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The Publication of Jack London's Works (1876–1916): Issues of History, Literary Form, and Technical Design

Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive scholarly analysis of the publication history of Jack London's works (1876–1916) across different countries, including Azerbaijan, with particular attention to the preservation of their artistic and aesthetic qualities and to issues of technical design. The study examines the ideological and philosophical dimensions of London's oeuvre, the depiction of human–nature relationships, and the complex system of characters imbued with motifs of social struggle. It further investigates the influence of translation traditions, typographic quality, and the development of book culture



on the publication process. Special attention is given to the presentation of Jack London's legacy within the Azerbaijani publishing context, highlighting aesthetic and technical differences across various publication periods. The article also explores the history of translations of London's works, their bibliographic analysis, and key bibliometric indicators. The findings hold both theoretical and practical significance for literary studies, library and information science, and contemporary publishing practices.

Keywords: Jack London, American Literature, History of Publishing, Book Culture

Jack London'ın Eserlerinin Yayımlanması (1876–1916): Tarih, Edebi Biçim ve Teknik Tasarım Sorunları

Öz

Bu makale, Jack London'ın (1876–1916) eserlerinin yayımlanma tarihini farklı ülkelerde, Azerbaycan dâhil olmak üzere, ayrıntılı bir akademik incelemeye tabi tutmaktadır. Çalışmada, eserlerin sanatsal ve estetik niteliklerinin korunmasına ve teknik tasarımıyla ilgili konulara özel önem verilmektedir. Araştırma, London'ın külliyatının ideolojik ve felsefî boyutlarını, insan-doğa ilişkilerinin betimlenişini ve toplumsal mücadele motifleriyle zenginleşmiş karmaşık karakter sistemini ele almaktadır. Ayrıca, çeviri geleneklerinin, tipografik kalitenin ve kitap kültürünün yayımlanma süreci üzerindeki etkisi incelenmektedir. Jack London'ın mirasının Azerbaycan yayıncılık bağlamındaki sunumuna özel bir odaklanma yapılarak, farklı yayımlanma dönemleri arasındaki estetik ve teknik farklılıklar vurgulanmaktadır. Makale, London'ın eserlerinin çeviri tarihini, bibliyografik çözümlemesini ve temel bibliyometrik göstergelerini de incelemektedir. Araştırma bulguları, edebiyat çalışmaları, kütüphane ve bilgi bilimi ile çağdaş yayıncılık uygulamaları için hem kuramsal hem de pratik açıdan önem taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Jack London, Amerikan Edebiyatı, Yayıncılık Tarihi, Kitap Kültürü

Introduction

Jack London (1876–1916), one of the prominent figures of American literature, is regarded as a writer who significantly influenced the development of world prose in the early twentieth century. His works are notable for the artistic expression of social, philosophical, and psychological issues, as well as the synthesis of adventure and romantic styles. Works such as *The Call of the Wild*, *Martin Eden*, *The Sea-Wolf*, *White Fang*, and *To Build a Fire* have garnered widespread attention not only within the American literary sphere but also among readers worldwide.

The publication process of Jack London's works has played a crucial role not only in disseminating their artistic value but also in shaping historical, aesthetic, and technical trends in modern book publishing practices. Although research on the author primarily focuses on his ideological and artistic pursuits, the publication history, typographic design, and presentation formats of his works also warrant separate scholarly investigation.

The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that translations and publications of Jack London's works in various languages, along with considerations of artistic design and technical formatting, serve as important resources for studying trends in bibliography, publishing, and cultural history. In this context, particular attention is given to the author's first publications in the United States and Europe, the mass editions produced in the Soviet sphere, and the presentation of his works to readers in Azerbaijan. The aim of this article is to trace the publication process of Jack London's works chronologically, analyze the interaction between artistic content and typographic design, and identify prospects for the application of contemporary publishing technologies. To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been established:

- To examine the characteristics of Jack London's first editions in the United States and Europe;
- To analyze the publication traditions of the author's works in the Soviet sphere;
- To explore the translation and publication history of Jack London's works in Azerbaijan;
- To investigate the interplay between the artistic content of the works and issues of technical design;
- To review the presentation of Jack London's oeuvre in contemporary digital publications.

Thus, the study of this topic is significant not only for understanding the development of artistic and technical design in the book publishing process but also for its relevance to the integration of these works into Azerbaijani book culture.

1. Publication History of Jack London's Works

1.1. First Editions in the United States and Europe

Jack London's works first appeared in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century. His collection *The People of the North* and the subsequently published novel *The Call of the Wild* (London, 1903; 1904; 1909; 1910a; 1910b) introduced the writer to a wide readership. The rapid dissemination of his works through large print runs reflected the significant interest in adventure and romantic styles in the American publishing market of that period.

In Europe, London's works were published primarily between 1904 and 1910, with notable activity in England, France, and Germany. English readers embraced London as "a fresh voice in American adventure literature," while French publishers presented his novels within the context of classical naturalism. In Germany, particular attention was paid to works reflecting the author's socialist perspectives.

From a typographic perspective, the quality of paper and illustrative materials varied during this period. While U.S. editions were commercially oriented and printed in a simple format for mass readership, European editions paid greater attention to graphic illustrations and the aesthetic presentation of the books.

1.2. Publications in the Soviet Sphere

Following the 1917 Revolution, Jack London's works attracted considerable interest in the Soviet Union. Novels such as *Martin Eden* and *The Sea-Wolf* were deemed compatible with Soviet ideology, as they depicted the struggles of the working individual and offered a critique of capitalist society, resulting in wide circulation (Əliyev, 2010; İsmayilov & Khalafova, 2023; Mammadov & Mahammadli, 2025). During the 1920s and 1930s, London's works were extensively translated into Russian, with print runs reaching tens of thousands of copies. In Soviet libraries, Jack London's books ranked among the most widely read foreign authors (Məmmədov, 2005; İsmayilov, 2018; Alizadeh & Mahammadli, 2025). This not only influenced readers' tastes but also contributed to the popularization of adventure literature.

From a typographic standpoint, Soviet editions were produced in a simple yet readable format. Illustrations were mainly in black-and-white graphic style, and the paper quality corresponded to the technical possibilities of the era.

1.3. Translation and Publication Traditions in Azerbaijan

Although Jack London's works were introduced to Azerbaijan in the early twentieth century, their systematic publication is associated with the Soviet period. The first translations appeared in the 1930s, and particularly between the 1950s and 1980s, his works were widely published (Huseynov, 2017; Nadir & Oruj, 2022; İsmayilov & Khalafova, 2022). For Azerbaijani readers, novels such as *Martin Eden*, *White Fang*, and *The Call of the Wild* generated the most interest (İsmayilov & Khalafova, 2024). The typographic characteristics of Azerbaijani editions included color covers, while the internal text generally followed the simple graphic style of Soviet publications.

In the post-independence period, Jack London's works began to be printed with more modern design and higher-quality typography, while also being made available in electronic book formats for readers.

2. Artistic Features of Jack London's Works and Their Influence on Publication

2.1. Thematic Characteristics and Plot Dynamics

A central artistic characteristic of Jack London's oeuvre lies in its grounding in the author's personal experiences and the socio-cultural realities he observed. His works address themes such as human will, the struggle against nature, social injustice, and the contradictions of human character.

In novels such as *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*, human–nature relationships, survival instincts, and the psychological portrayal of protagonists are conveyed to readers with compelling artistic expression (London, 1903; 1910a). The thematic selection of these works directly influenced their publication, as the strong presence of adventure motifs contributed to the mass production of books aimed at a wide readership, particularly young audiences.

Conversely, the novel *Martin Eden* features a more intellectual and philosophical content (London, 1909; Labor, 1994). By exploring individual freedom, the creative crisis, and social justice, the work was published not merely as an entertaining read but also as a serious literary and ideological text.

2.2. Ideological and Content Depth and Audience Reach

The ideological and thematic depth of London's works has been a key factor shaping their publication strategy. His literary output is not limited to adventure stories; the works also explore the human psyche, the will to struggle, and the pursuit of social equality.

Accordingly, London's works appealed to readers from diverse social backgrounds. Nature descriptions and adventurous plots, attractive to the general readership, contributed to the commercial success of his books, while his social and philosophical ideas generated serious scholarly discussion within intellectual circles.

Publishers adopted a dual approach in terms of audience targeting: on one hand, books were printed in inexpensive, mass-produced editions to reach a broad readership; on the other hand, limited-edition, high-quality publications with distinctive artistic design were produced.

2.3. Influence of Social and Philosophical Motifs on Publication

The strong presence of social and philosophical motifs in London's works facilitated their widespread distribution in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. For instance, *The Sea-Wolf* presents themes of authority, violence, and human freedom from a critical perspective, making its publication and promotion significant for Soviet ideological purposes (London, 1904).

Similarly, the protagonist of *Martin Eden* challenges bourgeois society through the struggle for individual freedom and creativity (London, 1909). These ideas influenced publishers to align their production practices with political directives.

Thus, works carrying ideological content were prepared for publication not only for their artistic value but also within a political context, often serving as instruments of targeted propaganda during various periods.

2.4. Alignment of Artistic Composition with Text Structure

The artistic value of London's works also influenced their technical design (Labor & Reesman, 1994). Strong depictions of nature, human–animal interactions, and adventurous plot dynamics necessitated the extensive use of illustrative materials in book design.

In particular, editions of *White Fang* and *The Call of the Wild* incorporated graphic illustrations that complemented the narrative (London, 1903; 1910a). Illustrations depicting animal figures, northern landscapes, and harsh climatic conditions enhanced the emotional impact on readers.

In contrast, more philosophical works such as *Martin Eden* and *The Sea-Wolf* favored minimalist design, emphasizing the intellectual content of the text (London, 1904; 1909). This serves as a notable bibliographic example of the interplay between artistic content and technical design.

2.5. Reader Psychology and Market Demands

Reader psychology was also considered in the publication process of London's works. Adventure-themed novels were primarily targeted at young readers, presented with bright covers and a clear, accessible writing style.

On the other hand, works with philosophical and social depth were designed with a more serious typographic style (Stasz, 2001). This approach simultaneously addressed market demands and established a publication policy aligned with the tastes of different reader groups.

3. Technical Design Issues

3.1. Graphic Design and Illustration Traditions

Graphic design and illustration traditions have played a significant role in the publication of Jack London's works. His narratives prominently feature harsh natural landscapes, human–animal interactions, and adventurous and romantic scenes, making the inclusion of illustrative materials in books an important factor in enriching the reader's experience.

In the early twentieth century, U.S. and European editions of novels such as *White Fang* and *The Call of the Wild* were presented with specialized graphic illustrations (London, 1903; 1910a). These illustrations not only enhanced the aesthetic value of the books but also visually conveyed the narrative dynamics. For example, depictions of northern landscapes, glaciers, and polar nights helped readers form a vivid understanding of the events described.

During the Soviet period, the illustration style predominantly consisted of realistic graphic depictions, often aligned with the principles of socialist realism (Ismayilov & Khalafova, 2023; Alizadeh & Mahammadli, 2025). Similar trends were observed in Azerbaijani editions, where simple yet effective illustrations corresponding to the content of the works were included in the book design (Huseynov, 2017).

3.2. Paper Quality and Printing Solutions

The quality of paper used in Jack London's publications varied significantly across different periods. In the early twentieth century United States, works were generally printed on medium-quality, commercially oriented paper due to the rapid growth of readership and high demand for inexpensive copies.

In Europe, particularly in England and France, books were published on higher-quality paper using more advanced printing technologies, targeting a more elite readership.

In the Soviet sphere, paper quality depended on economic resources. During the 1930s–1950s, simpler paper was used for cost-saving purposes. However, from the 1960s to the 1980s, improvements in the printing infrastructure allowed for higher-quality editions (Huseynov, 2017). Azerbaijani publications generally conformed to overall Soviet standards in terms of print quality.

3.3. Cover Design and Reader Psychology

The cover design of Jack London's works was a key factor in shaping reader interest (Reesman, 2009). Adventure, struggle, and romantic motifs in his narratives were visually emphasized on the covers.

In the early twentieth century U.S. editions, covers were simple but brightly colored, displaying the title and author's name in large type. In Europe, cover design was approached more aesthetically, with greater emphasis on artistic illustrations.

During the Soviet period, covers were generally designed in a realistic style. For instance, editions of *Martin Eden* featured contemplative portrayals of the protagonist, while covers of *White Fang* and *The Call of the Wild* symbolically depicted the wild nature (London, 1903; 1909; 1910a).

Azerbaijani editions followed similar styles, occasionally incorporating elements of national graphic design (İsmayilov & Khalafova, 2023).

3.4. Text Editing and Typeface Selection

An important aspect of technical design is the choice of typeface and text editing standards. Early editions of Jack London's works employed large, readable fonts, maintaining simple design principles for mass readership.

3.5. European Editions and Typeface Preferences

European editions, however, often favored classical serif typefaces to highlight the intellectual character of the work. In Soviet-era Azerbaijani editions, fonts similar to Times New Roman were primarily used, balancing readability with technical efficiency.

3.6. Contemporary Digital Editions and E-Books

In the twenty-first century, the technical design of Jack London's works has entered a new phase. With the advancement of digital technologies, all of his works are now available in electronic formats on various platforms (e.g., Kindle, ePub, PDF).

Advantages of digital editions include interactivity, easy accessibility, and multimedia presentation options (Altbach & Hoshino, 1995). For example, digital editions may incorporate audio versions, color illustrations, and even links to film adaptations alongside the text.

In the Azerbaijani book market, Jack London's works have also been recently made available in electronic formats. This has facilitated broader dissemination among younger readers and supported the development of modern publishing strategies through the application of contemporary technologies.

3.7. Translation History of Jack London's Works

Translation has played a crucial role in bringing Jack London's works to a global readership. The translation process involves not only linguistic conversion but also the preservation of artistic and aesthetic qualities, as well as the integrity of the author's ideas and character portrayals. The translation and dissemination of London's works have contributed significantly to establishing his position within the global literary circulation.

3.8. Early Translations and Dissemination

Jack London's works began to be translated into European and Asian languages in the early twentieth century. For example, *The Call of the Wild* was translated into Russian in 1905, followed

by translations into French and German. This stage laid the foundation for the international recognition of London's works and the expansion of his readership.

3.9. Translation Techniques and Aesthetic Preservation

Both linguistic and cultural context played a critical role in the translation of London's works. Translators endeavored not only to replace words but also to preserve the author's artistic and aesthetic style (Feather, 2006). Particular attention was given to the depiction of nature, the inner lives of characters, and the expression of social conflicts to ensure fidelity to the original text.

3.10. Translation in the Azerbaijani Context

In the post-Soviet space, including Azerbaijan, Jack London's works began to be translated and presented to readers from the second half of the twentieth century. Notable works such as *White Fang*, *The Call of the Wild*, and *The Sea-Wolf* were incorporated into libraries and school curricula (Huseynov, 2017; Ismayilov & Khalafova, 2023). These translations preserved the author's ideas and character system while introducing Azerbaijani readers to global literature.

3.11. Challenges and Prospects in Translation

The translation of Jack London's works presents several challenges, including the preservation of artistic and aesthetic elements, adaptation of culturally specific expressions, and maintaining the relevance of the translation for contemporary readers. Future research could focus on refining translation methodologies and adapting London's works into new languages, offering significant prospects for literary studies and bibliography.

The history of translating Jack London's works demonstrates that his literary output is highly valued not only in national but also in international literary contexts. The translation process has served as a primary instrument for bringing his works to a global audience, enriching book culture, and contributing to the integration of world literature.

4. Published Works on Jack London's Literary Output

Jack London's literary corpus has been examined not solely within the confines of artistic creation but also as a subject of rigorous literary and cultural scholarship. Across different historical periods, monographs, peer-reviewed articles, memoirs, and biographical studies pertaining to his works have been published (Greco, Milliot, & Wharton, 2014). The critical analysis of these publications is essential for understanding how London's literary legacy has been received internationally and how its thematic and ideological dimensions have been interpreted across diverse cultural contexts.

4.1. Publications in Western Literary Studies

In the United States and Western Europe, scholarly attention to Jack London has predominantly concentrated on his realist and naturalist narrative techniques, his conceptualization of the “American Dream,” and his social-philosophical outlooks. Between the 1920s and 1940s, particular emphasis was placed on studies exploring the author’s personal life and ideological orientations. From the 1960s through the 1980s, London’s oeuvre underwent a resurgence of scholarly interest, analyzed through the lens of contemporary humanities methodologies (Lyons, 2011). Biographical studies also proliferated during this period, with significant contributions from authors such as Irving Stone, Andrew Sinclair, and Earle Labor.

4.2. Publications in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Space

During the Soviet era, Jack London’s works were interpreted within the framework of socialist realism. Motifs relating to the struggles of the working class and the fight against social injustice were ideologically foregrounded, and the author’s sympathetic stance toward socialist ideals was particularly emphasized (Mammadov, 2005). Academic publications released in Moscow and Leningrad, alongside Russian-language biographies, were widely circulated within this context.

In the post-Soviet period, London’s literary output began to be investigated beyond the constraints of ideological frameworks, with greater attention directed toward its artistic and aesthetic dimensions. Contemporary scholarship has highlighted ecological themes, the individual’s pursuit of freedom, and existential concerns as central areas of inquiry.

4.3. Publications in Azerbaijani Literary Studies

In Azerbaijan, research on Jack London has primarily emerged within the context of translated literature. From the 1950s through the 1980s, Azerbaijani translations were accompanied by prefaces, critical commentary, and scholarly annotations, which facilitated a deeper engagement with the ideological and aesthetic dimensions of London’s works (Huseynov, 2017; İsmayilov & Khalafova, 2023). Since the late twentieth century, Azerbaijani philologists have produced specialized articles, research reports, and scholarly monographs addressing the social-philosophical and artistic-aesthetic aspects of his oeuvre.

The chronological and geographical distribution of publications on Jack London demonstrates that his works possess significant value not only as exemplary literary texts but also as subjects of scholarly investigation. The diversity of monographs and articles published across

different periods attests to the multifaceted nature of his literary legacy and provides a rich foundation for contemporary academic inquiry.

5. Bibliographic Analysis of Jack London's Works

The bibliographic analysis of Jack London's oeuvre is of significant importance for understanding the geographical dissemination of his works, their publication history, translation traditions, and impact on readership. Bibliographic studies indicate that, beginning in the early twentieth century, London's works were published in large print runs, translated into multiple languages, and reached an international audience.

5.1. Publication History and Geographical Distribution

Jack London's initial book publications appeared in the United States between 1900 and 1910. Works such as *The Son of the Wolf* (1900), *The Call of the Wild* (1903), and *The Sea-Wolf* (1904) quickly gained popularity among readers and were reissued multiple times. During his lifetime, his works were translated from English into German, French, Russian, Spanish, Italian, and other European languages (Mammadov & Mahammadli, 2025). This phenomenon serves as a bibliographic indicator of London's international recognition.

5.2. Print Runs and Reissues

Bibliographic analysis of London's works demonstrates that they were published in high print runs and frequently reissued. Notably, *White Fang* and *The Call of the Wild* were produced throughout the twentieth century in various editions targeting both children and young adult audiences. Publishers in the United States and Europe continually issued new editions with updated editorial revisions and occasionally produced illustrated special editions (London, 1903; 1910a).

5.3. Translation Traditions and Bibliographic Features

London's works were translated into Russian at a very early stage, which contributed to the formation of a broad readership in the post-Soviet space. In Azerbaijani, translations primarily appeared during the Soviet era under the auspices of publishers such as Azərnəşr (Əliyev, 2010; Bayramov & Məhəmmədli, 2025). Bibliographic elements in these translations—prefaces, commentaries, and editorial notes—significantly influenced the reception of the works and shaped the representation of Jack London within local literary scholarship.

6. Preservation and Dissemination in Library Collections

Numerous editions of Jack London's works are cataloged in major libraries worldwide. National libraries preserve both the original English editions and their translations. In Azerbaijan,

Soviet-era translated editions of London's works continue to attract readership in scientific and public libraries (İsmayilov & Khalafova, 2023).

The bibliographic analysis of Jack London's works demonstrates that his literary output has become an integral component of global book culture. Publications across various countries, print run statistics, translation practices, and library holdings collectively ensure the continued relevance of his literary heritage. Furthermore, from a bibliographic perspective, London's oeuvre serves not only as a subject of artistic study but also as a vital resource for examining intercultural literary connections.

6.1. Publication History and Reprint Metrics

London's works were first published in the United States between 1900 and 1910. Notable works such as *The Call of the Wild* (1903), *White Fang* (1910a), and *The Sea-Wolf* (1904) were reissued multiple times by different publishers. Bibliometric analysis demonstrates that the annual print volumes and frequency of publication contributed significantly to the expansion of London's global literary reputation.

7. Translation and International Dissemination

From the early twentieth century onward, London's works were translated from English into a variety of European and Asian languages (Alizadeh & Mahammadli, 2025). Bibliometric indicators reveal that the extent of these translations played a crucial role in the formation of a worldwide readership. Translations into Russian, French, German, and Spanish, in particular, were disseminated in substantial print runs.

7.1. Categorization of Editions and Scientific Indexing

Bibliometric study also examines editions based on genre characteristics, editorial and illustrative quality, and inclusion in scholarly indices. London's texts frequently appear in academic citations and attract scholarly interest both for their literary qualities and for the social and political themes they explore (Greco, Milliot, & Wharton, 2014).

7.2. Readership and Bibliometric Indicators

Using modern bibliometric research methods, it is possible to analyze London's readership, sales figures, and the geographic distribution of publications across various publishers. Results indicate that London's works have sustained reader interest not only in English-speaking countries but also in the post-Soviet space, including Azerbaijan (İsmayilov & Khalafova, 2023; Alizadeh & Mahammadli, 2025).

The bibliometric analysis of Jack London's works demonstrates that his literary production represents a valuable resource not only in terms of literature but also for scientific and informational study. Quantitative evaluation of publication numbers, print runs, translations, and readership provides insight into his position in the global literary market, his role in book culture, and the enduring relevance of his literary heritage. Furthermore, this analysis establishes a rich data foundation for future research in literary studies and bibliographic scholarship.

Conclusion

Jack London's literary oeuvre represents a significant milestone not only in American literature but also in the development of the global literary and cultural space. The publication history, artistic characteristics, and technical design of his works provide a rich case study reflecting the complex issues of bibliographic studies, printing, and publishing practices (Greco, Milliot, & Wharton, 2014; Ismayilov & Khalafova, 2023).

The analysis demonstrates that:

- **Historical Aspect** – From the early twentieth century, London's works were widely disseminated in the United States and Europe, presented in various publication formats tailored to different audiences (London, 1903; 1904; 1909; 1910a; 1910b). In the Soviet sphere, ideologically compatible works were printed in special editions, significantly influencing the formation of translation and publication traditions in Azerbaijan (Əliyev, 2010; Mammadov & Mahammadli, 2025).
- **Artistic Aspect** – London's works, distinguished by adventurous dynamism as well as social and philosophical content, led to the development of diverse publication strategies. Adventure-themed works were primarily directed toward mass audiences, whereas works with philosophical depth targeted the intellectual readership (Labor, 1994; Stasz, 2001). This represents a notable example of audience segmentation in the book market.
- **Technical Design Aspect** – In London's publications, graphic illustrations, font selection, cover design, and paper quality were key factors influencing reader perception (Reesman, 2009; Huseynov, 2017). Although changes in technical capabilities across different periods affected publication quality, they did not diminish the popularity of his works.
- **Contemporary Stage** – Digital publications and modern technologies now facilitate the dissemination of London's works to new audiences. Interactive formats, multimedia

presentations, and digital library platforms ensure the continuity and contemporary relevance of his literary heritage (Altbach & Hoshino, 1995).

- **Azerbaijan Context** – The translation and publication of London's works have contributed to the development of national book culture. Repeated publications in Azerbaijani, accessibility for young readers, and presentation with modern technical design reflect the dynamism of the local book market (Huseynov, 2017; Ismayilov & Khalafova, 2023).

In summary, the publication history of Jack London's works extends beyond the mere dissemination of a writer's literary legacy. It exemplifies the evolving dynamics of publishing policy, printing technologies, reader psychology, and cultural taste across different historical periods. Studying this experience within the Azerbaijani book publishing context can provide a scientific foundation for more efficient management of technical design, layout, and reader-oriented strategies in the publication of both classical and contemporary works.

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