

UDC 82.09Text Interpretation*Narine MINASYAN**Ph.D., senior lecturer,**Department of Romance-Germanic Languages**Artsakh State University*

## CONFLICT AS ONE OF THE INTERPRETATION TECHNIQUES IN FICTION

*The given article is devoted to conflict as one of the main interpretation techniques in imaginative writing. The plot of any work of literature involves character and conflict; conflicts are generally classified as external and internal. The analysis of the conflict as one of the stylistic-interpretation techniques is vital to understand the message of the author. The linguistic units used to describe it play a significant role as they carry not only informative, emotional but national overtone as well.*

**Key words:** fiction, interpretation, conflict, external, internal, opposition, character, human nature, psychology, linguistic unit.

**Ն. Մինասյան**

### **ԿՈՆՖԼԻԿՏԸ ԻՔՐԵՎ ԳԵՂԱՐՎԵՍՏԱԿԱՆ ԺԱՆՐԻ ՄԵԿՆԱԲԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԵԹՈԴ**

Սույն հոդվածում դիտարկվում է կոնֆլիկտը՝ իբրև պատկերավոր գրավոր խոսքի մեկնաբանության հիմնական մեթոդ: Ցանկացած գրական երկի պլոտի մեջ առկա են հերոսներ ու կոնֆլիկտ: Կոնֆլիկտները լինում են արտակա և ներակա: Կոնֆլիկտի՝ իբրև ոճական մեկնաբանության մեթոդներից մեկի վերլուծությունը հույժ կարևոր է հեղինակի ուղերձը ըմբռնելու համար: Այն բնույթագրող լեզվական միավորները էական դեր են խաղում՝ փոխանցելով տեղեկատվական և հուզական իմաստներ, ինչպես նաև ազգային արժեքներ:

**Հիմնաբառեր՝** գեղարվեստական արձակ, մեկնաբանություն, կոնֆլիկտ, արտակա, ներակա, հակադրություն, հերոսներ, մարդկային բնություն, հոգեբանություն, լեզվական միավոր:

**Н.Минасян****КОНФЛИКТ КАК ОДИН ИЗ ПРИЕМОВ  
ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ**

В статье анализируется конфликт как один из приемов интерпретации художественной литературы. Сюжет художественного произведения включает персонаж и конфликт; конфликты обычно классифицируются как внешние и внутренние. Анализ конфликта, как одного из стилистико-интерпретационных приемов, имеет большое значение для понимания авторской интенции. Лингвистические единицы, используемые для его описания, также имеют важное значение, поскольку носят не только информативный и эмоциональный, но также и национальный характер.

**Ключевые слова:** художественная литература, интерпретация, конфликт, внешний, внутренний, противостояние, персонаж, человеческая природа, психология, лингвистическая единица.

The statement “*Literature is a mirror of life*” is indeed veracious as interpreting literary texts nourishes us with a sense of the complexity of life’s deepest problems.

The writer receives diverse information from the outside world; some of it becomes a source for creating literary work. He refines this information and recreates it in own aesthetic images, thus translating life into narrative. The process of imbibing the outside information and transmitting it into imagery is termed encoding. The reader is supposed to decode the information embodied in the text of a literary work.

While depicting the created reality, a writer uses a complex of elements of fiction such as plot and plot structure, characters and conflict, means of characterization, form of presentation, tone and atmosphere, theme, message, a title of the text, etc.

A literary text is one of the best sources of evaluating human nature. The analysis of the psychological state of a character reveals life mysteries: love, hate, death, frustration, God’s punishment, irony of life and many others.

The plot of any story always involves character and conflict. Conflict in fiction is the opposition or struggle between forces or characters. Generally conflicts are classified into external and internal conflicts<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> **Богин Г.И.** Интерпретация текста. Тверь: ТГУ, 1995, 35с.; **Борисова Л.В.** Интерпретация текста. Минск: Высшая школа, 1999, 175с.; **Кухаренко В.А.** Практикум по интерпретации текста. Москва: Просвещение, 1987, 175с.; **Хованская З.И.** Принципы анализа художественной речи и литературного произведения. Саратов: Изд-во Саратовского ун-та, 1975, 428с.; **Sosnovskaya V.B.** Analytical Reading. М.: Высшая школа, 1974, 184с.

Different types of external conflicts can be revealed in fiction.

1. **Man against man**, when the plot is based on the opposition of two or more people, as for example, in “The Roads we Take” by O. Henry. Almost all the novels and stories involve the above-mentioned type of conflict, simultaneously revealing different personality traits. The writer may introduce a foil as a means of characterization. The foil accentuates the opposed traits of the character, he/she is contrasted to.

The typical scenario is carried out in “The Quiet American” by G. Greene; loss of Phuong, a young Vietnamese woman who had relationship with Fowler, to Alden Pyle, as well as disapproval of American policy and the terrible violence against Vietnamese civilians give rise to the external conflict between Fowler and Pyle.

Ungodly, invidious policy of the USA generating Fowler’s indignation is voiced in the following lines:

*He’ll always be innocent, you can’t blame the innocent, they are always guiltless. All you can do is control them or eliminate them, innocence is a kind of insanity.*

The concept *innocence*, repeated several times (an artistic detail) in the novel, may be regarded as G. Greene’s created individual symbol<sup>1</sup> which is an important element to characterize Pyle; the title of the novel “The Quiet American” is ironical and at the same time assignable as this quiet, innocent American is responsible for a bomb explosion in the Place Garnier in Saigon. Innocence is indeed a kind of insanity causing thousands dead. The below excerpt verifies this form of insanity:

*We were among a congregation of mourners. The doctors were too busy to attend to the dead, and so the dead were left to their owners, for one can own the dead, as one owns a chair. A woman sat on the ground with what was left of her baby in her lap. She was still and silent, and what struck me in the square was the silence. It was like a church – the only sounds came from those who served, except here and there the Europeans wept and implored and fell silent again. The legless torso at the edge of the garden still twitched, like a chicken which has lost its head.*

The striking similes (*one can own the dead, as one owns a chair; the legless torso like a chicken which has lost its head; the silence was like a church*) stir up mournful emotions and give a mental image of the violent scene, the result of American policy. This passage reveals the repetition of the concept *silence* representing nonverbal reality of the deepest darkness of despair and mute sorrow. If we pay attention to the

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<sup>1</sup> Fiction provides many examples of recurrence with implication. Among them are details. For instance, in J. Cheever’s story “The Pleasures of Solitude” the ‘coldness’ of the wind, the rain, the weather, the boys who came ‘shaking with cold’ are artistic details. The neutral word ‘cold’ acquires expressive force in the context of the story and conveys deep implication. It suggests the world that Ellen was afraid of and was eager to isolate and shelter herself from. When an artistic detail is repeated several times and is associated with a broader concept than the original, it develops into a symbol. A symbol is a word (or an object the word stands for), which represents a concept broader than the literal sense of the word. Symbols may be traditional or personal. An example of a traditional symbol is a rose: the rose is a symbol of love and beauty. A writer establishes personal symbols by means of repetition and repeated association with a broader concept.

initial consonant sound ‘s’ repeated in close succession we can reveal alliterative words creating indirectly a whispering and rustling sound of the mute voice: *She was still and silent, and what struck me in the square was the silence.*

2. **Man against nature** (the sea, the desert, the frozen North or wild beasts), as in “The Old Man and the Sea” by E. Hemingway or “Love of life” by J. London.

For example, the text of “Love of life” by J. London contains many fragments exposing conflict of a human being and a wild beast, their struggle, natural instinctive desire to survive. The self-love is expressed in the following extract:

*He did not hear the breath, and he slipped slowly from some dream to the feel of the tongue along his hand. He waited. The fangs pressed softly, the pressure increased; the wolf was exerting its last strength in an effort to sink teeth in the food for which it had waited long, and lacerated hand closed on the jaw. Slowly, while the wolf struggled feebly and the hand clutched feebly, the other hand crept across to a grip. Five minutes later the whole weight of the man’s body was on top of the wolf. The hands had not sufficient strength to choke the wolf, but the face of the man was pressed close to the throat of the wolf and the mouth of the man was full of hair. At the end of half an hour the man was aware of a warm trickle in his throat. It was not pleasant. It was like molden lead being forced into his stomach, and it was forced by his will alone.*

The author using simile **a trickle like molden lead** indirectly discloses the outcome of the struggle, man’s victory over the wolf. The subtle choice of the expression **a warm trickle (blood)** coursing through the wolf’s veins attracts our attention to the fact that a wolf is also a living being, having the same instinctive desire to live.

3. **Man against society or against the established order in the society**, when the individual fights his social environment openly, or when there is a conflict with poverty, inequality, injustice.

One of the best examples of the given type of external conflict is vividly depicted in “Anna Karenina” by L.Tolstoy. The very first sentence “All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way” hints at the tragic denouement of the novel. The tragic fate of the main character is the consequence of the societal disapproval of love relations between Anna and Vronsky.

From the below extract from “Namus” by A.Shirvanzade we can realize that Susan loves Seyran but as their marriage would not be accepted by the society she agrees to marry another person.

*Եթե քեզ վրա պսակվեմ, մարդիկ կասեն ‘կոտրված ամանը կոտրողին տվին, որ ինքը կոծկի’: Հասկանո՞ւմ ես, թե չէ: Ես կպսակվեմ ուրիշի վրա և երբ կհաստատվի, թե ես ‘կոտրած աման’ չեմ, այնուհետև կանցնեն մի քանի ամիսներ, ամենաշատը մի տարի, դու ինձ կգտնես հողի տակ:*

The author uses the epithet **‘կոտրված աման’** (the broken vase) to describe forlorn, woesome state of the main character. It would seem that the word combination (*կոտրված աման*) is in common use in language, but in the given context, especially taking into account the cultural aspect, it acquires broader meaning

and describes the inner sorrows and feeling grief of the main character. The only way is to follow her father's will and marry another person to prove up her virginity and vindicate her family's reputation. The tragic fate of the young lovers results from the socio-psychological conflict depicted in the novel.

#### **4. The conflict between one set of values against another set of values.**

These sets of values may be supported by two groups or two worlds in opposition, e.g. the conflict in “The Man of Property” by J. Galsworthy is between the sense of property, on the one hand, and beauty, on the other.

The following example taken from “Namus” by A. Shirvanzade shows that *honor* is the most important thing for Barkhudar:

*Ես, որ ճշմարտության համար, անունս իստակ պահելու համար, ամենից հեռու եմ քաշվում: Ես, ե՛ս, որ իմ նամուսիս գերի դառած մարդ եմ, իմ հոժար կամքով Սիբիր կգնամ, եղբաները դաբուլ չեմ անիլ: Ի՛նչ փող, ի՛նչ դովլաթ, ի՛նչ մեծ-մեծ տներ, ես թքել եմ դրանց վրա, հալալ քրտինքովս փող եմ աշխատում, կես քաղցած, կես կուշտ ապրում եմ, թե ինչ է, նամուսս մաքուր պահեմ, նա էլ Սեյրանի ու Սուսանի պես լակոտները կեղտոտում են:*

The following passage shows that for Seyran love is more important than the public opinion and family relations:

*Հրեա ասում եմ, մարդ, ջառը ջհաննամը դու էլ, քո բարեկամությունն էլ, մենք քեզ կարոտ չենք: Բայց Սուսանը իմս է, դու Սուսանին ինձանից չես կարող իլել, դու նրան ինձ ես բաշխել, դու երդվել ես և թքածո լզող մարդ չես:*

**Internal Conflict.** Almost each piece of literary work involves **internal conflict**, it is often termed as “man against himself” and consequently takes place within one character. The internal conflict is, as it were, in the inner world of the character and is rendered through his thoughts and feelings. Therefore the character is torn between the opposing sides of his personality. For example, the tragedy of Soames Forsyte in “The Forsyte Saga” by J. Galsworthy is his conflict with himself, the sense of property, on the one hand, and a keen sense of beauty, on the other. The internal conflict within an individual often involves a struggle of his sense of duty against self-interest.

Cultural value encoded in a literary text should also be taken into consideration which is closely connected with the perception and understanding of ideology. Literature can be regarded a platform to encode and decode different cultural values and norms. Literature can create barriers to identification of some cultural concepts and produce an experience of the limits of understanding. Nevertheless adequate decoding of the message may broaden the scope of the knowledge of different cultural values externalized in linguistic units. The issue here is the unique nature of some concepts emphasizing national values. The novel “Namus”<sup>1</sup> (Honour) by

<sup>1</sup> Two lovers were engaged by their families since childhood (ancient Armenian tradition), but they offended against Armenian custom (according to the norms established in the Armenian society, the engaged couple had no right to meet before the wedding). Because of violations of namus, the main character, Susan was married by her father (offended by the act of the groom entailing shame for the family of the bride) to another person.

A. Shirvanzade focuses on the significance of *namus* (Armenian national code of honor) in culture and the consequences that come from breaking tradition. Values refer to those beliefs that are closely tied to national perspective of what is right or wrong. It revolves around the notion that love in Armenian culture, no matter how strong and substantial, can be separated and disregarded if certain moral codes are broken. There is a number of idioms containing the element *նամուս* in the Armenian language<sup>1</sup>: *նամուսը գետինը կոխել*, *նամուսը գետինը մտնել*, *նամուսը շանը տալ*, *նամուսը ոտի տակ առնել*, *նամուսը ջուրը գցել*, *նամուսը տափը կոխել*, *նամուսը ցեխին հավասար դարձնել*, *նամուսի վրա մոխիր ցանել* and many others.

We'd like to illustrate cases of internal conflict, reflected in thoughts and feelings of the characters, revealed in "Namus" emerging due to the Armenian cultural customs and established norms in the Armenian society.

Internal conflict is within Seyran when he knows that Susan is ready to marry another person for the sake of the honor of her family and the rules established in the society.

*Նա փողոցի մեջտեղում կանգ առավ և նայեց յուր չորս կողմը: Ոչ ոք և ոչինչ չկար, բացի գիշերային խավարից: Մի քանի վայրկյան նա մնաց կանգնած, հետո դարձյալ շարունակեց յուր ճանապարհը: Ինչէ՛ր է մտածում նա, հը՛մ, մի՞թե՛ Սուսանը կարող է մոռանալ Սեյրանին, մի՞թե՛ չի սիրում: Հապա ինչո՞ւ է այդ օրն ընկել, այդպես լղարել, մաշվել: Ո՞րտեղ է այն առաջվա Սուսանը: Ինչո՞ւ Սուսանը այնքան կամքի ուժ չունի, որ ոտնակոխ անելով հասարակական կարծիքը, արհամարհելով ավանդական նախապաշարմունքները, ընկնի յուր սիրեկանի գիրկը և վայելի այն երջանիկ օրերը, որ շատ քիչ մահկանացուներին է վիճակված այս անցավոր աշխարհում:*

Another example is the internal conflict within Susan. The bitterness of parting from Seyran and the choice she has to make wrenched her heart, and these tortures are voiced in the following lines: *Նա չի հավատում, որ ես նրան սիրում եմ, — մտածում էր Սուսանը, ակսեսները մի առ մի թողնելով ջրի մեջ: — Չի հավատում, որ այսպես հալվելուս, մաշվելուս, այսքան տանջանքիս պատճառը ինքն է և միայն ինքը: Ախ աստված, քո ձեռով կապել ես, քո ձեռով էլ բաժանում ես մեզ:*

Interpretation of imaginative writing regards the aesthetic value of a text based on the interaction of specific textual elements: the employed techniques deliver the author's message. Expressive means and stylistic devices should be taken into consideration as they play a significant role in their interaction as carriers of the

<sup>1</sup> *Սուքիասյան Ա. Մ., Գալստյան Մ. Ա. Հայոց լեզվի դարձվածաբանական բառարան. Երևան, 1975.*

writer's purport.

So the analysis of the conflict as one of the stylistic-interpretation techniques is vital to understand the message of the author. The linguistic units used to describe them play a significant role as they carry not only informative, emotional but national overtone as well.

### Literature

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*Տողվածը տպագրության է նրաշխարհը խմբագրական կոլեգիայի անդամ, մ.գ.դ., Ի.Կ.Կարապետյանը:*