Jack London lived in times of social calamity caused by new set of ideas arising out of the theory of evolution. Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer were the torch bearers of this new light of thinking. On the other hand, there were other intellectuals like Nietzsche and Karl Marx who championed the cause of freedom. All these great thinkers became Jack London's intellectual mentors and thus paving the way for Jack London's personal struggle to be dramatized in stories so arresting and exciting. In fact it is not easy for us now to imagine how revolutionary and shattering were Darwin's and Spencer's ideas. Darwin was denounced from countless Christian pulpits by ministers who accused him of maintaining that man descended from monkey, although this was one point that he did not urge in his Origin of Species. And this was to question the very foundation of religion.

If Darwin was shaking the world with his theory of evolution, Spencer asserted that evolution is the fundamental law of social as well as physical process: from
simple and relatively uniform materials evolve increasingly complex and specialized structures. He contended that the more complex forms, whether individual creatives of social organization, are the mere stable—and thus he sent the social struggle for existences as leading up to the ultimately perfect and stable society. The evils of child labour, poverty, unemployment, and industrial warfare which were rampant in western Europe and America were just tied because they were the means to that perfect society which would survive. Every social and industrial violence, and every outrage caused by competition, was beautified with an aura of destined good in the philosophy of social darwinism. This put the humanitarianism and idealism of the nineteenth century under a fright and strain. The blessed prospect of the perfect society beginning from child labour called for special attention. Above all, it was the concept of "Superman" that captured the imagination of Jack London. "Superman" in his ruthless quest for power would help along the selection of the fittest by crushing the weak and helpless. Then rose the philosophy of socialism which challenged the role of unbridled individualism in the evolution of society. This was propounded by no other than Karl Marx for the cause of working class. He called upon
the supposedly weak and helpless victims of natural selection to unite and overthrow their exploiters and oppression, the industrialist ruling classes.

It was this complex of ideas, contradictions and all that captured the strong but untutored mind of young Jack London and permeated his writing. If we look briefly at his early trials in a world of extremes in wealth and poverty, in opportunity and helplessness, we may be led to understand how he came to light in his private life and in his work -- up and down the time between social darwinism and social justice, between individualism and socialism. He had the physical and intellectual powers to make his identity with the superman sweeping lesser beings out of his way in the upward climb to the perfect society, at the same time he had both the experience of privatism and the capacity for sympathy to make him take up the cause of all the hapless waifs crushed under a ruthless industrial juggernaut. He was inspired by the American dream of success even while he was living among the most oppressed of outcasts.

London was offspring of a strange union between Flora Wellman and "Professor" W.H. Chaney. Flóra came of sturdy welsh stock, but she had been stricken by typhus in her girlhood, and afterwards she was unstable if not
unbalanced. Chaney was an itinerent intellectual who made all knowledge his province and apparently remembered everything he had ever read. He always denied the paternity of Jack London, but the evidence of physical appearance and intellectual quality seems to be undeniable. Irving stone, biographer of London, who made considerable study of Chaney's writings, reports that they reveal "a clear, forceful, and pleasing literary style, an authentic erudition, courage to speak his mind, a sympathy for the mass of humanity, and a desire to teach them to better themselves. His point of view is modern and progressive." Chaney believed that a proper use of astrology would enable mankind finally to improve the human condition.

Flora was an ardent spiritualist, and seances were offered along with lectures on astrology and spiritualism while she and Chaney were living together, from June 1874 to June 1875. Flora wanted marriage and a child, but Chaney was too distressed by her violent temper to consider a permanent union; when she declared that she was pregnant by him and he denied responsibility, she either genuinely attempted to commit suicide or pretended to do so. In any event, Chaney was denounced and ostracized, even by his own family. Flora gave birth to a son on January 12, 1876, in San Francisco. Eight months
later she married John London and named her child for him, John Griffith London.

John London went into one business after another in California. Although he was a man of character and determination, he was repeatedly ruined, sometimes by the scoundrelism of a partner or, more typically, by the irresponsible plans of Flora. Young Jack lived from hand to mouth, getting a spotty primary education and working at one job after another to help his indigent family, which finally settled in Oakland. When he was thirteen he bought a small boat and learned to sail on San Francisco Bay. A year or so later, out of school, he got a larger boat and became an expert sailor. But just when freedom seemed within his grasp, John London was injured and Jack became the mainstay of the family. He supported this crushing load by becoming an oyster pirate -- one of a gang of small boat owners who raided the oyster beds in the dark of night and sold what they stole to markets and saloons in San Francisco. On his first raid he made as much money as he had been earning in three months of "legitimate" toil.

He was so decided about going for a better life than to be a common labourer; he entered Oakland High School when he was nineteen. He published in the school magazine,
made interesting friends, and through the Henry Clay Debating Society was put in touch with a widening circle of stimulating people. By then he had become an avowed socialist, however, and when he was thrown in jail for speaking in a park without a licence he found that many of his more prosperous new acquaintances drew back. The newspapers reported on him as if he were a combination of devil and maniac. In 1896, he passed the entrance examination and entered the University of California. Later he left even this university as he did not find it interesting, which finally led Jack London to take to writing. He wrote like a man possessed, gaunt, hungry, twiching, and slowly he found most of his writings in print. His dedication to the enlightenment of man, and the cause of socialism was terribly earnest and people let of his strength and his sincerity; he made many friends and impressed whomever he met. During this stage of his life, a series of events took place. His stories appeared in book form as *The Son of the Wolf* and won abundant fame. J.S. McClure, the editor-publisher, came to his rescue by offering Jack London to become the literary sponsor. And then what became a steady raise in his salary offered by McClure, now to be spent on his neurotic mother Flora, who made home a hell for she battled with Bess for control of the premises. Moving
Flora into a separate house added to London's expenses without solving the problem. This turned out to be a leap from the frying pan into the fire. It is during this time of stress and strain, he turned out *Children of the Frost* (1902), *The Cruise of the Dazzler* (1902) and *Tales of the Fish Patrol* (1905).

When he arrived in London enroute to find a cable cancelling the assignment, he bought himself shabby clothes and plunged into London's East End where humanity languished in one of its lowest depths. From his observations, he wrote in the three months he was there *The People of the Abyss*, a powerful image of misery.

London also wrote about thirty adventure tales laid in the South seas which he collected in *South Sea Tales* (1911) and other volumes. The twenty-five month South Pacific voyage (1907-1909) that provided the background for these stories is described by London in *The Cruise of the Snark*, a volume which makes far more interesting reading than most of the tales. As in his *Far North Stories*, London is usually at his best when he shows his characters in conflict with the hostile forces of nature as in "The House of Mapuhi," a vivid description of a hurricane and the struggle of an old native woman to
survive the death and destruction it brings to her atoll. In writing some of his *South Sea Tales*, London may well have been influenced by both Conrad and Robert Louis Stevenson, but he made little attempt to explore moral ambiguities as did Conrad and Stevenson also on occasion, limiting himself rather to adventurous incident and action. Although a very readable story, there is none of the richness of implication, for instance, of Conrad's "Youth" in London's "The Seed of McCoy," which like Conrad's story, uses the situation of a ship with its cargo on fire attempting to reach the safety of port. London's South Sea writings rival Stevenson's in their picturesque local colour, but they are not primarily concerned, as is the case with Stevenson's "The Beach at Falesa," with the moral problems involved in white-native relations. Several of London's tales, however, do graphically portray the white man's exploitation of the natives. White traders pillage and burn native villages and massacre the inhabitants, and of them London makes a South Sea islander say: "White men are hell. I have watched them much, and I am an old man now, and I understand at last why the white men have taken to themselves all the islands in the sea. It is because they are hell." There are also ironic references to the inevitable white
man with his racial egotism, cruelty, stupidity, and greed, but London's attitude in the main seems to be that, since he is an accomplished fact, there is not much point in reprehending him.

London's Klondike stories brought strong praise; he was called the successor to Poe, the equal of Kipling, a new voice rising above the prissy sentiment of the genteel tradition. The best of his stories have extraordinary power, which is generated by bold ideas, vigor and concreteness of language, and that combination of mystery and suspense that is the mark of the born storyteller. London jumps into the middle of his situation; he keeps the reader on tenterhooks by withholding facts in a way that makes him participate in the action.

One of London's earliest stories, "The White Silence," written in 1898, published in February 1899 in the Overland Monthly, is typical of the best. It introduces the Malemute Kid and his pal, Mason, caught two hundred miles from town in weather sixty-five degrees below zero with starving dogs and inadequate food for themselves. With them is Ruth, Mason's devoted Indian wife, carrying his child, sustained by the hope of seeing the white man's great cities. They experience the White Silence: "All
movement ceases, the sky clears, the heavens are as brass; the slightest whisper seems sacrilege, and man becomes timid, affrighted at the sound of his own voice. Sole speck of life journeying across the ghostly wastes of a dead world, he trembles at his audacity, realizes that his is a maggot's life, nothing more." Mason is fatally injured by a falling tree. If they wait for him to die, they will all die. He insists that they go on. After a day of grim waiting, Malemute Kid sends the girl on ahead, shoots the dying man, and lashes the dogs into a wild gallop as he flees across the snow.

"To Build a Fire" (1908) describes in minutest detail a man in the same cold "The White Silence" describes, trying to build a fire to warm himself before he freezes to death. He does get a fire going, but underneath a spruce tree, and the snow falls off the tree and puts it out. Lighting it the second time is the ordeal; his toes are frozen, his fingers too numb to feel the match, and he does not quite make it. The cold rapidly closes in on him. Dreams and hallucinations flutter through his consciousness as the end comes near. The suspense builds to an intense pitch.
"Batard" (1902) is a rich concoction of raw elements. Batard is the son of a grey timber wolf and a "snarling, bickering, obscene, husky" bitch with "a genius for trickery and evil." Black Leclere buys this dog because he hates him and wants to torment him. But Batard had "his mother's tenacious grip on life. Nothing could kill him. He flourished under misfortune, grew fat with famine, and out of his terrible struggle for life developed a preternatural intelligence. His were the stealth and cunning of the husky, his mother, and the fierceness and valor of the wolf, his father." Dog and master are bound by a savage hatred.

In their first major encounter, the dog leaps at Leclere's throat while he sleeps; the master disdains weapons, and in the ensuing fight they almost kill each other: "It was a primordial setting and a primordial scene, such as might have been in the savage youth of the world. An open space in a dark forest, a ring of grinning wolf-dogs, and in the centre two beasts, locked in combat, snapping and snarling, raging madly about, panting, sobbing, cursing, straining, wild with passion, in a fury of murder, ripping and tearing and clawing in elemental brutishness." Still the dog does not run away, and the master does not kill him, for they are linked by their
hatred. But the master torments him incredibly — and with a reason: Batard invokes a subconscious death impulse in Leclere: "Often the man felt that he had bucked against the very essence of life — the unconquerable essence that swept the hawk down out of the sky like a feathered thunderbolt, that drove the great gray goose across the zones, that hurled the spawning salmon through two thousand miles of boiling Yukon flood."

London was at the height of his powers in 1902 when he began writing the dog story which he thought of a balancing his account of the vicious hasky given in "Batard." He finished The Call of the Wild in just over a month, his prose flowing pure and sharp with story line. It is the story fascinatingly written about Buck. After several journeys, Buck was sold to another owner who was going to kill him when he was rescued and cared for by John Thornton. A great love grew between Buck and Thornton, and Buck more than once saved Thornton's life in camp and on the trail. Thornton almost brought Buck to his old self, and perhaps he would have in time. But Thornton was murdered by Indians while Buck was chasing a moose. When Buck returned to find his dead master and the slayers, he raged through the camp like a thunderbolt, killing several Indians and wounding others. Then he fled
into the wilderness, eventually becoming one of a wolf pack.

Civilized man -- especially American man -- lives constantly with the call of the wild but the call is quite different from the thing itself. The call represents the yearning towards freedom and purity that is an aspect of any human involvement. But one retreats in order to return with new strength. Robert Frost, climbing his birches to get away from it all, is very explicit:

I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate wilfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love ...

If we substitute "society" for "earth" we have the same problem stated more literally.

In the books that followed especially *The Call of the Wild*, London demonstrated contradicting theories of individualism and socialism. These ideas can be seen clearly in *White Fang* (1906). In this story we can see the disguised and projected expression of London's contradictory theories of individualism and socialism. Buck is the individualist who denies society and finally rejects it completely. White Fang is tamed by love and turns from a savage wolf into a loving and home-keeping dog. This
is the theory, but the impact of White Fang is still in violence, war, and survival by prowess. Most of the book concerns White Fang's struggles with savage nature. Indians, dogs, and white men, struggle that are as harsh as those of Buck in the first story. White Fang as clearly as Buck enacts London's own myth of a man unloved by his mother, unknown to his father, reared in poverty and deprivation, yet growing stronger because of innate powers that assert themselves and enable him to survive under extreme adversity.

The conclusion is prepared for by a vivid account of the experiences that moulded White Fang's heredity while he was becoming fit to survive in the jungle of life:

"Hated by his kind and by mankind, indomitable, perpetually warred upon and himself waging perpetual war, his development was rapid and one-sided. ... The code he learned was to obey the strong and to oppress the weak. ... He became quicker of movement than the other dogs, swifter of foot, craftier, deadlier, more lithe, more lean iron-like muscle and sinew, more enduring, more cruel, more ferocious, and more intelligent. He had to become all these things, else he would not have held his own nor survived the hostile environment in which he found himself."2

It is a wolf book, in short, and if at the end the wolf is tamed by love he is still a wolf. This merely
reinforces one's conviction that London's heart was in individualism rather than socialism. His lip service to the latter is a protest against his early poverty, but he does not dwell on the presumed benefits of socialist society. He writes instead of the evils of capitalism, the brutality of the industrial world, and the need for violent revolution to destroy them. The peace in his writing is the opulent peace of the great individualist who has beaten the system single-handed and can now afford to relax and live like a lord on his baronial domain. This is the peace of White Fang after he has conquered the world of club and fang by his ability as a fighter. Near the end of the book White Fang kills a desperate murderer bent on destroying his master's father, thus showing the great power that is his, the power that he relaxes into love and ease but still keeps ready in case there is need for it in the treacherous world. London in fact loved to be called wolf, and signed his letter "Wolf" and had his book marks engraved with a picture of a wolf-dog's head. He wrote of animals as if they were people -- and of people as if they were animals, recognizing no essential difference between human and animal societies. The struggle for survival prevails in the same terms as levels of life, with the same need for craft, strength and
courage. It's interesting to note in this context that Jack London wrote *The Call of the Wild* immediately after returning from his visit to London's East End, where he had seen society in the harshest terms of dog-eat-dog. Having established largely with the book -- he moved toward separating himself from society, buying more land than he could afford in order to have his own self-sufficient domain. In the beginnings of this withdrawal he wrote *White Fang*, symbolically projecting the lonely wolf into his own specially chosen world of love and security.

*The Sea Wolf* seems to turn into a different book with the appearance of Maud; the reason may be that it corresponded with a turning point in London's life. When he was half-way through writing the book, in 1903, he deserted Bess for Charmian Kittredge. Charmian, gushy, flirtatious, an intellectual chatterbox with a fine seat on a horse and an energetic social gaiety, set her traps for London and snared him. The relationship was kept secret for a long period during which the lovers exchanged volumes of fluttery, shrill, passionate letters. Charmian's style invaded Jack's style and it was never quite the same again. Charmian is the model for Maud,
"a delicate, ethereal creature, swaying and willowy, light and graceful of movement. It never seemed ... that she walked, or, at least, walked after the ordinary manner of mortals. Hers was an extreme lithesomeness, and she moved with a certain indefinable airiness, approaching one as down might float or as a bird as noiseless wings."

At about the same time Charmian was writing to London:

"Oh, you are wonderful -- most wonderful of all. I saw your face grow younger under my touch. What is the matter with the world, and where do I belong. I think nowhere, if a man's heart is nowhere."

And he wrote to her:

"My arms are about you. I kiss you on the lips, the fre: frank lips I know and love. Had you been coy and fluttering, giving the lie to what you had already appeared to be by manifesting the slightest prudery or false fastidiousness, I really think I should have been utterly disgusted. 'Dear man, dear love!' I lie awake repeating those phrases over and over."

It is with these kinds of startling subjects, a bold narrative line, and the play of new ideas constitute London's appeal. As the years went by, His personal tie with his reader became an important element as well. He recognized the need for interesting material. He was always reading, meeting new people and taking notes by the boxful. He was lifeless observer of events, situations, and matters of
intellectual novelty. His famous Wednesday evening parties, attended by a parade of bums, grifters, cranks, and intellectuals were not merely an indulgence, for those people were a source of characters and ideas. He even bought plots from the young Sinclair Lewis to bolster flagging invention. In his search for the unusual, the attention-catching, however, he increasingly moved too far from the representative concerns of men into the realism of fantasy. Thus a very little fact is stretched out over page after page with humorous repetition. To sustain creation from almost nothing implies a powerful talent, and the more one reads the more one is struck by London's control of the language. He can evoke sharp images, explain complex procedures, describe intricate mechanisms and processes with economy and clarity. London drew heavily upon the romantic myth of himself for interest in his books. From the very first story of the Yukas, he was living, in violence, adventure and triumph vicariously for the common reader.

London exists in his books as he writes, as he expresses, as he discovers the meanings and intensities for which he could not even yearn without laughing. He grows in the books and lives his evolving role between them, as the man in the flesh enacts the man in the books.
London's biographers comment in surprise on the fact that he could be almost dead with thirst on the bedlamed snark and stagger down to the cabin to write a story about a sailor dying of thirst. But he had to write the experience before he really knew it.

London may have thought of himself as a realist because he believed that he was engaged in recording truth honestly and would have agreed with Howells that the goal of the writer is to describe reality and that "all tells for destiny and character." But London's conception of truth, reality and character were remarkably different from the reality. London's interest in Martin Eden (1909) is richest if we read the book to see what sort of sense London could make of the intellectual and psychological materials that he knew best in himself. The exposition proceeds to show a mind of dazzling intensity that jumps from the present event to evoke brilliant images of past experience. While he talks painfully to the friend's sister (Ruth Morse), scenes of brawls, whores, engine rooms, prisons, and wild seas surge and tumble before his mind's eye. Jack London was seriously recording truth, but not mere truth. He desired to present "strong truth" and to make absolutely clear to his reader his own conception of that truth. As a consequence he never explicitly...
defined the principle of the cosmic process. Like Martin Eden "he accepted the world as the world, but was not comprehending the organization of it, the interplay of force and matter." Force is the most significant and underlying fact in the universe. Arthur McDowell, as early as 1918, realized that his belief is fundamentally hostile to realism.

... just as there is a form of art which regards life as the embodiment of someone guiding thought or feeling, so it has been a common trait of philosophers to choose one element of the universe and look in it for the meaning of the whole. So Spinoza chose substance, Scopenhauer chose will, while modern theorists who start from physical science interpret everything in terms of activity or force. This point of view realism also repudiates as deceptive in its assumption and in simplicity.6

London believed that primitive emotions lay at the centre of the struggle for existence. Fear, in particular, was the basic emotion which nature evoked in man and which men either learned to live with or perished. But an intense love of life complemented that fear and compensated for it. Portrayal of intense emotion became not only his fictional goal but also the sandstick by which he measured the success of other writers and the rationale behind his praise for Kipling, Gorky and Upton Sinclair.
Martin Eden has been considered London's best work. However, the work suffers from a few drawbacks for it lacks aesthetic distance, it lacks the sense of control that comes when a writer has made a book. It's author is nakedly, naively, embarrassingly present in its situations. The best of London is to be found in the short stories: The Call of the Wild and White Fang.

London contributed greatly to one myth of the American writer, which he passed on from Mark Twain to F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway. All these writers tried to live several lives at once and in the attempt sacrificed their lives, their art, or their peace to the excess they attempted. London is like Mark Twain in his grandiose and disastrous business schemes. He was like Fitzgerald in alcoholism and in his involvement with a woman who took so much of his life that she invaded his great capacity for friendship. Like the others, he seemed always to be in a desperate struggle with his writing, so that the extra activities might be regarded as symptoms rather than causes of their frustration. He spent his life discovering and castigating abuses of every sort, from capitalism in all its corrupt manifestation, through organized religion, and even on to bullfighting. And he
was confused and frustrated in the same way that Mark Twain was.

Jack London never wrote a novel of manners, never took the patterns of American society seriously, never found typical problems in it with which he could wholeheartedly engage himself. His stories of Klondike are valid because the Gold Rush was an actual experience of Americans in an actual part of the continent. The Darwinian struggle for survival was at that time a foremost preoccupation in American thought. His socialist writings are often moving because they take us into areas of misery and deprivation with which modern man is deeply concerned. But this stress soon runs into the sounds, compelling the author to invent new fantasies of violence or prophecy. These elements place London in the naturalistic movement which embraces scientific determinism, Darwinism, the Spencerian philosophy of evolution, and Marxism, all of which in some way reflect the anti-supernaturalism and anti-traditionalism of a presumably scientific approach to human affairs.

These all theoretically renounce the free-will and ethical responsibility that underlay the classic well-made novel of manners -- and thus contribute to the restless search or form that has characterized the American novel
since 1900. London's special genius appears in his command of detail and pace. He knows how to produce realism and suspense by giving the minutest factual items of a situation -- and how on the other hand to jump over large areas of fact and make the reader supply the information or the meaning. He can bring the most seasoned and sophisticated to the edge of his chair and have him fidgeting with anxiety as a story builds towards its climax.

The forceful truth London wanted to demonstrate to the world was that life-giving values could be operative in a death dealing environment, that ideals could triumph over actuality. Consequently, upon the cosmically cold, pulseless and deterministic "primary truth" embodied in the Northland landscape, he superimposed a more optimistic idealistic order of truth, "secondary truth he would later call it."

The failure of these stories was implicit in London's conception of the short story which claimed that the world of actuality, the Darwinian cosmos, could be infused with the ideal. He did incorporate The Waste Land into his fiction, but with the exception of "The White Silence" and "An odyssey of the North," it is superficially imposed upon the stories. Beneath the glass of unpleasant subject
matter — theft, brawling and adultery — the illusions that infested the pleasant land of romance control his stories. The operative values, the idealized qualities of the kid, are straight from the American Dream: a belief in the power of the human will, a trust in the legendary American common sense and ingenuity, a commitment to personal integrity and love, and above all a faith that these potent virtues are capable of securing the dignity of the individual and restoring a human social order. Rationality provides not only a scientific description of the universe, but mastery over it. London, it seems, had brought with him to the Northland the optimistic baggage of a dead morality that had already been undermined by newer, more pessimistic conceptions of the universe that he, ironically, simultaneously promoted. He tried to solve a twentieth century problem of alienation, despair, futility, suffering and death with a nineteenth century set of values that presumed a rational, man-centered world order. Gordon Mills tries to uncover the principles that organizes London's ideas. Mills further argues perceptively, for example, that the much debated issue of whether London was an individualist or a socialist has little meaning because London was ruled by two desires rooted more deeply in his personality than
in his reading: "the desire for adventure, combat and power" and "the desire for friendship, justice and a severe intellectuality" regardless of whether the topic was socialism or individualism."

As far as the technique of Jack London is concerned, critics have held a very high opinion. London himself had talked about his style. "The Law of Life" which is collected in Children of the Frost, analyses his most thorough critique of his own form that he ever wrote to demonstrate his conscious struggle to acquire more dramatic techniques. He says:

"Yesterday I corrected proof sheets of a story for McClure's. It was written some eight months ago. It will be published in the February number. Do look it up so that you may understand more clearly what I am trying to explain. It's short, applies the particular to the universal, deals with a lovely death, of an old man, in which beasts consummate the tragedy. My man is an old Indian, abandoned in the snow by his tribe because he cannot keep up. He has a little fire, a few sticks of wood, the frost and silence about him. He is blind. How do I approach the event? What point of view do I take? Why the old Indian's of course. It opens up with him sitting by his little fire, listening to his tribesmen breaking camp, harnessing dogs, and departing. The reader listens to every familiar sound: hears the last draw away; feels the silence settle down. The old man wanders back into his past: the reader wanders with him -- thus is the whole theme exploited through the soul of the Indian. Down to the consummation,
There is no essay in the beginning, and the setting is established in the beginning, and the setting is established in terms of the oldman's awareness so that there is no awkward shift from narrative landscaping to action; therefore, the reader is not conscious of a direct bid for his attention. "The Sun Dog Trail" thematically seems to demonstrate that London subscribed to the theory of dramatic fiction which describes rather than prescribes, shows rather than tells, presents ideas implicitly rather than explicitly by using scenes rather than exposition. It was intense, direct and powerful experience that Jack London wanted to evoke. And while he has finished the terms that would assist him, he was cultivating a style that would control and unleash that power. London accepted Spencer's theory that simple, evocative language was the best way to convey "each thought into the mind, step by step with little liability to error." Secondly, London learned from Spencer that forceful expression could be achieved by selecting "from the sentiment, scene, or event described, those typical
elements which carry many other along with them; or in other words, the most direct method and style is the most suggestive one. So London tried to acquire a simple but evocative structure and style, and in fact, the height of his stylistic achievement was just this evocative and poetic effect.

Throughout the rest of his career, London continued to rely on the three major short story forms and the evocative style that he learned during these early, apprenticeship years. His social criticism stories and South Sea stories, the good ones as well as the potboilers, are cast in these familiar moulds. At their best, the stories wed form, content and style while transcending formal and technical deficiencies by emphasizing central, powerful scenes. The essay-exemption form remained a staple for presenting ideas dogmatically, particularly when introducing new ideas about strange lands or situations whether in the Northland, the South Seas, or among the "submerged tenth" in America. The frame stories allowed him to develop more complex ideas. The mere dramatic forms and techniques were used for statements about basic human experiences which needed no explicit introduction, but demanded emotional impact, especially if the perspective was ironic.
Just why London experimented in form and technique near the end of 1902 is a most question. Certainly the oft repeated slogan the quest for dollars of the daily routine of 1000 words could not permit development as a measure of truth in it. That's not the entire answer, however. He needed money and wrote 1000 words daily at the beginning of his career when he wrote jokes, poems, and among other horror stories, and still obviously he went on to experiment successfully with forms, techniques and styles. Several other factors must have been equally as important in arresting his development. The reason he has stopped writing lacks work and began experimenting with new forms was that his goal had changed. Not satisfied to stay in the ranks of nameless professional hack writers, he had dedicated himself to a higher goal: to find in the proper trend of literary art. From 1899 to the end of 1902, he changed his conception of art and sense of mission as a writer did not change radically nor did his short story form. Secondly, especially after the publication of Call of the Wild (1903), he became more interested in the novel and less in short stories. But most importantly once he was convinced that he had adequate vehicles of his ideas that they were communicating, he had no interest in craftsmanship
for its own sake. Early in his career he had remarked that he would "subordinate thought to technique till the latter is mastered; then I shall do vice-versa." He saw himself primarily as a purveyor of new ideas and experiences and gave priority to them. Charmian London records that Jack often claimed that "I will sacrifice form everytime, when it boils down to a final choice between form and matter. The thought is the thing."

By the end of 1902, Jack London had come a long way from "Typhoon" and "In the Time of Prince Charley" in understanding the nature of short story craftsmanship. With the aim of stories and discussions of fiction in the magazines, Kipling's example and Herbert Spencer's stylistic theory as well as his own collosal energy, he was able to detail himself as an artist and had got in touch with the most important literary currents of his age. Abraham Rothberg writes in "The House that Jack Built" that:

Actually, [London] was committed to an earlier heritage of absolutist ethics, fundamental to the thinking of the mid-19th century. These ideas were derived chiefly from 18th century ideas of nature and moral law. Here nature was favourable to man rather than indifferent or hostile; the concept of historical development was both progressive and optimistic rather
rather than retrogressive and pessimistic; rather than a view of life in which man's nature is conceived of as beastly and irrational operating in a completely determined fashion ruled by blind forces or brute forces, man's nature was conceived as reasonable and his behaviour was based on free will operating in a universe governed by a benevolent providence.8

On the other hand, Warner Berthott, although admits "darker more complex intuitions" in London's fiction, places his emphasis upon the theme of mastery and domination in London's stories:

"He had a shrewd instinct for the chronic main currents of middle class hallucination, especially a kind of retributive day-dreaming about acts of pure domination or unconditioned conquest. He appealed strongly to readers who wanted their day-dreams explained a little dignified by an overglaze of objective theory."9

Rather than portraying characters who master themselves and their environments, London depicted them either reaching an uneasy accommodation with internal and external forces or being destroyed by them. The encounter of limited man with a mysterious cosmos, an encounter which defines the limits of rationality, is the major theme of London's best fiction. London continually readjusts the boundary between the rational and the supra-rational: from the intuitive and rational kid living in
an imaginatively and rationally comprehensible universe. London begins to portray protagonists who live by various kinds of laws which they apply to the knowable, parts of their existence while being aware of the ultimately unknowable and incomprehensible nature of life. London as we have seen was torn between the "greatness and the littleness of the human intellect ... its power [and] its importance." This is the lesson of the "White Silence" and often London's characters learn, as London did from Spencer, "the absurdity of the finite contemplating the infinite."

The characters are compelled to contrast the mysterious unknown and to learn either how to live amid it or perish. Like an aspect of mind, destructive forces cannot be escaped nor conquered. These protagonists consider that the world is a dark and futile place.

The predominance of death and violence in London's short stories disturbed some of the early critics who rejected him as sensationalist, and very few later critics have realized that through violence London was probing experiences neglected by his contemporaries. Moreover, he probed with an integrity, sincerity and insight rarely associated with him. For Earle Labor, at least, London deserves some attention as one of the first modern writers
to realize the significance of death and violence as central motif in twentieth century fiction ("Jack London's Literary Artistry," p. 12). Death and violence serve as an 'initiatory' rite into manhood. And manhood can be more fully understood as a full awareness of the individual's participation with the unknowable universe that has an anti-human malignancy as one of its components. The act of killing is a concession to their unknowable and an admission that man has an internal counterpart to destructive natural forces.

The introduction of violence and death coupled with the unknown into London's fiction has important artistic consequences: it demands limited characters who cannot predict all the implications of their actions nor understand all their consequences; the supra-rational is wedded to the rational and mystery to the unknown; tragedy rather than comedy becomes the mode; irony rather than a confident certainly becomes the mood.

Socialism was not an entirely new interest of London's. From the beginning of his career almost until his death, he was involved in the socialistic cause. The most important unifying bonds between the northland and socialist stories are that London could approach the
different subject matter didactically and prophetically, his most comfortable authorial stance, and that both kinds of stories were justified by 'scientific' theories. In the beginning of his career he hastened to find techniques to allow the presentation of strong "truths," derived in part from science, and in the socialist stories, the role of the artist as propagandist for a scientific Marxism is a recurring motif that demonstrates his messianic impulse; the sincerity of his conviction, and his continuing trust in scientific theories. London's interest in the artist's social role as prophet and propagandist accounts for one of his finest social stories, "The strength of the strong," one which proves that his socialism could sponsor high quality fiction. This story, which Foner calls "among the finest parables in American literature" uses the omniscient but limited narrator, the controlled narrative point of view which had given power to stories like "The Law of Life" (American Rebel, p.108). In this parable depicting the evolution of capitalism but prophesying its demise, London is attacking Rudyard Kipling for relinquishing his role of prophet to become spokesman for the establishment. Kipling had written a defence of capitalism and an attack upon the socialists' anti-war theory in a parable entitled "Melissa." London's
parable was written to attack Kipling's argument that socialism could not prevent war because cooperation necessitates a degenerating laziness that destroys the fabric of society before warfare can be stopped. Jesus, of course, taught through parable, and London admired Him for his simple moral understanding and love of humanity, qualities he hoped to portray in "The Strength of the Strong." Moreover, the parable is similar to the form of the best Alaskan tales since simple analogy is similar to archetypal symbolism.

Only one other story is similar in form, technique and theme to "The Strength of the Strong," no matter how suitable parable was for London's socialistic propaganda -- "A curious fragment." It is important that London, in these two socialist stories, has not returned to a completely optimistic theme of mastery. The stories are 'dystopian' rather than 'utopian' and concentrate upon the period of oligarchical, capitalistic oppression that, according to the Marxist dialect, comes before entering the promised land. His metier in these stories, as in his best Alaskan fiction, is catastrophe and suffering.

London hopes to prepare his audience for the coming utopia. And even in his self-assumed role of public
educator and "agitator" he is more practical than utopian. The assumed audience is the working class, and the story teller (an extension of London's self-concept) is not completely identified with the workers because he has gone further than they through self-education and is prepared to accept responsibility in the new order. At times, London himself could be contemptuous toward the proletariat. He wrote to Anna Strunsky, for example, "I grow, sometimes, almost to hate the mass, to sneer at dreams of reform" because they crucify their prophets and remain unfit for leadership themselves. These two stories, however, prove that London hoped to redeem them. In "The Strength of the Strong" he dramatizes the ironic situation of the masses staring. "Split Nose" their collectivist prophet because they have been duped by their corrupt capitalist rulers.

In London's as well as Conrad's fiction, social and political types replace the archetypal hero and poetry is replaced by slogans. The best known of London's socialist stories, "The Dream of Debs," and the only one dramatizing collectivist triumph exemplifies the artistic difficulties inherent in his propaganda. For example, Corf learns so little from his contact with human misery that he concludes the story by observing intensively that,
"the tyranny of organized labor is getting beyond human endurance" and "something must be done." But this point of view is a clumsy device for London's propaganda. Most of the story shows Corf suffering and emphasizes the violent savagery of the slum dwellers; consequently, the reader identifies too completely with Corf's agony. Moreover, because Corf is politically uniformed, the first person device forces London to draw from his other characters informative speeches, rather than dramatic dialogues.

The last of London's stories using a frankly ideological socialism, "The Mexican," is a companion piece to "The Apostle" since both stories portray the silent anguish of the proletariat facing economic, social and political injustice. However, the mood of "The Mexican" is vengeful rather than pathetically disillusioned, and its youthful protagonist is a victim-rebel instead of mere victim. Artistically, it is more successful because it evokes the mythic "unknown" that suggests both destruction and salvation and identifies its protagonist with the ambiguous, primitive forces.

In "The Minions of Midas," for example, he employs the dystopian concept that terror will reign before the
orderly and humane utopia will be reached that is found in "The Strength of the Strong," "A Curious Fragment" and "The Mexican." But the story is preposterous. The Minions of Midas is a terrorist organization of intellectuals from the working class who refuse to become wage-slaves and who are dedicated to assassinating rich industrialists. The terrorists remain faceless and are known by the reader only through their letters threatening the rich. They are, it is explained, the impersonal principle of destruction that is inherent in the capitalist system. Barret describes as characteristic of magazine fiction at that time: these stories aim "to present a vivid picture of our own times, whether to utilize some existing evil, or to entertain by telling us something of how 'the other half' of the world lives." Too many critics have confused the sincerity of London's convictions and the justice of his social imagination with artistic achievement. The truth is that socialistic theory did not provide him a basis of sustained artistic achievement nor produce many stories of quality.

From 1914 to 1916, Richard O'Connor writes, London, "began delving into the new science -- or cause, as it soon became -- of exploring the psyche. He devoured the works of Freud, Prince, and Jung, fascinated by what he
could grasp of their claims for psychoanalysis" (Jack London: A Biography, Boston, 1964, p.367). Charmian London verifies O'Connor's statements, and she suggests that the summer of 1916 climaxed Jack's intensive reading and discussion when he exclaimed, "Mate woman, I tell you I am standing on the edge of a world so new, so terrible, so wonderful, that I am almost afraid to look over into it" (Jack London: A Biography, (Boston, 1964, pp.322-23). This dramatic statement, recalling the terror that drove him from San Francisco, the wonder that called him to the Klondike and the mixture of despair and joy that infused his Northland stories, was made as London began writing the last of his short stories, published posthumously in The Red One (1918) and On the Makaloa Mat (1919). Beatrice M. Hinkel's introduction to Psychology of the Unconscious compares and contrasts Freud's and Jung's concepts of dreams, sexuality, the libido and the Oedipus complex and emphasizes those ideas which the two psychologists shared. London's stories prove that Jack had not only read this introduction but also the entire volume with care.

Early in his efforts, the writer had hoped to combine actuality and ideals, realism and romance, rational and subjective responses to life. As he felt the growing
fragmentation induced by rationality, he placed more emphasis upon subjective responses and the dream-like in his fiction. Jung too was compelled to explain non-rational thought, and the rest of *Psychology of the Unconscious* defines and explores "dream or fantasy thinking" or the "mythic." Recall, for example, in John Barleycorn, the romantic whisper that London heard while drowning in San Francisco Bay or the ambiguous ending of "then White Silence" that combines the Malemute Kid's pride in his ability to participate in adventure with his fear of annihilation. The representation and evocation of strong emotions, intense optimism or pessimism and an enthusiasm for felt life rather than abstracted experience had the object of and power behind the composition of his best stories. "If one honours God, the sun or the fire," Jung writes, then one honors one's own vital force, the libido." If one reverses this statement, the quality of London's affirmation is captured: if one honors one's vital force by participating in the true adventure, he honors life. If we read a story like "To Build a Fire" is the other side of the Jungian coin. The nameless rational man who travels into the Alaskan darkness has no "imagination," no subjective powers, to inform him of the nature of true adventure and the risks involved. He
is devoid of psychic energy and, therefore, becomes the victim of the natural forces that crush upon him from without. Consequently, his fatal inability to build a fire, which leaves him to die in darkness, symbolizes his failure or reasons capacity to affirm and sustain life. Not to honour one's subjective powers brings a denial of life and the symbolic extinction of the fire.

"The Tears of Ah Kim" can be suspected to have some aspects of the Oedipal complex. And this is intellectual rationale behind the unusual action. In fact, London has dramatized a corollary to the oedipal attachment theory -- Jung's concept of "the sacrifice" which is the substance of the last chapter of *Psychology of the Unconscious*. Ah Kim must undergo the pain which derives both from the guilt that springs from his incestuous impulses and his desire to be punished for his rebellious instincts. The bamboo stick, "predominantly a mother symbol," signifies that Mrs. Tai Fu's instrument of authority and punishment is her motherhood, and its phallic connotations reinforce Ah Kim's incestuous guilt.

To overcome guilt and achieve maturity, Jung writes in his chapter "The Sacrifice", a person must find a "sexual object" to "replace the forbidden mother" (p. 92.
of Li Faa in the story Ah Kim goes through the painful process of sacrificing his infantile wishes in order to transfer his libido energy to another object. In addition, Jung writes, freedom from the mother is symbolized in myths by an illusion to death which is followed by the new, mature relationship which evokes a sense of "eternal germination and renewal" and floral imagery (pp. 436, 467). It's by Jungian design, then, that at the end of "The Tears of Ah Kim" the mother looses her strength and dies, allowing Ah Kim to marry Li Faa. On his wedding night, Ah Kim explains to his bride why he cried under his mother's last beating: "She no longer had strength enough to hunt me." His mother had lost her Oedipal power. The bride, in a comic allusion to Jung's "eternal germination and renewal" phrase, is described as shaped like a "watermelon seed," and, completing the cluster of Jungian symbolism for a mature relationship. Ah Kim calls her "my flower of serenity, my perfect rest" (The God of His Fathers, p.34-64).

The life-giving, subjective call to "true adventure," properly undertaken, could tap the powerful energies of
Haeckelian "soul" or the Jungian subconscious and triumph over the death-dealing wasteland. For Jack London, Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious* was just the last in a series of romantic calls to completion, to self-identifying and self-sustaining nobility.
NOTES


