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PRESENCE OF MORAL VALUES ACCORDING TO SHANT

***Аннотация:** в статье говорится о моральных и педагогических взглядах Левона Шанта. Персонажи Шанта жертвуют собой и своим личным счастьем ради моральных принципов, подтверждая победу самопожертвования и моральных ценностей. Шант создал персонажи, обладающие пылкой страстью, как мечта о добродетели и красоте.*

***Ключевые слова:** Левон Шант, нравственность, ценности, эгоизм, любовь.*

***Abstract:** resume: the article enlightens the moral and pedagogical views of Levon Shant. Shant's characters sacrifice themselves and their personal happiness for the sake of moral principles, confirming the victory of self-sacrifice and its moral values. Shant created characters possessed by fervent passion as a dream of virtue and beauty.*

***Keywords:** Levon Shant, morality, values, selfishness, love.*

Throughout centuries Armenian Literature was a source of unique examples of beauty, light, struggle and love, becoming a plea of the world's spirit. Among the greatest personalities in the history of millennium a special place is given to Levon Shant – a thinker and an artist, who mastered the art of exposing the mysteries of existence and life, deeply penetrating into a man's inner world. The artist who considers the beauty of illusion to be of primary importance, reveals the feelings of love and self-sacrifice, the power of human beauty as a victory of virtue and perfection, moral values over cruel reality.

From the beginning of the 19th century enlightenment, education and school problems were in the centre of attention of Armenian intellectuals, writers and publicists.

Talented publicist-pedagogues Khoren Stepane, Ghazaros Aghayan, Sedrak Mandinyan, Petros Shanshyan and others had a huge contribution to the creation of Armenian text-books, to the development of school programs, to the upbringing with the Armenian spirit, national self-conscience and moral values.

The biographer of Levon Shant – literary critic Grigor Shahinyan speaks on Shant's pedagogical activity and personally compiled educational manuals in the chapter entitled as «Three destinations» from his book «Riding the horses» [3, p. 231–232]. The writer, who was educated at the prominent schools of Skyutar, Echmiadzin, then at the universities of Leipzig, Vienna, Munich and Paris, applied his vast knowledge at the schools of Rhodesto, Shamakhi, Yerevan, Alexandria and Cairo. His priority problem becomes the idea of creating Armenian cultural centre in Diaspora. His main subject is the idea of creating an Armenian cultural center in one of the Armenian-populated centers of the Diaspora. Together with Nikol Aghbalyan he establishes a national college and becomes its surveyor. More than twenty years are given to the pedagogical activity which allows a closer study of the pupils' psychology and peculiarities of upbringing, which he includes in his text-books on the study of mother tongue. «Starting from the first days after the establishment of the school, – writes G. Shahinyan, – Levon Shant dedicated himself to the creation of the text-books. He subsequently printed manuals on grammar... It was a series of text-books for secondary schools, consisting of 18 volumes, which could satisfy all the needs of the latter» [3, p. 231–232]. In this regard, the «Lusaber» text-book, created and innovated together with Hovhannes Tumanyan and Stepan Lisitsyan is also invaluable, although it undergoes severe criticism on the part of «Mshak», because of the well-known feud between «Mshak» and «Hasker». The talented writer's pedagogical views are represented in the valuable work called «The Pedagogy», whereas his views on psychoanalysis, philosophy and national values of the Armenian people are summarized in the manual «Psychology». His profound knowledge of the Armenian language, the Armenian people and the common history with which he was distinguished in the years of teaching at the Poghosian Armenian School in Alexandria helped him to achieve perfection while creating the manuals. 18 text-books periodically printed by «The

Communal Armenian Educational and Cultural Union» are designed for pupils of different age groups – pre-school, the first four grades of elementary school, secondary school. Noteworthy are the following text-books – «The Alphabet», «The Chrestomathy» (consisting of four books), «Children's world» (four books), «Written Lessons» (four books), «Motherland» (four books), «The Grammar of The Western Armenian» (four books), «Armenian word formation and emotional weapons of the language» and others, the content of which is represented in theoretical and methodological directions.

Shant's pedagogical and moral views are represented in «Durseciner» novel, the heroes of which came to Constantinople from different regions of Western Armenia. Bagrat initiated an intense activity in Constantinople. He was trying to improve the processes of studying and upbringing, to reduce the lessons on religion and to provide more time for exact sciences. He opens a Sunday school for crafts youth, programs to publish a magazine for children. But soon he encounters persistent resistance of the high class and the clergy and is deprived of his job. Bagrat's educational programs are opposed by Vasak, who denies administrative and state institutions, family traditions and upbringing as institutions which constrain human individuality. Actions and fight contributing to the success of others is a necessity for Bagrat, the meaning of life. Vasak's image is used to condemn selfishness and empty arrogance.

Literary critic Anzhela Qaloyan rightly notices that like Nar-Dos's Mouracan, Shat was also the follower of Kant's morality and, in fact, he was following the Stoic view of happiness. He pictures his heroes in the interconnection of personal happiness and perception of obligations and in a purely intellectual way to confirm the inevitability of the universal moral law. Kant rejected the principle of personal happiness considering it to be fictitious. «Among all the empirical principles it is the principle of personal happiness that should first and foremost be excluded. This principle is false in itself. Experience excludes the idea that good behavior allegedly always leads towards happiness. Eventually, the principle of happiness doesn't contribute to the creation of morality in any way». Then, the philosopher adds, "[2, p. 176]. All the principles which burst out of the principle of happiness are empirical. But, according to Kant,

empirical principles are not suitable for serving as a basis for the moral laws» [1, p. 330].

Thus, Kant's ethics leads to the revelation of «the law of moral will», which rejects «the heteronomy of voluntary choice», subjecting it to the «moral autonomy». Here, Kant exposes the principle of morality, the law of duty. As far as the human being is exposed to the order of his conscience, thus, in all his deeds he shouldn't forget his submissiveness to it. «Obligation. You are the highest, the greatest word, there is nothing in you that pleases those who are romantic, even for waking up the will... You only define the law, which penetrates into the soul... All the intentions become deaf before you, even if they oppose you secretly» [2, p. 177]. Generally speaking, Kant, as great thinker, had a substantial influence on the Armenian pedagogical thought, which based the elaboration of its upbringing systems on Kant's moral education.

This phenomenon is also visible in Shant's works. If we bring the ideological-aesthetic layers of Shant's works to a common statement, the writer's prevailing morality becomes obvious. It is an analysis of the causes and consequences of the «natural man» distortion, by which Shant reacts in his own way to the modern theories of «human perspective», which became a major problem for other important personalities of Vernatun, such as Aghayan, Demirchyan, Toumanyanyan, Isahakyan, Aghbalyan.

Tertiaryan evaluates Shant's revelation from the point of view of a literary movement. «A huge upheaval has taken place in our literature, – wrote Tertaryan. – The early «literary school» almost pushed backwards the woman and the love. As far as he was mainly worried about the social issues, the new «literary school» puts the woman and the love on the foreground and pictures a human being indulged in himself, in his own inner feelings» [6, p. 4].

In his first narratives Shant tends to establish the eternal harmony of man and nature, which is one of the famous ideas of romanticism. The young hero of «The Girl From the Mountains» poem was inspired by the beauty of nature and the insatiable beauties of the world wake up inside the young fellow. «The attendance and communication with European Universities on natural and social studies become substantial signals for the formation of Shant's world outlook. And firstly, they form the

pessimistic apprehension of moral decay and psychological changes of human selfishness. The selfish person comes forward, dividing moral values according to the sensuality of his lifestyle. According to the same viewpoint, female characters reveal new shades. In the selfish instincts of the environment, Siran's dreams of being a woman, of searching for personal happiness are neutralized, and she embraces the ghost of the eternally lost happiness («The Man of Selfishness»). If in these two dramas a woman is pictured in the sphere of the involuntary influence of circumstances, then in «On The Road» drama the phenomenon is a tragic solution to the psychological inner struggle. These biological instincts, which arise in the female cells of Mary, embrace the dominant existential meaning of a woman towards all kinds of moral values» [2, p. 201].

In «For Somebody else» drama all the care fell on the shoulders of the humble and selfless daughter. Siran was the only hope for her old Father, sisters and brother. It was only the father who valued his daughter who was carrying the family weight on her shoulders and advised her to go to the village for several days to have some rest. But her unemployed and sycophant brother considers it to be an act of selfishness and an obstacle to the realization of his plans. Based on the sycophant character of this young fellow Shant condemns selfishness. Siran's self-sacrifice reaches extremes – loving someone else, she unwillingly promises to get married to a man who withholds his love with helpless poverty.

In this respect extremely noticeable is «The Woman» novelette. Characters of different professions perceive various phenomena in an opposite way and react to the world accordingly. Medical profession allows Margaret to recognize the world by rational knowledge of natural sciences, whereas Souren, the artist, owing to his profession has to dwell into the inner world of a person. Therefore, if for Margaret it was worship of work that was valuable together with the faith in loyalty and self-sacrifice, optimism towards the future, then for the artist, who was going through personal crisis, a person was a miserable minority stuck to the ground. The young artist who is bored and despondent in his creative work loses the creative pleasure and comes to the idea that men and animals are identical, but with the help of intimate conversations with the clever and charming girl he liberates himself of the influences of Nietzsche, suppresses

mental numbness and man once again raises in his eyes with his pure beauty through the image of Margaret who is filled with optimism towards the future. The vestal fulfills her mission till the end. She reveals to Souren the miraculous force of creation, which makes one create, search for the beauty, move forward. «Simply living is malicious for you, your only vocation is work. The moment you feel your mental tension reduce, it is vulgarity that will start appearing around you. You shouldn't give yourself to vulgarity, you should always strive higher and higher, from one horizon to another, making greater efforts. Your soul is the endless strive, your utmost beauty, the best side of your spirits. Draw your strive, your thirst, your disruptions, our dreams...» [4, p. 336].

Shant reveals a new quality inside a woman – a woman as a friend, inspiration, intimate person, advisor.

Shant touches upon this ethic statement in «The Thirsty Souls» novel. The family of Ashot Nuryan and Arpik is based on love and fidelity. It seems as if nothing can get in the way of the happiness and peace of this family. But life puts the love of Ashot Nuryan and Nora to trial, mentally testing the ethics of family and morality. «Psychological transitions are based on a triple action of the beginning, the process and the ending of the action, – writes A. Qaloyan, – which give a complete shape to the parts of the novel – «The New Intimacy», «The Winged Interference», «The Old Rights». It seems that the souls striving for love and happiness should be united by the irresistible call of the nature, however, common sense wins over the weakness of the will and by the choice of destiny «The Old Rights» remain imperishable. This is exactly like the ethic choice of Nar-Dos's characters» [2, p. 207]. With the victory of common sense and for the sake of moral principles they sacrifice their personal happiness in the name of the victory of selflessness and self-sacrifice of moral values. «Why do I care about someone else's family nest? – says Nora refusing from an immoral deed. The same moral values are demonstrated by Rita, Oshin Payl, Hanna and other characters of Shant» [5, p. 272–273].

Shant is one of the unique artists whose views were formed in two different environments – Armenian and European realities. It's most likely that the influence of the

second environment has been more decisive in forming the writer's outlook, philosophical and ethical perceptions.

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