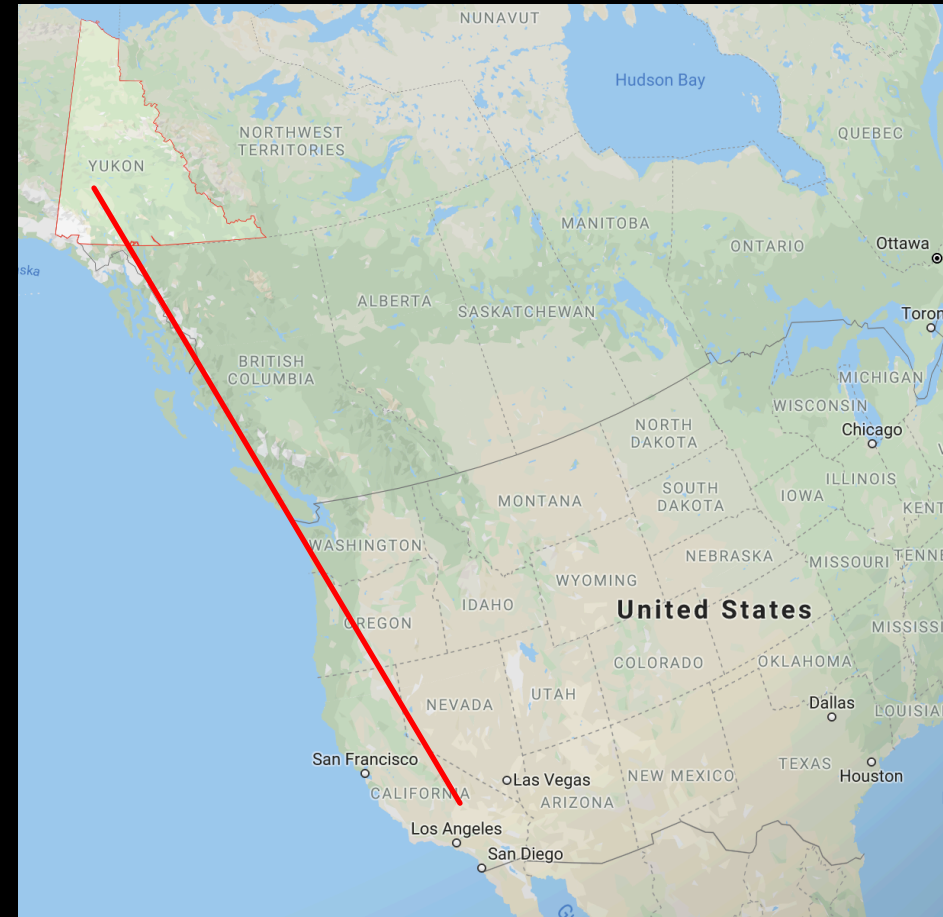


The Call of the Wild
by Jack London

Summary

Buck, a Saint-Bernard-Scotch-shepherd mix, lives a quiet life with an old judge and his family on a ranch in California until the Klondike Gold Rush strikes. Suddenly, Buck finds himself swept away from his warm home and family, shipped north to the Yukon Territories, where hunger, cold, danger, and the wild await. Transferred from owner to owner, Buck learns lessons about what it means to be human, what it means to be animal, and how to answer the call of the wild.



Background

- Published in 1903
- Written by Jack London
 - London wrote many short stories and novels, some based on his experiences in his travels, some leaning towards science fiction and dystopian fiction
- Placed during the Klondike Gold Rush (1896-1899) in the Yukon
- Became a hit instantly, was taught in schools and reviewed widely

Anthropomorphism

- Giving human qualities or abilities to nonhuman objects or animals
- Comes from Greek—“anthropos” meaning “human,” and “morphe” meaning “form”
- In literature, anthropomorphism often means giving reason, thought, language, and emotion to objects or animals that may not have those abilities themselves
- In *Call of the Wild*, Buck is capable of deep thought and reflection, while still remaining very animalistic

Naturalism

- Literary movement (a popular style of writing)
- Mainly popular around the turn of the century
- Similar to realism (portrayed life as it was, not romanticized) but also focused on identifying the underlying causes (both social and natural) for a person's actions
- Supported the belief that people's stations in life are decided by their genes, environment, and social conditions

Themes

- Human vs. Animal
- Nature vs. Nurture
- Freedom
- Knowledge and learning
- Law
- Power