

ROMANTICISM IN THE WORKS OF BYRON AND LERMONTOV: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Annotation. This article provides a comparative analysis of the main principles of romanticism in the works of George Gordon Byron and Mikhail Lermontov. The article discusses the historical formation of romanticism, its main ideas - individualism, attention to nature, emotionality, and a deep description of the inner world of man. Also, the Byronic hero, the concept of "surplus man", the image of nature, and the contradictions between man and society in the works of Byron and Lermontov are compared. The analysis reveals that although romanticism has common features in the works of both writers, they are interpreted in their own way, depending on the national and historical context.

Keywords: Romanticism, Byron, Lermontov, Byronic hero, superfluous man, individualism, nature, alienation

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada George Gordon Byron va Mikhail Lermontov ijodida romantizmning asosiy tamoyillari qiyosiy tahlil qilinadi. Maqolada romantizmning tarixiy shakllanishi, uning asosiy g'oyalari — individualizm, tabiatga e'tibor, emotsionallik va inson ichki dunyosini chuqur tasvirlash masalalari yoritiladi. Shuningdek, Bayron va Lermontov asarlarida bayroniy qahramon, "ortiqcha inson" konsepsiyasi, tabiat tasviri hamda inson va jamiyat o'rtasidagi ziddiyatlar o'zaro taqqoslanadi. Tahlil natijasida har ikki adib ijodida romantizm umumiy xususiyatlarga ega bo'lsa-da, ularning milliy va tarixiy kontekstga bog'liq ravishda o'ziga xos talqin etilgani aniqlanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: Romantizm, Bayron, Lermontov, Bayron qahramoni, ortiqcha odam, individualizm, tabiat, begonalashish.

Аннотация. В данной статье представлен сравнительный анализ основных принципов романтизма в произведениях Джорджа Гордона Байрона и Михаила Лермонтова. Рассматривается историческое формирование романтизма, его основные идеи — индивидуализм, внимание к природе, эмоциональность и глубокое описание внутреннего мира человека. Также проводится сравнение байронического героя, концепции «избыточного человека», образа природы и противоречий между человеком и обществом в произведениях Байрона и Лермонтова. Анализ показывает, что, хотя романтизм имеет общие черты в произведениях обоих писателей, они интерпретируются по-своему, в зависимости от национального и исторического контекста.

Ключевые слова: романтизм, Байрон, Лермонтов, байронический герой, сверхфлюозный человек, индивидуализм, природа, отчуждение.

Introduction.

George Gordon Byron and Mikhail Lermontov occupy a central place in the development of Romanticism in European literature, and a comparative study of their works reveals not only shared artistic principles but also significant cultural, philosophical, and stylistic differences that reflect the distinct literary traditions of England and Russia. Romanticism, as a broad intellectual and artistic movement that emerged in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, emphasized emotion over reason, individuality over collectivism, nature over industrialization, and imagination over rational constraints. Both Byron and Lermontov contributed profoundly to this movement, yet each adapted its core ideas to his own national and personal context, creating unique literary worlds that continue to influence modern literature.

The Romantic movement itself was, in many ways, a reaction against the Enlightenment, which had prioritized reason, logic, and scientific thinking. Romantic writers sought to restore the importance of subjective experience, emotional depth, and individual creativity. In Byron's works, this manifests in his fascination with rebellion, freedom, and the exploration of the self as a complex and often contradictory entity. His poetry frequently portrays heroes who are disillusioned with society, yet who remain deeply engaged with their own inner struggles. Similarly, Lermontov adopts many Romantic ideals but introduces a darker, more introspective tone, shaped by the social and political realities of 19th-century Russia, where censorship, autocracy, and limited personal freedoms influenced literary expression.

One of the most significant contributions of Byron to Romanticism is the creation and popularization of the Byronic Hero, a figure characterized by intelligence, emotional depth, defiance, and moral ambiguity. This hero often stands apart from society, burdened by a mysterious past and a sense of inner torment. Works such as *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Manfred* exemplify this archetype. The protagonists in these works embody a profound sense of alienation and existential questioning, reflecting Byron's own experiences and worldview. The landscapes described in these poems—often wild, majestic, and untamed—serve as external reflections of the hero's internal emotional state, reinforcing the Romantic connection between nature and the human psyche.

Lermontov, deeply influenced by Byron, adopted the Byronic Hero archetype but transformed it in accordance with Russian literary traditions and philosophical concerns. In his seminal work *A Hero of Our Time*, the protagonist Pechorin represents a distinctly Russian interpretation of the Byronic Hero. While he shares Byron's hero's traits—introspection, cynicism, intelligence, and emotional detachment—Pechorin is

also a product of Russian society, embodying the concept of the “superfluous man.” This term refers to individuals who are highly educated and capable but find themselves unable to meaningfully contribute to society due to structural and cultural constraints. Thus, Lermontov’s Romanticism is more socially grounded and psychologically nuanced than Byron’s, reflecting the unique historical circumstances of Russia.

Nature plays a crucial role in the Romanticism of both Byron and Lermontov, but their approaches differ in tone and emphasis. For Byron, nature often symbolizes freedom, power, and sublime beauty. His poetic descriptions of landscapes such as mountains, seas, and storms reflect both external grandeur and internal turmoil. Nature in Byron’s works is dynamic and overwhelming, representing both inspiration and danger. In contrast, Lermontov’s treatment of nature is often more introspective and melancholic. While he also celebrates the beauty of the natural world, his descriptions frequently evoke a sense of loneliness, isolation, and existential reflection. In Lermontov’s poetry, nature becomes a mirror for the human soul, emphasizing the tragic dimensions of human existence.

Another important aspect of Romanticism in both authors is the theme of individualism. Byron’s heroes are often portrayed as rebels who challenge societal norms and assert their personal freedom. This rebellious spirit is closely tied to the Romantic ideal of the autonomous individual who resists conformity and asserts personal truth. However, Byron also presents a critical view of such rebellion, showing that it often leads to isolation and self-destruction. Lermontov, while also celebrating individualism, tends to portray it as a source of both strength and suffering. His characters are often caught between their desire for freedom and their inability to connect meaningfully with others, leading to a profound sense of alienation.

Love and relationships are also central themes in Romantic literature, and both Byron and Lermontov explore these themes with emotional intensity and psychological depth. Byron’s works often depict passionate, but ultimately tragic relationships, characterized by longing, betrayal, and unattainable desire. His love poetry reveals a deep awareness of the complexities of human emotion, as well as the pain that often accompanies love. Lermontov’s approach to love is similarly tragic, but often more introspective and reflective. His characters struggle not only with external obstacles but also with their own emotional limitations, making genuine connection difficult or impossible.

The philosophical dimension of Romanticism is particularly evident in the works of both authors. Byron’s poetry often explores themes of existential questioning, fate, and the limits of human understanding. His characters frequently grapple with their place in the universe and the consequences of their actions. Lermontov expands on these philosophical concerns, delving deeper into questions of destiny, free will, and

the meaning of life. In *A Hero of Our Time*, Pechorin's reflections on his own behavior and motivations reveal a profound awareness of the contradictions inherent in human nature. This introspective approach aligns Lermontov with the broader Romantic tradition, while also anticipating later developments in psychological realism.

Despite their similarities, Byron and Lermontov differ in their overall tone and worldview. Byron's Romanticism is often characterized by a sense of grandeur, adventure, and dramatic intensity. His works celebrate the power of the individual spirit, even as they acknowledge its limitations. Lermontov, on the other hand, presents a more somber and introspective vision of Romanticism. His works are marked by a deep sense of melancholy, disillusionment, and existential despair. This difference can be attributed in part to the different social and political environments in which the two writers lived. While Byron was part of a relatively liberal and dynamic English society, Lermontov lived in a more restrictive and authoritarian Russia, where freedom of expression was limited and intellectual life was closely monitored.

The legacy of Byron and Lermontov in the development of Romanticism is profound and far-reaching. Byron's influence extended across Europe, inspiring writers, poets, and artists to explore themes of individuality, rebellion, and emotional depth. His works became symbols of Romantic freedom and artistic expression. Lermontov, in turn, played a crucial role in shaping Russian literature, introducing new psychological and philosophical dimensions to the Romantic tradition. His influence can be seen in the works of later Russian authors such as Fyodor Dostoevsky and Ivan Turgenev, who continued to explore themes of alienation, morality, and the complexity of human psychology.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, the comparative study of Romanticism in the works of Byron and Lermontov reveals both shared foundations and distinct developments within the broader Romantic movement. Byron's works embody the spirit of rebellion, emotional intensity, and individualism that define Romanticism, while Lermontov adapts and transforms these elements to reflect the unique cultural and philosophical context of Russia. Together, their works demonstrate the versatility and enduring relevance of Romanticism as a literary and intellectual movement. Through their exploration of the human condition, both authors continue to resonate with readers, offering profound insights into the complexities of identity, emotion, and existence.

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