

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND IN THE NOVEL "JEAN CAVALIER" AND ITS ACTUAL RELIABILITY

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### ANNOTATION

The paper finds the historical basis of Eugene Sue's novel "Jean Cavalier, or the Fanatics of the Cevennes" and analyzes its factual authenticity. The novel is based on such events as the Protestant uprising in the Cevennes region in the early 18th century, known as the Camisard Uprising, and the fate of Jean Cavalier, one of the leaders of this struggle. Attention is paid to accuracy in depicting historical facts, as well as to Eugene Sue's choice of historical themes that reflect a social and controversial era. Special attention is paid to displaying artistic depictions of events with historical sources, as well as analyzing how Eugene Syu adapts real events for dramatic and romantic interpretation. The works analyze the role of historical authenticity in the creation of characters' images, their motivation and attitude to the perception of the novel as historical works, as well as as a novel.

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The national identity of the French historical novel manifested itself in the close intertwining of the political problem and the moral problem, since "the historical novel was supposed not only to recreate the past, but also to point out the ways of further social development."

Depicting the deep conflicts of the epochs, Vigny, Hugo, Balzac and Merimet attached special importance to the problems of the historical responsibility of the individual to society, and human moral behavior. They also worried E. Syu. So, in his novel "Jean Cavalier" (1840), the plot of which covers 1701-1708, reproduces an important historical event — the largest demonstration of the Calvinist peasants of Languedoc in response to the edict of the king, which

actually deprived the Huguenots of all morals. Historians see the national and historical significance of this event in the fact that it largely prepared the Great French Revolution.

By portraying the antagonistic relationship between the government and disadvantaged Protestants, E. Syu focused on the conflict, which was of a pronounced political nature. For the writer, historical conflict "is not only the engine, but also the external center of the plot."

Unlike the novel "Latreumont", E. Syu in "Jean Cavalier" made an attempt to trace not only the fate of individuals, but also the fate of the nation. The contradictions between the government and Protestants caused a civil war. E. Syu argues that the responsibility for the unheard-of repression against Protestants lies with the great king, who "was relentlessly pursued by the fixed idea of eradicating heresy in the kingdom...at the cost of atoning for their own sins." "Firmly seated on the throne in peacetime, Louis XIV offered a blasphemous sacrifice to God.: harmless and oppressed people. The alarm bell of the Great King's St. Bartholomew's Night rang in the Cevennes for eight bloody years."

The novel also reflected a new understanding of the role of the people in the historical event. Indicative in this sense is the scene in which, on the orders of Abbot Shail, a violent persecutor of Protestants, the dead bodies of Cavalier's mother and grandmother are violated. The anger of the people in response to the excesses of Catholics is realistically written out. On their knees, the Protestants, despite the threats, began to sing. "It is impossible to convey the feeling that the majestic and deeply sorrowful sound of the anthem evoked: a multitude of voices, from the weakest, barely audible and trembling to sonorous and strong, merged, creating a calm and threatening harmony. It was the first cry of pain and the muffled indignation of the oppressed people," writes E. Syu, showing solidarity with the disadvantaged Protestants.

On the last pages of the novel, we see the image of a people who have already gone through the brutal trials of war and are confident in the rightness of their cause. Angrily condemning Cavalier's betrayal, the Camisards "promise to fight to the last breath against the oppressors and lay down their arms only when the Edict of Nantes is fully restored." "Their expressions were sad and solemn rather than threatening. Some of the Camisards were elderly, and their gray hair made their swarthy and weathered features look more imposing." The expressive exterior details underline the calm determination of the people to continue the struggle.

As in W. Scott's novel "The Puritans", the people here are an active background. E. Syu divides the Camisards into moderate, civilized, well-to-do peasants and far-left mountain peasants; distinguished by religious fanaticism. Social differentiation in the depiction of the

people goes back to the traditions of W. Scott's historical novel "The Puritans", in which the people are presented as a complex, contradictory whole.

The moderate Protestants in E. Syu's novel did not share the views of the Highlanders, and although at first there were no particular disagreements between the troops, the sophistication of the clothing of the moderate Protestants aroused the contempt of the Highlanders and their leader Ephraim, dressed in animal skins and armed with scythes, axes and knives. The style of action of each army was equally different. Cavalier, with his artisan and petty bourgeois men, waged a more "regular and humane war."

The juxtaposition of the two warring camps, the depiction of their intransigence in the struggle, brings the novel "Jean Cavalier" closer to Merimet's "Chronicle of the Time of Charles IX." This approach contradicts V. Scott's concept, the essence of which was the need to unite the warring parties. The novel "Jean Cavalier" is truly historical, and its nationality is revealed not only in the fact that the writer makes the heroes of his work simple Sevean peasants, but also in the fact that the events of the novel give rise to the life of France in the 17th century.

Along with the demands for religious freedom, Protestant peasants put forward the abolition of extortionate taxes as an indispensable condition for a future world. Thus, paragraph V of the peasants' demands reads: "Residents of the Cevennes, whose houses were destroyed during the war, are exempt from taxes for ten years." It is interesting to note that bourgeois historians wrote about Camisards only as "Martyrs" for the faith, they were only interested in the religious demands of Protestant peasants.

He recognizes the right of peoples to fight, and he sympathizes with the rebels. At the same time, it is impossible not to take into account the contradictions in the views of the writer, which led to a shift in emphasis, especially when portraying the far-left Protestants and their leader, whose fanaticism is sometimes clearly exaggerated. Nevertheless, Protestants appear in the novel as a kind of personification of the era.

The choice of characters in "Jean Cavalier" is determined by different tasks compared to "Latrecocon". The main character is a native of the people, a shepherd of the Sevean foothills, who grew up to be the leader of the Huguenot uprising. Revealing the image of Jean Cavalier, E. Sue explores the psychological aspect of the human movement between good and evil. As Sainte-Beuve rightly points out, "the interpretation of the character of the hero and, in general, the motivation of his actions is the most reliable part of the novel." U E. Syu, unlike V. Scott, a more complex motivation for human actions.

The writer in Jean Cavalier follows the tradition of the "novels of ambition," which analyzed this passion. Thus, in Vigny's novel *Saint-Mar*, the moral rebirth of the hero is connected with the theme of love, which overshadowed what Saint-Mar aspired to, and with the theme of the corrupting atmosphere of the court. The thirst for fame, ambitious dreams of the future, selfish aspirations, and not the dictates of morality lead Cavalier to the path of apostasy, to the path of betrayal. The path chosen by the hero did not become the meaning of his life, the decision was the result of only "sincerity of impulse" at a certain moment, which disappeared under the influence of ambition, the source of immoral acts. With the concept of morality. Syu connects the idea of dignity, of man's responsibility to history and his people. The author strives to show the moral collapse of J. Cavalier. He is disowned by those who recently fought alongside him for a common cause. "Go away," one of the *kamisars* says to his former leader, "the prayers of those who fought alongside you mean nothing to you. So be damned, you traitor to your brothers and religion."

The topic of Cavalier's betrayal is analyzed not only psychologically, but also socially. Ending the war is in the hands of the merchants of Montpellier. War is terrible for them because it does not allow them to make a profit. "Since the war started," one of the merchants cynically declares, "I can't sell leather. People don't come to me from Catalonia or Barcelona anymore. It is said that the plague is raging in the province, all foreigners are fleeing from there, but nevertheless leather is a first necessity. Military and civilian gentlemen wear boots and shoes. Oh! What are the times? Damn heretics!"

Cavalier's moral decline is further emphasized in the scene at the ball, where he was invited by Marshal Villard. The ridicule, the whispering of the overdressed gentlemen made the former leader of the *Camisars* experience a feeling that had never been familiar to him before. Oh, Cavalier thought. — In front of the soldiers of the Marshal of France, I did not blush, but now I cannot look up like a criminal. These despicable people would never dare to laugh in my face if I stood at the head of my *camisards* with a sword in my hand."

Thus, the true value of a person is determined primarily by dedication and development, a sense of duty; Cavalier's individualism is revealed as a destructive principle hostile to his co-religionists. The entire narrative of E. Syu refutes the idea of an individual's claim to individualism, which ultimately leads to isolation and separation from people.

Having carefully considered the main content of the novel, i.e. its ideas and characters, E. Syu changed little in the description of the actions of the real prototype, although the motivation of these actions belongs entirely to the writer.

Revealing the character of J. Cavalier, E. Sue remains faithful to the tradition of opposition. In the camp of the persecuted Huguenots, the leader of the middle strata of the peasantry, Jean Cavalier, is opposed by Ephraim, who leads the Highlanders. Creating the image of Ephraim, Syu constantly highlights the main feature of his character, unbridled fanaticism, which is intentionally exaggerated. The portrait characteristic of Ephraim, which includes unusual features, draws attention to itself: "...His hard, energetic dark-skinned features disappeared under a thick, black, shaggy beard that reached to his eyes and gave him a ferocious appearance. Wide wolfskin ribbon ...She held her long curly hair back. His black, deep-set eyes shone gloomily." Ephraim's terse, but vivid, poetic speech, containing quotations borrowed from the Bible, characterizes him as a man deeply confident in his rightness. According to Sainte-Beuve, this vivid image, full of violent passions, is "conceived very correctly," and "Walter Scott would have subscribed to it."

There is a whole chain of definitions of Ephraim: "wild", "cruel", "kind", "unyielding", "blind and unbridled fanatic", "heroic man". And he really exists, as it were, in all these manifestations, which creates the impression of the inner inconsistency of the peasant leader. E. Syu explains the psychology of Ephraim, his fanaticism and heroism by the peculiarities of his character, the spirit of the era and the circumstances in which he acts. Nevertheless, the author does not deny Ephraim purely human qualities. The scene of his return to the battlefield after the battle is impressive, where the ominous silence was occasionally broken by plaintive moans and the piercing screams of vultures. A stifled cry of pain burst from the chest of the courageous mountaineer; seeing the dead little prophets among the heaped bodies, Ephraim stood motionless for a long time, and "the only tear shed in so many years shone in his hollow eyes."

Ephraim's psychology is thus complex, and his image evokes both horror and sympathy. However, the specificity of recreating the romantic image of a peasant leader lies in his conditioning by the circumstances in which he was placed and the peculiarities of his nature.

A love conflict is connected with the theme of private and personal interest in historical actions, which largely determines the structure of the novel. Cavalier—Isabeau's companion and lover, a peasant girl, is opposed by Columbine named Toanon, who seduced the Camisard leader on behalf of Marshal Villard. The image of a spy in love was quite common in the literature of that time. In particular, in Balzac's *The Chouans*, Mademoiselle de Verneuil played the role of bait for the leader, who was being hunted down by the police. In "Jean Cavalier," Tuanon performs a slightly different function, as he deeply despises the "former shepherd."

The intrigue conceived by E. Syu is not a romantic interpretation of history. It's not that Columbine's beauty made an irresistible impression on the Camisard leader, but that her love for Tuanon comes into conflict with politics. Personal, private interest is opposed in this case to the interest of the cause for which Cavalier fought. The hero's ambition defeated his moral principles. Cavalier's love for Toinon is not always deeply revealed, due to the fact that E. Syu is driven by the desire to show the destructive power of a love affair.

The opposite world is quite widely represented in the novel (Marshal Villar, governor of Languedoc Baviile). Much attention is paid in the preface to the novel to Louis XIV, which reflects the tendency to critically rethink the personality of the great king. Sainte-Beuve, finding significant artistic merit in Jean Cavalier and calling it an "interesting and instructive novel," believed that the accusations against the great monarch in this work were more justified than in Latreaumont. Syu openly condemns the great king for his policy towards Protestants, confirming the justice of the reproaches with the whole course of the narrative. The accusatory beginning testifies to the writer's final rejection of inactivity, although in the early novels E. Syu offered the reader as a hero a certain mystical character with his inherent cynicism and disappointment. The transition of the novelist to the position of social criticism is obvious. Nevertheless, the writer explains the inhumane nature of the king primarily from the point of view of ethics, the hopelessness of the situation, and the persecution of Protestants. Syu considers it only a consequence of the policy of the great king.

Archbishop Shaila is represented in the novel as a rabid royalist: he does not disdain any means to fight the Huguenots. Syu is trying to get into the psychology of a ruthless man for whom questions of humanity meant nothing. According to the author, the actions of the abbot of Sevey were guided by a deep conviction that reformed religion is a poison that needs to be destroyed. And in order to purify the Christian faith from heresy, Abbot Shaila shamelessly destroyed the Huguenots. The scene of the abbot's brutal murder has a moral justification in the novel — it is retribution for the archbishop's atrocities, "the first blood-stained challenge to royal authority."

Thus, E. Syu created the novel from a position of social criticism. Nevertheless, the writer's attitude towards individual representatives of the Royalist camp, in particular, the governor of Languedoc, a well-known persecutor of Protestants, is ambivalent. Baviile's cruel and indomitable temper is somewhat softened, the author tries to present him as a conscientious executor of the will of the great monarch. The image of Baviile is interesting because E. Syu put quite a lot of arguments about politics into the mouth of the implacable intendant of

Languedoc. Baville sees in the Protestants not those "ignorant peasants" who blindly rushed at the royal troops, but worthy opponents. It is characteristic that in the novel the Huguenots are evaluated from various social positions. So, the soldiers of the royal army call them "demons", "sorcerers", "invulnerable", and the bourgeoisie — "cursed", "damned heretics".

Following the traditions of the French historical novel, in which the development of the plot and conflict often coincide, the writer analyzes in detail the political principles of the two contending parties. If the main task of Catholics is to preserve and defend the monarchy at all costs, then Protestants "want to achieve the legitimate right to freedom with weapons in their hands." E. Syu justifies the cruelty of the desperate people, he writes about the peasants as avengers of their brothers, "whose blood flowed like a river." To start an uprising for them means to start "the great grape harvest that has already begun." Subsequently, this image became traditional for the revolutionary democratic literature of France.

The main plot point of the novel was the Battle of Trevize, the most dramatically intense clash of the hostile sides. Balzac considered it the best place in the book, although he reproached Syu for describing military events beyond a certain volume. As an example, Balzac cites a military sketch of Stendhal's "Monastery of Parma": the author did not "undertake a full description of the Battle of Waterloo, he walked through the rearguard and gave two or three episodes depicting the defeat of the Napoleonic army. The last episode proves that the author was aware of this literary danger."

However, unlike Stendhal, E. Syu sought to objectively describe a military battle. It was important for him to show the strategy and tactics of each of the warring camps, the behavior of the participants in the battle and their leaders. Syu portrays her characters, constantly aware of their class nature. The writer does not detract from the merits of Marshal Villars as a commander, but against his background, Cavalier's military talent was particularly evident, who, knowing the terrain perfectly, goes to cunning. Hence, the description of topography has a certain semantic meaning in the novel.

The behavior of the participants in the battle is clearly different, they are grouped and opposed to each other. The soldiers of the royal armies are courageous, but devoid of enthusiasm, as they fight "against the heart." A special group consists of mercenaries from among the townspeople who have bought military ranks according to the new edict. These are all the same former merchants who were prevented from selling their goods by the war. Syu mockingly describes their cowardice and incompetence during the battle, their panic fear of



camisards. Protestants, on the other hand, have no doubts in battle, they are all united by a burning desire to win. Contempt for death is their common trait.

E. Syu's "healthy realism and observation" manifested itself in the depiction of the battle. He really recreated the picture of the uprising as close to reality as possible, showing how difficult the victory was for absolutism, whose moral defeat was revealed in concluding an agreement with the leader of the rebels. However, the reasons for the defeat of the Camisards were not understood by the writer, he saw them only in the treacherous behavior of Cavalier, the inconsistency of the actions of the rebels and the reactionary Protestants. Nevertheless, "Jean Cavalier" testifies to the search for new ways in the field of the historical novel.

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