

## **Man and Beast in London's Klondike stories**

**Jonida PETRO**, *University of Tirana, Albania*

[janasline@hotmail.com](mailto:janasline@hotmail.com)

### **Abstract**

The article focuses on Jack London's two most important Klondike stories, *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*, which are based on his meditations on the connection between adaptability and change. The aim is to show how the author wrote these two stories around his Klondike experience involving more than the idea of the survival of the fittest or law of the club, stressing the importance of applying knowledge gained from the social behaviour of animals to the study of human nature.

The first part of the article introduces some of Jack London's ideas on man and the animal world, ideas he created during his stay in the Northland or the Klondike, the raw edges of the world, where he was looking for vivid material for his future books and stories. The Klondike and the Northland adventures made up the laboratory where his characters, Buck and White Fang, were reduced to "primordial simplicity" as they learnt the frostbitten truth of the Law of life.

The second part focuses on Buck in *The Call of the Wild* and aims to point out the man-beast comparison into the wild. The third part focuses on White Fang and discusses how heredity and environment apply equally to the "moulding" of both man and beast.

Both stories, one of evolution and the other of devolution, provide us with enough evidence about the strong connection between men's and animals' behavioural aspects. London used his dog stories to show that both man and beast must develop methods of survival based on a combination of adaptability and instinct.

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