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PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS AND CHARACTERIZATION OF PRINCIPLES IN THE WORKS OF JACK LONDON

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Abstract. This article provides a scholarly analysis of the psychological mechanisms involved in the creation of characters in the works of Jack London, the internal conflicts within their personalities, the ways in which they are shaped by their environment and natural conditions, and the writer's naturalistic-reactionary stylistic principles. The analysis focuses on the relationship between these two dimensions, namely London's approach to psychological analysis and his principles of characterization. Drawing on The Call of the Wild (1903), White Fang (1906), and Martin Eden (1909), the study examines how psychological states such as the instinct for survival, social adaptation, self-awareness, loneliness, and alienation are conveyed through artistic means in London's characters.

Keywords: Jack London, psychological analysis, characterization, naturalism, interior monologue, alienation, Martin Eden, The Call of the Wild, White Fang.

Introduction

The great American writer Jack London (1876–1916) is regarded as one of the most consistent authors to have combined the aesthetics of naturalism with psychological depth in American literature. Each character in his works is not merely a component of the plot but rather an artistic testing ground for a particular system of philosophical and scientific views. In this respect, psychological analysis in London's works operates on two levels: first, the direct depiction of the character's psyche (internal perspective, self-awareness, and psychological crisis); and second, the artistic modelling of external factors that determine character formation—heredity, environment, and instinct.

In London's works, the inner world of his characters is revealed, in particular, through the struggle for survival, the opposition between strength and weakness, and processes of adaptation to or estrangement from the social environment. Earle Labor portrays London as a complex and contradictory individual; this biographical complexity is interpreted as being connected with the presence of "different selves" in his characters as well.

The aim of this study is to provide a systematic account of the principles of psychological analysis and characterization in Jack London's works, using his major literary works as examples. The study examines the relationship between the characters' inner psychological states, behaviour, interaction with their environment, and the artistic means of expression.

Methods

The study employs qualitative content analysis and comparative literary analysis. The primary sources are Jack London's The Call of the Wild, White Fang, and Martin Eden. The scholarly literature consulted includes research devoted to London's life and work, particularly The Oxford Handbook of Jack London, Earle Labor's biography, and works by Jonathan Auerbach and Jeanne Campbell Reesman.

The analyses mentioned above were conducted in the following areas:

- the characters' internal conflicts and motivations;
- the psychological influence of the environment, nature, and social conditions;
- the artistic representation of psychological states such as survival, strength, fear, loneliness, and adaptation;
- the role of description, action, interior monologue, and conflict in characterization;
- typological similarities and differences among the characters portrayed in Jack London's works;

Results

1. Fundamental principles of characterization

Jack London relies on several consistent principles when creating characters in his works. First, each character has a distinct goal, desire, and internal conflict. Second, a character's behaviour is determined not only by personal traits but also by external factors such as famine, violence, social inequality, and natural conditions. The third principle links changes in the characters to the development of events in the plot. For example, in The Call of the Wild, Buck's transformation from a "domestic animal" into a "wild beast" is presented as a psychological transformation brought about by the influence of the external environment.

2. Main areas of psychological analysis

The following factors play a central role in the psychological analysis of London's characters (see table 1):

table 1

Psychological factors	Means of artistic expression	Title of the work
Survival instinct	Action, struggle, depiction of famine	The Call of the Wild
Social adaptation	The character's relationship with the environment	White Fang
Internal conflict	Decision-making, interior monologue	Martin Eden
Loneliness and alienation	The character's estrangement from society	Martin Eden
Power and dominance	Violence, the motif of natural selection	The Call of the Wild

The table presented above shows that the psychological states of characters in Jack London's works are manifested not merely as internal "feelings" but also through the plot, conflict, and characterization.

3. The Call of the Wild: instinct and transformation

In The Call of the Wild, Jack London psychologically depicts the transition from civilization to nature through the character of Buck. In other words, Buck's initial behaviour as a domestic animal is gradually replaced by instincts that develop as a means of survival in the wild. The concepts of "law," "dominance," and the "primitive beast" encountered in the chapters of the work reveal the psychological essence of this process.

In this work, rather than explaining the character's inner transformation directly, the author conveys it primarily through action, the environment, and the development of events. Consequently, psychological analysis of this character develops in close connection with external events.

4. White Fang: adaptation and socialization

In White Fang, Jack London portrays the character through a process of transition from the wilderness towards human society. The character's psychological changes—from fear and hatred to submission and affection—are reflected in the sections entitled "The Law of Meat," "The Bondage," "The Outcast," and "The Love-Master." In this work, London relies on the triad of "nature–environment–human being" in creating character. The character's eventual bond with a human being serves as an example of his psychological "return home" and social adaptation.

5. Martin Eden: individualism and alienation

Martin Eden is considered one of the works in which London's psychological prose is most clearly expressed. Through the character of Martin Eden, the author depicts the processes by which a creative individual adapts to the social environment, develops self-awareness, and ultimately experiences alienation. In scholarly studies, the work interprets individualism as both a source of strength and a destructive ideology.

In this work, London demonstrates the character's psychological development through interior monologue, social relationships, and creative activity. Martin's psychological exhaustion and estrangement from society, accompanying his achievement of success, clearly illustrate the principle of "internal conflict" in characterization.

Discussion

In Jack London's works, psychological analysis not only reveals the inner world of the characters but also demonstrates their relationship with society and the surrounding environment. This approach brings his writing close to the traditions of psychological realism and naturalism.

The prominent scholar Auerbach emphasizes the importance of the construction of "selfhood" in Jack London's work and notes that the author created a particular "self" in order to adapt to the mass-market press. This observation also underscores the relevance of self-awareness and the construction of a social persona in London's characters.

Conclusion

In conclusion, an examination of the works of the great American writer Jack London indicates that his approach to the psychological analysis of characters and their creation is based on the following principles:

- ✓ the character is created as an individual possessing internal conflicts and a goal;
- ✓ psychological states are conveyed through action, environment, and events;
- ✓ the surrounding environment and social conditions directly influence the behaviour of the characters;
- ✓ survival, adaptation, loneliness, and alienation serve as the principal psychological motifs;
- ✓ description, interior monologue, conflict, and typification are used in combination in the process of characterization;

Thus, the characters portrayed in Jack London's works are not merely participants in a sequence of events; rather, they emerge as psychological systems shaped by the struggle between nature, society, and their own inner worlds.

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