

THE REFLECTION OF PERSONAL LIFE IN MEMOIR AND BILDUNGSROMAN WORKS

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Abstract. *The article analyzes different types of autobiographical works based on Jack London's "Martin Eden" as a semi-autobiographic Künstlerroman, a sub-genre of the bildungsroman, shedding light on the developmental phases of a protagonist. The point London makes is able to be witnessed throughout the real world and is essentially the case of the impoverished, self-educated, philosophically inclined, and aspiring author who emerges from the depths of societal desolation. Employing personal history, and wisdom to relay a longing narrative reflecting the psyche of an individual, which without a doubt resonated as the heart of an identity once lost. The outcome of these arises London's approaches towards depicting life and fiction, from personal events to drawing them into a fantastical portrayal showcasing memoirs of metamorphosing from a step-by-step realization shrouded by the fog of introversion.*

Keywords: *artistic form, personal life, bildungsroman, autobiographical works.*

INTRODUCTION.

It is essential point to observe that a particular period of history is thoroughly depicted in memoir types of works. Events in this type of work are also narrated in the first person, and the author prefers to present historical details rather than focus solely on their personal life. For example, Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* is considered a memoir, in which the author recounts the events he observed around Walden Pond.

Zahiriddin Muhammad Bobur created the memoir *Boburnoma*, which covers historical events from 1493 to 1529. The work reflects historical events related to the entire Babur dynasty, and Babur himself gives a detailed account of the events in his life.

Semi-autobiographical novels – are close to the genre of fiction, in which events from the author's life are presented in a highly artistic form.

METHODOLOGY.

Through literary analysis, the researcher can explore how Jack London reflects his personal experiences, beliefs, and philosophical influences (e.g., Nietzschean theory, Darwinism) in the plot and character of Martin Eden.

Historical-Biographical approach examines a literary work in the context of the author's life and historical background. It links the content of the work to real-life events, personal experiences, and historical context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

Jack London spent his childhood in the slums of Oakland, California, and referred to these places as “the cellar of society.” Jack London’s biological father, William Henry Chaney, never acknowledged him as his child. His mother, Flora Wellman, married a man named John London. Jack inherited the London surname from his stepfather.

As a teenager, young London enjoyed going on sea voyages. He even lived like a “hobo,” spending nights in empty freight train cars, homeless and wandering. Due to this vagrant lifestyle, he ended up in a jail in Erie County. After thirty days, upon release, he enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley. During his student years, he studied philosophical and scientific theories such as Darwinism and Nietzscheanism. He read a large number of scientific journals. In order to improve his status, he decided to write sonnets, ballads, jokes, and adventure stories.

Jack London’s first book, *The Son of the Wolf: Tales of the Far North* (1900), a collection of short stories, was published in magazines and became one of readers' favorite works. Although the writer lived only a short life of 40 years, he authored over 50 works, including *The Call of the Wild*, *White Fang*, *Martin Eden*, *The Iron Heel*, *The Grit of Woman*, and *Love of Life*.

Jack London’s *Martin Eden* is classified as a semi-autobiographical *Künstlerroman*. The term *Künstlerroman* is derived from the German word, meaning “the novel of the artist.”

It is a subgenre of the *bildungsroman* (coming-of-age novel), in which the protagonist rejects ordinary life events in the final part of the story. For instance, in *Martin Eden*, the protagonist Martin Eden does not change his attitude toward life, even though it is based on Nietzschean theory. Through the character of Martin Eden, Jack London suggests that Nietzsche’s ideas may destroy a person. The plot and characters in *Martin Eden* can be observed to mirror aspects of Jack London’s own life. For example, the protagonist’s journey as a sailor is similar to Jack London’s experiences at sea, and Martin Eden’s close friend, Russ Brissenden, resembles Jack London’s real-life close friend, the American poet George Sterling.

Martin Eden’s two sisters, Gertrude and Marian, are based on Jack London’s stepsisters, Eliza and Ida. Jack London often recalls his very affectionate sister, Eliza, from his childhood. The author also portrays Martin Eden as coming from an ordinary family and striving to become an ideal person, much like himself. They both achieve fame and success through hard work and perseverance.

By passing through the following four stages, the protagonist achieves spiritual maturity and is shaped into a mature individual in society.

1. The protagonist endures hardships to become an ideal person in his future life. For example, in *Uzbek classical literature*, the works of Navoi play an important role

in the spiritual development of the younger generation. In his works, respecting parents, teachers, and the elderly, acquiring knowledge, being a person of good morals, and staying away from evil – these are all issues addressed that are undoubtedly closely linked to the idea of the impeccable person, which has been an aspiration in all eras.

Thus, Jack London's *Martin Eden* characterizes the protagonist's growing up without parents, which is a characteristic feature of *bildungsroman* novels.

2. The protagonist faces obstacles in his life, or he suffers from strong emotional distress. For example, growing up without parents and realizing the hardships of life, Martin Eden faces many trials and challenges.

3. Travel or adventures also serve as an important poetic device for the protagonist to learn many things, gain experience, and be prepared for any dire events. In Jack London's *The Road*, the writer's portrayal of his wanderings on freight trains, living in hardship, helps lay the foundation for his development into a mature individual in society.

4. Conflicts and disagreements – sometimes, characters in a literary work make mistakes, and these mistakes lead to a turning point in their life. For example, in Jack London's *Martin Eden*, the conflict between Martin Eden and the young reporter can be an example of this principle.

In order to gain popularity among newspaper editors, the young reporter comes to Martin Eden's home and starts taking pictures of him. Martin, in a fit of anger, grabs the reporter by the collar and throws him onto the bed. Then the reporter publishes an article in the newspaper, presenting Martin as a "public enemy." It is suggested that Martin Eden had been spreading propaganda that poisoned the minds of the people. The reporter sarcastically informs the public about Martin's revolutionary works. The reporter even takes care to describe Martin's room in fine detail. In the newspaper, the reporter describes Martin as "Martin Eden– completely lazy, unwilling to work even when offered respectable office jobs."

CONCLUSION. The moral growth of the characters and their maturation into complete individuals defines the artistic quality of the writer's work.¹

Jack London, like his protagonist, believed that anyone could become a cultured person through education, and he frequently visited the public library in Oakland. To enhance the artistic quality of his works within the *bildungsroman* genre, Jack London focuses on the gradual psychological changes of the protagonist. For example, the author seeks to convey the character's mental state by describing their outward appearance.

¹ <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-a-bildungsroman-definition-and-examples-of-bildungsroman-in-literature#the-history-of-the-bildungsroman>

In bildungsroman works, a character's thoughts, actions, and relationships with others evolve over time. The writer strives to depict these changes in the protagonist's psyche as natural and believable for the reader. The character's psychological and spiritual growth may gradually change in an evolutionary manner throughout the story.

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