

On Space Narrative and American Dream in Martin Eden

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Abstract : Martin Eden tells about the tragedy of the protagonist Martin Eden's suicide after his disillusion about American dream. The author Jack London presents various spatial routines of Martin Eden and reveals the involvement of space in realizing American dream: on the one hand, the Berkeley and Oakland cities contribute to Martin's material success, making his American dream practical, and on the other hand, the two cities involve in the oppression of bourgeoisie ideology to Martin, promoting the domestic imperialization of bourgeoisie ideology represented by American dream. Molded by bourgeoisie ideology in the city, Martin constructed the oriental South Sea, revealing the oversea imperialization of bourgeoisie ideology behind American dream. By exploring the social, historical and political aspects of space, Martin Eden tries to demonstrate the mere material success and imperialism represented by American dream, revealing the fact of the involvement of American dream ideological oppression. When Jack London wrote Martin Eden, he had become a famous writer and realized his personal "American dream". He integrated his struggle experience into the protagonist Martin Eden, and also put his critique of the nature of "American dream" in the novel. The concept of the "American Dream" made the United States the land of dreams, and it also made many Americans believe that through personal struggle, they could climb the social ladder. Under the context of rapid growth in economy in the late 19th century, American dream was reduced to the satisfaction on a material level. When material wealth was fulfilled, many people felt shattered for a variety of reasons, and such a phenomenon was reflected in the literature of disillusionment in 19th-century America. Martin Eden is such a work about disillusion, in which the geographical space becomes the witness of the realization and disillusionment of the protagonist Martin's "American dream". By analyzing the spatial narrative in Martin Eden, this paper reveals that the "American dream" only represents material success for individuals and the imperialization of capitalist ideology, and exposes the ideological nature of the "American Dream".

Keywords : Martin Eden, space, American dream, ideology of imperialism

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