THE COMPARATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IMAGES IN JACK LONDON’S NOVEL “WHITE FANG”

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The English literature of the 20th century is the literature of the epoch of the bourgeois revolution. Jack London is one of the biggest and greatest American writers of the 20th century. He deservedly gained his world-wide recognition and popularity. Not only Americans, but also people from France, Germany and even England were reading his stories and novels with hefty pleasure. His works were accepted in these countries and also in Hungary, India, Switzerland, and many others.

London is a writer of mass. His creation appeals to an ordinary man. It was especially popular with the working class of Americans. In his books workers saw the truth of their own lives and the call to fight for reorganization of that vicious world, the call to the Socialistic Revolution.

London’s world outlook is complicated and conflicting, the writer had to pass an uneasy and sophisticated way forward. But the most important figure in his works from the very beginning was a real person, a real man. The peculiarity of his artistic method is in his careful attention to delightful and brilliant qualities of a human being, which he gave to his characters, thus making them exclusive figures. London had a strong desire to see a man being strong, beautiful, and harmonic, that’s why his characters correspond to his main artistic goal.

London depicted his characters, their relatives, surroundings and the whole atmosphere realistically and truthfully. Some critics admitted that this writer discovered the north in a totally different way. In this aspect he had no predecessors.

The topicality is caused by importance and complexity, artistic value of this novel, its impact on the following literary process.
The **goal** of this research is to analyze the characters in the novel “White Fang” by Jack London and make a comparison between the main hero and the others.

According to the goal of the work I set up the following tasks:
- to review the events in J. London’s life, which influenced his writing career;
- to analyze the characters in the novel and compare the main character with the others.

London is rather stingy in describing the appearance of his characters. Therefore, he gives a much greater preference for his heroes’ and heroines’ inner world. The human psyche, its shades always interest the writer. In the Northern stories he creates great for its strength and expressiveness pictures of human experience: he shows unbearable pangs of hunger, a passionate love to life, the tragic death from cold, describes whether the hero’s courage, or his dread of the inevitable impending doom:

*He came out of a doze that was half nightmare, to see the red-hued she-wolf before him. She was not more than half a dozen feet away sitting in the snow and wistfully regarding him. The two dogs were whimpering and snarling at his feet, but she took no notice of them. She was looking at the man, and for some time he returned her look. There was nothing threatening about her. She looked at him merely with a great wistfulness, but he knew it to be the wistfulness of an equally great hunger. He was the food, and the sight of him excited in her the gustatory sensations. Her mouth opened, the saliva drooled forth, and she licked her chops with the pleasure of anticipation.*

In the description of the nature, as in the description of humans or animals, London makes heroic qualities dominate. Northern nature in his works is majestic, grandiose. Very often, it has got not only strength and power, but some mystery, secret. It hides something terrible and unknown in itself. On the other hand, towards to a man nature looks as the beginning of something hostile, destructive, perhaps even apocalyptic. It could be either snow, which extinguishes some freezing traveler’s fire, or icy chaos, destroying everything in its path, and so on. But more often it is frost, which penetrates directly the lungs. The man starts coughing sharp dry cough, and next spring dies of pneumonia, wondering where it came from.
However, the characters of "White Fang", as the characters of other Jack London’s works don’t nearly know hopeless situations. There are no tests that are able to slant their will. Struggling against the nature, they find the way to salvation and victory.

There is nothing unusual or irrational, or mystical in “White Fang”. They are based on real events, and real people and the real nature of the north are described in them. But on the other hand, in the northern stories the extent of the realistic typification is quite limited. In favor of romanticism is the fact that the actions unfold far away from the bourgeois civilization, in the Far North. The writer in most cases recounts the exceptional events imbued with romance of adventures. He focuses on romantically elevated, exceptional people, this also regards animals. Let’s take Collie, for example. She’s Scott’s sheepdog. This dog is quite kind and very faithful to her owner, though even she “took advantage of her sex to pick upon White Fang and maltreat him. His instinct would not permit him to attack her, while her persistence would not permit him to ignore her. When she rushed at him he turned his fur-protected shoulder to her sharp teeth and walked away stiff-legged and stately. When she forced him too hard, he was compelled to go about in a circle, his shoulder presented to her, his head turned from her, and on his face and in his eyes a patient and bored expression.”

“She never gave him a moment’s peace. She was not so amenable to the law as he. She defied all efforts of the master to make her become friends with White Fang. Ever in his ears was sounding her sharp and nervous snarl. She had never forgiven him the chicken-killing episode, and persistently held to the belief that his intentions were bad. She found him guilty before the act, and treated him accordingly. She became a pest to him, like a policeman following him around the stable and the hounds, and, if he even so much as glanced curiously at a pigeon or chicken, bursting into an outcry of indignation and wrath. His favourite way of ignoring her was to lie down, with his head on his fore-paws, and pretend sleep. This always dumfounded and silenced her”
No way, she trusts White Fang at first, but then thanks to his truly loving, sincere, big heart White Fang earns Collie’s trust and respect at the end of the story:

Collie had been taken in charge by one of the woman-gods, who held arms around her neck and petted and caressed her; but Collie was very much perplexed and worried, whining and restless, outraged by the permitted presence of this wolf and confident that the gods were making a mistake.

Extremely deep penetration into the psychology of animals, perfect knowledge of their instincts helped London to create one of the best works in the animalistic literature.

At first Jack London draws the foil and then against this foil there is the protagonist – White Fang. Events are described not only in White Fang’s perception, but also the author looks at the world through the eyes of other ‘actors’. In this work, the author manages to create many colorful images of animals. Each dog has its own personality, its trappings. Thus, White Fang’s father – One-Eyed – has only one eye. That’s why he tries to take the handiest position - from the sighted, the left eye. Or this detail: One-eyed’s face is all riddled with scars. It is evidence of the battles they endured. And then the author shows how in a fight with a young wolf, and then with the leader of the pack One-Eyed proves to be an old experienced fighter. White Fang’s mother – Kichi – differs by her wiliness and agility. These qualities promote her to the leader of the pack during the persecution of travellers. Bulldog Cherokee, which fights with White Fang reveals extraordinary tenacity. Paying no attention to the pain, furious Cherokee stranglehold tackles White Fang's throat, trying to throttle him.

White Fang’s history is traced since his birth. First, it’s a small cub, whose life is limited by the cave. Then he gets acquainted with the outside world. Every time he's gone from the mother's den to broaden his knowledge.

If life in the desert made him necessarily be violent ("Eat or be eaten thyself"), then communication with people, it would seem, could awake a good feeling in him. But this doesn’t happen. White Fang grows as a sullen, withdrawn, angry beast. He becomes like this, as he doesn’t see good attitude to himself. Once among people,
he turned out to be in a new world, which, however, was no less cruel and harsh than the world of the desert, and no warmth or affection or attachment existed in it. An Indian Grey Beaver became the first owner of White Fang. He wasn’t a cruel man, and White Fang willingly acknowledged his power over himself. But this power is based on brute force. Meanwhile, White Fang was made of stuff as soft as clay, secretly hiding all sorts of possibilities in him. A kind word or a gentle touch of Grey Beaver could penetrate into these depths, but Grey Beaver neither ever caressed White Fang, nor told him a good single word:

*He did not love Grey Beaver, yet, even in the face of his will and his anger, he was faithful to him. He could not help it. This faithfulness was a quality of the clay that composed him. It was the quality that was peculiarly the possession of his kind; the quality that set apart his species from all other species; the quality that has enabled the wolf and the wild dog to come in from the open and be the companions of man.*

White Fang completely hardens when gets to Beauty Smith. Beauty Smith is one of the most negative and hateful of the writer characters. A coward by nature, he was tough as only cowards are:

*Beauty Smith was known far and wide as the weakest of weak-kneed and snivelling cowards.*

Human society follows completely different laws. Biological philosophy of life isn’t suitable for it. The work doesn’t contain any examples to prove that the author draws an analogy between the human society and the natural world. The writer is against the relationship based on the right of the strong, not only among people, but also between humans and animals.

Thus, at the end of my work I’d like to come back to the epoch, the writer lived in, London’s interests and main characters. Such things, as the American bourgeoisie, workers’ slavery and poverty, thus, class struggle and huge masses’ revolutionary protest, London’s radicalism and his advocacy of socialism, had a great impact on London’s œuvre.

Mainly life of simple people or poor wild animals (either domesticated ones, who turns out to be in the living wild environment) care the author. Though at first sight
the characters of his stories seem quite plain, they possess more extraordinary human features, than any one else, who’s being beyond beautiful or all-powerful. As we know Beauty Smith was neither beautiful, nor all-powerful, but at any cost he was trying to show exaltation of ordinary self above the others, in particular, White Fang. White Fang had to bear all the insult at his hand, as B. S. was his master. The most typical thing of London’s books is that they are life-affirming and democratically orientated. That is the reason for them being so popular with all generations. Even in his works, where animals are the main characters, London discusses problems almost directly connected to human society. Different characteristics of the animals express human either outstanding, good, positive qualities, such as agreeableness, kindness, brilliancy, loyalty, awareness, quickwittedness, gratefulness, justice, reliability, politeness, ability to forget and forgive bad things, honesty and so on; or negative features, such as aggressiveness, laziness, arrogance, ignorance, jealousy, wickedness, malice, impatience and others.

As people are able to recognize themselves, especially if they stand up for the poor, destitute and weak, of course, they fancy Jack London’s speaking the truth in public.

The writer contrasts the wild North, where it becomes more complicated to survive, but this place is freer, people can find it easier to breathe, to the capitalist society with its own morality.

White Fang has got an exceptionally kind heart. He knows such terms, as faithfulness, open-heartedness, certainly, if he gets all this back. But sometimes he forgets about these things, (while Grey Beaver was his master and never treated White Fang as a living being) and his wild instincts awake.

The author always writes about things of the agenda, or of his/her own concern. In J. London’s case it’s obvious that he really cared a lot for poor animals’ fate in general and, that’s why his novel “White Fang”, is full of sorrow and simultaneously love for the poor creature.