CHAPTER IV

MAJOR THEMATIC CONCERNS

A theme is the summation of a novel's, short story's, play's abstract meaning. For instance, the theme of Gone with the Wind is: "The impact of the Civil War on Southern Society". A theme may be specifically philosophical or it may be a narrower generalization. It may present a certain moral philosophical position or a purely historical view, such as the portrayal of a certain society in a certain era. There are no rules or restrictions on the choice of a theme, provided it is communicable in the form of a novel or short story. But if they have no discernible theme and if it is events add up to nothing it is a bad novel or short story: its flow is lack of integration. We note that there is quite often form following purpose and the theme of a novel or short story defines its purpose. The theme sets the writer's standard of selection, directing the innumerable choices he has to make and serving as the integrator of the novel. Since a novel or short story is a recreation of reality, its theme has to be dramatized, i.e. presented in terms of action. Life is a process of action. The entire content of man's consciousness—thought, knowledge, ideas, values—has only one ultimate form of expression: in his action; and only one ultimate purpose: to guide his actions. Since the theme of a novel is an idea about or pertaining to human existence, it is in terms of its effects on or expression in human actions that that idea has to be presented.
Jack London is one of those few writers to have risen so dramatically to such prominence and among the even lesser few to have plunged from such heights to near complete critical oblivion. His own life saw the gradual deterioration of his work because of his scramble for dollars and more dollars that his last work turned into obvious lack-work. No doubt the literary critics of the post World War I years either ignored his work or mentioned him as a very minor figure of the realist-naturalist movement whereas the reading public of America as well as of the rest of the world had a different opinion of Jack London's works. It is the reading public which has kept alive the flame of the torch of this great writer. Jack London has noted that:

"Of Jack London's fifty-one titles, all but four have been translated into at least one and usually many of fifty-eight different languages. In addition nearly four-hundred anthologies and collections, often in many-volume sets may be found in thirty-six of these languages".¹

Jack London's attraction to the reading public is his infinite variety of subjects. To club London in one of those traditional groups of writers or writing philosophies would seem unsatisfactory. His writings or his subjects easily fit into any one groups like naturalism, realism or romanticism. It is probably best to award these terms completely and at the same time to ignore the semantic confusions of such labels. instead we should look into the thematic concerns which are the main reason of the ever
lasting appeal of Jack London's work.

SOCIALISM

Jack London was a prolific writer and his themes varied in nature and substance. The most important theme or subject of his writing was Socialism. London remained till the end a Socialist, even though he had nothing to do with it at the end of his life. In his heart he remained a socialist and devoted the best of his life to the cause of socialism. Lecturing frequently for socialist organizations, he raised money, donated his own money to socialist organization, and wrote numerous essays, stories and novels. His activities as a socialist must be regarded as a remarkable and brilliant one. Socialism as a theme is littered across the pages of his writings.

In "Jack London, American Rebel," Philip S. Foner quoted Martin Russel's words from the January, 1929, issue of the "New Masses" as follows:

"Jack London was a real proletarian writer - the first and so far the only proletarian writer of genius in America. Workers who read, read Jack London. He is the one author they have all read. He is one literary experience they all have in common".*2*

He also wrote in praise of him - "London knew the life of which he wrote; knew how workers lived and talked and how to transfer the details of their lives to the printed page with
amazing fidelity". London wrote of his own experience, pointing out the mismanagement of the capitalistic class in the language which was so vividly understood by the workers. He wrote of his own proletarian life and experiences with vivid reality and exposed the evils of the capitalist society not only in his socialist essays compiled in War of the Classes and Revolution and other Essays but also in short stories and novels such as "The Apostate", "The Mexican", "The Dream of Debs" etc. and The People of the Abyss. The Sea-Wolf, The Iron-Heel, Martin Eden, Burning Daylight, John Barleycorn and The Valley of the Moon.

Jack London was involved from the beginning of his career almost until his death in the cause of socialism. During the time when he was deeply involved in his famous revolutionary novel, The Iron Heel, he composed the most outstanding socialist stories of his writing career. Among the few socialist stories he wrote and the ones which still elicit interest are the ones which we are going to touch. London's socialist writings were popular in his own lifetime among the proletariat because these members of the working class identified with London's characters and situations as they were London's character's and situations. The exploited workers' reactions were very similar to the protagonist's feeling and helplessness resulting due to the situations where neither London's protagonist nor workers in real life had any control. Two stories herein the portrayal of the exploited workers are vividly presented are "The
Apostate" and "A Curious Fragment".

Each of these stories brings forth to the readers the grim reality of the working class and the abominable conditions prevailing in London's time where the proletariat were forced to earn their daily bread. We note that London's stories try to inform his readers about the frailty of man's own societal structures. The information derived by the readers after going through such stories of Jack London should arouse in them the effort to remodel not to destroy these structures. This is what the stories try to tell its readers.

London's early years left deep scars on him as he was a victim of arduous physical labour and subservience to the overseer and factory superintendent. He was never able to get out of his fear which is so aptly called by many the submerged tenth. London could never get out of it, no matter how much he tried. So deeply were the scars etched in his psyche. The visualization of the life of a worker comes to the forefront in London's stories, because he had been one of them. The life of a factory worker was a simple one - arise before day break, gulp a meager breakfast, spend the daylight hours in the shadow of the machine, then fall into bed in total exhaustion. Each day had the same repetition in the life of the worker for a meager income which was not enough to eke out a living for the maintenance of soul and sole. The life they lead by selling their labour was worthy
of only sub-human animal. This life, this social injustice, is the essence of "The Apostate" the story of a boy wanting rest from the cosmic tragedy over which he held no sway, nor was he able to understand such a situation.

"The Apostate" is a very touching story. It begins with an effective and highly realistic scene in the domestic life of the working poor. A brief, four-line prayer serves as a prologue to "The Apostate". It is a ludicrous imitation of the child’s perennial failing bedtime prayer. "Now I long me down to sleep: I pray the lord may sent to keep ....." And the lips of the proletariat airs a totally different viewpoint :

"Now I wake me up to work:
I pray the Lord I may not shirk.
If I should die before the night.
I pray the Lord my work's all right".

The above lines show the feeling which is couched with bitterness, hatred and hopelessness. It is a graphic presentation of the working class sentiments, which London had experienced in his youth.

A powerful picture is created with the help of little imagination. We notice, the story’s protagonist Johnny, being woken up by his mother in the predawn hours. He is forced out of his deep tired slumber, only after the forced removal of the coverings and the cold touch of the floor that he is brought back into the harsh reality of the
working class world. Johnny's reluctance to arise, being stripped of the bed coverings and lying huddled up at the foot of the bed symbolizes the rebirth of Johnny, as all these actions show the refusal of an unborn child - refusing to leave the warmth of this figurative womb. It is quite a pathetic sight to behold. So automated has Johnny become due to the continuous repetition of the monotonous daily routine that he does not notice the "greasy filthy" sink where he goes to wash his face; neither does he take notice of the smell issuing forth from the outlet. He takes it for granted that it is the part of the natural order just as it is a part of the natural order for the soap being grimy with dishwater and hard to lather. He makes no attempt to arouse any lather from the soap as a few splashes of cold water serve his purpose.

It is a dismal picture painted by London, depicting the conditions under which the family lives. Every scene throws light on the pitiable conditions where life is so miserable that a stinking sink goes unnoticed; even the grimy soap indicates the miserableness. The towel used by Johnny too is greasy, damp, dirty and ragged leaving shreds of lint on his face which is quite ironic as the first thing Johnny tastes on being born is the lint in his lungs. The meager breakfast to which he is subjected every morning is hurriedly forced down with coffee. But the taste of real coffee is not known to his class. Johnny's uncomplaining
nature and patience is learnt in the only school known to
his fellow workers, which is the result of the endless hours
of toil and labour. This is the only school open to the
working class to which the bourgeoisie is deaf and dumb.
They don't even know that such a school exists where the
flower is crushed in the initial stage.

A two mile walk in the dark cold morning air brings
Johnny to the mills, where he has been employed since he was
seven years old. While entering the factory Johnny's quick
glance to the East is the only glimpse of the rising sun -
his only sight of daylight. Johnny's life till now is a life
of perpetual darkness, as the rest of the day is spent
within the confines of the factory walls and leaving them
only in darkness. The life led by Johnny at the factory has
perfected him into a perfect worker and out of which has
evolved the perfect machine. This again depicts the inhuman,
callous attitude of the bourgeoisie wherein the aptitude of
a human being is reduced into a perfect machine. From this
dreary world of darkness, Johnny walks home in darkness.
Being a machine, the carefree shouts and laughter of his
younger brothers and sisters which greets him at home, is
quite annoying and disturbing.

He had no patience with their excessive and amazing
juvenility. He did not understand it. His own childhood
was too far behind him. He was like an old irritable
men, annoyed by the turbulence of their young spirits
that was to him arrant silliness. "5"

Johnny, although chronologically a boy in his early teens.
is a hardened mature man. At seven years old, he became the male head of the family. Thus he does not know the jubilance and carefree attitudes of youth. At eleven, on the night shift, he was initiated into adolescence. At twelve or thirteen, he was already an old man. His childhood far behind and he felt of being robbed of a large part of that playtime. Even as a young child, he was pressed into service as a caretaker of his younger brother, Bill. Johnny is a machine—emotionless, cold and unmoved by his brothers and sisters frivoli. His evening meal is spent in cursing the younger children, even his mind is inactive while he sits relaxing on the porch. London says that where a proletarian mind is concerned, it is "asleep" as a machine has no mind; it has no need for thinking—it is only meant to use it for labour and nothing else. The work at the mill has moulded Johnny into a "work beast" and he has "no mental life whatever....", he knows nothing about what is happening in the world, so enmeshed has his life become due to the work at the mill. Johnny has no aesthetic sense of human beauty, as he was never exposed to it ever in his life.

Johnny's life is closer to the bare necessities of life and from the beginning, his mind and body has been shaped by industrial rhythms. The work as a mill hand had slowly turned Johnny from a perfect worker into a perfect machine leaving in him no zest, no challenge in turning out more work than everyone else. He has simply turned into a
machine, so absorbing and calculating has been his employers. The situation created by the unseen hand of the capitalist class is ever menacing in wrecking the mental set-up of any worker and unfortunate Johnny is one of the many proletariats to be a victim of this unseen hands. But as is the case of machines, Johnny too breaks down and one evening he returns home, "aware of unusual tiredness". He does not notice the hubbub arising out of a special dish cooked by his mother; instead he crawls into the bed, totally exhausted in body and spirit. Johnny's work has shaped his body as well as his spirit. Till his apostasy, he had accepted everything in the most machine-like manner, no reaction, no complain but acceptance of everything in a most listless way. London writes, "his consciousness was machine consciousness" and his life was controlled by the industrial rhythms where description of nature's beauty is never seen nor felt by Johnny but instead it is the factory whistle to which he has been tuned. He has been reduced into a machine, until he breaks down with grippe.

During his convalescence, Johnny spends long hours on the front porch lost in his endless calculation. When the endless calculation is over Johnny gets engrossed in a tree which symbolizes a reawakening of his real self.

"...greatly absorbed in the one tree that grew across the street. He studied it for hours at a time, and was unusually interested when the wind swayed its branches and fluttered its leaves".*6*

Johnny wakes up from the slumber of his mind and he
discovering a great mental activity which was never there before. For the first time with the discovery of the daylight and the tree across the street, Johnny experiences a rebirth and is enthralled by every moment of it. It makes his life more bright to everything around him. He decides never to work again which makes his mother believe that he has turned insane. Johnny's outburst at her discomfort is quite touching.

"I'm plain tired out. What makes me tired? Moves. I've been movin' every since I was born. I'm tired of movin'. am' I ain't goin' to move any more. Remember when I worked in the glass house? I used to do three hundred dozen a day. Now I reckon I made about ten different moves to each bottle. That's thirty-six thousand moves a day. Ten days, three hundred am' sixty thousand, that leaves a million moves a month-twelve million moves a year. At the looms I'm movin' twic'est as much. That makes twenty-five million moves a year, and it seems to me I've been movin' that way most a million years".  

It shows the callous attitude of the unseen hands of the capitalist class wherein no concern is shown to the working class. Johnny turns his back on his family and work, never to return.

"... he did not walk like a man. He did not look like a man. He was a travesty of the human. It was a twisted and stunted and nameless piece of life that shambled like a sickly ape. arms loose-hanging, stoop-shouldered, narrow-chested, grotesque and terrible".  

In this story, London portrays very graphically some of the conditions of the labouring class during his life time. It brings out the brutal, inhuman plight imposed upon the proletariat by the capitalist class with a veiled message.
writ across the story - arise you men and free your brethren from the yokes of the capitalist class. The story is a plea for action - a plea for the elimination of the conditions which made Johnny a machine, incapable of emotion, feeling and thinking. It was a plea to arouse in the minds of the readers, to save these from the ghettos who were forced by circumstances uncontrolled by them, in following the footsteps of Johnny.

London was a socialist at heart and he strongly believed that with the help of education these proletariat can rise up from the inhuman condition they were thrust in. We note in Johnny's reply at his mother's pleading. "An after I have brung you up the way I have." the sad reply; "You never brung me up.... I brung myself up...." shows us that the degenerate conditions of the working class is not entirely due to the injustices perpetrated on them by the capitalist class but also to some extent due to the ignorance of the uneducated people of the proletariat. This is what we notice in Johnny's mother and on which London frequently addressed himself. Jack London knew very well from his own experience, how difficult it was to attain education in his own lifetime. Thus he made a full attempt to point out that it was education and lack of it which resulted in a barrier between the working class and its masters. Foner points out the feeling of London being a member of the proletariat what the sociologists called, "the
submerged tenth at the bottom of the social pit", and the only way for climbing out of this pit was to "develop his brain, since muscles were used so quickly". With education, London felt, the submerged tenth could combat the tyranny perpetuated against them by the bourgeoisie. His "A Curious Fragment" provides this lesson wherein he tries to show that the key to the door which can lead the workers from the pit of depravity to social equality - is education.

The story revolves around the apathy of the proletariat during an imagined era of the twenty-sixth century after Christ: under the rule of one, Roger Vanderwater, the industrial oligarch. The editor’s note states that it was an era when writing and printing were considered unlawful. No one was supposed to teach anything to the working class during this period, but they were paid story tellers who told stories to the proletariat and "A Curious Fragment" is one such story. The story is about "an arm" of Tom Dixon who is a slave in one of the factories of Roger Vanderwater. Roger Vanderwater’s background is illustrated by London through the story’s narrator to show that in the beginning everyone was equal but it was with the help of education that one rises above the other. After this he talks about the story of Tom Dixon’s arm. Tom Dixon and his companions were treated very badly by their overseers, Joseph Clancy and Adolf Munster, who utilize the worker’s compensation fund for their own benefit. The workers try their best to bring this to the notice of Vanderwater and in
return are punished very severely by the overseers. One day, in an accident, Tom Dixon's arm is torn off by a belt in the factory and as usual, the overseers refuse to pay compensation. Finally a literate slave among the workers manages to take their petition to Roger Vanderwater who reads their petition and sends the literate slave back unpunished. Thereafter Vanderwater makes a thorough investigation and chastises the two overseers. The narrator then reveals that the literate slave who had carried Tom Dixon's arm clutching the petition to Vanderwater was the story-teller's father and it was from him that he had learnt to read and write:

"And my message is, brothers, that there is a good time coming. When all will be well in the world and there will be neither masters nor slaves. But first you must prepare for that time by learning to read. There is power in the printed world. And here I am to teach you to read, and as well there are others to see that you get books when I am gone along upon my way - the history books wherein you will learn about your masters, and learn to become strong even as they":*11*

No doubt the story is set in future, the conditions described by London were prevalent in his times. We note in the story that the plight of the exploited workers was put forth by one of them who later on became educated. This educated slave strengthened his position by taking advantage of the ignorance and illiteracy of the others and secured a place among the capitalist class. The narrator says that our masters read and write and possessed many books and it was because of that, that they were our masters and lived in places and did not work. The story presents the irony of the
situation, which was due to the lack of education among the workers. It is only he with the best education among them who manages to reach the master with the truth. Even though the worker's numbers are great, their voices are useless as it is heard only by the dishonest overseers who beat them to submission for their disloyalty to the rulers and in the process render them useless in their effort. London states that the key to lift themselves up from depravity and compete with the master's class is education. London also mentions that until and unless they fail in their endeavor to attain education, they will remain subservient to their masters, no matter what means they adopt. The above two stories are a lucid illustration of Foner's assertion that Jack London poured into his writings, "all the pain of his life, the fierce hatred of the bourgeoisie that had produced in him". Jack London, by examples, exhortation and providing practical suggestions to his working class readers, tells them that their hope for better life lies in education.

Jack London's socialist fiction shows that he was not only interested in exposing the cruelties and oppressions of the capitalist class but in remaking it and building a new and better social order. The following stories bear a testimony to further the cause of socialism. It shows that he did not pay heed to the demand of market, nor to the critics' comment but wrote from the core of his heart for the working class. The stories revealing his feelings the most
regarding his relationship with the working class are "The Dream of Debs", "South of the Slot" and "The Strength of the Strong". London's dream of a cooperative commonwealth is revealed by his story "The Strength of the Strong".

"The Dream of Debs" is perhaps the best known socialist stories of Jack London. No doubt "The Apostate" and other stories do overtake this story in certain aspects but "The Dream of Debs" is the only one which portrays the workers in class conscious revolt. It depicts and dramatizes the collectivist triumph of the proletariat. The story shows in a dramatized form the effects of a strike. This general strike has paralyzed the whole country and it is witnessed by a person belonging to the capitalist class. Maybe the intention of London might have been to present the callousness of the capitalist class and thus he has introduced a first person narrator, who is quite naive to understand what is the root cause of this organized labour. This organized, disciplined labour force finally brings the capitalist class to their own terms, proving that anything properly organized by true honest workers can succeed in their endeavor. The story does get dampened to some extent, as it is witnessed by a capitalist who is a victim of this strike. Otherwise the strike tries to show that the working-class can achieve its aim for a better society if they unite and collectively work together for their goal.

"South of the Slot" is a tale of the class struggle in
San Francisco. It is an interesting working-class story wherein London shows and suggests the birth of a new collective consciousness. Here London dramatizes the inevitable conflict between a worker's personality and a passionless, conservative sociologist professor. The working class character dons the name of "Big" Bill Totts, the labour leader when he is in the South of the slot, whereas he is known as Freddie Drummond when he is in the North of the Slot. The story derives its title from the iron cable line dividing old San Francisco. The North of the Slot was the abode of the capitalist class with all the best amenities fit for the bourgeoisie whereas in the South of the Slot lied the novel of the working class with factories and slums. London writes about his main character:

"The Slot was the metaphor that expressed the class cleavage of society and no man crossed this metaphor back and forth, mere successfully than Freddie Drummond. He made a practice of living in both worlds, and in both worlds he lived signally well"."13"

Freddie Drummond in order to write for his subject, crosses over to the South of the Slot to discover and dig out materials so that he can use them in his books. He becomes quite famous as a research professor but inwardly he realizes that he will function best as Bill Totts. The two females from both the sides of the slot bring a stalemate in his life and he decides to remain in the North of Slot but a dramatized engagement between the workers after their success at breaking the police cordon. The success of it was
largely due to his active participation in it. We note that the crisis in the double love life of Freddie Drummond is his own creation because of his double love life but his transformation into Bill Totts was a result of his inclination towards his burning faith in the collective struggle of the working class. It is this faith of Freddie Drummond that is portrayed by Jack London in this story which conveys to its readers that socialism will prevail one day.

"The Strength of the Strong" is among London's finest socialist stories. Foner states that it is among the finest parables in American literature. The story is set in prehistoric times when men were just learning to leave their homes in the trees. The story is narrated by one long-Beard wherein he tells the story of human achievement and human frailty. He narrates an incident which led to the awakening of a new tribal consciousness. The incident was the defeat of the Fish-Eaters, who lived separately among themselves, at the hands of the Meat-Eaters. Even though the Fish-Eaters had sixty men among their families, they were defeated by ten Meat-Eaters, as they were not united. The Fish-Eaters all fled to their trees and were overcome, family by family by the Meat-Eaters. London writes in order to awake the social consciousness among his readers, by stating the plight of the Fish-Eaters:

"Of the ten Meat-Eaters, each man had had the strength of ten, for the ten had fought as one man. They had
added their strength together. But of the thirty families and the sixty man of us, we had the strength of but one man, for each had fought alone.*14*.

After their individual defeat, the Fish-Eaters huddled together and held their first council and in that council they formed their first tribe. For mutual protection against the Meat-Eaters they adopted a social division among themselves. The story progresses further with Long-Beard's narration wherein the rise of the chief as well as the vested interest of the few takes place. Their justification is also shown by a singer, who has been elected to that placed by these few members of the tribe, and they have cornered the land, its natural product and the fruits of the labour of others. Long-Beard ends his narration in the present expressing his conviction that "someday ..... all the fools will be dead", and the others will no longer listen to the mystifying songs of Bug, who "when a man rises up to go forward.... sings that that men is walking backward to live in a tree". Then "all men will be brothers and no men will lie idle in the sun and be fed by the others". This story presents London's finest expression of his socialist consciousness. Here London dramatizes the chronic situation of the masses in stoning "Split Nose" their collective prophet because they have been duped by their corrupt capitalist rulers. Jack London has tried to show his readers by examples and exhortation that they will never be able to rise up as an individual but as a mass, they will succeed and their answer to their plight is socialism.
The London's class-consciousness, his quest for proletarian social equality and his method of bringing forward his most poignant statement of protest against the forces impending the progress of the proletariat is seen in his short story "The Chinago". Here he makes a soul searching, anguished cry for working class equality, by giving a lucid illustration of ruling class blindness, its rigidity and its callousness towards the helpless working class. This tragic piece with underlining pathos forcefully brings home the absurdity of life and the blind justice of the ruling class. In terms of irony and proletarian commentary, "The Chinago" is one of London's masterpieces. Chinago was a term applied to the Chinese coolies brought to the Tahitian islands as indentured labourers for the plantations. Here they worked for a paltry sum of fifty cents a day which to them at the end of the five years indenture was quite a sum of money to become a wealthy man by Chinese standards. Ah Cho is one of these Chinagoos facing trial along with four others for the murder of Chung Ga, a fellow Chinago. Ah Cho wonders at the "stupidity" of the Frenchman conducting the trial, as they had made a pact never to testify against one another. Ah Cho, reasons logically, which holds no meaning because of his merge social standing, that the circumstances leading to the murder reveal that the five men charged with murder could not be possibly guilty as Chung Ga had been stabbed only twice. Schemmer, the overseer of the plantation, had come into the barracks immediately after the murder and
found the five Chinagos standing over the dead body. All were charged with murder, yet it stands to reason that "five .... men could not inflict two stabs wounds".

Ah Cho’s retrospection while awaiting the court’s decision to go back to China after his remaining two years of indenture and to establish his home and hearth there presents the simple and uncomplicated ways of the proletarians. Ah Cho’s dreams and desires characterize him and his proletarians, as a peace loving, non-political people, content with little things and simple pleasures of life. But in striking contrast to Ah Cho and his labouring class is Schemmer, the overseer, the representative of the ruling class, a "brutish brute", who is only concerned to extract the last strength of the Chinagos. London writes that it is Schemmer’s dominant, iron-clad, primeval brutishness which enables him to goad the poor workers to their end of daily toil. Through Ah Cho’s London tries to show the indifferent attitude of the capitalist class. Ah Cho remembers an incident when Schemmer had knocked a Chinago dead and who was declared by the doctor to have died by sunstroke a blatant lie as Ah Cho knows that no body in Tatite had died so far because of sunstroke. The loss of one Chinago meant nothing to Schemmer as "he was only a Chinago".

The trail is a big force, as it concerns not only Ah Cho and his companions but it represents ruling class-
supremacy tried against working class-helplessness. The verdict is preordained. as Ah Cho and his fellow workers are mere pawns in the hands of the ruling class to be tuned in according to their wish. Ah Cho is sentenced to twenty years of imprisonment Ah Chow is to have his head cut off and the remaining three Chinagos are meted out with prison sentence. Ah Cho philosophically contemplates to pass off his twenty years and then go back to his Morning Calm, his home in China. But his dreams are shattered when his release is sought by a gendarme, Cruchot, on an order from the Chief Justice. Ah Cho is least aware of the mistake committed by the Chief Justice, who due to his intoxication has omitted the letter 'W' in the order of the Ah Chow's execution, thus Ah Cho is happy to return to work. Cruchot's heavy mind is stirred at Ah Cho's light heartedness and he points out to Ah Cho that why is he so glad to have his head cut off for the murder of Chung Ga. On realizing the gravity of the situation Ah Cho tries to convince Cruchot of the mistake in the order, but Cruchot ignores Ah Cho's pleading. But thinking about the mistake Cruchot reasons with himself that it was his duty to carry out the order, and thinks what if Ah Cho was the wrong man and they cut his head off. "It was only a Chinago .... and what was a Chinago, anyway?" He tries to south his troubled mind at the new-found knowledge of taking an innocent man to the gallows by ignoring Ah Cho's arguments. He reaffirms his belief that it is no mistake of his and would willingly assist a dozen wrong
Chinagos to their doom, rather than incur the displeasure of his superiors. Ah Cho resigns to his fate but on reaching the execution site, he braves a last effort to point out the mistake to Schemmer who is acting as a volunteer for the execution. Even though Schemmer is surprised by the error, he gives a tupence to Ah Cho's vain cries, as he is eager to see his guillotine work.

"Look here", he said finally, "we can't postpone this affair. I've lost three hour's work already out of those five hundred Chinagos. I can't afford to loose it all over again for the right man. Let's put the performance just the same. It is only a Chinago". The sergeant.....debated with himself. "All right", announced the sergeant. "Go ahead with it he is only a Chinago".

The dramatic ending brings to the foreground the inhuman callous attitude of the ruling class. Ah Cho, although guiltless of murder, is guilty of a mere serious crime—that of being "only a chinago". In that last few brief moments of his life Ah Cho learns that all his dreams, hopes and Garden of the Morning Calm will be destroyed by a drunken judge's careless mistake. He also learns that they are mere pawns in the hands of the ruler. The case of Ah Cho, "just another chinago" is settled with diabolical irony. In this story London slices through the false, yet effectual, premises upon which the ruling class supremacy is based. This story is described by Kind Hendricks as "the greatest story of London's career and one of the great stories of all time". There is absolutely no moralizing in the story and
the indictment of society, justice, racism and simple
indifference arises forcefully from the dramatic conclusion.

The last of London's socialist stories, "The Mexican"
makes use of ideological socialism for its theme. It
describes the work of the Junta operating in the United
States in support of the coming Mexican Revolution, and in
particular, one of the members of the organization, the
eighteen-year-old Felipe Rivera, who becomes a prize-fighter
to raise money for guns for the Revolution. The story is
vengeful in nature and its youthful protagonist is a victim-
rebel instead of a mere victim. Felipe Rivera, "The
Mexican", arrives at the California office of the Junta,
attempting to overthrow the Porfirio Diaz dictatorship. He
only says that he wants to work for the Revolution. The
others recognize in him, despite his silence that:

"This slender boy was the unknown, vested with all the
menace of the unknown. He was unrecognizable, something
quite beyond the ken of honest, ordinary revolutionist
whose fiercest hatred for Diaz and his tyranny, after
all was only that of honest and ordinary patriots".*19*

London further describes Felipe Rivera, glorifying him
in his zeal to work for the Revolution and shows what was
behind the revolutionary movement in Mexico. By using a
flash-back technique London portrays through the eyes of
Felipe Rivera, who while awaiting the arrival of Danny Ward
and his retinue, the underlying motives for the revolution:

"He saw the white-walled, water-power factories of Rio
Blanco. He saw the six thousand workers, starved and
wan, and the little children, seven and eight years of age, who toiled long shifts for ten cents a day. He saw the perambulating corpses, the ghastly death's heads of men who labored in the dye rooms. He remembered that he had heard his father call the dye rooms the "suicide holes", where a year was death....

But more visions burned before the eye of Rivera's memory. The strike, or rather, the lockout, because the workers of Rio Blbenco had helped their striking brothers of Puebla. The hunger, the expeditions in the hills for berries, the roots and herbs that all ate and that twisted and pained the stomachs of all of them. And then the nightmare; the waste of ground before the company's store; the thousands of storing workers; General Rosalio Martinez and the soldiers of Porfirio Diaz; and the death-spitting ruffles that seemed never to cease spitting. While the workers wrongs were washed and washed again in their own blood. And that night! He saw the flatcars, piled high with bodies of the slain, consigned to Vera Cruz, food for the sharks of the bay. Again he crawled over the grisly heaps, seeking and finding, stripped and mangled, his father and his mother. His mother he especially remembered—only her face projecting, her body burdened by the weight of dozens of bodies. Again the rifles of the soldiers of Porfirio Diaz cracked, and again he dropped to the ground and slunk away like some hunted coyote of the hills. 

It is with the help of these visions that Rivera is able to stand up under Danny Ward's brutal punishment and, in the end, to knock him out. The fight is portrayed skillfully and dramatically. Though battered and bruised, Rivera is content as the five thousand dollars would enable the guns to be brought, for the Revolution to go on.

Jack London was deeply concerned and touched by the problems of the society, especially the plight of the working-class. He became their spokesman and maintained a lasting faith in these oppressed people throughout his life. Just one month before his death, weary in body and spirit, he wrote in a
letter to his friend:

"As to my favorite of my books — that is a hard question to answer. I think I put more of my heart into The People of the Abyss than into any other books."

The account that London gave in his book is the story of "the submerged tenth"—and the human misery which flourished long before his book was published and continues to exist even today among us. Philip S. Foner says that it was "turned out white-hot from the boiling reservoirs of Jack London's indignation". London himself said of it "no other book of mine took so much of my young heart and tears as that study of the economic degradation of the poor".

This remarkable book, The People of the Abyss is replete with factual data lending it authenticity and was written while living for seven weeks the life of the poorest among the workers and the bums living in the East End of London city. He gives a reporter's account of what he found in one of the most prosperous cities of the world. He called them the "scrap heap" of the society. The human degradation depicted therein is a tell-tale account of the social injustices. It shows men being forced out of labour market because of advancement of age. The following description is the typical scene resulting due to the lack of proper distribution of country's wealth:

"From the slimy, spittle-drenched sidewalk, they were picking up bits of orange peel, apple skin, and grape stems, and they were eating them..... They picked up stray crumbs of bread the size of peas, apple cores so
black and dirty one would not take them to be apple cores ... and this, between six and seven o'clock in the evening of August 20, year of our Lord, 1902, in the heart of the greatest, wealthiest, and most powerful empire the world has ever seen*23*

The conditions described by London provided a natural haven for the festering of disease-coupled with the high degree of suicide and crime which went unnoticed as it was a common happening. London points out that even though many of the slums dwellers lived only for drink, they would have been otherwise had not the misery of their lives drove them to drink. Crime and suicide. London is critical of the workhouses and even the salvation Army is but a superior type of workhouse where people were forced to sit and listen to a sermon before a scanty breakfast was served to them. This wait for a meal at these workhouses forced these destitute men and women to go without food for day on end.

The London Abyss was a vast shambles, demonstrating the process of constant elimination in industrialism. The inefficient were weeded out and pushed downwards while the efficient emigrated, taking the best qualities of the stock with them. This was the fate of every one worker out of the four workers in London to live and die on charity. The British race was dividing itself into two classes, a master race and a ghetto race. A short stunted people were being created - "a bread strikingly differentiated from their masters' bread, a pavement folk, as it were lacking stamina and strength". Although the children of the Abyss had
qualities capable of development. the East End, "like an infuriated tigress turning on its young, turns upon and destroys all these qualities, blots out the light and laughter and moulds those it does not kill into sdden and forlorn creatures, uncouth, degraded, and wretched below the beasts of the field"." Throughout his investigating journalism. Jack London keeps asking, why are these people in the slums? He placed the blame for such injustices on the English Economic System which made the rich richer and the poor the poorer. The gap would widen if changes were not initiated. The people would continue to suffer and social inequality would continue to remain there as long as mismanagement of the century remained. London’s answer to this mismanagement was a socialist commonwealth where the profit motive would be replaced by welfare motive and distribution of production should be directed in a more favourable proportion to the needs of all the people. Even though the book shows a flow in London’s intensity of feeling about the slums of East End: London as a socialist thought that his best book was his account of the East End. As he himself wrote in his own defence in The People of the Abyss, "Is the picture overdrawn? It all depends. For one who sees and thinks life in terms of shares and coupons, it is certainly overdrawn. But for one who sees and thinks life in terms of mankind and womanhood, it cannot be overdrawn".

For London, socialism was an inevitable force, the
preordained victor of immense and violent class struggle. It was this struggle that he had pictured the year before Martin Eden in The Iron Heel. It is the socialism theme which has kept The Iron Heel in the forefront of the reading public as well as the critiques. This can be seen and felt from quite a number of articles presenting the ideological content of The Iron Heel - socialism. London had socialism the uppermost in his mind when he wrote The Iron Heel. This is affirmed from his letters which he wrote in 1906 to a socialist journal’s editor stating that "some very excellent socialist propaganda would be ..... spread", by the publication of the novel. At the same time he mentioned in his letter to Philo Buck Jr. in 1912, listing this novel with other socialist writings. Even as early as 1902, he had written to George Brett, his publisher, his wish to do a book, "with which I shall bid for a popularity such as Bellamy received". This clearly indicates London’s intention to draw on a dormant public interest in socialism, which was quite popular in the 1890’s the year of Bellamy’s Looking Backward.

Anatole France, the outstanding novelist, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1921, wrote in a preface for the book:

"The Iron Heel is the vigorous term Jack London uses to designate the plutocracy. His work by this title was published in 1908. He tells of the struggle which will break out some day, the facts in their wrath permitting between the plutocracy and the people. Alas ! Jack London had the genius to see what is hidden from the
majority of men and possessed the skill that permitted him to anticipate the future. He foresaw the general effect of events which are developing in our epoch. The frightful drama which he makes us witness in *The Iron Heel* has not yet become reality and the time and place of the fulfilling of the prophecy of Marx’s American disciple are unknown to us.”  

The novel is a homage to Karl Marx and through it the author has permitted himself to define and to diffuse in a lucid simple way, the Marxist theories to the sensitive minds of the people who would have never tried to understand the Marxist theories put in any other way. No doubt the people were awakening to the workers movement since 1900 and were becoming more and more engulfed in the principle of reformism, but few of them were then informed about Marxist theories. London was a militant socialist to the core and was stern towards some of the leaders of the movement who he felt were nothing more than reformists and whose collaboration with a “reformed” capitalism would result in the betrayal of socialism. It was amidst this milieu which gave birth to his great socialist work *The Iron Heel*.

*The Iron Heel* is narrated in the guise of a love story between a son of the working class, Ernest Everhard, a self-taught intellectual and a daughter of the bourgeoisie, Avis Cunningham. The story is a propaganda instrument of socialism of remarkable simplicity. The first part of the story/novel purports to the Marxist theories beginning in the year 1902 whereas the second shows the effect of declaration of war against reformism whose fallacies bring
about the crushing of the proletariat and establishment of a Fascist regime lasting till the twenty-seventh century. The Marxist theory is seen all over the novel preached by Jack London in his own way, through the mouthpiece of Ernest Everhard. He is the first of the socialist to realize the grave threat posed to the proletariat by the bourgeoisie. He reproaches the liberals of the middle-class farmers, traders, artisans, small industrialists etc. - grouped in the Grange Party who were in favour of establishing an order of liberty wherein the theory of earning money to the detriment of others and preventing others from earning at your expense. At this attitude Ernest speaks out with Marx that instead of suppressing monopolies:

"Let us control them. Let us profit by their efficiency and cheapness. Let us run them for ourselves. That, gentleman, is socialism, a greater combination than the trusts, a greater economic and social combination than any that has yet appeared on the planet. It is in line with evolution [...] come on over with us socialists and play on the winning side".*30*.

No doubt Jack London is as convincing in his prophecies, as in argumentation, we note that what he prophesied did not hold good in the way he described them but still quite a many of them has come true to-day especially his socialist message. His presentation of the very basis of the superior worth of Marxist theory is remarkable for its shrinking precision and its effective propaganda.
When Americans of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century voiced their thoughts for contemporaries or recorded them for posterity they often reported that they felt themselves living in a perilous time, a period of change and uncertainty, of dislocations and disorders. Naturalism is a literary form that struggles to accommodate that sense of discomfort and danger and form that unremittingly attends to the large social questions of its period. It may be pointed out that there are very few works which have had great impact on the affairs of the world. The one prominent among the few is Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859). This work was the turning point after which nothing was ever the same again. Darwin's central idea was "natural selection", more aptly phrased as "survival of the fittest", had its ramification not only in biology but in other branches of human knowledge and especially in the realm of literature. Freud went a step forward to include the cosmos itself as "the strong", by envisioning Nature as a personification of a force superior to man. The external enemy of man, a power sublime, pitiless and inexorable. Nature took a different look in the hands of the writers who equated cosmos to evil and from whose path no one escaped and weak humanity being its natural prey.
We note after going over the writings of Jack London that attention becomes necessary towards London’s contribution in the development of American naturalism. London, who stands apart in relation with other American naturalists, Stephen Crane and Frank Norris before him and Theodore Dreiser after him, is as different from and perhaps more influential and representative than any of them. London’s importance as a naturalist lies partly with its unique position in American history of naturalism and his embodiment, both in life and his writings the contradictions in American naturalism. Naturalism played an important part in the writings of American writers of this period. It started gathering some momentum during this era which has led many critics in reflecting its elusiveness. The Protean slipperiness of its character brought forth by the different critics, who have all looked at it in their own ways is quite confusing for the ordinary layman, as the difference between realism and naturalism is quite narrow indeed. Critics like Charles Walentt and Donald Pizer, who have built a new context for examining in naturalist fiction has lead to a more thoughtful and sympathetic assessment of London’s fiction. Their view about naturalism are almost synonymous with London’s own sense of his literary direction and mission. According to Walcutt naturalism encompasses two streams of thought:

One, the approach to Spirit through intuition, nourishes idealism, progressism, and social radicalism.
The other, the approach to nature through science, plunges into the dark canyon of mechanistic determinism. The one is rebellious, the other pessimistic: the one ardent, the other fatal. The one acknowledges will, the other denies it. This "naturalism", flowing in both streams, is partly defying Nature and partly submitting to it.*31*

He further states that "all naturalist novels exist in a tension between determinism and its antithesis." Donald Pizer's characterization of naturalism which comes closest to London's intention suggest that in naturalistic fiction, there is a tension "between the naturalist's desire to represent in fiction the new, discomforting truths which he has found in the ideas and life of his late nineteenth-century world, and also his desire to find some meaning in experience which reasserts the validity of the human enterprise".  

Two problems arise from the assertion that Jack London was a literary naturalist: lack of common agreement on a definition of the term "literary naturalism" and the need to demonstrate the precise ways in which London's fiction can be called "naturalist". No doubt research has taken place on these two issues but unfortunately these critics and literary historians have not always made anyone's task easier in grappling with the issues.

One faces a major critical problem when he tries to make sense of the widely divergent views about London's naturalism which springs from the historic elusiveness of the concept. Charles Walcutt is quite correct in noting the
difficulties in defining the term. He writes that:

"The word naturalistic ...... labels a philosophy fairly adequately, but by the time we have passed through the varieties of social and ethical applications that have been drawn from it and listed the forms, styles, and motifs that it has evoked, we dare speak of the "naturalistic" novel only with the reservations implied by quotation marks." 34

Pizer has also pointed out the limitation of the definition of naturalism by noting that the approaches have "handicapped thinking both about the movement as a whole and about individual works within the movement."

Quite a few of the critics who have tried to unravel the definition of naturalism and bring forth a new theory have associated it with abstract concept of reality and causality — specifically, with philosophical determinism.

This type of observation about naturalism makes us believe in George Becher's words that naturalism is "pessimistic naturalistic determinism". Lars Abnebrink's definition provides a more extended illustration of this view. "The author portrays life as it is in accordance with the philosophical theory of determinism..... a naturalist believes that man is fundamentally an animal without free will. To a naturalist man can be explained in terms of the forces, usually heredity and environment, which operate upon him". During and before the period of American naturalism, ideas of determinism were of widely prevalent and influential—Ronald Martin writes that the determinist view of causality he calls the "universe of force", had an
extraordinary impact in America.

Principally in its Spencerian formulation—indissolubly tied to the theory of evolution—not only did it become a factor to be reckoned with in American science, philosophy, and religion, but it penetrated to levels of the American population never before reached by any formal philosophy save Christianity.*37*

Martin thoroughly examines both the philosophical system based on this notion and their impact on American literature. At the same time other critics too have considered naturalism’s relation to the intellectual history of its period.

As usual the other school of critics observation about naturalism must surely be that it is not pessimistic determinism. They consistently assert that novels in one way or the other fall lamentably short of—or from another perspective fortunately escape—the rigorous application of determinist principles. For example, V.L. Parrington writes that the naturalist is subject to certain “temptations” one of which is that from:

"Concern over a devasting milieu he may and in desiring to change that milieu to the and that men may achieve happiness. Hence he tends to lose his objectivity and scientific detachment and becomes a partisan to a cause. Such was the fate of Zola. The philosopher of naturalism, in practice he abandoned his principles and became a reformer, attacking the church, the capitalist order, etc. . . . This was the failure of the first group of American naturalists—Frank Norris, Robert Herrick, Jack London." *38*

Parrington further states that by standing the "inner
drives of low-grade characters the naturalist is in danger of creating grotesques" and by emphasizing "animal impulses", he may "turn man into an animal". Donald Pizer comments that naturalism seems always to be either "damned for degrading man beyond recognition by depicting him as a creature at the mercy of 'forces'... or attacked for inconsistency because of the 'presence of characteristics which fail to debase him". To evaluate a work according to its relationship with such a narrow field of naturalism is a theoretically questionable enterprise. Pizer argues that the "traditional approach to naturalism through realism and through philosophical determinism is historically justifiable and has served a useful purpose, but it has also handicapped thinking about the movement as a whole and about individual works within the movement. It has resulted in much condescension towards those writers who are supposed to be naturalists yet whose fictional sensationalism... and moral ambiguity... appear to make their flawed specimens of the mode".*40* 

The contradictions cited by Parrington and Pizer are so common in naturalist novels that one starts wondering where would one find the novel that defines the norm.

Lilian Furst also observes that literary naturalism combines two incompatible attitudes, but she considers this dualism intrinsic to the form. She writes that naturalism was:

"torn between its theory and its practice, between materialism and idealism, between pessimism and optimism... [The naturalist tried] to combine high-minded idealism with the sobriety of detached
observers. Looking at the world and at man, they despaired and hoped to one and the same time. This underlying dualism helps to account for some of the apparent inconsistencies within naturalism."*41*

Charles C. Walcutt has deftly (dexterously) placed this apparent inconsistency at the very heart of his definition of naturalism - that it expresses "an optimistic social purpose", that it reveals a "pessimistic determinism", a "philosophy of gloom and despair" and that it is incomprenhensibly, hopelessly contradictory-by distinguishing between the literary works and the ideas that uniform it. The "key to this puzzle", he suggests, is that the novelist, committed to both science and reform.

"Has to establish the validity of the assumptions: that the state of man needs to be improved, and that human conditions are determined by the operation of material causes which can be traced, recorded, understood, and, finally, controlled. The best possible way to illustrate and validate these two assumptions is to write a "naturalistic" tragedy in which a human being is rushed and destroyed by the operation of forces which he has no power to resist or ever understand. The more helpless the individual and the more clearly the links in an inexorable chain of causation are defined, the more effectively documented are the two assumptions which underlie the scientists' program of reform, for the destruction of an individual demonstrates the power of heredity and environment over human destinies. And if the victim's lot is sordid, then for reform is "proved". The more helpless the character, the stronger the proof of determinism: and once such a thesis is established the scientist hopes and believes that man will set about trying to control the forces which now control men."*42*

No doubt Walcutt has been able to comprehend and simplify the complex attitude of naturalism for the critics in a rather unified and logical narrative but he has failed
to elivate the tension: "all naturalists" novels exist in a tension between determinism and its antithesis. The reader is aware of the opposition between what the artist says about man's fate and what his saying it affirms about man's hope. Both of these polar terms are a part of the "meaning" of a naturalistic novel". The antinomy between fate and hope, between determinism and human will, is not only implicit in the program of naturalism but it is repeatedly dramatized in the actions of the novels. This type of tension we encounter between hope and fate in the struggles of the character's fulfillment of their own desires. Walcott further states about the opposition between will and determinism: "In the naturalistic novel the interest is unavoidably divided between the controlling forces, which are the novelist's is avowed and intended subject, and the trail wills of the people who struggle against them". Syndey Krause like so many other critics, attributes this inconsistency that he observes in naturalism to the character's struggle on their own behalf:

"The characteristic mood of deterministic naturalism is mixed and paradoxical. Its key paradox centers on the brute refusal of the human to be sucked down into the vortex of natural law. It is because of their cheerless prospects that we are cheered by the moral drive of individual characters who suffer much, but who like Jean Macquart, Esther Waters, or Rose Dutcher still manage to hold themselves intact as human beings despite the animal ruthlessness of others and the natural and social causalities that confine them."*45*

In short it can be said that the literary naturalists attempted to apply the uses of scientific inquiry to the
creation of fiction. From Zola's "experimental novel", emerged a number of concepts ranging from Darwinian characters motivated entirely by animal instinct to themes, plots and setting that were not scientific in any sense. It becomes quite difficult to give a precise definition about the scope of a naturalistic piece of fiction, but when the movement as a whole is taken into account, a semblance does occur in the writings of London's works. In general, the specific naturalistic qualities which London's fiction contains include sociological and biological determinism: a characteristic opposition between human will, hereditary and environment determinism that both shape human beings and frustrate their desires: the survival of the fittest theory; belief in the materialistic, primitivistic nature of men, in short atavism; etc.

The theme of determinism which is prevalent strongly in the early writings of Jack London, carries the idea that natural law and socioeconomic influences are more powerful than the human will. No doubt the theme of determinism runs parallel to the theme of survival. In "The Men of Forty Mile", London explains that life in general is explainable in terms of a deterministic frame-work. The discussion between London's two main characters of the Yukon tales, Scruff Mackenzie and Malemute Kid, clearly brings forth the idea of determinism, when Malemute Kid, glibly voices a naturalistic assumption in noting that men should understand
that life itself is a gamble, a kind of game with no predictable outcome. He concludes when they fail to arrive at a conclusion: "So you see we do not actually take away the privilege of fighting; and yet I don't believe they'll fight when they see the beauty of the scheme. Life's a game, and men the gamblers." London is seen expressing the same idea through his Indian hero, Sitka Charley, who appears in many of the tales of this early period, and expresses the same kind of pessimism in reacting to a deterministic pattern of survival. Charley narrates of his taking a long journey with a white man and women in the story, "The Grit of Women" wherein he muses through philosophical soliloquy on the deterministic orientation of the universe. The story concerns a white man's unbounding love for his Indian squaw and their years of struggle in the Northland. Finally the couple is defeated by nature, with the narrative centering around their demise. In the story both the hero and his wife are overcome by their environment with the narrator before his death, asserting the pessimist's creed that life, which must be viewed materialistically, is futile and meaningless:

"Life is strange thing. Much have I thought on it, and pondered long, yet daily the strangeness of it grows not less, but more. Why this longing for life? It is a game which no man wins. To live is to toil hard, and to suffer sure, till old age creeps heavily upon us and we throw down our hands on the ashes of dead forest. It is hard to live. In pain the babe sucks his first breath, in pain the old man gasps his last and his days are full of trouble and sorrow; yet he goes down to the open arms of Death, stumbling, falling, with head turned backward, fighting, to the last. And Death is kind. It is only life, and the things of life that hurt. Yet we love life, and we hate Death".*47*
The deterministic view is brought forth in a more fuller measure and in the clearest philosophical statement of determinism, in the story, "Which Make Men Remember". Here the protagonist, Fortune Le Parle, comes to the same conclusion as Malemute kid’s earlier declaration that life is a game. Fortune, who is accused for the murder of John Randolphs, is befriended by Uri Bram. Uri hides Fortune, from the authorities, who while spending the many days in hiding, meditates on his destiny. It seems London is obviously allegorizing the man's name for thematic impact when he portrays Fortune as feeling that:

"Life's a shin-game, chance. I was faked in my birth and flim-flammed with my mother's milk. The dice were loaded when she toed the boz, and I was born to prove the loss."*48*

The murder of John in Fortune's own account is enunciated in classic deterministic terms:

"All worked out, every bit of it, all park filling snug. Before I was born, like as not I'll put the sack I never hope to get on it, before I was born. That's why."*49*

The story draws to an end, with both deciding to draw cards to see who will shoot first in a duel through which Uri seeks to revenge his friend, John. The duel is set, with lengthy sincere statements from Uri on the virtues of justice and on the virtues of his friend, John, who must be avenged. Fortune was best concerned about Uri's God as his concept was totally different from Uri's. "He did not know
much concerning Uri's God, but he believed in chance: Fortune feels while they drew the cards that surely "Chance [will] not desert him now", whereas the narrator [London] tells the reader, "chance had been very good to him [Fortune] already ... and if he tricked now he would have to pay it afterward." But Fortune loses the draw and is killed, and as he dies, the fatalist succumbs amid London's refrain: " Fortune did not whirl, but gay San Francisco dimmed and faded; and as the sun-bright snow turned blacker and blacker, he breathed his last malediction on the chance [will] he had misplayed." Thus we see that in the naturalist novels, the characters face both external and internal forces, and are thwarted by nature, making a mockery of the notion of free will, and at the same time according to a special status to fate and fatalism in the above writings. The operation of determinism is also seen in his first novel, *A Daughter of the Snows*, where he permits it in a very clear term but in a rather overrated and inflated way:

These be the ways of men, each as the sun shines upon him and the wind blows against him, according to his kind, and the seed of his father, and the milk of his mother. Each is the resultant of many forces, which should go to make a pressure mightier than he, and which moulds him in the predestined shape. But, with sound legs, under him, he may run away, and meet with a new pressure. He may continue running, each new pressure prodding him as he goes, until he dies, and his final form will be that predestined of the many pressures.*52*

The naturalistic element dominates London's writing;
especially his novella, *The Call of the Wild*, presents an account of Darwinian literature struggle-for-survival. Throughout this famous work, London who is drawing inferences about men in his "dog-heroes", tries to say that to leave the implications of his struggle-for-survival thesis in the realm of "lower" animals is to relegate the stories to mere animal adventures. Nevertheless the naturalistic complications of the novel accounts for the meaning of the work.

The plot of *The Call of the Wild* needs no elaboration because of its wide-spread popularity. In short, Buck, a magnificent Californian dog, is kidnapped from his owner: Judge Miller's ranch, and sold into Alaska to become a sled-dog in the gold rush. Here in Alaska through numerous exposures to hardships and encounters with the "wild", he recognizes his affinity to it and finally reverts to his primordial state.

Buck learns fast the ways of survival. His transition in the initial chapter, "Into the Primitive" is clearly seen when he recognizes the difference between the cold world of Alaska and the warmth of the South. He quickly learns to adjust and adapt himself to the new situation. He recognizes a new "law" when he sees it. He comes to respect "the law of club and fang":

He saw, once for all, that he stood no chance against man with a club. He had learned the lesson, and in all
his after life he never forget it. That club was revelation. It was his introduction to the reign of primitive law, and be met the introduction halfway. The facts of life took on a fierier aspect, and while he faced that aspect uncowed, he faced it with all the latent cunning of his nature aroused.*53*

Buck is abruptly jerked away from the heart of civilizations into the wild of Alaska to witness and experience nature's external struggle-for-survival. Curly, a raw hand to Alaska, while making friendly overtures to a husky, is quickly struck and knocked down. No sooner, she was down, the packs closed on in her, "she was buried screaming with agony beneath the bristling mass" of huskies who had been sketching the unequal fight. Watching this Buck's mind quickly reaches its first conclusion:

So that was the way. No fair play. Once down, that was the end of you. Well, he would see to it that he never want down. Spitz ran at his tongue and laughed*, again, and from that moment Buck hated him with a bitter and deathless hatred."*54*

The inevitable, bloody showdown between Buck and Spitz for leadership comes out in one of the best chapter of the novella, "The Dominant Primordial Beast". "It was inevitable that the elosch for leadership should come. Buck wanted it. He wanted it because it was his nature ....." The materlistic philosophy so prominent in the naturalistic school of thought is epitomized by London in his enulting in the joy of living, the joy of life for its own sake through Buck, who is also "mastered by the verb 'to live'." Buck finds the life urge, the sense of impulse the will to live.
dominating all else.

There is an ecstasy that marks the summit of life, and beyond which life cannot arise. And such is the paradox of living, this ecstasy comes when one is most alive, and it comes as a complete forgetfulness that one is alive. He was mastered by the sheer surging of life, the tidal wave of being, the perfect joy of each separate muscle, joint and sinew and that it was everything that was not death, that is was aglow and rampant, expressing itself in movement, flying exaltingly under the stars and over the face of dead matter that did not move.*56*

The materialistic view fuses men and animal into one representing the struggle as a life-urge, with the impulse arising out of self-forgetfulness. While the reader is yet to come out of this materialistic philosophy, the next passage presents the theme of survival of the fittest, in the fight to death for leadership between Spitz and Buck. Buck instantly knew the meaning where Spitz attacked:

In a flash Buck knew it. The time had come. It was to the death. As they circled about, snarling, ears laid back, keenly watching for the advantage, the scene came to Buck with a sense of familiarity. He seemed to remember it all. - the white woods, and earth, and moonlight, and the thrill of battle .... To Buck it was nothing new or strange, this scene of old time. It was as though it had always been. He wanted way of things.*57*

The battle which is bloody and an ugly affair is won by Buck because of his imagination. No doubt London is not explicit in arguing for survival, as the motivation for Buck's fight, but it is certainly implicit in all that Buck does from the first encounter with Spitz, even the capture of the rabbit is an epitome to the encounter between Buck
and Spitz. The story is constructed on the theme of survival of the fittest.

The strongest comment on survival and adaptability that London makes in this novella, and which is most forcefully illustrated, is on the deaths of Charles Mercedes and her brother, Hal. These three had come to Alaska in prospect of gold but as they had failed to leave behind the comfort and convenience of the life of the South they perish. Without a sense of economy or the will to work and endure hardship themselves, they overwork, starve and beat their dogs and in general are incapable and blind to the needs of their environment. Eventually from sheer selfishness, stupidity and ineptitude, they drown. In the same way London describes the dissertation of an old bull moose by his younger followers, as one old incapacitated life was not important, but the lives of the young and strong did matter. In short, just as Hal, Charles and Mercedes plunge to their deaths, because they are unfit to survive in the hostile North, so the old bull moose is left to be killed because he is no longer fit to survive. It is seen that the naturalism characterizing the novella is not consistently developed but it will be good to remember that neither is the naturalism always of a rigid, definable pattern and to make a rigid, categorical assertions about naturalism will only lead to technical difficulties.

Thematic analysis of naturalism and its tenderness
originating from Darwinian concepts are most effectively elaborated in the novel, *White Fang*; the story of a wolf that becomes a dog. Thematically, the novel is a graphic presentation of naturalism wherein the familiar story of a survival of the fittest in a wild terrain is presented. A parallel is noted in the ending of *The Call of the Wild* and the beginning of *White Fang*. Buck realizes that he belongs to the wild when he tracks down and kills a bull moose, the clinging terror of the being detailed. In a similar ritualistic incident, before Fang is born, it is pointed out:

Then they come upon moose. It was a big bull they first found. Here was meat and life, and it was guarded by no mysterious fires nor flying missiles of flame. Splay hoofs and patmed antlers they knew and they flung their customary patience and caution to the wind. It was a brief fight and fierce. The big bull was beset on every side. He ripped them open or split their skins with shrewdly driven them into snow under him in the wallowing struggle. But he was foredoomed, and he went down with the she-wolf savagely at his throat, and with other teeth fixed everywhere upon him, devouring him alive, before ever his last struggles ceased or his last damage had been wrought.*58*

It is in such a world that Fang is born which shows nature's primordial and savage splendor. The setting is not new, this land of White Silence, where nature is personified throughout as the "wild", the greatest enemy of both men and the beast. Nature, the inscrutable force, must be fought against day and night, for the survival of any life. Here every living being whether it is man or beast faces the onslaught of the "hostile environment" and where pressures
from every side dictate its creatures survival. The landscape of Fang's world in its hostility and its cold indifference is picturized as follows:

A vast silence reigned over the land. The land itself was a desolation. lifeless, without movement, so lone and cold that the spirit of it was not even that of sadness. There was a lint in it of laughter, but of a laughter more terrible than any sadness—a laughter that was mirthless as the smile of the Sphinx, a laughter cold as the frost and partaking of the grimness of infallibility. It was the masterful and incommunicable wisdom of eternity laughing at the futility of life and effort of life. It was the wild, the savage, frozen hearted North land wild.

This silence—dark and omniscient—the White Silence—impresses upon men their finiteness:

On every side was the silence, pressing upon them with a tangible pressure. It affected their minds as the many atmospheres of deep water affect the body of the diver. It crushed them with the weight of unending vastness and unalterable decree. It crushed them into the remotest recesses of their own minds, pressing out of them, like juices from the grape, all the false orders and exaltations and undue self-values of the human soul. until they perceived themselves finite and small, speaks and motes, moving with weak cunning and little wisdom midst the play and interplay of the great blind elements and forces.*60*

But even in such a silence there was life, a pack of wolves trailing the two men whom the wild was yet to overcome. No doubt the wild resents the pressure of movement, yet the two trappers, Bill and Charlie, are
passing through this same wild, not knowing that life is momentary in this wild. In this regard their comment, at the death of their dog, Fatty, who is devoured by the pack, is prophetic. It is in such a setting that the writers' use of naturalism tries to explore the plight of man's insignificance in a vast, uninstructable universe.

Part I of the novel shows the setting where the hungry wolf pack nearly kills the man. In a series of tensely described episodes the man fight off the pack of wolves, who devours the trappers' dogs one by one and wait patiently for the hostile environment to overcome the trappers, to devour them too. Charlie survives the nightmare but London implies that men do not belong in the land of White Silence. It is a bleak, desolate and merciless world where the wolves live and where nature works her woe on all trespassers. It is the world where Fang is born and where also the three year old suitor of Fang's mother meets the same fate as Curly in *The Call of the Wild*. The battle for Fang's mother pleasure is but another "law" of survival in the wild, and its victors, like Buck, find the summit of living gratifying:

She was made glad in vague ways by the battle, for this was the lovemaking of the wild, the sex-tragedy of the natural world that the tragedy only to those that died. To those that survived it was not tragedy, but realization and achievement."61"

The eventual victor, Fang's father, One-Eye, makes home with the she-wolf.

Perhaps one of the most thorough analytic study of the
survival of the fittest and natural selection thesis in London’s fiction is given in an episode later in the same day. In order to procure food for the family meal, One-Eye first catches a ptarmigan and then wait hours for a better game, the lynx. Here London views the science in the most objective manner as if witnessing the scene in a zoo:

He lay down in the snow, depositing the ptarmigan beside him, and with eyes peering through the needles of a low-growing spruce he watched the play of life before him - the waiting lynx and the waiting porcupine, each intent on life; and, such was the curiousness of the game, the way of life for one lay in the eating of the other, and the way of life for the other lay in being not eaten. While Old-Eye, the wolf, crouching in the covert, played his part, too, in the game, waiting for some strange freak of chance, that might help him on the meat-trail which was his way of life. *62*

It is in such a world that Fang is born and where the white fangs of hunger can turn any flesh into food. It is a world dominated by creatures of instinct who recognize that happiness is momentary and to live one has to kill. Fang’s initiation into the ritual of his world, reiterates the naturalistic concern with physical survival. The wolf’s world is that of Silence, the cold, with the savage Northland wild, being ruled by the harsh “Law of meat”. The instinctive, non-reasoning law of the universe, Fang learns while going on the meat hunts with his mother, is to kill or to be killed. This is the law of life:

The aim of life was meat. Life itself was meat. Life lived on life. There were the eaters and the eaten. The law was: EAT OR BE EATEN. He did not formulate the law
in clear, set terms and moralize about it. He did not even think the law; he merely lived the law without thinking about it at all.*63*

The cub has learnt the lesson to live with the wild. He is capable of surviving and conquering in this realm. Fang learns a corollary law of the fang, the law of club through the "man-animal" chapter where he realizes that adaptability to the environment is his best bet for survival. The survival tactic continues as lip-lip, parallel to Spitz in *The Call of the Wild*, becomes his personal enemy. He also learns that he must forage for his food and become a clever thief. He slowly and steadily learns and adapts himself to the environment and also learns to oppress the weak and obey the strong. No doubt the Darwinian and Spencerian motifs are not clearly discussed, except as London wishes to impress his readers in his own way. The novel's importance is felt in its parallels with the much superior work, *The Call of the Wild*; yet the dominant theme in the novel, one feels, is more naturalistic in concept than with any other genre in which the novel can be classified.

London's first collection of short stories, *The Son of the Wolf*, introduces the survival motif. This particular idea was to be used by London in its protean form in his writings whether be it the short stories or the novels. Environment plays a dominant role in London's naturalistic heroes as they must adopt themselves in order to survive. This inter-relationship between man and nature is of central
importance in London's fiction. The Darwinian "animals", the characters in London's Northland stories, learn the lesson well, either adopt themselves to the environment or perish. This relationship is vividly pictured in the beginning of "In a Far Country".

When a man journeys into a far country, he must be prepared to forget many things he has learned, and to acquire such customs as are inherent with existence in the new land; he must abandon the old ideals and the old gods and oftentimes he must reverse the very codes by which his conduct has hitherto been shaped. To those who have the protean faculty of adaptability, the novelty of such change may even be a source of pleasure, but to those who happen to be hardened to the ruts in which they are created, the pressure of the altered environment is unbearable, and they chafe in body and in spirit under the new restrictions which they do not understand. This chafing is bound to act and react, producing diverse evils and leading to various misfortunes. It were better for the man who cannot fit himself to the new groove, to return to his own country: if they delay so long, he will surely die.  

The survival motif dominates the action in no less than ten of the first twenty-five stories, and it is implicit in almost all the stories. In his later stories, London includes the species too in the survival thesis, whereas in his first stories it is basically individual whose survival is presented. "The White Silence". "In a Far Country" shows how nature with its own tricks overcomes the protagonist. Nature has no regard for those who fail to adapt themselves and finally they are overcome. as Mason, the traveller, in the form of a tree which falls on him and the two men from the "older" civilization, who are also subdued by nature, in the later story. London makes clear in
these stories that the "law of survival" permeates all levels of existence. In "The White Silence", London's hero of the Alaskan tales, Malemute kid's dogs when weakened in their traces are devoured by the more stronger of them. They even turn on men, when they fail to subsist on their own ration, to survive. The survival motif is stated in its simplest terms, when Malemute kid returns from his forage for food, to find his dogs attacking the provisions:

Bursting into the camp ..... [Malemute] saw the girl in the midst of the snarling pack, laying about her with an axe. The dogs had broken the iron rule of their masters and were rushing the grub. He joined the issue with his rifle reversed, and the heavy game of natural selection was played out with all the ruthlessness of its primeval environment. Rifle and axe went up and down, hit, or missed with monotonous regularity: little bodies flashed, with wild eyes and dripping fangs; and men and beast fought for supremacy to the bitterest conclusion. Then the beaten brutes crept to the edge of the fire-light licking their wounds, voicing their misery to the stars. *65*

It is seen that only the fittest survive either nature's or man's attack, as both are a part of the evolutionary process and are forced to obey the laws of survival. In another story, "The Son of the Wolf", the survival-oriented plot shows the protagonist, Scruff Mackenzie's desire to have an Indian maiden, Zarinska, for his wife. In order to have his desire fulfilled, he has to fight Fox, the medicine man who claims that his black magic can subdue the white man. Finally the two are engaged in a physical battle for survival, with the entire fight being a re-enactment of the survival thesis:
Time and again... [Meckenzie] was forced from the edge of the fire to the deep snow, and time again, with the foot tactics of the bugiliest, he worked back to the centre. Not a voice was lifted in encouragement, while his antagonist was heartened with applause, suggestions, and warnings... At first he felt compassion for his enemy; but this fled before the primal instinct of life, which in turn gave away to the last of slaughter. The ten thousand years of culture fell from him; and he was a cave-dweller, doing battle for his female.*66*

The survival tendency is pictured as inherent, as animal instinct. In "Jan, the Unrepentent", Jan on being found out of being guilty of having killed a man flees for his life and while being pursued, his instinct for survival seems to give him courage:

Jan ran blindly, reckoning not of the way of his feet, for he was mastered by the verb "to live". To exist, Buck flashed gray through the air, but missed. The man struck madly at him, and stumbled. Then the white teeth of Bright closed on his mackinaw jacket, and he pitched into the snow. To live! To Exist! He fought wildly as ever, the centre of a tossing heap of men and dogs.*67*

These stories portend a pattern of naturalistic thought that permeates the greater part of Jack London's writings after 1902.

The naturalistic writings took the soft, aesthetic sufferers and placed them in primitive surrounding where they were reinvigorated with purpose, direction and will to live. Such plots usually involved taking the protagonist away from the city-over civilization to the country, or the high seas, or the Klondike-the frontier-where the veneer of civilization fell away from the aesthetic and they were reborn in the
image of an earlier social type: the self-made man, becoming revitalized and healed. Jack London not only wrote about the Northland, but his writings also deal with life at sea where naturalism is brought to the fore. In a consideration of Wolf Larsen in The Sea-Wolf and others, London's characterizations of these people as demoniacs should be kept in mind. Samuel Shivers carefully defines the term demoniac in reference to London's characters as "a being of tremendous energy and determination who at the same time is possessed of an intensely evil quality.... such a person is not tangible or ghostly but very real and is driven by devilish impulses against which he does not struggle, as if he had no moral conscience or God-given sense of direction." He goes on to say that the demoniacs are conceived along bestial lines in order that the actions of the characters proceed from a biological basis. When this is not completely possible, London emphasizes the primacy of debased "Wille Zur Macht" combined with a Darwinian "survival of fittest" concept. Therefore, the use of the demoniac as exemplified in many respects by the bestial imagery, is an important aspect of the naturalism presented by Jack London.

The chief elements of the London demoniac are:
1. He or it is a personification of instincts or passions;
2. The energy and drive are enormous, making the character almost unconquerable in one respect or another;
3. The animal, beastly qualities are emphasized, especially
those equipping one to survive in the heartless world of natural competition:

4. There is no conscience or moral reflection:

5. There is an *idée fixe* in most cases:

6. The demoniac has a fine body, keen mind and a strong unrelenting will.

The demoniac as a facet of naturalism concerns Wolf Larsen, the main protagonist in the novel. The *Sea-Wolf* and captain of the sealing craft, *The Ghost*. The protagonists in the naturalistic novels are made to face both the external and internal forces, even social forces invades the self wherein the forces of instinct and heredity are embodied. The characters’ freedom is assaulted by both nature and society, as well as internal and external forces. The novel opens up in an apparently safe, civilized setting of a ferry steamer crossing San Francisco Bay. The journey is seen through the eyes of Humphrey Van Weyden, an educated privileged character and also a literary character. He is abruptly made to realize that the problems of navigation which he considered as simple as A,B,C is not so simple as he had thought, but rather complex. Neither is the law of nature so simple and easily controlled, as he had been thinking. He is brought face to face with harsh realities of life when his steamer collides and sinks. Van Weydon’s experience of shipwreck is above all one of helplessness as he is confronted with a situation in which he has no control. By chance he is rescued by the sealing-ship. The
Ghost, where he is made to enter the realm of force when he comes out of his stupor. He becomes Hump from Van Weydon and we note that by force he has been precipitated into the brutal world of the seal hunting ship where he must submit to its captain, Wolf Larsen. Here on this hunting ship nothing but force held the strongest sway and everybody was in its grip. Hump is enslaved by Larsen as he is refused to be put ashore, instead two reasons are given by Larsen for this behavior. He states that the hard experience of being shanghaied and put to rough usage will make a man out of the bookish "molly coddle", and then it is to his personal benefit to have Van Weydon serve under him. Shivers essential elements of a demoniac is fulfilled by Wolf Larsen.

The name Wolf is by no accident. as time and again throughout the novel Larsen’s resemblance to a beast is explicitly stated. His strength was that which “we are won’t to associate with things primitive.... a strength savage, ferocious, alive in itself.... in short that which wretches as in the body of a snake when the head is cut off.” “The jaw, the chin, the brow rising to a goodly height and swelling heavily above the eyes-these, while strong in themselves, unusually strong seemed to speak an immense vigor or virility of spirit that by behind and beyond and not of sight” Inspite of his massive strength, he once sprang to this deck with the weight and softness of a tiger.

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He is personified as a man of instincts on being infuriated
by Hump:

".... until the whole man of him was snarling. The
dark sun-bronze of his face went black with wrath. His
eyes were ablaze. There was no clearness or sanity in
them, nothing but the terrific rage of a madman. It was
the wolf in him that I [Hump] saw, and a mad wolf at
that."*72*

The animal qualities of Larsen is presented when he was on
the point of attacking Johnson while sitting down three
yards away from him.

Nine feet! And yet he left the chair in full leap,
without first going a standing position. He left the
chair, just as he sat in it, squarely, springing from
the sitting posture like a wild animal, a tiger, and
like a tiger covered the intervening space.*73*

London is also explicit concerning Larsen’s conscience or
moral reflection and lack of it. There is no moral
persuasion on the ship, it is simply ruled by brute force.
Larsen chides Hump in one of their conversation when the
word 'ethics' is mentioned by him but instead reminds him
that he is hearing the word for the first time and does not
believe in such things as right or wrong. He further
elaborates his feeling that right is right and that weakness
is wrong. No doubt Larsen has obviously read and studied
some philosophy but he only adopts those which are suitable
to his needs and desires. Larsen cites Spencer who says that
man must act first for his own benefit, then for the benefit
of his children and finally for the benefit of his race, but
Larsen has different views: "I wouldn't stand for that.
Couldn't see the necessity for it, nor the common sense I cut out of the race and the children. I would sacrifice nothing for them".

Larsen is a true embodiment of the naturalistic school of thought. He is a perfect incarnation of a demoniac as seen through the eyes of Hump:

He was certainly a handsome man-beautiful in the masculine sense. And again, with never-failing wonder, I remarked the total lack of viciousness, or wickedness, or sinfulness in his face. It was the face, I am convinced, of a man who did no wrong. And by this I do not wish to be misunderstood. What I mean is that it was the face of a man who either did nothing contrary to the dictates of his conscience or who had no conscience. I am inclined to the latter way of accounting for it. He was a magnificent atavism, a man purely primitive that he was of the type that came into the world before the development of the moral nature. He was not immoral, but merely unmoral.*75*

He also feels that Hump is capable of doing great things in the world but only then when Hump is able to rid himself of conscience and moral instinct.

Larsen 'idée fixe' is success in seal hunting. He is not bothered how he attains that success and thus tolerates the hunters as they are necessary. "He frankly states that the position he takes is based on no moral grounds that all the hunters could kill and eat one another so far as he is concerned were it not that he needs them alive for the hunting". For Larsen it is desire which decides and conscience has no place in his thinking. He states this by giving an example:
Here is a man who wants to, say, get drunk. Also, he doesn’t want to get drunk. What does he do? How does he do it? He is a puppet. He is the creature of his desires, and of the two desires he obeys the strongest one, that is all. His soul hasn’t anything to do with it. How can he be tempted to get drunk and refuse to get drunk? If the desire to remain sober prevails, it is because it is the strongest desire. Temptation plays no part.... he is tempted to remain sober.”77"

No matter what Hump says, he fails to sway Larsen from his ideas. Larsen sees just one objective in life—to kill and not to be killed: his physical strength is devoted to this end, presenting a great similarity with Buck. Hump does not try to refute Larsen’s ideas when he says: "I had seen the mechanism of the primitive fighting beast, and I was as strongly impressed as if I had seen the engines of a great battleship or Atlantic liner". On being asked by Hump in what he believes, Larsen sums up his philosophy of life:

"I believe that life is a mess. It is like yeast, a ferment, a thing that moves and may move for a minute, an hour, a year, or a hundred years, but that in the end will cease to move. The big eat the little that they may continue to move, the strong eat the weak that they may retain their strength. The lucky eat the most and move the longest. that is all."79"

Larsen has no effect of killing on him, he simply takes them as part of survival motif. He stands no one who came in his way towards his goal; he simply killed them. Wolf Larsen is the protagonist in a naturalist universe whereas Humphrey Van Weydon its antagonist. To sum up, Wolf Larsen is the virile embodiment of the contradiction which C.C. Walcutt identifies in his book, American Literary Naturalism: A
Divided Stream and says that the contradictions in naturalistic writing have in them:

The tension between hope and despair, between rebellion and apathy, between defying nature and submitting to it, between celebrating men's impulses and trying to educate them, between embracing the universe and regarding its dark abysses with terror.*80*

Naturalism in Martin Eden, as elsewhere mingles with many other genres and many of the elements of naturalism are also self-consciously examined within Martin Eden itself. In dealing with the naturalism projected in the story, it is well to keep in mind Emile Zola's impressions of the function and structure of that literary form. He states that: "by naturalism.... is meant the experimental method, the introduction of observation and experiment into literature.... to possess a knowledge of the mechanism of the phenomena inherent in men, to show the machinery of his intellectual and sensory manifestations, under the influence of heredity and environment such as physiology shall give them to us, and then finally to exhibit man living in social conditions produced by himself, which he modifies daily, and in the heart of which he himself, experiences a continual transformation." An important component of this is the idea of scientific causation which Zola asserts as:

"an animate body possesses merely the ordinary, external environment, while the essence of the higher organism is set in an internal and perfected environment endowed with constant psycho-chemical properties exactly like the external environment; hence there is an absolute determinism in the existing conditions of natural phenomena.... determinism [is]
the cause which determines the appearance of these phenomena."

At the very beginning of the book, the image of the beast is evoked when the sailor, Martin Eden, enters the bourgeois home of the Morses. It is the brute in him and the power that signifies, to which Ruth is drawn.

Her gaze rested for a moment on the muscular neck, heavy corded, almost bull-like, bronzed by the sun, spilling over with rugged health and strength.... It seemed to her that if she could lay her hands upon the neck that all its strength and vigor would flow out to her."

The plot shows Martin Eden educating himself for the hand of Ruth. Finally attaining the social status as a writer and in the process giving up his naturalistic philosophy and turning to altruism which in turn leads him to the feeling of emptiness and eventually to suicide. Jay Gurian feels that Martin Eden is a romantic hero and that the romantic hero is necessary to literacy naturalism:

In sum, Martin Eden, is London's fullest working out of the naturalist philosophy because Martin enacts the truth-and-consequences dialectic of the causative natural force which denies abstract morality and deity. Martin is the private vision of the naturalist universe—his own romance of naturalism. Without a Martin to storm this universe, conquer its obstacles, and look around from its summit to find nothing, London would have been writing merely a biological, sociological and faintly psychological essay."

Thus the writings discussed above has the element of naturalism, wherein men and animals are seen both within and outside their natural habitat, trying to adapt to their
environment for survival. Perhaps the sharpest and strongest image of London's powerful, contradictory articulation of naturalism and the domestic formula is the conclusion of *White Fang*, in which the domesticated wolf is not only guardian of the human household but in a bizarre parody of the ideal family, is himself the head of a canine household. Finally, one must note that to read London with the expectation of a consistent naturalism is to invite disappointment, as tension were one of the most fundamental themes of American fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. There is a fruitful tension between the naturalistic impulse, with its emphasis on society and environment and the romantic impulse, which emphasizes the power of the exceptional individual to act on his own in the naturalistic writing of this period.

**RACISM**

Many critics have pointed out the racist propaganda in London's writings. For instance, while talking of London's "manifest" racism, Richard Vandeerbeets describes one of the stories, as a "racist pygmalion" in London's collection of short stories, *The Son of the Wolf*.

The presence of racism and the justification of Anglo-Saxon superiority by London was the working of the milieu of late nineteenth and early twentieth century America. The concept of racial superiority was an accepted part of
sociological opinion of the age. To witness the age, we take a passage from the introduction to Theodore Roosevelt's *The Winning of the West* (1889), a history that drew praise from such luminaries as Francis Parkman and Alfred Thayer Mahan:

The most ultimately righteous of all wars is a war with savages, though it is apt to be also the most terrible and inhuman. The rude, fierce, settler drove the savage from the land lays all civilized mankind under a debt to him. American and Indian, Boer and Zulu, Cossack and Tertar, New Zelander and Maori—in each case the victor, horrible though many of his deeds are, has laid deep the foundations for the future greatness of a mighty people... it is of incalculable importance that America, Australia, and Siberia should pass out of the hands of their red, black and yellow aboriginal owners, and become the heritage of the dominant world races.*85*

For London, the white man, especially the Anglo-Saxon, was the most "worthwhile", a theme which is reflected in his essays and letters.

[We] must come to understand that nature has no sentiment, no charity, no mercy; we are blind puppets at the play of great unreasoning forces; yet we may come to know the laws of some of the forces.... These forces generated the altruistic in man; the voice with the highest altruism will endure—the highest altruism considered from the standpoint of merciless natural law, which never conceives nor alters. The lesser breeds cannot endure. The Indian is an example, as is the black man of the Australian Bush, The South Sea Islander, the inhabitant of the sub-Artics, etc.*86*

London's racism had its basis in the moves and practices of his time, his introduction by his mother and in his misreading of evolutionary theory which convinced him that the Blacks as well as the Indians had stopped evolving and were thus an inferior race. They were in his estimation.
doomed to be passed by the evolutionary process. London’s primary source, for his philosophy of race, was Benjamin Kid (1858-1916) British Sociologist and author. Kid’s argument in his work Social Evolution and Principles of Western Civilization and his acceptance of the principle of natural selection and its application to society with the conclusion that the few superior individuals would naturally rule the society viçed with London’s thinking that the Anglo-Saxon “had been deeply affected, more deeply than many others, by the altruistic influences of the ethical system upon which our Western civilization is founded”. and because of its superiority, the Anglo-Saxon race was destined to prevail over weaker races as the irresistible law of evolution dictated this pitilessly.

He justified the mastery of these “inferior” people on the grounds that Anglo-Saxon were superior in both physical and mental powers and in spiritual qualities:

Back of our own great race adventure, back of our robberies by sea and land, our lusts and violent, and all the evil things we have done, there is a certain integrity, a sternness of conscience, a melancholy responsibility of life, a sympathy and comradeship and warm human feel, which is ours..... and which we cannot teach to the Oriental as we would teach logarithms or the trajectory of projectiles. That we have grouped for the way of right conduct and agonized over the soul betokens our spiritual endowment. Though we have strayed often from righteousness, the voice of the sages have always been raised, and we have larked back to the bidding of conscience. The coolest fact of our history is that we have made the religion of Jesus Christ our religion. No matter how dark in error or deed. ours has been a history of spiritual struggle and endeavor. We are preeminently a religious race. Which is another way of saying that we are a right-seeking
London's first novel, *A Daughter of the Snows*, shows the racial overtones in a number of places:

Competition was a secret of creation. Battle was the law and the way of progress. The world was made for the strong, and only the strong inherited it, and through it there ran an eternal equity. To be honest was to be strong. To sin was to weaken. ...we are a race of doers and fighters, of globe-encirclers and zone-conquerors.... All that the other races were not, the Anglo-Saxon, or Teuton if you please, is"...... Where nature shows the rough hand, the sons of men are apt to respond with kindered roughness. The amenities of life spring up only in mellow lands, where the sun is warm and the earth fat.... Thus, in the young Neatherland, frosty and grim and menacing, men stripped off the sloth of the south and gave battle greatly...."

The racist, imperialist ideology occurs between Froma and her sister, Vauce Carliss conversation as they witness the funeral cortege of one of the Neatherland pioneers:

A zone-conqueror", Froma broke voice. Carliss funnel his thought following hers and answered, "These battlers of frost and fighters of hunger! I can understand how the dominant races have come down out of the north to empire-Strong to venture, strong to endure, with infinite faith and infinite patience, is it to be wondered at?"

She expresses her belief in the superiority of the White man over the natives, pointing out that the white man had always been able to beat the Indian. The racial ideology is present in Froma Welse right from the beginning of the novel till it ends. She is the "pride of her race" and her pride is easily aroused at the scornful comment of the Indian packers that she will be afraid to cross the treacherous river on an
unsteady log. The source of her pride is an inherited quality which she got from her father, Jacob Weise, one of London's first great individualists who dominates men and environment by combination of physical strength, crude intelligence and force of will. Frona's father is a perfect picture presenting racial overtones. He is a mighty trader of the North, describing the code of the strong:

Conventions are worthless for such as we. They are for the swine who without them would wallow deeper. The weak obey or be crushed; not so with the strong. The mass is nothing; the individual everything; and it is the individual, always, that rules the mass and gives the law."91"

Frona in very respect is Jacob's child. Racism is also pointed out by the captain of the police, who turns to a certainty and being not very specific, that the white man is the greatest and best breed in the world.

Race, however, is a motif in almost all of London's earlier stories of Alaska. The Anglo-Saxon race-supremacy's portrayal is elaborated at its best in "The God of His Fathers". The story is set in the Northland primitive, culture, which was just awakening to the new iron age. Hay Stockard, his Indian wife, and child alongwith his companion gold-seeker, Bill, are in an Indian camp trying to get an assurance from Baptiste the Red, an independent dignified but hostile half-breed chief, that his tribe will not molest them in their prospect for gold up the uncharted Kovukuk river. While the arrangement is in progress, they are joined
by another white man, a fanatical, self-righteous priest. Strugis Owen. A new turn takes place with the arrival of the priest, as Baptist the Red refuses to let them pass unless they renounce the Christian God whom he hates because priests had refused to legitimize his birth; to solemnize his marriage to a white woman and to punish the culprit who had raped and killed his daughter. Strugis Owen refuses to blaspheme and out of race pride the non-religious Stockard refuses to hand over the missionary for torture. A bloody battle ensues and in the end Hay Stockard and Bill, the incarnation of the unrest of their race, being killed, a martyr to "The God of His Fathers",-their race. with Owen recanting to save his life and presenting the shallowness of priesthood in general. Here race is the dominant theme. Race is the true God:

[Strugis Owen's] courage, if courage it might be called, was bred of fanaticism. The courage of Stockard and Bill was the adherence to deep rooted ideals. Not that the love of life was less, but the love of race tradition more, not that they were unafraid to die, but that they were not brave enough to live at the price of shame.*92*

So Hay Stockard became the genuine martyred "missionary"—perhaps the missionary of his race. Stockard's last words may be interpreted in a number of ways. ".... the God of my fathers" could mean that Stockard, under the exigency of circumstances was granted a significant realization of God; or the statement could be mainly a defiance; or the meaning could be a combination of defiance and a significant
realization of God. But probably "The God of my fathers" means that Stockard's "God" is the inevitable destiny of his race:

"... already, over unknown trails and chartless wilderness, were the harbingers of the steel arriving,—fair-faced, blue-eyed indomitable men, incarnations of the unrest of their race.... So many.... race be achieved.*93*

In "Wisdom of the Trail" for example, Mrs. Eppingwell is capable of her Anglo-Saxon heritage and Charlie can practice the code because he has learned the "honor of the new law" from the whites and is, therefore, superior to his Indian companions. The race martyrdom is again employed in "The League of Old Men", where the race theme is echoed in the judge's thought at the end of Imber's trail for murdering scores of white adventurers but at the same time it reveals the judge's admiration for the Indian too:

"... all his [the judge's] race rose up before him in the mighty phantasmagoria his steel-shod, mail-clad race, the law-giver and world-maker among the families of men. He saw it dawn red-flickering across the dark forests and sullen seas; he saw it blaze. bloody and red, to full and triumphant moon; and down the shaded slope he saw the blood-red sands dropping into night. And through it all he observed the law, pitiless and potent, ever answering and ever ordering, greater than the motes of men who fulfilled it or were crushed by it, even as it was greater than he, his heart speaking for softness.*94*

"Keesh, the Son of Keesh" is similar in theme to "The League of Old Men" and it dramatizes the loss of racial identity as the non-whites fall before Anglo-Saxon superiority. London's assertion of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon is depicted
by devoting an entire story to focus on this concept. In "The Great Interrogation", Karen Sayther is London's voice for his racism. Attempting to lure David Payne back to civilization with her and away from his Indian maiden, Mrs. Sayther's plea is purely racist:

Come, Dave you must see. She is not your kind. There is no race affinity. She is an aborigine, sprung from the soil.... But we - you and I - the dominant, evolved race - the salt of the earth and the masters thereof! We are made for each other.\textsuperscript{95}

Literally, race theory had the advantage of allowing London to continue some of his best practices, as the age in which he lived had a strong influence on the thinking of the people. London's visit of the Hawaiian Islands brought forth the story, "The House of Pride" which depicts race prejudice in Hawaii and his experience in the islands of the South Sea reinforced his racial theories, particularly the superiority of the white man - a thesis which finds expression in many of the South Sea Tales:

When one considers the situation, one is almost driven to the conclusion that the white race flourished on impurity and corruption. Natural Selection, however, gives the explanation. We of the white race are the survivors in the war with the microorganisms.... Only those of us survived who could withstand them. We who are alive are the immune, the fit-the ones best constituted to live in a world of hostile micro-organism. The poor Meraeusens had undergone no such selection. They were not immune.\textsuperscript{96}

Racism is also seen in these lines of South South Sea Tales:

A man needs only to be careful-and lucky-to live a long
time in the solomons; but he must also be of the right sort. He must have the wall-mark of the inevitable white man stamped upon his soul.... He must have a certain ground carelessness of odds, a certain colossal self-satisfaction, and a racial egotism that convinces him that one white man is better than a thousand niggers every day in the week, and that on Sunday he is able to clean out two thousand niggers. For such are the things that have made the white man inevitable. Oh, and one other thing—the white man who wishes to be inevitable, must not merely despise the lesser breeds and think a lot of himself; he must also fail to be too long on imagination. He must not understand too well the instincts, customs, and mental processes of the blacks, the yellows, and the browns; for it is not in such fashion that the white race has tramped its royal road around the world.*97*

London’s later works written during the period 1911 and 1917 has strong overtones of racism too. He stresses the racial attitudes through the psychological and quasi-religious nature of Saxon, the main protagonist in his novel, *The Valley of the Moon*. His Anglo-Saxon supremacist preachings is especially blatant in other works of this period, such as *Adventurer*, *The Mutiny of the Elsinore*, *Jerry of the Islands*, and *Michael, Brother of Jerry*. London’s support of American imperialism in the case of Mexican Revolution reflected his Anglo-Saxonism and his racism was as rampant as before when he openly advocated imperialism and blamed the whole Mexican fracas on a few mixed breeds:

Mexico must be saved from herself. What Mexico really needs is to be saved from the insignificant portion of her half-breeds who are causing all the trouble. They should not form the government at all. And yet they are the very ones who insist on forming it, and they cannot be eliminated by those who should form it, namely the twelve million peons and the nearly three million peaceably inclined half-breeds.*98*
London often used "Law-giver" in the sense of imposing a Nordic code of race supremacy upon civilized or under-civilized cultures (Alaskan, tropical or Mexican). The above phrase was the title of an article extolling the power of Americans in Mexico. Further in another article, "The Yellow Peril", he has affirmed his belief in the essentially ethical character of the Anglo-Saxon and of Western civilization: which is already quoted above. We note, his racism was even present at the fag end of his life when he asserted his belief that the mass of men must be ruled by the few. In his short story, "The Bones of Kahekili", written just five months before his death:

"I will answer you", said Hardman Pool. "It is because most men are fools, and therefore must be taken care of by the few men who are wise. Such is the secret of chieftainship. In all the world that has been have there ever been chiefs, who must say to the many fool men: 'Do this; do not do that. Work and work as we tell you, or your bellies will remain empty and you will perish. Obey the laws we set you or you will be beasts and without place in the world. You must not kill one another, and you must leave your neighbors' wives alone. All this life for you, because you think but one day at a time, while we, your chiefs, think for you all days and for days ahead.'"*99*

DEHUMANIZATION AND ALIENATION

The advent of industrialization brought along with it many evils which lead to the debasement of human beings. Early nineteenth-century was a world which was not only
harsh and cruel but also rationalized its cruelty under the guise of "economic law". The world was run by economic laws and economic laws were nothing with which one could trifle with; they were simply there, and to rail about whatever injustices might be tossed up as an unfortunate consequence of their working was as foolish as to lament the ebb and flow of the tides. The laws did look inviolable and yet the State of society for which they were held responsible were intolerable. This was a situation prevailing all over the world where industrialization had taken the country in its grip, even America was not free from such symptom. The industrialized and commercialized world of the late nineteenth century in America was dominated by the proliferation of factories, machines and the financial tycoons. The culmination of industrial capitalism aroused hostility, fear, and protest in the minds of the middle class and the working class, because their prospects of good livelihood and independence were hampered by unscrupulous monopolizers. Rapid mechanization brought many evils along with it. As a result of the growth of industrial Capitalism, the picture of "calamitous industrialization" was seen everywhere and Leo Marx has commented upon it thus:

"Mechanization, both literally and metaphorically means disharmony. It separates the people from the lovely green landscape which has, or ought to have, a primary place in their thought and feeling. Between man and nature it threatens to impose an ugly depressing and inhuman community." *100*
Many discordant notes appeared in the mechanized social order of the day. A pervasive sense of gross acquisitiveness prevailed everywhere in the country, particularly in the cities where the corruptive and exploitative practices stemming from commercial profiteering increased.

As such, it is apparent, the declining civilization of the later nineteenth century in the United States suffered from acquisitive, exploitative and divisive forces working vigorously in the social order of the day. It found expression in the rise of the labour movement, confrontation between labour and capital. There was never ending poverty among the workers, like wretched housing conditions, low wages, long hours and unsanitary working conditions, exploitation of child labour by the ruthless, inhuman industrial and financial tycoons. Unfortunately, the biggest evil of industrialism appeared in the form of a conflict in the relationship of industrialists and wage-labourers. An ordinary wage-laborer became a cog in the huge machinery and was dwarfed by its presence. The wage-labourer emerged as a tool to serve the capitalist, and in the process became devoid of independent thinking, initiative and human feelings. In the process of "mechanization", the wage-labourer lost his identity and inward impulses, and became mechanical in head and heart. Ultimately, the depression which grips him (mind and feelings) leads him to a state of dehumanization.
Crane and Norris became pioneers in this art of exposing the reality but they failed in giving it an ultimate remedy for its betterment. It was Jack London, who no doubt not their equal, surpassed them by his sheer intensity of conviction and his great love for the working people and their aspirations. It was so because he knew the life of which he wrote, as he was one of them. Thus he was successful in transferring their lives in detail on the printed page with amazing accuracy and clarity.

Jack London projects and presents the dehumanization effects, arising out of the misuse of machine and money in a number of novels and stories: The People of the Abyss, Martin Eden, "The Apostate", "A Chinago", "Dream of Debs", "South of the Sloth" and "A Curious Fragment".

London published The People of the Abyss, an Orwellian study of the dehumanization effects of slum life in the capital city of England, in 1903. He gives a reporter’s account of what he witnessed in one of the most prosperous cities of the world. Throughout the novel he stresses with amazement the fact that British slum dwellers were more degraded and more helpless than in any of America’s most destitute areas. He goes further by stating that the English poor’s’ very manhood had been destroyed—that their debasement was even observable in their physical appearance:

"Nowhere in the streets of London may one escape the
sight of abject poverty, while five minutes walk from almost any point will bring one to a slum; but the region my hansom was new penetrating was one unending slum. The streets were filled with a new and different race of people, short of stature, and of wretched or bear-sodden appearance. We rolled along through miles of bricks and squalor, and from each cross street and alley flashed long vistas of bricks and misery. Here and there lurched a drunken man or woman, and the air was obscene with sounds of jangling and squabbling. At a market, tottery old man and woman were searching in the garbage thrown in the mud for rotten potatoes, beans, and vegetables, which little children clustered like flies around a festering mass of fruit, thrusting their arms to the shoulders into the liquid corruption, and drawing forth morsels but partially decayed, which they devoured on the spot."

As the novel proceeds further, London begins to discuss this dehumanization process:

On the benches on either side arrayed a mass of miserable and distorted humanity, the right of which would have impelled Dore to more diabolical flights of fancy than he had ever succeeded in achieving. It was a welter of rags and filth, of all manner of loathsome skin diseases, open sores, bruises, grossness, indecency, leering monstrosities, and beastial faces."

The human degradation is a heart-rendering scene. It shows men being forced out of the labour market because of advancement of age. A typical scene is witnessed by London while walking with two men who were victims:

From the skinny, spittle-drenched sidewalk, they were picked up bits of orange peel, apple skin, and grape stems, and they were eating them.... They picked up stray crumbs of bread the size of peas, apple cores so black and dirty one would not take them to be apple cores.... and this, between six and seven o'clock in the evening of August 29, year of our Lord 1902, in the heart of the greatest, wealthiest, and most powerful empire the world has ever seen."
The conditions described by London provides a natural haven for festering of disease-coupled with a high degree of suicide and crime. Further on, he compares the modern Lords of business in England who are knighted to the true warrior-knights of the old and tells us that it is these modern lords of capital who are responsible for the misery, sufferings and dehumanization of others as their prosperity is based on these poor creatures:

In old time the great blonde beasts rode in the battle's van and won their spurs by cleaving men from pate to chin. And, after all, it is finer to kill a strong man with a clean-slicing blow of singing steel than to make a beast of him, and of his seed through the generations, by the artful and spidery manipulation of industry and politics.*104*

The above lines show that the beneficial aspects were present only in the olden days, whereas the contemporary urban setting is only associated with destruction which is the result of the mechanizations of the Laissez faire capitalism.

London points out the evil of the British tradition of sending only its most able-bodied poor into military service, resulting in a race of dwarfed and violence-oriented, dehumanization men at home:

The constant selection of the best from the workers has impoverished those who are left, a sadly degraded reminder, for the great part, which, in the Ghetto, sinks to the deepest depths. The wine of life has been drawn off to spill itself in blood and progeny over the rest of the earth. Those that remain are the less, and they are segregated and steeped in themselves. They become indecent and bestial. When they kill, they kill
with their hands, and then stupidly surrender themselves to the executioners. There is no splendid audacity about their transgressions. They gouge a mate with a dull knife, or beat his head in with an iron pot, and then sit down and wait for the police. Wife-beating is the masculine prerogative of matrimony. They wear remarkable boots of brass and iron, and when they have polished off the mother of their children with a black eye or so, they knock her down and proceed to trample her very much as a Wester Stallion tramples a rattlesnake. *105*

The economic degradation of the poor and their children is presented in a vivid picturization. These children who die before they reach the age of five, are never able to get out of this human hell-hole called London Town; and perhaps those who manage are the luckierfew:

There is one beautiful sight in the East End, and only one, and it is the children dancing in the street when the organ-grinder goes his round. It is fascinating to watch them, the new-born, the next generation, swaying and stepping, with pretty little mimicries and graceful inventions all their own, with muscles that move swiftly and easily, and bodies that leap airily, weaving rhythms never taught in dancing school.... They delight in music, and motion, and color, and very often they betray a startling beauty of face and form under their filth and rags.

But there is Pied Piper of London Town who steals them away. They disappear. One never sees them again, or anything that suggests them. You may look for them in vain amongst the generation of grown-ups. Here you will find stunted forms, ugly faces and blunt and stolid minds. Grace, beauty, imagination, all the resiliency of mind and muscle, are gone. *106*

The appalling descriptions of human degradation is very apt when one says that only the beasts in the jungle remain:

"It is rather hard to tell a tithe of what I saw. Much of it is intellible. But in a general way I may say that I saw a nightmare, a fearful slime that quickened the pavement with life, a mess of unmentionable obscenity that put into eclipse the "nightly horror" of
Piccadilly and the Strand.... They reminded me of gorillas. Their bodies were small, ill-shaped, and squat. There were no swelling muscles, no abundant thews and wide-spreading shoulders.... But there was strength in those meagre bodies, the ferocious, primordial strength to clutch and gripe and tear and rend...

But they were not the only beasts that ranged the menagerie. They were only here and there, lurking in dark courts and passing like gray shadows along the walls; but the women from whose rotten loins they sprang everywhere.... inconceivable types of sudden ugliness, the wrecks of society, the perambulating carcasses, the living deaths—women, blasted by disease and drink till their shame brought not tuppence in the open mart; and men, in fantastic rags, wrenched by hardship and exposure out of all semblance of men, their faces in a perpetual writh of pain, grinning idiotically, shambling like apes, dying with every step they took and each breath they drew.

The unfit and the unneeded!.... The miserable and despised and forgotten, dying in the social shambles.

The progeny of prostitution—of the prostitution of men and women and children, of flesh and blood, and sparkle; in brief, the prostitution of labour. If this is the best that civilized can do for the human, then give us howling and naked savagery. Far better to be a people of the wilderness and desert, of the cave and the squatting-place, than to be a people of the machine and the Abyss.*107*

In his essay, "The Tramp", London describes the fate of the inefficient American labourer who falls to the bottom of the social scale, and presents the dehumanized form of such labourers because of no fault of theirs.

Thus, there is no encouragement for the unfit, inefficient, and Mediocrity. Their very inefficiency and mediocrity make them helpless as cattle and add to their misery. And the whole tendency for such is downward. unfit, at the bottom of the social bit, they are wretched, inarticulate beasts, living like beasts, breeding like beasts, dying like beasts. And how do they fare, these creatures born mediocre, whose heritage is neither brains nor brown nor endurance? They are sweated in the slums in an atmosphere of discouragement and despair. There is no strength in weakness, no encouragement in foul air, vile food, and dank dens. They are there because they are so made that
they are not fit to be higher up; but filth and obscenity do not strengthen the neck nor does chronic emptiness of belly stiffen the back.*108*

In the above writing, London expressed his belief that modern man was becoming more and more dehumanized by the kinder threats of laissez fair capitalism and urban slum life. London's most famous work, "The Apostate", describes the slow process of the working style of capital in reducing a human being into a dehumanized state of existence. It is a story of a young boy named Johnny, trapped by manual labour, finally forsaking his religion and principles. The dehumanized state of human existence starts off with the prologue of the story.

Now I wake me up to work:

I pray the Lord I may not shirk.

If I should die before the night,

I pray the Lord my work's all right.

The prayer shows the bitterness, hatred, and hopelessness of a poor labour. The scene which follows is the waking up of Johnny by his mother in the predawn hours so he can have his meager breakfast consisting of bread and so-called coffee and go to work. Johnny has been so debased that there is no complain except of mechanical obedience. He has learnt all this in the terrible school where only endless hours of toil and labour is present, whereas his mother's consciousness has been dulled by years of poverty and narrowed by the struggle to survive in the most dehumanized ways. The saddest part of the cool outlook of the bourgeoisie and
their numbness towards such apathetic condition prevailing among the poor labourers. Johnny's day begins in darkness and ends in darkness. He has turned into a perfect machine from a perfect worker and when his work goes wrong, it is with him as with the machine, "due to faulty material". London's description of Johnny is flat and without effect. He is the "perfect worker", for whom everything was commonplace and nothing meant anything to him anymore.

The whole story shows the effect of machine on Johnny. He has evolved into a perfect machine. He is a hardened mature man, even though still a little boy in reality. His reaction towards his brothers and sisters at home is note worthy in this aspect.

He had no patience with their excessive and amazing juvenility. He did not understand it. His own childhood was too far behind him. He was like an old irritable man, annoyed by the turbulence of their young spirits that was to him arrant silliness."

The above lines prove that he has evolved into a machine which is emotionless, cold and unmoved by such frivolity. While he sits out on the porch with his mind inactive proves that his mind has ceased to function. This further goes to show that a machine has no mind as it has no need for thinking—it only labours. From the age of seven he has been working in the mills and with the passing of ten years he has became a fitting example of a machine. London describes Johnny's experience in the glass factory:
The superintendent was very proud of him, and brought visitors to look at him. In ten hours three hundred dozen bottles passed through his hands. This meant that he had attained machine-like perfection. All waste movements were eliminated... Every motion of his thin arms, every movement of a muscle in the thin fingers, was swift and accurate. He worked at high tension, and the result was that he grew nervous. At night his muscle twitched in his sleep, and in the day-time he could not relax and rest. Also he grew sallow and his lint-cough grew worse. The pneumonia laid hold of the feeble lungs within the contracted chest, and he lost his job. . . .

Johnny's spirit as well as his body has been shaped by his work. His consciousness is machine-consciousness and the rhythm of his life has been patterned by the machine as he goes to work when it is dark and returns when it is dark. He is totally a product of the machines upon which he works. He is not an actor but one who is acted upon: he has not shaped his destiny, it has shaped him and mangled him in the process—this dehumanized labour.

Martin Eden is basically a story of disintegration of an individual, but traces of dehumanized state of existence resulting, because of the callous inhuman attitude of the capitalist and the deplorable situation of the poor labour class due to industrialization, are present throughout the novel. The picture of Martin Eden's sister, Gertude Higginbothen, who is now a pale shadow of a real self is a testimony of dehumanization. She has been reduced to a being who is devoid of real human feelings. She is living a life of dehumanized being because of her endless work:
Hers was the kiss of a tired woman who had been tired so long that she has forgotten how to kiss. He remembered her as a girl, before her marriage, when she would dance with the best, all night, after a hard day's work at the laundry, and think nothing of leaving the dance to go to another day's hard work. *112*

The evils of industrialization is seen among the poor labourer class who are unable to make both their ends meet in a decent human way. They are reduced to prostitution of the self:

"... particular class, hard-working for meagre wages and scorning the sale of self for easier ways, nervously desirous for some small pinch of happiness in the desert of existence, and facing a future that was a gamble between the ugliness of unending toil and the black pit of more terrible wretchedness, the way whereon being briefer though better paid. *113*

London evokes the picture of a domesticated ox while comparing it with Martin Eden, because an ox is nothing but a "toil-beast". It is frightening not because of its ferocity but because it represents a surrender. A surrender to the danger of a factory job wherein one is reduced to perform a single distasteful mechanical job:

Ceaselessly active, head and hand, an intelligent machine, all that constituted him a man was devoted to furnishing that intelligence. There was no room in his brain for the universe and its mighty problems. All the broad and spacious corridors of his mind were closed and hermetically sealed. The echoing chamber of his soul was a narrow room, a conning fever...."*114*

The worst imaginable fate of a dehumanized being is to be reduced to a stage when he ceases to resist such degradation. Such a being is not only swallowed up, devoured
and destroyed by the carnivores of nature and society but by an anonymous grim world of toil. The experience of Martin Eden in the factories is a representation of such toil:

London's early experience of poverty seems to have left permanent scar on him. It is this scar from which comes out his outstanding stories presenting the inhuman callous attitude of the capitalist class towards the underdog of the society. It also shows how men with power, money etc. in such a society are dehumanized. In "The Chinago", London makes an anguished cry for working class equality and gives a lucid illustration of ruling class blindness.115

"Chinago" was a term applied to the Chinese coolies brought to the Tahitian Islands as indentured labourers for the plantation. These Chinagos worked for a miserly sum of fifty cents a day in the plantation. The story revolves around the trial of five Chinagos for murdering a Chinago and the introspection of one of them, reflecting the evils of the capitalist class whose ideal example is the overseer of the plantation, Schemmer, who is worse than a brute. The main protagonist, Ah Cho, remembers an incident when Schemmer, with one blow of his fist had killed a Chinago. The capitalist doctor had prescribed sunstroke as the reason of the Chinago's death which was a blatant lie as no one had ever died in the history of Tahiti of sunstroke. The loss of one Chinagos meant nothing to Schemmer as "he was only a Chinago". It is a supreme presentation of the indecent society which is represented by degenerate human beings and thus the trail concerns not only Ah Cho and his companions, it represents ruling class supremacy tried against working
class helplessness. These helpless labourers have no defence, no justice. The trail itself is a big force as these labourers have no defence, no voice in justice and since they have lost their battle for social equality, they loose in the courtroom. Ah Cho is sentenced to twenty years in prison in New Caledonia; Ah Chow is to have his head cut off; and the remaining three Chinagos are dealt prison sentences.

It is seen that in a dehumanized society one does not have any human feeling for another. This is witnessed by the reader in the execution order, wherein the Chief Justice had written Ah Cho instead of Ah Chow, as he was under the influence of alcohol while writing the order. The gendarme, Cruchot, another part of the ruling class on being reasoned by Ah Cho, hesitates to act on his own to rectify the error, as he was merely a pawn in the hierarchy of the ruling class. "What if Ah Cho is the wrong man and they cut his head off? It was only a Chinago... and what was a Chinago, anyway? .... You are not to think; you are to obey and leave thinking to your betters". Cruchot realizes the mistake but ignores it, thinking it was no mistake of his which only shows the degenerate state of a human being belonging to the ruling class. Schlemmer, who is acting as a executioner, is more interested in seeing his guillotine work, than rectifying the error; even though he is surprised by the error.
Schemmer was surprised. He swore tersely for a few seconds, and looked regretfully across the thing he had made with his own hands and which he was eager to see work. "Look here", he said finally, "we can't postpone this affair. I've lost three hour's work already out of those five hundred Chinagos I can't afford to lose it all over again for the right man. Let's put the performance through just the same. It is only a Chinago." *117*

Ah Cho, who is not guilty of the murder, is guilty of a more serious crime—that of being "only a Chinago". London shows that the conditions of the uneducated, unwashed, unfortunate underdog will be like a Chinago as he has no voice of his own against the tyranny of the ruling class who have been reduced to a dehumanized state in their accumulation of wealth and in the process have turned a blind eye to the existence of the shameful conditions in the bowels of their society. "Dream of Debs" is another story wherein the labour organize themselves to fight against their merciless exploitation by the capitalists, which has forced them to live the life of dehumanized human beings. No doubt the story is harsh and exaggerated but it brings home to the readers that the money of the capitalist is actually responsible for dehumanizations of the labour class.

"A Curious Fragment", and "South of the Slot", tries to picturize the "System" which is responsible for the hellishness of the social pit that forever yawns for the man and woman out of work, and which reduces them into worse than a dehumanized state. "A Curious Fragment" is a story of the conditions prevalent among the proletariat in London's
time. The portrayal of a factory "Hell's Bottom" and its overseers, who are tool in the hands of the capitalist, or industrial oligarch, Roger Vanderwater, shows to what extent degeneration of human being takes place. They are forced by the prevailing circumstances to become immune to the finer feelings of the human beings, but instead their debasement takes them to that ground from where there is no return for them. There is total dehumanization of such characters.

London's famous work, The Sea Wolf also presents this aspect of dehumanization of human beings. If we look deep into the meaning of the novel, we note that it is nothing but a story about master-slave relations in an industrial workplace and about the fragmentation of consciousness that class division fosters. The industrial organization abroad The Ghost validates the world of Laissez-faire capitalism wherein the chain of command gives the captain power over his crew and its abuses is the subject of the first half of The Sea-Wolf. Of the many scene present in the first half, is the degrading death and burial at sea of Wolf Larsen's first mate. The inhuman callousness of Wolf Larsen's character presented in the meaning of his mate's death which is nothing but loss of labour. Wolf's valuation of human life is evident in the funeral service he provides:

"I only remember one part of the service", he said, "and that is", "And the body shall be cast into the sea'. So cast it in". He ceased speaking. The men holding the hatch cover seemed perplexed, puzzled, no doubt by the briefness of
the ceremony. He burst upon them in a fury. "Lift up
that end there, damn you! What the hell's the matter
with you?" They elevated the end of the hatch cover
with pitiful haste, and like a dog flung overside, the
dead man slid feel first into the sea."118"

Another incident which shows what a capitalist can do to his
worker is the incident where Harrison, a green hand, is sent
up the rigging, eighty feet above the deck, to make an
adjustment which could have been undertaken more easily and
safely by lowering the foresail. Harrison is forced to climb up the rigging even though the uncertain breeze has made his
task very dangerous and difficult. Larsen's comment, on a
crew's protest, "The man's mine, and I'll make soup of him
and eat it if I want it", is a true picture, of a
dehumanized state of a capitalist. Humphrey Van Weyden who
is a witness to it is appalled by the "callousness of these
men, to whom industrial organization gave control of the
lives of other men.... I, who had lived out of the whirl of
the world, had never dreamed that its work was carried on in
such fashion. Life had always seemed a peculiarly sacred
thing, but here it counted for nothing, was a cipher in the
arithmetic of commerce". Larsen's response at Van Weyden's
challenge that it does not give hum carte blanche with other
people's lives is worth noting:

"Why should I be parsimonious with this life which is
cheap and without value? There are more sailors than
there are ships on the sea for them, more workers than
there are factories or machines for them. Why, you who
live on the land know that you have your people in the
slums of cities and loose famine and pestilence upon
them, and that there still remain more poor people,
dying for want of a crust of bread and a bit of meat-
which is life destroyed—than you know what to do with. Have you ever seen the London dockers fighting like wild beasts for a chance to work?"*121*

The dehumanization of Wolf Larsen can be gauged from the above lines and Wolf Larsen's character illustrates the logic of industrial capitalism taken to its extreme.

London depicts through the depiction of the above characters how desperation arising out of acute economic disparities is the main cause of a man's conversion to a cog in a machine in a capitalist society. It is to be noted that London is not hostile to the machines, but to the exploitative practices of the capitalist system. London's social perception depicts complexities of the industrial society and a deepening concern for the working class which becomes a victim to its malpractices of amassing wealth. His repudiation of the industrial society is more concerned with his amassing wealth. His repudiation of the industrial society is more concerned with his will to persuade people to think that acquisitive capitalism is not in keeping with its democratic traditions. Dehumanization occurs due to the capitalistic ways.

ALIENATION : THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT

The previous chapter has shown us the dark depths of the machine and the people who own these machines. It also showed the relentless and tyrannical handling of the
"machine technology" which transfers a wage-labourer into a saleable commodity. We noticed that the wage-labourer not only grows hostile to the machine and capitalism but also loses interest in life and society. His experiences of everything is in a passive state, as life has no meaning and holds no purpose for him. He is simply existing for the sake of existence and his instinctive feelings are empty and dead. His individualism is frustrated and the whole world appears alien to him. He is physically exhausted, mentally blunted and morally debased and he is forced to estrange or alienate himself from self and society. No sooner alienation takes place the result is that either he turns out to be a rebel or becomes insane or finally in the end commits suicide.

Before we go into the fiction of Jack London, let us see what this alienation is all about. The term 'alienation' has been widely used in various branches of knowledge and has come to acquire a variety of meanings. but G Petrovin gives a broad meaning "which is suggested by the etymology and the morphology of the word... the meaning in which alienation (or estrangement) is the act, or the result of the act, through which something, or somebody, becomes (or has become) alien (or strange) to something, or somebody, else." This definition though literally accurate does not fully explain the metaphorical nature of alienation, which it certainly is. The concept of alienation was first philosophically elaborated by Hegel which was
followed by Fuerback and Karl Marx. Petrovic states further that according to Hegel, "Nature is only a self-alienated (self estranged) form of Absolute Mind, and man is the Absolute in the process of dealienation," and as per Fuerback, "Man is not self-aliernated God. On the contrary, God is self-aliernated man, he is man's essence absolutized and estranged from man... The dealienation of man consists in the abolition of that estranged picture of man which is God." Erich Fromm in Marx's *Concept of Man*, wrote that according to Karl Marx:

...Man does not experience himself as the acting agent in his grasp of the world, but that the world (nature, others and be himself) remain alien to him. They stand above and against him as objects of his creation. Alienation is essentially experiencing the world and oneself passively, receptively, as the subject separated from the object.*125*

Quite a few of the modern writers have tried to explain the concept of alienation, one of them, Eric and Mary Josephson, states that alienation is "an individual feeling or state of dissociation from self, from others, and from the world at large". Eric Fromm further defines alienation as:

...a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the centre of his world, as the creator of his own acts but his acts and consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship. The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of reach with any person. He, like the others, is experienced as things are experienced, with the senses and with common sense, but at the same time without being related to oneself and to the world outside productively.*127*
Jack London's famous short story, "The Apostat" describes the situation of a young boy trapped by manual labour, who finally forsakes his religion, his principles and his family. The capitalist exploitation has ruined his body and mind and has turned him into a beast. The conversion at the end of the story, shows the state of alienation with his family. Johnny's reaction at his mother's accusation presents a different Johnny. A Johnny who smiles patiently and has no more the peevishness and irritability present in the Johnny of the yore. The alienated Johnny's reaction to his mother's comment about the welfare of the family is worth noting:

But there was no bitterness in his voice. He had long known his mother's ambition for the younger boy, but the thought of it no longer rankled. Nothing mattered any more. Not even that. *128*

Johnny decides to quit his job, leave home for good. The degrading machine-work which was responsible for his alienation has made him into a "travesty of the human...twisted and stunted and a nameless piece of life that shambled like a sickly ape, arms loose-hanging, stoop shouldered, narrow-chested, grotesque and terrible" 129

London's novel, The Sea-Wolf, tries to show an individual who disintegrates and is finally alienated because he had tried to chart a path of his own which was away from the conventional social mores of that day society. Wolf Larsen rules his ship, The Ghost, all by himself and in
the process suffers alone. He is like twentieth century man who lacks purpose and direction and as such has no quest for himself where he can channel his great tremendous force. The result is disorientation, frustration and senseless violence. It is his individual will which leads him to aggression against his fellow human beings, the result being self-corrodation, alienation and finally self-destruction.

Wolf Larsen stands alone against all the rest and any sign of weakness is sure to lead to his death. His tremendous vitality manifests itself, physically in his brutal treatment of his crew and intellectually in his materialistic nihilism:

"Do you know, I am filled with a strange uplift; I feel as if all time were echoing through me, as though all powers were mine... But," and his voice changed and the light went out of his face, - "what is this condition in which I find myself?... It is what comes when there is nothing wrong with one's digestion, when his stomach is in trim and his appetite has an edge, and all goes well. It is the bribe for living, the champagne of the blood, the effervescence of the ferment - that makes some men think holy thoughts, and other men to see God or to create him when they cannot see him.... Tomorrow I shall pay for it as the drunkard pays. And I shall know that I must die, at sea most likely, cease crawling of myself to be all crawl, to yield up all the strength and movement of my muscles that it may become strength and movement in fin and scale and the gutes of fishes."*130*

He is total rational man, devoid of morality. He wishes that he were blind to the fact of life and knew only illusions, but his rationality leads him to melancholy and misery. Larsen is Lucifer, sitting alone on the rock. As he describes Lucifer, he describes himself:
He led a lost cause, and he was not afraid of God’s hell. He was unbeaten. A third of God’s angels he had led with him and straightway he incited man to rebel against God, and gained for himself and hell the major portion of all the generations of man. Why was he beaten out of heaven? Because he was less brave than God? Less proud? Less aspiring? No! A thousand times no! God was more powerful as he said, Whom thunder hath made greater. But Lucifer was a free spirit. To serve was to suffocate. He preferred suffering in freedom to the happiness of a comfortable servility. He did not care to serve God. He cared to serve nothing. He was no figure head. He stood on his own legs. He was an individual. *131*

The novel shows the gradual deterioration of Wolf Larsen—first headaches, then blindness, and paralysis and finally death from brain tumour. This illness of Wolf Larsen symbolises the "black" state of total alienation which his own aggressive individualism has brought upon him. He is symbolic of a modern type: the psychopathic over-reacher who is alienated both from nature and from his fellow men by the leprous, corroded disease of self. It is an accepted fact that all things are permitted within reason, because reason justifies the act and rationalism taken to its logical extreme leads to loneliness and alienation. Larsen is damned because of his knowledge and self-consciousness.

*Martin Eden* is among the first novels that documents the disintegration of the American success story. It presents the existential dilemma of the modern anti-hero. London was a man ahead of his time in portraying the dilemma of modern man. The meaninglessness, which Martin Eden faces is much like that described by later writers, - the
confrontation with nothingness — and which afflicted mid-
twentieth century man. The modern existential dilemma can be
defined as the loss of identity, the feeling of alienation,
the lack of faith which has been so well documented in so
much of the modern literature.

Martin Eden describes the ways in which capitalism
causes alienation. It portrays both the degradation of the
working class and the narrowness, stupidity and hypocrisy of
the bourgeoisie. Martin is estranged from his own labour,
from himself, from other people and finally from himself as
a member of the human race. The forbidden fruit of
introspective self-awareness which Martin was bidden to eat
by Ruth, a representative of the bourgeoisie, turns out to
be fatal for him. Martin Eden's humble, lower-working class
background makes him see the bourgeoisie world as all
encompassing and grand. But even then he doesn't aspire for
its wealth, instead he is looking ahead for its education
and knowledge. In the process he takes a fatal turn, for
instead of turning outward toward wealth and position of Mr
Butler, he turns inward toward the bitter loss of faith of
Mr. Brissenden. It is noted that both are artists, both are
disillusioned and both are destroyed by the society and the
intellectual climate that surrounds them. Both of them have
been through much in life: Brissenden through sickness and
tuberculosis and Martin Eden through Cheese Face and the
laundry. Even though both appear to be tough, they are in
fact brittle and break in the end.
London describes the consequence of a brutal economic system on the lives of workers by describing their physical suffering and spiritual desolation and focuses specifically on the lack of beauty in their lives. The working-class women in the novel are trapped by their roles as wives and mothers. They live a dull, empty lives tied to the drudgery of housework and are captives of their tyrannical husbands, who lead an equally oppressive life in the factories. London describes this kind of alienated labour:

Indomitable, never resting, fighting for seconds and minutes all week, circumventing delays and crushing down obstacles, a fount of resistless energy, a high driven human motor, a demon for work, now that he had accomplished the week's task he was in a state of collapse. He was worn and haggard, and his handsome face dropped in lean exhaustion. He puffed his cigarette, spiritlessly, and his voice was peculiarly dead and monotonous. All the snap and fire had gone out of him. His triumph seemed a sorry one.*132*

The Cheese Face and the laundry episodes are similar in qualities and experiences. They are hard physical experiences and Martin Eden survives them both because of his endurance and ability to withstand physical pain. Yet as touching as these experiences are, they do not prepare Martin for the mental toughness that the new industrial-scientific-existential age demands. Martin realizes that a society dominated by the values of the market-place destroys the genuine artist, kills the authentically of human relationship and has no room for spiritual values. When he is struggling for recognition and receives only rejection
slips, he protests this dehumanization:

If he had received one line, one personal line, along with one rejection of all his rejection, he would have been cheered. But not one editor had given that proof of existence. And he could conclude only that there were no warm human men at the other end, only mere cogs, well oiled and running beautifully in the machine.*133*

It is interesting to note that Martin recalls the Cheese-Face when he is at the bottom, when rejection slip after slip has totally defeated him for the moment, when the Haratio Alger myth has been shattered and long hard work has brought no reward. It is then that he recalls his greatest triumph and he reminds himself that he can withstand any physical pain. It is after his reminiscent dream that he tells himself he will succeed but there is a note of uncertainty in it. Similarly, the laundry is another test of Martin's physical endurance. Again his mind is overwhelmed by the physical onslaught, but as he fought like a brute against Cheese-Face, so he works and lives like an animal in the laundry. As in the Cheese-Face incident, Martin's mind, his introspective tool, is shattered. It was impossible for Martin to work like an animal and think on a high level at the same time. No doubt he is physically well up to it, he is mentally destroyed by it:

He was self-repelled, as though he had undergone some degradation or was intrinsically foul. All that was god-like in him was blotted out. The spur of ambition was blunted; he had no vitality with which to feel the prod of it. He was dead. His soul seemed dead. He was a beast, a work-beast. He saw no beauty in the sunshine.
sifting down through the green leaves, nor did the azure vault of the sky whisper as of old and hint of cosmic vastness and secrets trembling to disclosure. Life was intolerable dull and stupid, and its taste was bad in his mouth. A black screen was drawn across his mirror of inner vision and fancy lay in a darkened sick-room where interred no ray of light.*134*

One day, after three months at the laundry, Martin gets drunk with his partner Joe, and realizes that the work has made him a beast and it was no way to success. He prefers starvation than to this kind of spiritual torture and quits his job at the laundry to continue his writings.

Thus on both occasion, it is work, hard work, that brings on a mental shattering in Martin. For him, Haratio Alger is proven wrong, hard work does not lead to success, but to death - a spiritual and intellectual one. These are premonitions of the stresses that Martin will soon face. They are indication of what Martin lacks, mental toughness. It is by some quirk of destiny that Martin’s work becomes suddenly acceptable and he becomes rich, famous and wanted. But the material success has the taste of ashes, because it is based on “work performed”. If we consider Martin’s work experience, his denial and hatred of physical labour, and keeping the Cheese-Face and laundry episodes in mind, Martin’s distaste for success based on “work performed” is understandable. Within an existential philosophical system, Martin’s obsession of people accepting him on the basis of “work performed” becomes clear. He has become another commodity. The public does not respond to his work because
of its artistic value, but because it has become fashionable. He refuses to be objectivized, to be made an "it" by other. He wants to be taken as a man and not to be "pigeon-holed" as an artist. But what really crushes Martin is Brissenden's death as neither of them have the mental strength required by an existential age of the introspective writer. They both search desperately for answers and both are overwhelmed by the thought of man as little more than nothing in the chaos of the universe. Their physical trail have made them aware of man's weakness, his lack of strength against the universe. They have also read of man's physical and emotional limitation in the scheme of nature. Introspection has reinforced their knowledge, gained by searching for an enduring philosophy of life, face the void with no solid faith to grab onto, not even the Haratio Alger myth. "Work performed" becomes a dirge and it is not enough to save Martin from destruction. Haratio Alger is too weak, and Martin is too worn out to face the battle of existence. Martin Eden falls to an inhuman universe, as Haratio Alger fall to the existential dilemma.

Throughout the novel there are signs that Martin is heading towards a dilemma of existence, a problem of alienation. Loneliness is continuously stated problem for Martin throughout the novel. Martin breaks away from the lower class, his first paradise, as he finds them too coarse, ill-mannered and stupid. He is disillusioned with the middle class but fails to return to the lower class.
where he recognises the virtues and the beauty of Lizzie Connolly because he is too far alienated from her surroundings to stay with her. Martin soon becomes disillusioned with the bourgeoisie class too because of its mediocrity, hypocrisy and narrowness. He finds the bourgeoisie "sickening" and realizes that what he dreamt about them has proved all wrong. It was a great lie of the Horatio Alger success story. Brissenden's suicide leads Martin to being truly alone, alienated, the classical existential anti-hero in the classical existential dilemma. It is then that he longs for paradise again, to which he can never return, the paradise he knew as a poor sailor in Tahiti. He longs to escape into this paradise from the disorder of his squalid room, from the disorder of his existential dilemma in the modern industrial world.

Ruth, an ironical name given to a woman, who is far from ready or willing to go wherever Martin would lead her, puts the last nail in the coffin of alienation. She who had refused to live with him when he was down and out, comes back to reconcile with him when he is famous and wealthy. Martin repays her pleas. "I could die for you! I could die for you!":

"Why didn't you dare it before?" he asked harshly. "When I hadn't a job? When I was starving? When I was just as I am now, as a man, as an artist, the same Martin Eden? That's the question I've been propounding to myself for many a day - not concerning you merely, but concerning everybody. You see I have not changed though my sudden apparent appreciation in value compels
me constantly to reassure myself on that point. I've got the same flesh on my bones, the same ten fingers and toes. I am the same. I have not developed any new strength nor virtue. My brain is the same old brain. I haven't made even one new generation on literature or philosophy. I am personally of the same value that I was when nobody wanted me. And what is puzzling me is why they want me now. Surely they don't want me for myself, for myself is the same old self they did not want. Then they must want me for something else, for something that is outside of me, for something that is not I! Shall I tell you what that something is? It is for the recognition I have received. That recognition is not I."

Ruth's final and futile attempt to revive Martin's love perhaps alienates him more than anything else that he experiences. Compromising her reputation by coming to his room alone at night (but with her brother waiting outside in the doorway to escort her there and back), and now willing to dare anything for Martin's love, finds only a cold welcome. To Martin her action is the ultimate bourgeois insincerity.

Finally, alone and totally disillusioned, he longs to return to paradise to escape from his existential reality. He attempts death through myth, through dream and perhaps realizing at the subconscious level, kills himself physically en route to his spiritual death. As he lacks the necessary mental toughness to survive in this existential world, Martin cannot face the loss of paradise to which his introspectiveness has lead him. Suicide, from this desert of emotions, from this spiritual hell, becomes a positive act for Martin. He conquers the absurd natural order by imposing his human will on it, forcing himself to death. The
natural order prompts him to swim, to keep alive, but
Martin, rejecting life, goes to death positively and
happily. Pain and strangulation was a hurt not imposed by
death, since "death did not hurt. It was life, the pangs of
life, this awful suffocating feeling; it was the last blow
life could deal him".

Martin Eden shakes the foundation of the Horatio Alger
myth. No other novel of the era is so hopeless, so empty, so
awful in its view of man than Martin Eden. London wrote
about an existential anti-heroes long before this
terminology was coined for literature. Like Martin just
before his death one sees in this novel a terrible vision of
self-knowledge, of self-awareness for men of the twentieth
century:

It seemed a lighthouse; but it was inside his brain - a
flashing, bright white light. It flashed swifter and
swifter. There was a long rumble of sound, and it
seemed to him that he was falling down a vast and
interminable stairway. And somewhere at the bottom he
fell into darkness. That much he knew. He had fallen
into darkness. And at the instant he knew, he ceased to
know. *137*

Evidently, the manifestation of dehumanization and
alienation in the above characters shows Jack London’s
indictment of capitalist society, which degrades the poor,
creates industrial slavery and ultimately compels the weak-
willed individuals to dissociate themselves from the
constricting forces of acquisitive society.

2. Foner pp. 21-22

3. Ibid p. 21


5. Ibid pp. 208-209

6. Ibid p. 216

7. Ibid p. 218

8. Ibid p. 219

9. Ibid p. 219

10. Foner p. 38


12. Foner p. 23

13. *To Build a Fire and Other Stories* p. 221


15. Ibid pp. 311-312

16. Ibid p. 245

17. Ibid pp. 248-249.


19. *To Build a Fire and Other Stories* pp. 319-320.


22. Foner p. 70


24. Ibid p. 222

25. Ibid p. 275

26. Ibid p. 169

27. King Hendrick p. 224

28. Ibid pp. 138-43

29. Penguin Edition of The Iron Heel


32. Ibid p. 29

33. Donald Pizer, Realism and Naturalism in nineteenth-Century American Literature (Carbondale, 1966) p. 13

34. Walcutt, p. 23

35. Pizer p. 12


38. Howard P. 37


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40. Pizer p. 12
41. Howard p. 37
43. Walcutt p. 29
44. Howard p. 39
45. Ibid p. 39
48. Ibid p. 75.
49. Ibid p. 83.
50. Ibid p. 84.
51. Ibid p. 85.
53. London, *Call of the Wild*. p. 18
54. Ibid p. 23
55. Ibid p. 41
56. Ibid p. 47
57. Ibid p. 48
59. Ibid p. 91
60. Ibid p. 92
61. Ibid p. 121.

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63. Ibid p. 153
64. London. To Build a Fire & Other Stories p. 22.
65. Ibid p. 19
67. Ibid p. 347
69. Ibid p. 14
70. London. The Sea Wolf p. 20
71. Ibid p. 24
72. Ibid p. 71
73. Ibid p. 78
74. Ibid p. 68
75. Ibid p. 81
76. Ibid p. 86
77. Ibid p. 194
78. Ibid p. 117
79. Ibid p. 45
80. Walcutt. p. 17
82. Ibid p. 14
83. London. Martin Eden p. 10

86. Ibid p. 7


88. Ibid p. 213.


90. Ibid pp. 146-147.

91. Ibid p. 184


93. Ibid p. 2


97. Labor pp. 133-134


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102. Ibid pp. 76-77
103. Ibid p. 78
104. Ibid p. 197
105. Ibid p. 257
106. Ibid pp. 274-275
107. Ibid pp. 284-88
109. London. To Build a Fire and Other Stories p. 202
110. Ibid pp. 208-209
111. Ibid pp. 210-212
113. Ibid pp. 46-47
114. Ibid p. 137
115. Ibid pp. 144-145
116. Jack London. To Build a Fire and Other Stories. p. 245
117. Ibid p. 248
119. Ibid p. 55
120. Ibid p. 55
121. Ibid p. 50
123. Ibid p. 76
124. Ibid p. 77
125. Ibid p. 78
128. London. *To Build a Fire and Other Stories* p. 218
129. Ibid p. 219
131. Ibid p. 249
133. Ibid p. 109
134. Ibid p. 141
135. Ibid p. 362
136. Ibid p. 381
137. Ibid p. 381