

**JACK LONDON'S NEW-WOMANISH HEROINES**  
**FRONA WELSE, MARGARET WEST AND SAXON ROBERTS**

Master's thesis

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## HUMANISTINEN TIEDEKUNTA

### KIELTEN LAITOS

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Maisterintutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää yläluokkaisen ja työväenluokkaan kuuluvan sankarittaren yhtäläisyyksiä ja eroavaisuuksia Jack Londonin romaaneissa *A Daughter of the Snows* (1902), *The Valley of the Moon* (1913) ja *The Mutiny of the Elsinore* (1914). Huomion kohteena on myös mahdollinen yhteiskuntaluokan vaikutus uuden naiskuvan mukaisiin piirteisiin sankarittarien käyttäytymisessä, persoonallisuudessa ja mielipiteissä.

Aluksi on tarkoituksena perehtyä yksityiskohtaisesti Jack Londonin elämään ja historialliseen sekä naisten aseman kehitystä selvittäviin taustoihin 1860-luvulta aina 1920-luvulle, johon ajoittuivat sekä naisten aseman kehittyminen Amerikassa että kirjailija Jack Londonin tuotanto ja elämä. Lisäksi käsiteltävien romaanien sisältö selvitetään lyhyesti. Tutkielman keskeisten teemojen on tarkoitus valottaa näiden kahden eri yhteiskuntaluokan sankarittaren suhdetta 1) perheeseen, esi-isiin ja rotuun, 2) työhön, politiikkaan, uskontoon ja rakkauteen sekä heidän 3) uuden naiskuvan mukaista persoonallisuuttaan urheiluharrastuksineen ja vaatetuksineen. Tätä selvittäessäni aion tukeutua aiempien tutkimusten huomioihin etenkin rotukysymyksien ja uuden naiskuvan osalta.

Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että uuden naiskuvan mukaisten sankarittarien ominaisuuksissa oli keskinäisiä eroavaisuuksia ja yhtäläisyyksiä, jotka eivät kuitenkaan johtuneet sankarittarien yhteiskuntaluokasta. Ainoastaan työväenluokkainen sankaritar joutui elämään yhteiskunnallisten, poliittisten ja uskontoinkin liittyvien tapahtumien keskellä. Hänet myös vihittiin kirjan ensimmäisen neljänneksen kuluessa, kun yläluokkaiset sankarittaret vasta valitsivat kumppaninsa romaaniensa viimeisillä sivuilla. Heillä luonnollisesti oli varaa hitaampaan harkintaan.

Uusi naiskuva ilmeni sankarittarien vahvana tahtona, toisten auttamisena, neuvomisena ja jopa ohjailuna. He olivat kaikki lahjakkaita urheilussa, musiikissa ja teknisissä suorituksissa. Työväenluokkainen sankaritar oli kaiketi luonnonlahjakkuus ja toiset olivat saaneet taitonsa koulutuksesta ja kotoaan. Vaatetus, joka on tärkeä osa uutta naiskuvaa, ei saa suurta huomiota lukuun ottamatta Frona Welsen kuvausta. Kaikkien sankarittarien vaatteet olivat asiallisia ja työläisluokkaisella vain tansseissa sieviä ja muodistettuja. Yleisvaikutelmaksi jäi selkeä naiskuvan muutos näissä romaaneissa verrattuna 1800-luvun lopun viktoriaaniseen naiskäsitykseen. Sankaritarten huippusuoritukset jäänevät Jack Londonin huippuviihteen tiliin. Vai olisivatko ne olleet uudenlaisille naisille todella mahdollisia?

Asiasanat: New Women, Anglo-Saxon, supremacy, Jack London, class, racism, anti-racist

Lisätietoja: DS (*A Daughter of the Snows*), VM (*The Valley of the Moon*), ME (*The Mutiny of the Elsinore*)



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, my aim is to study Jack London's novels *A Daughter of the Snows* (1902), *The Valley of the Moon* (1913) and *The Mutiny of the Elsinore* (1914) from the point of view of the heroines' characters. My aim is to look at Frona Welse's, Margaret West's and Saxon Brown Roberts's personalities, opinions, attitudes and characteristics of the New Woman very thoroughly according to the narratives of the novels. In addition, my aim is to conduct the comprehensive comparison of the three heroines' characters.

The choice of the topic for my thesis was by no means an easy one but I finally selected Jack London and his novels, because I had previously read his novel called *Burning Daylight* and had liked his style of writing. The investigation of the female characters, especially the heroines, was, in the end, an easy choice, since, after a preliminary look at previous studies on Jack London, his female characters, even the heroines, have often received little attention in these studies. I was, however, fascinated by the nearly disregarded heroines, knowing how much all heroes, even the animal ones, have attracted people's and researches' attention. Perhaps this study can thus contribute to the neglected study of Jack London's heroines and their characters.

Guided by the narratives dealing with Frona Welse, Margaret West and Saxon Roberts in the novels in question, I intend to focus on the heroines' religious and political attitudes, their racial ideology and relationship to their families and ancestors. In addition, their new-womanish personalities, including their hobbies and clothing, will be studied in detail, too. In addition, I will examine the differences and similarities in the heroines' characters in general, and in their new-womanish characteristics in particular. Finally, I will attempt to find out if there is evidence in the novels that could support the argument that the New Woman in the heroines would be dependent on their social background or their social class.

My method of research consists of detailed description of and comparisons between the heroines with respect to the above-mentioned issues in their lives. As background, I will take a look at the contemporary historical events and the development of women's position in North America at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, I will discuss previous literary studies on the ideologies of Anglo-Saxon supremacy, racism and anti-racism, important to Jack London and visible in his writings.



Yet another key part of the background section of my thesis will be an account of Jack London's comprehensive biography. It was his life story which, in fact, inspired me to look at the heroines' characteristics from the point of view of social class, since his life experiences ranged from rags to riches, from a working-class boy to a multi-millionaire. So the heroines I will study in my thesis belong to two different social classes: Frona Welse and Margaret West to the upper class and Saxon Brown Roberts to the working class.

In sum, my aim is to pay close attention to Jack London's brilliant heroines, whose research has been somewhat neglected in comparison with the numerous studies on his heroes and even animal heroes of his writings.

## 2 JACK LONDON'S LIFE AND WORK

### 2.1 Childhood and youth

Jack London's birth in San Francisco on 12 January 1876 was preceded by her mother's suicide attempt in June 1875. According to the article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, his mother Flora Wellman and her partner William Chaney had quarreled about the abortion of Flora's unborn baby. (Barltrop 1976:12) Flora Wellman, who was left alone by William Chaney, got involved with John London one year later. Their marriage took place after John Griffith London's birth. (Hedrick 1982:5)

Earlier Flora Wellman had given piano lessons for a living. During her relationship with Chaney from 1874 to 1875, she helped him in his work as an astrologer. (Barltrop 1976:15 – 16) Jack's childhood was marked by insecurity and loneliness, mainly caused by his mother's instability and séances of spiritualism where Jack was taken at the age of six (Barltrop 1976:18). However, he grew up with a belief in success by means of hard work, characteristic of the lower middle-class way of life and of his stepfather, John London (Hedrick 1982:5 – 6). Soon the Londons were obliged to move to Oakland, due to Jack's and his stepsister Eliza's severe case of diphtheria. After a while, they moved to Alameda. (Barltrop 1976:17) There Jack and his stepsister Eliza went to the West End School (Barltrop 1976:18).

Due to his loneliness and shyness as a boy, Jack London had an interest in books, especially Irving's *The Alhambra* and Quida's *Sigma*. When Jack was eight years old, the family moved to a farm in Livermore. Mortgage difficulties, however, made them return once more to Oakland in 1886. (Barltrop 1976:18 – 19) Living in Oakland brought important changes to Jack's life: going to Garfield Elementary School and getting in touch with the public library of Oakland and the librarian Ina Coolbrith (Kershaw 1997:15; Barltrop 1976:19).

At the age of ten, due to John London's unemployment, Jack sold newspapers in order to earn some money for his family. In 1890, Jack graduated from Cole Grammar School at fourteen. Because high school was too expensive to Jack, he had to do all kinds of odd jobs for two years. Then he bought a larger skiff, where he took borrowed books for reading. After John London was injured in an accident, Jack had to go to work at Hickmott's canning factory in West Oakland. (Barltrop 1976:20 – 22; Kershaw 1997:15) Ina Coolbrith, the librarian in the library of Oakland, was greatly admired by Jack London. The novels of adventure and discovery she recommended to him gave him new visions of another world and a hope of

escaping his work at Hickmott's Cannery. So he voraciously entered the exciting life presented in the novels of Horatio Alger, Washington Irving, du Chaillu and in some novels dealing with the Viking era. (Kershaw 1997:15 – 16)

## **2.2 Jack London as a young man**

Escaping from the hard life of a manual worker also included, in Jack's case, getting involved with the life and drinking in the saloons. Soon Jack joined some oyster pirates in order to support his family all alone. A man sold him *The Razzle Dazzle*, a sloop, where Jack's own cabin offered him an escape into the exciting worlds of Melville's, Flaubert's and Kipling's works until a fire destroyed it. Because Jack did not want to go on with the pirates or on the production line, he joined the Fish Patrol and started fining his former pirating comrades. (Kershaw 1997:16 – 17) In a desperate search for a new direction to his life Jack joined road kids and hooligans. Their exceptional way of living actually made him leave everything behind and he boarded *The Sophie Sutherland*, a sealing schooner, which took him to the Bering Sea and the coast of Japan on his seventeenth birthday, as a member of the crew. (Barltrop 1976:28 – 29)

On the Pacific Jack spent seven months. There he used to read adventure books he had borrowed from the library while the rest of the crew was asleep. (Barltrop 1976:32; Kershaw 1997:26) After his return home, he wanted to get a job and to start studying. However, life at home was difficult due to John London's illness and the only job Jack could find was "at the jute mills, a ten-hour working day at ten cents an hour", what made him want a change in his life. (Kershaw 1997:26 – 29; Barltrop 1976:32)

## **2.3 Early literary success**

The change in Jack's life came all of a sudden in the form of the first prize he won in a writing competition *The San Francisco Morning Call* had announced for amateurs. Jack won the competition with his "Story of a Typhoon off the coast of Japan" published on 12 November 1893. (Barltrop 1976:32 – 33; Kershaw 1997:29 – 30) Eager to succeed as a writer, Jack offered his writings for publication but without luck. The job at the jute mill offered him an alternative for a while. Next he tried shoveling coal at the power plant of the Electric Railway nearby and working in a steam laundry. (Kershaw 1997:31; Barltrop 1976:34 – 35)

At this point of his life, Jack was ready to experience just anything instead of working at a machine. Charles Kelly's Army of the Unemployed heading east to Washington and the Congress, offered him a chance to see the eastern part of America. Kelly's issue, however, failed to succeed. In June 1894, Jack was arrested for vagrancy. His jail sentence led to his awakening to socialism and his realization of the exploitation of the work force. (Barltrop 1976:35 – 45; Kershaw 1997:32 – 35) After coming back to San Francisco, Jack's aim was to start his high school studies after five years of absence. Even then he had to support his family as the janitor of the school. (Kershaw 1997:39 – 40) Socialism and Marx's ideas consoled Jack's feelings of loneliness and his loss of motherly love as a child. Through *the Henry Clay Debating Society* he got acquainted with Fred Jacobs, Bess Maddern, his future wife, and the Applegarths, whose daughter Mabel became his sweetheart. (Kershaw 1997:40 – 42)

Rejecting the respectability of the lower class meant either choosing a criminal path or becoming a tramp. Alien to such extreme life-styles, Jack decided to strive towards the middle-class world instead. It meant adopting the middle-class behavior and values, such as certain verbal skills, and forgetting the roughness of his working-class youth. (Hedrick 1982:3 – 5, 32 – 33) Having entered *the Oakland High School* in January 1895, Jack was brought into contact with the cultured circles in the region (Johnston 1984:28 – 29).

#### **2.4 Socialist ideas and studying**

Jack London's vision of socialism expressed in his article "What Socialism Is – The Boy Socialist Describes the Meaning and Intent of the New Philosophy" was published in *The San Francisco Examiner* in December 1895. Because of his opinions, he could be considered a rebel defending justice and equal opportunity for everyone. (Johnston 1984:31 – 32) His middle-class bourgeois models came from the Applegarths, especially from their daughter Mabel, his sweetheart. Earlier he had learnt about the bourgeois values from his mother Flora and from some novels he had read. (Johnston 1984:30)

With the help of the University Academy, a cramming school, and his own studies, Jack was able to begin his studies at the University of California in August 1896. Earlier he had already joined the local Socialist Labor Party. (Walcutt 1966:10; Johnston 1984:32 – 33) We do not know for sure, why Jack London's studies at the university lasted for one term instead of four years as usual. It is assumed that the academic learning caused him some kind of disappointment or he had to start supporting his family once more. Maybe the real reason for

quitting his studies was, however, the fact that he found out about his illegitimate status and went through the consequent feelings of distress. (Barltrop 1976:55 – 57) At that time Jack's job in a steam laundry at Belmont Military Academy offered him starching and ironing work for ten hours a day. Too exhausted, he could not even read his books. In addition, all editors had returned his manuscripts he had sent them hoping to start earning his living as a writer at last. (Barltrop 1976:57 – 58; Kershaw 1997:55)

## **2.5 The gold rush, success and Jack's life as a married man**

In July 1897, Jack London's hopelessness changed into promises of riches and gold after Garmack's findings of gold in Klondike. Jack embarked *the Umatilla* with Eliza's husband in order to travel to Klondike. (Barltrop 1976:58 – 59; Kershaw 1997:58 – 59) The year Jack London spent in the Klondike region provided him with the splendid material for his future fiction, whereas his findings of gold remained meaningless (Walcutt 1966:10). In Klondike Jack and his comrades had to spend the winter at Split-Up Island some fifty miles from the city of Dawson. There prospectors spent their time discussing and debating philosophical, social and economical theories, thus providing Jack with impressions, character types, stories and experiences for his future, world-famous writings. (Johnston 1984:42 – 43; Barltrop 1976:61)

Severely affected by scurvy, Jack London headed for home in June 1898 (Johnston 1984:49). His journey however enriched his literary style together with Darwin's, Spencer's, Milton's, Karl Marx's, Haeckel's and Nietzsche's theories. Polishing his expression with new and enchanting vocabulary, Jack eagerly pursued his goal of becoming a successful writer. It was *The Overland Monthly* that finally published his story "To the Man on the Trail" in January 1899. (Johnston 1984:42 – 43; Stone 1938:114 – 116) So this is how Jack London's great success began with his published stories in magazines. The Klondike stories, started in 1900, made him famous all over the world. (Johnston 1984:53)

Socialism became Jack London's way of rebelling against the capitalist exploitation of the lower classes in the society. From 1900 to 1902, he gave socialist lectures and spoke in political meetings. He was even elected to campaign for the mayor's post in 1901 in order to raise public interest in the socialist cause. (Johnston 1984:54, 64 – 66) At first, London's or the Boy Author's writings encountered numerous obstacles before they guaranteed his success, but they were already published in five major magazines in July 1899. Because Jack

could not convince Mabel about his suitability as a breadwinner, he married Bessie Maddern in April 1900. The bride, who had earlier tutored him before his entry in Berkeley High School, appeared to be an ideal housewife and a mother. At last, Jack was able to concentrate on his work as a famous writer. (Stone 1938:116 – 118, 120; Johnston 1984:71; Kershaw 1997:91 – 93)

## **2.6 Jack London's growing fame and family**

Joan London, Jack London's eldest daughter, was born in January 1901. *McClure's*, a famous publishing house in New York, had offered London \$100 a month and had promised to publish all his future stories, especially the one called *A Daughter of the Snows* Jack was about to finish. So Jack's hopes of belonging to the middle class as a writer seemed to come true. (Johnston 1984:72; Kershaw 1997:93 – 94) The lasting relationship to a publisher, however, properly began with *Macmillan* later (Johnston 1984:72).

In February 1901, the London family had moved to Piedmont. There Jack's artistic friends, the so-called bohemian Piedmont group, started to assemble. Among those friends were George Sterling, Jimmy Hopper, Xavier Martinez, Joaquim Miller, Anna Strunsky and Charmian Kittredge, who replaced Jack's socialist friends. In addition, he fell in love with Anna Strunsky and, even though their love affair was purely platonic, it resulted in Jack's divorce later and the publication of *The Kempton-Wace Letters* in 1903. (Johnston 1984:72-74; Kershaw 1997:96 – 98)

Jack London's *An Odyssey of the North* and *The Son of the Wolf*, published in 1900, made him well-known and praised by the critics in the eastern parts of America, too. According to *The Editor*, Jack's success was guaranteed by his good health, hard work, a life philosophy and his sincerity. People wanted to read adventure stories and stories about their pioneer past at the time when foreign immigration and urbanization were happening in America. Thanks to the development of the printing techniques and paper manufacturing, the readers of the published stories were also very easily reached and satisfied. (Kershaw 1997:87 – 88)

The bohemian friends attended his Wednesday night parties in their house and Charmian Kittredge, his future wife, also took part in those meetings (Kershaw 1997:98 - 99). Later on she became a model of the New Woman, the mate woman and a model for many heroines in London's novels. Among those characters was also Frona Welse of *A Daughter of the Snows*, published by Lippincott in 1902. (Kershaw 1997:99)

## 2.7 Severe personal losses and new challenges in Jack London's life

After Anna Strunsky's departure from Piedmont to New York, Jack felt depressed. He was also heavily in debt, his wife Bess was pregnant and worse still, he had lost his interest in writing stories. (Kershaw 1997:112 – 114) Luckily he received an offer to work as a war correspondent in South Africa. Soon this employment was cancelled and London offered to report on the life in the East End slums of London instead. As a result, he wrote *The People of the Abyss*, published by *Macmillan* and serialized by the American Press Association. It is said to represent London's socialism at its best. (Kershaw 1997:114 – 115; Barltrop 1976:79 – 82) After his return home, he received a generous offer dealing with the publication of six new volumes. Jack's following story was *The Call of the Wild*, which later became a widely read American classic, and was published by *Macmillan* in July 1903. This study of uncivilized men and civilized beasts caused London's immediate rise to fame shown, for example, by the fact that its first edition was sold out in a day. (Kershaw 1997:121 – 122, 124, 130)

It was a miraculous change in Jack London's life. First of all, he received \$2700 for his bestseller from *Macmillan* and was able to pay the family's bills at last. At home, entertaining guests at Wednesday parties belonged to this period of his growing fame. It seems that, through such parties, he returned, by means of social games and play, to his lost childhood. (Barltrop 1976:93 – 95) In the summer of 1903, Jack's divorce left him in serious financial trouble. Besides, he was desperately short of themes for his writings. So it is no wonder he did not hesitate to accept a war correspondent's post offered by W.R. Hearst. Aiming at reporting on the war events between Russia and Japan, London left for Yokohama, Japan, in January 1904. (Barltrop 1976:100 – 101; Kershaw 1997:137) In Japan and in Korea, London encountered serious setbacks and was even imprisoned as a spy. Finally he was released by President Roosevelt. (Kershaw 1997:137 – 142)

## 2.8 Jack London as a famous writer and a farmer

Jack London's Klondike stories brought him world-wide fame. Among his most popular works were *The Son of the Wolf*, *The God of his Fathers* and *Children of the Frost*, all of which were published between 1900 and 1902. (Kershaw 1997:107) *The People of the Abyss* (1903) sold surprisingly well in America, whereas its descriptions of the life in the East End slums and its realism were totally rejected in England (Kershaw 1997:120). The slums

brought to London's mind his fear of falling down to the social pit once more. In order to get rid of these memories, London drank heavily and used to eat raw meat. (Kershaw 1997:109, 120) Nevertheless, *The Call of the Wild* and *The Sea Wolf* were sensational in their popularity causing feelings of disillusionment in London (Kershaw 1997:124, 152 – 153).

After Jack's divorce had become legal in November 1905, he immediately married Charmian Kittredge on his socialist lecture tour in Chicago. The press disapproved of their marriage so soon after Jack's divorce and the couple returned disappointed home to Glen Ellen. (Bartrop 1976:111 – 112, 114) At this point in his career, Jack's inspiration came from Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and from the idealization of the superman and the Anglo-Saxon race. Still, only Charmian could rescue him from his feelings of disillusionment. (Kershaw 1997:154) In 1906, London wrote works of high quality, such as *Moon-Face and Other Stories* and *White Fang*, because he enjoyed his new way of life. Reluctantly, he also wrote his historically famous report on the earthquake of San Francisco, which had taken place on 18 April 1906. *Before Adam* (1907), *Love of Life and Other Stories* (1907) and *The Iron Heel* (1908) completed London's years of great creations. (Bartrop 1976:114 – 115; Kershaw 1997:170, 172)

The Earthquake confirmed London's desire to start building a large sailing boat for a cruise round the world. So he asked *the Cosmopolitan*, *McClure's* and *Outing* for advance payments for his future sea stories and *The Snark* finally sailed out to the sea after various delays and difficulties of construction in April 1907. (Bartrop 1976:119 – 121; Kershaw 1997:173) During their intended seven-year-long voyage, London wished to get rid of his fame as a successful writer and find a superman's characteristics in himself (Kershaw 1997:175 - 177).

## **2.9 Jack London in the South Seas**

The voyage of *The Snark* was originally planned to go via the Hawaiian Islands, New Zealand, Australia, New Guinea, the Philippines and Japan to several European countries (Kershaw 1997:175). In fact, the voyage symbolized Jack's final rejection of socialist ideology but it was, however, a dream come true to Jack, who, as a child, had greatly admired Melville's *Typee* (Kershaw 1997:179; Bartrop 1976:122 – 123). In spite of the various illnesses the crew suffered from in the South Seas, the period proved to become another Klondike for Jack, who continued writing his one thousand words a day there, too. So he managed to finish five books, several short stories and articles for *Macmillan's* publication



during the voyage. (Barltrop 1976:129) Because of the expenses of the voyage, Jack had to ask *Macmillan* for advance payments in order to complete his novel called *Martin Eden*. Its serial rights he sold to *The Pacific Monthly*. (Barltrop 1976:131 – 132)

In Melanesia, on the Solomon Islands, the crew encountered cannibal tribes and the circumstances were extremely difficult for writing there. Still, Jack succeeded in finishing three more books called *South Sea Tales*, *The Cruise of the Snark* and *Adventure*. From them one can see that the wilderness of the Klondike, Eden-like, had changed into the hellishly wild life in the Pacific, more or less resembling Hades. (Kershaw 1997:198 – 199, 202 – 203) Especially *The Cruise of the Snark* describes the white race as the survivor among races in comparison with the indigenous, inferior races (Kershaw 1997:204).

In September 1908, the crew was suffering from various illnesses. Having arrived in Sydney, Jack and Charmian had to stay in a private hospital, the cruise had to be ended and *The Snark* had to be sold at an auction there. In April 1909 they sailed on *The Tymerick* to Central America and came back to Glen Ellen in July the same year. (Kershaw 1997:205 – 210; Stone 1938:253 – 256) London's novel, *Martin Eden* (1909) was utterly misunderstood by the critics, due to the fact that it was the first American novel describing human alienation. In the novel, the hero did not survive, whereas Jack London, also disillusioned, did, supported by Charmian and his socialist ideology. (Kershaw 1997:210 – 211) Their return to Glen Ellen revealed Charmian's aunt's incompetence as London's literary agent. As a result, Jack had to start working hard to win back his lost popularity. (Sinclair 1978:159)

As a talented author, London succeeded in ensuring his popularity anew in a year. So *Macmillan*, *Collier's*, *the Herald*, *the Cosmopolitan* and *the Post* paid him huge sums of money for his stories. It is no wonder then that *Burning Daylight* (1910) was well received by the audience. (Stone 1938:266 – 267) In order to become a successful farmer, London had to work hard. Buying plots for his writings from Sinclair Lewis gave him material for his novel called *The Abysmal Brute* (1913). In fact, Jack's abundant flow of stories provided him with \$75,000 a year for the rest of his life. (Kershaw 1997:212 – 213)

## **2.10 The worst year in Jack London's life**

The beginning of the couple's life in the country seemed to evolve successfully. In 1909, Charmian told Jack about her pregnancy. After the announcement Jack started planning their new, castle-like mansion named the Wolf House. (Kershaw 1997:216, 219) On his ranch Jack

used to entertain masses of guests, who were mostly strangers to the Londons but who had heard about the limitless hospitality offered on their ranch. Under these circumstances writing had become a kind of refuge to London. (Kershaw 1997:220 – 221)

In June 1910, the couple's luck changed all of a sudden. Their daughter Joy died at the age of one and a half days. (Kershaw 1997:229) This was followed by other misfortunes and the year 1913 can be considered the worst year in London's life, due to several tragic events on the ranch and in his personal life. As a result, London's melancholy and agony increased considerably. The sales figures of his books were declining, he doubted Charmian's fidelity and, worst of all, the Wolf House was destroyed in a fire. (Johnston 1984:168 – 169; Walcutt 1966:14)

It was in 1913 that London moved back to *Macmillan*, having changed his publishing house in the hope of a better contract some years earlier. The Londons decided to leave for Seattle on *the Dirigo* via Cape Horn, where Charmian went through a miscarriage. (Kershaw 1997:235, 239, 242 – 243) However, *The Mutiny of the Elsinore* (1914) was largely inspired by this sea voyage (Kershaw 1997:235). The disastrous year 1913 brought London success, too. It may be regarded as one of his most productive years as to the amount of his published books and serialized publications. His novels *The Night Born*, *The Abysmal Brute*, *John Barleycorn* and *The Valley of the Moon* were, all of them, published at that time, the last two bringing him lasting fame. (Stone 1938:306)

Even if London's novels gained popularity, some of them were utterly misunderstood by the critics, *The Little Lady of the Big House* (1914) and *Martin Eden* being among the most misunderstood ones. Despair thus continued to follow in London's steps and nothing, including socialism, Charmian, their Beauty Ranch and writing stories, could help him to recover from his disillusionment any longer. (Johnston 1984:170)

### **2.11 Jack London's last years, decline and death**

From the start of the film industry London had been keen on getting his own novels onto the screen. Already in 1913 he had started signing contracts for the first film versions of his novels. After some difficulties concerning the copyright matters, *The Sea-Wolf* was produced as a film version in 1913. (Kershaw 1997:248 – 249) *John Barleycorn*, filmed a year later, was considered a sensation among the first motion pictures in America (Kershaw 1997:253). In April 1914, London got a chance to work as a war correspondent on behalf of *Collier's*

during the revolution in Mexico, but, unfortunately, the conflict was ended by the time Jack and Charmian arrived at Vera Cruz (Walcutt 1966:15; Kershaw 1997:266, 268). So Jack, who had suffered from dysentery and pleurisy, returned home with Charmian. Attacked by inflammatory rheumatism in February 1915, Jack and Charmian sought relief from Hawaii, where they spent most of their time in 1915 and 1916. (Kershaw 1997:269, 277 – 278)

At a critical moment, London, who was heavily in debt, received a great offer dealing with the novelizing of Charles Goddard's play *Hearts of Three*. This generous offer made by *the Cosmopolitan* helped Jack to pay back his old debts. He also collected huge sums of money for several film rights from Hollywood and for the royalties of his translated stories from Europe, too. (Kershaw 1997:279 - 280) In Hawaii, London wrote two more stories about dogs, namely *Jerry of the Islands* and *Michael, Brother of Jerry*. Moreover, he finished the splendid introduction to *The Cry for Justice: An Anthology of the Literature of Social Protest*. (Kershaw 1997:280) In August 1916, the Londons arrived at Glen Ellen from their last trip to Hawaii. At that time Jack suffered from painful attacks of uraemia and used pain-killers together with morphine to relieve the pain. His death on 22 November was apparently caused by an overdose of morphine sulphate. Whether he took the overdose on purpose or not, no one knows for sure. (Walcutt 1966:15 – 16; Kershaw 1997: 290 -292; Johnston 1984:170)

Jack London was familiar with the ideologies created by Marx, Spencer, Darwin, Freud, Nietzsche and, finally, by Jung. Studying Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious* made him more aware of his own unbalanced state of mind and its results, his habits of eating raw meat and drinking too much. By means of those habits, he seemed to look for ways of compensating for the lack of his mother's love in his early childhood. (Kershaw 1997:286 – 287) *The Water Baby*, which was the last story London finished, showed his interest in the Jungian ideology. *On the Makaloa Mat* (1919) and *The Acorn Planter* (1916) are part of his posthumous publications. (Kershaw 1997:287 – 290)

After Jack London's death, the Jack London State Park was established on the Beauty Ranch the Londons owned with its 65,000 eucalyptus trees and its vineyards (Kershaw 1997:301 – 302). London's significance as a writer is shown by *The Jack London Society*, founded at the University of San Antonio in Texas. Moreover, London's writings about the East End slums are said to have initiated a new wave of journalism. He also made surfing familiar to the Americans by means of his vivid writings of the sport. People also remember him for the first experiments of fertilizing the soil by means of liquid fertilizers. His land terracing efforts,

hollow silos, and alfalfa cultivations were also significant creations to be remembered ever since. However, according to Irving Stone, London's best story was his own life. (Kershaw 1997:264, 301 – 302)

Jack London bore a strong resemblance to some other writers in his intensive way of living, as if he had lived several lives at the same time. For example, he resembled Mark Twain in his big business efforts, Hemingway in his friendship matters and in his courageous deeds, and Fitzgerald in his drinking habits. (Walcutt 1966:42) In general, Jack London is said to have been a visionary and a Californian icon, far ahead of his time in his ideology, his farming experiments and his world-famous writings (Kershaw 1997:302 – 303).

### **3 MAJOR HISTORICAL EVENTS IN NORTH AMERICA FROM THE 1890'S TO THE 1920'S**

In this section of my thesis my aim is to give an overview of the historical background of Jack London's novels. In general, during the decades of the turn of the century America went through major changes which affected both society and people's lives. Since Jack London told about such changes, especially the gold rush of the 1890's, the labor strikes of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the sea voyages typical of the colonization period in the three novels of my thesis, it is important to know about the real themes in the history of North America at that time.

#### **3.1 The late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 1910's**

On the 9 April, 1865, the peace treaty of Appomattox after the Civil War (1861 – 1865) guaranteed the abolition of slavery. The work for reuniting and reconstructing of the shattered nation could begin in earnest. (Brinkley 1991:451) In the decades after the war, the pressure for gaining new arable land increased in America. The resulting migration was made easier by the construction of transcontinental railroad lines. By 1900, five railroad lines had been built across the American continent. (Brinkley 1991:494, 506) Migrating westward obviously attracted settlers a lot, because the Far West offered them mining possibilities in gold and silver mines. In addition, fortunes could be made in the cattle ranching business. Although the mines were quickly exhausted and only ghost towns left behind, the migration continued westward to the region of the Pacific Coast, thus closing the period of the mass migration to the Far West in the history of America. (Brinkley 1991:494 – 499)

While the white settlement moved further and further westward, American Indian tribes and settlers were involved in violent fighting against each other in several decades. The solution to the warfare was provided by the Indian Peace Commission, founded by the Congress in 1867, and its new Indian policy. According to this policy, all Indian tribes had to move to two large reservation areas in Oklahoma and the Dakotas. The Dawes Act (1887) deprived Indian tribes of their previous collective land ownership rights. So the American Indian tribes started to accommodate to the white civilization and its society. (Brinkley 1991:501 – 505)

During the last few decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century enormous changes in people's lives affected every layer of the American society. The nation longed for a stable handling of affairs in its economy as well as its cultural life, but the weaknesses of the

reigning two-party system led to the Panic of 1893 or the worst national period of depression so far. (Brinkley 1991:567) Before the period of crises and labor strikes at the turn of the century, America had experienced great success in many areas of the society. By 1890, industrialization, due to inventions and workers at hand when needed, had made America a great nation in the whole world. From 1860 to 1890, over 440.000 new patents were awarded in America. Such inventions as the telegraph, the telephone, the adding machine and the typewriter also helped in increasing the economic growth in America. The extra labor force the industrial sector needed came from the country and from foreign immigrant sources. (Brinkley 1991:513 – 515)

The major inventions, which contributed to the nation's life, culture and economy, were, however, the automobile and the assembly line with its great mass production abilities. From the 1870's, electricity gave people power and light. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, iron, steel and oil industries started to accumulate American industrial wealth. Huge sums of money were invested in new research activities by such corporations as Du Pont, Eastman Kodak, Bell Telephone and General Electric in the fields of their industries. (Brinkley 1991:514 – 516)

The 1890's began with the disastrous depression and the stock market crash and bank failures. Farmers and businesses went bankrupt because of their unsecured loans. Soon it seemed that the whole American society was about to collapse. Strikes followed in the wake of bank failures. After the Philadelphia and Reading Railroads and the National Cordage Company went bankrupt in 1893, strikes changed their character becoming more violent, even bloody. In 1894, the Pullman and the Homestead strikes were the most notorious ones. (Brinkley 1991:583 – 585)

The presidential election of 1896 succeeded in changing the scene of American politics and, as a result, President McKinley's administration achieved some major improvements. Important issues were intensely debated in America at that time, including, for example, the issue of the gold standard, overseas expansionism and tariff questions. Fortunately, America found new solutions to combat depression. (Brinkley 1991:588 – 590) For example, all of a sudden, their gold supplies were guaranteed by new gold mining efforts in Alaska, Australia and South Africa. In addition, new techniques had been developed for the processing of gold by means of cyanide. The recovery of the American agriculture from the depression happened in the wake of years of total European crop failure. As a result, the international crop markets were suddenly anxious to receive American agricultural products again. (Brinkley 1991: 590)

Before 1890, the Americans were mainly concerned about national issues, such as the Reconstruction, the building of transcontinental railroads, the industrial development and the American Indians. The fact that the Far West was reached by settlers and that it was no longer possible for the Americans to expand anywhere on the American continent, expansionism was enlarged to involve overseas islands, territories and even foreign countries (Brinkley 1991:593).

At that time European imperialism was developing fast and the United States seemed to rise to the level of England, France and Germany as a major colonial power. The United States had already expanded its possessions to Hawaii (1898) and parts of Samoa (1899). After the Spanish-American War, which America had won in 1898, the nations all over the world acknowledged America as a new major colonial power. No doubt America's fame was due to its large colonial areas on the surface of the globe, ranging from the Caribbean to Alaska and from the Philippines to Puerto Rico and Guam. (Brinkley 1991:594 – 607) Nations sought for the justification of their imperialist efforts with the help of Darwin's theories, the doctrine of natural selection and the survival of the fittest. In the same way industrialists found the justification for their exploitation of workers in Social Darwinism. (Brinkley 1991:595)

### **3.2 The period from the First World War to the 1920's**

The U.S.A. was not an isolated nation in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Rather, it had taken an important diplomatic role in foreign affairs. For example, President Roosevelt had participated in the peace negotiations between Russia and Japan in 1905. At the same time, it must be remembered that the United States did not interfere in World War I from its start, but had stayed neutral. (Shannon 1977:3 – 4) The effects of World War I were, however, far-reaching in America, too. First of all, as the export rate to the Allies was greatly increased, the American recession of 1914 quickly ended. American products were exported considerably more to Europe and other foreign countries than before the war. Compared to the pre-war American export figures with the wartime ones, we see a notable rise of 390 percent in them. (Shannon 1977:5, 25)

During the post-war period, the U.S. faced tumultuous events in its economy, culture and politics. Due to the recession which lasted until 1922, the nation suffered from the lack of foodstuffs, fuel and farming machinery among other things in the post-war years. (Shannon 1977:25, 28) In 1921 the depression reached its height. There had been a severe shortage of

coal all over America in 1917 and 1918, causing closures of major steel and other important manufacturing industries in January 1918. However, the recovery of the nation had already begun and better times were looming on the horizon. In fact, these years were wealthier ones than ever before in the history of America. This was the era of the business-oriented politics, too. (Shannon 1977:25, 49, 69)

In the 1920's, the Presidents of the United States came from the Republican party. The first of them, President Harding did not sympathize with the business world, but his follower, President Coolidge, was already considered a businessmen's friend and the third, President Hoover, finally supported the business sector in every possible way. By 1920, according to the demands of the business world, the private management was accomplished in transports and communications. (Shannon 1977:49 – 50)

### **3.3 The New Economic Era, social controversies and liberated manners of the 1920's**

In the 1920's, the development of big enterprises, even of oligopolies, meant that the labor force, their working conditions and poor wages were forgotten, as the government showed its generosity toward those big corporations. As a result in 1919, over 4 million workers were striking, especially in steel and coal industries. Striking brought, however, no progress from the point of view of workers. (Shannon 1977:52)

It is noteworthy that the depression was prevailing, even if some major industries were developing fast, as far as they became super-corporations later (Shannon 1977:71, 77). The automobile industry had lasting effects on the nation and on people's way of life. General Motors, Ford and Chrysler manufactured about 83 percent of all automobiles and trucks on the continent in 1930. The production of explosives for the warfare meant a boom in the chemical industry. Other big growth industries were connected with electricity. The great inventions, such as the radio, and new, synthetic materials led to very fast growing industries in the United States. (Shannon 1977:74 – 77)

In the late 1910's and in the first half of the 1920's, the number of households with electricity increased fast. A similar increase could be noticed in the number of various electric household appliances. The leading appliance industries, General Electric and Westinghouse Electric founded the Radio Corporation of America. As a result, about 3 million radio owners could listen to news broadcasts from Detroit as early as in 1920, as well as advertisement broadcasts from New York City two years later. (Shannon 1977:76 – 77)



The foreign politics of the post-war United States was largely controlled by major American corporations. Even if the U.S. was stronger than ever before, there were severe obstacles in American economic expansion abroad because of war debts and some imperialist issues. The nation needed large international markets for their surplus production. Moreover, the role of the U.S. in the world trade showed during the years of depression, when the lack of American capital flow caused extreme difficulties to the functioning of the world trade system. (Shannon 1977:89 – 91)

In the decade after the war, there was also a tremendous increase in public education in the United States. In fact, industrial needs emphasized specialized skills, thus resulting in masses of young students in high schools, colleges and universities. Students were also interested in Ph.D. degrees and working possibilities at the research centers big corporations had founded for their own purposes. (Shannon 1977:110 – 113)

The 1920's could be described as a period of various social conflicts in American society. In fact, almost all the areas of society were overwhelmed by contradictory issues. For example, American people faced such difficult issues as the immigrant question, the tension between Protestants and Catholics, the emancipation of women and the differentiation of the rural and the urbanized ways of living. (Shannon 1977:127 – 128) At the same time, the 1920's generally witnessed only a few labor strikes in America, and they were caused by the weak labor organizations and minor rises in wages. However, workers in coal and textile manufacturing kept on striking in order to gain improvement in their wages and their horrible working conditions. (Shannon 1977:84, 86)

No matter how liberated we think New Women's behavior was, Kinsey's report of women's sexual behavior shows only a slight rise in the rate of women's immorality in America in the period of his study (Shannon 1977:137). Still, the new, urban way of life did not involve rural areas or small towns, in which the family, the church, and hard agricultural work conditions set restrictions on people's lives, thus widening the gulf between the countryside and the cities to the utmost. In any case, urban and rural people had one thing in common, namely their strong belief in and support of patriotism. As a result, they created such immigration restriction laws as the Illiteracy Test Act (1917) and the National Origins Act (1924). The enforcement of the acts definitely helped to stop the excessive immigrant flow to the United States. (Shannon 1977:127 – 128, 138)

By these means Americans in the 1920's went on with their lives, freer and more liberated in morals than before, but at the same time restricted as to their drinking and manufacturing of alcoholic beverages. At the same time, they were steadily approaching the Wall Street Crash of 1929, as well as the abolition of Prohibition in 1933. (Shannon 1977:136, 145)

Jack London's life clearly reflects some major events in the history of the United States. As a young boy he had to stop going to school in order to support his family by working as a manual worker in factories. Like many people at that time, the Londons also suffered from the severe depression in the 1890's. Jack sought relief from adventure books, which told about distant countries. In the way of colonialists those territories could be reached by sailing. So Jack built his sailing ship, *the Snark*, and sailed to the South Sea Islands in order to make his sailing dream come true. The first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century could be described as a period of new inventions and experiments, of warfare and searching for personal happiness. London also acted as an inventor and an experimenter on his Beauty Ranch, his farm and encountered warfare as a war correspondent in foreign countries, whereas entertaining masses of guests naturally gave him personal happiness. Participating in the gold rush, in turn, gave him everlasting fame as a world-renowned author.

## **4 WOMEN'S POSITION IN NORTH AMERICA FROM THE CIVIL WAR TO THE 1920'S**

In this section of my thesis, I will briefly describe the American women's life in the last few decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main attention will be paid to their working, schooling, taking part in labor unions and other organizations, and their emancipation culminating in woman's suffrage in 1920. It is important to know how the American women's position developed in the U.S. in order to understand how women became the modern New Women, such as Froula Welsing, Margaret West and Saxon Roberts in the novels of this thesis. The starting-point of this historical survey will be far away in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, since the development of women's position was a complicated and sinuous process on the verge of failing all the time.

### **4.1 Some major themes in American women's life during the Civil War period**

Before the Civil War (1861 – 1865), American people had encountered several difficulties. Especially women had been exploited in the 1840's and the 1850's. As a result, women's societies had been founded to further antislavery and women's rights issues in America. At that time, many brave women, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony, devoted their whole careers to promoting women's political, suffragist, and equality rights. In 1848, the Seneca Falls meeting was declared the first women's rights meeting with overall suffragist themes. (Riley 1987: 100 – 102, 107, 111 – 115) The legislative progress in women's rights issues proved slow and awkward. This was because, firstly, only middle-class and upper-class women were interested in the issue and secondly, there were numerous other matters capturing people's interest, such as the westward migration, the Mexican War, the gold rush, and the economic and industrial boom. (Riley 1987:115 – 116)

However, the Civil War began to change the women's role in society. From the beginning, women took an active part in producing war supplies, food products, dressings and so on. Women soon organized war aid societies all over the nation. They also started working for the New York Central Association of Relief, founded in 1861. (Riley 1987:121) In general, women worked on the front as nurses, couriers, spies, saboteurs, and even soldiers. Some of the most active women, like Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross in the 1870's, and Elizabeth Van Lew or 'Crazy Bet', famous for smuggling prisoners, concentrated on the expanding of women's sphere in the society. On the whole, women's tasks varied from

agricultural to industrial work and from teaching and nursing to clerical work during the Civil War and the Reconstruction years. (Riley 1987:122 – 123)

After the war, even the women's rights supporters wanted to endorse the black slaves' cause, and leave their own agenda, the woman's suffrage issue, aside, even if they hoped for a recognition for women's exhaustive wartime efforts. Still, the previously prevailing, domestic female image had definitely begun to change for the sake of women's new experiences outside the home during the Civil War. (Riley 1987:126 – 129) Contrary to general expectations, women could now take over jobs in factories, schools, offices and hospitals, thus entering some previously male professions. Working outside the home gave women a feeling of a more liberated way of life. In fact, they were able to prove their power and ability to replace men in the workforce when needed. (Brinkley 1991:423 – 424)

#### **4.2 American women's education in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries**

As to schooling, American girls were first taught to read and write by their mothers, or they attended so-called "dame" schools. There were only a few colleges for women, such as Oberlin and Vassar, and some "normal schools" for female students, founded for teacher training purposes before the Civil War. However, the number of women's colleges increased in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Banner 1984:3 – 5)

In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, American women faced various difficulties when they strove for a better education and professional schooling in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At first, they were not admitted to institutions, and when the first of them did, it happened after many years of political pressure, individual efforts or stubborn determination. In order to be admitted to colleges and universities in the east of America, women had to have their own universities built. So they studied in Vassar or Smith, the coordinate branch universities for female students, which had been built side by side with Harvard and Yale. (Banner 1984:31 – 32)

Women were more easily admitted to higher education in the west, if vacancies needed to be filled. In the Midwest, in contrast, it was much more difficult for women to enter state universities there. (Banner 1984:33) By the turn of the century, in general, women gained almost total access to all institutions. Even some of the most esteemed professions opened up for women little by little, allowing them chances for upward social movement. (Banner 1984:3 – 5) However, women's gaining access to professional institutions had proved very

difficult, because they had to fight against old Victorian prejudices and male opposition in the field of law, medicine and journalism. The first woman doctor in America, Elizabeth Blackwell, was admitted to study medicine in Geneva, New York in 1848 but, as a female student, she had to endure joking, mockery, and restrictions in practical studies, because, in reality, she had been admitted to study just for fun. (Banner 1984:34 – 35)

Studying for elite professions was made extremely difficult for female students. For example, becoming a lawyer turned out to be very hard for women, due to lawyers' public male image. The first female lawyer in America, Annabella Mansfield, succeeded in studying only together with her brother in Iowa in the 1860's. Other female law students had to have special laws passed by Congress in order to finish their studies in such states as California, Illinois, and Wisconsin. (Banner 1984:34 – 36)

It was evident that educated women had begun to have more prominence and power in society, since they had gained self-confidence and power as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and nurses, as shown by growing employment figures (Banner 1984:5 – 6, 12). Besides, it was generally assumed that educated women had special tasks to perform in society. They were also believed to be morally superior to men and that's why their leaving the domestic sphere for the public one seemed appropriate, even if men found it hard to endure their wives' attempts of achieving social reforms. (Banner 1984:39 – 40)

### **4.3 American women at work in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was appropriate for young women to contribute to the support of their families, especially before they got married. Their increased work opportunities mainly derived from the industrial growth and the public school system in America. The Civil War had emptied workplaces of male workers, and new jobs were also offered in clerical work and in textile factories, which no longer gave piece-work to be done in the home. Women's joining the workforce in industries, schools and so on, derived from necessity, not from any feminist motives. (Banner 1984:29 – 31)

In general, most women finished working outside the home after getting married. This was also true of middle-class women who worked in elite professions. The wealthy middle-class men used to give their wives more leisure and freedom than they had ever had before. (Banner 1984:51-53) Middle-class women sought pleasure in, for example, buying stylish clothes and actively taking part in various associations. According to their role as homemakers and

mothers, and as advised by women's magazines and the domestic-science movement, they expected to find perfect happiness in their marriage or else they would file for divorce. (Banner 1984:54 – 56) Going to work outside the home was obligatory for working-class women. Especially young, unmarried women used to support their families before getting married. Most of them worked in professions which did not demand any special skills. (Banner 1984:61) Rural women, in turn, played an active part in farm work. In 1865, the Homestead Act allowed single women to become landowners, too. As a result, in Colorado and Wyoming, for example, 12 landowners out of 100 were single women. Rural women also actively participated in the suffrage and temperance movements. (Banner 1984:57 – 61; Riley 1987:102)

From the 1880's, unmarried immigrant women usually worked in industries. When they got married, some of them did ironing or piece-work at home for the benefit of factories or middle-class housewives. (Banner 1984:62 – 63) Middle-class women started to work as professionals having taken part in training courses at women's colleges and coeducational universities. The professions welcoming women were thought of as belonging to the female domestic sphere and requiring more female than male characteristics. Professions, such as physician, librarian, teacher, and nurse, were seen as female professions. (Brinkley 1991:623 – 624) By 1900, for example, five percent of physicians and two thirds of grammar school teachers were women, thus proving the growth of women's portion in these appropriate professions. Nursing was considered a solely female profession, due to nurses' kind and comforting nature. (Brinkley 1991:623 – 624)

Female professions were strictly separated from the male professional world as to the targets and places of work. Women worked for the benefit of other women and children in schools, hospitals and libraries, or, in a word, in places resembling homes. In addition, social work in the Settlement House movement offered women endless work opportunities. (Brinkley 1991:624) As far as black women were concerned, they faced severe discrimination at work because of their gender and race. Even 23 percent of married black women had to work outside the home in 1900, whereas only 4 percent of married white women did so. No matter whether black women worked as teachers or domestics, they were regarded as sexual or mother-like stereotypes. Besides, it was impossible for them to enter office or sales or even industrial work. As a result, they had to secure their chances by means of studying for example law or medicine. (Banner 1984:65 – 66)

#### **4.4 Women workers as members of labor unions and as strike participants**

Working in the notorious “sweatshops” in factories proved so unhealthy for both male and female workers that it was important for them to try and improve the working conditions there. Working hours, low wages and equality issues also belonged to the agenda of the labor movement and unions. (Banner 1984:67 – 69)

In women’s active participation in organizations, one may see a major contributive factor, namely the decline in the birth rate figures in America. The birth rate had begun to decrease from 7 children per family unit in 1800 to 3.5 a century later. So women’s leisure had increased considerably and, as a result, they had started to take an active part in life and hobbies outside the home. (Banner 1984:17 – 18) It is important to notice that the birth rate had kept on declining in spite of legislation prohibiting abortion, birth control devices, and even the spreading of birth control information. Perhaps women had begun to see their own role freed from the restrictions set by large families. (Banner 1984:16, 18)

Educated women founded women’s associations for women in professions, while other women joined women’s clubs in order to raise their own level in educational, cultural, and social competence (Banner 1984:18). The women’s club movement rapidly grew from 500 local clubs in the 1890’s to the General Federation of Women’s Clubs with its over one million members in 1917. These clubs had started as cultural meeting places for middle-class and upper-class women, but they soon developed into clubs, where social justice, child labor, working conditions and woman’s suffrage legislation issues were discussed by women. In their own clubs women could stay away from the public sphere, in which men used to dominate. (Brinkley 1991:624 – 625)

Previously women had taken part in organizations dealing with labor issues and farming. Several women’s associations were founded in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as the General Federation of Women’s Clubs (1890), the YWCA or the Young Women’s Christian Association and the DAR or the Daughters of the American Revolution. In addition, the NAWSA or the National American Woman Suffrage Association formed a union of two quarrelling woman’s suffrage unions separated in 1869. Women also became members of the missionary movement as auxiliaries and even led the movement in post-war years. (Banner 1984:18 – 19)

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, women's participation in organizations eventually grew out of women's own friendships and societies encouraged by strict gender roles in society. The largest organization for women was the WCTU or the Women's Christian Temperance Union (1873), which was established to protect families from the consequences of men's alcoholism. (Banner 1984:41 – 43) Women workers were also organized to join labor unions, but their participation in them was, however, difficult for various reasons. Firstly, their seasonal working did not allow their continuous union membership. Secondly, large labor unions like the AFL or the American Federation of Labor (1886) usually directed their efforts to benefit the professional labor, not the unskilled native or immigrant female workers who quit working as soon as they got married. Thirdly, unions were customarily meant "for male workers only" (Banner 1984:72 – 76). However, there were organizations for women workers. These had been founded to give support to women in eastern textile factories (the Industrial Workers of the World), in the sales sector (the Consumers' League, in 1890), and in the woman's suffrage movement (the Women's Trade Union League or the WTUL, in 1903). (Banner 1984:76)

As strike participants, women workers seem to have been active in cases they regarded as vital or extremely important. Such very vital strikes took place, for example, in Chicago in 1898, when female glove makers went on strike in order to oppose new assembly-lines and the lowering of their wages. As many as 8.000 laundry workers also went on strike in New York in 1905, because their work had been mechanized, they had been fined for being late for work, and punished if they were seen chatting during the working hours. The most historical strikers' march gathered about 80.000 female garment workers to New York. Their aim was to improve their poor working conditions, which had caused the disastrous fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in 1911. (Banner 1984:69 – 70)

From 1910 to 1912, striking became a typical way of protesting in clothing manufacturing and textile mills, the working conditions of which were known to be most pitiable. As a result, women's participation in the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (1900) was considered massive even on the national level in the AFL. Unfortunately women's power in strikes brought about only minor results. (Banner 1984:71 – 72) Women were oriented toward social reforms in their organizational activities, even if they had to fight against old prejudices and fears of the breaking-up of traditional family models, as when housewives left their homes for the public sphere of affairs and politics. In any case, women's increased spare time



provided the major condition for female activism. A smaller family size and various time-saving household appliances also played an important role in housewives' liberation. For example, time was saved by such new household appliances as the vacuum cleaner, the refrigerator, and the washing machine, presented to the public at the Columbian World Fair in 1893 and ready for mass production in the 1910's. (Banner 1984:40 – 41)

#### **4.5 Woman's suffrage and women's liberation in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

As members of women's clubs women succeeded in supporting many political issues of great significance and the American society in general. After the women's rights convention at Seneca Falls in 1848, women had been presented as members of the public sphere by a leading suffragist, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Women's new roles certainly ignited feelings of fear in men, resulting, for example, in vigorous anti-suffragist organizations. (Brinkley 1991:633 – 634)

In spite of women's eager support to the abolition of slavery and the temperance movement, it was not easy for them to make any progress in the woman's suffrage question during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the Reconstruction period, they pushed their own agenda aside for a long time and supported the blacks' rights issue instead. In fact, they needed new feminist leaders, Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt, and the National American Woman Suffrage Association, before they could proceed to national legislation phases in their own agenda. Still, the final step forward was provided by World War I and by the splitting up of the suffrage movement. (Brinkley 1991:634 - 635)

The second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century finally witnessed the achievement of the woman's suffrage for the whole nation, even if the process proved quarrelsome and slow, happening step by step, in one state after another: in Washington (1910), California (1911), four other states in the west of America (1912), Illinois (1913), New York (1917), and Michigan (1918). The final ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment took place in 1920 (Brinkley 1991:635). It must be admitted that the mutual relations of the woman's suffrage movements had been strained, but they succeeded in uniting their members in this unique issue. However, after the suffrage had been gained, the disputes started anew in the Equal Rights Amendment issue, mostly supported by Alice Paul, leader of the militant National Women's Party (1916). (Brinkley 1991:635 - 636)

The 1920's, with profound changes in the nation's economy and cultural life, put citizens through an amazing number of new experiences and ways of life in America. People now lived in an exciting, urban and consumer-oriented society where mass-produced and widely advertized products became everybody's property or, at least, their fantasy. (Brinkley 1991:704 - 705) In addition to new kitchen appliances, cosmetics products, fashionable clothes, and even automobiles, people's attention was captured by famous screen stars in movies, the first talkies and on the radio (Brinkley 1991:705 – 707).

By 1920, there were almost one million female workers in the clerical sector, sales and professional occupations in North America. Their working in whatever vacancies during the war made their economic emancipation advance a lot. (Chafe 1991: 64 – 66) According to Susan Gorsky (in Koppelman-Cornillon (ed.) 1973: 31 – 32), the Victorian heroine as depicted in Englishwomen's novels was ladylike, beautiful, capable of hiding her feelings and liked playing the piano, singing and doing her embroidery. The change of the public image of women into a modern "flapper" of the 1920's did not happen quickly. In the meanwhile, people were made familiar with the "Gibson Girl" image, a kind of "American virgin-woman", who liked natural, healthy life and enjoyed sports activities. (Banner 1984: 21 – 22)

Especially single lower-middle-class and working-class, and later on middle-class women, made the idols' fashion, make-up, and values their own, thus idolizing the "flapper" image, typical of women in the 1920's. Very many American women imitated flappers' style of living, short skirts, hats resembling Viking-helmets, stockings up to the knees, make-up and more liberated habits, which included drinking alcoholic beverages and smoking cigarettes. Corsets they willingly abandoned in order to move freely in their sports activities. As flappers, women replaced the Victorian virtues with taking part in wild parties without any companion in the new era of the 1920's. (Brinkley 1991:707 - 709; Shannon 1977: 137)

The role of American women changed from a reformist one to a more personal one in the 1920's. Women started to search for individual happiness after they had been granted the franchise in 1920. However, their work opportunities were still restricted to certain professions, in other words, to usually unskilled, poorly paid service work or work as teachers, nurses or social workers. (Brinkley 1991:707 – 708) New advances in the birth control movement, by Margaret Sanger, and an increase in electric household equipment resulted in extra leisure for middle-class housewives, whose frustration led to wildly rising divorce figures. Women's participation in women's clubs and various organizations also

greatly increased, as well as their concentration in gaining personal satisfaction in life. (Brinkley 1991:708 – 709)

The heroines of Jack London's three novels discussed in the present study were located in the quasi-real setting of American society. It seems that Jack London wrote about matters he thoroughly knew about, thus depicting the heroines' lives in the framework of American and American women's history. So the heroines were described in the midst of the gold rush, labor strikes, and seafaring events in the way people lived in the decades of the turn of the century. Besides, one may discover new-womanish traits in their description, too. It is natural, because the publication of these novels took place in the era of the ardent women's emancipation efforts in the United States.

## 5 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON MAJOR THEMES IN JACK LONDON'S WORKS

In this section of my thesis, my aim is to introduce a couple of principal themes in Jack London's writings as presented in previous studies. These themes include womanhood and the New Woman concept, the Anglo-Saxon supremacy and racist ideologies, and escaping from the city to the country. Some of the themes are present in the novels of this thesis, too, even if one must admit that the majority of the previous studies have paid an attention to theories and ideologies other than heroines' personalities. However, all the studies dealt with here have greatly helped to form an overall conception of Frona's, Margaret's and Saxon's fictional lives, although several studies mainly concentrate in other main characters.

### 5.1 Womanhood and the concept of the New Woman

In "The (American) Muse's Tragedy", Donna M. Campbell (2002:189, 203) states that critics have found out connections to Darwin's doctrines, feminism, and the theme of the New Woman in London's *The Little Lady of the Big House* (1916). Paula, the heroine, is presented as an artistic, princess-like woman with no real occupation, not even in the field of housekeeping. The Freudian imagery of the novel, according to Campbell, hints at fertility and sterility, earth and water. Campbell also draws our attention to London's focus on the new, restless type of heroines of the 1920's who were similar to icons or muses. (Campbell 2002:204 – 208)

Andrew J. Furer (1994:185) has studied Jack London's heroines Frona Welse, Dede Mason and Paula Forrest. Firstly, he sees them as representatives of London's view of the New Woman ideal in the turn-of-the-century America. Secondly, he deals with the ambivalence about the liberated New Woman, known as Manly Woman or Mannish Lesbian, due to her interest in sports, athletics and women's rights. Thirdly, he concludes that the debate over the new image of women was also directed toward London's stories and their heroines, as some critics had found evidence of homoeroticism and androgyny in the descriptions of London's heroines. Other critics had even accused him of having created masculine heroines and only masculine characters in his writings. However, London's characters express the new womanhood as a mixture of outdoors girls and heterosexual women who took part in sports and adventures as women wearing women's clothing. In addition, they were not permitted expressions of free love, since they had to fit in with the Darwinian and Spencerian

evolutionary theory of healthy motherhood that London also supported himself. (Furer 1994:186 – 187)

Especially Frona Welse, the heroine of *A Daughter of the Snows* was violently criticized by Victorian-minded critics. Similarly, many readers considered physical power as not feminine, but as exclusively masculine. But, as Furer (1994:188) declares, strength is separate from the biologically determined gender in London's works, since his new womanhood comprises beautiful, athletic female bodies in heterosexual and attractive women, who are also intelligent, witty and equal to the stories' heroes.

In his study, Furer (1994:189- 191) shows that London's heroines are regarded as the heroes' sincere comrades who only lack the manifestations of real physical affection and love. Their physical strength is needed for their future motherhood and for saving the male characters' lives in the Klondike. Since sexual relationships outside of marriage are forbidden in London's works, adventure equals sex to Frona, and her physical attractiveness in perilous situations is the main cause of sexual allusions in the novel. In fact, London succeeds in denying references to the new womanhood as "Mannish Lesbians", by letting Frona participate in adventures dressed in female clothing.

Furer (1994:192 – 194) also deals with Dede Mason, the heroine of London's *Burning Daylight* (1910), who is independent at the socio-economic level, too. She and Frona resemble each other in many ways. Dede is not allowed pre-marital sexual relationships either. She is also feminine, no "Manly Woman" at all. Her heterosexuality and athleticism result in the realization of the Darwinian doctrine in her healthy pregnancy. In the end, Dede Mason, an intelligent, artistic and sincere heroine, becomes her husband's equal comrade and a mother (Furer 1994:196).

Furer (1994:196 – 200) pays attention to the similarity of London's three heroines, Frona, Dede and Paula, as to their interest in sports, their heterosexuality and their female clothing in sports events. Moreover, they share attractiveness combined with physical strength. Although Paula is physically and socially equal to her husband, it is the lack of sexual equality and freedom that forces her to commit a suicide. All in all, her expertise and abilities remain unused and her image reveals her as her husband's puppet. In Furer's (1994:200) opinion, London's three heroines reveal similarities with his personal life. Firstly, Frona obviously belongs to the era of his Klondike times and his relationship with Anna Strunsky. Secondly,

Dede is situated in the country London greatly admired during the time of the writing of *Burning Daylight*. Thirdly, by means of Paula's character, London succeeded in describing the perilous nature of the Eden in the country for women reduced to their husbands' marionettes in their status. Finally, Furer also refers to *Cherry*, London's unfinished novel, in which he was reaching for totally new spheres of female images.

Gender, sexuality and narrative in London's work have been studied by Scott Derrick (1996:110). He has described the contradictory themes of gender and eroticism in London's fiction. He sees traditional gender features violated or, at times, left intact by the narrative, due to the changes in the image of the turn-of-the-century American woman. Homosocial love between men and feminizing eroticism are described by means of characters' gazing at the male skin and muscles. In addition, there are traces of "cross-dressing" and "cross-behaving" in London's writings, although London still succeeds in maintaining the traditional male and female roles. (Derrick 1996:111, 113)

Derrick (1996:113 – 119) states that the New Woman question is dealt with from both conservative and modern points of view in London's writings, as it seems that he could not take the side of either theory. Firstly, womanhood, as expressed by Ruth in *Martin Eden*, is felt as a threat to Eden's masculinity. In the narrative the female characters participate in male activities using their weapons and dressed in male clothing. In fact, the female characters become more attractive when they assume male tokens of power, such as Maud Brewster's clubs in *The Sea-Wolf* and Frona Welse's use of Vincent's whip in *A Daughter of the Snows*. However, the use of some signs of the male power does not yield the heroines any more privileges or real power. Secondly, Derrick also supports the view that there is a prevailing economy between male and female strengths and they exist in some state of tension. Adventurous women constitute a lesser threat to male characters than the conventional ones. Thirdly, homoeroticism hidden in male characters is relieved by the hero's admiration of the heroine's masculine characteristics. This is the case of Billy and Saxon Roberts in *The Valley of the Moon*, too.

Earl J. Wilcox's study (1983: 111 – 112) makes the reader acquainted with literary naturalism in London's Klondike stories. They are filled with realistic or even naturalistic themes with a new type of heroines who is capable of living in the northern wilderness, where she is able to perform amazing tasks in order to survive or to save people's lives. London's heroines seem to possess some kind of animal instincts needed for survival. To conclude, Wilcox states that,

in London's case, one cannot know for sure, if the naturalistic themes in his writings expressed his own ideas or if they reflected the literary naturalism which was popular at that time.

Among the studies dealing with Jack London's female characters, Susan Ward's (1983:169 - 170, 173 - 174) article "Ideology for the Masses: Jack London's *The Iron Heel*" investigates Avis Everhard's character. Firstly, as a romantic heroine of the turn-of-the-century, Avis admires and adores her husband Ernest so much that her conversion to socialism and her participation in the revolution depends on Ernest's political opinions. Secondly, although Avis is a liberated woman, she stays in the background, since Ernest is a manager, a successful businessman, whom she compares with a blond beast and a Nietzschean superman. Thirdly, both Avis Everhard and Maud Brewster in *The Sea-Wolf* fit in with the image of the popular heroine of the day, even though Avis maintains some conservative, political views as a pacific socialist.

In Susan Ward's article "Jack London's Women: Civilization vs. The Frontier" (1976), she describes the characteristics of London's different types of heroines. Her study divides the heroines into three categories. Firstly, readers are introduced with the cultivated, virtuous heroines of the last few decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century romantic style. Secondly, as the turn-of-the-century type of heroines, London is anxious to depict a comrade woman who is able to share the hero's adventurous experiences in his writings. In Ward's opinion, most of London's heroines belong to this category. Thirdly, she mentions the type of female characters, such as the Klondike dance-hall women and native Indian women, prostitutes and mistresses, who all have a low position, compared with the white heroine. In fact, Ward assumes that London possibly cared more for these humble characters, since they seem to possess more admirable characteristics than their white counterparts. (Ward 1976:81, 83 - 84)

As a prominent writer of his period, London was also accused of plagiarism in the search of his sources of material. R. F. Mehl, Jr. (1973) has studied this point of view in his article about "Jack London, Alfred Henry Lewis, and Primitive Woman". According to Mehl (1973:66 - 70), both London and Lewis wrote almost identical stories about a young Indian woman as a protagonist in a love triangle. Mehl states that the writers in question were familiar with primitive ways of life, Lewis from the Southwest and London from Alaska and the tropics, due to their own experiences and general knowledge. Because the plagiarism could never be proved, the similarities in London's *The Wit of Porportuk* and Lewis's *The*

*Mills of Savage Gods* may have been caused by a mere coincidence of two artists' interest in the same theme at the same period of time.

Clarice Stasz (1996:134 – 136, 139 – 140) has studied London's *Adventure*, which entails the description of London's stay in the Solomon Islands during his cruise round the world in 1908. In the narrative of the story, Joan Lackland, the heroine, has been described as a representative of the New Woman of the era. Firstly, Joan resembles London's other liberated heroines, such as Paula Forrest in *The Little Lady of the Big House* and Frona Welse in *A Daughter of the Snows*. Secondly, as the female characters express themselves and criticize events around them, London gives them a more dominant position, in comparison with their male counterparts. Thirdly, Joan abandons the ways of the New Woman in order to become the hero's ideal of a traditional Victorian woman. Finally, Stasz states that the changes in Joan's character possibly resulted from London's desire to appeal to the conservative readers of his stories, which were in serial publication.

## **5.2 Racist themes and Anglo-Saxon supremacy**

Clarice Stasz (1996:130 – 136) has also studied Social Darwinism and humor in Jack London's *Adventure*. In her study, she refers to racial issues, too, and sees the suitability of the doctrine of the survival of the fittest or Social Darwinism to the spreading of the American imperialism. In fact, American people were widely interested in those themes in the period of the closed American frontier and the dawn of imperialism. In his writings, London describes the conflicts between native people and the white colonizers in natural settings he was familiar with, having travelled in the Klondike, the South Sea Islands and Hawaii. He depicts Joan Lackland, the heroine, as a representative of the New Woman ideal of the era, courageous in dangerous situations with bush people, headhunters and colored plantation workers. After several attacks by the racial groups in the vicinity of the plantation, Joan assumes more anti-racial attitudes toward the native people than at the beginning of the story. (Stasz 1996:131 – 136)

Stasz (1996:137 – 139) also pays attention to the apparent imperial views in *Adventure*, which clearly differs from London's other South Sea tales in this respect. The Melanesians are referred to as monkeys and, moreover, other examples of the exploitation of native people abound in the story. Firstly, Stasz states that both Jack and Charmian London express ambivalent views on racist matters, remaining either for or against the colonizers' imperialist



attitudes. Secondly, especially London's short stories are considered critical of the actions of the white, imperialist supremacy, thus expressing his empathy toward the struggles of native people in the middle of colonialist procedures. Thirdly, London generally uses mockery and irony to show his anti-imperialist opinions in a somewhat disguised manner in his other South Sea stories.

Andrew J. Furer (1996:158 – 159) has studied Jack London's racist ideology and his themes related to the Anglo-Saxon supremacy. According to Furer, London suggests that the Anglo-Saxons present themselves as zone-conquerors or people who want to conquer climactic zones. It is no wonder that London supports views of white supremacy, having learnt them from his mother as a child. In spite of his racist ideas, London also writes antiracist stories with colored protagonists, especially in his later works, in which the non-white protagonists are endowed with the finest qualities of mind and body. So they were capable of overcoming those of their white counterparts.

In addition, Furer (1996:159 – 160) explains that London was blamed for making his readers more aware of the lesser breeds, thus supporting American imperialism. London's novel *A Daughter of the Snows* is 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 (Furer 1996:161). Still, as Labor (1983:214) concludes in his "London's Pacific World", London's views in the area of antiracism, as in so many other issues, are contradictory, which means that even *A Daughter of the Snows* as well as *The Mutiny of the Elsinore* also include antiracist themes (Furer 1996:162).

However, Furer's (1996:160, 163 – 171) article shows Frona Welse and Vance Corliss, the main characters in *A Daughter of the Snows*, praising the Anglo-Saxon race. Later on, in London's antiracist works, readers are acquainted with the non-white protagonists. In them, London portrays his admiration of colored individuals, powerful winners of battles, in spite of their belonging to lesser breeds. Furer especially mentions *Koolau the Leper*, *The House of Pride*, *Cherry*, and *The Mexican* whose main characters testify London's admiration of fine human beings in spite of their race, social class or political ideology.

### **5.3 Escaping from the urban environment into the country**

Christopher Hugh Gair's article (1996:141 – 142) "The Way Our People Came" examines the protagonists' moving from the city to the rural idyll, in which the family is seen as a peaceful

unit untouched by urban naturalism. In addition, Gair pays attention to London's central themes, such as race purity and his shift from naturalism to sentimental fiction in his writings. Gair finally argues that London's acceptance of bourgeois values and his resignation from the Socialist Party were, in fact, reflected in his sentimental narrative.

The heroine of *The Valley of the Moon*, Saxon Roberts, loses her faith in God because of the violence she encountered during a workers' strike. Suffering from mental disorder, she escapes to the nature in order to find happiness in the world, or to pursue self-realization, instead of a faith in God. The Robertses have to find themselves by means of tracing their pioneering ancestors in the country. In the city, they had been controlled by alien forces. (Gair 1996:143 – 144) Billy's and Saxon's ancestors are referred to as pre-Civil-War Indians, who could not survive in the urbanized business world (Gair 1996:145 – 147). In his study, Gair (1996:148 – 150) states the conditions for a truly American family discovered in *The Valley of the Moon*, still uninhabited by immigrants. Furthermore, he explains how Saxon succeeds in becoming herself by means of a cultural mapping of her ego and her ethnic origin. In Gair's opinion, London uses the naturalism for urban and corporate descriptions, whereas he reserves the sentimental narrative for the descriptions of the country life.

Studying Frona's, Saxon's and Margaret's characters in my thesis, I argue that all these heroines fully depend on their era's living conditions and historical setting. In spite of their womanhood, they forcefully get in touch with most ideologies and theories of their era, which are represented in the studies dealt with above. Accordingly, it is easier for us to comprehend the heroines' actions and life in London's *A Daughter of the Snows*, *The Valley of the Moon*, and *The Mutiny of the Elsinore* after we get familiar with some basic facts in the background of his writings.

## 6 THE HEROINES OF JACK LONDON'S THREE NOVELS

This part of my thesis concentrates in describing the heroines' main characteristics in Jack London's novels *A Daughter of the Snows*, *The Mutiny of the Elsinore* and *The Valley of the Moon*. The choice of these particular novels for my study was quite easy for me, since there are just few novels in Jack London's works with female main characters. The heroines' belonging to two different social classes made my choice even easier. I will perform the detailed study on the basis of various examples describing the heroines in the narratives of these novels. The themes taken into consideration include the heroines' relationship to work, politics, labor unions and religion, as well as to love, family and racial issues. The heroines' new-womanish image will be discussed in detail in this section, too. In addition, a survey of the plots of these novels will be given below.

Firstly, the heroine of *A Daughter of the Snows*, Frona Welse, will be represented as a young new-womanish character in the middle of the northern wilderness of the Yukon, where gold-rushers, dangerous adventures and battles for survival in the rough nature intermingle. Still, a persistent romantic theme is involved in Frona's trying to choose between Vance Corliss and Gregory St. Vincent, her rival suitors. Amazingly, the racial heritage and bravery finally help her in getting the matter settled in favor of Corliss.

The second heroine described in this thesis is the main female character in London's *The Mutiny of the Elsinore* called Margaret West. The story is about sailing aboard the Elsinore round the Cape Horn with her father, Captain West, a male passenger called Mr. Pathurst and the most villainous crew the world had ever known. Captain West dies during a storm and the crew starts a violent mutiny on the Elsinore, in which Margaret and Mr. Pathurst also get involved. Finally, they succeed in putting an end to all the struggling aboard the Elsinore and acknowledge that they are seriously in love with each other. Accordingly, they decide to spend their honeymoon on the ship from Valparaiso to Seattle, their home town. As a new-womanish, upper-class woman, Margaret West performs astonishing athletic tricks, handles her father's gun and the steering-wheel of the ship like a professional and takes care of all animals aboard with utmost, almost veterinary skill.

Thirdly, this part of my thesis introduces the heroine of Jack London's *The Valley of the Moon*, Saxon Brown Roberts, who belongs to the working-class heroines of London's work. In the narrative, Saxon's life evolves from a laundry into a small cottage in the country, from

an unmarried woman's long working days via her marriage, violent labor strikes, her miscarriage and mental disorder to a peaceful and independent farming enterprise together with her husband in the Valley of the Moon. Their happiness grows even more by Saxon's announcement of her new pregnancy. Saxon essentially represents the New Woman ideal, thanks to her independent actions, opinions, decisions, and display of her own will in important phases of her and Billy's lives. Still, her ultimate support comes from her mother's pioneer poetry, the treasures hidden in her mother's old chest of drawers, and her Anglo-Saxon racial heritage instead of a faith in God.

## **6.1 The heroine of *A Daughter of the Snows*, Frona Welse**

### **6.1.1 Frona as a representative of the Welse family and the Anglo-Saxon race**

The first glimpse of Frona Welse's past was given on page 1 of the novel. Her arrival at the small harbor of Dyea showed her pointing at her ancient log-house home on the shore. During the first scenes, in which masses of gold-rushers seemed to transform the scenery to a sort of chaos, Frona was introduced and introduced herself to some people, bringing about astonishment, because people immediately knew that she was Jacob Welse's daughter. (DS: 6)

All over the region Jacob Welse's name had become familiar, because of his great achievements as a trader in an uninhabited country (DS: 35). Every sector of the society was ruled by him, no matter if it was the banking sector, investments or mining. In spite of his many activities, he devoted his time to Frona, his daughter, whose mother had died years ago. (DS: 35, 38) Frona had been born to the phenomenal Welses, who, according to Del Bishop's statement, always succeeded in everything they did (DS: 33). As Jack London depicted Frona's struggling in order to save a sailor from drowning and her giving orders to Indian paddlers, Jacob Welse acknowledged the characteristics of the Welses in her conduct even after three years she had spent studying abroad (DS: 47). After the episode, Jacob Welse introduced her daughter to everyone, "glowing with pride" (DS: 47).

Later on, Jacob Welse confessed to her daughter that he had feared that Frona's stay abroad would have changed her into a non-Welse woman. Fortunately, as he stated, she had remained a Welse, even if she spoke about alien matters of art, poetry and so on, using phrases he did not understand. (DS: 121 – 123) Their discussion showed Frona's appraisal of her father, their fighting ancestors and the last fight at Treasure City, where Jacob's father had died. Finally,

Frona concluded that her father would die fighting, just like all the Welshes. (DS: 123 - 124) In general, Frona appreciated her father's opinions and "liked the things her father liked" (DS: 90).

The narrative of the novel takes the reader to Frona's old childhood memories and tells about a violent cultural crisis in Indian villages nearby. Encounters with Matt McCarthy and Neepoonsa, Frona's old acquaintances from her childhood, reveal that Frona had warm personal relationships. With Matt she recollected her swimming adventures with young Siwash girls and the Big Bear stories he had told her in her childhood. (DS: 10) An old Indian woman called Neepoonsa, had given her an Indian nickname, *Tenas-He-Hee* or *Little Laughter*, as a child and had saved her life in case of illness (DS: 15).

In this novel the Welshes are represented as members of the Anglo-Saxon race and as having a strong racial pride. Because Frona's mother had died earlier, her most important relative was, of course, her father. (DS: 38 - 39) Frona, Vance Corliss, her beloved friend, and Captain Alexander kept on praising the Anglo-Saxon or the Teuton, their fighting skills, racial qualities and, in a word, their supremacy among all other races (DS: 54 - 56). Frona and Vance shared some idealized concepts about their ancestors, who were "strong to venture, strong to endure, with infinite faith, and infinite patience" (DS: 99). Frona stated that the Anglo-Saxons ruled half of the countries and all seas, thus showing their racial supremacy. Vance's family line, in turn, had sea-kings and blond Vikings as ancestors. At last the main characters' eloquence takes the reader to the realms of Valkyries and myths of old times (DS: 100).

Frona's and her father's special relationship was clearly seen in her acceptance of his opinions without questioning. Accordingly, she accepted her father's idea of her belonging to those who were ready to fight for their opinions (DS: 105). He told Frona some truths about the Welshes, such as their hatred toward dictation and cowardice, and their appreciation of individuality (DS: 126). Even if Frona understood that her father was stubborn, she firmly believed that he was capable of doing just anything (DS: 169 - 170). The father-daughter relationship was seen further strengthened by Frona's saving her father from drowning during the springtime flooding of the Yukon (DS: 181). In turn, Jacob Welse supported her at St. Vincent's, Frona's suitor's, murder trial after his confession of cowardly behavior at the time of the murder, a fact the Welshes could not endure (DS: 227, 242).

### 6.1.2 Love, marriage and friendship in Frona's life

In Frona's opinion, "the strong could inherit the earth" (DS: 57), which basically meant that she was searching for a strong friend or companion. According to Darwin's doctrine of natural and even sexual selection, she favored men whose body and soul, both of them, were equally well-shaped (DS: 57). In the beginning of a new friendship, Frona weighed both the qualities of the friend's body and soul very carefully. So, for her, Vance Corliss represented doers and intellectuals, whereas Gregory St.Vincent, another suitor, appeared to her as a natural man and an Anglo-Saxon proud of his race. (DS: 58, 88, 90) Because of Frona's feelings of kinship with both of these men, she had to admit that they had become "good friends", nothing more (DS: 57, 117).

Frona's advisors in courtship and love wanted that everything would turn out well for her. Especially Matt McCarthy, Frona's foster-daddy, even swore that he would give his own life for her and that he could "kill the man that gave ye sorrow" (DS: 118 – 119). He did not promise to stop interfering in Frona's life and warned her about her close relationship with St.Vincent, who had been seen dating another woman (DS: 117, 120). As Jacob Welse stated, Frona could independently make up her mind about her future husband. However, he told her his opinion about St.Vincent's unsuitability as her companion because of his cowardice. (DS: 124 – 126) According to Jacob Welse, the Welses could never endure cowardice nor stand anybody's orders. Then he stressed that he would always support her, even "in the face of hell and heaven, of God himself" (DS: 126 – 127).

Frona's girlish expectations of love as a kind of revelation, all of a sudden coming out "in a great white flash revealing everything in dazzling, blinding truth" (DS: 125), expressed her scanty knowledge about courtship and love. The same impression was conveyed by Frona's definition of love as "immolation" (DS: 133). Frona's and St.Vincent's relationship was at its most romantic or even at its most audacious, when they met under a starry sky. Feeling St.Vincent's arm round her waist, "she felt herself drawn against him closely" (DS: 130). In the romantic atmosphere, Frona was leaning against St.Vincent's shoulder and felt satisfied (DS: 130). In Vance's case, Frona experienced several degrees of friendship and companionship and even let him kiss all her toes, because he was fond of her like a big brother (DS: 101- 102, 196).

Showing her feelings seemed to be difficult for Frona in general. When a situation became overwhelming in one way or another, her face became expressionless, as if she could not help caring less. It also happened at St.Vincent's murder trial, so that her face was "a white face devoid of expression" (DS: 225, 227). In general, Frona's ways of showing caring and closeness meant holding someone's hand, pressing someone's arm, or leaning on someone's shoulder. Also teasing, mockery, and laughter were among her means of expressing closeness. Friendly kisses or kisses in a family setting were rarely included in Frona's expressions of feelings. Astonishingly, however, St.Vincent received a kiss from her during the murder trial, and she even made a suggestion of another kiss under the hanging rope. In turn, Vance did not receive a single kiss from Frona but, after she had given up her idealized love affair after the murder trial, he won her love instead. (DS: 99, 119, 122, 152, 160, 171, 181 – 206, 215, 225 – 235)

### **6.1.3 Frona's personality and hobbies**

In *A Daughter of the Snows*, Jack London described a representative of the New Woman ideal of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Frona Welse, the young heroine of the novel, bore strong resemblance to the ideal woman in her sports activities, fresh opinions, and self-willed manners. Frona generally roused astonishment, even confusion, by means of her "unconventionality" (DS: 59). In Vance Corliss's words, Frona was "something new, a fresh type, a woman unrelated to all women he had met" (DS: 48).

Frona appeared to be an honest and frank person and someone willing to help other people and anxious to counsel whenever needed (DS: 23, 60, 62). Other characters of the novel often paid attention to her eyes and her gaze, by means of which she could even express her gratitude without uttering a single word (DS: 60, 212). Many people also saw "a smiling light" (DS: 7) in her eyes, which answered to their own smiles. For example, her smile expressed comradeship and frankness (DS: 7).

Not only did Frona's eyes and gaze win admiration, but she also used to observe the people and events around herself. So the reader finds her looking at five drowned Scandinavians on the trail and watching narrowly her father's, Baron Courbertain's and St.vincent's slow advancement on the frail ice of the Yukon as far as their return to the river bank. (DS: 20, 170 – 171) In addition, Frona actively and eagerly watched other people's behavior as an outsider but, in a way, did so to learn more about life. First, she watched drunken people in Vance's

log cabin (DS: 151), and, secondly, she enjoyed a gun fight between two sailors (DS: 2). Her active observations of the events around herself were obviously due to the fact that she, first of all, loved life. Besides, as Jacob Welse's daughter, she felt it her duty to be familiar with all aspects of life. (DS: 2, 6)

In Frona's character, readers also see a helpful advisor whenever needed. For example, when running out of doors with her huskies, she advised a woman to get up quickly from the snow in order to avoid freezing to death. (DS: 62) We also read about two gold-rushers whom Frona helped on the trail: firstly, she untied one man's rucksack he could not untie himself and secondly, she told another man to go back home, since he was not brave enough to endure living in the wilderness (DS: 20 – 23). As Vance Corliss's tent was heated by means of an oven, Frona was ready to show him how it should be done (DS: 26). In addition, she told Vance how to make a tasty meal using poor ingredients (DS: 27). She also knew how to make the beds by laying "the sacks lengthwise in a double row" on the floor of the tent (DS: 31).

Frona did not get angry very easily. For example, when she was arriving at Dyea by boat and the oarsman's oar splashed cold water in her face, she only laughed at the incident and spoke "good-naturedly" to him (DS: 4). In the rare cases of insult, she just flushed, and became mad at her own flushing, and not at the insult (DS: 28). Throughout the narrative Frona acted as an initiator of the action, especially in the scenes of St.Vincent's murder trial. His escape was planned by her, the revolver was put to his hand by her, and finally, he was guided to the place of hanging by her. All actions associated with the murder trial were initiated by her, except for the failure of his escape. (DS: 217 – 219, 231 – 235)

In sum, the novel shows a range of Frona's character traits: politeness, kind-heartedness, stubbornness and determination for example. She is also presented as a heroine who is made unique by the fact that she saved three persons' lives: a sailor's (DS: 47), her father's (DS: 181) and a mail-carrier's (DS: 199, 202). Each rescue seemed to demand unnatural strength, inhuman characteristics, even slaughter, from her in the rescuing process, but, as an ideal new-womanish heroine, she naturally possessed those necessary characteristics needed for courageous deeds.

The self-willed heroine of *A Daughter of the Snows* refused Corliss's attempt to escort her to the Pentley's late at night (DS: 152) and accepted Lucile's wedding invitation, even if their views about St.Vincent differed a lot (DS: 157). In all, she loved honesty that came "straight



from the heart” (DS: 5) and that was expressed “with a comrade smile” (DS: 47), because she was a member of the honest Welses and a representative of the new-womanish comradeship.

#### **6.1.4 The New Woman in Frona’s character**

According to Frona Welse herself, she was actually neither feminist nor any New Woman, but a representative of the new womanhood (DS: 74). This concept entails many extraordinary characteristics, the proof of which is clearly shown by Frona’s personality, her actions and her opinions. For example, she firmly believed in women’s chance to perform even most upsetting actions. (DS: 62) More specifically, the heroine of *A Daughter of the Snows* was a magnificent combination of a cultivated young lady, a strong and independent athlete, and a humane, kind and helpful person. And, as was discussed above, she was a Welse, her father’s daughter and a representative of the Anglo-Saxon race or, in a word, a fighter among the strongest. (DS: 105, 121 – 123)

As an example of the women of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Frona enjoyed taking part in activities outside the home. For example, she used her team of huskies for nightly runs over the ice trail (DS: 62). Paddling, canoeing, rescuing people in distress, wandering, acting, and cooking among other skills were also included in the list of activities that she completely mastered. Examples of her various skills abound in the novel.

As a representative of the New Woman ideal, Frona also liked sports activities, looked fresh and healthy, and enjoyed many outdoor hobbies. Not only did she exercise her muscles, but she looked like an athlete. In her list of sports activities she included swinging clubs, fencing and even boxing. (DS: 11) As an athletic New Woman, Frona could also walk on her hands, chin a bar, and dive splendidly without any difficulty (DS: 11). Her excellence in her athletic activities was shown in her habit of checking the grips of the paddles before going paddling or canoeing in order to succeed in maintaining the course of the canoe right even if “with a hand of steel” (DS: 189).

As regards Frona’s clothing, she was said to wear clothes “of the mountaineering sort” (DS: 18). Her short, grey skirts revealed her ankles and “grey-gaitered calves” (DS: 7). Well-equipped as she was, her main problem seemed to be the fact that she got wet now and then. Then she encountered some problems when trying to put on a dry skirt and dry Indian moccasins very quickly before anyone came in. Her underwear she had to let dry on herself due to her shyness in the presence of men and because it was an old custom among women.

(DS: 25 – 26) When saving a mail-carrier's life on the Yukon, Frona had to put off her jacket and skirt and was left with her short underskirt only (DS: 184). After the rescue, she accidentally entered a log house, where the miners' meeting was about to decide St. Vincent's murder case, in her short, ragged skirt and dirty all over with clay. In any case, the men in the court soon advised her to go to change her clothes in another room. (DS: 204, 215 – 216) Frona's clothing was well suited for sports activities or wandering on the trail, whereas she had to wear long skirts in the city of Dawson so as the female city-dwellers used to (DS: 60). In addition, *A Daughter of the Snows* was published in 1902, when the Victorian female image with long skirts still prevailed to a certain degree.

Frona was a superior creature. No matter when she encountered a new situation, a tricky problem or anything strange, she naturally proved to be most resourceful, most intelligent and strongest in the process of solving the problem to a favorable ending. Her resourcefulness was astounding when, for example, she gave Vance a detailed account of the degree of freezing and the possible cure of frozen feet (DS: 149). Another example of her superiority is how, having accidentally entered St. Vincent's murder trial, she was astonishingly ready to address the court and its Chairman pleading St. Vincent "not guilty" (DS: 203 – 211). Almost as if she had always worked as a lawyer, she knew how to address the Chairman of the court and how to tell about the obvious lack of evidence in St. Vincent's murder case (DS: 222, 228). The fact that her eloquent speech abounded in legal terminology was only natural, since she was clearly depicted as an omniscient heroine of the novel.

Frona was a heroine who admired her father's skills and praised both her ancestors, who had been great warriors, and her Anglo-Saxon racial heritage. As a member of the Welshes and a representative of the Anglo-Saxons, she even chose her future husband according to their racial background and the values of the Welsh family. In general, Frona's athletic hobbies, personal skills and characteristics presented her as an outdoors girl, a New Woman or a representative of the new womanhood of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **6.2 Margaret West in *The Mutiny of the Elsinore***

### **6.2.1 The heroine's personality**

In the novel, Margaret West was first introduced to us as a wealthy, well-dressed woman (ME: 8 – 9). At first, few details were known about her, except for the fact that she was Captain West's daughter (ME: 8). Later on, readers get a more detailed description of her as a

representative of the New Woman, who was “generously strong, and yet, not quite what one could call robust” (ME: 76). Her astonishing health and vitality together with her smiling eyes and laughter (ME: 66 - 67) were emphasized as some of her key features. According to the novel, Margaret’s appearance was splendid, every part of her body looks most attractive, fresh, smooth, vital and strong (ME: 66). However, she was also compared to “a plantation mistress”, “a genuine daughter of Herodias” and even a splendid cook (ME: 99, 118). She was also described as being capable of expressing opposite states of mind at the same time. Sometimes she suddenly “cried out in surprise” or “clapped her hands” as a sign of her enthusiasm (ME: 91, 122).

Margaret West appeared to be well-dressed due to her wealth. In fact, she was introduced as Captain West’s daughter, who “made a warm and gorgeous blob of color in the huge muff and boa of red fox in which she was well-nigh buried” (ME: 8). She was also perfectly dressed for the special circumstances at sea. On *the Elsinore*, she wore “oilskins, sou’wester and long sea-boots”, since she had had a “hard sea-training” and was considered “a proper sea-woman” (ME: 125). In general, her clothing was only occasionally represented in the novel under discussion here.

Margaret’s personality was also shown to be sociable and vivacious. For example, she was typically engaged in humming, smiling, laughing, shrugging her shoulders and teasing (ME: 17, 41 and 81). Margaret’s laughing could be regarded as a key characteristic and it reflected her unique way of solving problems or managing awkward situations. After finding out that Mr. Pathurst was suffering from bedbugs, she began laughing delightfully and “there was such a mellowness, and healthiness, and frankness about it” (ME: 67). Even when her life was filled with action during the mutiny, she was able to forget her father’s sudden death and laugh sometimes (ME: 221).

However, there is some contradiction to be seen in Margaret’s character. She was a woman (ME: 100), a sea-woman (ME: 125), and the one who enthusiastically reacted when she saw four sunsets colorfully lighting up the sky at the same time (ME: 122 – 123) in spite of her “firmness” (ME: 124). At the moment of the ship’s losing the foresail in the course of a storm, she just laughed, thus showing no fear and clearly resembling her fearless father, Captain West (ME: 132).

### **6.2.2 Margaret’s hobbies and her role as a benevolent adviser**

As an example of the New Woman ideal of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Miss West took an active part in society and the world around herself. For example, she enjoyed her hobbies during the voyage onboard *the Elsinore*. In general, she was willing to help everybody in distress, including sick animals. As the heroine of the novel she was an expert in almost every subject, and was presented to us as Captain West's "unusual" daughter at the same time. (ME: 34)

Margaret's actual tasks were mainly restricted to serving tea, coffee or dinner to his father and Mr. Pathurst, the male passenger (ME:20, 32, 34). Her skills, in turn, varied from simple tasks to unbelievable athletic trickery (ME: 158 – 162). It seems that even the most complicated technical facilities were extremely familiar to Miss West and that she could use them with utmost ease and precision. "As quite a weather prophet" (ME: 47), she was asked about the weather by Mr. Pike, the mate, and Mr. Pathurst (ME:44, 47). She could apparently easily interpret the meaning of the figures of the barometer (ME: 44), and the sextant, the figures of which she wanted Mr. Pathurst to find out in a couple of hours or she would have to do it for him by herself (ME: 237 – 238). During the mutiny, she also helped Mr. Pathurst in keeping the *Elsinore's* log (ME: 228).

The fact that Margaret was very well-bred was revealed by some of her pastime activities, such as playing the piano, singing, and reading Browning's works, especially *The Ring and the Book* (ME: 81). Her playing of Chopin, Debussy and Sibelius reflected her masterful technique but, to a certain extent, lacked the deepest sentiment present in their music (ME: 88 – 89). Amazingly, she knew how to use her playing as a psychological tool against the mutineers on *the Elsinore* (ME: 221). So Miss West managed all arrangements on *the Elsinore* during the mutiny, as "an old hand at the game" (ME: 221). Being familiar with everything associated with sailing, she even took the responsibility of setting the sails, standing watches, and, finally, steering the whole ship (ME: 212 – 214, 231, 236). Having graduated from Bryn Mawr (ME: 88), Miss West could also make use of the medical library of *the Elsinore* in order to cure a sick chicken, Possum or Mr. Pathurst's puppy and Mr. Pathurst's inflammation caused by bedbugs (ME: 75 – 76, 83, 67 – 68).

Although Mr. Pathurst hoped that she would not be any suffragette (ME: 74), he, however, gave her several attributes, such as "a nest-builder", "a race-mother", and a "nest-making, planet-populating, female, human woman" (ME: 74 – 75). This "life-giving, life-conserving female of the species" (ME: 86) knew how to fire her father's revolver against the attacking group of mutineers on *the Elsinore* (ME: 242, 244). Her new-womanish attitudes were also

seen in her doing the washing, the sewing, the embroidery, and the spicing of Eastern dishes by herself (ME: 98 – 99).

Margaret West's bravery was reflected by her athletic abilities, which seemed almost supernatural to the reader, but belonged to the new-womanish heroine's repertoire. For example, as if to strengthen her own sportsmanship, Miss West demanded Mr. Pathurst to climb up to the masthead with herself in spite of the windy weather and the grayish air (ME: 158). She started the most perilous part of the climbing high above the deck, swinging around the rigging and, finally, reached the masthead without any difficulty (ME: 159). This kind of acts displayed amazing courage and strength in Margaret's character and body, peculiar to fairy-tale heroines and supernatural characters.

Giving orders and various instructions also belonged to Margaret's repertoire, due to her "hard sea-training" as Captain West's daughter (ME: 87). It was no surprise that she asked Mr. Pike, the mate, about the speed of the ship and the shortening of some sails, because they had obviously been mishandled (ME: 201 – 202). In fact, her "sailor's eye" (ME: 234) warned her about storms on account of the gathering of the clouds. Margaret usually took an active part in decisions on *the Elsinore*, no matter whether it was the question of the use of medical treatment and drugs (ME: 225), the sailors' hygiene, the thorough cleaning up and painting of the ship (ME: 225) or the figuring out of the mutineers' plan (ME: 237).

### **6.2.3 Margaret's family, ancestors and race**

According to Margaret West, her father's ancestors were seafarers, pirates, and different sorts of "disreputable sea-rovers" (ME: 120 -121). All his father's ancestors had been Americans and masters or captains of long-voyage ships. His father, Robert, had been "captain of some of the fastest Cape Horn clippers after the gold discovery" (ME: 120 – 121). So Margaret explained her father's love and knowledge of the sea, referring to him as "an artist" in his relation to the sea and everything connected with it (ME: 121).

Captain West, Margaret's father and her closest relative, did not give an impression of being a captain at all. Instead, he seemed cool, very remote, "as remote as the farthest fixed star" (ME: 8), and spoke little if at all. In Mr. Pathurst's opinion, his voice brought some old memories from New England to his mind (ME: 8). Captain West's personality and manners were described by means of several adjectives, such as *serene, aristocratic, remote, superior, slender, graceful, human, all-observant, tranquil, and casual* (ME: 33, 56, 59, 74, 118, 155).

He was naturally Margaret's most beloved relative, since her mother had died earlier. In fact, her father had not been "the same" ever since (ME: 8, 121). In the novel, Captain West was defined in most interesting ways. He was referred to as "the blond Aryan master, the king", and "the Samurai" (ME: 118), but, according to Mr. Pathurst, he had to be a human Samurai, since he took care of his passengers' well-being onboard *the Elsinore* (ME: 74). Other attributes associated with Captain West included "an aristocrat" (ME: 33), "the brains" and "the knower" of the ship (ME: 63).

Margaret naturally adored his father's knowledge and love of the sea very much and she described him as a naval hero who had saved hundreds of people during the voyage on *the Dixie* (ME: 22 – 23). In fact, she firmly believed in his father's skill to start setting sail before a menacing storm, but could not foresee his mistake caused by his illness, because he was "a king" at sea and the sea was running in his veins (ME: 121, 127, 131). Captain West's personality did not include any signs of being a good conversationalist, since he was not interested in reading or political issues (ME: 56 – 57). So the only book he was in the habit of reading was the Bible and, according to Miss West, her father believed in God (ME: 55, 82).

In a word, Captain Nathaniel West, who always wore slippers and smoked a cigar in his cabin, gave an impression of "a remote and superior being" (ME: 56), whose Gabriel-like voice rang loud and clear (ME: 87, 107). The most skillful strategist on *the Elsinore*, Captain West, gave his last orders near Cape Horn some moments before he died of a heart attack. After his father's death, Margaret seemed "a little drawn", but soon recovered, due to the overwhelmingly horrible mutiny on *the Elsinore* (ME: 63, 190 – 191, 204), thus showing her firmness she had inherited from her father.

#### **6.2.4 Love and companionship in Margaret's life during the voyage**

At first, Miss West made it clear to Mr. Pathurst that she did not need his companionship at all and that she had always had so much to do during her previous voyages that the time had totally run out, even without any social intercourse with male passengers (ME: 10). Still, Mr. Pathurst had many doubts about Miss West's aim and considered her a huntress of men, similar to all other women, whom he did not like at all (ME: 39). For sure, he had run away from the remotest possibility of getting in touch with scheming women, just to meet Miss West by accident out at sea (ME: 39 – 40).

Their relationship started to advance from necessity during a storm, the winds of which forced them to grip and press each other's hands (ME: 125 – 126). The stormy wind actually threw them against each other closely (ME: 127). After the storm, their love affair advanced to a stage, in which Mr. Pathurst started to admire Miss West, her name and age. In addition, she had become the woman he desired most of all. (ME: 142 – 143) Margaret, in turn, confided in him and, in distress, reached out her hands to meet his (ME: 160), with love in her eyes (ME: 214). A little later, Mr. Pathurst confessed his feelings to Margaret, who, simultaneously, joined in their mutual confession of love “in the shelter of the weather-cloth” and “in the bright-lighted chart-room after the watches had been changed at eight bells” (ME: 180). In the following stage of their love affair, Mr. Pathurst and Margaret discussed their feelings (ME:182), which were so overwhelming that Mr. Pathurst even shouted of joy to some lonely albatrosses in the sky (ME: 181).

Soon, however, their love was put to the test by the mutineers, who arranged a severe attack using sulphuric acid on *the Elsinore*. Mr. Pathurst, who suffered from breathing difficulties during the attack, finally succeeded in finding Margaret on the cabin floor and, all of a sudden, really understood that he loved her very much (ME: 256). After their recovery, they decided that their wedding would take place in Valparaiso and their honeymoon on *the Elsinore* on their way back to Seattle, their home. All arrangements had to be performed according to Margaret's desire, because, after all, she was both Captain West's daughter and a self-willed, new-womanish person. (ME: 269 – 270)

As Captain West's daughter, Margaret West belonged to the upper social class. She was a cultivated, well-dressed, new-womanish person, whose hobbies, such as playing the piano and doing the embroidery, were characteristic of women's hobbies in her social class. By means of her sea-training, she was able to master the use of every technical device on *the Elsinore*. Her relationship to love seemed to be very romantic. Her father and his skills as a captain won her admiration and respect, as well as her sea-faring ancestors in the past, whereas the members of the crew were only worthy of her indifferent shrugging of shoulders.

### **6.3 Saxon Roberts as the heroine of *The Valley of the Moon***

#### **6.3.1 Saxon's personality in detail**

As a representative of working-class heroines in Jack London's novels, Saxon Roberts was involved in the chaos her social class went through during the labor strikes in the first decades

of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Her personality vividly expressed different aspects of the human mind and character in her marriage, life, and as a new-womanish, strong-willed person. Saxon was described to possess a variety of natural sentiments, which were characteristic of a modern new-womanish type of women. Like any New Woman, Saxon also expressed her feelings open-heartedly. Accordingly, she was terrified by strange, nightly noises she heard when sleeping out of doors in the country (VM: 257), whereas some pearls of abalone fascinated her a lot at a shop's window (VM: 300). In fact, she behaved in the same way as all other female laundry workers, who fled out from the laundry at the sight of a harmless bat (VM: 92 – 93).

The heroine of *The Valley of the Moon* was allowed to show some weaknesses from time to time but, in general, most of her characteristics belonged to the most positive and the strongest ones. For example, she showed notable bravery when defending herself against Charley Long, who threatened her on the beach (VM: 208 – 209). No doubt, Saxon was highly self-willed, even obstinate, in the realization of her desires. So she told her husband that he should not fight with scabs and that she could not stand living in Oakland anymore (VM: 222 – 223). It seems that Saxon represented almost all the characteristics one may imagine to find in a strong, healthy and natural human being. All in all, she was witty, clever, cheerful, jealous, and talented in many respects. In fact, she could draw conclusions from her life experiences in order to find answers for the injustices of her life and the justification for her leaving Oakland for good (VM: 204 – 205).

In everyday situations, Saxon's feelings varied from a strong dislike of Billy's admirers (VM: 20) to her love of horses and the beautiful clothes she habitually ironed at work (VM: 66). As regards her nerves, she could control them well even in the most dangerous situations. So she could easily push away big rock rats by means of some driftwood stick, when she was wandering half unconscious at the seaside during her husband's prison term (VM: 210). It is typical of Saxon's personality that she was very eager to learn about new matters, such as the fertilizing of the soil (VM: 272), the interior of a middle-class home (VM: 272 – 273), and the industrious Dalmatians as farmers (VM: 294). She also acted as an adviser and told her husband to go and ask a lineman questions about peculiar trees, farming land for sale, and the price of land around there (VM: 244 – 247).

The heroine of *The Valley of the Moon* was a very talented, young woman, who aroused admiration whenever she sang or played the ukulélé. Her beautiful, soprano voice made Billy



compare it with that of angels. (VM: 33, 104) In Carmel, the crowd of famous poets, writers and artists admired her playing and singing Hawaiian melodies. Together they also sang Saxon's own verses and old songs from her childhood, which she taught them, enjoying it all. (VM: 314 – 315, 318) Riding and sewing were also included in Saxon's various skills that she instinctively mastered almost with a lightning speed. To her, horses were a target of her love, due to her memories of her father's war-horse. (VM: 60) Once she even admitted that she loved horses more than dancing (VM: 53). In fact, she had always been drawing horses in her childhood and dreaming of riding a horse of her own (VM: 60 – 61). Moreover, she really knew how to do needlework and embroidery and she was in the habit of making her old clothes more stylish by means of slight alterations (VM: 44, 58). She even strengthened the seams of her clothes in order to give them a ready-made impression (VM: 58). Later on, she sold her fine needlework to a shop, aided by Mercedes, a neighbor (VM: 128). She also completed almost all the baby clothes for her unborn baby by herself (VM: 129), thus expressing her love for the unborn child.

Saxon Roberts gave the impression of a highly sensitive and sentimental woman who mostly shed her tears alone. In the narrative of the novel, the reader finds out that both positive and negative feelings brought tears into her eyes. For example, when Tom, her half-brother, wished her luck after her marriage announcement, she had to swallow tears (VM: 90). The same thing happened when Billy consoled her after her miscarriage (VM: 156), whereas the most tragic events Saxon experienced during the labor strikes caused her insomnia, severe headaches, and vacillation in her consciousness instead of flowing tears (VM: 197, 208). Saxon's feelings of sorrow and despair changed to brighter sensations toward the end of the novel, where one finds her rejoicing at the first marvelous sight of Carmel Bay (VM: 296 – 297).

In Saxon's case, her clothing was rarely represented in the novel under discussion here. The pretty clothes she wore when going to see Billy, in a way revealed her desire to make Billy fall in love with her. In her "tight, black skirt", wearing "gloves of imitation suède" and shoes "with high Cuban heels", she could possibly succeed in becoming a housewife instead of a laundry worker some day (VM: 9). In order to be sure of the positive effect, she even put on "the thinnest and flimsiest of fifty-cent black silk stockings" (VM: 9).

On the whole, Saxon considered herself a woman who was neither beautiful nor unpleasant (VM: 232). Especially her mouth and smile appealed to herself, as she knew how to laugh

“with eyes and mouth together” (VM: 232). Billy thought that there was something of a French woman in her and that her cool skin could be compared with velvet and silk. Even her voice penetrated Billy’s body and soul “like a wind of coolness” (VM: 233). In general, Saxon seemed to be content with her own figure, her slender ankles, her calves, and all the other parts of her body (VM: 233). She carefully kept in mind Billy’s favorable statement concerning her lips (VM: 233) and his referring to her as “his Tonic Kid” and “the greatest little bit of a woman that had ever come down the pike” (VM: 233).

### **6.3.2 Saxon’s relationship to religion**

God and religion were subjects that Saxon and her friend Mary open-heartedly discussed at the beginning of the novel. It was difficult for them to describe God’s appearance. According to Saxon, her half-brother regarded God as someone who “looks like Abraham Lincoln”, and Sarah, her sister-in-law, was of the opinion that “he has whiskers” (VM: 11). In Saxon’s opinion, God resembled “that little Mexican that sells wire puzzles”, whereas Mary was sure God did not look like any human being, since he was a spirit and his looks remained unknown to people (VM: 11). Even if Saxon considered herself a religious person, her religious opinions seemed more or less unorganized and without any precise, visual form (VM: 38). Instead of going to a normal church, Saxon’s own church was situated beside her mother’s old chest of drawers, where she gazed at her mother’s picture seeking consolation and support (VM: 38).

Saxon also discussed God’s achievements with Billy, and they thought that God could never create disorder in society. To Billy’s mind, God ought to do something to prevent the social injustices according to his divine rights (VM: 69). Mercedes, in turn, evaded the question of her believing in God. Instead, she advised Saxon not to be afraid of God or his punishment. (VM: 133) God’s role as the creator of the world with its clever and stupid people was also explained by Mercedes, who finally thought that the violent labor strikes did not arouse God’s interest at all (VM: 144). Having encountered severe difficulties during the labor revolution, Saxon began to lose her faith in God, since the perfect, natural world had been created by him and the evil, disordered world was, of course, part of people’s own achievements (VM: 204). When searching for some reasons for her own misfortune, Saxon found none, not even any sins (VM: 204).

According to her reasoning, Saxon even questioned God's existence and felt lost in the world with no way out of her misery. She concluded that God's absence in the world meant people's lack of salvation. (VM: 205) Having discussed the socialist ideology with Tom, her half-brother, Saxon clearly disapproved of Tom's claim that God was a Socialist, testifying that God had died "two thousand years ago" (VM: 207). The fact that religion meant a lot to Saxon, was, for instance, implied by her choice of a religious melody she sang in the church of the Carmel Mission. Her beautiful song resulted in Billy's confession that he only thought of religion when thinking of her (VM: 301).

As a result of the reversal in her conception of the universe and religious ideas, Saxon fell ill. Her symptoms varied from insomnia and "the pressure of the iron band on her head" to feelings of unreality and unconsciousness (VM: 206 – 208). Her recovery was initiated by a minor incident, her encounter with "a grinning small boy, in a small, bright-painted and half-decked skiff", who asked her to go sailing with him and who told her about his desire to leave Oakland for far-away countries. Apparently religion had nothing to do with Saxon's recovery from her mental disorder. (VM: 210)

### **6.3.3 Saxon's racial concepts, her ancestors and members of her family**

Saxon's family consisted of her half-brothers, Tom and George, from her mother's first marriage. Tom's wife, Sarah, also belonged to Saxon's family. At first, Saxon's parents had been separated due to the false death news concerning her father, who had been sent to the front. Accordingly, Saxon's mother had married someone else and stayed married until her husband died. Then Saxon's parents had got married and Saxon was born as their only child. (VM: 53 – 54) After Saxon's mother's death, Cady, the saloon-keeper, took care of Saxon for a while. Soon, however, Cady died, too, and Saxon was taken to an orphan asylum. Tom, her half-brother, saved her from there, and Saxon moved to Tom's and Sarah's home to stay with them as their lodger. (VM: 75) Although Saxon and Sarah did not get along at all, Saxon was ready to take care of her sister-in-law during her mental breakdowns (VM: 6, 57, 90, 194 – 195).

Everything that Saxon knew about her racial heritage had been told her by her mother and her mother's scrap-book, hidden in her mother's old chest of drawers. The tales about their Saxon race, which her mother had told about, made her admit that their race was good, industrious and tough. (VM: 83, 85) There were also some old pioneer poems published in newspapers in

the scrap-book she kept in the chest of drawers. In some ancient pictures representing Viking-like warriors, she spotted an invader looking just like Billy. (VM: 83) Thus the racial past of Saxon's family was included in her everyday life and the old memories came to her rescue and support when needed. Even if she knew her mother superficially as a myth she had created by herself, there was concrete evidence about her past in the old pioneer poems she had written. (VM: 38) To Saxon, the poems contained hidden messages she could not understand at all, due to mostly meaningless words unknown to her understanding. So she remained puzzled, looking for the solution to her problems. (VM: 38 – 39)

It seemed very important to Saxon that both she and Billy, her future husband, belonged to the "old American stock" (VM: 18 – 19). Saxon even rejoiced in the thought that their parents had crossed the American continent at the same time and that their fathers, both of them, had fought in the Civil War (VM: 19). In addition, being old Americans made it easier for them to get to know people on their way to their new life in the country or their valley of the moon, because they were familiar with Saxon's mother's or Dayelle Wiley Brown's poems published in *The Story of the Files*, a collection of pioneer poems. (VM: 277 – 278, 307)

Saxon cherished her mother's memory taking good care of the old items that had belonged to her, thus trying to trace "her mother's hidden soul" (VM: 39). In her memories, Saxon admired her mother a lot, because people had known her as a trustworthy adviser (VM: 40). In spite of imagining her mother's traversing of the plains, Saxon, in a way, saw her helping the wounded in the fight of Little Meadow (VM: 41). Saxon also loved her mother's wedding ring, which she had been wearing "like a locket" after her stay in the orphan asylum. It was also her desire to start wearing it as her own wedding ring after her own marriage ceremony. (VM: 88) In fact, Saxon remembered some visions of her mother as an older person from her childhood. Those visions of her mother, in which she was "broken with insomnia and brave with sorrow" and "a pale, frail creature", she used to imagine before going to sleep. (VM: 41)

At the same time, Carlton Brown, Saxon's father, was very dear to her, too. He had worked as a captain in the war, riding his war-horse (VM: 53). His father's sword eventually became her most precious wedding present (VM: 90 -91) and she was so happy to receive it that she immediately kissed it (VM: 91). Thus Saxon highly respected the memories she had about her deceased parents. She desperately searched for support and advice for her everyday life problems, which seemed really incomprehensible and difficult during the labor strikes.

Actually, her old memories only gave her some kind of consolation in her problematic situation.

Due to their family's racial heritage as Saxons, her mother had wanted to give her Saxon as her first name. In addition, her mother, who had been a cultivated person at that time, had told her everything about the Saxons. Saxon had learnt that the members of their race had been "wild, like Indians, only they were white" and that they had been "awful fighters" (VM: 17). The race had had their origin in England and its members could be called real Americans after their settling down in America (VM: 17). After meeting a fishing boy and talking about distant countries with him, Saxon realized that she and Billy might also easily leave the city for the countryside and a new life, because they were of "a good stock", too (VM: 210 – 213). Earlier their land-hungry people had considered California a favorable country for settling down, and, as an offspring of the Anglo-Saxon race, she also found land-hunger in herself (VM: 239).

#### **6.3.4 Work, labor strikes and politics in Saxon's life**

Saxon's working period had lasted from the end of her going to school to her marriage (VM: 205). As a worker, she had been familiar with factory work and working in mills. In everyone's opinion, she had been a good worker no matter whether her working place had been a jute mill, a paper-box factory or a cannery. (VM: 78, 205) At the laundry, her last working day was filled with envious teasing from the part of the other workers because of her marriage and her consequent freedom from "the suffocating slavery of the ironing board" (VM: 92). After a bat had startled the workers, Saxon was courageous enough to return to her work to finish the ironing of the last items she had been ordered to iron before leaving the laundry for good (VM: 91 – 92).

After getting married, it was evident that Saxon would do all household work, such as washing the dishes, clothes and sheets by herself (VM: 102, 197). For working assignments outside the home, she had to have Billy's consent. Such a case was, of course, her working in the fruit harvest. (VM: 352) According to Mrs. Mortimer, their acquaintance and a farmer, Saxon ought to start taking workers to help her in their new home and start planning the farming business herself (VM: 401).

Because of her working-class background, Saxon got to know all the gloomy aspects of a working-class family, too. The women usually listened to men, who talked about the strikes.

(VM: 136 – 137) At first, Saxon became bewildered when she heard people talk about strikes and politics but, with time, she understood what Mercedes, their strange neighbor, had told about the stupid workers and the clever masters (VM: 137, 169). After witnessing a most violent fight between scabs and strikers in front of their house, Saxon experienced the most tragic event of her life when she lost her unborn baby (VM: 154). The strikes also changed Billy into a different man from the one Saxon had married (VM: 181). After he was sentenced to prison, due to the knocking down of their lodger, Saxon fell mentally ill herself (VM: 190 – 192, 206).

Consequently, the horrible events caused by the strikes menaced Saxon's and Billy's happiness in their marriage and their life in general (VM: 167). In vain, Saxon tried to understand what was happening at working places all over Oakland. Again Mercedes explained her that "democracy is a lie," and that the strikes were "the dream of the stupid peoples", "an enchantment to keep the working brutes content, just as religion used to keep them content" (VM: 145 – 146). Still, Saxon did not believe in her ideas (VM: 146) and Billy's strange thoughts about the labor fights made her see herself as perpetually entangled in the tumult of the conflict she could not understand at all (VM: 157 – 160).

According to Saxon, it was wrong that the descendants of those who had crossed the Plains and had conquered the lands in the West could not earn their living there anymore (VM: 164). In order to find some traces of the truth, Saxon was in the habit of glancing through the articles of *the Tribune*, whose editorials declared that the labor unions were to blame for the conflicts in the society (VM: 165). Saxon, who was by no means politically oriented, considered her life very puzzling. Finally, she was easily led to believe in the stupidity of the workers and the cleverness of the masters Mercedes had told her about. In Saxon's opinion, it seemed to be the finest explanation to the problems in the society and in her life, too. (VM: 145, 159)

### **6.3.5 Saxon's marriage**

Saxon had met her future husband, Billy Roberts, at Weasel Park, where young people went to spend their leisure time during week-ends (VM: 8). Mary, Saxon's friend from the laundry, formally introduced Saxon to Billy, in whose opinion Saxon was "a dream of a dancer" (VM: 12, 14). Saxon, in turn, wondered if Billy could be her future husband. To her, Billy looked like "a great big man-boy" (VM: 13- 14). From the beginning of their relationship, Billy and

Saxon felt like relatives or comrades because of their common pioneer past. Saxon also noticed that Billy did not “paw a girl as Bert and lots of other fellows did” (VM: 15, 18).

However, Saxon had to fight for Billy’s attention, because girls literally chased him. At last, she let him reserve two more dances, because Billy was really interested in her. It was no wonder, since Saxon had taken great pains in sewing a new shirtwaist for herself and had even bought herself a new pair of silk stockings. (VM: 43 – 44) Billy’s proposal occurred in a romantic setting in the countryside, but its “simplicity and directness” almost hurt her feelings (VM: 77). She gave her consent to his proposal kissing his hand and telling how much she loved his hands (VM: 78). Their wedding took place a month later before a justice of the peace. As a working-class woman, Saxon had left the laundry, her working place, the day before their wedding. (VM: 91)

To Saxon, Billy seemed “a prize among men” (VM: 118). Although their marriage had a happy start, Saxon knew about other women’s marital problems and firmly decided to maintain their marital happiness forever (VM: 108). Following her neighbor’s advice, she decorated her underwear with pretty laces and scented her bathing water in order to keep herself attractive (VM: 112 – 113). Mercedes Higgins also taught her to avoid commonplaces in order to stay happily married (VM: 114). As the last means of capturing a husband’s love, she showed Saxon how to play the ukulélé of Hawaiian origin (VM: 115 – 116).

Although Saxon strictly followed women’s beauty tips published in women’s magazines and newspapers, she could not save her marriage from the great threat caused by the disturbed society and the violent labor strikes (VM: 118, 167). As a consequence of striking, she actually lost her unborn baby, Billy was sentenced to prison, and she was left all alone with her loss. (VM: 154, 190 – 191) It was only her desire to resemble her self-willed mother that forced her to go on with her marriage (VM: 192). Suffering from symptoms of mental illness for a while, she even went to see a doctor in order to get herself sterilized, because her husband had become “another man”, not the same man she had fallen in love with. (VM: 180, 198)

Saxon’s miraculous recovery from her unbalanced state of mind happened after she met Jack, a boy in a skiff. After talking to the boy, she realized that the only solution to her world in chaos was to leave Oakland and all the fighting strikers for good. (VM: 210, 217 – 218) All the way through the country, Saxon’s desire to learn about new things, her stubborn decision-

making and guidance succeeded in bringing their life and love to a new fertile start (VM: 270, 278, 294, 296, 338 – 340). Self-willed like her mother, she searched, with Billy, for their ideal domain all over the country (VM: 352). The Madrono Ranch finally had everything they wanted: oranges, great oak trees, plenty of water, no fogs, no mosquitoes, and a railway in its vicinity (VM: 386 – 390, 396 – 397). Living in the countryside united the couple in their farming and business tasks. In the end, Saxon's announcement of her pregnancy completed their Sonoma Valley idyll (VM: 398 – 403, 409 – 410, 414 – 416, 424 – 425).

Saxon's life, which started from the orphan asylum and went on as a worker in mills and factories, offers the reader a startling vision of a strong-minded and independent woman searching for support from ancient memories, old, beloved items, newspaper articles and incoherent phrases of men's discussion, all of which she succeeded in forming into a new life and a new happiness far away from evil cities in the valley of the moon. For sure, she could independently change the direction of her and Billy's life, since she represented the independent, new-womanish ideal in her deeds and thoughts. She even showed enough determination to realize her desires in spite of the tumultuous society around them and her own vulnerable state of mind. Although she had to abandon her faith in God, she still found one way out of the misery in her life. The couple's return to the country fully made up their loss in the end.



## **7 FRONA WELSE, MARGARET WEST AND SAXON ROBERTS IN COMPARISON**

In this section of my thesis, I will compare the heroines of the novels under discussion here dealing with the major themes of the analysis in Chapter 6. By means of this detailed comparison, my aim is to find out the main characters' similarities and differences in their personalities, opinions, attitudes and other new-womanish characteristics. In addition, I will try to conclude if the similarities or differences in Frona's, Margaret's and Saxon's characters might be related to their social class.

### **7.1 Work in Frona's, Margaret's and Saxon's lives**

In 1900, about 5 million women or about 20 percent of all women worked outside the home and 20 percent of them worked in industrial jobs, mainly in the textile sector but also in physically more demanding jobs together with male workers. In general, women were paid even so low wages as to make their surviving difficult. (Brinkley et al. 1991: 528 – 529) For working-class women, it was utterly necessary to work in order to support their families. Especially young women and spinsters used to work in factories and in the clerical or sales sector. Working women were mainly young maidens, who considered their jobs in a way “seasonal” leading to a housewife's position sooner or later. (Banner 1984: 61, 72 – 73)

Jack London used to write about topics and characters that he thoroughly knew due to his own life experiences and his extensive reading and studying of issues around him. For example, he depicted Saxon working in a laundry, since he knew laundry work extremely well having worked in the laundry of the Belmont Military Academy doing the same kind of ironing as Saxon in *The Valley of the Moon* did (Kershaw 1997: 55).

Middle-class women generally did not work outside the home in the industrialized society and their roles were housekeeping and raising children. Their husbands were considered the family's breadwinners, whereas the wives were supposed to cherish the “cult of domesticity” enjoying their wealth and freedom in the home. (Brinkley et al. 1991: 323) Frona Welse and Margaret West belonged to this wealthy social class, whereas the only working-class heroine in the novel under investigation was Saxon Roberts who worked in a laundry at the time of her marriage. In general, her life had gone on in the same way as so many other working-class women's lives: after leaving school, she had started working in factories and mills and finished working only the day before her wedding. (Chapter 6.3.4) As a rule, the future bride was teased a lot during her last working day, because, due to her marriage, she could free

herself from the inhuman working conditions, low pay and a monotonous life in a working place without any vision of a better tomorrow.

In Saxon's co-workers' opinion, she had been a very good worker in all factories and mills she had worked in during her life. Industrious, fast and skilled were among the adjectives used for her working and she had liked ironing and starching most beautiful clothes. After her wedding, she had to have her husband's permission to working outside the home. Billy gave her his consent for fruit harvesting but did not approve of her selling embroidery in order to get more money for the housekeeping during the labor strikes and his unemployment. (Chapters 6.3.1 and 6.3.4) In a marriage, women used to do all household work, such as washing the dishes and clothes and cleaning up the rooms. Saxon even denied her husband's participation in any household work. In fact, she had decided to keep her marriage happy and offered Billy slippers and a newspaper instead of an apron and dirty plates. (Chapter 6.3.4)

Compared with Saxon, Margaret and Frona belonged to the upper class, as Margaret's father was Captain West, a member of mighty seafarers' family, and Frona's father belonged to the renowned Welshes. Accordingly, both Frona and Margaret stayed outside the public sphere, although they had studied and were considered cultivated women. Frona had studied abroad for three years and Margaret had graduated from Bryn Mawr earlier. (Chapters 6.1.1 and 6.2.2) Frona's duties were attached to saving people in the wilderness, whereas Margaret was satisfied with serving tea, coffee or dinner to her father and Mr. Pathurst, the male passenger. In addition to these services, Margaret was ready to cure sick animals and to save Mr. Pathurst from bedbugs. Both young women gave useful advice to other people and used to do sewing and embroidery in their leisure, whereas normal work outside the home was none of their business. (Chapters 6.1.1, 6.1.3 and 6.2.2)

## **7.2 Politics and labor unions in Frona's, Margaret's and Saxon's lives**

Saxon Roberts was the only heroine investigated in this thesis who discussed politics to some extent. Tom, her half-brother, was sure that God was a Socialist, and Saxon firmly disapproved of his claim (Chapter 6.3.2). When Saxon discussed social issues with Mercedes, her neighbor, Mercedes pointed out that democracy kept poor workers satisfied at work. However, Saxon disapproved of her ideas. (Chapter 6.3.4) Both Margaret and Frona naturally lived detached from social and political issues due to their upper-class standing or, at least, they neither talked about political matters nor expressed their own political views.

The same pattern is repeated once more in the novels in question when the reader thinks about the heroines' participation in labor unions and strikes. Saxon as a working-class heroine had to live in the tumult of violent fights during the labor strikes losing her unborn baby as a result of the events and falling seriously mentally ill because of Billy's jail sentence and the changes in his character (Chapter 6.3.4), whereas Margaret and Frona experienced nothing of the sort. Saxon's suffering seemed overwhelming, since she did not participate in striking or demonstrations herself. Because she was not working as a married woman, she only heard about the unions from her husband's and Bert's, a friend's, discussions and reading about the strikes from newspaper articles. (VM: 136 – 137, 165) Even though Saxon had been single and a worker in a factory, she would not have been a union member, because the AFL or the American Federation of Labor and other large unions discarded female workers as seasonal and unstable members due to their short working terms before they got married (Brinkley et al. 1991: 536).

Still, there were some exceptions to the general rule of not accepting female workers as union members, such as the IWW or the Industrial Workers of the World and the WTUL or the Women's Trade Union League, the former of which campaigned for textile workers' rights (Banner 1984: 76), but, as we know, Saxon was married and experienced all horrible acts of labor revolution through his husband's life (see Chapters 6.3.4 and 6.3.5).

### **7.3 Religion in the heroines' lives**

As to religion and religious ideas in Frona's, Margaret's and Saxons lives, Saxon had a lot of them and the other heroines none. It is amazing to notice that both Frona and Margaret even evaded discussing serious or religious themes. When Mr. Pathurst asked Margaret if she believed in God, she answered that her father did and that she used to when she "was a little girl" (ME: 82), whereas Saxon readily discussed God, faith and religion with many people near to herself. She wondered about God's appearance with Mary, her friend, who thought that God, as a spirit, was not visible at all. With Billy, Saxon talked about God's achievements in the world and wondered why he had not ended the increasing disorder in the society. She also exchanged opinions about God's political ideology with Tom, her half-brother. (Chapter 6.3.2)

In the course of the narrative, Saxon's faith in God proved to be weak, as she noticed that God had not created the whole world but only the natural, good parts of it. She also realized that

her life had become miserable, even though she had behaved well and had not committed any sins in her life. (VM: 204) Moreover, Saxon had gone to church in her own imaginary way for a long time. It was beside her mother's chest of drawers that she found comfort, support and consolation looking at her mother's picture and caressing her ancient items with religious love. In the end of the novel, Saxon's religion was transformed to her naturally healthy way of life in the countryside. (Chapters 6.3.2 and 6.3.5)

#### **7.4 Family in Frona's, Margaret's and Saxon's lives**

When studying the novels in question in detail, some interesting observations can be made. Firstly, Jack London depicted smaller or reduced families. Both Frona's and Margaret's mother had died. Saxon, in turn, had lost both of her parents and stayed with her half-brother and his wife while working outside the home. It may be that the small number of key characters was motivated by leaving more space for the main characters' description in the novel. (Chapters 6.1.1, 6.2.3 and 6.3.3) Secondly, the reader of these novels quickly notices the heroines' great admiration of their ancestors and race. As Frona's and Margaret's fathers were still alive, these heroines could praise their fathers' achievements to the skies. It was no surprise, since Frona's father took care of all sectors of the society in the Klondike region and still further in the north, and Margaret's father reigned at sea as a Samurai, the knower and the naval king. (Chapters 6.1.1 and 6.2.3)

Saxon, in contrast, who was a motherless and fatherless young woman, greatly appreciated her living half-brothers, Tom and George, with whom she was on good terms, whereas Tom's wife, Sarah, usually showed her dislike of Saxon. It was a pity that George lived far-away and his contacts with Saxon remained slight, not taking into account the fact that he sent her father's sword to her as one of her most cherished wedding presents. (Chapter 6.3.3) Still, most of all, Saxon worshipped her deceased parents' memory and some ancient items she kept hidden in her mother's chest of drawers (Chapter 6.3.3).

Frona's and Saxon's grandparents had been among the settlers who migrated westward in the decades following the Civil War. The main reasons for migrating to the Far West had obviously been the lack of arable land in the eastern parts of America and the alluring mining possibilities in silver and gold mines or even some chances of getting rich in cattle ranching business in the west. Some settlers were aided by new transcontinental railroad lines, but masses of people wandered westward in wagons, on horseback or on foot. As a matter of fact,

Frona's father and Saxon's mother had belonged to the latter crowd of people early in their childhood. (Brinkley 1991: 494 – 499, 506; Chapters 6.1.1 and 6.3.3)

In Margaret's opinion, her father, Captain West resembled "an artist" in his relation to the sea and his blood equaled the sea (ME:120 – 121, 127). All the time, Margaret concentrated in her father's well-being and admiration (Chapter 6.2.3). Jacob Welse's and his daughter's close relationship was depicted in several scenes in the novel, for instance in a scene Jacob Welse told her about his fear of seeing her changed into a non-Welse woman after her studies abroad. Then Frona started praising her father and pointed out that her phenomenal father would obviously die at war like all the Welses. (Chapter 6.1.1; DS: 121 – 123) In general, Frona expected her father to perform miracles due to his mighty achievements in the northern areas. She surpassed her father's skills only once when saving his life. (Chapter 6.1.1)

Saxon Roberts, in turn, restricted herself to admiring her deceased parents and their ancient items, such as her father's war sword, her mother's wedding-ring and pioneer verse. In her mother's poems, she tried to find out the clue to her problems but without success as the enigmatic verses only sounded queer to her. Beside her mother's old chest-of-drawers, she had founded her own chapel and altar, where she received some consolation and support. (Chapter 6.3.3)

### **7.5 The heroines' ancestors and racial heritage**

Worshipping their ancestors and racial heritage was typical of all the heroines under investigation, in addition to their admiration of their parents. Frona's and Saxon's ancestors had been born to the Anglo-Saxon or the Saxon race, whereas Margaret's seafaring ancestors had been Americans or Anglo-Saxons, even if no exact mentioning of the latter can be found in the novel. (Chapters 6.1.1, 6.2.3 and 6.3.3) Andrew J. Furer (1996: 158 – 159) states that Jack London's Anglo-Saxon themes include the notion of white supremacy and Furer explains his interest in that theory on the basis of his mother's influence in his childhood (Chapter 5.2). Also Labor (1983: 214) refers to London's unstable attitude to racism in his novels with magnificent examples of both racist and anti-racist themes in them.

Margaret West seems to have restricted herself to a short, admiring explanation of her father's male ancestors and their seafaring, magnificent past. In fact, they had owned merchant ships and been captains of "the fastest clippers" and sailed, for instance, round Cape Horn and to the Northwest Coast. (ME: 120 – 121) In Margaret's opinion, they had been great sea folk

but, in general, racial issues did not seem to interest her at all or they proved insignificant as a whole (Chapter 6.2.3).

In general, Saxon only used to worship her father's and mother's memories, not those of all previous generations in their racial past. She even had real evidence of their traversal through the American continent, because her mother had told her a lot about their way to California and their fights with Indians. As a reminder of their own race, Saxon's mother had wanted to give her Saxon as her first name and told her about the Saxons' appearances. (Chapter 6.3.3) Belonging to real Americans was a decisive factor at the beginning of Saxon's and Billy's relationship. It gave them real unity and a firm foundation for their future marriage. Saxon's mother's verse published in a collection of pioneer poems and well-known among cultured people all over the Californian lands, made it much easier for the Roberts to get to their destiny or their valley of the moon. (Chapter 6.3.3) In Saxon's case, it seems that she succeeded well in transforming the memories of her racial past to valuable social contacts by means of which to start building their future life in the country.

Frona Welse was similar to Saxon Roberts in her habit of praising the Anglo-Saxon race in addition to her worshipping of Jacob Welse, her father. Their similarities also comprised the choice of their future husbands on the basis of their race, which meant that they preferred male companions with the same racial background as they had themselves. So, first of all, Frona chose Vance because of his racial heritage, whereas Vincent finally lost the game of winning her love due to his cowardice and lies no Welse could ever endure. (Chapters 6.3.3, 6.1.1 and 6.1.2) Frona most eloquently praised the Anglo-Saxons in general, not only her father or his ancestors, who had been great warriors, especially Jacob's father. In the narrative of the novel, the reader finds her glorifying their race's supremacy among other races. (Chapter 6.1.1; DS: 54 – 56, 100) With Vance Corliss, she discussed the reasons for the racial supremacy. As the Anglo-Saxons governed half of the countries and all seas of the globe, they were, no doubt, supreme rulers in the world according to her statement. (DS: 100)

In all, these heroines seemed to understand the meaning of their racial supremacy, even if they took it into an account with different emphasis which does not seem to depend on their social class. Actually, the working-class heroine, Saxon, worshipped her Anglo-Saxon heritage as nobly as Frona, who belonged to the wealthy Welses proud of their Anglo-Saxon roots. The fact that Saxon had developed the cherishing of her parents' memory to the cult of ancient verse and her parents' old items, is only found in her description. Maybe her sticking to her

memories resulted from her life as an orphan and the lack of adult relatives as her advisers in her childhood and youth. Margaret, in turn, concentrated on the admiration of her father telling about his father's ancestors only once when referring to her father's splendid skills out at sea. If it was due to her upper-class status, no one may know for sure. However, her cool, sometimes even serene behavior toward the members of the crew possibly reflected her feelings of the racial supremacy she had obviously inherited from her father, Captain West.

### **7.6 Frona's, Margaret's and Saxon's love stories**

As Frona, Margaret and Saxon were young women, their love affairs and plans of getting married and a marriage were also included in the partly romantic themes of the novels under investigation. Working outside the home did not prevent them from getting married, since wealthy women did not generally work in the public sphere at all and working-class women finished their work before their wedding. (Brinkley et al. 1991: 323; Chapter 6.3.4) The heroines' parents did not form any hindrance to the young women's falling in love either, because Saxon's parents and both Frona's and Margaret's mothers had died earlier. Jacob Welse could not prevent Frona from seeing St.Vincent, because the Welses could never endure dictation. Margaret's father, in turn, had had a heart attack near Cape Horn and his daughter's love affair began somewhat later in the novel. (Chapters 6.1.2, 6.2.3 and 6.3.3)

Thus, almost completely free to choose their companions and future husbands, both Saxon and Frona made their choices according to their idealized racial concepts, whereas Margaret seemed to have fallen in love with the only possible male candidate or the only male passenger on *the Elsinore*. Apparently, the same racial background gave Saxon and Billy feelings of nearness, whereas Frona thoroughly inspected her male companions in terms of their well-shaped bodies and souls, since she preferred strong, Anglo-Saxon intellectuals to all other men. (Chapters 6.1.2, 6.2.1, 6.2.4 and 6.3.5) Margaret West's love story proved a most romantic one from the beginning to the happy end. It comprised some elements which are generally known to be present in romantic fantasies, such as the denial of love at the beginning, the possibility of coincidence in the course of the love story, the questioning of the existence of love and the confessions of love in the end. (Chapter 6.2.4)

Frona's love affairs were considerably more complicated than those of the other heroines, because two suitors, Vance Corliss and Gregory St.Vincent, were competing for her love. Frona's task of choosing between them proved very hard because of her strict criteria and her

friendship with both of them. Both Vance and St.Vincent fitted her idealized model of a strong, intellectual and Anglo-Saxon man. (Chapter 6.1.2) Because she was a young woman, she seemed to have no real ideas of love regarding it as a kind of “immolation” or “a great white flash, like a revelation” (DS: 125, 133; Chapter 6.1.1, 6.1.2). Everyone close to Frona wanted her to choose a suitable man as her future husband and tried to warn her about St.Vincent. Still, she “felt herself drawn against him closely” (DS: 130), when she and St.Vincent met each other out of doors and were watching the stars together (Chapter 6.1.2).

Frona’s romantic moments with St.Vincent only meant holding his hand, pressing his arm and leaning against his shoulder, whereas she understood that Vance was like a big brother to her. Their relationship was formed from friendship to love only after her feelings had changed toward St.Vincent. (Chapter 6.1.2) However, it must be admitted that, at the time of the publication of *A Daughter of the Snows*, young women’s behavior was not extremely liberated in their love affairs. So it was natural that Frona kept her feelings hidden for the most part, for instance in the court, where her face totally lacked expression. (DS: 225) In fact, she could tease her father and Vance and even make fun of them, whereas she saved her kisses for some special occasions (Chapter 6.1.2).

In a way, Saxon and Billy met by chance, because they liked to go dancing to Weasel Park on Sundays. Compared with Saxon, Frona also met her male companion, Vance Corliss, by chance on the trail, when she was searching for shelter in a cabin Vance happened to live in. (Chapters 6.3.5, 6.1.3) At first, Saxon had to fight for Billy’s admiration, because he was so popular among young women. Saxon’s attitude toward Billy seemed practical, since she kept on asking herself if he could be her future husband. (Chapter 6.3.5) Billy’s proposal was not romantic either, whereas Mr. Pathurst’s proposal to Margaret happened in a romantic atmosphere on *the Elsinore*. It is worth noticing that Saxon’s wedding took place in the first quarter of the novel. Both Frona and Margaret, in turn, made their decisions about their future husbands on the last few lines of the novels under discussion. (Chapters 6.3.5, 6.2.4, 6.1.2) If this difference depended on the heroines’ social class, one cannot know for sure. However, it is true that young working-class women actively looked for their future husbands in order to escape most horrible working conditions in their industrial working places like those Saxon had worked in. (VM: 92)

Saxon had presumably decided to stay happily married and followed all instructions she could find in women’s magazines and newspapers in order to ensure her happy marriage. For



example, she wore laced underwear and started scenting her bathing water for that purpose. (VM: 108, 114 - 119) Soon the violent labor strikes came out of the blue, destroyed her marriage, killed her unborn baby, changed her husband into an alien person and a prisoner and made her fall seriously mentally ill. It was only their leaving Oakland for good and finding their valley of the moon in the countryside that provided them with happiness in a natural setting. (Chapter 6.3.5)

As a working-class heroine, Saxon had to experience several horrible events in her life and in her marriage with Billy. Compared with Frona and Margaret, she accomplished much more in her novel than the other heroines in theirs. Maybe it was due to her working-class background and the fact that she had to be among doers to survive, whereas Frona and Margaret had a more secure financial situation. Saxon had to fight hard for her happiness, whereas Frona made her choice between two male companions and Margaret could accept the sole male fiancé available on *the Elsinore*. One could easily draw such a conclusion that working-class women apparently lived more intensively than their upper-class counterparts or that they just had to.

### **7.7 Frona's, Margaret's and Saxon's new-womanish characteristics**

Women's economic independence gained by means of working outside the home was considered a major reason for their increased feelings of independence and freedom from their domestic sphere. As a consequence of this independence, women's manners and even morals went through considerable liberation in the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the 1920's. (Chafe 1991: 64) By means of the modern mass media, a new type of woman was created for all young women to try to imitate. In the 1920's, women adopted movie stars, such as Clara Bow and Mary Pickford, as their female models imitating their make-up, clothing and behavior. The age of "flappers" had begun in earnest. (Riley 1987: 201 – 203)

At the time of the publication of *A Daughter of the Snows* in 1902, the New Woman ideal was on its way in the American society, although women's right to vote was still an unfulfilled dream. However, as Richard O'Connor (1965: 147) stated in his study, London succeeded in creating "a new conception of the American woman" in Frona Welse who was equal with male characters as their comrade. According to O'Connor (1965: 148), London's "Natural Woman" replaced the old "Victorian Lady" and revealed his "dream of the perfect woman, the mate, worthy of modern man."

In *A Daughter of the Snows*, Vance Corliss expressed everyone's thoughts about Frona who "was something new, a fresh type, a woman unrelated to all women he had met" (DS: 48). In fact, he could not place her to any category of women before getting to know her better (DS: 49). So Frona Welse represented an athletic and new-womanish heroine with several characteristics, such as strong, helpful, independent, cultivated and good-humored. As a Welse, she was bound to fight hard for survival and for other people's survival, too. (Chapter 6.1.3) Rescuing other persons from dying was a proof of Frona's supernatural abilities and physical strength (DS: 47, 181, 199 - 201 and 202). Her smiling and frank gaze often captured people's attention because of their sincerity (Chapter 6.1.3). Margaret West's characteristics also included freshness, vitality, physical strength, attractiveness and healthiness. Humming, smiling, laughing, even teasing and shrugging her shoulders seemed characteristic of her behavior very often. Her way of solving problems appeared to be laughing or giggling when, for instance, she understood that Mr. Pathurst suffered from bedbugs. (Chapter 6.2.1)

According to Andrew Sinclair's study (1978: 180), Saxon Roberts resembled Charmian Kittredge, Jack London's second wife, even if she was an unpolished version of her. Her characteristics ranged from healthiness and strength to cleverness, obstinacy and sentimentality. She could openly express her feelings from disliking Billy's admirers to loving horses and fascinating pearls of abalone in a new-womanish manner. Both Margaret and Saxon easily cried out in surprise and used to clap their hands when seeing or experiencing something worth rejoicing. (Chapters 6.2.1 and 6.3.1) Saxon's repertoire of various feelings included bravery in dangerous situations and being stricken with terror in the laundry and in the countryside. Even then she did not shout or scream but controlled her nerves well. (Chapter 6.3.1)

Compared with Frona, who had been studying abroad for three years, Margaret was equally cultivated, since she had graduated from Bryn Mawr (Chapters 6.1.1 and 6.2.2). Saxon Roberts belonged to the working-class and had not studied after going to school, being just talented in many respects (Chapter 6.3.1). In fact, she seemed to have an utmost interest in her looks due to her working-class background and her consequent feelings of uncertainty when going out to see Billy. However, she was content with her figure, slender ankles and calves. Even Billy admired the movement of her lips, the quality of her voice and her angelic soprano, which made him tremble. Saxon herself was especially proud of knowing how to laugh with her eyes and mouth at the same time. (VM: 232 - 233; Chapter 6.3.1) Frona, in

turn, showed her muscles to her foster-daddy, Matt McCarthy, feeling proud of her sports achievements (Chapter 6.1.1).

The New Woman ideal expressed her feelings freely, said what she wanted to and took part in various hobbies according to her own desires. She wanted to have more equality with her male partners in everything. She even gave orders and instructions to other people, as she was skilled, talented and often also cultivated. Taking part in decision-making was also included in their new-womanish action in the novels under discussion here, too.

Frona's hobbies were mostly athletic ones, such as canoeing, paddling and wandering in the wilderness. In addition, she participated in a play, since she had studied "art, poetry and music" abroad and possibly mastered acting as well. (DS: 122; Chapter 6.1.3) Margaret, in turn, had received sea training from her father Captain West and could perform almost inhuman or supernatural athletic trickery up on the mast-head (ME: 87, 158 – 162). The most practical of these three heroines, Saxon Roberts, liked riding and dancing a lot. In all, she preferred riding to dancing due to her memories of her father and his war-horse. (Chapter 6.3.1; VM: 53)

Margaret's and Saxon's other hobbies comprised general women's hobbies, such as needlework, embroidery and sewing they were utmost good at and enjoyed for the most part. Saxon even succeeded in selling her masterpieces in embroidery with the help of her neighbor. Moreover, Margaret and Saxon liked to sing and Margaret used to unpack her suitcases humming melodiously. Saxon's instrument she liked to play to the Carmel crowd was the ukulélé and Margaret played the piano in order to overcome the mutineers on *the Elsinore*. No doubt, Frona's time passed saving a sailor, her father and a mail-carrier from drowning, and practicing sports activities, thus having no time for other hobbies. (Chapters 6.2.2, 6.3.1 and 6.1.3) As one easily notices, the working-class heroine's hobbies were similar to those of the upper-class heroine apparently notwithstanding her social class. Frona, in turn, concentrated in her sports activities differing from both Margaret and Saxon in this respect.

In all, the heroines discussed in this thesis were resourceful, helpful, skilled and talented. For example, Saxon gave orders and advised her husband in their search for their valley of the moon (VM: 244 – 246). She even taught the Carmel artists how to sing some old songs from her childhood (Chapter 6.3.1), whereas Margaret's expertise in technical facilities, such as the barometer and the sextant, surpassed Mr. Pathurst's knowledge (ME: 44, 237 – 238). As a

matter of fact, Margaret mastered all routines on *the Elsinore* in the way sailors did. So she was called “an old hand at the game” (ME: 221), since she knew perfectly how to set the sails, steer the ship, forecast the weather and stand watch. Thanks to her medical knowledge, she helped to cure the sick chicken, Mr. Pathurst’s puppy, Mr. Pathurst himself and Wada, the servant, on *the Elsinore* (Chapter 6.2.2). Frona also acted as an adviser in Vance’s cabin on the Dyea trail, since she exactly knew how to heat the oven, how to cook a delicious meal using poor ingredients and how to put the sacks to the floor in order to make the beds well (DS: 27, 31). Furthermore, her role was even more important as an initiator of the action during St. Vincent’s murder trial (see Chapter 6.1.3).

The reader surely sees the active roles played by Jack London’s heroines and fully understands how much the female image had changed in Frona’s, Margaret’s and Saxon’s characters compared with the Victorian counterpart. The new-womanish heroine did not stay overshadowed by her husband but freely expressed her ideas and opinions. In fact, the increased equality between male and female main characters was shown by the fact that the heroines’ opinions tended to dominate the discussion and action in these novels, too.

Although clothing constituted one of the major features in the new female image and “flappers” were partly identified by their bold clothing, the heroines’ clothes were not especially paid attention to or, at least, they were not so widely described as, for instance, their racial attitudes and love affairs. Even if Frona’s, Margaret’s and Saxon’s clothes formed an unessential point in the plots of the novels, they could be associated with the new-womanish ideal due to their use in outdoor activities. Having studied in Paris for three years, Frona seemed to bear a clear resemblance to the new ideal in her clothing, too. For the most part, however, Jack London clearly concentrated on the heroines’ personalities, opinions, attitudes and activities instead of their clothing in depicting their new-womanish characters.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

My aim in this thesis has been to study Jack London's heroines Frona Welse, Margaret West and Saxon Roberts in detail comparing them in almost every aspect they appear in the narratives of *A Daughter of the Snows*, *The Mutiny of the Elsinore* and *The Valley of the Moon*. In the detailed study of these characters I have closely studied the heroines' descriptions in the novels under discussion. By means of those descriptions I have thoroughly inspected the heroines' opinions, ideologies and personalities in order to find out their differences and similarities in them. My study I have based on several previous studies on Jack London concentrated on the Anglo-Saxon supremacy and racism in general, the New Woman concept and escaping from urban to rural environment. In addition, my aim has been to try and show if the heroines' new-womanish behavior, hobbies, attitudes, opinions and even clothing could be determined by their social class to some extent.

The three novels dealt with here brought forward some interesting observations. To begin with, one should remember that Saxon Roberts was the only working-class woman in these novels, whereas both Frona and Margaret belonged to the upper class. Amazingly, the emphasis of the social class is not clearly seen in the heroines' characteristics and other traits of behavior or the choices they made in various situations of their lives. Some of those features belonged to all these heroines or to two of them, still seemingly irrespective of their social class. Sometimes a particular characteristic was overwhelmingly represented in one heroine's character again apart from her social class.

It is worth noticing that only Saxon Roberts expressed her ideas and beliefs about religious or political issues, whereas both Frona and Margaret stayed detached from both politics and religion in their discussions. As a working-class woman, Saxon had to live in the middle of the violent labor strikes and their disastrous effects on her life and marriage. Obviously, Frona's and Margaret's social class normally lived far-away from such events, although Margaret happened to encounter a mutiny on *the Elsinore*.

Both Frona and Margaret had motherless families. That is why they obviously restricted themselves to admiring their fathers' achievements. Saxon, in turn, was an orphan, who worshipped her deceased parents' memory and some ancient items they had left behind. All these heroines knew how valuable it was to have been born to the Anglo-Saxon race or real Americans. Accordingly, both Frona and Saxon chose their future husbands and companions

on the basis of their racial past. Frona often praised her Anglo-Saxon ancestry, whereas Saxon worshipped her parents' memory. Margaret, in turn, only told about her seafaring ancestors once. In all, the heroines' attitudes toward the Anglo-Saxon supremacy obviously originated from their upbringing, not from their social class.

Frona, Margaret and Saxon differed from each other in their relationship to their male companions to some degree. In Frona, Jack London had created the Natural Woman or the quasi modern female image who acted as a comrade to her male partner. If Frona's love affair was a most innocent one, Margaret's courtship undoubtedly belonged to the most romantic ones. In turn, Saxon's love and her marriage seemed to be among the most troublesome love stories ever written about.

All these heroines may be classified to new-womanish persons according to their independence in their thoughts, decisions and actions. They all willingly gave advice to other people whenever needed, even technical and medical ones in Margaret's case. Frona suddenly appeared in St. Vincent's murder trial and used her legal expertise to everyone's astonishment. Saxon lacked formal education but showed her talents in her singing, playing the ukulélé and, of course, advising Billy, her husband, in matters of searching for their valley of the moon. The New Woman also practiced various sports activities suited for the modern, strong, healthy woman, although athletic hobbies were previously denied women because of their assumed unfavorable effects. All these heroines were strong and capable of practicing various sports activities. Especially Frona mastered several athletic hobbies and used her skills in saving three people's lives. Saxon and Margaret shared some feminine hobbies, such as doing needlework and embroidery but they were physically strong, too. Saxon liked dancing and riding, whereas Margaret's sea training assured her physical strength, even the athletic trickery she performed on the mast-head of *the Elsinore*.

The descriptions above prove how well Frona Welse, Margaret West and Saxon Roberts fitted in with the new-womanish ideal but they also showed that there was no clear connection between the heroines' characteristics and their social class. In a word, Saxon and Frona could share the same racial ideology, even though they differed in their social class. In the same way, Margaret's and Frona's common social background did not have an effect on their choice of hobbies.

When examining the observations made in this thesis, one may realize that there is much more worth studying in Jack London's heroines. In fact, there is a vast gap to be filled up, since there are just few previous studies on the main female characters of Jack London's production compared with masses of studies of heroes and dogs as main characters. However, I found it very interesting to find out so much about Frona, Margaret and Saxon and their new-womanish characters. In the end, I was left without any answer to my wondering, if Margaret was really able to climb up to the mast of *the Elsinore* or if Frona could really be strong enough to save her father from under the heavy log constructions. In fact, Margaret had her sea training and Frona even looked like an athlete with her swollen muscles so that those events could easily have happened in reality. But still, maybe those events had been created just for the sake of highlighted fiction by Jack London.

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