

# Anthropomorphism and the theme of survival in jack london's story white fang

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White Fang is an endearing story of a young man and the dog that he befriends on his journeys to find fortune in the harsh Yukon. Jack London presents this classic tale of the gold rush to the American Northwest. Jack London grew up in the seedier part of his town. He saw many good people grow to enter a life of crimes because it was the only thing that they could do. London is known to be the greatest writer of nature stories and animal tales. He also has some recurring themes throughout his novels. He focuses on animals as humans, stresses Darwinism, and believes that ones actions are dictated by their surroundings.

London portrays animals as humans and men as animals in his books. This may be by their actions, or thoughts. He possesses love for his master, Scott. Enough love, in fact, that he would leave everything to come with him to California. He also has nightmares, which suggests that he has a consciousness. He gives the animals intelligence enough to trick the humans. This is shown when Kirche sneaks amongst the dogs and is given a fish. The dogs, sensing a threat, got close to the camp of the humans, which was unusual. Henry said, Theyre pretty wise, them dogs.(p 107) Also, White Fang has a substantial amount of deductive capability. When his mother leaves the den, he wonders how the she wolf can pass through the, white wall of light.(p 153) He also goes on to contemplate why he cannot pass through the other walls. He learns well, and that is why he survives so long, and why he is considered one of the fiercest dogs ever.

He uses the theory of survival of the fittest in his novel. However, in this novel it is more along the lines of the law of nature. All the living animals in

the forest strictly obey this law. The fight over Kirche, White Fangs mother, between One-eye and the others is an example of this. They had to fight each other to win the right to mate with her, and thus, the right to live and continue their line. One-eye wouldnt eat their pups because that would be against the natural law that all living things abided by. The lynx that enters Kirches lair presents the, EAT OR BE EATEN,(p 166) law again. If the lynx was not killed, it would have killed both Kirche and White Fang. This law did not dictate the animals entire life because they were also directed by their circumstances.

London also believes that a person or animals behavior is shaped by the circumstances that surround their lives. The first example of this is the wolf pack that attacks Henry and Bill. They did not want to stay together, but the famine brought them to a temporary treaty to find food. Once they bring down the moose and feast, they begin to break up and live on their own. White Fangs whole attitude of being the proverbial, lone wolf, and his hatred for others stems from the lack of love and the presence of Lip-lip in the Indian village. Lip-lip was White Fangs own kind, and, being only a puppy, did not seem so dangerous; (p 175) he tended to bully and provoke the other dogs to attack Fang. He spent his whole life as a puppy hiding from the other dogs and fighting to stay alive. He eventually leaves his life of fighting because of the love of Scott, but his old ways revisit him. Beauty Smith comes to steal White Fang from Scott, but White Fang is driven out of his calm state to attack Smith. This attack was not out of his hatred for him, but for his love for Scott. His attack on Jim Hall was a similar incident. He

attacked him because he threatened the safety of the Scott family. Jim Hall was similar to White Fang, in the fact that he was pushed until he finally responded the only way he knew how, through violence. Judge Scott wrongly imprisoned him, and this was the only thing he felt he could do.

London portrays animals as humans and vice versa, emphasizes the law of the jungle, and believes that people are trapped by their social circumstances. Londons views are the key focal point in the story. If White Fang had not lived by these principles he would not have lasted as long as he did. Christians know that the only law is Gods law, and we must follow it. If we dont we have much to lose than a wolf.