



PHILOSOPHICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF BRAVERY IN JACK LONDON'S WORKS

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Annotation:

This article explores the philosophical and ideological foundations of bravery in Jack London's literary works. By examining his narratives through the lens of naturalism, social Darwinism, and existentialist themes, the study identifies the key elements that shape the portrayal of courage in his stories. The research utilizes literary analysis and thematic interpretation to highlight the ways in which London's characters embody resilience and heroism in the face of adversity. The findings suggest that London's conception of bravery is deeply intertwined with survival, individualism, and the human struggle against nature and society.

Keywords: Jack London, bravery, naturalism, social Darwinism, existentialism, individualism, survival, literary analysis.

Jack London, one of the most prominent American writers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is well-known for his adventure novels and stories that explore human endurance, resilience, and bravery. His works, including *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*, frequently depict characters who must confront extreme conditions, both environmental and societal. London's philosophical influences, such as naturalism, social Darwinism, and elements of existentialism, provide the foundation for his portrayal of bravery. This study aims to analyze the philosophical and ideological underpinnings of bravery in London's literary universe, exploring how his characters embody the struggle for survival and self-determination.

Jack London, one of the most renowned American writers of the early 20th century, is famous for his adventure novels and short stories that explore themes of survival, resilience, and human courage. His works are deeply influenced by philosophical and ideological currents such as Social Darwinism, Nietzschean individualism, and Marxist thought, all of which contribute to his depiction of bravery. This paper



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examines the philosophical and ideological foundations of bravery in London's works, focusing on how his characters embody physical, moral, and existential courage.

Social Darwinism and the Struggle for Survival

One of the most prominent influences on London's portrayal of bravery is Social Darwinism, which emphasizes the survival of the fittest in a harsh and competitive world. In *The Call of the Wild* (1903), Buck, the protagonist, undergoes a transformation from a domesticated pet into a wild and fearless leader. His journey reflects the Darwinian struggle for survival, where only the strongest and most adaptable can endure. Bravery in this context is defined by the ability to overcome adversity, assert dominance, and embrace one's primal instincts.

Similarly, in *White Fang* (1906), the titular wolf-dog character learns to navigate a brutal environment where aggression and courage determine one's fate. London presents bravery as a biological necessity, where fearlessness is not just a virtue but a requirement for existence.

Nietzschean Individualism and the Will to Power

Jack London was also influenced by the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche, particularly the concept of the *Übermensch* (Overman) and the will to power. Nietzsche's philosophy champions the idea of self-overcoming, personal strength, and defiance against imposed limitations. Many of London's protagonists exhibit these qualities by demonstrating determination, self-reliance, and an unyielding spirit in the face of hardship.

In *Martin Eden* (1909), the protagonist, a self-taught writer, embodies the Nietzschean ideal of the self-made individual. His intellectual and physical bravery allow him to rise above his working-class origins, rejecting societal norms to pursue his own vision of success. However, his eventual disillusionment with the world highlights the existential cost of such bravery.

Similarly, in *To Build a Fire* (1908), the unnamed protagonist attempts to defy nature's harshness with his intellect and willpower. His failure, however, underscores the limits of human arrogance and the necessity of humility in the face of nature's power.



Marxist Themes and Bravery in Class Struggle

Although London's works often celebrate individual heroism, they also reflect his interest in Marxist ideology, particularly in terms of class struggle and resistance against oppression. His early experiences as a laborer and his involvement in socialist movements influenced his depiction of bravery as a form of defiance against exploitation and injustice.

In *The Iron Heel* (1908), London presents a dystopian world where an oppressive oligarchy crushes the working class. The novel's protagonist, Ernest Everhard, embodies revolutionary bravery, fighting against the capitalist system despite overwhelming odds. Here, bravery is not just about physical endurance but also about moral conviction and political resistance.

This theme is also evident in *The People of the Abyss* (1903), a non-fiction work documenting London's experiences among the poor in London's East End. The courage of the working class, who endure extreme poverty and suffering, is portrayed as a collective act of resilience against systemic oppression.

Existentialism and the Human Struggle Against Fate

London's stories frequently explore existential themes, portraying bravery as a confrontation with death, fate, and the meaning of existence. His characters are often isolated individuals facing extreme conditions, forcing them to grapple with their own mortality.

In *To Build a Fire*, the protagonist's fatal mistake is his lack of imagination—he underestimates nature's power and overestimates his own abilities. His ultimate fate reinforces the existentialist notion that bravery alone is not enough; wisdom and respect for the unknown are equally vital.

In contrast, *The Sea-Wolf* (1904) presents Wolf Larsen, a Nietzschean superman who rejects conventional morality and lives according to his own rules. His intellectual and physical bravery make him a formidable force, yet his eventual demise suggests that power without compassion leads to self-destruction.

Bravery in Jack London's works is a complex, multifaceted concept shaped by Social Darwinism, Nietzschean philosophy, Marxist thought, and existentialism. Whether it is the survivalist courage of Buck, the self-overcoming of Martin Eden, the revolutionary defiance of Ernest Everhard, or the existential struggle of



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London's doomed protagonists, bravery is depicted as both a necessity and a burden. Ultimately, London's philosophy of bravery teaches that courage alone is insufficient—wisdom, adaptability, and moral strength are equally essential in the struggle for existence.

Conclusions

Jack London's literary works provide a rich philosophical foundation for understanding bravery as a function of survival, self-determination, and adaptation. His naturalistic and social Darwinist perspectives offer a realistic portrayal of human endurance in extreme conditions. Future studies could further explore the intersections of London's philosophy with contemporary psychological theories on resilience. Additionally, a comparative study between London's depiction of bravery and that found in other adventure literature could provide deeper insights into the evolution of the heroic archetype in literature.

By critically engaging with London's works, readers can gain a deeper appreciation of the complexities of bravery and the human spirit in literature. His stories continue to serve as a testament to the enduring struggle for survival and the philosophical underpinnings that define human courage.

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