

JACK LONDON'S *THE CALL OF THE WILD*: A STUDY ON AMERICAN INDIVIDUALISM

Jack London Dalam Novel The Call of the Wild: Studi Tentang Individualisme Amerika

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INTISARI

The Call of the Wild adalah sebuah novel Amerika awal abad dua puluh yang ditulis oleh Jack London. Novel ini menampilkan tokoh cerita berupa anjing. Lewat novel ini Jack London mengungkap doktrin individualisme Amerika yang kuat saat warga Amerika berbondong-bondong ke tambang emas di Alaska. Untuk mencapai keberhasilan di sana, diperlukan ketahanan fisik, mental dan keberanian atas keganasan, kebuasan hutan belantara serta kebrutalan manusia.

Secara umum, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan individualisme dalam konteks kehidupan masyarakat Amerika sedangkan tujuan khususnya adalah mengungkap visi Jack London terhadap individualisme Amerika lewat karyanya *The Call of the Wild*.

Untuk mencapai tujuan di atas, studi ini menggunakan penelitian pustaka. Kemudian pendekatan yang digunakan adalah pendekatan American Studies yakni pendekatan yang menekankan pada pendekatan interdisipliner. Pendekatan ini melibatkan ilmu sastra, sejarah, sosiologi, dan budaya. Semua bidang ilmu ini digunakan secara bersamaan guna memperoleh analisis yang komprehensif terhadap topik yang dibahas.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pada awal abad dua puluh masyarakat Amerika berada dalam suasana kompetitif yang cukup kuat dalam meraih kesuksesan. Pertumbuhan industri yang cepat, birokrasi dan urbanisasi mendominasi perkembangan Amerika saat itu. Di era itu nilai masyarakat Amerika mengalami perubahan salah satunya adalah individualisme Amerika. Doktrin ini telah membawa kesuksesan besar bagi masyarakat Amerika dalam membangun suatu negara. Doktrin ini tercermin pada individu Amerika yang telah mengenal peradaban dengan menampilkan sikap tanpa ketergantungan, percaya diri, kesetaraan dalam kesempatan, kompetisi, kekayaan atas materi, dan kerja keras. Kesemua aspek ini merupakan warisan *frontiers* dan telah menjadi impian warga Amerika. Namun, di bagian lain kesuksesan masyarakat Amerika dengan berpegang

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pada doktrin individualisme Amerika, ternyata juga membawa hasil berupa kekerasan, ketidaksetaraan dalam kesempatan, ketidakadilan, dan regimentasi pada Amerika moderen.

Kata kunci: *individualisme -- visi Jack London -- masyarakat Amerika.*

INTRODUCTION

This thesis observes individualism through literary work of the early twentieth century, *The Call of the Wild* in the form of a novel that was written by Jack London. The central character of the story is a dog, Buck, half St. Bernard and half Scott shepherd, who begins his life on a Californian estate until he is stolen and shipped to Klondike. There he is trained as a sledge dog, and win the leader of the team for Spitz. To his master, John Thornton, he gives his entire allegiance, even breaking ice and dragging a thousand pond load on a sledge to win a wager. After Thornton is murdered by the Indians, Buck responds to the *Call of the Wild*, and abandons human civilization to lead a wolf pack.

Relating to the explanation above, *The Call of the Wild* presents London's thought in describing life in Alaska. In this place, it can be seen how the people live as individuals or groups. Buck as one of the characters in this novel, shows individualistic character. Walcutt in *Seven Novelist in the American Naturalist Tradition* claims that "Buck is individualist who defies society and finally rejects it completely" (147). In this case, London has chosen Buck as a character corresponding to individualism. The novel itself was based on London's experience when gold rush happened in Klondike especially the discovery of gold in 1896 (McMichael 876). In *Jack London State Historic Park Book and Gift Shop* it is described that "despite his avowed socialism, most people consider him a living symbol of rugged individualism, a man whose fabulous success was due not to special favor of any kind, but to a combination of unusual mental ability and immense vitality" (1). In Woodress's *American Literary Scholarship*, Jonathan H. Spunier in "Syllabus for the 20th Century" argues that "in Buck's joining the wolf pack, London is saying that the dilemmas of modern man are going to be resolved through violence, that allegorical Buck in the North is learning to cope "with his loss of identity, his feeling of alienation, and his loss of faith" in a world he neither created nor knew existed" (237). Ronald E. Martin in his book *American Literature and the Universe of Force* also discusses Jack London's works that revealed radical individualism and social justice (185-214).

Referring to American individualism, Jack London in *The Call of the*

Wild presents a central character of the story, Buck, a dog, who represents American individualism. Buck really has a strong American individualism. He is free, independent, civilized, self-confidence when he lives at Sunny Santa Clara Valley, California. But when he is shipped to Alaska, he becomes brutal and violent. This tends to radical individualism. So what does actually American individualism look like? Does it experience changes?

Non-Americans view American individualism as negative thing; it is an alienation of social community and it doesn't accept affiliation with group. This "misleading" view triggers me to study deeply the real American individualism and see if the view is valid or that American individualism is unique.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

This thesis uses the library research, especially focusing on bibliographical sources such as the novel *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London, a collection of critical books, documents or files on internet and essays about the author's works and about the historical, sociological and cultural background of American Individualism when gold rush happened in Alaska.

This research is using American Studies approach that orients to interdisciplinary approach. This approach requires the unity among the disciplines to get better and deeper interpretation from the data provided. Interdisciplinary approach covers historical, literary, sociological and cultural approach.

ANALYSIS

Individualism in the Wilderness

To deal with individualism in the wilderness, this analysis is divided into six parts. Those are individual freedom, self-reliance, equality of opportunity, competition, material wealth and hard work. All of them have been the main aspects in American individualism. This is to be a standard of meaning to analyze the problems discussed.

Jack London in his novel *The Call of the Wild* presents a phenomena of social life in the early modern America. When American people have a desire to get material, they try to expand their country. For example, the period between 1815 and 1860 were the years when the West was expanding, cities growing, political life was becoming more democratic, and industrialization was transforming the national economy (Curry et

al 170). The expansion was developed further by the finding of gold in Alaska in 1896.

For Jack London, Alaska can give the expectation for better life so American people went there. It is illustrated in the novel "because men, groping in the Arctic darkness, had found a yellow metal, and because steamship and transportation companies were booming the find, the thousands of men were rushing into the Northland" (9).

Individual Freedom. In America, each individual has freedom to take a part in his life. He is free to decide what to do now and in the future. American government or constitution guarantees him without interference. He is free to speak, to get material wealth, and to profess a religion. Buck as a representation of human also feels as an American.

Buck lives at a big house in sunny valley. The house is called Judge Miller's place. In this house Buck recognizes and does everything as a civilized man. He is free to do everything and is free from the press of everything and including man. He also rules over all this like a king. London illustrates in his novel: "Buck was neither house-dog nor kennel dog. The whole realm was his [...]. Among the terriers he stalked imperiously, and Toots and Ysabel he utterly ignored, for he was king, -king over all creeping, crawling, flying things of Judge's Miller place, human included" (11).

Buck really has an individual freedom when he lives in Judge Miller's house for four years. It is true that there are other dogs. But other dogs are not important. They come and go and they live outside or in the corners of the house. And Buck is not like these dogs. The whole place is his. There is no interference from other dogs or human. Kearny et.al. assert that "by Freedom, Americans mean the desire and the ability of all individuals to control their own destiny without outside interference from the government, a ruling noble class, the church, or any other organized authority. The desire to be free of control was a basic value of the new nation in 1776, and it has continued to attract immigrants to this country" (20-1).

As for the historical data, before the Civil War of the 1860 the American ideal of the free individual was the frontiersman and small farmer. It then developed in different setting like entering the wilderness for getting gold. There are many gold seekers who went to the wilderness to pursue the material wealth. Buck was also a member of them when gold seekers looked for gold in Alaska. There they were to be individuals, who were responsible to themselves. The individual was the center to serve what he needed.

Before the Civil War of the 1860 the American ideal of the free individual was the frontiersman and the small farmer. President Thomas Jefferson expressed this ideal when he said: "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people [...]." Jefferson glorified the farmer for being a free individual who relied on no one but himself for his daily needs. Being dependent on none but himself, the farmer, he believe, was the most honest of citizens (Kearny et.al. 124).

When Buck enters the wilderness, he abandons civilization. This is because of Judge Miller's servant, Manuel. He needs money for his family and for playing poker. He then sells Buck to the strangers who need dogs to pull sledges. Manuel and other gold seekers are portraits of American people who want to get material wealth. It can be predicted that this situation is related with economic crisis in America. Besides they expand to other places to get material wealth, they also fall into economic problem.

Self-Reliance. Americans believe that individuals must learn to rely on themselves or risk losing freedom. This means achieving both financial and emotional independence from their parent as early as possible, usually by the age 18 or 21. It means that Americans believed they should take care of themselves, solved their own problems, and "stand on their own two feet" (Kearny et.al. 21). Furthermore they also say that "Tocqueville observed the Americans' belief in self-reliance 150 years ago in the 1830s: They owe nothing to any man, they expect nothing from any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone, and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands (21).

As described before that Buck has lived at Judge Miller's house for four years. He has built his existence as American people. He believes in himself. He realizes that everything can be done with self-reliance.

Kearny et.al. claim that "Americans believe they must be self-reliant in order to keep their freedom. In order to be in the mainstream of American life-to have power and/or respect-individuals must be seen as self-reliant" (21). It can be shown that Buck really has self-confidence to solve the problems he faces.

Buck was the exception. He alone endured and prospered, matching the husky in strength, savagery, and cunning. Then he was a masterful dog, and what made him dangerous was the fact that the club of the man in the red sweater had knocked all blind pluck and rashness out of his desire for mastery. He was preeminently cunning, and could bide his time with a patience that was nothing less than primitive (London 51).

Equality of Opportunity. Buck as a member of a community has shown a character as American people. He appreciates someone in certain position or status. Everyone has the same chance to get a certain status. When Spitz becomes a leader of the sledge team, Buck don't object to it. But he feels that he also has the right to be it. London pictures this in the novel: "Spitz was the leader, likewise experienced, and while he could not always get at Buck, he growled sharp reproof now and again, or cunningly threw his weight in the traces to jerk Buck into the way he should go" (London 28). Dave is the first dog nearest to the sledge. Pulling in front of Dave is Buck, then came Sol-leks; the rest of the dogs are spread out in front in a single line. Spitz is at the front, leading all the dogs. It can be inferred from the quotation that Buck is willing to accept Spitz's superiority.

It is important to understand what Americans mean when they say they believe in equality of opportunity. They do mean that each individual should have an equal chance for success. Americans see much of life as a race for success. For the equality means that everyone should have a chance to enter the race and win. In other words, equality of opportunity may be thought of as an ethical rule (Kearny et.al. 22).

Buck has been placed between Dave and Sol-leks on purpose so that he might learn a lot. The two dogs are good teachers, never allowing him to make a mistake for long and using their sharp teeth to support their teaching. Dave is fair and very wise. He never bites Buck without cause, and he never fails to bite him when he needs it. London illustrates this in the novel as follows: "Dave was wheeler or sled dog, pulling in front of him was Buck, then came Sol-leks; the rest of team was strung out ahead, single file, to the leader, which position was filled by Spitz" (London 33).

Competition. Stephanson in *Manifest Destiny* states that "the outside world of the 1890s was far closer both in time and space, appeared in fact ominously crowded and competitive" (67).

Competition may take the form of rivalry between individuals within a group, of competitive effort of social groups to gain their objectives, of racial rivalries, or of a contest of culture and institutions for pre-eminence. Competitive effort may be expended to achieve sheer existence and survival, or it may be devoted to a struggle for prestige.

Buck can be categorized as an American individual in the wilderness and has a chance to be a leader of dogs team to pull a sledge. Firstly, Spitz is a leader while Buck is a member. The time comes when these two dogs have to compete for the position of a leader. Spitz and Buck have the same chance to be it. Buck really wants to take a chance. London

pictures this as follows: "It was inevitable that the clash for leadership should come. Buck wanted it. He wanted it because it was his nature, because he had been gripped tight by that nameless, incomprehensible pride of the trail and trace -that pride which lures them to die joyfully in the harness, and break their hearts if they are cut out of harness" (51).

Competition is seen as an open and fair race where success goes to the swiftest person regardless of his or her social background. Competitive success is commonly seen as the American alternative to social rank, the more successful a person is the higher his social status is. And competition is seen by most Americans as encouraging hard work. What Buck does with Spitz is to appeal the social phenomena in the wilderness. Both of them have the same chance to be the leader. Race is the solution.

If much of life is seen as a race, then a person must run the race in order to succeed; a person must compete with others. If everyone has an equal chance to succeed in the United States, then it is every person's duty to try. Americans match their energy and intelligence against that of their neighbors in a competitive contest for success. People who like to compete and are more successful than others are honored by being called "winners." On the other hand, those who do not like to compete and are not successful when they try are often dishonored by being called "losers." This is especially true for American men, and it is becoming more and more true for women (Kearny et.al.23).

Buck and Spitz by fighting to be a leader of sledge dogs team. What they do show an attitude in the wilderness. Fighting is the solution. Rugged individualism becomes a real attitude. Strength becomes a part of the struggle to survive. Buck finds his way of success in the wilderness. "Buck stood and looked on, the successful champion, the dominant primordial beast who had made his kill and found it good" (London 61). Strength and intelligence have the main basis of personal success in such competition, though the institutions which control human effort have played a large part in competitive struggles. Buck had shown it when he wanted to be the leader.

Material Wealth. Material wealth becomes a value to American people. The phrase "going from rags to riches" becomes a slogan for the great American dream. The main reason is that material wealth is the most widely accepted measure of social status in the United States. Because Americans reject the European system of hereditary aristocracy and titles of nobility, they have to find a substitute for judging social status. The quality and quantity of an individual's material possessions become the accepted measure of success and social status (Kearny et.al. 24).

One night after supper, Dub, a dog team, finds a rabbit. The rabbit is too quick for him and escape. In a second the whole team is pursuing the rabbit. There is a camp of Northwest Police hundred yards away, with fifty dogs: they all join the pursuit. In this case, rabbit is a symbol of material. All dogs want it. They have the same right to get it.

At the mouth of the Tahkeena, one night after supper, Dub turned up a snowshoe rabbit, blundered it, and missed. In a second the whole team was in full cry. A hundred yards away was a camp of the Northwest Police, with fifty dogs, huskies all, who joined the chase. The rabbit sped down the river, turned off into a small creek, up the frozen bed of which it held steadily. It ran lightly on the surface of the snow, while the dogs ploughed through by main strength (London 56).

Russell Conwell, a Protestant minister who also preached at the beginning of the twentieth century, gave a speech about the duty to get rich, entitled "Acres of Diamonds" more than six thousands times. In it, he said: "I say that you ought to get rich [...] it is your Christian and godly duty to do so. His message was that all men in the Unites states have the opportunity to rise from poverty to great wealth if they will only use it (Kearny et.al. 43).

There are many gold seekers take part in Alaska. Buck is included in the adventure. They try to find gold. It is illustrated in the novel that they find a broad valley where the gold show like yellow butter across the bottom of the stream. They seek no farther. Each day they work hard bring them thousands of dollars in clean gold-dust and rock of gold. And they work every day. The gold is put in a strong bag.

"They sought not farther. Each day they worked earned them thousands of dollars in clean dust and nuggets, and they worked every day. The gold was sacked in moose hide bags, fifty pounds to the bag, and piled like giants they toiled, days flashing on the heels of days like dreams as they heaped the treasure up" (London 121). This was a standard of American success, material wealth. Scholars like David Potter, an American historian, believe that abundant material wealth of the United States has been a major factor in development of the American character (Kearny et.al. 80).

The belief in an everlasting heritage of abundance had many good effects. It made Americans an optimistic people with confidence that human problems could be solved. It greatly reduced the conflict between the rich and the poor which has torn many older nations part. Perhaps most important, the belief in an always growing abundance gave strong support to such basic national values as freedom, self-reliance, equality of opportunity, competition, material wealth and hard work. It seemed

to Americans that their high standard of living was a reward for practicing these values (Kearny et.al 87).

Hard Work. Hard work is a price of material wealth. American people claim that material wealth can be obtained through hard work only. To get it, they try to expand from one place to another place. In early twentieth American people expanded to the Northland. The North American continent was rich in natural resources when the first settlers arrived, but all these resources were underdeveloped. Only hard work could these resources be converted into material possessions and comfortable standard of living. Hard work has been both necessary and rewarding for the most Americans throughout their history. Because of this, they have come to see material possessions as the natural reward for their hard work. Most Americans believe that if a person works hard, it is possible to have a good standard of living.

As it is illustrated in the novel Buck has seen many gold-seekers working hard. By hard work only guarantees them to get material. This makes American to be a winner in pursuing material wealth. "But the opportunity did not present itself, and they pulled into Dawson one dreary afternoon with the great fight still to come. Here were many men, and countless dogs and Buck them all at work (London 53).

For Jack London, hard work in the wilderness is an important aspect. American people can reach their dream by hard work. There are many successful American people because of hard work. It is possible to say that hard work is also an ethic in American life. Kearny says that hard work was coming from Protestant tradition. "Protestant tradition probably played an important part in creating a good climate for the industrial growth of the United States, which depended on hard work and willingness to save and invest money. The belief in hard work and self-discipline in pursuit of material gain and other goals is often referred to as "the Protestant ethic" (Kearny et.al. 43).

As it is revealed in the novel, that hard work makes Buck feel comfortable. Because he really finds the way to solve his problem like the problem of winning the competition. He tries to work hard in winning the fight over Spitz. Strength, intelligence and hard work become the key to success. London pictures this in the novel as follow: "but Buck was to clever ever again to be caught red-handed. He worked faithfully in the harness, for the toil had become a delight to him;" (London 56).

Based on above explanation, it can be concluded that individualism becomes a driving force to the personal success. Individual freedom is a right and a desire of individuals to control their destiny without interfer-

ence. Americans take care of themselves, solve their own problems and stand on their own feet. Self-reliance was a means to keep their American freedom. Equality of opportunity, an ideal of frontiers gives American people the same chance or right to pursue happiness. Competition is the manifestation of equality of opportunity. To pursue happiness, American people should compete. Material wealth becomes a value to American people. Material wealth is a measurement of American success. Hard work is necessary in pursuing the material wealth.

Individualism in Modern America

It can be estimated that Jack London wants to convey the changes in American life through the novel *The Call of the Wild*. This novel pictures the changes of human characters in the early twentieth century. As mentioned before this novel illustrates reversion of human character from civilized to be wild. Individual becomes a driver for his fortune especially pursuing the success. He is a brutal actor in his community. The principle of Survival of the Fittest is his. Only the strong will survive. What Jack London conveys in the novel, actually show his attention to the complex problems in community, that is American individualism.

Jack London's heart was in individualism rather than socialism. His lip service to the latter is a protest against his early poverty, but he does not dwell on the presumed benefits of a socialist society. He wrote instead of the evils of capitalism, the brutality of the industrial world, and the need for violent revolution to destroy them (Walcutt 148).

Another source described that the study of his life and writings provided a case through which to examine the contradiction in the American character, and the key movements and ideas prominent during the Progressive era (<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/London/jackbio.html> 3).

Robertson states that "American society believed that traditional American individualism has brought violence, exploitation, inequality and regimentation to modern America, that individualism has been incorporated into giant industrial, commercial, and governmental entities, and man-outlaw-robber baron-"traditional" American" (130).

Jack London observes that the changes of American character occur because of the growth of industry, bureaucracy, and urbanism. Franklin Walker states that "Reader throughout the world have found Buck's imitation a reflection of their own struggle to find themselves; they have sense that Buck's conflicts echo their own hostilities (as they did London's); and they have thrilled at Buck's atavistic return to nature, because it has furnished them a vicarious escape from industrialism, urbanism, and

bureaucracy" (xiii).

Referring to the statement above, Jack London views that industrialism, urbanism and bureaucracy influenced the American individualism.

Franklin Roosevelt spoke sarcastically of the "rugged individualists" who had flocked to Washington for help. But he passed immediately to defend of his own belief in individualism-in the arts, sciences, and professions-and in business. "We have suffered in the past," he said, "from individualism run wild" (Greene 632).

Jack London has put Buck as the central character who experiences it.

Jack London's observation is then followed with progressive movement in early twentieth century. Kazin claims that "the significance of the Progressive period to literature is not that it marked a revolution in itself; it simply set in motion the forces that had been crying for release into the twentieth century" (92).

Craven et.al. assert that:

two serious problems of adjustment faced the American people at the close of the nineteenth century. With immense rapidity, industrial-urban America had forged ahead to place the United States in the front rank of manufacturing nations. The new industrial age brought many material benefits to society, but at the same time, it raised certain fundamental questions for a democratic nation. How was democracy faring under industrialism? Was there no need for the American people to recast their agrarian conceptions of freedom in the light of the machine age? Could a democratic society ignore responsibility for the slums, the poverty, and unemployment that had developed? (590).

Progressive period was, indeed, so much a repository for all the different influences that were now beginning to press on the American consciousness-Darwinism and imperialism, Socialism and naturalism-that those who think of it as a period devoted solely to muckraking and trust-busting and legislative reform must wonder at its delight in swashbuckling romance and "red-blooded" adventure (Kazin 92-93).

Bailyn et.al. state that:

The progressive attack centered on 'invisible government' the alliance municipal authorities and business interests. The connection between "corrupt government" and "corporate arrogance," which the progressives fought to destroy, was simple one of mutual need. In attempting to modernize their cities, machine politicians had discovered in secret agreement with transit, utility, and construction interests a handy device for providing minimal service while lining their own pockets (647).

It can be assumed that Jack London has the same vision with the

progressive movement. The wilderness phenomena as described in *The Call of the Wild*, could also possibly happen in the American cities. American people enter the wild setting so that individuals are to compete in a brutal, unjust, unequal ways. Monopoly system becomes strong and the strong is the winner. Government interference is great in the individual rights to progress his existence. Jack London's illustration of the terms "to kill or to be killed, obey or to be obeyed, and law of club, really dominate this era. Related to this case, Ronald E. Martin tends to the term radical individualism.

Significantly, it was the trusts, those dragon's teeth sowed in American Individualism, that now came up to haunt the national imagination and provoked a national effort toward reform. It was monopoly, force, that seemed to have changed American life—a railroad squeezing predatory rates out of small farmers; political bosses imposing their nominees upon the public; state legislatures electing their most powerful members to the United States Senate, that "rich man's club"; steel combines laying down law of acquiescence or destruction for thousands of small businessmen (Kazin 94-5).

Kazin, Bailyn et.al., and Craven et.al. have revealed the social changes in modern America. The changes orient to the American character, which tend to American individualism unjust, violent and unequal..

Progressive movement has tried to minimize the American problems like democratic and moralistic. Stephanson is optimistic that civilization is coming. Stephanson asserts that "it was agreed that civilization would conquer barbarism and that the United States would (if acting rightly) become a powerful presence and model on the world stage in its capacity as the most advanced form of civilization anywhere" (97).

In modern era, Americas would be American who have a dream to build his nation or state. Individualism principle make him race to get the success. Greene claims that:

modern individualism has generally been identified in connection with commerce, the market, and the general advance of capitalist types of venture and investment. But earlier foundation has lain in the land itself. Independent ownership of land may never have been a prescription for a fully individualistic society, for the obvious reason that there was not enough land for all the individuals; however, it was generally agreed to provide the essential basis for those qualities of mind and spirit that make men depend on themselves and that free them from dependence and servility (626).

Americans had tried to build the U.S. They really competed to pursue happiness as their dream. Kearny et.al. stated that "the phrase "going from rags to riches" became a slogan for the great American dream"

(23-4). They connoted happiness as materials, and materials connoted money. So American success can be measured with money only. Robertson claimed that "money is an intermediary, not end product. In modern America, individual work makes money. That money is used in order to consume the goods and services (in order to acquire the products) the individual desire" (187).

Robertson also adds that "success is measured by ingenuity, courage, expertise, physical prowess, and employee's ability to snatch personal pleasure, reward, and hedonistic life style out of pressures of employment and employers. Large quantities of money, private pleasure and consumption, and public acknowledgement of the individual's abilities, personality, and luck are the rewards at least of the fictionalized heroes of modern life" (Robertson 211).

CONCLUSION

For Jack London, American individualism has experienced changes in the early twentieth century. He observes that the changes occur when American people expand to Alaska. They want to get material wealth such as gold because Alaska can give the expectation for better life so Americans people go there. This point has been pictured by Jack London through his novel *The Call of the Wild*.

Furthermore, Jack London also observes that reversion of American individualism has occurred, that is from civilized to wild. Jack London illustrates this through the central character of the novel, Buck. He symbolizes the qualities of human of America. He abandons civilization. In Alaska he shows his attitudes to defend his life from brutality, injustice and inequality. It means that at that time, American people experience changes radically in social life including American individualism in the early twentieth century. The principle of "survival of the fittest", "the strength is the winner" and "weakness is loser" is really applied.

In the early modern era, American people compete to pursue the success. They have an equal chance for success. They try to get material wealth in fulfilling their needs. Material wealth is a measurement of American success. Material wealth also means money. The slogan "from rags to riches" constitutes the belief to be successful. This has become the American dream. The big enterprises dominate economic activities in this era. They tend to monopolize economic activities so individuals who organize economic activities in the middle or low levels are not able to survive. Capitalism and the brutality of industrial world really destroy them. In other words that industrialism, urbanism and bureaucracy tend to

dominate the early twentieth century. Jack London is against the dehumanization of modern man. In *The Call of the Wild*, he presents laws that are applied in social community. Those laws tend to reflect the phenomena "to kill or to be killed, to obey or to be obeyed, and the law of club." Thus, American individualism becomes radical or individualism runs wild.

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