

## The Development of Jack London's Ecological Thought in "All Gold Canyon," *Burning Daylight*, and *The Valley of the Moon*

---

Jingbi Shi

Jingbi Shi is a lecturer in the Foreign Language Department at Nanjing University of Science & Technology, China.

---

### Deep Ecology Principles

Literature can be read from many approaches, among which is the approach of eco-criticism grounded in deep ecology principles. Deep ecology theorists combine ecology with ethics to restrain human beings from destroying nature. In 1972, Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess coined the term "Deep Ecology Movement," which was soon popularized by North American deep ecology supporters such as Bill Devall, George Sessions, and others. The heart of the deep ecology movement is its eight-point platform principles articulated first by Arne Naess and George Sessions in 1984. The platform principles aim to be the basis for unity among all who seek to create an ecologically sustainable society. The most recent version of the platform principles is as follows.

1. All living beings have intrinsic value.
2. The richness and diversity of life has intrinsic value.
3. Except to satisfy vital needs, humankind does not have the right to reduce this diversity and this richness.
4. It would be better for human beings if there were fewer of them, and much better for other living creatures.

5. Today the extent and nature of human interference in the various ecosystems is not sustainable, and the lack of sustainability is rising.
6. Decisive improvement requires considerable change: social, economic, technological, and ideological.
7. An ideological change would essentially entail seeking a better quality of life rather than a raised standard of living.
8. Those who accept the aforementioned points are responsible for trying to contribute directly or indirectly to the realization of the necessary changes.<sup>1</sup>

The philosophical roots of deep ecology theory can be traced to many writers in the West and East, some as early as the Taoist Lao Tzu, or in the West to the Pythagoreans. In North America, the ecocentricism of writers such as Henry David Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, and others has fostered the deep ecology movement. It is clear that deep ecology advocates ecocentricism and focuses on anthropocentrism or human-centredness as a major cause of the ecological problems. By now, deep ecological theory has become an indispensable part of Western environmental ethics. Moreover, deep ecological theory has been “central for most practitioners of ecocriticism.”<sup>2</sup> Obviously, the ethics of a deep ecology approach are necessary today, because humans now have the power to destroy the integrity, diversity, and stability of nature on the global scale.

Although London did not hear about “deep ecology principles” in his day, his ecological thought is so modern that it is consistent with the principles of deep ecology. For this reason, the present study is a work of eco-criticism that is grounded in deep ecological insights and principles.

---

### **Newly Awakened Ecological Conscience in “All Gold Canyon”**

“All Gold Canyon” sets forth a land of Edenic beauty whose tranquility is shattered by the destructive, resource-oriented pocket-miner named Bill, who despoils and destroys the valley in search of gold. Man’s greed for gold results in not only a damaged slope but also a war between Bill and another gold-hunter. If we do not read it from an eco-critical perspective, the story, on the face of it, is just another humorous

adventure story about the unexpected battle between two pocket-miners for gold.

In “All Gold Canyon,” London not only notices for the first time in his career that greed and desire are in conflict with the ecosystem, but he begins to develop an ethical concern for nature. In Earle Labor’s words, the story “demonstrates his newly awakened ecological conscience. There had been little evidence of such concern in his Alaskan stories.”<sup>3</sup> London’s ecological conscience is first implied in his contrasting descriptions of the tranquil valley and the noisy action of a pocket-miner named Bill.

London lyrically describes the beauty and tranquility of the valley in the first seven paragraphs which present a healthy ecosystem where animals, plants, and their physical environment are in perfect harmony. Yet the harmony of the place “fled away”<sup>4</sup> as the gold-seeker Bill intrudes into the valley. The noise he makes breaks the repose and arouses a sense of anxiety and tension. The drowsy buck escapes with fear and other living things such as the butterflies and the bees disappear too. It seems there is “little hope for the spirit of the place to return with its quietude and repose, for the man’s voice, raised in ragtime song, still dominates the canyon with possession.”<sup>5</sup> What London implies in the opening paragraphs is that humanity can be a menace to the harmony of nature.

Then, to emphasize the binary opposite relationship between Bill and nature, London employs a simile to depict the expression in Bill’s eyes when he is surveying a flower-covered hillside to locate the site of the gold-pocket. “In his eyes was a curiosity, new-aroused and burning. There was an exultance about his bearing and a keenness like that of a hunting animal catching the fresh scent of game.”<sup>6</sup> It is obvious that Bill values the beautiful slope materially not aesthetically. The hill is not seen as what it is but as what it might offer. His exploitive attitude toward nature establishes a dualism of humanity and nature. In the case of Bill, the human/nature dualism takes the form of a hunter/game relation. That is, London pictures Bill as the predator and conqueror, with nature as the prey and victim.

To further explain the separation of Bill from nature, London chooses the words “desire” and “fever” to describe Bill. In one scene, Bill is counting the golden specks in the dirt, and London writes, “His blue eyes were shining with desire.”<sup>7</sup> In another scene, where Bill is digging gold, London describes: “A fever seemed to be growing in him, nor did the increasing richness of the test-pans allay this fever.”<sup>8</sup> To remind

readers that the deeper cause of the “devastation” of the environment is man’s greed, London repeats “feverish” and “desire” in still another scene where Bill is digging an “untold number of”<sup>9</sup> deep holes into the sloping hill for the purpose of discovering the gold-pocket.

Feverish with desire, with aching back and stiffening muscles, with pick and shovel gouging and mauling the soft brown earth, the man toiled up the hill. Before him was the smooth slope, spangled with flowers and made sweet with their breath. Behind him was devastation. It looked like some terrible eruption breaking out on the smooth skin of the hill. His slow progress was like that of a slug, befouling beauty with a monstrous trail.<sup>10</sup>

In this paragraph, not only the repetition of “feverish” and “desire” serve to emphasize the topic of this story, comparison also functions for the same purpose. London’s criticism of Bill’s destructive behaviour is clearly implied in the contrasting description of the unmined slope before him and the ravaged one behind him. What’s more, the two vivid similes at the end of the paragraph show London’s sensitiveness to the harmful result of man’s materialism and his anger with man’s lack of ecological conscience. Bill’s greed-driven exploitation of the earth is a form of violence that grows from the misguided values that human beings are superior to nature and that nature exists only to supply resources for human use.

Aiming to highlight the theme that humanity’s greed is a threat to the environment, London adds a further scene near the end of the story to dramatize his point, in which another pocket-miner attacks Bill for the gold. The deafening explosion made by the revolver further violates the canyon, and the miner’s death spoils the spirit of peace. In miniature, London’s scene resembles the destructive force of warfare in today’s world, which is destructive, even deadly, to the ecosystem. Nowadays, greed-driven mining and profit-driven wars are two of the most destructive factors that will lead to an even darker ecological crisis. London’s awareness of the cause-result relationship between humanity’s greedy desire and the environmental crisis is ahead of his time. Even now, in the twenty-first century, the dominant worldview is that nature is important only as a source of materials to satisfy human desires. With the waning of hunter/gather societies, Western cultures began to lose their sense that their existence depended on the natural world. Christian cultures believed that their god had provided unlimited resources for themselves, presumably their god’s favoured creatures on earth, and later scientific developments abetted this worldview. But if people in Jack London’s time acted as if trees existed to be burned and mountains to be graded and wild animals to be slaughtered, modern generations are hardly better in valuing nature only for its resources.

“‘The avarice of mankind is insatiable,’ wrote Aristotle twenty-three centuries ago,”<sup>11</sup> which explains in part why the misguided worldview dies hard and still contributes to ecological crisis. Such misguided values have caused serious ecological problems as Wieland presents,

We have exploited nature thoughtlessly for our short-term goals, and are in the process of poisoning the earth and robbing her of all resources, we have polluted the air that we breathe and the water that we drink. We have extinguished plants and animals and turned parts of world into concrete deserts in whose waste we are likely to suffocate.<sup>12</sup>

However, in London’s story, the valley begins to regenerate and recover from the ravages of humanity’s invasion after Bill leaves triumphantly with his gold.

Through the silence crept back the spirit of the place. The stream once more drowsed and whispered; the hum of the mountain bees rose sleepily. Down through the perfume-weighted air fluttered the snowy fluffs of the cottonwoods. The butterflies drifted in and out among the trees, and over all blazed the quiet sunshine”<sup>13</sup>

Yet, London still cannot get the destroyed slope out of his mind. To underscore his newly awakened ecological conscience he ends the story with the sentence: “Only remained the hoof-marks in the meadow and the torn hillside to mark the boisterous trail of the life that had broken the peace of the place and passed on.”<sup>14</sup>

With the unresolved question in mind—how to deal with the ecological problem involving the clash of man’s greed with the ecosystem, London composed another novel, *Burning Daylight*.

---

### **Quest for Ecological Self in *Burning Daylight***

*Burning Daylight* (1910) is partly autobiographical and is set in Sonoma Valley (also called the valley of the Moon) where London lived for the last decade of his life (from 1905–1916). The book begins in the Arctic where the hero, Elam Harnish, makes great fortune. With the huge fortune, Elam heads to the cities looking for new fields to conquer. However, the financiers in the new fields cheat him out of his fortune. Learning the lesson of dog-eat-dog, he too becomes a scoundrel when it comes to doing business. The way of life in the city not only turns him into a soulless man but also destroys his health and good looks. The story ends with Elam living harmoniously with nature after the rebirth brought by nature and a woman named Dede Mason.

Thus, the novel's popularity seems due largely to its pleasing combination as a story of adventure, dirty business deals, and love. However, the following analysis develops an ecological reading that explores Elam's quest for what contemporary philosophers refer to as "the ecological self."

"Ecological self" is a term coined by Arne Naess. As Naess sees it, many of us who want to mitigate the environmental crisis will do so based on our own personal ecologically based philosophy, or *ecosophy*. An ecosophy is a life style committed to living in an ecologically wise way. Naess's own example of a personal ecosophy is his Ecosophy T, in which the ultimate norm is Self-Realization. The capitalized "Self" in Self-realization refers to the "ecological self." He capitalizes *self* to distinguish it from the smaller, ego self. As Naess explains,

Traditionally, the maturity of the self has been considered to develop through three stages: from ego to social self (comprising the ego), and from social self to a metaphysical self (comprising the social self). But in this conception of the maturity of the self, Nature is largely left out. Our immediate environment, our home (where we belong as children), and the identification with nonhuman living beings, are largely ignored. Therefore, I tentatively introduce, perhaps for the very first time, the concept of ecological self.<sup>15</sup>

To reach Self-realization, in Naess's view, one goes toward an extended identification with all of nature, loving not only one's ego self, or only one's family and fellow human beings, but also with nonhuman living nature. Naess's concept of "ecological self" best explains what London had in mind when he traced the career of his hero, Elam, in *Burning Daylight*.

In the first third of the novel, London reproduces the conflict that he had presented in "All Gold Canyon" between man's greedy desire and the natural environment. This part is set in the north, where an alarming number of gold-hunters violate the natural order. "Six thousand spent the winter of 1897 in Dawson, work on the creeks went on apace, while beyond the passes it was reported that one hundred thousand more were waiting for the spring."<sup>16</sup> "By 1898, sixty thousand men were on the Klondike."<sup>17</sup> Again, the north falls victim to the greed-driven gold-hunters. The hills become treeless and into the hills numerous holes have been dug to the extent that even the arctic snow cannot cover them, and even the air is polluted.

It was a scene of a vast devastation. The hills, to their tops, had been shorn of trees, and their naked sides showed signs of goring and perforating that even the mantle of snow could not hide. . . . A blanket of smoke filled the valleys and

turned the gray day to melancholy twilight. Smoke arose from a thousand holes in the snow, where, deep down on bed-rock, in the frozen muck and gravel, men crept and scratched and dug, and ever built more fires to break the grip of the frost. Here and there, where new shafts were starting, these fires flamed redly. The wreckage of the spring washing appeared everywhere—piles of sluice-boxes, sections of elevated flumes, huge water-wheels,—all the debris of an army of gold-mad men.<sup>18</sup>

In this “smoky inferno,”<sup>19</sup> humanity is the violent destructive force and nature the helpless victim. Not even the extreme cold can defeat man’s desire for gold. It is evident that greed can be a major force in driving excessive exploitation of natural resources and causing environmental degradation. With the intrusion of the gold-hunters, not only the landscape is devastated, the living things are also the victims. In the eyes of the miners, nonhuman beings such as snowshoe rabbits, moose, squirrels, and so on are just for food. The miners disturb the north to such an extent that, just within one or two years, no animals can be found where there used to be plenty.

There was an unwonted absence of animal life. At rare intervals they chanced upon the trail of a snowshoe rabbit or an ermine; but in the main it seemed that all life had fled the land. It was a condition not unknown to them, for in all their experience, at one time or another, they had traveled one year through a region teeming with game, where, a year or two or three years later, no game at all would be found.<sup>20</sup>

Although the north is very cold for human beings, it is the perfect habitat for its own native species. London’s fine sensitiveness to landscape and environment not only brings us the damaged scene, but also the beauty and biodiversity of nature. London presents some of his best description of the north. The unique beauty of the north is impressive: snow-covered wasteland, frozen creeks and rivers, forests of spruce and fir, especially the aurora borealis flashing coldly across the sky. The description of the long arctic night reveals a moving genuine current of poetry, “the aurora borealis flamed overhead and the stars leaped and danced in the great cold.”<sup>21</sup> In addition to the beauty, the biodiversity of the region is also unforgettable. Animals such as snowshoe rabbits, ermine, moose, wolverines, squirrels, lynx, salmon and baldface grizzlies abound in the north, especially moose. These animals, together with plants such as moss, willows, pines, and spruce, as well as the creeks, gravel bars, rivers, and tundra: all this constitutes a perfect world where both the living and non-living things exist together in a natural order that is notable not only for its beauty, but also for its stability and biodiversity. Both the living and the non-living things in the north have formed an ecologically balanced community

during the long evolutionary period of development. They are adapted to each other and connected to each other. The ecosystem in the north has its own values, independent of its usefulness to the human species or human societies. Therefore, human beings have no right to ravage it according to their own greedy desire. Yet, driven by the lust for gold, the gold-hunters disturb the ecosystem without hesitation and thus break the ecological equilibrium, causing alarming damage such as the extinction of the native animals—in London’s words, “an unwonted absence of animal life.”<sup>22</sup>

Apart from the description of the damage done by the miners in general, London focuses on the harmful behaviour of Elam who is depicted as a man with intense desire. “Desire for mastery was strong in him, and it was all one whether wrestling with the elements themselves, with men, or with luck in a gambling game.”<sup>23</sup> His extremely strong sense of desire and control makes him a more destructive force than his fellow gold-hunters. Pushed by the strong desire for mastery, Elam feels it is necessary to extend his achievements on a large scale. To satisfy his desire without any limitation, he would attack everything that impedes him, even if it means damage to nature itself. The case in point is Elam’s ambition to build a metropolis in the Arctic. In his mind’s eye, he sees steamboat landings, sawmill and warehouse locations, big trading stores, saloons, dancing-halls, and long streets of miners’ log cabins—in a word, everything a far-northern mining city would need. He does contribute to the development of the city in the north and makes big money in his investment in the project. For example, he foresees the commercial chance to make a great fortune in building log cabins in Dawson for thousands of gold seekers who will come in soon. Therefore, he buys timber and sawmills and makes them work day and night. As the town of Dawson quickly grows, Elam earns a huge amount of money from the sale of the log cabins.

Although what he possesses is far more than what is necessary, he desires even more. “He had developed, in a new way, the taste for power. It had become a lust with him. By far the wealthiest miner in Alaska, he wanted to be still wealthier.”<sup>24</sup> Driven by the desire for more money, he begins to alter the wilderness of Ophir. He establishes a reservoir; he builds a huge wooden conduit; he installs electric power plants. Finally, Elam converts “the vast moose-pastures,” a paradise for moose, to nothing but a mining town. Elam earns a net million from selling the mining district and all its plants, and at the same time, the moose are dispossessed of their habitat.



A resource-oriented person, Elam does not realize that man is not privileged to shape nature for self-benefit. He does not realize what this alteration means to the whole ecosystem where vast stands of timber were consumed and where numberless game animals have lost their habitats. So Elam does not feel guilty for what he has done. Instead, he feels enchanted by his own mighty power and takes pride in the image as “the King of the Klondike . . . the Lumber Baron, and the Prince of the Stampedes.”<sup>25</sup> In other words, he is proud of the image as a conqueror of nature.

Tearing his fortune from the earth, leaving the ecosystem desecrated and ravaged, Elam departs for cities to begin another venture. And his fellow miners, who admire Elam as their “captain,”<sup>26</sup> will undoubtedly follow the path of their hero and continue to conquer nature. Thus ends the first third of the novel.

From what has been discussed above, we can see that the theme of Elam’s adventure in the Arctic is like that of Bill’s in the beautiful canyon: greedy desire and damaged nature. The only difference lies in the extent of damage. In “All Gold Canyon,” the destroyer is one miner and what is destroyed is one hill slope, while in *Burning Daylight*, thousands of gold-hunters are doing harm to nature, and the sufferer is the entire north.

Unlike Bill who remains unchanged, Elam is a round character. His attitude toward nature changes gradually after he suffers a sense of loss in the corrupted city. So the following venture in the cities mainly deals with Elam’s spiritual transition. In the world of business, Elam is busy accumulating his wealth. Yet the dirty business battles have turned Elam into a brutal and cruel man. “Men were afraid of him. He became known as a fighter, a fiend, a tiger.”<sup>27</sup> Although he triples his wealth earned in the north, the alienated Elam feels a sense of anguish and a sense of loss. Lust for larger wealth traps Elam in the corrupt city where organic nature ceases to be a part of daily life. He becomes tired of the unnatural city life and begins to miss the direct contact with nature. Elam feels that there must be places in nature for human beings to satisfy their souls, for food and drink alone are not enough. Therefore, Elam begins to seek nature for healing.

One week-end, feeling heavy and depressed and tired of the city and its ways, he obeyed the impulse of a whim that was later to play an important part in his life. The desire to get out of the city for a whiff of country air and for a change of scene was the cause.”<sup>28</sup>

For Elam, “The change from the city crowding was essentially satisfying.”<sup>29</sup> Paragraph after paragraph, the description of the valley is filled with poetry which is like that in “All Gold Canyon.” Elam feels horrified that his business has almost made him forget that nature is so beautiful. The corrupt city life encroaches on his daily life, and he is thus less and less able to have rich experiences in free nature as he does in the past. Looking around the beautiful scenery in the valley, he comes to the realization that too many worldly desires have isolated him from the natural world. He even fails to remember when he enjoyed the fresh air, the song of larks, and so on. This time, his rich experiences in free nature contribute to his maturity. In the valley, Elam makes his first step towards the realization of his ecological self. In the benevolent Sonoma Valley, Elam’s delight is tremendous. He seems to have never felt so happy in his life. All his experience with the wild nature comes alive. Elam feels keenly interested in everything. Like Thoreau, the prophet of the deep ecology movement, Elam feels a vast exaltation in little things: the moss, the bunches of mistletoe, the nest of a wood-rat, the water-cress, the butterflies, and the crimson-crested woodpecker “that ceased its knocking and cocked its head on one side to survey him.”<sup>30</sup> Elam’s interest in the little things reflects that his love for nature is genuine.

In Elam’s eyes, nature is now valuable not only for its economic value, but also for its religious value, that is, for its power to cleanse one’s soul. Nature here is not the area to conquer, but a church in which to worship. It is evident when Elam discovers a wild California lily growing in the cathedral nave of lofty trees. Gazing at the lily:

He took off his hat, with almost a vague religious feeling. This was different. No room for contempt and evil here. This was clean and fresh and beautiful—something he could respect. It was like a church. The atmosphere was one of holy calm. Here man felt the prompting of nobler things.<sup>31</sup>

At this moment, Elam is so moved by the lily that he feels himself spiritually purified and uplifted. Obviously, the charm of nature penetrates into his corrupted soul, causing a sense of awe and reverence in him.

In a word, the intimate contact with nature in this excursion makes Elam feel “singularly at peace with himself and all the world.”<sup>32</sup> He identifies with nature and feels a sense of organic wholeness, namely, a sense of deep kinship with the natural world and a sense of connectedness with his deeper self. With this contact with nature, Elam begins to look at the world from new angles. He grows to respect nature and to value simplicity. He realizes how sordid, mean, and vicious the

city life is, and he feels the call back to nature and cannot help thinking: “I’ll settle down in a place something like this, and the city can go to hell.”<sup>33</sup>

The wild journey into the valley is one method London arranges for Elam to cultivate ecological conscience. The other arrangement is the guidance of a woman. While Elam’s spiritual reformation begins with the excursion into the valley, it is completed by a woman named Dede Mason. Dede Mason is created as the embodiment of nature. “She liked the simple and the out-of-doors, the horses and the hills, the sunlight and the flowers.”<sup>34</sup> What’s more, she also knows that nature and her knowledge about nature will benefit Elam. She is the

guide, pointing out to him [Elam] all the varieties of the oaks, making him acquainted with the madrona and the manzanita, teaching him the names, habits, and habitats of unending series of wild flowers, shrubs, and ferns...Also through her he[Elam] came to a closer discernment and keener appreciation of nature.<sup>35</sup>

With her noble nature and her keen insight, Dede points out to Elam that his increasing lust for wealth is the root cause of his unhappiness. “Your money, and the life it compels you to lead, have done all this.”<sup>36</sup> Dede’s words like this linger in Elam’s mind. Haunted by her criticism, Elam becomes introspective and realizes that “ ‘Accumulation of wealth . . . is at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation.’ ”<sup>37</sup> Thus, he at last accepts Dede’s view that more power and material things do not equal greater happiness. Elam loves Dede not only because she is a lover of nature like him, but also because she is a woman with no desire for wealth. More significantly, he respects her as a woman with wisdom. All this contributes to his willing acceptance of Dede’s guidance. It should be pointed out that his new attitude toward women forms a sharp contrast to his old ideas of women: “Woman, the toy; woman, the harpy.”<sup>38</sup>

Elam finally gives away his fortune, discards his desire for power, and moves into a small ranch in Sonoma Valley to live a simpler, more pure and more ethnical life. “They were like two persons, after far wandering, who had merely come home again.”<sup>39</sup> Elam, once a conqueror in both wilderness and cities, grows to respect nature and women, and thus he is reborn. With Elam’s spiritual regeneration, the conflict between man’s greedy desire and environment disappears. The binary opposite relationship between man and nature is replaced by a kind of harmonious and reciprocal relationship. Their life in the valley constitutes the last third of the novel and in this last part London

elaborates on the reciprocal relationship between nature and man who is void of greed.

Because of his changed attitude towards nature and the guidance he receives from Dede, Elam now begins to develop an ecological lifestyle that is “simple in means, rich in ends.”<sup>40</sup> Elam now supports his family as a farmer. When they need cash, Elam works as a labourer, a horse-breaker, and so on. He does not care for material things and feels content with the wholesome and natural life. Transcending his greedy desire and simplifying his material wants in the valley, Elam expands his spiritual life. He lives a poetic life which is totally different from that of the city: he begins to learn poetry, and also practices playing violin. Nature and the simple lifestyle finally restore Elam to health spiritually and physically.

Elam’s voluntary simple life-style challenges the dominant worldview that material possessions will provide true happiness. According to Durning’s investigation, wealth, beyond a certain level, does not necessarily lead to increased human happiness. Given that the carrying capacity of the earth has diminished, maintaining a low material standard living is an ecological life-style that helps reduce impact on the earth. “Unless we see that more is not always better, our efforts to forestall ecological decline will be overwhelmed by our appetites.”<sup>41</sup>

Elam’s ecological conscience develops further as he begins to have more and more enjoyable experiences in free nature. He, along with Dede, refrains from interference with the ecosystem of the valley. For example,

Merely in passing, they paused, from time to time, and lent a hand to nature. These flowers and shrubs grew of themselves, and their presence was no violation of the natural environment. The man and the woman made no effort to introduce a flower or shrub that did not of its own right belong. Nor did they protect them from their enemies.<sup>42</sup>

Elam and Dede are wise enough to allow the balance of the ecosystem to remain by avoiding the introduction of species that might be harmful. The relationship between the living things and their physical environment is a product of evolution, during which everything finds the best place to live, and the relationship becomes stable. Every member of the ecosystem interacts with all the others according to the intrinsic relationships that have evolved through natural selection, so there is no other need for human involvement. Not blindly introducing new species reflects the ecological wisdom of Elam and Dede.

It might seem strange that Elam and Dede do not protect the plants from their enemies, but their action is also in accordance with both Darwinian evolution and deep ecological principles: ecosystems develop to maintain themselves, and they are self-regulating, so human interference should be avoided. The basic ecological principle is that everything is connected to everything else, so no one can predict what will happen next if human beings kill a so-called natural enemy. So Elam and Dede do the right thing by not interfering with the prey and their predators. That is, without interference, they in fact protect nature's evolutionary processes.

It is manifest that Elam now is a man with ecological conscience; his ecological conscience is stressed and confirmed by the fact that he would rather make less money than overgraze.

Daylight [Elam] could have taken in fully a dozen horses to pasture, which would have earned him a dollar and a half per head per month. But this he refused to do, because of the devastation such close pasturing would produce.<sup>43</sup>

Elam obviously knows that overgrazing will produce a great devastating effect on the rangeland ecosystems, and reduction of horses is an effective way to solve the ecological problems caused by overgrazing, such as soil erosion and desertification. Thus, out of the care for healthy ecosystems, Elam transcends his self-interest.

Elam's ecological conscience comes to a climax at the end of the story. London's novels usually have unexpected and symbolic endings, and there is no exception in *Burning Daylight*. Close to the end of the novel, London presents a harmonious scene of life among human beings and non-human beings:

It was in the afternoon, and a bright sun was shining down on a world of new green. Along the irrigation channels of the vegetable garden streams of water were flowing.<sup>44</sup>

Against the setting of early April, Dede is preparing clothes for the coming baby, and Elam is reading beside her. The beautiful valley exists not only for them; it is also shared with other living things around them. London, with his deep love for nature, depicts the non-human beings vividly such as the newly born foal, the quail, the pigeons, the mourning dove, the hens, and so on.

Here, London offers us a world without injustice and inequality, where all forms of the living things flourish freely and happily. Needless to say, this is the right soil for living things to multiply. Only in such condition, can one expect biodiversity. Yet the harmonious scene is almost destroyed by the discovery of gold in the valley. The event happens shortly after Elam stops reading and leaves to dig out the leaking pipe buried beneath the earth. In the process of digging the pipe, Elam discovers a gold-laden vein and the gold is richer than ever. He is immediately caught up in the strong desire for gold. As he gazes upon the yellow lure, a fire is burning in his eyes. “No quart of cocktails had ever put such a flame in his cheeks nor such a fire in his eyes.”<sup>45</sup> He digs the earth like a mad man, and immediately plans to mine the mountain. The whole mine grows in his vision: tunnels, shafts, galleries, and hoisting plants. Imagining the potential fortune, Elam trembles with ecstasy.

London seldom describes the process of mining in detail except in “All Gold Canyon.” However, to show how human lust will destroy the environment, London here again describes Elam’s vision of mining the mountain in detail. The mining picture forms a sharp contrast to the previous harmonious scene. Obviously, London aims to remind the reader that there is a cause and effect relationship between human lust for gold and the integrity of the whole ecosystem. Fortunately, the “frightful crisis”<sup>46</sup> passes when Elam hears Dede’s voice which reminds him of the harmonious scene with nature that he had experienced hours ago: the newly born foal is bathing in the sunlight and Mason is happily sewing for the baby to come. He comes to realize what disaster his mining plan will bring about: if he destroys their habitat out of ignorance or greed, he destroys the happiness of other beings as well as his own. Therefore, he decides at once that he cannot let his wild desire free to upset the ecosystem of the valley.

With this realization, Elam, a gold miner who has groped for gold for twelve years in the north, decides to bury the gold he discovers. Elam immediately toils like a lunatic again, but this time the purpose is different. He covers up all he has uncovered until no sign remains of the walls of the vein. On the way home, breathing the fragrant mountain air and gazing at the valley, Elam feels relieved that everything remains unchanged. At this moment, for Elam “Myself” includes everything in the valley—the clean air, the pure water, indeed, the whole ecosystem. There is no sharp line between self and the rest of nature. Finally, Elam decides to plant eucalyptus “thick as grass”<sup>47</sup> all over where the gold vein exists, “so that even a hungry rabbit can’t squeeze between them; and when they get their roots agoing, nothing in creation will ever move

that dirt again.”<sup>48</sup> By burying both the gold and Elam’s lust for it beneath the eucalyptus, London suggests that man can control his desire, but that he must be ever vigilant. Until now, Elam has never fully transcended his narrow self nor realized his true ecological self. Now, however, he completes his change from being a conqueror in the north, and then a business tycoon in the cities; he has finally become a voluntary environment-protector in the valley and thus realizes his higher, ecological self. His ethical concern extends to the environment and thus enhances the harmony between himself and the world around him. No longer a mere competitor in the natural arena, he now explores a new ecological self that will enhance his own joy and give new meaning to his life. The story then ends with the joyous laughter of Dede and Elam.

In “All Gold Canyon,” the main character Bill leaves the valley with so much gold that even his horse cannot bear the burden, and what remains is the destroyed hill and the desecrated valley. In *Burning Daylight*, the gold is buried and the mountain remains intact. The shift in Elam’s thought accounts for the different results. First, he grows to respect nature and identifies with nature. Second, he learns to respect women and accepts their guidance. Thus with his new love for nature, along with the guidance he has received from Dede, Elam has developed beyond his narrow and isolated self to realize his ecological self. In a word, in this novel London more fully realizes the solution to the ecological problem that he had put forward in “All Gold Canyon”—the clash between human lust and the environment.

London’s ecological thought continues to develop in *The Valley of the Moon*, where he dreams of a future society which is peaceful, free from social injustice, devoid of pollution, and ecologically sustainable. Here, moving beyond his efforts to explore a character’s quest for ecological self, London now explores his main characters’ quest for an ecologically sustainable society.

---

### **Quest for Ecologically Sustainable Society in *The Valley of the Moon***

*The Valley of the Moon* is highly autobiographical. The title refers to Sonoma County, California, where London owned a large ranch. He wrote and practised environmentally-friendly farming there from 1905 to his death in 1916.

Setting his novel in the strike-ridden city of Oakland in turn-of-the-century California, Jack London created two young lovers Billy (a teamster) and Saxon (an ironer in a laundry), who become disillusioned with their life in Oakland and seek a simpler life on the land. In Book 1, London describes the life of Billy and Saxon in the industrial city Oakland. In Book 2, he describes their life on the road after leaving Oakland to seek a place where they can live close to the land. In Book 3, London describes their life in the valley of the moon as small-scale farmers. Through the experience of this couple, London advocated a new, ecological society based on sustainable agriculture.

Several factors led London to the theme of a sustainable society. First, London realized that much of the land in California was exhausted because of poor agricultural practices by the homesteaders, and he felt the responsibility to revive American agriculture. Second, the population explosion in Oakland where London lived and other cities aroused London's concern. London once expressed his concern for the exploding population: "in ten years the mouths to feed in the United States have increased by sixteen millions."<sup>49</sup> Realizing that the problems of the depleted farm lands and of the exploding population were related, he knew that he should present "his lovers (Billy and Saxon) within the larger biological reality, including the pressing issue of how to feed the world's exploding population."<sup>50</sup> Third, London became disillusioned with modern industrialism that resulted in many problems, such as poverty and pollution, and he felt it urgent to establish a new economy as an alternative.

Aside from the fictional world in his novels, London built an actual model ranch by using "all the latest knowledge in the matter of farming."<sup>51</sup> He read the latest agricultural bulletins, and consulted with the scientists at the University of California at Davis, and with Luther Burbank in Santa Rosa.

London gradually developed a vision of sustainable farming and devoted most of his creative energies and all of his money to it during the last decade of his life, with the hope of saving the American economy by promoting sustainable agriculture. In his own words,

in the solution of the great economic problems of the present age . . . I see a return to the soil. I go into farming because my philosophy and search have taught me to recognize the fact that a return to the soil is the basis of economics . . . I see my farm in terms of the world, and I see the world in terms of my farm.<sup>52</sup>



London was trying his best to turn his farm into a self-sufficient community as an alternative for industrialization. According to Irving Stone, a Jack London biographer:

He would establish a select rural community . . . he would employ only those men who had . . . a love for the land. For each of these men he would build a cottage; there would be a general store at which commodities would be sold for cost; and a little school for the labourers' children. The number of families he would include in his model community would depend solely on the number the land could support. . . . He wanted no profit, no return on his investment of a quarter of a million dollars; he wanted only to break even, to maintain a real community of workers, bound by their common love of the soil.<sup>53</sup>

He was so obsessed by the idea of turning his Beauty Ranch into an ecologically balanced and harmonious community that all he talked about to his sister the day before his death was his plan for the promising community. What's more, from the quotation above one can sense that London's dream of an ecologically sustainable society was beyond his own personal needs. This point is confirmed by his sustainable farming practice. Usually, sustainable practices seem to require more cost but with less profits in the short term. However, London even set aside his chances for earning short-term profits in order to improve his land. According to Alex Kershaw, a Jack London biographer, London planted crops but did not harvest them.

He had already planted some of his fields with Canadian peas, rye and other crops which he would plough under for three years to increase the humus content and enrich the over-farmed soil.<sup>54</sup>

London's practice of environment-friendly and sustainable farming contains ecological wisdom and was decades ahead of his time. His ideas are so modern that they transcended his fellow Californian farmers' comprehension. The farmers even mocked London as a fool. Irving Stone writes, "The farmers of the neighborhood jeered at him for ploughing three crops under . . . for building a model ranch."<sup>55</sup> Yet, London never gave up his dream.

He thought himself a pioneer, a trail-blazer, a creator of a new and better civilization . . . believing in human progress, he was willing to devote his life to bringing to mankind an intelligent civilization.<sup>56</sup>

Among London's sustainable agricultural practices were the use of green manures, the planting of nitrogen-gathering cover crops, the rotation of crops, and a program to insure proper tillage and draining to protect land from erosion. He also terraced the hillsides to lessen

erosion and used the manure from his livestock as fertilizer instead of the new chemical fertilizers that were emerging on the market. Identifying land-based agricultural sustainability as a replacement to the greed-based industrial economy, London weaves his practice of sustainable farming techniques into the story of the protagonists in the novel. After leaving the city Oakland, Billy and Saxon decide to do farming, so they observe, investigate, and learn how to farm as they are wandering on the road.

In Book 3, Chapter 1, Billy and Saxon observe and investigate the way Portuguese plant crops and become fascinated by their way of farming. The Portuguese had planted

currants between the tree rows, beans between the currant rows, a row of beans close on each side of the trees, an' rows of beans along the ends of the tree rows.<sup>57</sup>

These methods of efficient or intensive farming are better known today as intercropping and alley cropping. In Book 3, Chapter 11, Billy and Saxon learn Chinese practices. A man named Gunston tells them why the Chinese succeed in farming. He cites Mr. John Chinaman as an example, who “grows two crops at one time on the same soil . . . radishes and carrots, two crops, sown at one time.”<sup>58</sup> The strategy the Chinese practise is called multiple cropping. In Book 3, Chapter 18, the character named Edmund, who has read “hundreds of volumes on farming, and all the Agricultural Bulletins,”<sup>59</sup> suggests crop rotation as opposed to monoculture: “Don’t be satisfied with one crop a year, like the rest of the old-fashioned farmers in this valley.”<sup>60</sup> London also criticizes the practice of monoculture in Book 3, Chapter 11, through the mouth of his character Gunston who says “ ‘The white man doesn’t know how to farm. Even the up-to-date white farmer is content with one crop.’ ”<sup>61</sup> In agriculture, the crop rotation, multi-cropping, intercropping, and alley cropping mentioned above are methods often associated with sustainable agriculture and organic farming, while the practice of monoculture is generally considered unsustainable.

London’s environment-friendly, sustainable, agricultural practices were ahead of his time when unsustainable agriculture was dominant. But, not only were London’s agricultural practices ahead of his time, so was his ecological conscience. London believed that “progress lay in mankind’s rethinking of its relationship with land.”<sup>62</sup> He had already criticized the miners’ greed and disregard for the land. Now, faced with the frightening reality that the shortsighted Californian farmers had exhausted their land, London felt that there would be no hope to salvage the country as long as man’s greed remained unrestrained. With the

concern about his country in mind, London appealed for a change in the way humans view the land; human beings must not only learn to love the land, but they must also accept their responsibility to take care of it. In other words, what is needed is the cultivation of an ecological conscience for land. In his previous two works, London realized that human avarice had already produced severe damage to the ecosystem, and he had criticized the ecologically harmful human greed. Here, on rethinking the relationship between human beings and the land supporting them, and identifying human greed as the deeper cause of ecological problems, London continues to attack human greed and ignorance even more fiercely.

The first lesson Billy and Saxon learn about the relationship between man and land is from Mrs. Mortimer, who tells them that although the land supports people generously with what it has, its capacity is limited. Humans should not view land as an infinite resource, always taking from it without replenishing it. She says to them: “ ‘Remember, the soil is generous. But it must be treated generously, and that is something the old style American farmer can’t get into his head.’ ”<sup>63</sup> Mrs. Mortimer is the mouthpiece for London. London himself once said: “ ‘I adopted the policy of taking nothing off the ranch. . . . The rancher . . . who conserves and builds up his soil is assured of success.’ ”<sup>64</sup>

As Billy and Saxon travel on, they meet a group of artists. The poet Mark Hall criticizes white people’s greediness. He severely reprimands such people as greedy “swine” and “locusts”<sup>65</sup> who “destroyed everything—the Indians, the soil, the forests, just as they destroyed the buffalo and the passenger pigeon.”<sup>66</sup> Hall also points out wrathfully to them that white people’s greed not only has destroyed nature and exhausted natural resources but also democracy. He says: “ ‘There was only one thing to stop them from perfecting the democracy they started, and that thing was greediness.’ ”<sup>67</sup>

Another important person they meet is Jack Hastings, a war correspondent in the Japanese-Russian War. London based this character on himself. Like London, Hastings loves his ranch so much that he tries his best to conserve the soil. He severely attacks people’s shortsighted greed and makes biting and sarcastic remarks on their irresponsible and unsustainable practice. Hastings articulates that “ ‘It is sacrilege, a veritable rape of the land . . . We live in a wicked age. This wholesale land-skinning is the national crime of the United States today.’ ”<sup>68</sup>

As Billy and Saxon travel further north, they meet a farmer who realizes that water is the source of every thing, and he loves water as his own life. He tells them with deep regret that due to the farmers' shortsighted greed, the fertile soil is impoverished and exhausted to such an extent that the land becomes "almost desert."<sup>69</sup> He criticizes the old farmers and their younger generation for the desertification,

And old folks and young united in one thing: in impoverishing the soil. Year after year they scratched it and took out bonanza crops. They put nothing back. All they left was plow-sole and exhausted land. Why, there's big sections they exhausted and left almost desert.<sup>70</sup>

From all the quotations above, one feels that the ecological shortsightedness in London's time is universal. Through characters, such as Mrs. Mortimer and Mark Hall, London expresses his own emotional outrage at land abuse and environmental damage and demands a shift in values toward land. London does not criticize individuals, such as Bill in "All Gold Canyon," or groups of people, such as the gold-hunters in *Burning Daylight*: here the target of his critical attack is the overwhelming force of the universal shortsighted human greed; the victim of the greed is not a hill or a region but the entire country.

London's ecological conscience prompts him to further study the solution to the ecological problem. In *Burning Daylight*, London arranges a wild journey and a woman for Elam to change his worldview. In *The Valley of the Moon*, London arranges travel on the road for Billy and Saxon to get close contact with the land and to learn how to treat the land. Once again, London arranges for a woman to be the leading force in solving the problem.

It is Saxon who guides Billy from beginning to the end to find a just economy for themselves. First, it is Saxon who makes the decision to get out of the "city-wilderness." London writes that, after meditating on the stillbirth of her child and the jailing of her husband during the teamster strike:

She sat there, racking her brain, the smudge of Oakland at her back, staring across the bay at the smudge of San Francisco. Yet the sun was good; the wind was good, as was the keen salt air in her nostrils; the blue sky, flecked with clouds, was good. All the natural world was right, and sensible, and beneficent. It was the man-world that was wrong, and mad, and horrible.<sup>71</sup>

London realized that industrial society was polluting America, which had already become the main industrial power by the early twentieth

century. Moreover, he realized that, driven by desire for more profits, the American capitalists would continue to expand their businesses at the price of the environment. Society prospered materially but deteriorated environmentally. London is not only sensitive to the environmental degradation caused by shortsighted human exploitation of the land, but also very sensitive to the environmental deterioration caused by profit-oriented industrialism. In the novel, London mentions the industrial pollution many times. Significantly, it is Saxon who first sees it: "Her eyes showed her only the smudge of San Francisco, the smudge of Oakland"<sup>72</sup> To make things worse, the industrial wastes pollute the marsh where Saxon digs clams for food. She reflects: "Still another mark against Oakland ...Oakland, the man-trap, that poisoned those it could not starve."<sup>73</sup> Poverty is another product of the industrial city. Saxon revolts against Oakland where some men possess so much food that they throw it away, but, in the same world, so many people do not have enough food; she has to dig food from the poisoned marsh. Therefore, Saxon takes the return to the land, to the simple virtues of the rural life, as a solution to the ravages capitalism has brought. "Her mind was made up. The city was no place for her and Billy, no place for love nor for babies."<sup>74</sup> Billy then accepts her decision and they begin their journey on the road north to find a place where they can live close to the land.

Again underscoring the woman's leading role in nurturing the ecological conscience, London leaves it to Saxon to initiate the communication with people they meet on the road and from whom they learn a lot on sustainable farming and the right attitude toward land. This point can be seen clearly from the dialogue at the very beginning of their travel on the road.

Saxon: "We've got to talk and find out. We'll talk with everybody we meet. Ask questions. Ask everybody. It's the only way to find out."

Billy: "I ain't much of a hand at askin' questions."

Saxon: "Then I'll ask."<sup>75</sup>

Saxon is an intelligent woman whose questions on farming are always on the point. She plays a leading role in their effort to acquire agricultural knowledge. Saxon asks questions like "How did you manage it all? How much did the land cost . . . Which grew best and which paid best? What is the best way to sell them?"<sup>76</sup> Compared with Saxon, Billy is somewhat a passive person on the subject of farming. He usually keeps silent while Saxon communicates with people they meet on the subject of how to run a farm.

In the valley of the Moon, the paradise of their dreams for so many years, it is Saxon who reminds Billy to protect the environment of the valley. Saxon has experienced miscarriage in the polluted city Oakland, thus she subconsciously becomes sensitive to the health of the environment. Upon hearing Billy's plan to mine a little hill to dig out the clay, Saxon thinks first of the environmental degradation it causes rather than the economic benefits it brings. Feeling upset and nervous, Saxon "cried with alarm":<sup>77</sup> " 'But you'll spoil all the beautiful canyon hauling out the clay.' "<sup>78</sup> Of course, Saxon feels relieved when Billy answers " 'Nope; only the knoll. The road'll come in from the other side.' "<sup>79</sup>

Consequently, Billy grows with Saxon's guidance in ecological conscience. Since Billy accepts Saxon's decision to leave the city and go back to the land for a living, he gradually becomes mature. First, he learns to become more socially aware. For example, with Saxon's encouragement, he asks an old farmer to teach him to plough, and "he learns pretty quick."<sup>80</sup> Second, he becomes confident in living on the land. When he accepts Saxon's decision to go out of the city to farm, he has no idea where they should go and he is not sure whether they can survive by depending only on the land. Yet he becomes interested in running a ranch to raise horses and becomes confident in his ability to live on land. He admits to Saxon: " 'I was dead leary when we pulled out on the San Francisco . . . Yep, a man can get work in the country.' "<sup>81</sup>

What's more, Billy learns how to treat land correctly. For example, Billy shows his strong disgust against the character Chavon and his shortsighted human greed regarding the land. Chavon uses other people's lands and tries to maximize profits by putting excessive numbers of livestock on the range. Billy points out that: " 'Chavon's over-pastured it' "<sup>82</sup> and then Billy criticizes: " 'Chavon's worked it for eight years now, an' never rested it once, never put anything in for what he took out, except the cattle into the stubble the minute the hay was on.' "<sup>83</sup> This criticism reflects that Billy has developed ecological conscience that does not exist when he lives in city. Billy realizes that the unsustainable farming practices will exhaust the carrying capacity of the land, leading to environmental damage, and that an ecologically sustainable society calls for a long-term sense of responsibility and care. Billy's attitude toward land transcends commercial exploitation. In a word, there would be no growth for Billy without Saxon's guidance.

Armed with the education gained on the road, Billy and Saxon build up a successful small-scale farm in the valley of the Moon whose magnificent natural landscape is a unique combination of hills, fields and streams, and a wonderful mixture of oaks, madronas, California buckeyes, Douglas fir, and redwood trees. London's description of the valley impresses readers with its ecological diversity and its spectacular natural beauty, all of which forms a sharp contrast with the city environment. There, Saxon suffered from misfortunes that resulted from industrial turmoil such as poverty, pollution, the miscarriage of her child, and an alienated husband.

At the end of the story, London presents his readers with a moving final scene that embodies the fulfillment of Saxon's ecological dream. Saxon is pregnant, and she and her husband Billy see their own natural reality reflected before their eyes: a newly born fawn and its mother. This ending conveys London's vision of an ecologically balanced society in which humans and nonhumans live harmoniously. Only in such a society can living things multiply and flourish freely.

From what has been discussed above, we can see that, in the development of his ecological thought that had begun in "All Gold Canyon," London came to depend more and more on women than on men to realize an ecologically sustainable society. Writing about his plans for *The Valley of the Moon*, London remarked: "The woman gets the vision. She is the guiding force."<sup>84</sup> So Saxon is virtually the real main character in the novel. Like Dede in *Burning Daylight*, Saxon is a nature lover and an intelligent woman with no greedy desire for wealth. This is the basis for his women characters' power to guide men toward their realizations of their ecological selves or the ecological society.

It should be pointed out that London's positive portrayal of his women characters in these novels arises from his understanding of Darwin's theory of sexual selection, in which the female's power to select is one of the most important forces in evolution. According to this theory, women tend to select men who are not only physically strong but also morally superior. London was confident that this essential law would lead to "the highest evolutionary development according to *The Descent of Man*."<sup>85</sup> Such views on moral evolution are shared by modern day ecologists, such as Thiele, who writes that "Morality may have 'survival value' among social animals, making them environmentally fitter."<sup>86</sup> London found that the male's violent passion was "always the greatest obstacle" in his own effort to "fight . . . for higher civilization & culture."<sup>87</sup> He believed that the female's power to select would eventually lead to the evolution of a more spiritual humanity.

Therefore, in *Burning Daylight* London arranges for Dede to select Elam only when he becomes morally purified, that is when he discards his greedy desire for money and power and when he changes his attitude toward nature and women. Similarly, in *The Valley of the Moon*, Saxon selects Billy not only because of his physical strength, but also of his virtue of “rightness and integrity,”<sup>88</sup> and his potential to evolve to a more civilized man. The two women’s power in selection helps men become “stronger” in the sense that they become more likely to survive by taking in the ecological ideas that might lift social development to a higher level—ecological civilization.

---

## Conclusion

London’s ecological thought develops in the three works. London notices the conflict between man’s greedy desire and the destruction it brings to the environment in “All Gold Canyon” and his critique is implied. The conflict extends to *Burning Daylight* where London represents destruction that is more serious due to man’s mindless mining. In *Burning Daylight* London’s critique is articulated more clearly. In *The Valley of the Moon*, becoming increasingly aware the tremendous damage done by shortsighted human greed, London’s critique is obviously harsh. What’s more, in “All Gold Canyon” and *Burning Daylight* it is the individuals (Bill and Elam Harnish) who are the target of critique, while in *The Valley of the Moon*, London criticizes the entire American society, or what he refers to as “the Great White Way.”<sup>89</sup> In order to solve the clash of human greed and ecological crisis, London appeals for a change in the way we think about the world and proclaims the need to respect nature and women. In “All Gold Canyon,” London’s ecological conscience is newly awakened. In *Burning Daylight*, London begins to contemplate a solution to the conflict—respect for nature and women. London reveals his ecological thought in this novel through describing how Elam’s ecological self-realization is achieved as he learns to show respect for nature (Sonoma Valley) and women (Dede Mason) and how such guidance helps keep the ecosystem from damage. In *The Valley of the Moon*, London begins to rethink the relationship between man and land, and he envisions an ecologically sustainable society. London regards women (Saxon Brown) as a leading force in realizing such a higher civilization. London demonstrates his ecological thought in this novel through depicting how Saxon and Billy realize the ideal society as they learn to respect land on the road. It should be noted that London offers a way to help promote ecological conscience—intimate contact with the natural world. In both *Burning Daylight* and *The Valley of the Moon*,



the main characters go to the natural world, fully experience pure nature, interact with wild open spaces, and then live harmoniously with nature.

In summary, London finds that shortsighted human greed is the deeper cause of the ecological problem, and that the solution to the problem lies in our need to shed the old values that humans are the masters over nature and that men are superior to women. Humanity must embrace the new values, according to which humanity constitutes only part of nature, and women have an important role in protecting the earth. Briefly, London's ecological thought can be summarized as follows: London criticizes profit-motivated human greed and attributes ecological problems to anthropocentrism. To solve the ecological problems, he calls for a shift in thought away from an anthropocentric worldview and away from an androcentric worldview.

Obviously, a shift away from an anthropocentric worldview and away from an androcentric worldview is necessary today. First, the anthropocentric worldview still prevails. In today's world, thoughtless people are still exploiting nature for short-term goals, and shortsighted unsustainable agricultural practices continue in many cultures. To put it another way, people are living in an era where everything is centred on human needs and wants, and nature is treated simply as a resource to keep economies growing. Second, an androcentric worldview is also dominant in today's world. Women are still treated as inferior to men. Their intelligence and wisdom have been ignored, and they do not have equal opportunities to exert their influence. Because London's ecological thought is founded on the shift of the two misguided worldviews, his ecological vision is still thought-provoking in the present society, which is marked by the continuing environmental crisis. Therefore, the exploration of the development of Jack London's ecological thought has its realistic significance.

## References

- Bender, Bert. 2004. *Evolution and "the Sex Problem": American Narratives during the Eclipse of Darwinism*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press.
- Bennett, Michael. 2003. "From Wide Open Spaces to Metropolitan Places: The Urban Challenge to Ecocriticism." In *The ISLE Reader: Ecocriticism, 1993–2003*, ed. Michael P. Branch and Scott Slovic. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 296–317.

- Devall, Bill, and Sessions, George. 1985. *Deep Ecology*. Salt Lake City, Utah : G. M. Smith.
- Durning, Alan Thein. 1992. *How Much is Enough : The Consumer Society and the Future of the Earth*. New York: Norton.
- Kershaw, Alex. 1997. *Jack London: A life*. London: HarperCollins.
- Labor, Earle. 1994. *Jack London*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- London, Jack. 1945. "All Gold Canyon." In *Best Short Stories of Jack London*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- . 1913a. *Burning Daylight*. New York: Macmillan.
- . 1913b. *The Valley of the Moon*. New York: Macmillan.
- Naess, Arne. 1995. "Self-realization—An Ecological Approach to Being in the World." In *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century*, ed. George Sessions. Boston: Shambhala Press, 225–239.
- . 2002. *Life's Philosophy: Reason & Feeling in a Deeper World*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Stone, Irving. 1938. *Sailor on Horseback: The Biography of Jack London*. London : Collins.
- Thiele, Leslie Paul. 1999. Evolutionary Narratives and Ecological Ethics. *Political Theory*27(1): 6–38.
- Wieland, Friedemann. 1991. *The Journey of the Hero: Personal Growth, Deep Ecology and the Quest for the Grail*. Dorset, UK: Prism Unity.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Naess 2002, 107–108.

<sup>2</sup> Bennett 2003, p. 297.

<sup>3</sup> Labor 1994, p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> London 1945, p. 250.

<sup>5</sup> London 1945, p. 253.

<sup>6</sup> London 1945, p. 252.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> London 1945, p. 256.

<sup>9</sup> London 1945, p. 257.

- 
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Durning 1992, p. 35.
- <sup>12</sup> Wieland 1991, p. 12.
- <sup>13</sup> London 1945, p. 264.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Naess 1995, p. 226.
- <sup>16</sup> London 1913a, p. 117.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 117.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 117.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 118.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.a, p. 61.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 107.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 112.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 121.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 155.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 182.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 183.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 186.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 184.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 193.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 246.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., 246-247.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid., 292-293.
- <sup>37</sup> Kershaw 1997, p. 6.
- <sup>38</sup> London 1913a, p. 247.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 340.
- <sup>40</sup> Devall and Sessions 1985, p. 68.
- <sup>41</sup> Durning 1992, p. 24.
- <sup>42</sup> London 1913a, p. 344.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 344.

- 
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 354
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 357.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 359.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 360.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>49</sup> Stone 1938, p. 283.
- <sup>50</sup> Bender 2004, p. 73.
- <sup>51</sup> Stone 1938, p. 281.
- <sup>52</sup> Labor 1994, p. 99.
- <sup>53</sup> Stone 1938, 316-317.
- <sup>54</sup> Kershaw 1997, 227-228.
- <sup>55</sup> Stone 1938, p. 284.
- <sup>56</sup> Stone 1938, 289-290.
- <sup>57</sup> London 1913b, p. 311.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 424.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 495.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., 493-494.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 424.
- <sup>62</sup> Kershaw 1997, p. 302.
- <sup>63</sup> London 1913b, p. 338.
- <sup>64</sup> Stone 1938, p. 283.
- <sup>65</sup> London 1913b, p. 413.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 413.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 434.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 460.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 254.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 256.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 286.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 271.
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 305.
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 333.
- <sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 528.

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 363.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 520.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 524.

<sup>84</sup> Labor 1994, p. 390.

<sup>85</sup> Bender 2004, p. 76.

<sup>86</sup> Thiele 1999, p. 10.

<sup>87</sup> Bender 2004, p. 76.

<sup>88</sup> London 1913b, p. 417.

<sup>89</sup> Bender 2004, p. 83.