

Homework Week 2

A. Answer the questions below. We will spread them out over two weeks in class. Make sure to support your answers from the text and cite the quotes. Aim for at least three or four sentences for each question.

- 1) A. How does the man in the red sweater fit into the setting of the book?
B. How is his behavior different from what Buck was accustomed to?
- 2) A. What trait ensures that Buck will survive in the north? How is this aspect of his character shown in the story?
B. How would this trait be accepted in his former life? What does this say about the differences in the two worlds?
- 3) How does Buck begin to undermine Spitz's authority in chapter 3?
- 4) A. What traits did Buck have that allowed him to adapt to the north that Charles, Hal, and Mercedes lacked?
B. Why do you think London included these three characters in the book? What do they represent?
- 5) In chapter 5 London writes, "Thornton went on whittling. It was idle, he knew, to get between a fool and his folly; while two or three fools more or less would not alter the scheme of things."
A) Explain what London means in the second half of the quote.
B) What is the worldview communicated throughout the book?
- 6) In chapter 6, what does London mean by the following quotation: "He was older than the days he had seen and the breaths he had drawn"?
- 7) What is London communicating with the "short-legged hairy man" Buck remembered when he stared into the fire? What does this character add to the story?
- 8) A. How did Buck's relationship with John Thornton differ from his relationships with his previous masters?
B. Thornton has to die before Buck can join the wild. Is London suggesting that the primitive, wild side is incompatible with love?
- 9) Does the book have a happy or sad ending? Explain your answer. What do you think London would say?

B. Vocabulary

Anthropomorphism—giving human qualities to nonhumans

Conciliate—to win over

Fastidious—excessively particular, critical, or demanding; hard to please

Feigned—pretended

Formidable—frightening; imposing