

## LITERARY INTERPRETATION OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY IN THE NOVEL “MARTIN EDEN”

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**Abstract:** *Literary interpretation of social psychology in the novel “Martin Eden” is analyzed in the article.*

**Keywords:** *social psychology, spiritual illness, to have aversion for life, physical strength, mental power, recognition.*

Events of realistic novel are held in certain historical period and place. In each historical period general mental signs, views and system of relations are formed which are called in science as “social psychology”. Writer, drawing literary scene of this or that period, just is not able to put aside motives of social psychology. Historical view of the period, we can say, social reality, on the contrary is literarily reshaped by prospect of this period’s people.

While reading life experience of Martin – protagonist of the book “Martin Eden” by Jack London representative of American literature, reader can easily imagine the views and social opinions of the time.

In “Martin Eden” we observe such 2 sides of social psychology in concrete social system in which general viewpoint lead to the intensification of conflict between the main hero and minor characters, in the result, becoming the reason for both destroying Martin and Ruth’s love and the tragedy of protagonist.

The first of them is in the society based on capitalistic relations – property relations, that is to say, personal relations supported by property relations was put on the first plan. People were treated by looking at the properties they have. So, both sisters, lover of him Ruth and other advised Martin Eden, was born for art, full of creative power, to work at proper place and earn money, live as other in peace. He had to strike with the people who always thought about earning money and live peacefully alone. “Martin Eden at the beginning lived in the world of love and romantic beauty, created in his imaginative mind. In this world he made heroism as being a writer. Though Martin’s world was not stable and eternal. Romantic here faced to the capitalistic circumstances”.<sup>1</sup>

Psychology of financial life problems encompassed all levels of society. From Gertruda, by working class, to Mors, higher class were down with such kind of psychology. Regardless of social and financial differences between them, all of the people without stopping, again and again forced Martin to find stable work place and salary: “that was their first word and their last. It constituted their whole lexicon of ideas. Get a job! Go to work! Poor, stooped slaver, he thought, while his sister talked. Small wonder the world belonged to the strong. The slave were obsessed by their own slavery. A job was to them a golden fetish before which they fell down and worshipped.” (304)

In the society, which lost hope for the future nobody realized and supported his strivings. Such kind of surrounding convicted Brissendens and Martins, who were always disagree with the general psychology, to spiritual illness, to have aversion for life and finally to suicide.

Mental and physical aspects are swelled up in Martin Eden’s character. For example, the more physical strength he had, the more mental power he showed. But if physical strength is seen in adoption of each situation, paying no attention to hard work, hunger, difficulties and sufferings, mental power is observed when Martin couldn’t adopt false traditions – opposed to humanity, which were admitted freely by majority, treated as strict rule. He considers that personal power is realizing spiritual strength and making it real, but for people around him choose adoptions in the society, having a better life and property. Martin’s views made him to be alone in the society. Neither Ruth nor his

<sup>1</sup> Баданова И. Джек Лондон и его герой. Творчество Джека Лондона 1900 – 1910 гг.

relatives could understand him. That's why "this man, whose clay was so plastic that could live in any number of pigeonholes of human existence, she thought willful and most obstinate." (184)

The second kind of social psychology in the surroundings Martin Eden lived, as Jack London described, is spreading out broadly some of the views, admitting by majority and taking the shape of unwritten strict law, despite it is true or false according to humanity. It is very important state. The importance of it is exact this psychology marks the relation of people in the certain society (This is the main difference between Ruth and Martin's opinions and consequence being the reason for dispiriting relation between them).

May be, Jack London really used the pieces from life of Leo Tolstoy for his heroes, who was very popular and notable for American readers at that time. Because Jack London was greatly influenced by Russian literature, at the same time he highly praised realism in the works of Great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, as well as in I. Turgenev and M. Gorky's works<sup>2</sup>. Jack London wrote openly in his novel:

"He was coming to realize, with increasing conviction, that he possessed brain – areas and stretches of knowledge which she could never comprehend nor knew existed". (186)

Ruth wanted to change Martin, but Martin in his idealized world found out that Ruth has not the spiritual beauty which he thought should be and at the end of the novel accepted the truth that: "He knew, now, that he had not really loved her. It was an idealized Ruth he had loved, an ethereal creature of his own creating, the bright and luminous spirit of his love poems" (353).

The psychology of recognition formed in society awakened the strong pains in the heart of Martin, it became more stronger when he was popular as a writer.

Martin couldn't accept stable law shaped views and opinions. He was killed by this endless and great open-minding and knowledge. Martin Eden didn't accept most of the higher class people in the society and because of it he had different views with Ruth, who blindly worshipped everything given by society. Martin was not only writer, but also very talented, open – minded and free person.

Recognition – became the great power in the society but unrecognition grinded many people and their great views, turned them into useless things. Making exception of social people like Martin and Brissinden the rest of the people spent all of the strength and talent for seeing recognized, adopted their views and strivings to the psychology of recognition. In such kind of society removing even on step from psychology of recognition would be equal to tragedy. Such environment will pull off anti – traditional views and opinions as stranger plant. Monotonousness and boring monogamy will appear in the society; free – mind thinking will be ended. Martin lives in exact this kind of society; and loves just the same minded girl and because of not admitting such kind of society psychology he failed in love and his life ruined as well.

Love towards Ruth woke up the artistic features in Martin Eden. So, we can say, Ruth is the teacher of Martin. But different spiritual circumstance is that, woken up by love Martin realized the truth of the world he loved with the help of it, but he understood that there is no place for the people owning the heart as his, such kind of great soul and spiritual flying can't be excepted in the earthly life. With the achieved spiritual level he could live only in spiritual world. From one point of view the fate of all achieved Martin and Ruth, who couldn't high up till his moral level recognize relations between Leo Tolstoy and Sofia Andreevna.

So we can say that Jack London opened the social – spiritual circumstances not only in Martin lived society but also the whole humanity's. It was psychology of rejecting any open – minded views, specialty news; likeness, dependence psychology, psychology of terror from the views which are not accepted by majority.

## REFERENCES

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<sup>2</sup> Богословский В. Джек Л. – М. Просвещение 1964 – с. 162-172