



St. Joseph's Journal of Humanities and Science

ISSN: 2347 - 5331

<http://sjctnc.edu.in/6107-2/>



Presentation of Naturalism in the Novel *The Call of the Wild by Jack London*

M. Jasmine Sagila^a

J. P. Ida Joicey^{b*}

ABSTRACT

Naturalism was first proposed by a French novelist Emile Zola and then many novelists used this literary theory in their novels. Especially the prominent writer, Theodore Dreiser is a pioneer of Naturalism who wrote his novels with this realistic theme. Jack London was one the most prominent novelist who wrote novels with the theme of Naturalism. Naturalism is a literary theory which emphasizes that every living thing is being influenced by the environment around them and their own heredity. Everyone in this world wants to survive and lead a long life happily. In order to achieve a sophisticated and comfortable life everyone works hard and do many things to become a survivor in this competitive world. Jack London believed this theory and exhibited in his novel "The Call of the Wild". In this novel, he uses a dog named Buck as the protagonist and shows how his life is transformed in the story by Naturalism and heredity. Buck is being determined in this novel to overcome his barriers and achieve a life of freedom. Literary Naturalism looks deeply how living beings rely on their own instincts and respond the environment. .

Keywords: Naturalism, Transformation, Instincts, Environment.

John Griffith London was an author, journalist, and social activist from the United States. His pseudonym was Jack London and he was born on January 26 in 1876 in San Francisco. He was one of the first American authors to achieve international fame and earn a substantial fortune

from writing. He was a pioneer of commercial fiction and American magazines. He was also a pioneer in the genre of science fiction genre that would eventually be named after him, London educated himself by reading popularised versions of Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, and Friedrich

^a Research Scholar, PG & Research Department of English, St. Joseph's College of Arts and Science (Autonomous), Cuddalore-607001, Tamil Nadu, India.

^{b*} PG & Research Department of English, St. Joseph's College of Arts and Science (Autonomous), Cuddalore-607001, Tamil Nadu, India.

*E-mail: ida@sjctnc.edu.in

Nietzsche at public libraries. Like London Dreiser also greatly established the theme of Naturalism through his novels to a greater extent. His novels like *Sister Carrie*, *An American Tragedy*, are some of the examples which speaks clearly about the relationship of human beings with the nature. Also it tells about how nature is associated with the human life and the way how it affects the society. He joined the University of California, Berkeley, at the age of 19 after cramming a four-year high school course into one year, but he dropped out after a year to seek his fortune in the Klondike gold rush. He returned the following year, still destitute and jobless, and resolved to make a livelihood as a writer. *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*, both set during the Klondike Gold Rush, are among his best-known works, as are the short pieces "To Build a Fire," "An Odyssey of the North," and "Love of Life." In stories like "The Pearls of Parlay" and "The Heathen," he wrote about the South Pacific.

Buck, the protagonist of the novel is a dog who lives in the care of Judge Miller, a comfortable happy life. He is a mix of St. Bernard and Scotch Collie. There he is being pampered by everyone and lead a very luxurious life. But soon his life is changed when he is kidnapped by a gardener of that house and sold to the dog traders for profit. From now his life is transformed from a life of sophistication to a life of misery. Later Buck is again sold and made to work as a sled dog. In order to earn money the human beings makes use of these dogs by selling and making them to do heavy works. Because, they wanted to earn money, to live a satisfaction life and happiness

When Buck worked as sled dog he began to get some primitive instincts where he realized the basic rule of this world that is "survival of the fittest. Everyone wants to have a life of freedom and they should only work hard and find a way to achieve that freedom happiness. From then Buck starts to transform from a soft domestic dog to a wild beast in order to protect himself from the dangerous situations. When he works as a sled dog he has many dogs in his team where a dog named

Spitz is the leader. Later Spitz and Bucks had a fight within themselves where Buck kills Spitz and declares himself as the leader of the team. The team of sled dogs is sold to mail carrier where one of the dogs dies as they were made to carry heavy loads. Again from there Buck and other dogs are sold to gold hunters named Hal, Charles and Mercedes.

Even there the dogs are made to do a lot of work and many dogs die due to starvation. Buck is very stubborn to live and so he accepts all the struggles. There they are happened to meet a man named John Thornton who saves Buck from drowning in the ice cold river. From then Buck becomes devoted to Thornton and they become thick friends. Buck helps him to win thousand dollars in a beating competition and also saves his life. Meanwhile Buck gets primitive instincts often and so he goes inside the forest for long intervals of time. But returns back to Thornton. One day when Buck returned he found Thornton and his crew been killed by the Native Americans referred as Yeehats in the novel. Buck is shattered and he kills many of the Native Americans for killing his friend.

Then he goes to the forest and become the leader of the wolf pack and lived there. Being transformed totally as a wild, he regularly visited the place where Thornton was killed every year to mourn for his lovable friend. So, Buck's life is totally changed by the various incidents he faced and the environment he came across which is called Naturalism.

Buck, when he stayed with his owner, Judge, he was a domestic animal who does not know the reality of the world outside. He does not know how to survive in this inescapable world. When the situation pushes him inside this world he runs hard to find a life of freedom and happiness. In the same way only we human beings are being pushed into this competitive world to survive our life. As the protagonist, we human beings also do know the real world during our childhood. Only when we complete our studies we enter into the

real world where we have to work hard for our lives and transform ourselves into a successful survivor.

WORKS CITED

1. Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopedia. "Jack London". Encyclopedia Britannica, 16 Jun. 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jack-London>.
2. London, Jack. *The Call of the Wild*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. 1994.
3. Zhang, Xiaofen. "Naturalism Presented in *The Call of the Wild*". Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 1, No. 3, May 2010, pp. 278- 281.