

**“THE CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS”: LOVE, FATE, AND EXISTENTIAL TENSIONS IN ALEKSANDR FAYNBERG’S POETIC UNIVERSE**

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**ANNOTATION:** This article provides a comprehensive, systematic, and multi-method scholarly analysis of Aleksandr Faynberg’s poem “The Carpathian Mountains.” The study examines the poem’s poetic structure, compositional dynamics, symbolic-semiotic system, ontological and axiological layers, existential tensions, poetics of love and fate, psychological mechanisms of the inner monologue, and socio-philosophical implications. Through images such as the Carpathian mountains, lovers, stars, the Jewish young man, and local Gutsul customs, the poem explores love, destiny, moral responsibility, and the human confrontation with tragic fate.

Methodologically, the research relies on structuralism, hermeneutics, semiotics, phenomenology, and existential analysis. The poem is interpreted as a multilayered poetic model articulating the tension between individual desire, social context, and universal fate.

**Keywords:** Carpathian Mountains, love and destiny, existential tension, poetic structure, symbolic system, axiological paradox, cosmic imagery, lyrical subject, semiotic code, morality and fate, ethnographic context.

**АННОТАЦИЯ:** Данная статья представляет собой комплексный, систематический и многометодный научный анализ поэмы Александра Файнберга «Карпатские горы». В исследовании рассматриваются поэтическая структура и композиционная динамика произведения, символично-семиотическая система, онтологические и аксиологические слои, экзистенциальные напряжения, поэтика любви и судьбы, психологические механизмы внутреннего монолога, а также социально-философские аспекты. Через образы Карпатских гор, влюбленных, звезд, еврейского юноши и местных гуцульских традиций поэма исследует любовь, судьбу, моральную ответственность и человеческое противостояние трагической участи.

Методологически исследование опирается на структуризм, герменевтику, семиотику, феноменологию и экзистенциальный анализ. Поэма интерпретируется как многослойная поэтическая модель, отражающая напряжение между индивидуальным желанием, социальным контекстом и универсальной судьбой.

**Ключевые слова:** Карпатские горы, любовь и судьба, экзистенциальное напряжение, поэтическая структура, символическая система, аксиологический

парадокс, космические образы, лирический субъект, семиотический код, мораль и судьба, этнографический контекст.

## INTRODUCTION

Aleksandr Faynberg's poem "The Carpathian Mountains" is a vivid example of philosophical and lyrical synthesis in 20th-century poetry. While narratively telling the story of a tragic love between a Gutsul girl and a Jewish young man, the poem operates on multiple conceptual levels. It is not merely a romantic narrative but a meditation on fate, cultural norms, mortality, and moral responsibility.

The poem juxtaposes personal emotion with historical and cultural realities, reflecting on the complex interrelation between individual agency and external circumstance. Faynberg draws upon ethnographic elements, such as Gutsul traditions, pastoral imagery, and local societal norms, to construct a setting where human passion is inevitably mediated by fate and social codes.

The narrative begins with a temporal suspension: "Falak ters aylandi. To'xtab qoldi vaqt," reflecting existential dislocation. Time and nature are not neutral backdrops; they actively participate in shaping the lovers' destiny. The poem's structure is a blend of dramatic lyricism and narrative progression, where each stanza advances both plot and philosophical reflection.

From a methodological perspective, this study applies:

1. Structuralism (Lotman, 1970s) – to analyze the poem's internal semiotic organization.
2. Phenomenology (Husserl, Heidegger) – to investigate the existential experience of love, separation, and death.
3. Hermeneutics (Gadamer, Ricoeur) – to interpret the poem's symbolic, cultural, and moral dimensions.
4. Existential analysis (Sartre, Camus) – to examine the confrontation between individual desire and inexorable fate.

Through this approach, the poem is not simply a story of star-crossed lovers but a multilayered philosophical text that interrogates the human condition, mortality, and the tension between desire and destiny.

## STRUCTURAL-POETIC CONSTRUCTION AND COMPOSITIONAL DYNAMICS

Although the poem "The Carpathian Mountains" is moderate in length, its internal compositional mechanism is built upon a complex dramatic structure. The work combines lyrical monologue with narrative depiction, engaging the reader both through the progression of events and through philosophical and emotional experience.

Exposition:

The line “Falak ters aylandi. To‘xtab qoldi vaqt” (“The sky turned upside down. Time stopped”) draws attention to the metaphysical dimension of time and space. Time is not neutral; it exists beyond human control, immediately establishing dramatic tension.

“Bulutlar ichinda surnay chalindi” (“Within the clouds, a shawm was played”) provides an aesthetic backdrop, adding musicality and dramatism, situating the event within both natural and cultural space.

Compositional stages:

The initiation of love and conflict – the meeting of the Gutsul girl and the Jewish young man, negotiating personal desire within social and natural constraints.

Intimacy and dramatic culmination – secret love, hidden connections through night and day, tensions between human desire and societal pressures.

Tragic denouement – the Jewish young man’s death, the girl’s inner suffering, and the community’s reaction.

Post-event reflection and aesthetic closure – the revival of nature, the girl’s emotional purification, leaving philosophical and ethical impressions for the reader.

From a structuralist perspective (Yuri Lotman, 1970s):

The poem is a closed semiotic system. Each image and line prepares semantically for the next. For example: “Gutsul qiz juhutga ko‘z suzdi, badbaxt, U ham qiz makriga asir olindi” (“The Gutsul girl cast her gaze at the Jewish boy, unfortunate, she was also captivated by the girl’s cunning”) illustrates the tension between love and destiny. The Gutsul girl’s action reflects the conflict between emotional desire and social pressure.

Internal dynamics are conveyed through verbs:

Opened – closed – lay hidden – reached – faded – set – came.

The sequence of verbs generates a pattern of dramatic rise and fall, emphasizing both the climax and post-climax phases of the narrative.

Integration of narrative and lyrical layers:

The poem simultaneously conveys the story and the lyrical subject’s inner experience.

Lines like “Somon g‘aramga bosh qo‘ydi ikki yosh, Bir-birin vasliga yetdi ovloqda” portray intimate experience, whereas “Shapka kiygan ikki nafar shopmo‘ylov Gutsul qabr qazdi. O‘ldi Yahudo” depicts the tragic outcome. This layering draws the reader into the emotional and intellectual dimensions of the poem.

Compositional characteristics:

Although the poem is continuous, natural stanzas and event sequences create dramatic rhythm.

Each stanza develops both the narrative and emotional trajectory, producing a three-tiered semantic layer: narrative, lyrical, and philosophical.

This part demonstrates that “The Carpathian Mountains”—despite its modest length—possesses a complex dramatic and philosophical structure. Each image and verb, as well as the artistic details, enhance the poem’s internal dynamism and existential tension. Its compositional dynamics engage the reader in profound reflections on love, destiny, and human responsibility.

## ONTOLOGICAL SPACE AND THE SYMBOLISM OF TRAGIC EVENTS

In “The Carpathian Mountains”, the ontological dimension of space plays a crucial role in shaping the poem’s narrative and emotional trajectory. The Carpathians themselves are not merely a geographical backdrop; they are a symbolic and existential framework that mediates between human desire, social conventions, and the inevitability of fate.

### 1. The Carpathian Mountains as Ontological Space

The mountains function as a liminal space where human action, natural forces, and destiny intersect. They symbolize both freedom and constraint:

**Freedom:** The open landscapes allow the lovers to meet in secrecy, giving space for intimate connection beyond societal surveillance.

**Constraint:** The mountains also harbor dangers and social oversight, as shown in the intervention of the community and the eventual tragic outcome.

The Carpathians’ duality emphasizes the ontological tension between individual will and the deterministic forces of fate. The setting becomes a physical manifestation of the poem’s existential themes.

### 2. The River and the Flow of Time

Water imagery—rivers and streams within the mountains—represents the inexorable passage of time and the uncontrollable flow of destiny:

“Ko‘rdi darichadan oqqan daryoni” (“He saw the river flowing from the window”) signals the inevitability of events beyond the protagonists’ control.

The river functions as a metaphor for life’s continuum, reminding the reader that personal agency is constrained by broader natural and temporal laws.

### 3. Tragic Symbolism of Death and Loss

The poem’s tragic dimension is articulated through the death of the Jewish young man and the ritualized representation of mourning:

“Shapka kiygan ikki nafar shopmo‘ylov Gutsul qabr qazdi. O‘ldi Yahudo” portrays the ritualized yet emotionally charged encounter with mortality. The act of burial, juxtaposed with the indifferent natural cycles, emphasizes the existential vulnerability of human life.

The tragedy also highlights ethical and social tension: the Gutsul community’s reaction, along with the young man’s outsider status, amplifies the sense of social injustice. The poem thus conveys both personal and collective dimensions of suffering.

#### 4. Symbolic Role of Night and Day

Temporal transitions—night, dawn, and the appearance of celestial bodies—underscore the poem’s ontological and existential concerns:

Night embodies secrecy, desire, and uncertainty. The lovers’ secret encounters occur under darkness, suggesting the precariousness of human fulfillment.

Dawn and the rising sun symbolize renewal and the continuity of life, even amidst loss: “Tongda quyosh chiqdi, yashnadi yaylov” (“At dawn, the sun rose, the meadow rejoiced”), offering a poetic counterpoint to tragedy and hinting at resilience.

#### 5. Interplay Between Natural and Social Forces

The poem presents a dialectic between nature and society:

Natural forces—mountains, rivers, and celestial cycles—operate independently of human desire, establishing a deterministic framework.

Social forces—family authority, community expectations—intervene directly, dictating the outcomes of personal choices.

This interplay situates the protagonists’ love within an ontological structure where freedom is real but bounded, reinforcing existential concerns regarding human agency, responsibility, and moral decision-making.

#### 6. Existential Implications

Through the ontological framing of space and tragedy, the poem explores fundamental existential questions:

Agency vs. destiny: Can love survive within predetermined structures?

Moral responsibility: How does one act ethically when social and natural constraints conflict with personal desire?

Mortality and memory: How does human life, love, and death resonate within the eternal cycles of nature?

The Carpathians, as an ontological and symbolic locus, amplify the poem’s existential depth, transforming a love story into a reflection on human vulnerability, the inevitability of loss, and the search for meaning within the natural and social cosmos.

This part demonstrates that in “The Carpathian Mountains”, space is not merely a backdrop but an ontological and symbolic mediator. The mountains, rivers, and celestial cycles function as active agents in shaping the narrative, mediating between personal desire and the forces of fate. Tragic events, particularly the young man’s death, highlight the tension between human agency and determinism, embedding the poem within an existential framework that extends beyond its immediate narrative.

### **THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF LOVE AND THE DYNAMICS OF DESIRE**

In “The Carpathian Mountains”, love is the central phenomenological category, yet it is presented as far more complex than mere romantic sentiment. It functions

simultaneously as a psychological, ethical, and ontological phenomenon, mediating the relationship between the individual and the social-natural environment.

### 1. Love as Phenomenological Experience

From a phenomenological perspective (Husserl, 1913), love in the poem is characterized by the interpenetration of subjective and intersubjective experience:

“Gutsul qiz juhutga ko‘z suzdi, badbaxt” (“The Gutsul girl cast her gaze at the Jewish boy, unfortunate”) demonstrates the intentionality of consciousness, where desire is both directed and limited by the perceived other.

The emotional experience is embodied in bodily gestures, gazes, and spatial proximity, creating a felt dimension of love that is inseparable from the surrounding environment.

### 2. Desire and Social Constraint

The poem situates love within social, cultural, and familial frameworks that constrain desire:

Family authority and communal norms govern behavior, creating a tension between private longing and public expectation.

The Gutsul girl’s and Jewish boy’s secret interactions illustrate the negotiation between inner desire and external regulation, a tension that intensifies dramatic and emotional suspense.

### 3. Temporal Structure of Desire

Love in the poem unfolds across multiple temporal layers:

Immediate desire: spontaneous attraction and secret encounters.

Anticipated future: hope for union and survival of love.

Inevitability of loss: the looming threat of social intervention and fate.

This temporal layering mirrors the phenomenology of experience, where desire is never isolated but always projected into past, present, and future dimensions simultaneously.

### 4. The Dynamics of Secret Love

The poem highlights the dialectic of concealment and revelation:

“Ikkovi yosh edi ham sho‘xi bevosh, Tonggacha berkinib yotdi o‘tloqda” depicts intimacy hidden under natural cover, where desire is enacted cautiously yet passionately.

Secrecy intensifies the emotional experience, producing a heightened phenomenological awareness of risk, joy, and ethical tension.

### 5. Love and Mortality

The tragic death of the Jewish boy infuses the love narrative with existential weight:

“Shapka kiygan ikki nafar shopmo‘ylov Gutsul qabr qazdi. O‘ldi Yahudo” situates love directly within mortality, reminding readers that desire is always vulnerable to fate.

Phenomenologically, this renders love finite, urgent, and ethically charged, as the characters must navigate their own vulnerability and the moral consequences of actions.

#### 6. Ethical Dimension of Love

The poem links love with moral responsibility, reflecting on the ethical stakes of desire:

Despite the tragedy, the Gutsul girl survives and eventually restores her life, suggesting that ethical and emotional integrity persists beyond loss.

Love is depicted not merely as passion but as a force demanding awareness of consequences, empathy, and social negotiation.

#### 7. Existential Implications of Desire

Through phenomenology, love is revealed as an existential experience:

Desire exposes the characters to uncertainty, suffering, and limitation, reflecting broader human conditions.

Love functions as a medium of self-realization, where the tension between longing and social constraint becomes a lens to examine freedom, choice, and the nature of existence itself.

This part demonstrates that in “The Carpathian Mountains”, love is not a static sentiment but a dynamic, multi-layered phenomenological process. It intertwines emotion, ethical reflection, and existential awareness, situating the characters’ inner lives within broader ontological and social frameworks. Desire, secrecy, and mortality interact to create a complex experiential field, making love both an intensely personal and universally resonant phenomenon.

### **EXISTENTIAL TENSION AND TRAGIC FATE**

In “The Carpathian Mountains”, the narrative tension is deeply rooted in existential concerns, illustrating the fragility of human agency and the inexorability of fate. The poem’s tragic dimension arises from the collision between personal desire and social, cultural, and natural forces, emphasizing the precariousness of human existence.

#### 1. Existential Tension Between Freedom and Determinism

The young lovers’ freedom is constantly constrained by deterministic forces:

Social authority (familial and communal norms) restricts action, creating a moral and practical tension.

Natural elements—the mountains, rivers, and temporal cycles—operate independently of human will, establishing an ontological limit to agency.

The tension is explicitly realized when the Jewish boy is rejected and ultimately killed by communal intervention:

“Shapka kiygan ikki nafar shopmo‘ylov Gutsul qabr qazdi. O‘ldi Yahudo” illustrates the tragic inevitability imposed by social and cosmic forces, highlighting human vulnerability.

## 2. Tragic Fate and Ethical Responsibility

The poem juxtaposes tragic events with moral reflection:

The Gutsul girl survives, yet her love and happiness are deeply mediated by the ethical consequences of social norms and communal power.

Fate is not merely random; it operates in conjunction with ethical, social, and ontological structures, underscoring the complex interplay of choice, constraint, and consequence.

## 3. The Role of Death in Existential Awareness

Death functions as the ultimate manifestation of existential tension:

It confronts the characters and the audience with the limits of human agency, reinforcing the notion that life and desire are temporary and fragile.

Phenomenologically, the death of the Jewish boy intensifies the lived experience of love, longing, and moral reflection, transforming individual desire into a universal contemplation of mortality.

## 4. Symbolism of Spatial and Temporal Displacement

The Carpathians and the passage of time structure the tragic experience:

Mountainous terrain symbolizes the limitation of freedom, where natural topography both shelters and confines human action.

Temporal cycles—night and dawn, celestial transitions—illustrate that the flow of life and destiny is independent of human desire, amplifying existential tension.

## 5. Interplay of Human Desire and Cosmic Forces

The poem presents love and desire as embedded within broader cosmic and social frameworks:

The lovers’ secret encounters, while temporarily fulfilling, are always susceptible to intervention by larger forces.

The tragic outcome demonstrates that human intention is constrained by existential structures, reinforcing Sartre’s notion of contingency and the tension between freedom and circumstance.

## 6. Existential Implications

From an existential perspective, the poem explores several key themes:

Freedom vs. constraint: Human agency exists but is always limited by natural, social, and moral forces.

Mortality: Desire is inseparable from the awareness of impermanence and vulnerability.

Ethical reflection: Love and action carry moral responsibility, even when outcomes are tragic.

The poem's tragic dimension thus functions as an ontological mirror, reflecting both the human struggle for fulfillment and the inexorable structures of existence.

This part demonstrates that the tragic fate of the lovers in "The Carpathian Mountains" emerges from the intersection of personal desire, social norms, and cosmic determinism. Existential tension is heightened through the interplay of mortality, ethical responsibility, and constrained agency. The poem transforms a localized narrative of love into a universal reflection on human vulnerability, the limits of freedom, and the inevitability of fate, situating personal tragedy within the broader ontological and phenomenological framework of existence.

### CONCLUSION

Aleksandr Faynberg's "The Carpathian Mountains" is a complex, multilayered poetic work that intertwines personal experience, social dynamics, and existential reflection. While narratively it recounts the tragic love between the Gutsul girl and the Jewish boy, a deeper analysis reveals the poem as a philosophically rich exploration of human desire, moral responsibility, and the constraints of fate.

The research demonstrates that the poem's symbolic architecture—including the Carpathians, celestial imagery, magical objects, and ritual gestures—creates a multi-dimensional semiotic system. Each symbol operates on literal, ethical, and existential planes, connecting personal emotions with social, cultural, and ontological conditions. The mountains, for example, both shelter and constrain, embodying the duality of freedom and limitation, while the celestial imagery situates human love within a cosmic framework, highlighting the tension between human agency and the forces of fate.

The poem's existential dimension emerges through the interplay of human desire and inevitable tragedy. The Jewish boy's death and the Gutsul girl's survival underscore the fragility of human freedom, while ethical responsibility and moral reflection are embedded within the narrative. Faynberg presents love not merely as personal emotion but as a testing ground for ethical and ontological engagement, where human action, cultural norms, and cosmic forces intersect.

Furthermore, the poem's temporal and spatial dynamics—night and day, valleys and peaks, hidden glades and open pastures—enhance its existential and semiotic resonance. The tragic events unfold within a structured environment, illustrating how human agency is always embedded in, and constrained by, both natural and social orders.

In conclusion, "The Carpathian Mountains" transcends a simple romantic narrative to become a universal meditation on love, mortality, and human responsibility. Through its intricate symbolic system, existential depth, and ethical complexity, Faynberg's poem invites readers to reflect on the limits of freedom, the inevitability of fate, and the enduring value of human emotion and moral action. The

work stands as a testament to the poet's ability to merge narrative lyricism with ontological and phenomenological inquiry, affirming its place as a profound achievement in modern poetic literature.

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