreamland of heroic opportunity" (Hicks 196). Marx observes in his *The Communist Manifesto* thus, "The working class, in the process of social evolution, is bound to revolt from the sway of the capitalist class and to overthrow the capitalist class. This is the menace of socialism, and in affirming it and in tallying an adherent of it" (3).

Jack London was eighteen years old when entered the job market. He was greatly inspired by Jacob S. Coxey who called for direct government action to help the millions of unemployed workers. With the expansion of trade and industry new business culture emerged. Thorstein Veblen in his book *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (1904) showed the "importance of organization and the control of its members. London lived in an age of business enterprise in which the scope and



method are supplied by the machine. The emphasis was on standardization. Human beings are no exception to the standardization” (11).

Buck of *The Call of the Wild* belonged to California and lived at Santa Clara Valley. His sufferings began when the gardener Manuel kidnapped him and sold him. Buck’s agony is depicted thus: “Never in all his life had he been so vilely treated, and never in all his life had he been so angry. But his strength ebbed, his eyes glazed...” (11). Buck experienced “intolerable pain from throat and tongue” (13). In the world of Northland Buck is introduced to the world of labor: “No lazy, sun-kissed life was this with nothing to do but loafing and bored” (43). He is called to perform the tough task in a routine mechanical way and very soon he learned the work culture. “Yet once he has absorbed this blow to his dignity, he discovers that “though the work was hard...he did not particularly despise it” (55).

Buck is presented as the slave worker in the novel; he is forced to learn to pull a sledge. He witnessed the cruelties of the huskies who killed Curly, a dog that travelled together with Buck. Buck learned the art of living and surviving from this tragic episode. Buck learned the typical ways of the new environment of the capitalist society. Buck developed the spirit of revolt and decided to fight against Spitz, the lead dog. Buck saw Spitz’s “white teeth broke its back in mid-air the dogs raised a hell’s chorus of delight and death struggle was on. Buck seemed to remember it all; the white woods, and earth, and moonlight, and the thrill of battle. Over the whiteness and silence brooked a ghostly calm” (93). Spitz saw “the silent circle, with gleaming eyes, lolling tongues, and silvery breaths drifting upward, closing in upon him as he had seen similar circles close in upon beaten antagonists in the past” (99) until finally “the dark circle became a dot on the moon-flooded snow as Spitz disappeared from view” (99). Jack London introduces the image of the “club” symbolizing the oppressive and destructive tendencies of American capitalism and the culture of violence and force. Buck is shocked to witness the tragic scene of the killing of Curly. He abandons his beliefs fresh and laziness” and learns that life is an incessant struggle in the growing capitalism. Marx (1970) discussed in detail the master-slave relationship in his famous book *Das Capital II* thus:

As the industrial revolution evolved in England, American slaves began to produce for the English cotton mills and became drawn into the sphere of industrial capital. The commodities produced under the slave system entered the world market and circulated within the framework of capitalistic production. In a global sense, the planters constituted, therefore, a dependent class bound to a world market. This market defined and controlled the planters' profit motive and their attitudes toward property and labour. The slave holder bought and sold the slave as any other commodity. Since the slave holder did not pay out any variable capital in the form of wages, the entire surplus value extracted from the slave's labour was profit. (804)

He prepares himself to learn the values of capitalism and competition. He feels indignant when he is not made the team leader by Francois and Perrault. With hard and perseverance, Buck becomes the leader of the sledging dogs excelling Mercedes, Hall, and Charles. London himself was a tramp when he wrote the novel. Like Buck, London was ignorant of the realities of life. He was sentenced to thirty days imprisonment by a judge in thirty seconds of hearing. He was handcuffed, shaved, and given the number of the convicts. Like Buck, London learned the rule of the club and made up his mind to fight against these oppressive and dehumanizing forces. The capitalist survives on the exploitation of the labor class. Marx observes in *Das Capital II* volume thus about the exploitation of labor:

Why, if the labourer can be brought to feed on potatoes instead of bread, it is indisputably true that more can be exacted from his labour, that is to say if when he fed on bread, he was obliged to retain for the maintenance of himself and family the labour of Monday, and Tuesday, he will, on potatoes, require only the half of Monday; and the remaining half of Monday and the whole of Tuesday are available either for the service of the state or the capitalist. (26)

He speaks about the tough work under “the Scotch half-bread and he took pride in it after the manner of Dave and Sol-leks and seeing that his mates...did their fair share”

(27). London has created Buck as an exceptional hero representing the class antagonism on Marxian lines. He is a forceful character known for his violence and ferocity. London depicts him thus:

And Buck was truly a red-eyed devil, as he drew himself together for the spring, hair bristling, mouth foaming, a mad glitter in his bloodshot eyes. Straight at the man he launched his one hundred and forty pounds of fury, surcharged with the pent passion of two days and nights. In mid air, just as his jaws were about to close on the man, he received a shock that checked his body and brought his teeth together with an agonizing clip. He whirled over, fetching the ground on his back and side. He had never been struck by a club in his life, and did not understand. With a snarl that was part bark and more scream he was again on his feet and launched into the air. And again, the shock came and he was brought crushingly to the ground. This time he was aware that it was the club, but his madness knew no caution. A dozen times he charged, and as often the club broke the charge and smashed him down. (21-22)

Marx observes thus about the working conditions of the workers in his *The Communist Manifesto* thus:

They feel at home when they are not working and away from home when they are working. Their work is therefore not voluntary but forced: obligatory work. Finally, the externality of the work appears to workers as if the work were not their own, but belonged to another person, and as of it did not belong to them, but to another person. Thus, in the way that religion and people's internal fantasies of the brain and heart act independently of the individuality of individuals and on them, i.e., as strange, divine or diabolical activities; likewise, worker's activities are not their own activities. They belong to others and are lost to the workers themselves. (82)

The characters of *The Call of the Wild* are members of an organization working together like a team to achieve their goal and for the promotion of the capitalist system. The main concern of Jack London is to depict the socialistic journey of his characters in the novels. The plots deal with the main issue of cultural transformation. The critics observe that London used the real material of his life and adventures in his tales and novels. Forces of corruption and exploitation of the capitalistic system disgusted him so he joined the socialist movement. This action of London created a sensation in America but he won a great name among the American youth. London was a man of manifold experiences but he also suffered a lot because of poverty and unemployment. He was shifting labourer employment. He got the first shock when his beloved Mabel Applegarth broke up with him. London had natural and instinctive compassion for the working classes as he devoted his whole life to the betterment of proletariats. He became a radical thinker and active political thinker. He moved from place to place to deliver lectures and was acclaimed as the Socialist of America. London was not an ordinary young man; he was gifted with exceptional gifts of writing and speaking. On the stage, he was a forceful orator and the masses attended his public meetings. He was ambitious to rise on the social ladder so he took up the writing career and platform to become famous in America. He was fired with the passion to bring radical changes in society and to overthrow the oppressive structure of capitalism. He wanted to be rich and desired to escape from the bog of poverty.

Jack London's life was full of struggles and challenges of life. He was motivated by Karl Marx to bring radical cultural transformation which was a Herculean task in America. He felt shame for being poor and downtrodden. He was extremely handsome and was a poster boy on the stage. He realized very early in life that the working classes are helpless and weaklings and couldn't fight with the rich businessmen who owned the means of production. London learned from *Das Capital* of Karl Marx the power of the Socialist Organization and he wanted all the weaklings working people to unite and fight united. Jack London's famous letter was published in the *Oakland Times* in which for the first time he discussed the influence of Karl Marx and the power of the workers. His letter created a sensation in the capitalists

and this was the real turning point of his career. He was inspired by *Das Capital* of Karl Marx. Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* (1961) again changed the vision of his life. London emerged as a radical social thinker and he used the material of his life and wrote tales and novels propagating the radical Socialist vision. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were the champions who raised the cry of the poor workers. They wrote revolutionary books and inspired the workers to fight the oppressive forces unitedly. Marx argued that the evolution of social organization manifests the true spirit of material growth. Marxian concepts of *Dialectical Materialism*, *Historical Materialism*, and *Marxist Economics* are based on Hegel's Dialectical methods. "Marx rejected Hegelian dialectic and his idealist views and developed Marxist dialectics and gave the materialist view of society" (Lukacs 132).

Marx argued that law, art and culture are secondary matters. He put these in the base of his economic theory. He argued that in the historical process the economic forces determine human consciousness. He took inspiration from Hegel but discarded his idealism and took up the theory of economic determinisms, Althusser observes thus: "The law of society, ethics, religion, art and culture, and political power comes under the superstructure. He talked of exploitation and poverty which were the real culprits in society" (123). In *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845), Marx defended "his theory of Dialectical Materialism and rejected the language of the thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis. The world is material and materialism is a realist philosophy of science as all matter in the universe consists of matter of motion" (54).

Like Marx and Sinclair Lewis London wanted to bring cultural transformation and he agreed with Marx that socialism was a stage between the age of capitalism and communism. London had keenly observed the inequalities and injustices in American society and he believed that socialism can cure all the economic ills of the society. Jack London comments thus:

It is distinctly revolutionary, and in scope and depth is vastly more tremendous than any revolution that has ever occurred in the history of the world. It presents a new spectacle to the astonished world, that of an organized, international, revolutionary movement, in the

bourgeois mind a class struggle is a terrible and hateful thing, and yet that is precisely what socialism is, a worldwide class struggle between the property-less workers and the propertied masters of the world. (Jack London, *War of the Classes* 3)

Jack London firmly believed that the only panacea left for the poor people is the adoption of socialism that can transform the lives of poor Americans. Men and women would no longer be thrown into the pit of industrial poverty and death. His radical beliefs were expressed in all his major novels.

Jack London's *The Sea Wolf* (1904) expresses his socialistic vision and the powerful work to bring cultural transformation to America. The main characters in the novel are Henderson, Smoke, and Jack Horners who are hunters. The plot chronicles the history of the class conflict. Humphrey Van Weydon is saved from the foggy waters of San Francisco Bay. He is taken as a cabin boy despite his protests. Wolf Larsen represents the bourgeoisie culture; he has become a tyrannical king on the ship. Larsen's materialistic philosophy reflects his vision of life within a capitalistic society, typified by the tyrannical organization on the ship. Wolf Larsen hails from an upper class who led a luxurious life; he is well educated as he calls himself "a scholar and a dilettante in things artistic and history" (31). The plot depicts the conflict between idealism and professionalism; between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Van Weyden suffers constant shame which forces him to bear the injustices and the cruelties of Larsen's capitalism. He has observed that Larsen is a superman on the *Ghost* and nobody dares to oppose him as he is dominating and powerful. Sinclair Upton in his book *Jack London in His Short Stories* observes thus:

The image of the wolf symbolized his dilemma: how to rise out of the working class and still join with it in hastening the revolution. He wanted to be a self-sufficient one wolf, raging against the forces of nature and ruthlessly fighting for survival. At the same time, he was the wolf in a pack, needing comradeship in order to survive as he had during his escapades as a seal hunter. Of course, London preferred to be the leader of the pack. The wolf image captured his imagination,

and London loved to be called Wolf by his friends, called Wolf by his friends, called his dream castle Wolf House, chose a wolf's head to adorn his bookplate and filled his stories and novels with the animal. (111)

London opines that the capital system in America enjoys supreme power; the status of the capitalist world order is unchallengeable; it relies on brutal force and strict rules and regulations. The plot of the novel revolves around the struggle between Wolf Larsen and Van Weyden. Van Weyden has to fight with the capitalistic policies of Wolf Larsen. Jack London has dramatized the scenes of unwanted psychological pains inflicted on Van Weyden in the novel. Like Conrad's novel *The Heart of Darkness*, London's novel *The Sea Wolf* is packed with the images of darkness; death, and night. Weyden is transformed into a member of the industrial working class. Wolf Larsen is a despotic ruler in the *Ghost* with his complete lack of concern for human needs. He has titanic physical strength and endurance and he uses his physical power to terrorize his crew members. Van Weyden calls Wolf Larsen an "individualist, and a materialist" and Larsen appreciated Weyden for his intellect. He enslaved him to do menial work on the ship. Wolf Larsen is a true representative of the cruel capital system which oppresses and exploits working-class Americans. Jack London demonstrates the physical power of Larsen when he assaults the cabin boy, Leach who dare to disobey him:

Then came another stirring of Wolf Larsen's tremendous strength. It was utterly unexpected, and it was over and done with between the ticks of two seconds. He had sprung fully six feet across the deck and driven his fist into the other's stomach. (28-29)

Jack London dramatizes the scene of savage violence symbolizing the cruelty of the capital system. Wolf Larsen is created as a powerful symbol of the heartless capital society which is crossing all barriers to dominate and dehumanize the poor and downtrodden workers belonging to the lower middle classes. Leach is subdued and his individuality is crushed; he is forced to accept the duties seriously and Van Weyden is given the charge of the Cabin boy: "What was I to do? To be brutally

beaten, to be killed perhaps, would not help my case” (30). His novel *The Sea Wolf* is an allegory of the cruel capital system; Wolf Larsen is a supreme leader; heading the materialistic organization and his sole purpose is to rule and to impose his will upon others. He believes that weak and sick have no place in the organization, “Do you know, I am filled with a strange uplift, I feel as if all time were running through me, as though all powers were mine. I know the truth, divine good from evil, right from wrong. My vision is clear and far. And I could believe in God” (62).

The main focus of the novel is the class antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Van Weyden believes in idealism; his belief in the soul, immortality, humanity, and love is contrasted with Wolf Larsen’s animalistic violence and physical cruelty. Wolf Larsen is the villain of the novel; the symbol of the heartless bourgeoisie society committed to accumulate wealth and exploit the working class. Wolf Larsen is a mighty creation of Jack London as “the perfect type of primitive man, born a thousand years or generations too late and an anachronism in this culminating century of civilization” (52). The capitalist enjoys the power of money and they are free to destroy any individual; often they rape women who are poor and subjugated working in the factories. Robert C, Tucker describes Karl Marx’s theory of freedom for the proletariat thus:

Escape from alienated labour finally become materially possible in the stage of technological development created by modern machine and industry. The way of escape lies in the revolutionary seizure and socialization of the productive powers by the proletariat. Repossessed through revolution or his organs of material production externalized in industry, man will, at last, be able to produce in freedom. (12)

Jack London’s *The Iron Heel* (1908) dramatizes the rising wave of socialism in America to fight capitalism. His *The Sea Wolf* and *The Iron Heel* are powerful novels dramatizing the class conflict in America. Jack London was greatly impacted by Marxian thought and believed that socialism alone can solve all the economic problems of society. Marx asserts thus in his *Das Capital Vol 11*:



Communism is the complete return of man to himself as a social human being; a return becomes conscious and accomplished with the entire wealth of previous development. It is the positive transcendence of all estrangement; that is to say, the return of man from religion, family, state, etc., to his human, i.e., social mode of existence. (12)

Avis Everhard represents hard-core capitalism. She is ignorant of the sufferings of the working classes but as the plot progresses London depicts her passion for the proletariat consciousness of the American workers. Jack London's prime concern is the exploration of the theme of class antagonism. C. H. Gratten (1929) observes that the novel *The Iron Heel* chronicles the class conflict of American society. Leon Trotsky in his book *Literature and Revolution* noted that Jack London "not only absorbed creatively the impetus given by the first Russian Revolution of 1905 but also courageously thought over again in its light the fate of capitalist society as a whole" (123). Everhard expresses the fears of the risk of Capitalist Oligarchy which would crush the liberty and identity of the workers. K Whipple (1943) observes "that they are shocked to find out that the capitalists determined not to hand over the reins of government have conspired to form a militant oligarchy" (102). Jack London's *The Iron Heel* faithfully depicts the plight of the working classes and the destructive policies of the rich capitalists who treated the workers like animals. London has highlighted the growing discontentment of the workers. London was hailed as a radical Socialist thinker.

The loss of an arm Jackson is at the centre of the novel. The workers were subjected to all forms of oppression and suppression. They had no voice in society and the missing arm of Jackson symbolizes the cruelty of the system, Poor guy is denied basic rights and is thrown on the road to starve. This one episode of the novel sums up the oppressive tendencies prevailing in the country revealing the helplessness of the poor workers like Jackson. Avis cries in socialistic spirit thus: "The more I thought of Jackson's, the more shaken I was" (41). Jack London's novel is rich in images of loss, fragmentation: "We have with us a member of the working class" (8). Avis states that "His behavior was what was to be expected by a member of the working class" (51). Ernest is portrayed thus: "He had been in the working

class, though he was a descendant of the old line of Everhard that for over two hundred years had lived in America” (19). Avis firmly believes that the workers have to realize the significance of the policies of Socialism important for the happiness of the people. Oligarchy is inimical to the interests of the workers. Karl Marx (1844) argues thus in his *Das Capital Vol 1*

The increased profit received by a capitalist through the cheapening of, say, cotton and spinning machinery, is the result of higher labour productivity; not in the spinnery, to be sure, but in cotton cultivation and construction of machinery. It requires smaller outlays of the conditions of labour to incorporate a given quantity of labour, and hence to extract a given quantity of surplus-labour. The costs required to appropriate a certain quantity of surplus-labour diminish. (56)

Avis tells all about his rootedness in a class thus: “You see, I was a creature of environment, and at that time had strong class instincts. “Such boldness on the part of a man of my class would have been almost unforgivable” (Jack London, *The Iron Heel* 5). Avis’s father Bishop Morehouse is a rigid bourgeoisie. London portrays the character of Morehouse thus:

And then, when he shook hands with me! His handshake was firm and strong, but he looked at me boldly with his black eyes--too boldly, I thought. You see, I was a creature of environment, and at that time had strong class instincts. Such boldness on the part of a man of my own class would have been almost unforgivable. I know that I could not avoid dropping my eyes, and I was quite relieved when I passed him on and turned to greet Bishop Morehouse--a favorite of mine, a sweet and serious man of middle age, Christ-like in appearance and goodness, and a scholar as well. (2)

At the outset of the novel, London has depicted an interesting confrontation between Bishop Morehouse, Dr. Hammerfield, and Earnest. He is presented thus by London, a man full of enthusiasm:

As Ernest talked, he seemed in a fine passion; his face glowed, his eyes snapped and flashed, and his chin and jaw were eloquent with aggressiveness. But it was only a way he had. It always aroused people. His smashing, sled-hammer manner of attack invariably made them forget themselves. And they were forgetting themselves now. Bishop Morehouse was leaning forward and listening intently. Exasperation and anger were flushing the face of Dr. Hammerfield. (19)

Morehouse is a big gun of the town. He represents the oppressive power structure of the bourgeoisie. He is a famous professor belonging to the elite class of America. Her daughter has adopted the values of the elite class and she hates the poor workers. Avis lives in her capitalistic environment. Karl Marx observes thus:

Thus, the highest development of productive power...would coincide with the depreciation of capital and the degradation of labor, and these regularly recurring catastrophes...would lead to their repetition on a higher scale and finally to its violent overthrow. (*Economic Manuscripts of 1957* 133)

Avis narrates the episode of the accident of Jackson who lost his arm in the factory when he was on the duty. Jackson was forced to work overtime and the poor worker was under acute stress. He slipped but the owners of the company refused him to pay the compensation. The Management found fault in him and dubbed him as inefficient and negligent. Avis is in favour of the structure and system of the capitalists. She defends the system thus: "The case would not have been decided against him had there been no more to the affair than you have mentioned" (41). She doesn't express compassion for the poor worker but supports the action of the company without investigation. Her ideology of the bourgeoisie is ridiculed and exposed by London in the novel. She admits the impact of new experiences on her mind and sensibility, "I realized the truth for the first time. I experienced life for the first time. I had been in the University and only had the bookish knowledge; I didn't know the theories of life and the struggles of the workers struggling in the society" (59).

Jack London's novel depicts the changing cultural setup of American society. London has discussed the emergence of the strike culture in America as the workers are dissatisfied and they organized a strike against the capitalists. In the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter, London reports thus:

And that was really the situation. The seven great trusts, working together, had pooled their enormous surpluses and made a farm trust. The railroads, controlling rates, and the bankers and stock exchange gamblers, controlling prices, had long since bled the farmers into indebtedness. The bankers, and all the trusts for that matter, had likewise long since loaned colossal amounts of money to the farmers. The farmers were in the net. All that remained to be done was the drawing in of the net. This the farm trust proceeded to do. (125)

John Steinbeck imitated the radical vision of Jack London. He excited the interest of contemporary critics for his leftist approach. He was dismayed to observe that the planters and the fruit pickers of America were exploited by the bankers and the owners of the vast plantations. Jack London witnessed the cruelty of the rich landlords and supported the cause of the poor farmers. James observes: "Our minds thus grow in spots...but we let them spread as little as possible: we keep unaltered as much of our old knowledge, as many of our old prejudices and beliefs, as we can" (168). James argues that people often have the rigid attitude: "When the individual experiences something new, the mind must take that pragmatic truth into account, which may mean the complete shift of beliefs" He continues: "New truths are resultants of "new experiences and of old truths combined and mutually modifying one another" (169). Avis regards Ernest as the champion of the working people. She advocated the case of Jackson and lashed at the oppressive nature of law:

The law was a puppet with which he played. He moulded it like clay, twisted and distorted it like a Chinese puzzle into any design he chose. In appearance and rhetoric, he was old-fashioned, but in imagination and knowledge and resource he was as young as the latest statute. His first prominence had come when he broke the Shard well will. His fee

for this one act was five hundred thousand dollars. From then on, he had risen like a rocket. He was often called the greatest lawyer in the country-- corporation lawyer, of course; and no classification of the three greatest lawyers in the United States could have excluded him. (51)

Ernest's creed is Socialism and he is committed to carrying out the ideology of Karl Marx. Jack London comments thus, "Out of the decay of self-seeking capitalism, it was held, would arise that flower of the ages, the Brotherhood of Man. Instead of which, appalling alike to us who look back and to those that lived at the time, capitalism, rotten-type, sent forth that monstrous offshoot, the Oligarchy" (5).

Ernest emerges as a committed socialist worker devoted to the cult of socialism. Ernest observes that the capitalist attitude is inimical to workers. The business leaders and the politicians cannot ignore the genuine demands of the workers. The same ideas were expressed by Frederic Jameson who advocated the ideas of New Marxism. The cult of socialism is at the centre of the novel *The Iron Heel* of Jack London. Avis expresses her anguish for the lack of social equality in society, "All their old liberties were gone, they were labour slaves. Choice of work was denied them...there in the labour-ghettos is the roaring abysmal beast the oligarchs fear so dreadfully but it is the best of their making. In it, they will not let the ape and tiger die" (319).

To conclude, *The Iron Heel* is a unique novel of Jack London as it strikes like an anti-utopian novel. Jack London gives a warning to the capitalists that the rise of fascism is impending if capitalism remains rotting and oppressive. London outlines the importance of the unity of the workers to fight a battle against the Oligarchs and their exploitative schemes;

The hard times at home had caused an immense decrease in consumption. Labour, out of work, had no wages with which to buy. The result was that the Plutocracy found a greater surplus than ever on its hands. This surplus it was compelled to dispose of the surplus in the world market, the Plutocracy clashed with Germany. Economic

clashes were usually succeeded by wars, and this particular clash was no exception. (127)

Jack London's masterpiece *Martin Eden* is the real socialist manifesto chronicling the changing culture of America. London earned the title "Karl Marx of America" and Harvard University invited him to deliver a lecture. The response was so overwhelming that the faculty and the students gave him a standing ovation for his revolutionary ideas and socialistic vision. The editor of *The New York Times* hailed him as "the poster boy for American socialism" It was a new aspect of American culture and Jack London read the pulse of the American youth who wanted massive cultural transformation. Jack London fought against "the villainy of capital with rugged honesty of labor" (3). Atkinson Brooks stated that "Every revolutionary movement needs a Jack London, a youthful, charismatic figure in whose person a different generation sees the reflection of its dreams and hopes" (3). Paul Lauster in his article: "London's Place in American Studies" (2003) observes that "what attracted London to Marxism was less the dream of a society perfected in justice than the drama of a class war fulfilling his own need for apocalyptic violence" (2).

Martin Eden is portrayed as the young hero who meets Ruth the daughter of a banker. Ruth makes serious efforts to shape Martin Eden according to "established value standards like her class and family". Martin experiences profound alienation and loss of identity in his struggle to achieve social prominence. Ironically, Martin loses contact with his class while rising upward on the social ladder. As the novel progresses Martin emerges as a symbol of reactionary individualism. Martin embraced Marxian socialism. Jack London's two famous biographers; Irving Stone who wrote *Sailor on Horseback* and Joan London who wrote *Jack London and His Times* observed that his Martin Eden established him as the front runner of socialism.

London was impacted by *The Communist Manifesto* and found in this work of Marx the answers to his searching questions. He found that the Marxian philosophy is the only way to bring harmony to the life of the workers who were oppressed by the American capitalists. He agreed with Marx that the means of production be owned collectively in the country. He realized that he must have a consistent

philosophy of life to support his ideas. Jack London expressed his sympathy for the socialists and wrote a short story *The Mexican* published in *Saturday Evening Post*. London had followed the progress of the revolt. Interestingly, Marx himself didn't see socialism but Martin and many socialists believe that socialism is the real cure of the social, political, and economic ills of the society. He turned to Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, Malthus's *Theory of Population*, Ricardo's *Theory of Distribution*, and Bastiat's *Theory of Economic Harmonies*. He read Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, and J.S. Mill. London wrote an essay "Optimism, Pessimism and Patriotism" in which he raised the cries of the workers of America and aroused the spirit of the Socialist Revolution among the masses. Philip S. Foner comments thus, "He pointed to the evils of capitalism, the long hours and low wages and social and moral degradation that flowed from these evils, and urged "ye Americans, patriots, and optimists to awake! Seize the reins of a corrupted government and educate the masses" (27).

The primary purpose of Jack London's *Martin Eden* is to propagate the philosophy of socialism. Like his novel *The Sea Wolf*; the novel is a virulent attack upon individualism. The title character of the novel Martin Eden is a socialist and the plot of the novel deals with the self-realization of a sailor and his struggle to become a writer. Martin saves the life of Arthur Morse belonging to the capitalist class. He is invited into the Morse home, a symbol of wealth and culture. He is not familiar with the life of the capital class and behaves like an uncouth and crude fellow. Martin Eden finds Ruth "a pale and ethereal creature, with wide, spiritual blue eyes and a wealth of golden hair; she was a spirit, a divinity, a goddess, such sublimated beauty was not of the earth" (4). On this evening of the Morse home, Martin Eden is baptized with the water of ambition. He begins his journey of the world with new ambition as he says: "he knew at last, clearly and, that it was a beauty, and intellect and love that he must have" (1). Love plays an important role in his life as he says: "he had starved for love all his life. His nature craved for love"(1). He comes under the spell of the natural beauty and purity of Ruth. He gives up drinking: "He dared not go near Ruth's neighborhood in the daytime, but night found him lurking like a thief around the Morse home" (1). His determination to rise on the social ladder of the capitalists

fired his ambition and changed his outlook on life. He emerges as a young superman who aspires to achieve prominence through education. Marin Eden was a sailor and he broods over the future: "On shipboard, he would be a sneak, a whiner, a tattler. He, Martin Eden, was a better man than that fellow. The thought cheered him. It seemed to draw him nearer to her" (17). He tries to learn the philosophy of Darwin and Spencer. He is excited by the strong confidence to enter into the domain of bourgeoisie society through his mentor.

Martin starves and endures great hardships but his ambition to explore the bourgeoisie culture and to ride in the social ladder becomes extremely active. He displays a "snarling rebellion against the slowness of his progress which leaves upon the reader's mind the impression of a prolonged whine" (280). Martin is actively marching on the road to success. His engagement with Ruth comes as a shock to Mr. And Mrs. Morse. Ruth gives him sympathy, education, and a clear vision to progress in life; he is from the world of an abyss, and with Ruth's motivation he recognizes the power of his writing and starts attending the meetings organized by the socialists. Within weeks he becomes wealthy as the orders of manuscripts flow across the country. He works sixteen hours a day since Ruth has left him and he is alone struggling for recognition by the upper classes. Being frustrated and depressed he feels that life is meaningless and that he was nobody, nothing. He has money, security, and respectability but not the peace of mind. He can neither belong to the bourgeoisie nor his proletariat class. His disillusionment is complete:

His thoughts went ever around and around in a circle. The center of that circle was work performed; it ate at his brain like a deathless maggot. He awoke to it in the morning. It tormented his dreams at night. Around him, that penetrated through his senses immediately related to work performed. (4)

Jack London presents Martin as an aesthete with a taste for writing stories to rise in society and to raise his economic status. His meeting with the bourgeoisie Ruth is a source of his rise and downfall in the novel. His entry into Morse's home gives a push to his life. He looks at the pile of books lying on the table there is a strange



sensation in his mind: “Into his eyes wistfulness and a yearning as promptly as the yearnings leap into his eyes of a starving man at the sight of food” (1). His passion to improve his status is sharpened as he comes in contact with Ruth. He becomes crazy to achieve fame and power in imitation of the bourgeoisie. He makes inroads into the upper class through Ruth and believes that the only way to bridge the gap between his poor status and the high-status Ruth is material prosperity that can be acquired by hard work. Martin is a sailor; his speech is unsophisticated and manners are crude as he says, “It was nothing at all...any guy ‘ud do it for another. That bunch of hoodlums was look in’ for trouble, an’ Arthus wasn’t botherin’ ‘em none. They butted in on ‘em an’ then I butted in one of them an’ pold a few...I wouldn’t a missed it for anything. When I seen” (11).

Martin’s lack of education is evident in this speech. His speech patterns are crude and full of errors but Morse and Ruth speak in a sophisticated, precise, and controlled manner. Martin needs to polish his grammar and improvement in speaking and Ruth takes up the project to bring drastic transformation in the life and style of Martin. He is taught to master standard grammar and build his vocabulary. Martin is also surprised and asks: “but then, may not I be peculiarly constituted to write? He secretly expressed his exultation at the language he had used”(48). Martin is not fully satisfied as there is conflict in his mind; his experiences with the bourgeoisie are quite baffling:

He wondered if there was soul in those steel-gray eyes that were often quite blue of colour and that were strong with the briny airs of the sun-washed deep. He wondered, also, how his eyes looked to her. He tried to imagine himself she, gazing into those eyes of his, but failed in the jugglery. He could successfully put himself inside other men’s minds, but they had to be men whose ways of life he knew. He did not know her way of life. (22)

Martin is a young sailor of twenty-one and his entry into the world of the bourgeoisie transforms his whole life. He knows Ruth for the first time and is thrilled and excited by the entire atmosphere in the room and the beauty of her. Ruth is also charmed by

the strength and enthusiasm of Martin. Martin Eden feels embarrassed in the presence of rich people. Ruth, the only daughter of Morse, comes under the spell of Martin. She finds him a strong and adventurous being; rough and tough; romantic and interesting. She exhorts him to read and learn and Martin begins reading Darwin, Kant, Huxley, and Marx. Martin frequently visits the Morse home where he finds himself depending upon the advice and guidance of Ruth. Martin gives his understanding of Ruth thus:

Here was something to live for, to win, to fight for-ay, and die for. The books were true. She lent wings to his imagination, and great, luminous canvases spread themselves before him whereon loomed vague, gigantic figures of love and romance, and of heroic deeds for woman's sake; for a pale woman, a flower of gold. (6)

He talks painfully to Ruth Morse expressing his concern for the disparities existing in American society. He describes the horrible scenes of brawls, whores, engine rooms, prisons, and wild seas displaying his dismal view of the world. Martin's view of the world is contradictory; he boasts of his individualism and criticizes capitalism. He often defends the law of the strong expressing his individualism and showed sympathy for the weak and supported the weak masses. He soon falls in love with her and decides to become a writer. Martin finds Ruth a different type of woman as he comments:

She had never had any experiences of the heart. Her only experiences in such matters were of the books, where the facts of the ordinary day were translated by fancy into a fairy realm of unreality....She did not know the actual fire of love. Her knowledge of love was primarily theoretical, and she conceived of it as lambent flame. His idea of love was more that of placid affection, serving one softly in an atmosphere of ethereal calm. She did not dream of volcanic convulsions of love, its scorching heat, and sterile wastes of parched ashes. (42)

The world of Ruth is different and Martin is an outsider in her world. She is unrealistic and idealist as she doesn't know the ground reality. But Martin belongs to

the grassroots level well aware of the economic disparities and inequalities. Ruth's knowledge about life, society, and the world is bookish but Martin is practical and well aware of the struggles of life. The relationship between Martin and Ruth is transient as their views and class differs. The process of transformation and the success journey is very slow. Martin believes firmly that only Ruth can save him from the gutter of life. He gives an outlet to the window of his heart thus:

He had forgotten immortality of late, and the trend of his scientific reading had been away from it...He remembered it was at this table, at which he now sneered and was so often bored; that he had first eaten with civilized beings in what he had imagined was an atmosphere of high culture and refinement. He caught a glimpse of that pathetic figure of him, so long ago. It is a tiring and taxing timing for Ruth who is under pressure and cannot wait for long. (197)

Unfortunately, Martin is disappointed by the repeated rejections coming from his publishers. He doesn't get even one success. People all around him including Ruth do not understand him. Ruth leaves him under the pressure of his capitalistic environment and upper-class respectability. But when success comes to him it is too late; he is alone and now well aware of the artificial and hypocritical culture of the bourgeoisie. The upper-class people begin to invite and Ruth also repents but all these changes puzzle Martin. Ruth is charmed by "the muscular neck, heavy corded, almost bull-like, bronzed by the sun, spilling over with rugged health and sun" (10). Jack London comments thus:

She looked upon Martin Eden as a novelty...in similar ways, she had experienced unusual feelings when she looked with animals in the menagerie, or when she witnessed a storm of wind or shuddered at the bright-ribbed lightening. The blaze of tropic suns in his face, and in swelling resilient muscles was the primordial vigor of life. (63)

Ruth is very much attracted to him because of his muscular personality and primordial vigor. She sees Martin as the hero of her life. She expresses her sexuality thus: "Then arose in her the impulse to lean against him, to rest herself against his

strength' a vague half-formed impulse, which even as she considered it, mastered her and made her lean toward him" (160). Brissenden exclaims thus: "Ah, you young Creek! I wonder if you take just pride in that body of yours. Thou are devilish strong. You are a young panther, a lion cub. Well, well, it is you must pay for that strength" (160). Brissenden expresses his contempt for the civilian population and advocates socialism because of his hatred for the capitalist. He believes that the capitalist society of America was rotten and soon the capitalist society would be replaced by the proletariats. He thinks and argues with his friend Martin that only socialism can save humanity. Martin's character is manifested by two important factors in his struggle for the top; he has deep feelings for shame for his lower-class origin and his ambition to reach the top of the upper classes like Horatio Alger. Ruth is also fired with an ambition to cultivate and educate him to achieve the top status like the capitalists. His motives and efforts prove fruitful as he comes closer to Ruth and wins her love displaying unique self-confidence and individuality. Martin falls into the trap when he begins comparing the working women of his lower class with Ruth Morse. He sees his women and comments:

The weak and sickly faces of the girls of the factories and the simpering, boisterous girls from the south of Market...frowsy, shuffling creatures from the pavements of the white chapel, gin-bloated hags of the stews, and all the vast hell's following of harpies, vile-mouthed and filthy that under the guise of monstrous female from prey upon sailors, the scrapers of the ports, the scum, and slime of the human pit. (5)

Martin felt the taint of his class. He is ambitious to rise above but his class lets him down. He is resentful of his humble origins. Martin gives information of his society thus:

I want it. I want it now, I want to breathe air like you get in this house; air that is filled with books, and pictures, and beautiful things, where people talk in low voices an' are clean an' their thoughts are clean. The air I always breathed was mixed up with grub an' house rent an' scraping an' booze an' that's all they talked about too. (56)

Martin sets the tone of the struggle “I’m just as good as them, and if they do know lots that I don’t, I could learn in a few myself, all the same” (15). Ruth has found Martin a rough diamond whom she hopes to cut and polish fit for the upper-class society. London also uses the metaphor of clay: “He was clay in her hands immediately, as passionately desirous of being moulded by her as she was desirous of shaping him into the image of her ideal of man” (52). Ruth used her sophisticated skill to polish the manners and correct grammar of Martin so that he may look impressive in her bourgeoisie community. She taught him the bourgeoisie virtues:

Renunciation, sacrifice, patience, industry, and high endeavour were the principles she thus indirectly preached...such abstractions being objectified in her mind by her father, and Mr. Butler, and by Andrew Carnegie, who, from a poor immigrant boy had risen to be the book-giver to the world. (162)

Ruth takes a romantic view of her poverty and innocence as she shared “comfortable middle-class feeling that poverty was salutary that it was a sharp spur that urged on to success all men who were not degraded and hopeless drudges” (209). Ruth gives an account of Mr. Butler’s life but he feels disheartened for he couldn’t find any meaning in Butler’s life except that he makes thirty thousand dollars a year: “He was dissatisfied with Mr. Butler’s career. There was something paltry about it, after all. Thirty thousand a year was all right but dyspepsia and inability to be humanly happy robbed such princely income of all its value” (74). Ruth is shocked to know the ideas of Martin and she feels that “more remodeling was necessary” (74). Martin realized that the life of Mr. Butler is artificial and the bourgeoisie values are not based on real happiness. He doesn’t want to be trapped in the values of the bourgeoisie society. Martin fails to comprehend the value of the bourgeois society represented by Ruth who expresses his idealism to shape Martin according to the standard of the capital class. The rich and the upper-class pole control the means of production and exploit and oppress the workers of the factory, coal fields, and mines. Karl Marx observes thus in his *Das Capital Vol 11* thus:

Where labour-power is a commodity only in the hands of its seller, the wage-labourer, it becomes capital only in the hands of its buyer, the

capitalist who acquires the temporary use of it. The means of production do not become the material forms of productive capital, or productive capital, until labour- power, the personal for form existence of productive capital, is capable of being embodied in them. (27)

Martin finds a difference between the culture of Ruth and the culture of the factory working girls: “He was used to the harsh callousness of factory girls and working women. Well, he knew why their hands were rough. But this hand of hers...It was soft because she had never used it to work with” (23). Martin is shocked to note the snobbery, hypocrisy, and artificiality of the bourgeoisie represented by Ruth and her father. When Martin takes Martin Silva and her children to buy them the Christmas presents, he encounters Ruth and her mother who is shocked to see Martin in the company of a lower-class woman. London depicted his passion for idealism in the character of Martin Eden as he says:

I am an idealist who believes in reality, and who, therefore, in all, I write strive to be real, to keep both my feet and the feet of my readers on the ground so that no matter how him. We dream and our dreams will be based on reality. (Tavernier and Courbin 17)

Martin has seen poverty and hunger but Ruth is ignorant of them. Martin becomes conscious of two cultures; his awakened self- consciousness has torn his roots from his class without family and the genteel world of the upper class. He looks at the mirror and is lost in introspection: “You wanted to write...and you had nothing in you to write about” (10). London was a firm believer in the cult of individualism but he wanted to mix individualism with a socialist concern for the welfare of the poor masses. In his essay *How I Became A Socialist* (1905) Jack London comments thus, “The women of the streets and the man of the gutter drew very close to me. I saw the picture of the social pit as vividly as though it were a concrete thing, and at the bottom of the pit I saw them, myself above, not far, and hanging onto the slippery wall by main strength and sweat” (13).

London concluded that men and women would get freedom from the pit of poverty, hunger starvation, and death through socialism. London joined the Socialist Labour Party of America and expressed his socialistic beliefs in the majority of his novels. London explores the social dynamics of the proletariat classes; their struggle to rise in the social ladder and the inimical attitude of the bourgeoisie class. Jack London's *The Valley of the Moon* and *A Daughter of the Snows* depict his intention to correct the deep problems of society giving directions to the proletariats. Payne describes the aspirations of London to write novels to depict the subjugation and oppression of the proletariats of America. Payne in his book *The Soul of Jack London* observes thus:

To discard the life of the toiler, that was the idea, and himself to become a producer of commodity for the general open market- in short, be a capitalist hereafter and whistle a cheerful goodbye to the wage slavery which he had now beaten out. And what commodity should this new-made capitalist produce, when his day had come?....The best selling commodity in the market. (15)

Jack London repeatedly discussed in his letters, interviews, and essays that the main problem today is to structure the society based on equity, justice, and equitable distribution of wealth. Matthew Arnold once said that literature should be a criticism of life and all novels of Jack London are directed towards social criticism. John Brazil in his article: "Politics and Art: The Integrated Sensibility of Jack London" (1979) comments thus, "London held to the version of historical causality in which progress resulted not from the actions of the superior individual but through the ineluctable Marxian dialectic and the confrontation of, groups, the proletarian masses with the capitalist elite" (11).

Joan London in his book *Jack London and His Times* observes that London's main mission in his life was to think of the problems of the poor masses who suffered poverty; injustices and starvation. London received the basic tenets of socialism from Austin Lewis. His daughter Joan wrote thus: "The socialistic ideas remained the foundation of all his best novels" (qt in Jack London, 108). Harold Rugg in his book

*A History of Civilization* observes that “when Jack London started writing *Martin Eden* and *The Valley of the Moon* America was passing through a turbulent period” (23). He comments thus:

The depression, low prices, unemployment, a growing hatred of the capitalists, and a lack of faith in the government were rapidly causing a revolution in public opinion. The people who had come west were filled with a strong sense of individualism and unaccustomed to group life, but now they were beginning to feel the need for organization. (464)

Jack London realized Marxian ideology could be the panacea of all the economic ills in America. Means of production, communication, and transportation must be owned collectively. Jack London expressed his disgust over the growing materialism and power of the capitalists and the emergence of the Socialist Revolution thus:

This revolt, appearing spontaneously all over the industrial field in the form of demands for an increased share of the joint product, is being carefully and shrewdly shaped for a political assault upon society. The leaders, with the carelessness of fatalists, do not hesitate for an instant to publish their intentions to the world. They intend to direct the labour revolt to the capture of the political machinery of society. With the political machinery once in their hands, which will also give them the control of the police, the army, the navy, and the courts, they will confiscate, with or without remuneration, all the possessions of the capitalist class which are used in the production and distribution of the necessaries and luxuries of life. (14)

London’s novel *The Valley of the Moon* (1913) reflected the political and economic currents of American society. He opposed the American government which valued dollars and was insensitive to the sufferings of the workers. *The Valley of the Moon* depicts the class antagonism between proletariats and the bourgeoisie. Jack London’s *The Valley of the Moon* (1913) is considered as his masterpiece in proletarian literature. The novel depicts the struggles of the working classes trapped in the



vicious cycle of capitalism and socialism. The striking culture ruins the life of the workers and they resort to alcoholism, drug addiction, and despair. *The Valley of the Moon* is divided into three parts read as separate works of fiction. The first part is about the love and marriage of Billy and Saxon; the second part is about the strike and the loss of the baby of Saxon and the miseries of the workers and the last part describes the epical journey of Billy and Saxon to the Valley of the Moon to escape from the destructive environment of the capitalist society of Oakland. The novel *The Valley of the Moon* advocates the idea that a return to agrarian ideals would resolve the economic struggles of the working class. The plot of the novel describes the quest of Saxon and Billy to escape the injustices and brutalities of the city culture; alcoholism, violent union strikes, and tragic terror. London describes the “industrial tragedy” that sweeps across the city of Oakland and taints their marriage, leaving them with zero love life.

London begins the novel by describing the nightmarish scene of the social pit. Sarah is leading a miserable life as her husband Tom remains upset in her job; there is no stability and no solid future for the family. Saxon Brown, her mother Daisy and Mrs. Higgins, and Mrs. Mortimer suffer because of the unexpected industrial strike as the forces of socialism collide with the power structure of the bourgeoisie. *The Valley of the Moon* is about a socialist revolution couched as a love story. He has focused on the bourgeois morality and bourgeois business ethics. The owners of the big ranches know only the language of profit and if a proletariat is to survive, he must continue generating the profit to the capitalist. Marx (1999) has expressed the mean mentality and profit-making mindset of the bourgeoisie thus:

Accumulate, accumulate! That is Moses and the prophet! Therefore, save, save, i.e., reconvert the greatest possible portion of surplus value, or surplus product into capital! Accumulate for accumulation's sake, production for production's sake: by this formula classic economy expressed the historical mission of the bourgeoisie, and did not for a single instant deceive itself over the birth-throes of wealth.

(412)

Saxon works as an ironer in a drab laundry and she is keenly watched by a cynical forewoman who uses every opportunity to humiliate Saxon. At home also, life is miserable for Saxon. She lives in a small dingy room and struggles against hunger and poverty. Her brother and the wife of her brother also live in the same apartment. *The Valley of the Moon* is about “the trials and tribulations of the marriage of the working class”. Saxon wants to continue her work to solve the economic problems of the family. Saxon struggles to save her domestic happiness but the violent labour strike damages her domestic happiness. She lost her unborn child; her husband Billy becomes a neurotic man and loses his balance of mind under depression. The violent labour strike is caused by the discontentment of the workers who are ill-treated and exploited by the oppressive capitalists. The workers have no alternative but to launch a strike to force the capitalists to concede just the demands of the workers. Socialism is introduced through the conversation when Billy and Saxon are having dinner with Mary and Bert, their friends and neighbours. Tom points to the fact that organized labour is making progress by obtaining better wages. He invites Bert and Billy to the socialist meetings hoping that “they will decide to vote for the socialist ticket at the next election” (170). Tom is the peaceful, optimistic socialist who believes that capitalism will be defeated at the polls. Bert expresses his disgust for capitalism thus:

We’ve been robbed. We couldn’t mark cards, deal from the bottom, an’ ring in cold decks like the others. We’re the white folks that failed. You see, times changed, and there were two kinds of us, the lion and the plugs. The plugs only worked; the lions only gobbled. They gobbled the farms, the fines, the factories, an’ now they’ve gobbled the government. (174)

Billy doesn’t support socialism because the Party is controlled by the Germans and the Russians who cannot speak English. A few weeks later a railroad strike occurred in the railroad shops. Gloom pervades the neighbourhood of Saxon where many people live. Jack London has depicted the plight of the children who couldn’t get milk because of the strike. There is violence in the streets and life becomes hellish as the life of the people was paralyzed.

Saxon belongs to the working class and London has depicted the plight of the workers through her life and struggles. Her working period “had lasted from the end of her going to school to her marriage” (205). Saxon had been familiar as a worker with factory culture and working conditions of the mills. She has been a dedicated and loyal worker of the jute mill, he “worked in the paper factory and also she had worked in a tannery” (205). She had worked in the laundry and her experience was horrible as the workers were mean, jealous and the wages were very low and life was very risky. The working hours were not fixed and when she got married, she felt she had “got freedom from the suffocating slavery of the ironing board” (92). She left the laundry for good and felt happy to enjoy the freedom of life. Economically, she suffered a huge setback as she had to depend on Billy who was also a poor worker like her.

The first two sections of the novel *The Valley of the Moon* London portrays the harrowing conditions in the Oakland slums, the squalor, and poverty, the spiritual barrenness, the helplessness, and despair. London condemns a society where human beings are degraded and dehumanized and ruled by cruel capitalistic forces. London depicts the presence of the scabs, strike-breakers, and the police. Billy becomes the victim of oppressive capitalism as all the upper-class people were busy amassing wealth and private property. Karl Marx virulently attacked the craze of the capitalists to accumulate wealth and private property in his book *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part 1 thus:

Private property was responsible for the destruction of Man’s social nature. The guiding question was how the development of exchange relations had transformed this originally sociable state into social interactions based upon individualism, class antagonism, and domination by the world market....Marx advocated the revolution of the proletariat. (190)

The class conflict is fully dramatized by London. The scenes of death, violence, and frustration of the working-class people are realistically portrayed by Jack London in this novel. London gives an insight into the bafflement of working-class characters in the face of unemployment, poverty, and civil strife.

Jack London's novel *A Daughter of the Snows* (1902) is an adventurous love story written during the period of crisis of Jack London. The critics have called it "knee-jerk fiction" The plot of the novel is focused on Frona Welse born into a wealthy family and is rooted in the bourgeoisie culture. Jack London has depicted the luxurious life of Frona, her old acquaintance Matt McCarty and Neeposa recognize her luxurious life; her swimming adventures, and her bourgeoisie values. Her father is proud of "doing just anything" (169). Frona has strong ideas of the bourgeoisie culture as she states that "the strong could inherit the earth" (57). The workers of her industry and estate are suffering from hunger and starvation but Frona and her father are not much concerned about their plight. The novel is set with the background of the gold rush of America.

Jack London has articulated his vision of the collapse of the bourgeoisie culture. Frona appears on the first page of the novel and remains till the end of the novel the decline of morality and human degradation. "Frona confronts Jacob Welse who is a capitalist in an "uninhibited country" (35). He is the head of institutions and all means of production are controlled by him. He is a dominating figure in the banking sector, financial institutions including the mining industry. He is a dominating bourgeoisie ruling all institutions and workers under him. He loves his daughter Frona whose "mother died years ago" (38). Welses had been powerful people of the area and always succeeded in everything they did" (33). Frona has many traits of the upper rich class; she is free-minded; is always fond of giving orders. She struggles to save a sailor from drowning and her giving orders to Indian paddlers. Jacob Welse is very much excited at this and he introduced her daughter to everyone: "glowing with pride" (47). Her father tells "about the special traits of the Welses; their hatred for cowardice and their appreciation for individuality" (105). She once saved her "father from drowning during the floods of the Yukon" (181). Frona observes thus, "We are a race of doers and fighters, of globe, encircles and zone-conquerors. We toil struggle, and stand by the toil and struggle no matter how hopeless it may be. While we are persistent and resistant, we are so made that we fit ourselves to the most diverse conditions" (83).

In this passage, Frona highlights the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and their strategies to rule and dominate the proletariats. Her father considers himself a born ruler and superior by birth evoking the totalitarian spirit of Nazism. London's concept of Superman is dominating and powerful. Frona's father is Superman, dominating ordinary workers belonging to poor sections of society; he is cruel, savage, and predatory. Marx raised the cry of the working classes and with Friedrich Engels wrote "workers of the World unite" Marx believes that in an age of determinism the combination of the class struggle of evolution, and progress were irresistible to Marxists. *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) established that "the whole history of mankind has been a history of the class struggle" (54). The rich and the powerful men like Jacob Welse have been dominating and crushing the liberty of individuals since the beginning of civilization. Marx has traced the history of the oppression of the bourgeoisie; oppression and class distinctions.

To conclude, Jack London is a committed socialist dedicated to the cause of the workers. He wrote *The Valley of the Moon*, *A Daughter of the Snows*, *The Call of the Wild*, *The Sea Wolf*, *The Iron Heel*, and *Martin Eden* to propagate the philosophy of Karl Marx. Marx and Engels contended that the capitalist society would end with the growth of the proletariat consciousness. This process would lead to the dictatorship of the working class. London has visualized the New Utopia of the working class; the new society would be ruled by the workers. London had firsthand experience as a cannery worker and he believes that in the face of enormous wealth the capitalist forfeits worker's right to exist and the result is bestial poverty for the workers. The gap between the rich and the poor widens; the capitalists like Jacob Welse and Frona Welse roll in wealth but the poor workers lead a miserable life. He observed thus: "Capitalism focused on the destruction of modern society, socialism offered ferment, escape, and brotherhood. He firmly believed that the future strength of society lies in comradeship and brotherhood and not in a throat-cutting struggle where every man's hand is against every man" (256). Since "the class struggle forced classes and the capitalist class exploits the working class, the proletariat, and the Socialist sets to work to capture the political machinery so that he may make illegal capitalist's ownership of the means of production, and make legal his ownership of the means of production" (256).

## Chapter V

### Contextualizing Marxian Ideology and Class Conflict

The entire life of Jack London has been devoted to solving the problems of the individual who was in the oppressive net of capitalism. His works depict the conflict between individualism and socialism and that this conflict is discussed in his biographies of Irving Stone and Joan London. Philip S. Foner published his book *Jack London: American Rebel* providing valuable information about his social and revolutionary vision depicted in his tales and novels. In this chapter, the main focus is to dig out Marxian allegory in the novels of Jack London. In all his novels Jack London depicts the class struggle of the bourgeoisie and proletariat. He came under the influence of *The Communist Manifesto* of Marx which excited his battle cry depicted in the tales and novel. Marx discussed in detail the exploitative nature of the capitalists in his *The Communist Manifesto* thus:

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his “natural superiors”, and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment”. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation. (5)

No wonder the critics of London hailed him as the celebrated socialist. There is a consciously considered effort in his tales and novels to reveal the horrors of capitalism. The thematic purpose of all his works is to dramatize class antagonism. Unfortunately, his readers couldn't understand the thematic purpose of his works. He

expressed his dismay once to a fellow author thus, “The prophets and seers of all times have been compelled to sit alone except at such times when they were stoned or burned at the stake. The world is mostly bone-headed and nearly all boob” (Jack London, *No Mentor But Myself* 160).

Northop Frye in his book *The Archetypes of Literature* (1951) discusses literature in the context of cultural transformation. He observes thus:

All societies work from a class structure. Culture may be employed by societies or intellectual classes to increase its prestige, and in general moral censors, selectors of great traditions. the apologist of religious or political causes, aesthetes, radicals, codifiers of great books, and the like are expressions of class tensions...We soon realize....that the only really consistent moral criticism of this type would be the kind harnessed to an all-around revolutionary philosophy of society, such as we find....in Marxism...[where] the present valuation of culture is in terms of its interim revolutionary effectiveness. (346)

As an active socialist, London was an active radical thinker like Dos Passos. His main concern was to assail capitalism and in all his essays and major novels he exposed inhuman and destructive tendencies of capitalism. There is a complex allegorical pattern in his novels and short tales depicting the socialistic vision of London. His famous novels such as *The Sea Wolf*, *The Iron Heel*, and *Martin Eden* reveal the Marxist interpretation of social problems. Even in his Alaskan stories, the brutal Klondike setting is quite visible depicting man’s struggle to combat the cruel and deadly capitalist world. London has created characters belonging to various class positions and their conflict epitomizes the struggle of the working classes. Foner observes thus:

The course of his personal and literary life was set by the Socialist doctrine he embraced as a young man, sending him on a crusade which ultimately led to his self-destruction at forty. (143)

London's prime aim was to establish himself in the realm of fiction and to make money. He belonged to a poor class and had seen a very bad time of poverty and

unemployment. London emerges as a revolutionary socialist thinker and an artist who, “Strove for recognition and success, yet at times he relegated himself to selling slews of half-baked stories to pay the bills a sort of prostitution he disdained. As a Socialist, he also disdained this prostitution, and further was often unable to reconcile his capitalist drive for success with his basic socialist tenets” (Foner 123).

In his novels, London intends to serve the working classes. He rejected the idea to give charity to the poor and the downtrodden but launched a virulent attack on the capitalists. Donald D. Eghert (1952) observes thus “Though never a very convincing socialist himself his writings did more to spread the ideas of socialism in the United States than those of any other American author” (603). He was under pressure to achieve success. Johnston says:

His first-hand experiences with manual labor as a boy, his time in prison, and his growing consciousness of a class struggle led him to search for a means of salvation for himself and his entire class. His fervent emotional commitment to socialism derived in part from his need for attention and appreciation as a leader. Contradictions within his radicalism stemmed from his feelings about his proletarian youth. Suffering from the rejection of his mother and bitterly ashamed of his family’s poverty, he began to see his own struggle to succeed as part of a cosmic drama. (19)

London’s *The Call of the Wild* is an allegorical tale depicting the oppressive capitalist system of America. Northrop Frye attempts to defend allegory which, “...is still a structure of images, not of disguised ideas, and commentary has to proceed with it exactly as it does with all literature, trying to see what precepts and examples are suggested by the imagery as a whole” (90).

*The Call of the Wild* is regarded as the masterpiece narrating the story of Buck’s life in an allegorical style. His life is full of challenges and he is the only superhero of London who fights against the forces of oppression and cruelty. His journey begins as a tamed dog of Santa Clara Valley but ends as a sled dog. James Lundquist (1900) observes in his book *Adventures, Ideas and Fiction* thus, “This is



by far the best piece of work which has come from this gifted author. This book rises above mere storytelling and possesses elements of the best in literature –scope, vitality and fullness” (102). Buck is expelled from the civilized world and allegorically he represents man afflicted with the forces of capitalism. He represents all strong people of the world who use the strength of their bodies to control and dominate others. The clear message of Buck is that the weak and the divided people have no place in this universe. Marx also gave the message to unite and fight. Buck conquered the North and London also proved himself by violence. It is examined that “violence is the main trait of the heroes of London which bring success and dignity to the heroes of London. It was violence that the greatest characters came to life” (Kazin 87). London exposes the gruesome class system thus, “This man did not know cold. Possibly all the generations of his ancestry had been ignorant of cold, of real cold, of cold one hundred and seven degrees below freezing point. But the dog knew; all its ancestry knew, and it had inherited the knowledge” (London 420).

Buck emerges as a tough dog who can be bent but cannot be broken by the ruthless master. The interesting feature of his life is his fighting spirit as he avenges the murder of Thornton. Jack London describes the fighting trait of Buck thus at the beginning of the novel:

He did not know why, but he felt oppressed by the vague sense of impending calamity. Several times during the night he sprang to his feet when the shed door rattled open, expecting to see the Judge or the boys at least. But each time it was the bulging face of the saloon-keeper that peered in at him by the sickly light of a tallow candle. And each time the joyful bark that trembled in Buck’s throat was twisted into a savage growl. (9)

London’s *The Call of the Wild* depicts all the tenets of Marxian ideology. Buck is confronted with Spitz who is a powerful and ferocious dog. He was a dog with an evil spirit and he knew the law of the jungle; the survival of the fittest. He used every opportunity to reveal his power. He tried to bully Buck and strive for a war with Buck. But Buck avoided him. Buck, at last, got the opportunity to kill him. London

articulates his Socialistic vision thus, “The working class, in the process of social evolution is bound to revolt from the sway of the capitalist class and to overthrow the capitalist class. This is the menace of socialism, and in affirming it and in tallying an adherent of it” (Jack London, *The War of the Classes* 3).

London’s *The Call of the Wild* best exemplifies his passion for liberty and individualism. Buck represents London's fierce struggle with life. Jack London’s novel *The Call of the Wild* presents Buck who is an allegorical hero representing his rebellion against the oppression of the capitalistic organization. The plot depicts the themes of oppression and resistance. London discusses the culture of the class struggle in his book *The War of The Classes* (1905) thus:

But the facts of the class struggle are deeper and more significant than have so far been presented. A million or so of workmen may organize for the pursuit of interests which engender class antagonism and strife, and at the same time be unconscious of what is engendered. But when a million or so of workmen show unmistakable signs of being conscious of their class,—of being, in short, class conscious,—then the situation grows serious. The uncompromising and terrible hatred of the trade-unionist for a scab is the hatred of a class for a traitor to that class,—while the hatred of a trade-unionist for the militia is the hatred of a class for a weapon wielded by the class with which it is fighting. No workman can be true to his class and at the same time be a member of the militia: this is the dictum of the labour leaders. (8)

The dogs are forceful characters of Jack London giving the Marxian message of survival through allegorical argument, representing the oppressed proletariat. In Marxian ideology unity and fighting spirit are the only ways to survive. The editor of *New York Times* (1906) commented thus, “London must be commended for his courage and for his honesty. Society can Judge Socialism better and reach sounder conclusions upon its merits when it has a correct understanding of the nature of socialism and the intentions of socialists” (6).

The cult of capitalism thrives on competition and exploitation. London realized in his early years that capitalism is evil as it destroys the freedom and identity of the workers. He wanted the workers to unite and fight against the hegemony of the capital system. He toured in the American cities and delivered speeches and wrote an article to propagate the cult of Socialism. Buck is his ideal who fights against the exploitation and submission of the other dogs. The novel inspires all the workers to be strong and use force to eliminate the capitalistic institutions. The “competition between dog and owner, Black Leclere, begins with their first meeting when Batard had buried his puppy fangs in Leclere's hand, and Leclere, thumb, and finger, was coolly choking his young life out of him” (627). Although the dog is given to “foolish rebellion in his younger years, he learns to endure the abuse, so that he became grim and taciturn, quick to strike, slow to warn” (628). London wrote the dogs allegories to indict capitalism. Foner has recorded the socialistic vision of London thus:

My final word is that liberty, freedom, and independence are royal things that cannot be presented to nor thrust upon race or class. If races and classes cannot rise up and by their own strength of brain and brawn, wrest from the world liberty, freedom, and independence, they never in time can come to these royal possessions. (123)

Jack London's *The Sea Wolf* continues London's passion for Marxian philosophy and his faith in socialism. London was influenced by Darwin's theory of Evolution and he believed that forces of Nature condition the life of man on earth. The main plot of the novel is narrated by Humphrey Van Weyden who was rescued by the captain of the *Ghost Wolf* Larsen. He is depicted as a superman of Nietzsche with “broad shoulders, massive strength, and deep chest” (18). Larsen is the real wolf in the novel who once crushed seven mutinous sailors. London dramatically revealed the struggle between idealism represented by Van Weyden and materialism and capitalism represented by Larsen, “There was life all around him, but it was strong life very much alive and well, and he knew the sick wolf clung to the sick man's trail in the hope that the man would die first. In the morning, on opening his eyes, he beheld it regarding him with a wistful and hungry stare” (223).

Wolf Larsen understands the value of labour in pursuance of Marxian ideology and he criticizes Van Weyden for this attitude: “You stand on dead man’s legs. You’ve never had any of your own. You couldn’t walk alone between two sunrises and hustle the meat for your belly for three meals” (3). Wolf Larsen is projected as a spokesman of Marxian ideology who values work in life. He is an image of the powerful wolf, a symbol of individuality, power, and violence. Upton Sinclair observes thus:

The image of the wolf symbolized his dilemma: how to rise out of the working class and still join with it in hastening the revolution. He wanted to be a self-sufficient lone wolf, raging against the forces of nature and ruthlessly fighting for survival. At the same time, he was the wolf in a pack, needing comradeship in order to survive as he had during his escapades as a seal hunter. (111)

Van Weyden is portrayed as weak and frail: “his muscles were small and soft, like a woman’s or so the doctors had said time and again in the course of their attempts to persuade me to in for physical culture fads” (4). Marx observes that idleness is cancerous in man; it drains the energies of the spirit. Wolf Larsen believes that a body is simply a tool to be used. Van Weyden is not used to working who feels uncomfortable: “I did not dream that work was so terrible a thing” (6). Wolf Larsen is not an idealist like Van Weyden; he is practical believing in the values of work essential for the growth of civilization. Wolf Larsen uses the terms evolution and Marxism. In economic terminology, he talks about demand and supply as the basic principle operating in the world. Larsen firmly believes that life is “the cheapest thing in the world” (68). Wolf Larsen believes in the Marxian ideology and works hard day and night. His philosophy is consistent with his selfish individualism.

Jack London’s *White Fang* (1906) is another novel giving the message of Marxian socialism. The hero of the novel is White Fang, a wolf-dog who has to face many trials and tribulations in his life. His journey of life is an interesting history of transformation and assimilation. Jack London depicts the role of instinctive drives in the making of an individual. The will to survive is imperative and the instinctive

drives condition the personality of man. His appearance is described thus: “He was the one little grey cub of the litter. He had bred true to the straight wolf stock” (Jack London, *White Fang* 153). He used his instincts of survival when he found himself in the frozen north of Alaska. London borrows the socialistic idea from Marx that helped Jack London to depict the conflict between man and the forces of production. Jack London realized that the emergence of capitalism is inevitable with the rise of machines, speed, and industry. Jack London evokes the theories of Marx through the parable of *White Fang*. The novel is the epitome of Marxian theory of survival as the plot echoes the survival of the fittest ideology again and again.

Jack London’s *The Valley of the Moon* (1910) depicts the inhuman growth of capitalism and industry and the evils of urbanism. The growth of machines and industry destroyed Nature and brought about cut-throat competition in society. Every man turned against everyman in the mad race of making dollars. They are laundress and teamsters and love each other. London depicts the impact of the destructive strike of the teamster on the life of Billy. They become unemployed as the force of capitalism ruin their life. They are forced to leave the town in desperation like millions of labourers and seek shelter in the fabled Valley of the Moon. London depicts the helplessness of the working-class community. They lose their strength, beauty, and love in their struggle for survival in Oakland. London shows the miserable conditions of the workers in his novel. The working classes have to cope up with all these hardships. Billy expresses his disgust thus: “There are the labour unions and employers’ associations and strikes, and hard times, and hunting for jobs and all the rest” (Jack London, *The Valley of the Moon* 53). Billy loses the job and becomes neurotic and violent. He is sent to jail by the rich bourgeoisie. For Saxon, the city of Oakland is a den of evil and she persuades her husband, Billy, to run away from the vicious environment. They go to the Valley of the Moon in quest of peace and survival. Billy and Saxon can escape from the destructive forces of capitalism and are happy to confront the forces of Nature to survive. They are away from the snares of machine and industrialization and return to the rejuvenation of the land. The novel is a landmark of the socialistic philosophy of Jack London.

Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (1908) is an epitome of Marxian interpretation of London. The issue disced in the novel is the need for social revolution; the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariats and the destructive growth of capitalist oligarchy in America. London explores the philosophical vision of Avis Everhard who was a renowned socialist. The plot begins with Avis's meeting with Ernest who lashes at the power structure of the Oligarchy of the capitalist, "Instead of which, appalling alike to us who look back and to those that lived at the time, capitalism, rotten –ripe, sent forth that monstrous offshoot, Oligarchy" (Jack London, *The Iron Heel* 5).

Everhard is presented as the Socialist hero of the masses who laid down his life for the working classes of America. *The Iron Heel* depicts social and political unrest. The metaphor "Iron Heel" symbolizes the oppressive power structure of the capitalists who crushed the working classes with their iron boots. The capitalists threw away the workers and bulldozed their identity and individuality. Everhard represents the spirit of revolt and his diary contains events highlighting the scene of the plight of the workers in America. London wrote this novel at a time when he had joined the new Socialist Party of America. Leon Trotsky in his book *Literature and Revolution* noted that Jack London "not only absorbed creatively the impetus given by the first Russian Revolution of 1905 but also courageously thought over again in its light the fate of capitalist society as a whole" (123). Everhard delivers fiery speeches predicting a bloody class conflict. K Whipple (1943) observes "London's *The Iron Heel* that excited the interest of the critics and the novel has been hailed as a small folk Bible of scientific socialism" (90).

The historical journey of Avis begins with her falling in love with Ernest. She takes up the case of Jackson who is tortured and neglected by the capitalist. She works hard to get justice for him. Ernest and Avis work together for the socialist uprisings. They fight the capitalist machine but at last, are crushed by the iron heels of Oligarchy. Jackson's missing arm is an important factor in the novel. Avis expresses her "concern for the plight of Jackson in a socialistic spirit. The more I thought of Jackson's, the more shaken I was" (41). Ernest Everhard belongs to the suburbs like Jackson. The rise of Oligarchy is dangerous. Karl Marx (1844) observes

thus, “It is not a question what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, regards as its aim at the moment. It is a question of what the proletariat is, and what in accordance with the being, it will historically be compelled to do” (*The Holy Family* 37).

Avis lives in a rich and spacious house owned by her father Bishop Morehouse. Avis is basically from the elite class having the instincts of the capitalists. Jones, Gareth Stedman Jones expresses the Marxist philosophy thus:

Marx now believed that he had developed a new way of demonstrating the exploitative character of capital. The capitalist’s desire in purchasing labour power was to increase the value created by labour beyond what was necessary to sustain the subsistence of the labourer. This ‘surplus value’ was extracted either by lengthening the working day or by increasing the productivity of the labourer during each hour of work. The increasing use of machines made available an ever-greater quantity of surplus labour, creating a reserve army of labour and increasing the chances of sinking into pauperism. (198).

Jackson lost his arm but the cruel factory owner denied him compensation. She argues that he is guilty and is suffering because of his negligence and inefficiency. Avis’s approach is socialistic for she takes her moral responsibility to fight for the workers. Her association with Ernest Everhard brings a drastic change in her perceptions. Avis discovers many evils in the bourgeoisie system as she expresses her commitment to spreading Socialism. London describes the socialistic passion of Ernest to claim justice for the poor workers in true Marxian language thus:

On point, after point, Ernest challenged the ministers. When they affirmed that they knew the working class, he told them fundamental truths about the working class that they did not know and challenged them for disproofs. He gave them facts, always facts checked their excursions into the air, and brought them back to the solid earth and its facts. (33)

The plot of the novel is replete with images of Socialism. London firmly believes that capitalism is evil and must be eliminated by the forces of socialism. Ernest and his socialism are at the center of the plot as he fights for the poor and the downtrodden workers. Avis describes the revolutionary secret service thus, “In the shadow world of secret service, identity was nebulous. Like ghosts, the agents came and went, obeying commands, fulfilling duties, following clues, making their reports often to officers they never saw or co-operating with other agents they had never seen before and would never see again” (194).

Avis takes an active role in the socialistic commune and finds that people are fighting each other because of ideological differences. Avis describes her first impression thus: “It was not a column, but a mob, an awful river that filled the street, the people of the abyss, mad with drink and wrong up at last and roaring for the blood of their masters” (326). Robert C Tucker in his book *The Marx-Engels Reader* (1978) observes thus: “The relationship of the worker to labour engenders the relation to it of the capitalist, or whatever one chooses to call the master of the labour” (76). Marx’s theories greatly influenced the ideas of Jack London who advocated socialism in his *The War of the Classes*:

The existence of this struggle can be shown theoretically, and it can be shown actually. For a class struggle to exist in society there must be, first, a class inequality, a superior class and an inferior class (as measured by power); and, second, the outlets must be closed whereby the strength and ferment of the inferior class have been permitted to escape. (5)

Jack London vindicates the greatness of the individuals and vindicates the rights of the labour class in true Marxian spirit in his *The War of the Classes* thus, “Marx further argues that only in this state would personal manifestation coincide with material life, which would correspond to the transformation of individuals into complete individuals” (93).

Lundquist (1900) observes thus in his book *Adventures, Ideas and Fiction*. “This is by far the best piece of work which has come from this gifted author. The



tragic journey of Martin Eden is symbolic of the struggles of the working classes in capitalist America. Martin Eden is presented as an aesthete with a passion for beauty and knowledge. He struggles to raise his social status as he meets Ruth Morse and her family. His meeting with Ruth Morse brings drastic transformation in his life. He comes under the spell of Ruth and falls in love with her and desire for fame and power. He says: "Ruth was a pale, ethereal creature, with wide, spiritual blue eyes and a wealth of golden hair. She was a spirit, a divinity, a goddess; such sublimated beauty was not of the earth" (4). During his rise, Martin is trapped into two worlds; the working class and the world of the upper-middle class bourgeoisie., Martin suffers alienation when Ruth breaks his heart:

He broke off lamely. He was confused, painfully conscious of his inarticulateness. He had felt the bigness and glow of life in what he had read, but his speech was inadequate. He could not express what he felt, and to himself he likened himself to a sailor, in a strange ship, on a dark night, groping about in the unfamiliar running rigging. Well, he decided, it was up to him to get acquainted in this new world. (7)

Martin represents the poor and the oppressed working classes and Ruth represents the creamy layer of the American society. The gulf between Martin and Ruth is quite apparent and this antagonism forms the core of the novel. Martin begins to educate himself and begins his writing career. He makes some strides to bridge the chasm between himself and Ruth. But in this process, he loses his identity as Marx observes in his *Das Capital Vol. III*:

The working class receives but a certain portion of the total product... the other portion, which falls to the share of the capitalist *class*, represents the surplus-product in the Marxian sense, and accordingly ... the surplus-value. Then the members of the capitalist class divide this total surplus-value among themselves *not* in accordance with the number of workers employed by them, but in proportion to the capital invested by each, the land also being accounted for as capital-value. (18)

Ruth teaches him the culture and mannerism of the bourgeoisie and no wonder Martin begins to leave his working-class brethren. Martin asks, ““but then, may not I be peculiarly constituted to write?’ he queried, secretly exulting at the language he had used” (48). Martin’s financial struggles are historical. According to Marx, “surplus-value of the capitalist class leads to profit and economic change. The class struggles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are at the centre of the novel. The class struggle then becomes the motive force of human history that finally conducts social revolution” (78). Marx (1867) observes thus: “From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into fetters. Then begins the epoch of social revolution” (20). In explaining the Marxist theory, Martin gets the awareness of his social homelessness. Jack London depicted the ethos of commercialism and economic determinism in the novel. The view held by the proletarian hero Ernest Everhard of Jack London's *The Iron Heel*. As Everhard tells a room full of outraged capitalists, the problem with society was that the ruling class had “mismanaged” it. (48). Economic inequality, poverty, labour exploitation, the destructive business cycle, the dehumanization of the workforce: the answer to all of these problems that ravaged the Gilded Age was the proper management of society. The key to social and economic justice was held not by the working class, whose members were presented as barely human in the novel, reduced to “brutish apathy”, nor by the members of the establishment who were but “well-fed beasts but by the small group of revolutionary artists, scientists, scholars, musicians, and poets able to take a disinterested stance a star-cool attitude toward the rational amelioration of society” (181).

Martin is trapped in the destructive forces of capitalism and his suicide becomes inevitable. Jack London investigates the cause of his downfall and the forces that crush him physically and psychologically at the end of the novel. He depicts his hopeless and depressed state of mind thus:

He dropped his arms upon the table and buried his face in them. His throat was aching, and he wanted to cry. It reminded him of his first fight when he was six years old when he punched away with the tears running down his cheeks while the other boy, two years his elder, had

beaten and pounded him into exhaustion. He saw the ring of boys, howling like barbarians as he went down, at last, writhing in the throes of nausea, the blood streaming from his nose and the tears from his bruised eyes. (80).

The growing capitalism led to the growth of greed; profit hunting and accumulation of wealth. Karl Marx became popular and the workers took a keen interest in the Marxian ideology to fight with the forces of capitalism and the oppressive power structure. No wonder, the workers joined hands together and the culture of unionism spread rapidly with the growth of proletariat consciousness. Marx has explored the growth of the bourgeois and the class antagonism in his book *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part 3 thus:

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralised means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralisation. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier and one customs-tariff. (36)

To conclude, Jack London belonged to the grassroots level and had seen all the facets of life and society. London explored the culture of the bourgeoisie and the plight of the proletariats who struggled to rise on the social ladder. He was also fired with the ambition to become rich and prosperous which was not easy in the capitalistic society of America. He read the books of Karl Marx and decided to propagate the Marxian ideology through his tales and novels. London wrote novels and short tales to expose and ridicule the oppressive forces of the power structure of capitalism. He was widely regarded as one of the leading socialist leaders. London's *The Call of the Wild* and *The Sea Wolf* are simple adventurous stories but with a Marxist reading, these stories indicate the capitalism and oppressive bourgeois culture. Margaret I, Pope, in

her. *Jack London; A Study in Twentieth-Century Values* has presented a thorough appraisal of all of Jack London's works, including novels, short stories, plays, and essays. London's novels are replete with Marxian ideas and historical materialism. In each tale and novel of Jack London, the main current is class antagonism. The interesting thing about Jack London is his dramatization of naturalism with materialism following the ideology of Engels and Marx. Jonathan Berliner in his book *American Literary Realism* (2008) offers an interesting reading of the works of Jack London. He observes that London is a legendary figure in America who championed the cause of the working classes. The juxtaposition of material history and class struggle forms the core of his works. London observed in his lifetime the brutalities of unbridled capitalism shaping the poor proletariat into an "abysmal brute" preparing for him to revolt against the bourgeoisie. Jack London observes in *The War of the Classes* thus:

Man being a man and a great deal short of the angels, the quarrel over the division of the joint product is irreconcilable. For the last twenty years in the United States, there has been an average of over a thousand strikes per year; and year by year these strikes increase in magnitude, and the front of the labour army grows more imposing. And it is a class struggle, pure and simple. Labour as a class is fighting with capital as a class. (7)

Marx stated that "Capitalism would turn the worker into a crippled monstrosity" (461). Jack London's *The Strength of the Strong* (1914) depicts the evolution of civil society. London like Hobbes and Locke explores the historical basis of the society and concludes the emergence of the class conflict discussed by Karl Marx is indubitable. London like Marx explores the concept of private property, labour, and wages the evolution of class antagonism. Jack London has dramatized the socialistic ideas of Marx in all his works.

## Conclusion

The preceding chapters are dealt with the theme of the rise of the capitalist society of America during and after World Wars along with the growing class conflict and the discontentment of the poor workers of America. Jack London focused upon the oppressive forces of capitalism and the power structure of the bourgeoisie bulldozed the individuality and the identity of the working classes. His belonging to the grass-root level of society and close observation of the plight of the workers who were treated like animals bound to live miserable lives gave extra edge to his writings. Having firsthand experience of the oppression of the capitalists being a victim of the same he rightly hammered the harsh realities through his novels. As evidenced in the select novels, London believed that everything was not rosy or utopian in the culture of capitalism and the Party culture alone could save the life of the workers. He advocated the union of the workers following the dictates of Karl Marx given out in his *Das Capital*. He argued that the workers were enslaved by the oppressive institutions of capitalism. Jack London realized that the socialistic vision of Karl Marx was essential for the social awareness and unity of the working classes in America. America emerged as a superpower and values changed rapidly.

In the *Introduction* of the thesis and in the chapter entitled “The Emergence of Marxism: A Theoretical Insight” the historical journey of Marxism is discussed in detail. In many research papers and the critical books, the journey of Socialism of Jack London is not traced out. In this study, the progressive growth of his vision of socialism is an important focus of the thesis. His famous three novels *The Sea Wolf*, *The Iron Heel*, and *Martin Eden* were written to promote the socialist cause. The novels of Jack London had historical significance as they chronicled a new aggressiveness in American politics. London was a serious novelist who got inspiration from the various philosophers who championed the cause of the proletariats. In all his writings, interviews, and lectures London focused on the propagation of Marxist Socialism to fight with the forces of capitalism. Philip S. Foner in his book *Jack London: American Rebel* (1947) hails him as a legendary novelist who deviated from the traditional themes of love and adventure and

introduced in his tales and novels the themes of Darwinism and struggles to survive in the harsh environment of American society. The historical process reveals that there is an incessant struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariats and this class conflict is the root cause of social disharmony and discontentment. The novels of Jack London reveal the working of the oppressive forces of capitalism. His novels are not based on the fictional love stories but are structured around the realistic play of the forces of class conflict.

London turned to Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*; Malthus's *Theory of Population*; Ricardo's *Theory of Distribution*; J.S. Mill's *Theory of Shares in Distribution*. He read Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Darwin, Marx, and Huxley and evolved their theory of life and struggle and existence. The novels *The Iron Heel* and *Martin Eden* deal with the struggles and hardships of workers; who launched a crusade against the forces of the hegemony of the landlords and the capitalists. London expressed the strike culture in America and the feelings of discontentment in the workers. He talked of Socialism and Revolution for the first time in American society. Jack London was the first novelist of the twentieth century who talked about the oppression and exploitation of the working classes. Based on his personal experiences he warned the rich capitalists to think about the problems of the workers. Marxian ideology is used in his tales and novels as a strategy to fight with the forces of oppression. In the *Introduction* of this study, the main focus is on the socialistic vision of Jack London who was the champion of the poor working classes of America. The main influences on Jack London and his interest in Darwinism and Marxist Socialism is investigated in the introductory chapter. London was a practical realist and advocated proletarian activism. He read *Das Capital*, *The Communist Manifesto* and read the works of Herbert Spencer.

In the first chapter of the thesis entitled, "The Emergence of Marxism: A Theoretical Insight" the historical growth of Marxism is traced out with a focus on the growth of the socialistic vision of Jack London. The Marxist ideology became popular with the rise of science and technology and with the massive growth of industry and capitalism. Marx is a philosopher, sociologist, historian, and revolutionary socialist as his revolutionary ideas had a tremendous impact on Max

Weber, Emile Durkheim. Marxism became a creed in the world. In this chapter intensive research is done to trace out the growth of science and technology and the growth of capitalistic oppressive forces in America. The historical and socialistic ideas of Marx were so popular and universal that when Jean-Paul Sartre visited America he declared that Marxian ideology is the best example of historical analysis and some of the theories of Karl Marx are universal and can be adopted in the capitalist system of America. In this research work, the theories of Karl Marx and the texts of Jack London are investigated from the perspective of socialism. The rise of machine, technology and industry led to the growth of capitalism which thrived on profit and greed for money. The capitalists grow powerful as they own the mean of production and employ workers who generate wealth for them. The novels of Jack London inspire the working classes to unite to fight against the forces of capitalism.

Marx believed that there is an eternal struggle going on between the capitalists and the proletariats. Marx moved to London and remained in London till 1867 and published the first volume of *Capital* in which he laid out his vision of capitalism and its inevitable extinction. Marx's critique of the division of labour is based on the view that the powers of the capitalists cannot be tolerated at the expense of individuals. The philosophical ideas of Karl Marx and their relevance to the contemporary American capitalistic society impacted Jack London who emerges as a Messiah of the working classes. He wrote novels and short stories depicting the plight of the working classes and expressing the need of the workers to launch a crusade against the oppressive capitalistic forces.

In the second chapter of the study entitled, "Jack London: His Life, Ideology, and Contribution" the main focus is on the influences of various socialistic thinkers on Jack London. The intensive study of the texts of Jack London reveals that with the passage of time he emerged as the champion of the working classes. He started hating the bourgeoisie and started to work for middle-class Americans. The critical analysis of the texts of Jack London is done relying on the theories of Karl Mars. It is found that the themes of poverty, oppression and exploitation are depicted by Jack London in his novels. He created characters who struggle to fight with the forces of capitalism and the power structure of the capitalists. The lust for greed and money of

the capitalists motivated them to throw away all the norms of traditional culture and they resorted to dehumanizing policies and strategies. In writing about the bureaucratic outlook of the Progressive Era, Robert H. Wiebe notes: “The bureaucratic orientation did more than sweep away faculty psychology and its Christian dualism; it obliterated the inner man” (Wiebe148). Marx analyzed the process of the capitalist economy thus:

The produce of the earth - all that is derived from its surface by the united application of labour, machinery and capital - is divided among three classes of the community; namely, the proprietor of the land, the owners of the stock or capital necessary for its cultivation and the labourers by whose industry it is cultivated.. .to determine the laws which regulate this distribution, is the principal problem of Political Economy. (108).

The outcome of this chapter is the cause of class antagonism of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It is found that the power structure of the capitalists is destructive, dehumanizing and oppressive. The forces of capitalism bulldoze the individuality and identity of the workers who are treated as animals. Jack London had experienced this tyranny of the capitalists as he was forced to work in various places and positions to survive in the harsh environment of America. All his tales and novels are the result of his personal traumatic experiences.

In the third chapter, “The Revelation of Marxian Socialism” the main focus is to analyze all the major texts of Jack London through the lens of Marxian ideology. London published *The Call of the Wild* to propagate the socialist philosophy of Karl Marx. The novel *The Call of the Wild* is regarded as the masterpiece of Jack London. It is unique “in its appeal to readers of all ages, social classes, and civilization”. Buck is an allegorical hero belonging to modern society representing his rebellion against the oppression of the capitalistic organization. On the surface, the plot of the novel is about the adventures of Buck but the critical analysis of the text reveals the class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie. It is found that London wrote his novels in capitalist environment. He came to the conclusion that the Marxian ideology alone



can safeguard the interests of the workers. The working classes must unite and fight against the capitalist forces.

In the fourth chapter entitled, “Capital Society and Cultural Transformation,” the dialectical relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is investigated. Jack London’s *The Iron Heel* (1908) depicts the passionate desire of London for a socialist revolution. The novel is considered as an epitome of the Bolshevik Revolution about America. The storyline is the expression of his socialist views and their application to the capitalist society of America. Everhard sacrificed his life for the noble cause of socialism and he was the hero of the working people of America. The social and political situations greatly influenced Jack London so it is essential to understand the genesis of the novel. When London wrote this novel, he was shocked to witness the social and political unrest. There was a class conflict in America as the rich were becoming richer and the poor were jobless and neglected by the capitalists. The phrase “Iron Heel” is very effective in the novel symbolizing the oppressive power structure of the capitalists. The capitalists crushed the workers with their steel boots. They could be thrown away from their jobs and there was no law to protect their wages and life. The plot of the novel *Martin Eden* deals with the struggles of Martin in the harsh society of America. They fight the capitalist machine but at last, are crushed by the iron heels of Oligarchy. *Martin Eden* of Jack London is the Bible of Socialism as the plot depicts the theme of class antagonism. The novel vindicates the rights of the workers. Following observations are made in this chapter:

(a) Jack London propagated the cult of Socialism and as in his novels he advocated the social vision and Revolution.

(b) The novels of Jack London bring about social and cultural awareness and hence they are social documents. The novels of Jack London inspired the American writers to continue the fight against the capital forces. No wonder, the novelists such as Dos Passos, Sinclair Lewis and John Steinbeck championed the cause of the working classes.

The main theme is the quest of a rude and uncouth man to civilize and educate himself. The main focus of Jack London is on the narration of the ugliness of the capitalist system. The tragic journey of Martin Eden is symbolic of the struggles of the working classes in capitalist America. Jack London's *The Sea Wolf* depicts the theory of Darwinism and Marxism. The story is narrated by Humphrey Van Weyden who is a writer and a critic rescued by the captain of the Ghost Wolf Larsen. Wolf Larsen believes that man's usefulness is decided by his work as he explained to Van Weyden: "Your body was made for use" (15). Wolf Larsen believes in the Marxian ideology and works hard day and night. His philosophy is consistent with his selfish individualism. Van Weyden became happier on the Ghost since he devoted himself to hard work. Like Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* the characters are seen struggling with the forces of Nature. Raymond Williams gave his own theory of hegemony elaborating the meaning of hegemony in *Culture and Materialism* as:

It is whole body of practices and expectations...It is a set of meanings and values which as they experience as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most of their lives. (38)

Steinbeck became aware of the class conflict as he read books written by Terry Eagleton. He read *Criticism and Ideology* (1976), *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (1976), *Ideology* (1991), *The Function of Criticism* (1994), *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990) written by Terry Eagleton. The study of Marxism and contribution of major Marxist critics such as George Lukacs, Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton and Zizek provide tools to explore the growth of proletariat consciousness depicted in the novels of Jack London.

Jack London's *White Fang* (1906) is a continuation of socialistic philosophy giving the message of adaptability in the environment for survival. White Fang has to face many trials and tribulations in his life and his life is an interesting history of transformation and assimilation becoming fully integrated into civilization. Jack

London depicts the role of instinctive drives in the making of an individual. The will to survive is imperative and the instinctive drives condition the personality of man. White Fang is described as a superior specimen both physically and mentally. London relies on the biological and genetic theory of Mendel characterizing the inheritance of White Fang in the novel. The novel is the epitome of Marxian theory of survival as the plot echoes the survival of the fittest ideology again and again. Marx observes thus:

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune: here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany); there taxable “third estate” of the monarchy (as in France); afterwards, in the period of manufacturing proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie. (Marx 5).

In the fifth chapter entitled, “Contextualizing Marxian Ideology and Class Conflict” the class antagonism depicted in the novels of Jack London is explored and investigated. Jack London argues that in society weak people have no place as they can be devoured at any time by the strong. White Fang realized that in the harsh environment, “denied their usual food supply, weakened by hunger, they fell upon and devoured one another. Only the strong survived” (128). In the capitalistic system if the workers are not united, they would be crushed by the cruel capitalistic forces. Johnston traces the growth of Jack London’s socialism contending that he used his own personal experiences as the material for the plots. London’s *The Valley of the Moon* is set in the urban society of America in which the workers are employed in factories in large numbers. London has

depicted the conflict between the forces of nature and the struggle of the poor workers to survive in the harsh community. Payne describes the aspirations of London to write novels to depict the subjugation and oppression of the proletariats of America. Marx writes thus in his *Das Capital Vol.1*:

Just as capital has the tendency to reduce the direct employment of living labour to no more than the necessary labour, and always to cut down the labour required to produce a commodity by exploiting the social productiveness of labour and thus to save a maximum of directly applied living labour, so it has also the tendency to employ this labour, reduced to a minimum, under the most economical conditions, i.e., to reduce to its minimum the value of the employed constant capital. If it is the necessary labour-time which determines the value of commodities, instead of all the labour-time contained in them, so it is the capital which realizes this determination and, at the same time, continually reduces the labour-time socially necessary to produce a given commodity. The price of the commodity is thereby lowered to its minimum since every portion of the labour required for its production is reduced to its minimum. (60)

The plot depicts the struggles of the life of Saxon Brown and Billy Roberts. They are laundress and teamsters and fall in love at first sight. The first section of the novel deals with their courtship and marriage. John Brazil in his article: "Politics and Art: The Integrated Sensibility of Jack London" (1979) comments thus, "London held to the version of historical causality in which progress resulted not from the actions of the superior individual but through the ineluctable Marxian dialectic and the confrontation of, groups, the proletarian masses with the capitalist elite" (Brazil 11).

In the second part of the novel London depicts the impact of the destructive strike of the teamster on the life of Billy. The third section deals with their flight from Oakland and searches for the fabled Valley of the Moon and the theme of naturalism. Billy finds life very hard in Oakland as he observes the helplessness of the working-class community.

The interesting thing about Jack London is his blending of naturalism with materialism following the ideology of Engels and Marx. During his lifetime the naturalist philosophies toward socialist ends were very popular. Nietzsche taught him individualism but his best novels such as *The Iron Heel*, *Martin Eden*, and *The Valley of the Moon* depict his passion for Marxian Socialism. His biographer Joan London comments thus:

All his life he remained an individualist and a socialist; he wanted individualism for himself because he was a superman, a blond-beast who would conquer...and socialism for the masses who were weak and needed protection. For a number of years, he was to be successful in riding these two intellectual horses, each of which was pulling in an opposite direction. (108)

Jonathan Berliner in his book *American Literary Realism* (2008) offers an interesting reading of the works of Jack London. He observes that London became popular in America because he juxtaposed material history and class struggle as “a dialectical one, with the social processes supported by the natural one” (60). In explaining the Marxist theory, Jack London discusses Marxian theory of surplus labour and investigates the plight of the workers thus in his *The War of Classes*:

The existence of the surplus labour army being established, there remains to be established the economic necessity for the surplus labour army. The simplest and most obvious need is that brought about by the fluctuation of production. If, when production is at low ebb, all men are at work, it necessarily follows that when production increases there will be no men to do the increased work. This may seem almost childish, and, if not childish, at least easily remedied. At low ebb let the men work shorter time; at high flood let them work overtime. The main objection to this is, that it is not done, and that we are considering what is, not what might be or should be. (17)

Jack London has a self-contained social vision and therefore has established itself as a significant figure among world's great authors who touched the enchantment of a

fine poet personally and socially on the actual life and society. His intellect had pretty much the same circumstances as that of D.H. Lawrence. His writings show a society controlled by the rich class economically and socially. Most of his complots concentrate on a confrontation between the steady society and the delicate one who has half and half rebel. As an anthropologist, he researched modern American society. He was of the idea that society is not governed and regulated by those who lived in society, but rather by a system of convictions and traditions, which are linked and controlled. London had a deep understanding of the upper and lowest classes, and the contrast of the two classes was remarkable. He never was separated from the society he grew up in. It is useful to highlight here that London was too scrupulous to attack modern American society's vulgarities, shortfalls and failings.

As a novelist, he also focused intensely on women's positions and difficulties. The difficulties on many economical levels related to women's behaviour from aristocrats to flappers were well included. London was a delicate human being who tried to liberate Americans from the hold of a new culture and the underlying difficulties of the Central American people. The personalities he discovered in, and around, his parents, friends, and local people in the Mid-south American communities, for his literary work he did not have to construct. He has given his own observations and experiences to the stark realities of his family and society. London's aim was to show America's daily lives. His literary endeavour is in keeping with the notion of race and environment in emerging cities of the French critic Taine. He enjoyed, and chose, to write about the dark people who lived in the mid-western country or city as handicrafts-men, go down-keepers, horse-keeping labourers and military men.

London was never able to adapt to society since it was a weak, sluggish and uninspiring society for an ambitious person like him. He was ravenous for his ambitious thirst. Similarly, London never tried to adapt the person to society as an honest literary subjective artist. London knew both mid-west rural life and city life through machinery. It had a lot of knowledge. The age of the machine was wobbly in London. It paralyzed human awareness. London, an American absolute, was an open-minded man without classes, sects or groups. He cordially greeted everyone. He had

a beautiful mix of facts and imagination that remembered the past. London has sought to define an adapting civilization of men who are able to maintain and preserve their culture of agriculture and animal husbandry via a new industrial revolution.

London has brilliantly represented American men and women in his books, in his short tales, and their difficulties have arisen from excessive scientific progress, industrial growth and capitalism. Indeed, London started his literary career as a propagandist by combating the corruption of many types in the American architecture. London has shown these phenomena beautifully. He felt that men and women must live joyfully, freely and friendship and affection should be exchanged. Jack London was a good viewer and relationship observer.

In short, it can be said that he very seriously took human life. He was of the view that the general connection of men and women was not only corrupt but also uncreative since they did not have real ethnicity or communication due to equal and reciprocal relationships with one other. As a result, there was a disparity among men and women in their personal closeness, appeal, and creativity. In light of their hardships and their connections with males, he has brought his ladies forward. Jack London was regarded excessively simple, coupled with Theodore Dreiser and other unpolitized literary giants, in the 1940's-1950's when American literature favoured sophisticated and deliberately complex writing approaches. Those who were scared of socialist and revolutionary ideals had great favours with those new aesthetic standards. However, the works of London spoke on their own. Love was transferred to their offspring from parents. The national tradition, the people's pride, survived in London. The work of Jack London is inconsistent and gives rise to conflicting answers as many readers and critics have noticed for a long time. In most debates and conversations concerning the works of London, one unique detail was repeated. Almost often, a debate about London as an author was intimately related to a unique and fascinating individual talking about Jack London.

Talking about the role of London in the US, his influences as a socialist booster and a critic of the American capitalist system cannot be overlooked. Two

students were displaced, in order to spread socialism, three years after London died, from a school in Chicago. They have read Marx and Jack London's writings and have their socialist views accordingly. It was a real result, both strength and restlessness, of the militant, working class and border spirit on the Western Coast. Jack London's name is a living legend across the West. He is considered as one of their own by teamster, seafarers, fisherman and miners and labourers in the depths of the continent. His name has been a symbol of the fellowship and guerrilla spirit of the working class for many years now.

London sought to build realism in his fictional work and actually make significant use of the realities of life. He seeks the passes of time and place, the corruption of the people and the new realities that are founded in former ideals. His research is focused on recognition. He was persuaded that in industrial society the history of which he wrote was lost. London, in rural Virginia, was looking for and persuaded of what he had so long portrayed in fiction as the recreation he found. It was for him an imperfect rediscovering of reality. London confronted Midwest-corrupted industrialisation, frustration, confusion, and dehumanisation. London's fictitious world is great. No other 20th-century writer has embodied and reflected important parts of American society like him. His works are shaded by new modes of life and thought.

In all the chapters of the study, the impact of new money culture and the growing trends of industrialization are highlighted while analyzing the texts of Jack London. Jack London championed the cause of the working classes and he propagated Marxian ideology in his novels and stories. He firmly believed that the only panacea to alleviate the evils of capitalism was the theory of Marxism. He wanted to bring social revolution to America. His novels inspired socialist novelists such as Dos Passos and Sinclair Lewis who wrote novels such as *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Dos Passos wrote *The 42<sup>nd</sup> Parallel; 1919* and *The Big Money* depicting the plight of poor workers like Mac, Charley Anderson, and Joe Williams. James D. Hart.

It can be concluded that London has very sophisticatedly displayed his characters. His characters are not imagined, but are genuine and moving people from



America. His literary characters are mostly compatriots, ladies, relatives and friends. Through their acts, contemplatives, goals, dreams, and, in short, human ethics, they have brought his persona to life. His quest has been founded on recognising passes of time and location, people's depravity and the new reality that has its roots in former values. London has been a restless writer, without any question. In the early part of the 20th century his finest works describe New York life. A world economically and socially dominated by the upper classes comes into being in his books. He was a straightforward writer; he wasn't bewildered by anything. His novels are more than a pervasive and full study collection. It's well-connected episodes. He was persuaded that in industrial society the history of which he wrote was lost. London, in rural Virginia, was looking for and persuaded of what he had so long portrayed in fiction as the recreation he found. It was for him an imperfect rediscovering of reality.

London confronted Midwest-corrupted industrialisation, frustration, confusion, and dehumanisation. Jack London is one of his generation's greatest authors. Jack London was a careful and precise recorder of the stuff of his day. His works describe the present socioeconomic situation from diverse sources extremely touchingly. Due to his dramatic attempts at freeing it, his role in American literary works was to be given further significance as a technique. In his experiments with imagination, expressionism, and self-conscious narrative voice he remained a major character, a significant connection between the past and present American culture. He attempted to comprehend the raw realities of the American existence and to go behind the façade. The tragedy of death in living is the main subject of London literature. He believed the contemporary guy was missing.

London had discovered not to manufacture characters, his parents, friends, and local people in the centre of the Americas. He found them within himself and around. He has given his own observations and experiences to the stark realities of his family and society. Therefore, it is worth mentioning that London was too brutal to assault the current American society's vulgarities, weaknesses and failings. As a novelist, he also focussed intensely on women's positions and difficulties. To conclude, in Jack London's novels there are a multiplicity of Marxian ideas as he talks of historical materialism and class antagonism.

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