

# BUCK'S STRUGGLE IN THE WILDERNESS IN JACK LONDON'S THE CALL OF THE WILD

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## BUCK'S STRUGGLE IN THE WILDERNESS IN JACK LONDON'S *THE CALL OF THE WILD*

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### ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses Buck's struggle in the wilderness in Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*. The life of a spoiled pet dog, Buck, who is kidnapped and then sold to be used as a sled dog in Alaska. This thesis discusses the struggle of the main character, Buck, to survive in his new savage life in the wilderness. This research was conducted using a literary psychology approach because it is seen as the most suitable approach for this research. This study aims to analyze the causes, effects, and the ways Buck struggles in the wilderness. This research uses references from journals, books, internet articles, and other sources that can support this research topic. The results of the research conducted showed that the causes of Buck's struggles are because in the beginning Buck was a spoiled dog. Throughout his life, he has never felt a struggle because what he wants is always fulfilled at Judge Miller's house until the Klondike Gold Rush occurred in 1896, Buck was stolen and taken to the Yukon wild. Buck's struggles occur because he is in a strange, harsh, and wild environment. Buck struggle in the wilderness has positive effects, which are develop his hunting instincts, increase his senses, and his body and character become more vigorous. What Buck does to survive in the wilderness is the result of his struggles, from the effects he is able to survive. He adapts, sees, and learns from his surrounding.

**Keywords:** *struggle, wilderness, psychological approach, The Call of the Wild*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Bill Keane once said, "yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift from God, that's why we call it a gift." in the Study of Grace (2019:30). Life is a gift. Struggles don't just appear in real life. Struggle is also found in the elements of literary works. The struggle in this study is aimed at Buck as the main character struggling in the wilderness. Douglass (1857) stated that if there is no struggle, there is no progress. This novel tells the point of view of other living souls in the era of the Klondike gold rush. The Call of the Wild tells that animals might also feel various kinds of feelings such as joy, fear, despair, sadness, honor, and even love as well as humans. This is what makes the writer interested in researching and analyzing Buck as the main character before he was kidnapped, the struggle that ensues when Buck was in the wilderness in the novel The Call of the Wild.

The statement of the problem in this study are (1) what causes Buck's struggle in the wilderness? (2) what are the effects of Buck's struggles in the wilderness? (3) how does Buck's struggle in the wilderness?



## 2. METHOD

In this research, the writer uses a descriptive method. <sup>9</sup> Descriptive research means that the data decomposes in the form of words or pictures, not in the form of numbers (Semi, 2012:30).

In this study, researcher used a psychological approach. The reason the writer uses a psychological approach is because this study analyzing the struggle journey in the novel The Call of the Wild that Buck experienced was also related to the development of his mental and character. <sup>12</sup>

The source of data in this research is taken from the novel The Call of the Wild. The novel was published in 1903 and set in Yukon, Canada, during the 1890s Klondike Gold Rush. The novel consists of 7 chapters and 232 pages. The Call of the Wild novel is often regarded as his masterpiece and the most widely read of all his publications.

The instruments of this research are the writer herself. In this study, the researcher collected data by reading the novel The Call of the Wild by Jack London intensively, identifying characters, recording the data as a whole, then classifying or grouping the data according to the research problem raised.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Buck's struggle starts because he experiences culture shock. The environmental differences between California's warm weather and Alaska's cold snow make it a bit of a struggle to adapt. In addition to the weather, also the environmental differences in Alaska which is wild also makes it difficult. Besides, the cold weather and the threat of wild animals at night disturb Buck's sleep. And at the same time Buck is also experiencing the loss of Curly, his first friend when he arrives in Alaska. Whose loss also gives Buck deep trauma because Curly is beaten by a flock of wolves. Another problem Buck struggles with is that he have to adjust his new diet. He have to work first to get a piece of dried fish to fill his big stomach and that is less because in California Buck is used to eating freely whatever and whenever.

The effect of Buck's struggle in the wilderness starting when Buck, who never eats other animals alive, must do so because he has to survive. Buck can't keep parts from Francois and Perrault because that's not enough energy for Buck. Buck is forced to prey on other animals such as rabbits because he must have more energy. Another effect is Buck's character becomes powerful and masterful among the other dogs. Bucks are known to be friendly and kind dogs. It is undeniable that he was once a dog living in an educated place. Buck's muscles have also become stronger than before because he keeps his diet and moves every day to deliver mail. The stronger Buck body is very useful for Buck to prey on other animals. Buck's hunting skills also improved as time went on.

The way Buck is able to survive in the wilderness is that he sees and imitates. That way Buck doesn't look weak to his enemies. Buck also learn his surroundings. Just as when his friend's meal rations were taken by another dog, Buck quickly finished his own. Buck, who used to live in an educated area, thinks that stealing is wrong. But in the wilderness, true and false things don't apply. If Buck is very hungry and the rations are not enough, he secretly steals the fish in Francois and Perrault's bag. Otherwise Buck wouldn't have the energy for the next day. To increase the amount of his intake, Buck also did hunting. He who initially did not like it was forced to do it to survive. In the wilderness, all the living things have the choice to be mastered or to be mastered. And Buck chose to become a master. Finally, Buck returns to his herd and mates with a white female wolf he meets in the deep forests.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted by the writer is to revealing the research problem in the novel *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London. Buck is a dog originally from California and kidnapped to Alaska during the Klondike gold rush. He is a house dog living at Judge Miller's mansion in Santa Valley, must struggle with conditions in the wilderness.

In this study, what Buck struggled with was that he was in an unfamiliar place and had never been in the wild before. The cause of the struggle started when he first arrived in Alaska. Dogs who fight like beasts, the law of club and fangs, traumatized by seeing their friends killed, sleeping in the cold snow, and limited amounts of food. Which he had never experienced in California before. Which left him shocked by those new environment and struggling to adapt and to survive. In addition, the effects of Buck's struggles in the wilderness had a developmental impact on him. Starting from his developed hunting instincts, Buck became more quick-moving, his senses were improved, his body became stronger, and he became able to lead himself and the sled dog team well.

It is also found that Buck has struggled in the wilderness well. He mustered his energy and mind so he could struggle in the wilderness. Clever Buck, it didn't take him long to adapt to his surroundings. He easily learns and recognizes his environment. Buck who initially did not like hunting, but for the needs of his stomach he had to. This also proves Charles Darwin's theory that It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change. Buck is not the strongest in the herd. He watches and learns the surroundings so he can survive in the wilderness.

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