

**COMPARING THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THE WORKS OF
VICTOR HUGO NOTRE DAME DE PARIS AND FREDERIC STENDHAL
RED AND BLACK**

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Annotation: This article provides a comparative analysis of Victor Hugo's novels "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" and Frédéric Stendhal's "The Red and the Black." It examines the works' artistic nature, their genre characteristics, socio-historical context, types of conflict, protagonists, and the role of fate and social environment. Particular attention is paid to the differences in the artistic methods of Romanticism and Realism, revealing profound differences in the authors' views on humanity and society. The analysis reveals that, despite their temporal proximity and shared European themes, both novels explore the theme of individuality, freedom, and tragic confrontation with the world differently. Hugo strives to depict human destiny within a Romantic model of the world, while Stendhal explores the real social structure and psychological motivations of the protagonist's behavior.

Key words: Victor Hugo, Stendhal, romanticism, realism, social conflict, personality, fate, artistic method, European literature of the 19th century.

Introduction

The 19th century was a period of intense development in French literature, in which various artistic movements—Romanticism, Realism, and Critical Psychology—coexisted and interacted. Victor Hugo and Frédéric Stendhal represent two distinct literary poles: Hugo, one of the greatest Romantics, whose works are alive with powerful passions, symbols, and destinies; Stendhal, a prominent precursor and founder of the realistic psychological novel, explored the social laws of 19th-century France.

The novels "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" (1831) and "The Red and the Black" (1830) appeared almost simultaneously, yet belong to different artistic worlds. Comparing them allows for a deeper understanding of the literary evolution of France and the mechanisms of personality representation in an era of social change.

1. Genre nature of the works

Hugo creates a romantic historical novel that blends real history with a powerful layer of symbolism. The history of 15th-century France in the novel serves as a backdrop for exploring timeless themes—fate, sin, love, and human tragedy.

Stendhal, on the other hand, writes a socio-psychological realistic novel that captures the spirit of the Restoration era. His work can be called a "chronicle of modern times": the events are as close to reality as possible, social laws are depicted accurately, and the psychological motif dominates artistic embellishment.

Main genre differences:

- Hugo has a clearly expressed romantic conventionality and symbolism,
 - Stendhal has analytical quality, precision, documentary quality, and psychological depth.
- Thus, the genre nature determines the artistic method, the type of hero, and the logic of the narrative.

2. Socio-historical context

Although the novels take place in different eras, both authors depict societies at turning points.

In Hugo:

15th-century Paris is a city of social contradictions: poverty, the harshness of medieval laws, the power of the church and the mob. The historical setting emphasizes the tragic fate of the characters, who find themselves in a cruel environment where individuality is easily suppressed by the system.

In Stendhal:

Restoration France is a society of strict social hierarchy, where birth is more important than talent and personal qualities. Stendhal depicts real social struggle, careerism, and hypocrisy—the traits that define Julien Sorel's fate.

Common features between the novels:

- the heroes encounter rigid social structures,
- the individual finds himself under pressure from fate or social attitudes,
- society acts as a force that determines the tragic outcome.

The difference is that in Hugo the social environment is the backdrop for a romantic tragedy, while in Stendhal it is the driving mechanism of the plot and psychological conflict.

3. Images of the main characters

3.1. Quasimodo and Esmeralda

Hugo's heroes embody romantic contrasts: beauty and ugliness, purity and passion, sacrifice and crime. They are symbols, bearers of the author's philosophy. Their destinies are determined by external forces—fate, mob rule, religious taboos.

Quasimodo is the image of a tragic eccentric whose inner world belies his appearance. Esmeralda represents innocence and purity, doomed to destruction by human obscurantism.

3.2. Julien Sorel

Julien is a typical hero of a realistic novel, a man of the people striving to change his position in society. He is not a symbol, but a living personality with conflicting motivations. His fate is shaped not by fate or mysticism, but by:

- social laws,
- own ambitions,
- internal conflicts.

Similarities and differences

General:

- the heroes are tragic: they all die or suffer failure;
- their destinies are determined by external forces.

Differences:

- Hugo's heroes are romantic symbols,
- Stendhal's hero is a real person with psychological depth.

Julien Sorel dies from the conflicts of his own personality, while Hugo's heroes die from the inevitability of fate.

4. Conflicts and their artistic interpretation

In Hugo:

The main conflict is man's struggle with fate and society. Medieval laws, fanaticism, and superstition create a wall between the heroes and happiness. The conflict is cosmic in scale and tinged with fatalism.

In Stendhal:

The conflict is social and psychological. Julien is torn between desires and reality, between careerism and feelings, between ambition and honesty. A society devoid of genuine morality fractures the individual from within.

Comparison:

- Hugo has a tragedy of fate.
- Stendhal has a tragedy of character.

Julien's death is the result of his desire to overcome social barriers, while Esmeralda's death and Quasimodo's death are the result of the cruelty of the medieval world.

5. The role of love in novels

In Hugo:

Love is the main driving force of the plot:

- Quasimodo loves Esmeralda selflessly and sacredly,
- Frollo is demonic and destructive,
- The poet Gringoire - platonically.

Love here is tragic, symbolic, and inevitably leads to death.

In Stendhal:

Love is psychological and social. Julien experiences emotions mixed with ambition. His relationships with Madame de Rênal and Mathilde are simultaneously emotional and pragmatic.

Difference:

- For Hugo, love is an absolute value;
- In Stendhal, it is part of the social and psychological struggle.

6. Artistic methods

Hugo's Romanticism:

- bright contrasts,
- symbolism,
- emotionality,
- mysticism and fatalism,
- elevated style and expression,
- architecture as a metaphor for human destiny.

Stendhal's realism:

- precision of parts,
- social analysis,
- the hero's inner speech,
- psychological motives,
- an objective view of society.

Stendhal explores the real structure of the world, Hugo creates an artistic universe full of symbols.

Conclusion.

The novels of Victor Hugo and Stendhal, published almost simultaneously, demonstrate two opposing approaches to the depiction of man and the world.

Hugo created a majestic romantic tragedy in which the fate of the heroes is determined by forces beyond human capacity. His work is symbolic, figurative, and emotional.

Stendhal, on the contrary, depicts a reality in which the hero's fate is shaped by social conflicts, personal ambitions, and psychological struggles. His novel is an exploration of society and the human soul.

A comparison of the works reveals the richness of 19th-century French literature and its ability to explore personal tragedy through a variety of artistic methods. Both novels, in their own ways,

reflect on eternal questions: what is the meaning of life, what are the limits of freedom, and how can an individual resist society and fate?

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