

# Childe Harold and Eugene Onegin as Representatives Of English and Russian Romanticism

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Odjel za anglistiku  
Engleski jezik i književnost

**Ranko Ćirić**

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and Russian Romanticism**

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Završni rad

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Zadar, 19. Listopad 2022.



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## Table of Contents:

1.Introduction.....	5
2.Romanticism.....	6
3.Childe Harold and English Romanticism.....	10
4.Eugene Onegin/Childe Harold.....	16
5.Conclusion.....	23/24
6.Works Cited.....	25
7.Internet Sources Cited.....	26
8. THESIS TITLE IN ENGLISH: Summary and key words.....	27
9.NASLOV RADA NA HRVATSKOM JEZIKU: Sažetak i ključne riječi.....	27/28

## **Eugene Onegin and Childe Harold as Representatives of English and Russian Romanticism**

### **1) Introduction**

This is going to be an analysis of two significantly different representatives of the same intellectual trend of the late 18th and early 19th century; namely, romanticism. The analysis will be done via comparison of two main characters of English and Russian romanticism: Eugene Onegin and Childe Harold. European/English and Russian romanticism(s), although belonging to the same literary epoch and sharing quite common characteristics, differ greatly due to the fact that they originate from significantly different cultural sources. We will begin with a brief contrast between Russian and Western European in the period of romanticism in literature and by comparing some of the basic literary traits (narrative, writing style, space, characters, etc.) as well as two major literary works of two currents represented through Childe Harold and Eugene Onegin. After that, a deeper analysis of the characters will be made (which is also the main topic of this presentation) and analysis of the same in the aforementioned novels. I will try to present what role the novels play in the depiction of characters and how they are presented differently. In what way does the experience differ from that in the "classic" acts of Western European writers' romanticism, that is, what are their main features, what is the inspiration drawn from the characters from the novel and how much the characters are is specifically Russian/English? Since Romanticism was the intellectual and spiritual force which catalyzed the development of civil society at the beginning of the 19th century, and was a reaction to the monarchical political system as well as strictness, rigidity and narrowness of the Enlightenment and excessive rationalization of the world. In the context of mainly rural Russia, in which the hermetic feudal relations were

firmly fixed, this development, due to the very nature and characteristics of the illiterate, autocratic, and rural society like the Russian one, significantly differed in its dynamics, speed and manner of development than it was the case with the Western European context, with the industrial epoch in its cradle and already in full swing with its development of civic society. Consequently, literary features (including character depiction) were significantly different. The main task of this work will be to outline the difference in literary characteristics between the aforementioned cultures in a specific time in history (Huntington 130).

## 2) Romanticism

The term Romantic comes from languages that were derived from Latin (so called Romanesque languages), and the term romantique was created as an associative connection between these languages and amorous/“romantic“ mentality that was part of the culture of their native speakers. As it is the case with marking of epochs, the boundaries of romanticism are somewhat imprecise and arbitrary. That means that abstracting basic literary features, putting them in or seeing them as part of a specific socio-historical context and consequently marking them out as a singular epoch is a task that is, shall we say, doomed to suffer vagueness at the hands of literary critics and scholars of all sorts. Nevertheless, recognizing and accepting this arbitrariness paradoxically makes us able to change, modify and further fixate our loosely-based markings. So, what are the key features of romanticism and what made scholars to single it out as a singular epoch and in what historical context did those features emerge?

There was actually a pre-romantic movement in Germany called the Pietists movement (< <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Pietism>> accessed on 08.08.2020). They were already calling for the rebellion against the established doctrines and aimed at

simplification of literature and transforming into a medium for rebellious tendencies. The romantics that appeared later were the rebels, the individualists, the haters of industry and worshipers of wildlife, the dreamers and the haters of rationalist dogma, the enjoyers of solitude who avoid masses and are carving their own path, the conjurers of demons and mythological creatures and the spirits of the ancients.

„I don't know whether deluding spirits hover about this region, or whether it is the warm, heavenly fancy in my heart which turns my whole environment into a paradise. Thus, directly outside the town there is a well, one to which I am magically bound like Melusine and her sisters.“(Goethe 9)

It is no surprise that those qualities/traits and consequently their intellectual and artistic traits were spawned by a strict, rigorous and politically reactionary country such as Germany of that period. The need to escape from the grips from the intellectual form of the newly-created society was the strongest there. This is the source for the works Tieck, Holderlin, Schelling, Schiller and Goethe. From the point of view of literary analysis, the novelties were: a general dark, mystical atmosphere, an almost theological approach to nature (it is being worshipped nearly as a divinity), emphasis on emotion, putting reason as a secondary thing, individualism, the exaltation of a genius; the disintegration of strict rules, codes, norms, repetition and the breaking of tradition as such.

„When the rationalistic approach was applied to the arts as well as to the emergent physical sciences, it resulted in those rigid pronouncements on the immutable 'rules' of literature that were the bane of Neoclassicism“ (Furst 116).

The neoclassical principle was that of universality, the romantic of individuality and particularity. Romanticists advocated the return and refreshing of those subjects which the Enlightenment found empty and anachronistic: mysticism, transcendence, spiritualism, the occult. The authors and writer focused greatly on the subconscious, on visions, dreams,



allegories, supernatural phenomena.

([http://ddceutkal.ac.in/Syllabus/MA\\_English/Paper\\_04.pdf](http://ddceutkal.ac.in/Syllabus/MA_English/Paper_04.pdf) accessed on 08.08.2022).

In short, on all those elements which were thought of as surpassed and cast aside by Enlightenment and the notion of progress of that period. The middle ages are the most interesting historical period since the epoch is shrouded in christian mysticism (fascination with medieval chants and allegories). Really, the heroes of romanticism are very childlike and it would appear that this childish impulse is precisely what gave them their inspiration. It is a strong and powerful, adolescent-like rebellion against the neoclassical norms and rules for producing literary texts. A genius must follow his own inspiration and his imagination run loose.

Germany, as an immensely strict and a politically reactionary country, spawned romanticism as a counter-force to these tendencies. The romanticism that was created in Germany was a counter-force applied to the immense political and social pressure that was applied by such a strict surroundings. The rationalist dogma, coupled with the germanic strictness, produced an immense negative effect on the creative, young minds of that period and they naturally and consequently sought out to break those invisible chains. Besides Germany, there was a second albeit a smaller epicentre (which was of course aroused by German influence), the country that started the industrial revolution: England. The huge industrial towns and the immense negative social impact that the revolution brought there are an explanation in itself as to why the romantic urges and impulses appeared. Differing from Germany, the grounds for rebellion in England were not so much political (England of that period was far more liberal than Germany), but socio-economic. The booming free market economy, the emerging capitalist society and the development of industry and commerce had put man into a repetitive and dull, iron-cast everyday life, topped with intellectual constraints of the Enlightenment. The reaction to that was an explosion of natural instincts, emotion and subjectiveness.

Individualism became the dominant philosophy. The prominent thinkers were thinking up the alternative to contemporary brutal and constraining ways of life; these ideas subsequently lead the artist and the writer to express their subjective, emotive life and make the spectator or reader partake in their own existential struggle. Individualism became a means to retain mental and emotional independence. All this in the name of struggle against the social conditions created by the sheer physical reality that stared the all too necessary, rigorous and vigorous transformation of the human mind pressed by the crowdiness, filth, smog, deprivation, obligations and social injustice (<http://www.marxistsfr.org/ebooks/marcuse/one-dimensional-man.htm> accessed on 08.08.2022).

So, listing some of the prominent elements of that period, such as Wordsworth's Lake Poetry, William Blake's mysticism, the works of Shelley and Coleridge singles out a tendency to bring in a change in the English mind in order to create a social structure that is more acceptable and to bring back humanity in man. To once again restore his passion and his natural instincts that were blunted by the bloodlessness, platitudes and the emptiness of empiricist/rationalist dogma and socio-economic reality of England of the late 18th and early 19th century. „For instance, [William Blake](#) Blake had been dissatisfied since boyhood with the current state of poetry and what he considered the irreligious drabness of contemporary thought.“ (<https://www.britannica.com/art/English-literature/The-Romantic-period> accessed on 08.08.2022). They set out to carry out this task and by doing so they brought England a whole new literary expression. Finally, Byron's Childe Harold is an accumulation of all those tendencies in a single book/character.

The actual start of romanticism in England began with William Wordsworth's and Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads.

They talked about „the spontaneous overflow of feelings“ in the preface. This can be seen as a manifesto of English romanticism ([www.britannica.com/art/Romanticism](http://www.britannica.com/art/Romanticism) accessed on

08.08.2022). Wordsworth and Coleridge divided the work amongst themselves: Wordsworth wrote in a general and simple way and Coleridge wrote in a more dynamic style about nature. In the preface Wordsworth outlined some general notions about what his main object was: to make poetry light and „edible“ so that the general public could reach it.

(Wordsworth 8)

The Two devoted their writing entirely to nature and even did the job of marking it in three different layers each one corresponding to a specific literary/artistic motive typical of that era: Description of the countryside (as a contrast to the overall dissatisfactory urban environment), This contrast was, as we said, one of the founding elements of romantic expression. Diving into nature with a specific frame of mind (seeing it as a source of divine power). Nature is that which gives life its energy (oceans, forests, clouds, mountains, waterfalls, lakes, rivers all give the artist such inspiration that no civic erudite can).

### 3) Childe Harold and English romanticism

Childe Harold's pilgrimage describes a young man searching for his manhood on his long journey. Childe Harold sets sail from home to distant and unknown lands. As a romantic hero, he experiences, praises and cherishes nature. He is a prodigal youngster, has a moody personality and is in want of wandering as a means to ease his hurting soul.

„Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth

Who ne'er in virtues ways did take delight

But spent his days in riot most uncouth

And vex'd with mirth the drowsy ear of Night.“ (Byron 16)

He abandons his native land with the sole purpose of finding two things which he simply could not find in his native land: truth and justice. There is an „ocean“ ahead of him (the symbolics of a long, arduous, unpredictable and dangerous journey ahead). Apart from his native land, he also abandons his mother who he loves and cherishes equally. As he looks back while sailing away, he starts naming all the things he will long for and he clearly states that he sees no joy in earthly pleasures and that he feels a duty to do something higher.

In medieval England, childe was a rank of a young man (from the ranks of nobility) about to become a knight. Harold is a modern Childe, weary of earthly pleasures and in want of an escapade which would transform him into a grown man. So that means he has no definitive destination and he leaves Albion for the sole purpose of finding and forming himself. He travels to many countries: Germany, Portugal, France, Spain Greece and Italy. The theme that perpetually being emphasized is rebellion. Childe is a rebellious hero who fights authority and oppression with passion. While in Spain, he mentions the resistance against Napoleon Bonaparte's dictatorship. It is the same in Greece with the Greek's struggle against the Turkish reign. He always fights for the oppressed against the oppressor. As we said, every act is done in the name of liberty and restoration of man's blunted primordial instincts. Childe is the sole narrator and he describes his journeys. His depictions of nature with whom he is so bedazzled are always entwined with history of the places described. He praises wildlife and at the same time he is giving an impression as if he is chanting to the spirits of the ancients to come out. He often evokes ancient Greek authors and literary characters to give him inspiration.

„Oh, thou in Hellas deemed of heavenly birth,

Muse, formed or fabled at the minister's will“ (Byron 15)

This fusion of history and wildlife is one of the defining elements of romantic literary expression and Childe is one of the most prominent romantic characters. He is not just a character in a literary work, he is a personification of those adventurers and dreamers of the early 19th century who travelled the world in want of finding sense and structure different than of the imposed dogma. He is fascinated by natural beauties of Germany and Greece and takes painful steps to describe them with the utmost fascination and longing. But throughout his journey, he seems to never find any truth or meaning that he so craves for. He searches and sees natural beauty everywhere but he does not seem to find social satisfaction. This is partially a reflection of Byron's own troubles. He suffered a considerable amount of oppression as a child and adolescent from all sides so it is natural that he takes a stand against these things that bother him more precisely because of his traumas. In childhood his poetic instincts were stimulated. At the age of ten his great uncle died and left the family in debt. Byron's father was a violent noble and an alcoholic who did not care much about anything. In almost all of his life he was always under pressure from creditors and he had to struggle to maintain his inheritance. He was often times underfed and he had a limp (Huntington 130). His writing can be considered as propaganda pamphlet against tyranny and oppression written by a socially awkward individual who leaves us with masterfully depicted experiences his struggle and pleasures. He is at the same time a fighter and a mourner. In Greece he is bedazzled by its natural beauties but at the same time disgusted by the terrible social conditions. Childe Harold is a painter who paints mankind that has degraded itself in contrast to the ancients. He represents Byron's own dreams and aspirations. His function is only as a mediator through which these dreams are transmitted.

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,

There is a rapture on the lonely shore,

There is society, where none intrudes,

By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:  
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,  
From these our interviews, in which I steal  
From all I may be, or have been before,  
To mingle with the Universe, and feel  
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal." (Byron 240)

The orgasmic, highly explosive, up-and-down romantic flow of ideas is entirely in correspondence to the vibrant, dynamic and relentless personality whose goal is to break every single boundary that there is. The colossal energy that is being emitted and the strength with which these boundaries are being hit are symbolized by the narrator's subtle and refined, yet at the same time highly potent and captivating outcries and lamentations.

"Awake, ye sons of Spain! Awake! Advance!

Lo! Chivalry, your ancient goddess, cries,

But wields not, as of old, her thirsty lance

Nor shakes her crimson plumage in the skies

Now on the smoke of blazing bolt she flies

And speaks in thunder through yon engine's

Roar

In every peal she calls – "Awake, arise!

Say, is her voice feebler than of yore,

When her war-song was heard on Andalusia's shore?"(Byron 37).

This is a call to the Spanish people to resist Napoleon's invasion. Greater portion of this narrative comes down to evoking the ancient fires, mythological creatures and great historical figures. These apparitions are supposed to remind man of his origin as a passionate, energetic and overall wild being. To once again restore his natural instincts that were up until that point caged-up by the civic customs and mentality. His expression is, of course, filled with pathos and panache.

The last country that he visits before dying is Italy (he will pass away in Rome). His journey through Italy is described in the last of the Cantos (The fourth one).He focuses mostly on Venice since it is the place where the background of the novel Romeo and Juliette (<<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/lord-byron>> accessed on 08.08.2022). He is, again in the romanticist style, describing the spirits of great authors like William Shakespeare. In Arqua he finds the home and tomb of Francesco Petrarca. Each town that he visits is associated with a great Italian writer who was born there. Ferrara is associated with Torquato Tasso. Florence, naturally, with Dante Alighieri and Giovanni Boccaccio. As a rebel, after reaching Rome he is going to lament and protest about all kinds of dictators that ruled the town. He calls it a country and "the city of the soul" making a notion that it is the very heart of civilization. This is a call for its protection and preservation. He states that upon those things depends the entire civilization. So his subsequent death in the City means his transition into its spiritual network. At the very end of the poem he greets us in the following way:

"My task is done—my song hath ceased—my theme

Has died into an echo; it is fit

The spell should break of this protracted dream.

The torch shall be extinguished which hath lit

My midnight lamp—and what is writ, is writ—

Would it be worthier! but I am not now

That which I have been—and my visions flit

Less palpably before me—and the glow

Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.” (Byron 286).

He and his narration are on and the same and the ending of the first presume the death of the latter. He and his work will continue to echo in eternity and Rome will be the epicenter from which his spiritual frequency will vibrate indefinitely. His journey, the struggle that he undertook and life as such has created a force that is unstoppable and is bound to change the face of the world innumerable. A passionate man, true fighter, liberty-lover and ultimately a tragic figure, the spirit that he unleashes after dying will be transforming man relentlessly and unstoppably. The seed of liberty which he has spread with his actions and deeds will, in a never-ending cycle, anew inspire people to bring freshness and enthusiasm into their life and surroundings. Let us now focus our attention to his contemporary antipode: Eugene Onegin.



#### 4) Eugene Onegin/Childe Harold

First, to understand the connection, it is necessary to understand the hows and the whys of Russian romanticism. To that end, we are going to first outline some of its basic elements.

First and foremost, Russian romanticism marks the beginning of modern literature in Russia, as opposed to the English one which already had a long literary tradition (Russia did not see Baroque or Renaissance, neither Classicism nor Rococo). Russian literature as such practically did not exist up until that moment, while the English was in full sway of the spawning civil society (Huntington 100). The language that was most widely in use and which spread from the Kievan Rus was the Church Slavonic and the Orthodox Church had an incredibly strong influence. The Russian writers and authors of the period did not have some real identity and the country was ethnically strongly divided. Just to keep things in perspective: this was also the period in which the rise of the British empire was in full swing. So the adventures of Childe Harold represent an allegorical depiction of the desires for adventure and exploration on part of the prominent members of a fully mature society such as the British one (Huntington 70). By turning our attention towards Russia, we see that the writers that wrote and lived in old Russia did not think of themselves as Russians. The Orthodox church did an effective job of keeping different ethnicities together but a singular identity did not exist. There were large groups of people that spoke different languages and literature was, of course a reflection of that: a gargantuan collection of all sorts of linguistically and stylistically different folktales with no unifying force, all coupled with Orthodox Christian teachings which had a much more didactic than aesthetic function. In stark contrast to that were the works of William Wordsworth, Percy Shelley, and of course, George Byron. To this cultural/literary context along steps in Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin.

Strongly under Byron's Influence (he also divided his work into cantos), Pushkin transformed the way in which literary texts were produced in Russia. The literature became more westernized, so to speak. There was a literal (i.e. literary) spill from the West to the heart of modernization of Russia: Saint Petersburg. Literary expression was transformed in such a way that no longer did the Russians simply cherish and praise their rural surroundings, but they got endowed with the power of thinking over their social position and society in general (a generation of literary rebels (such as Pushkin and Lermontov) was born, inspired by the poetic sparks made by the romantic rebels of Britain and Germany. There is a strong influx of freshness underneath Pushkin's work that makes man deeply reflective and critical towards his social situation. This is a more realistic romanticism than the western one. The latter is always in a kind of an orgasmic grip while the Russian one has a much calmer facade, although far from calm. Russian romanticism is less metaphysical since it is a messenger of a society which is far more „down-to-earth“, that is, has seen a lot less joys and far more sorrows that came as a consequence of their social immobility. The wild, adventurous spirit of Childe Harold can not be found within the likes of Eugene Onegin. The latter is trapped by norms, conventions and the very nature of the space in which he is placed (Pushkin 30).

Alexander Pushkin was the one who united the narrative style and elements of Russian folk tales with a romantic literary expression, thus creating a modern and mature Russian literature capable of keeping up the pace the European one. It is interesting to see how it was modified immediately after being placed in the Russian social context. For one, Pushkin's heroes are not avid adventurers seeking freedom and wildlife like Childe Harold, nor are they enchanted and hopelessly enamoured artists like Goethe's Werther; their representative figure is Eugene Onegin. This implies a rich aristocratic background (while Childe Harold belonged to the lower stratum of society). In contrast to European heroes who went to adventures in the

name of passion and freedom, their motivation for travelling is the escape from the monotony and void of everyday (rural) life or, what the Russians call „handra“ (their equivalent of spleen). We see here a stark contrast between the background of the two literary works in question: one is dull and monotonous, the other is captivating and inviting; one is a place of craving for the battle of the soul, the other is a place where that battle occurs. Being a dandy and an attempted gentleman, Onegin possesses a level of classical literacy, reads Schiller, Goethe and Homer, knows Latin and that knowledge, but he utilises with the sole purpose of wooing the ladies. We see from this a desperate and pathetic attempt of a feudal aristocrat at being a cultivated European gentleman, taking a leaf from the book of the likes of Byron and Wordsworth. The static nature of his surroundings is opposed to a thunderous one of Childe Harold (Byron 30) and it pulls his spirit down like a whirl.

Childe Harold travels and fight for national independence, while Onegin goes to public baths, eats abundant meals and regularly returns to his estate in the early morning hours. He then sleeps until afternoon, gets up and repeats the same dull routine every single day. What does Childe Harold do? He sings, he battles, he travels, he dreams, he inspires.

„Oh, Christ! it is a goodly sight to see What Heaven hath done for this delicious land! What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree! What goodly prospects o'er the hills expand! But man would mar them with an impious hand: And when the Almighty lifts his fiercest scourge 'Gainst those who most transgress his high command, With treble vengeance will his hot shafts urge Gaul's locust host, and earth from fellest foemen purge“ (Byron 9)

Childe Harold lusts for the spiritual nectar of nature. He is so enamored by it that he finds himself almost in a state of trans. The sequence of motives displayed here are testament to

the utter fascination and a religious zeal towards it. He is so ensnared that it occupies his entire being. Onegin, on the other hand, is dunked in boredom and monotony.

„Where is Onegin? Half asleep, Straight from the ball to bed he goes, Whilst Petersburg from slumber deep the drum already doth arouse. The shopman and the pedlar rise and to the Bourse the cabman plies; The Okhtenka with pitcher speeds, Crunching the morning snow she treads; Morning awakes with joyous sound; The shutters open; to the skies In column blue the smoke doth rise; The German baker looks around His shop, a nightcap on his head, And pauses oft to serve out bread.“ (Pushkin 25)

With Onegin, Every day is like this: gray, filled the same pleasures as the previous, dull and void of any meaning. (pay attention to the dynamic, fiery an orgasmic narrative style of Childe Harold as a contrast to this. Onegin is trapped in a repetitive decadent lifestyle and is gradually beginning to get weary of it. The exploits of the adventurous gentlemen of whom he has read put him in a state of even greater frustration (Pushkin 42). There is, of course a shared trait between these two: just like with European romanticism, it's exterior is the projection of the mental state of the characters. That is, the description of it is a projection of feelings of the character. It is the one by which romanticists are saturated. With his focus towards nature, he puts himself to a state of mental isolation (with Childe Harold it reaches extreme levels). The literary representation of this condition is far from the energetic and adventurous one that is presented in Byron's Harold and Onegin as a prominent character of russian romanticism does drop out of the category of romantic heroes since they lack the "real" idealistic traits, zeal and a simplistic outlook. They can be seen as „realistic“ characters with a romantic driving force which always ends up being dissipated by the torrent of russian social reality, and ends up being the force of destruction which ultimately gives us a scenario worthy of a classic tragedy. Onegin pretends that he is interested in Tatiana's sister

Olga in to order mock Lensky and the sensible and irritated Lenski takes this seriously and challenges him to a duel. The meaning of the atmosphere and the place of the duel is perhaps the deepest symbolic of the whole novel. The space and atmosphere of an early, foggy morning symbolizes the return of grayness to Onegin's life and the shift in sight (in a typical romantic style, the space is again a projection of the psychological condition of the character. Just like the space in Childe Harold, which ). The wind and the cold surrounding them add to the spleen (the windmill in the background is the apprehension of the absurd and the pier is the symbol of anticipation).

„My second!" cried in turn Eugene, "Behold my friend Monsieur Guillot; To this arrangement can be seen, No obstacle of which I know. Although unknown to fame mayhap, He's a straightforward little chap." Zaretski bit his lip in wrath, But to Vladimir Eugene saith: "Shall we commence?" "Let it be so," (Pushkin 117)

„He on his bosom gently placed his hand, and fell. His clouded eye. Not agony, but death expressed. So from the mountain lazily the avalanche of snow first bends, Then glittering in the sun descends. The cold sweat bursting from his brow, to the youth Eugene hurried now gazed on him, called him. Useless care! He was no more! The youthful bard For evermore had disappeared. The storm was hushed. The blossom fair Was withered ere the morning light The altar flame was quenched in night.“ (Pushkin 118)

Do we notice here the same energetic and vigorous narration as we do with Childe Harold? Certainly. But Childe seems to be doing a psychological dance with his surroundings, while Onegin is struggling and with it and finds it unbearable. While Harold dies in Italy doing his duties as a christian disciple and Goethe's Werther commits suicide for failed love, Onegin at the same time because of Lensky's girlfriend (who he actually didn't want) kills his best

friend. Onegin and Lensky story, though tragic in itself, is far from the glamour, glitter and general greatness that accompanies the death of a romantic hero (actually Lenski's death represents a tragic pathos and what deepens the absurd is precisely the fact that it all started from a small joke by Onegin).

Tatiana as well as Onegin originate from wealthy families as landowner's descendants. Like Onegin, she is stuck in boredom and greed, reading Richardson's novels that develop her imagination, and thanks to which she builds her vision of an "ideal" man (Pushkin 45). When she sees Onegin, she falls in love at the first glance because he looks like an embodiment of her vision that she built while reading these romantic novels. She is static at her estate, and Childe is dynamic in his adventures. Onegin and Tatiana absorb the atmosphere of their estates and are far from adventures, disturbance and noise. Swamps, tumulus lakes and an idle life in an old castle full of Imperial portraits are not exactly background that one would expect from a „classic“ romantic scenario. Its room is made of oak and contains two closets, a table and a sofa. In one closet there are accounts and other alcoholic drinks. All this is rather obsolete and reflects to a certain level of the state of Onegin's mind. Cluttered by the old-fashioned way of life and reflecting his position in want for freshness and change that was supposed to enter his life. It never comes. The primitive, semi-feudal surroundings burden him with social obligations and constrain him from following the footsteps of the likes of Childe Harold. This apparent contrast serves as a marker between the Russian and English romanticisms and different cultural contexts in which they appeared. The main difference with regards to its English contemporary parallel is: the slow birth of civic society (late as opposed to the English one), the development of civic culture and customs within the context of feudal power that is still persistent but weakening, the entrance of European literary and cultural trends into Russia, masses of illiterate, rural people (90% of the population of Russia at that time lived in the villages), serfdom that does not show signs of ending, the strong

presence of Christian Orthodox ideology, the legacy of Russian folk tales and Saint Petersburg as the center of modernization/ Europeanization of Russia have given Russian romanticism its peculiarity. Depictions of nature are more refined and less orgasmic than it is the case with English romanticism, and the relationship between the village and the city is described to a great extent. On the other hand, the characters are much more bulky and raw.

„To Love all ages lowly bend,  
 But the young unpolluted heart  
 His gusts should fertilize, amend,  
 As vernal storms the fields athwart.  
 Youth freshens beneath Passion's showers,  
 Develops and matures  
 its powers,  
 And thus in season the rich field  
 Gay flowers and luscious fruit doth yield.  
 But at a later, sterile age,  
 The solstice of our earthly years,  
 Mournful Love's deadly trace appears  
 As storms which in chill autumn rage  
 And leave a marsh the fertile ground  
 And devastate the woods around.“ (Pushkin 159)

## 5) Conclusion

With all said and done, we can sum things up by singling out Childe Harold as a typical representative of English romanticism. He is energetic, imaginative, impulsive, relentless and uncompromising. Him and the characters like him it brought to European literature a gush of youthful freshness and enthusiasm. It made her free of the imposed boundaries and set up a new way of thinking for the writers of that period. Eugene Onegin represents precisely what romantic heroes of the west inside the Russian (that, is semi-feudal) context were. Beneath that panache and pathos, they were socially immobile and frustrated people. Childe Harold as a western romantic hero, is full of zeal, vigour and life, Eugene Onegin is a spiritual mire praying and hoping for a fresh influx of air. Put inside the romantic context, we can think of Onegin therefore as a character that is, in a sense, a deprivation of that gilded patina with which romantic heroes like Childe Harold were covered. As opposed to the Russian literary context, their struggles and expectations and their expression through literature seem to originate from a seemingly religious zeal. The Russian cultural context and literary expression remained within the boundaries socio-economic relations and interchanges, adding to them the Sisyphian struggle to escape. The aristocratic country estates are places where relationships between humans complicate or resolve (they can be considered as episodes of revolution in terms of interpersonal relationships), that is, they represent peripety. A constant shift of descriptions between between the open and closed surroundings as opposed to the wondrous natural beauty painted by Byron, the aristocratic interior as opposed to wilderness, the village as a place of reflection, tranquility mixed with unrest as opposed to Childe Harold with his never-ending orgasmic grip, patheticness, pathos, fervor, irrationality, hot-headedness and overall zeal. What did we say about the common traits of romanticism? What are the ever-present elements? Tragic death, pathological love, mysticism, supernatural phenomena



and medieval zeitgeist. The English romantic writers were considerably less realistic from the perspective of the Russian culture, philosophy and thought. They were free of the social burden of semi-feudal Russia, they flew on the wings of liberalism and did not carry that immense burden that the Russian society in general seemed to be overloaded with. It helped to produce a very specific literature corresponding to a very specific yet universal state of mind. The one that sought to bring about in literature repetitive vigour, optimism, freshness and zeal, like a phoenix in perpetual youth, the constant resurging of new blood and energy through dreams, yearning and adventure. Onegin was endowed only with yearning. That was what made him a pathetic, but still a romantic hero. Childe Harold is Eugene Onegin's accomplishment.

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7) CHILDE HAROLD AND EUGENE ONEGIN AS REPRESENTATIVES OF ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN ROMANTICISM (summary)

Both characters represent a specific period in time and two very specific and different cultures. The Russian character belongs to a semi-feudal society, the English character is a product of a civic society in its cradle. The period is the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. A time of great changes in society and technology. Literature followed the pace and was a reflection of these deep changes. The revolutionary outburst of romantic novels was a messenger of deep philosophical and societal changes in that part of the world. The cultural influence and interchange is strong. But the main difference is that English romanticism is dynamic. The Russian romanticism is static.

Key words: romanticism, literature, England, Russia, Byron, Pushkin, Goethe, revolution, rebellion,

8) CHILDE HAROLD I EVGENJIN ONJEGIN KAO PREDSTAVNICI RUSKOG I ENGLESKOG ROMANTIZMA (Sažetak)

Oba lika predstavljaju specifičnu epohu u historiji i dvije veoma različite i specifične kulture tog perioda. Lik iz ruskog romana pripada polfeudalnom društvu, lik iz engleskog romana je proizvod građanskog društva u nastajanju. Vrijeme u kojem se dva književna djela pojavljuju je kraj osamnaestog i početak devetnaestog stoljeća. Bilo je to vrijeme velikih promjena u društvu i tehnologiji. Književnost je išla ukorak sa tim promjenama. Revolucionarni krik prisutan u književnim djelima romantizma bio je glasnik dubokih društvenih i filozofskih promjena tog vremena. Kulturološki utjecaj i razmjena jaki su, ali suštinska razlika je u tome da je engleski romantizam dinamičan, a ruski statičan.

Ključne riječi: romantizam, književnost, Engleska, Rusija, Byron, Puškin,  
Goethe, revolucija, pobuna





