

# A Study of *The Call of the Wild* from the Perspective of Greimas' Semiotic Square Theory

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**Abstract**—Algirdas Julien Greimas is the most influential French structural linguist. He puts forward the profound semiotic square, which has been widely used in the research of literature to reveal the implied meanings and relationship between complex things. *The Call of the Wild* written by the American naturalistic writer Jack London is his representative work. It has been studied by a lot of scholars from different perspectives since its birth. This thesis applies semiotic square theory, further classifying characters in this novel: Buck is the X; Trafficker is the Anti X; Spitz is the Non X; John is the Non anti X. By the use of the comparative analysis method and the textual close-reading method this thesis analyzes the plot and the deep structure of *The Call of the Wild*. The result of this thesis is as follows: the relation between Buck and the traffickers is oppression and resistance; the relation between Buck and Spitz is competitor; the relation between Buck and John Thornton is protective and grateful. Through classifying the action elements, readers can see the narrative structure of this novel, which is not stated flatly but with its own unique tortuosity and complexity and it is conducive to deepening their understanding about the artistry and profundity of this novel, and help readers better understand the Superman image of Buck, the main character in *The Call of the Wild*, and provide them with the effective example in appreciating Jack London's other literary works.

**Index Terms**—semiotic square, narrative structure, comparative analysis, Buck, superman image

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Problem Statement

This thesis mainly focuses on finding out how to apply the semiotic square theory in *The Call of the Wild* to analyze the deep structure and the implied thoughts in Jack London's novel *The call of the wild* by the use of the semiotic square theory invented by Greimas, the famous French structural linguist. In *The call of the wild*, Buck is the most important protagonist, who plays a crucial rule in the development of the plot and character's building. By using of the semiotic square theory this thesis also tries to find out who should be the X, the Anti X, the Non X and the Non anti X. After defining their identity, this thesis will discuss what is the relation between X and the Anti X, the relation between X and the Non X and the relation between X and the Non anti X. Finally, the superman image of Buck will be given.

### B. Significance and Innovation

This research is valuable both practically and theoretically. Practically speaking, semiotic square, as a theory, can be used to analyze novels like *The Call of the Wild*, which gives researchers and scholars new angles to make researches and help readers see the conflicts between various contradictory forces, and the deep structure behind different forces. Through classifying the action elements, readers can see the narrative structure and author's thoughts of this novel, which is conducive to deepening their understanding of the art of fiction and profundity, and help readers better understand the Superman image of Buck, the main character in *The Call of the Wild*. Theoretically speaking, the research can help us better understand the semiotic square theory and give researchers and scholars new angles to make researches on other works, which provides them with theoretical support.

### C. Methodology and Arrangement of This Paper

Two methods are mainly used in this research, namely comparative analysis method and textual close-reading method. Through contrast between different characters with Buck, a much better understanding of the superman image of Buck can be seen. By carefully reading, readers can understand how semiotic square can be applied in this novel.

There are four parts in this paper. The first part is Introduction, mainly divided into three sub- parts: problem statement, significance and innovation and the last part is methodology. The second part is the literature review and brief introduction about Jack London, *The Call of the Wild* and Algirdas Julien Greimas' semiotic square. The next part is the concrete application of semiotic square in *The Call of the Wild*, namely, the relation between Buck and traffickers Manuel, Judge Miller's helper, for instance, the relation between Buck and Spitz, the dangerous rival of Buck and the relation between Buck and John Thornton, a man who saves Buck from dying. The last part is conclusion.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND BRIEF INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND THE BOOK

### A. Literature Review

As one of the most legendary novelist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jack London has always been remembered for his short stories dealing romantically with the overwhelming power of nature and the struggle for survival. Those high adventurous stories were in view of his experience on water or in the dols and companies of California. Because of this, his writing style is very unique and instructive. His works are very popular both at home and abroad. Many scholars put their interests in studying himself and his novels from different aspects. *The Call of the Wild* is one of them. "According to the survey of the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Jack London was the most popular writer whose works were translated into most languages in Europe, and *The Call of the Wild* was the most of them."<sup>1</sup>

As a classic novel, *The Call of the Wild* was very popular both at home and abroad, which tells the story of Buck, who begins as a tamed dog in the sun-kissed Santa Clara Valley but eventually ends as a sled dog in the primitive north after being through all the trials and tribulations. In China, this novel was published in 1919 for the first time and had at least 32 versions since then. Literature review of this novel is mainly divided into two parts: the studies abroad and the studies at home.

Firstly, *The Call of the Wild* has been analyzed a lot by American and foreign critics. At the very beginning, Liu Ningning (2009) mainly concentrates on the theme of this novel. Jack London is a naturalistic writer. In this novel he applies Darwin's survival of the fittest theory to emphasize the theme of this novel. In order to survive in the wild north, Buck has to fight for everything, food, water and leadership even at the risk of his life. He must be stronger and stronger so that he can avoid being killed in the north. As the time goes by, some scholars focus on the image of the protagonist Buck. When Jack London wrote this novel, he added some human features to a dog. Mark Seltzer (1992) analyzed the superman image of Buck. As is a special dog, Buck is courageous, persevering and very loyal. He is a fast learner who can accommodate himself in any tough situations. He is grateful to John Thornton, his beloved master and willing to protect him from harm at any cost even losing his life. Cai Yigan (2009) holds that this shows Buck's image as a superman. As the famous biographer Irving Stone said "Nietzsche had a great emotional effect on Jack London. He found the theory man in Nietzsche's works. Jack felt that superman philosophy was his taste because he thought he was a superman who could conquer any barriers" (Stone Irving, 1999, p23). In addition, Peter Schmitt (1964) thinks that atavism in this novel is also frequently on the lips of critics. The term atavism means that some organism has inclined to return the characteristics of a more primitive type or the ancestral type. Buck in this novel was first a civilized dog who lived in the sun-kissed south and led a carefree life. Not until he became a sled dog after being treated by the law of club and fang on the way to the wild north, did he hear the call of his ancestor. Gradually, Earle labor (1994) thinks that his ancestor's characters were back to him, such as crafty, bravery and tenacity. Finally, some critics also use Humanism to analyze this novel.

Secondly, there are some features on the study of *The Call of the Wild* when it comes to the study at home. To begin with, the research methods are varied, mainly from the traditional artistic techniques to social background and psychoanalysis, from single method analysis such as, ecology, narrative skill to the analysis with different methods together. Besides, Bert Bender (2004) makes research on the meaning of the novel has turned to cultural and ecological field, and Jiang Chenghe (2010) paid much attention to the relationship between humanity and wildness. Thirdly, the change form separate study of the novel *The call of the wild*, to the use of comparative integrated research to analyze Jack London's other novels. Finally, Zhang Yan (2004) saw this novel in the aspect of naturalism. Following are works related to it: On Naturalism Elements in Jack London Works Yang Renjing in American Literature in the Twentieth Century holds that *The Call of the Wild* reveals the tenaciously fight over enemies for survival, and at the same time reveals the writer's naturalistic ideas of law of the jungle.

In conclusion, researches on *The Call of the Wild* at home or abroad make readers have a better understanding about this novel. However, there are still some limitations among them, which are seldom of them analyzes the relation between different characters by the use of the semiotic square theory. This makes my research worthwhile.

#### B. *The Brief Introduction of Jack London and The Call of the Wild*

Jack London is an American novelist, short story writer, journalist, essayist, dramatist and autobiographer. He is also a popular Naturalist. Jack London lived a special life that was "the era of the millionaire and manufacturer and speculator, when Darwinian evolution and the survival of the fittest seemed to sanction the sometimes unethical methods of the successful business tycoon." (Kathryn & Vanspankeren, 2004, p160) In less than two decades of writing career, this prolific and diligent writer created a lot of marvelous works, including 152 short stories and articles, 19 novels, 8 autobiographies, plays and many reportage, essays and papers. Among all of his writings, his short stories occupied a very high reputation, which created a new era for the modern American literature.

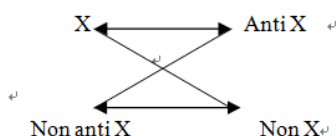
*The Call of the Wild*, the masterpiece of Jack London's novels, which tells the story of Buck, who begins as a tamed dog in the sun-kissed Santa Clara Valley but eventually ends as a sled dog in the primitive north after being through all the trials and tribulations. "This is by far the best piece of work which has come from this gifted author This book rises above mere storytelling and possesses elements of the best in literature –scope, vitality and fullness" (James Lundquist, 1900, p.102). Although it is a story of a dog who is expelled from civilized world, in some way, it is a story of human being as well. By using personification and other rhetorical devices, London draws a vivid picture of animal world.

<sup>1</sup> Wang Nuo. (2003). *Ecological literature in Europe and America*. Beijing: Beijing University Press.

After suffering a lot of tribulations, he is saved by John Thornton, a kind-hearted man. Unfortunately, John Thornton is murdered by Yeehats. Therefore, Buck makes up his mind to take revenge for his host. After revenge, he lived in the forest with some real wolves.

### C. *The Brief Introduction of Greimas' Semiotic Square*

Semiotic Square is put forward by Algirdas Julien Greimas, the most influential French structural linguist. It is used to analyze the deep structure of novels. Stories originate from the opposition between X and anti X, in the process of plot development, new factors are introduced, namely, non X and non – X. When these factors are unfolded, the story is completed. The basic method of using Semiotic square is as follows:



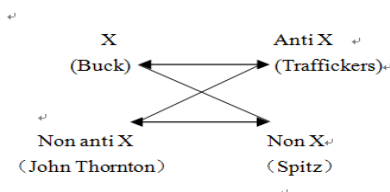
The first step is to determine the X. Based on careful reading version of the story; X is the most basic elements of the story. This step determines the success or failure of the quality of the whole analysis. In addition to relying on the literary perception ability, there are some methods. That is, the key elements in the text often appears repeatedly, we need to carry on the careful inspection to measure whether it is enough, as the leading the whole X. Sometimes the key elements don't appear repeatedly, but they can appear combined with multiple images and this requires a process.

Secondly, we need to analyze the narrative structure. In order to make all elements of the narrative text clear, what we need to do is to study the whole story structure, plot, ending the initiation, evolution based on these basic elements. We can also use the narrative structure to figure out the author's implied meanings, such as Buck's superman image and capitalistic thoughts in this novel. We need to ultimately conclude that the story has its own unique structure and developing order. If everything is what it seems, it doesn't need to use the chaos theory. In other words, this is because of the existence of this theory, each person's personalized, diversified understanding can find their own according to the meaning.

### III. GREIMAS'S SEMIOTIC IN *THE CALL OF THE WILD*

According to this chart and the plot of *The Call of the Wild*, the relation between Buck and the traffickers is oppression and resistance. Secondly, the relation between Buck and Spitz is competitive. Both of them want to survive in the law of club and fang, they have to fight each other for the leader of this team, which makes them competitors. Thirdly, the relation between Buck and John Thornton is protective and grateful. John Thornton saves Buck from being harmed and Buck regards him as his new loyal master. He is willing to do anything for John. Therefore, through analyzing the semiotic square, readers can better understand the deep structure which is not stated flatly but with its own unique tortuosity and complexity of the novel. Also, it will give readers some hints on Buck's superman image.

Now, let's look at how Semiotic square is exactly used in this novel.



#### A. *The Relation between Buck and Traffickers (X and anti X)*

Buck is the most important character in *The Call of the Wild*. Apparently, Buck is the X. Characters who are contrary to X are defined as anti X, thus the anti X is the traffickers. The relation between Buck and those traffickers is oppression and resistance. On the way to the north, Buck uses his wisdom to fight against oppression from those traffickers. The process of resistance is a process of Buck's image shaping and self-growth.

Analyzing the novel carefully, a conclusion can be drawn that there are three anti X, that is to say, Manuel, the man in red sweater and Hal. At the very beginning, Buck is a very big dog with strong muscles who lives a very comfortable life in Judge Miller's place, the sunshine area of Santa Clara Valley. He is not a pet dog or a captive dog. The whole realm is his. "Among the terriers he stalks imperiously, and Toots and Ysabel he utterly ignores, for he is the king, ---king over all creeping, crawling, flying things of Judge Miller's place, human included" (Jack London, 2010,p32). This showed that Buck can control everything around him; he was the king in his territory. However, Buck didn't read the newspapers, for human, exploring in the darkness of Arctic, had discovered a yellow coherer, and because carriages and men emerge in large numbers. They needed dogs, the dogs they needed were those who were strong and had furry that can protect them from the cold. It is this background that promotes traffickers to sell dogs everywhere.

The first anti X is Manuel, Judge Miller's helper who was also a greedy gambling lover. Lacking of money for

gambling, he got himself in kidnapping Buck. But Buck didn't know this was happening. When Manuel doubled a piece of stout rope around Buck's neck under the collar, he didn't fight or struggle at all, because he had got to know that he must trust in men he familiar with, and to give them the wisdom and strength they want. Buck's superman image here is loyalty and trust. This was the beginning of Buck's tough life.

The second anti X is the man in the red sweater, who tortures Buck using the club. Under the law of club and fang, Buck was not broken but learned to adapt himself in the wild life as soon as possible. He understood, no matter how, he had no chance to fight against a man with a rod. He had absorbed in what he learned, and in all his life he would remember it. That rod was powerful. Then he understood the so called primitive law. Gradually, he learned that if one wants to survive he has to give up civilized behaviors and fight against evil with evil. The man in the red sweater gives him a chance to watch other dogs pass under the dominion of the man. Once more, as he saw these ruthless actions, the lesson was driven back to him: a man who had a rod was a lawgiver, a host to be submitted himself to. On the Dyea beach, life was nightmare; Buck had to bear the beat of club and knew that every moment life and limb were in peril. The man in the red was savage, knowing no law but the law of club and fang. That was why Buck had to be very clever. He had to be a fast learner so that he would not be beaten by the club. Buck swiftly lost the fastidiousness which had characterized his old life. He became clever, cunning, strong in body and fast in action which is a clever malingerer and thief. All this was taught by the man in the red sweater. Buck's superman image mainly reflected in his fast learning under the threat of club and fang, easily accommodating himself to the new mode of life and knowing survival of the fittest. This experience helped him know the rule of living in the north.

The last anti X is Hal, another seller, who bought Buck from Francois. Hal, as the new owner, was a bad tempered and cruel man who always used a whip to push Buck forward. "Again Hal's whip fell on the dogs. They threw themselves against the breast bands, dug their feet into the packed snow, and got down low to it was an anchor. After two efforts, they stood still, panting. The whip was whistling savagely" (Jack London, 2010, p52). This shows how cruel Hal was. The sled was too heavy to be carried by those poor dogs, but Hal didn't care, and treated them as slaves. Hal's principle, which he acted on other people, was that one must be tough. He had begun drilling this so called principle into his sister and brother –in –law. Dogs were perambulating skeletons. They fell down one after another. They were stiff and in pain; their muscles ached, their bones ached; their very hearts ached. Buck was still in the front of this team, but no longer forcing himself to obey the roles, turning a blind eye to weakness and follow the trail by his unwilling feet. Because of Hal's cold-blooded beating on Buck, he was badly sick, very hungry and without any spirit at all; bones were the only things breakable on Buck; in his very strong suffering, he had no feeling to the bite of the smash or the hit of the rod, and saved by John Thornton. This shows Buck is very tough and can bear any difficulties.

In conclusion, after analyzing this three anti X, we see they have different roles in Buck's growth. Firstly, Manuel, Judge Miller's helper, a greedy gambling lover. Lacking of money for gambling, he gets himself in kidnapping Buck. Secondly, the man in the red sweater, because of him Buck knows the law of club and knows how to survive under the club law. Thus, this made him realize that he had no opportunity to fight against a man with a rod. He had taken in the lesson he learned from being beaten by the men with a rod, which he would never forget. Buck gets the chance to meet John Thornton, the man who saves him from disaster. All the three men play an important role in developing the plot of this novel and shaping Buck's superman image such as loyalty, hardworking and strong in self-adaptive ability.

#### B. *The Relation between Buck and Spitz (X and -X)*

On the way to north, traffickers bought a lot of dogs. Some of them were as strong as Buck, Spitz, for instance. Some of them are very tender, such as Dave and Billee. Some of them got well along with Buck, while some of them didn't, they were competitors because they have to fight for leadership of the team. Buck, the big and strong dog was seen as the most important rival by Spitz. -X is the one who has conflicts with X but don't opposite with X. Therefore, -X is Spitz. The relation between Buck and Spitz is competitive. They are rivals. During his fight with Spitz, Buck was very cunning, brave and clever. At the beginning, he knew that he was new to the team and not familiar with the rules of living in the wild, so he chose to avoid fights with Spitz. He knew he has to learn and adjust. However, when the time was right, he pick up the fight with Spitz to win the leadership.

Spitz was the leader, likewise experienced who had the bitter hatred situation with Buck. Spitz was a dog with evil spirit who can't bear anyone that is stronger than him. He also knew the survival of the fittest. Therefore, Spitz spared no effort to fight against his dangerous rival Buck. Besides, possibly because he treated Buck as a dangerous competitor, Spitz tries to use every opportunity of revealing his power. He even tries every way to bully and threat Buck, striving from time to time to start a war which could only has one survivor. A lot of wars happened between them. But at first Buck was too busy adjusting himself to the new life. Therefore, he did not want to start a war and he avoided him whenever it is possible. Because he knew that he had to be strong in the first place. He was not given in the imprudent action; though provoked by Spitz, he tried to stay calm down until oneday he really could not bear it. However, one night, when Buck was exhausted, Spitz thought it was his opportunity. He bited on Buck, and his teeth entered into his unresisting enemy time and time again and ripped and lanced the body to the bone, but this fight was stopped by Francois. Since then on it was war between them.

After he adapted himself to the new life, it was unavoidable that the fight for leadership should come. Buck was desirous toward it, because of his nature, because he had been caused physical and mental suffering by that countless, incomprehensible of the trail and trace. He openly threatened the other's leadership. The insidious resistance of Buck

has destroyed the unity of the team. It was no longer like a dog in a trace. Buck encouraged the rebels to fight which led them to buck all sorts of pretty misdemeanors. Spitz was no longer a leader greatly to be afraid of. The fear before left, and they were equal to challenge Spitz's authority. He did it deliberately, and had a quality that was for great imagination. He fought by nature, and he could fight by his body power as well. When one night began, his time had come. It was the only one can live fight. As they surrounded about, snarling, ears laid back, carefully watchful for the chances. Spitz was a practised fighter. He never take a rush to fight till he was well prepared to do it; never fight till he had first chance to defend that fight. Therefore he tried to knock him over, then repeated the trick and broke the fore leg. He had no chances to survive. Buck was ready, when he was well prepared, he was cruel and merciless. Buck practiced for the final rush. Soon Spitz disappeared. Buck looked on and sought for him, the successful champion and the brutal beast who had made his kill and found it very irritative. Then Buck had the leadership and he earned it.

In conclusion, as a -X, Spitz taught Buck to learn how to fight and evoked his wildness. In order to get the leadership, which Buck wanted, because of his nature, because he picked the fight by that countless, incomprehensible of the trail and trace, he tried to threaten the other's leadership openly. He did whatever he could to fight and beat others who stood in his way. He did it deliberately. At the very beginning, Buck didn't fight for it, just bear whatever happened to him. However, at last, Spitz forced him to fight, to find out his wildness. The -X, Spitz, made Buck, better understand himself and evoked his nature. Thus Spitz was necessary in shaping Buck's characteristics and promoting the development of the plot. Spitz and Buck couldn't co-exist with each other, which caused the fight between them. Because of the fight between Buck and Spitz, Buck finally got the leadership and found out his wildness and nature.

### C. *The Relation Between Buck and John Thornton (X and -anti X)*

Before Buck met John Thornton, he was experiencing his hardest time since being kidnapped in the wild North. With the very heavy sled on his back and without any food to eat, Buck was very tired and hungry and almost was dead but had to bear the beating by Hal. So greatly had Buck suffered, so far gone was he, that the blow did not hurt much. He didn't want to go even with club on his body. He felt numb about it. The last sensations of pain left him. He no longer felt anything. Under this situation, "Suddenly, without warning, uttering a cry that was inarticulate and more like the cry of an animal, John Thornton sprang up on the man who wielded the club. Hal was hurled backward, as though struck by a falling tree. Mercedes screamed. Charles looked on wistfully, wiped his watery eyes, but did not get up because of his stiffness. John Thornton stood over Buck, struggling to control himself, too convulsed with rage to speak and said If he struck that dog again, I will kill you. John Thornton saved him from being beaten to death. John Thornton was his protector, the role of -anti X. The relation between Buck and John Thornton is protective and grateful. John Thornton saves Buck from being harmed and Buck regards him as his new loyal master. He is willing to do anything for John.

Under the care of John Thornton, Buck's wounds healed. He shared the kindness and generosity of John Thornton. As Buck grew stronger he lured Buck to all kind of funny games, in which John Thornton himself could not bear to be part of it; and in this fashion Buck jumped through his kindness and into a different kind of life. Love was here for him for the first time, which he had never experienced at Judge Miller's house. "Love that was feverish and burning, that was adoration, that was madness, it had taken John Thornton to arouse" (Jack London, 2010, p83). Buck enjoyed the time he spent with John Thornton. Life was comfortable and carefree again as used to be. John Thornton saved his life, which was a good thing and he was the perfect host. Others see the welfare of their dog from the sense of responsibility and the commercial interest. John Thornton saw to the welfare of dogs as if they were his own children, because he was kind and his human nature caused that.

Buck was older than the days he had seen and the breaths he had drawn. Influenced by soft human civilizing, the spirit of the primitive, which the Northland had spied on him, stayed alive and active. Faithfulness and devotion were his nature too; He was a beast, from wild to sit in the John Thornton's fire, in soft Southland stamped with modern civilization symbol, a special dog. For his very great affection to John, he could not pilfer from this man, but from other man, in other camp, he did not hesitate to do so. To show his very great love to for John, Buck in return did something for his him. Firstly, he saved his master from being beaten by the drunk Burton. When he saw the fight, Buck jumped on Burton's throat and almost bit him to death. This is because he can't bear anyone to fight against his beloved master. Secondly, Buck saved John from being drowned by flowing water. In the fall of the year, John and his partner were lined with a narrow strip of polarized jet under a bad stretch of jet at forty miles of Greece. Suddenly, John fell into the water. On seeing this, Buck was very worried and jumped into the angry water. Buck could not catch his own, and swept down, desperately struggling, but unable to win back. John's partners tried to save Buck, for the current was too strong. Buck was half drowned. But Buck couldn't give up. Once again, he jumped into the water with a rope. By the help of this rope John and Buck were out of the water, but almost suffocating and with three broken ribs on Buck. He can sacrifice himself to save his master's life. Thirdly, Buck helped John Thornton pay for his debt by pulling 1000 pounds load and made it possible for his master to go to the East after a fabled lost mine. Fourthly, one night, Buck was playing out of his place. Yeehats destroyed his home and killed the man he loved most. After seeing that scene, Buck roared and terribly. For the last time in his life he allowed passion to burst out and it was because of he was thankful for John Thornton that made him lose his head. Being a evil spirit, he killed lots of Yeehats, but could not find his master. He knew that John Thornton was dead. He killed a man, as the intelligent part of the universe people killed him in the club before him. It was the call, the many -noted call, sounding more luringly and compellingly than ever before.

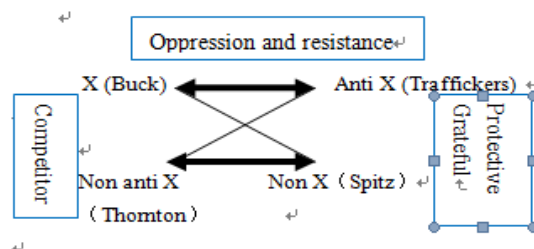
John Thornton was dead. The last bond was broken. Man and the so called speeches of man no longer tie him. Buck was back to the forest and lived with real wolves. But every summer, Buck will visit the place where his beloved man died. He will stand for a time, howling once, long and mournfully, ere he departed.

In conclusion, the relation between Buck and John Thornton is protective and grateful. John Thornton, the man Buck loves most, give him a life he has never experienced before. He loves him. Love was crazy and burning, that was worship, it was crazy, and it took John Thornton to evoke. Buck enjoyed the time he spent with John Thornton. Life was comfortable and carefree again as used to be. Thornton saved his life, this was something and he was the ideal master. Others saw the welfare of their dog from the sense of responsibility and the commercial interest. Thornton treated him as if Buck were his own children, because he could not help it. The –anti X, John Thornton, becomes the most important man in Buck’ life. Because of John Thornton’s death, the last tie was broken. Man and the claims of man no longer bound him. Therefore, Buck returns to live in the forest. All the four things he did to John showed his very great love to John. They were more than dog and master; they were friend and family.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

*The Call of the Wild* is the epitome of London’s own struggling story. Tracing of his own life can also be revealed from Buck’s rejection of civilization and returning to nature. This thesis uses the semiotic square theory to analyze the narrative structure and the plot development of this novel so that readers can have a better understanding about Buck’ relation with other characters and Buck’ superman image. A conclusion can be drawn that the structure of this novel is not stated flatly but with its own unique tortuosity and complexity.

As a theory, semiotic square can be used to analyze novels like *The Call of the Wild*, which gives researchers and scholars new angles to make searches and help readers see the conflict between various contradictory forces, and the deep structure behind different forces. Besides, the research can give researchers and scholars new angles to make searches on other works, which provides them with theoretical support. According to the chart and the plot of *The Call of the Wild*, the relation between Buck and traffickers is oppression and resistance. Secondly, the relation between Buck and Spitz is competitive. Both of them want to survive in the law of club and fang, they have to fight each other for the leader of this team, which makes them competitors. Thirdly, the relation between Buck and John Thornton is protective and grateful. John Thornton saves Buck from being harmed and Buck regards him as his new loyal master. He is willing to do anything for John.



In conclusion, through analyzing the semiotic square and the different relations in this novel, readers can better understand the deep structure which is not stated flatly but with its own unique tortuosity and complexity of the novel. Through *The Call of the Wild*, we see the author’s outlook on human society which was very much influenced by his own life experience. As a beast fable, this novel points to something with humanity—the everlasting mystery of life itself. People should fulfill their highest possible destiny themselves as Buck does. Buck’s world is also an epitome of human’s society. We are experiencing exactly the same feeling as Buck, feeling abandoned, feeling crises, even feeling cruel in the end. In this novel, Jack London tells not only a cruel story of one dog, but also of human beings. The turning of Buck from dog to wolf, from civilization to wildness shows the very history of human beings who, being driven by selfish purpose, strive to compete with, to hurt and to kill each other without any mercy. Also, it will give readers some hints on Buck’ superman image. Loyalty, hard-working, perseverance, strong in adaptability and grateful to his master, all of them is Buck’s superman images.

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