THE CONCEPT OF CONFLICT AND THE CLASSIFICATION OF LITERARY HEROES IN FRENCH LITERARY MOVEMENTS

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Abstract: *This article analyzes the evolution of the typology of the hero and the concept of conflict within the framework of the main movements of French literature - classicism, romanticism, realism, naturalism and modernism. The aesthetic principles of each literary movement, the structure of the hero's image and the specific aspects of the formation of conflict are shown through examples. A comparative analysis is carried out using tables, and the typology of the main literary heroes and conflict models are systematically summarized. The article is intended for students, graduate students and researchers in the field of literary studies studying French literature.*

Key words: *French literature, literary movements, hero typology, concept of conflict, classicism, romanticism, realism, naturalism, modernism.*

INTRODUCTION

French literature is one of the richest and most diverse strata of world literature. During the literary process that has continued from the 17th century

to the present day, a number of major movements have been formed: classicism, enlightenment literature, romanticism, realism, naturalism and modernism. Each movement is unique in its aesthetic principles, attitude to the world and human nature, and methods of creating the image of the hero.

By the typology of the hero, we understand the sum of the social, psychological and philosophical characteristics of a literary hero, his function in the work and the ideological and aesthetic load assigned to him by the author. Conflict, on the other hand, represents the driving force of any literary work - a sharp contrast between the hero and the world around him, society, nature or himself.

This article provides a comparative analysis of the typology of the hero and the specific features of the concept of conflict in the works of the main representatives of French literary movements. A typical hero model and conflict structure for each movement are identified and substantiated through examples.

The methodological basis of the research is the methods of comparative-historical and structural-semiotic analysis. The main sources used are textbooks and monographs of French literature of the 17th–20th centuries, as well as critical articles.

DISCUSSION

Classicism, which emerged in France in the 17th century, took as its aesthetic basis the examples of antiquity, especially Aristotle's Poetics. Rationalism, adherence to order and rules were characteristic of this movement, and the influence of Descartes' philosophy was also noticeable in literature. The most important characteristic of the hero of classicism is the victory of reason and duty over sensual feelings.

In classicist tragedies, the hero is usually drawn from the ranks of aristocrats or mythological figures. They must remain loyal to the concepts of state and duty, which are above personal interest. In the works of Corneille[1] and Racine[2], this opposition constitutes the central conflict.

Table 1. Hero types and conflict forms in classicist dramaturgy:

Hero type	Features	The main conflict	Sample work
Tragic hero	Noble, spiritual, devoted to duty	Emotion vs. Duty	Cornelius, "The Sid" (1637)
Passionate hero	Caught between love and power	Personal happiness vs. State	Racine, "Phedre" (1677)
Comedic hero	Representing moral defects	Fake vs. Truth	Molière, "Tartuffe" (1664)
Lifetime hero	A typical representative of his time	Individual vs. Community Norm	Molière, "The Misanthrope" (1666)

In classicism, conflict is mainly expressed in the form of internal - psychological conflict. The hero is torn between his feelings and socio-political obligations. In Corneille's "The Cid", Rodrigo kills the father of his love, Ximena, because it was necessary to restore his family honor. This is a classic French dramatic conflict between duty and love.

[1] Corneille, P. (1637). Le Cid: Tragi-comédie. Paris: Augustin Courbé
[2] Racine, J. (1677). Phèdre: Tragédie. Paris: Claude Barbin

In Racine's Phaedra, the conflict becomes even more complex: Phaedra falls in love with her stepson, which represents a sharp contrast between moral standards and natural instinct. From the perspective of classicism, this impurity is interpreted as a deviation of man from the divine order.

In the first half of the 19th century, the Romantic movement, which spread throughout France, emerged as a direct opposition to the values of classicism. For Romanticism, the freedom of the individual, the boundlessness of feelings, and the aspiration to nature were important. French Romanticism reached its peak in the works of Vugo, Lamartine, Musset, and Chateaubriand.

The Romantic hero is often portrayed as a lone rebel on the fringes of society, fighting against it. He is like an misunderstood genius or a person rejected by society. Byron's influence is also evident in French Romanticism - the concept of the "*Byronistic*" hero has become firmly established in literary criticism.

Table 2. Typology of the hero in French Romanticism:

Type	Signs	Example	Author
Rebel hero	Anti-social, freedom-seeking, rebellious	Hugo - Don Carlos in "Ernani".	Victor Hugo
Unrecognized genius	An artist who is not accepted by his surroundings	The image of Rolla from "Gorno"	Alfred de Musset
Historical reformer	Fighter for the people's freedom	Hugo - Heroes of "93"	Victor Hugo
Child of nature	A man of pure nature, escaping	Rene of Chateaubriand	Chateaubriand

	civilization		
Tragicomic lyrical hero	In the conflict of love and bitter disappointment	Musset's "Game of Thrones"	Alfred de Musset

In Romanticism, the conflict is not only internal, but also global. The hero as an individual confronts the entire civilization, social system, or cosmic order. Victor Hugo's drama "*Cromwell*" (1827)[3] and its "*Preface*" became a manifesto of romantic aesthetics: it rejected the rule of three unities of classicism and called for the depiction of a broad picture of life in drama.

The main types of romantic conflict are: social conflict between the individual and society; metaphysical confrontation of the individual and fate; eternal struggle between feelings and reason; internal division resulting from the inability of the individual to achieve his ideal. These four types of conflict often intertwine in one work, creating a complex multi-layered dramatic structure.

The second half of the 19th century saw the rise of realism in French literature. Stendhal, Balzac, and Flaubert are prominent figures in this movement. The realist hero is no longer a romantic rebel who thinks about the sky and stars, but an ordinary person living in a specific social environment, shaped and defined by that environment.

Honoré de Balzac's collection of works, The Human Comedy, depicts all levels of society, different people, in more than a hundred works. For Balzac, the hero is primarily a social type - a representative of a certain class,

[3] Hugo, V. (1827). Cromwell: Drame. Paris: A. Mie

profession, or psychological type. In *Father Goriot* (1835)[4], the hero, as an ordinary father who sacrifices his life for his children, brings to life the conflict between blind love and self-interest in society.

Table 3. Hero types and social conflict in realist literature:

Hero type	Social background	Main conflict	Sample from the work
Ambitious young man	Lower/middle class	Aspiration vs. Morality	Stendhal "The Red and the Black" - Julien Sorel
The dying bourgeois	Middle class	Dream vs. Reality	Flaubert's "Madame Bovary" — Emma Bovary
Victim of wealth	High class	Father's love vs. Child's infidelity	Balzac "Father Gorio" - Father Gorio
Predatory businessman	Financial aristocracy	Self-interest vs. Humanity	Balzac "Gobseck" — Gobseck
Socially illegal	Outside the law	Freedom vs. The Rule of Law	Hugo's "Les Miserables" - Jean Valjean

Stendhal brought psychological depth to French realism. His novel The Red and the *Black* (1830)[5] centers on Julien Sorel, a talented, ambitious, but socially inferior young man who is torn between two paths to achieve his dreams: military (red) and religious (black) careers.

[4] de Balzac, H. (1835). Le Père Goriot. Paris: Werdet et Spachmann
[5] Stendhal (1830). Le Rouge et le Noir: Chronique du XIXe siècle. Paris: Levasseur

Stendhal's theory of "crystallization" in his "De l'amour" (1822) is crucial to understanding the psychology of the realistic hero: the hero "crystallizes" his own image of the person he loves and loses sight of the real person. Julien Sorel also constructs his love through this prism, ultimately reaching a tragic conclusion.

Gustave Flaubert, in his novel Madame Bovary (1857)[6], opened a new chapter in realist literature by creating the character of Emma Bovary, a woman who is destroyed by the unbearable contrast between her romantic upbringing and middle-class life. The simple and ordinary life that Emma lives is completely at odds with the ideals of the novels she read.

Flaubert's model of conflict is more universal: it is not just Emma's conflict, but the eternal difference between human dreams and real life. This situation has entered literary criticism with the term "Bauvarism" - the idea of a person as different, more sublime, and the discrepancy between this idea and reality.

Naturalism was founded in France by Émile Zola, and his collection *Rougon-Macquart* (1871–1893)[7] was the main example of this movement. For naturalism, man is a product not only of his social environment, but also of heredity and biological laws. Zola put forward a theory of the experimental novel, inspired by the physiology of Claude Bernard.

The naturalistic hero is depicted as an organism that has no freedom. His character is predetermined, first of all, by hereditary factors and social environment. This approach completely eliminates the free rebellious image of the hero of Romanticism. The human will is not the decisive factor in the

[6] Flaubert, G. (1857). Madame Bovary: Mœurs de province. Paris: Michel Lévy frères
[7] Zola, É. (1880). Le Roman expérimental. Paris: Charpentier

conflict, but is only a gurgling argument in the game of circumstances and heredity.

Table 4. Hero types in Zola's collection "Rougon-Macquart":

Novel	Hero	Hereditary/Social factor	Main conflict
Germinal (1885)	Etienne Lanthier	Heredity of alcoholism, mining class	Labor vs. Capital, Class Struggle
Nana (1880)	Nana Coupe	A woman from a dirty environment	Sexual instinct vs. societal morality
Gervaise (1877)	Gervaise Maskard	Poverty and genetic vulnerability	Struggle for survival vs. Alcohol
Ilya (1877)	Dupont House	Hereditary connection to the earth	The struggle for land, family conflict
The Human Beast (1890)	Jacques Lantier	The Inheritance of the Killer Instinct	Intrinsic Evil vs. Human Feeling

The conflict in naturalism is based on the principle of determinism: the hero cannot resolve his conflict because he is a victim of his own fate. In Germinal, Étienne Lantier organizes a miners' strike - this class struggle has a strong symbolic content. However, in the end, the strike is suppressed, and Étienne is forced to leave the coal mines.

For Zola, conflict is not resolved, it only atrophies or takes on a different form. At the end of "*Germinal*"[8] it is expressed that new revolutionary forces

[8] Zola, É. (1885). Germinal. Paris: Charpentier

are growing like seeds under the ground - this became a kind of bridge between naturalism and socialism. In naturalistic works, social conflict is seen through the filter of determinism: the system triumphs over the hero.

RESULTS

At the beginning of the 20th century, the modernist movement took shape in France. Under the influence of the philosophy of Marcel Proust, André Gide, and Henri Bergson, a new model of the hero emerged - this hero was no longer a specific social type, but a subject lost in the labyrinths of consciousness and memory. For modernism, the internal psychological world, not the external world, was important.

In Marcel Proust's novel In Search of Lost Time (1913–1927), the protagonist Marcel explores the phenomena of time and memory by recovering his childhood memories. The novel introduced the stream-of-consciousness technique to French literature: the plot develops not linearly, but through association and emotion.

Table 5. Hero types in French modernism and existentialism:

Author	Hero	Main topic	Type of conflict
Marcel Proust	Marcel (hero of memory)	Time, memory, art	Past vs. Present
André Gide	Michel (Free Man)	Freedom, moral restraint	Individual freedom vs. Community morality
Albert Camus	Meresault (stranger)	Absurdity, the meaninglessness of life	Person vs. Absurd World
Jean-Paul	Roquentin	Existence, freedom,	Burden of Freedom vs.

Sartre	(Disgusting)	responsibility	Denial
Simone de Beauvoir	French female heroes	Gender equality, self-affirmation	Women's Liberation vs. Patriarchy

In the 1940s and 1950s, French existentialist literature, led by Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre, developed a unique model of the hero. This hero is someone who has come to realize the meaninglessness (absurdity) of life but continues to struggle. In Camus's The Stranger (1942), Meursault is a character who is unable to express human emotions and is disconnected from the world.

In Sartre's Nausea (1938), the protagonist Roquentin feels the physical disgust of existence—this existential "nausea" represents the excess of existence. For Sartre, the conflict is metaphysical: man is "condemned to existence" and must take full responsibility for making his life meaningful.

In French literary movements, the following evolutionary path of the hero typology and the concept of conflict can be traced: in the 17th century, the hero of classicism was torn between duty and emotion, while in the 19th century, romanticism expanded this contradiction and made the hero rebel against society and the cosmic order. In the second half of the 19th century, realism and naturalism turned the hero into a product of social determinism. In the 20th century, modernism and existentialism brought the hero into absolute subjectivity, into the labyrinths of consciousness.

Table 6. Comparative view of the concept of hero and conflict in French literary movements:

Literary stream	Hero model	Type of conflict	Solution	Periodical representative

Classicism	Aristocrat, noble person	Duty vs. Emotion	Victory of duty	Cornell, Racine
Romanticism	A rebel, a solitary individual	Individual vs. Society/Fate	Tragic, unsolvable	Hugo, Mussée
Realism	Social type	Dream vs. Reality/Environment	Fragmentation/Failure	Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert
Naturalism	Victim of determinism	Heredity vs. Free Will	The hero loses.	Zola
Modernism	Subject of consciousness, antihero	Memory vs. Now; Absurd	Understanding, acceptance	Proust, Camus, Sartre

The table shows that the main trend in the evolution of the hero and conflict in French literary movements is the movement from the outside inward, from the social to the individual-psychological world. While the hero of classicism is embodied mainly in external socio-moral conflict, the hero of modernism is completely internal, in the whirlpool of problems related to consciousness and identity. This evolution reflects the transformation not only of the literary style, but also of the entire European worldview and understanding of man.

CONCLUSION

A comparative analysis of French literary movements shows that the typology of the hero and the concept of conflict represent two inseparable aspects. Each new literary movement was formed as a reaction to the hero

model of its predecessor: romanticism opposed the rationalism of classicism, realism opposed romantic idealization, and naturalism opposed the fallacy of realistic psychologism.

An important methodological conclusion is that conflict is not only a mechanism for plot movement, but also an expression of the author's fundamental attitude towards man and his freedom. In classicism, man is free, but must submit to duty; in romanticism, man is free and rebellious; in realism, man is constrained by determinism; and in modernism, man is free, but this freedom is a heavy burden.

In modern French literature, the current of the "new novel" (Robbe-Grillet, Sarrot, Simon), the concept of the traditional hero was further disrupted: the "pronoun" hero appeared, deprived of his own name, history and psychology. This trend also served to express the conflict in a new way - now as a gap between human identification and real existence.

By studying French literary movements, we gain an understanding not only of literary history, but also of Europe's intellectual and cultural development, and of the centuries-long dialogue about human values and the meaning of life.

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