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FRAGMENTATION IN BYRON'S *THE GIAOUR* AS A MODEL
FOR LERMONTOV'S *A HERO OF OUR TIME*

Фрагментарность в «Гяуре» Байрона как модель для «Героя нашего
времени» Лермонтова

Аннотация

М.Ю. Лермонтов никогда не скрывал своего увлечения западной литературой и особенно поэзией лорда Байрона. Сходство личностей двух поэтов, а также некоторых типов персонажей и мотивов в их произведениях было установлено уже в академической литературе XIX века. Автор данной статьи стремится доказать наличие связи между поэмой «Гяур» и романом «Герой нашего времени» с точки зрения литературной фрагментарности, в частности пропусков и пробелов, обнаруженных в повествовании, структуре и хронологии двух текстов.

Ключевые слова: литературные фрагменты, Байрон, Лермонтов, романтизм

“This broken tale was all we knew”
Byron: *The Giaour*

It is well known that Mikhail Lermontov was interested in Western (mostly French, German and English) literature, and presumably through his French-language readings and because of Pushkin's enthusiasm, he encountered the poetry of Lord George Gordon Noel Byron, a major figure of the English Romantic Movement. The effect Byron had on the young Lermontov is a frequent and thoroughly researched topic in the literature, from numerous angles: connections and differences between certain characters and works, way of thinking, common themes and motifs, as well as how this influence is different from the one Byron had on Pushkin. Udodov provides an extensive overview of Russian literature and the connections between Lermontov and Byron in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in his monumental 1973 monograph, focusing mainly on his poem *Demon* [«Демон»] and novel *A Hero of Our Time* [«Герой нашего времени»]. Spasovich discusses the Byronic patterns of the artistic world of Pushkin and Lermontov in his 1911 book, comparing Lermontov's *Demon* to Byron's *Cain*, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and the French romantic poet Alfred de Vigny's *Éloa, ou La Sœur des Anges* [Éloa, or the Sister of the Angels]. Rozanov believes that the Byronic foundations in Lermontov's works should be examined together with the philosophy of Rousseau [ROZANOV 1914]. In his opinion, compared to other Byronists, there is no one closer to Byron in talent and spirituality than Lermontov. Zhirmunsky's 1924

book *Байрон и Пушкин* ["Byron and Pushkin"] provides a comprehensive summary of Byron's influence embedded in 19th century Russian literature, meticulously tracing how Byronic elements, figures, and structures find their way into Pushkin's oeuvre and how Pushkin transforms them in his own works. Eikhenbaum claims that while Pushkin appreciated Byron, Lermontov found something in Byron's oeuvre that he thought was missing from Russian literature [EIKHENBAUM 1986]. According to Nolman, Lermontov continued the tendency Pushkin started: he brought in themes, characters, and motifs from European literature in such a way that his writings still retained their "Russian originality" [NOLMAN 1941]. In his 1941 work, Tomasevsky discusses how Pechorin and Onegin are different from other literary figures of European literature, including the character of *Childe Harold*. All the above mentioned works approach the connection between Byron and Lermontov from either a thematical and motivic point of view or focusing on similarities and differences of their belief systems and poetic personas. In this paper, I aim to prove that a structural parallel which can be studied from the perspectives of literary fragments might also exist.

The barely teenage Lermontov first discovered Byron's artistic world through French language readings and the Russian translations by Zhukovsky, who is credited with translating Byron's narrative poem *The Prisoner of Chillon* into Russian, which also marked the introduction and foundation of this genre in Russian literature [LANDSDOWN 2007: 73]. The American Slavist scholar, Allen compares the "Byronic period" of Pushkin and Lermontov, emphasizing that the two Russian poets were struck by "Byronism" at different points in their literary careers and in different stages of their lives: Pushkin encountered the works of the then-living Byron as an already mature author, while Lermontov learned about the somewhat mystified figure of the then-deceased Romantic poet at a very young and sensitive age. Allen examined the traces of Byronic influence in Lermontov's narrative poetry and concluded that although we undoubtedly discover numerous quotations, adopted motifs, characters, and similarities in worldview, Lermontov nevertheless had a kind of ambivalence towards Byron, which takes his work beyond romanticism and towards realism [ALLEN 2007: 59–60].

Both Byron and Lermontov have several poems entitled "Fragment" in their oeuvre, which is not uncommon in 19th century poetry. In case of Lermontov, unfortunately we have no proof, however, from Byron's correspondence it becomes evident that he thought of literary fragments as something innovative and valuable. He does not only refer to his own poems this way, but he labelled his contemporaries' works as fragments, too. This is best explained by the fact that the publication of his contemporary and friend, Coleridge's poem *Kubla Khan* was encouraged by Byron himself [NEWLYN 2002]. Based on all this, I think a comparative study is well-justified from the perspective of fragmentation since it can be found both structurally and thematically in both poets' oeuvres.

To map the possible connections, I took the following aspects into account when choosing two works for comparison. A comparison of fragmented structures and narrative techniques would be better observable in prose; however, Byron did not

write novels or short stories (except an unfinished one), so his narrative or epic poems were the only options. First, it was important to examine whether fragmentation was indicated either in the title or in a subtitle. Then, I checked the number and personality of the narrators in certain narrative poems. In both *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*, the events are narrated in the first person singular by a narrator who likes to become the focus of attention instead of his hero. Although his identity is not precisely defined, his voice has often been confused with the personal perspective of the author, Byron, himself. However, there is one narrative poem by Byron in which we can find multiple narrators and conflicting points of view, which may evoke the narrative technique Lermontov used in his novel, *A Hero of Our Time*. This is one of Byron's "Oriental verse tales", written in 1813 entitled *The Giaour*. This narrative poem is also suitable for comparison with *A Hero of Our Time* since *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan* tell journeys that follow a linear chronology of geographical journeys, and in *The Giaour* we encounter a fragmented chronology that is fundamentally uncharacteristic of Byron's poetry. The linear array of the stanzas does not present the events in a chronological order, just as the chapters in Lermontov's novel do not either. What makes this poem an even stronger candidate for comparison is the fact that Lermontov not only certainly knew and read *The Giaour* in English, but also aspired to translate certain parts of it into Russian in 1830.¹

The influence *The Giaour* had on Lermontov is undoubtable, however, it has not yet been traced in *A Hero of Our Time* to my knowledge.² It is important to note that we can also find further motivic parallels between with Byron's *The Giaour* and Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*.³ However, due to the space limitations of the present paper, the main focus here remains on the similarities of narration, chronology and structure.

¹ Even before Lermontov, Pushkin was also captivated by *The Giaour* and made his own translation in 1820, which is regarded as Pushkin's first known literary translation. However, most scholars agree that neither Pushkin's nor Lermontov's attempt was more than a literal translation of the original text. Three more translations were carried out after that: in 1953 by Georgy Sengel, in 1960 by Vasily Betaki, and in 1981 by S. Ilyin [ILCHENKO 2014: 4]. András Soproni believes that the sixteen-year-old Lermontov probably translated *The Giaour* as a school assignment, along with Byron's works *Darkness* and *Napoleon's Farewell*, as well as the first stanza of *Beppo*. Lermontov himself called these "translations in prose" [перевод в прозе], Soproni claims that he tried to preserve the original artistic means in them and later used some motifs in his own poems [SOPRONI 2024].

² According to Ágnes Dukkón, it can be principally retraced in an early narrative poem of Lermontov entitled *Boyar Orsa* [Боярин Орша], published in 1835. Dukkón identifies a similar hero type and points out that the connection is evident in the conflicting value systems, where there are no winners, only losers at the end of the poem [DUKKÓN 1997: 106].

³ The interweaving motifs of sea and death, horse and death, elements of constant movement and travel, and mythological/supernatural creatures. Similarities can also be discovered in the descriptions of the main characters, their demonic features, and their relationship with female characters. In both works, the contrast between East and West, the thematization of Eastern philosophy and worldview, specifically predestination, is strongly present, too. I am discussing all these motivic parallels in another article.

The term *giaour*, used by Byron in the title of the work, got into the lexicon of the English language in the 16th century. It comes from the Turkish pronunciation of the Persian word *gaour*, meaning “infidel, fire-worshipper”, and originally referred to the followers of the Zoroastrian religion. In Turkish it is used mainly to refer to Christians with such frequency that it is no longer necessarily an insult [ONIONS 1966]. The word *giaour* can also be found in the Russian language, but it is rather derogatory [PREOBRAZHENSKY 1951]. Lermontov himself uses this term in the chapter “Bela” of the novel *A Hero of Our Time* (but it can be found in his poem “Ismail Bey” [Измаил-Бей] as well):

За мной неслись четыре казака; уж я слышал за собою крики **гяуров**,
и передо мною был густой лес. [...] Через несколько мгновений
поднимаю их – и вижу: мой Карагез летит, развевая хвост, вольный как
ветер, а **гяуры** далеко один за другим тянутся по степи на изму-
ченных конях. [ЛЕРМОНТОВ 1981: 192; курсив мой]

Four Cossacks dashed after me. I could actually hear the cries of the **giaours**
behind me, and in front of me there was a dense forest. [...] After a few
moments I looked up again, and there was my Karagyz flying along. I could
actually hear the cries of the **giaours** behind me, and in front of me there
was a dense forest. [...] After a few moments I looked up again, and there
was my Karagyz flying along, his tail waving – free as the wind; and the
giaours, on their jaded horses, were trailing along far behind, one after
another, across the steppe. [LERMONTOV 2008; emphasis mine]

The sentences above are spoken by the mysterious and exotic character Kazbich, when he tells Azamat one of his adventures with his beloved horse named Karagyz. He uses the word to refer to his pursuers, and from the context the negative connotation is absolutely evident.

In case of *The Giaour*, the fragmentary nature of the poem is indicated in the subtitle: *The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale*. The work is one of Byron’s narrative poems with an oriental theme, and its peculiar characteristic is that the exotic is mixed with Gothic elements. The original manuscript consisted of only 407 lines, but Byron continuously expanded it in various later editions, until it reached a 1,334 line length. Even though he had tremendous success with this poem, he still might have not been satisfied with the result since in one of his letters, he referred to it as “foolish fragments” [BYRON 1974:105]. It is not regularly divided into chapters or parts, but there are visual breaks signalled with asterisks in the text.

The reader is introduced to the relatively simple but fragmented chronological plot through several narrators with opposing worldviews. The use of fragmented chronology and multiple points of view is unique in Byron’s “Oriental tales” and in his oeuvre. This idea comes from a more or less forgotten representative of the first generation of English Romantic poets, Samuel Rogers. Byron dedicates his work to Rogers, so the general opinion in literature is that the structure of Rogers’s narrative poem *The Voyage of Columbus* (a brief summary of the story in the preface,

followed by a chain of fragments) served as a model for the structure of *The Giaour* [WATKINS 1985: 874].

The hero of the narrative poem is a wealthy Christian nobleman, referred to only as the "Giaour", who has a love affair with Leila, a member of the harem of a Turkish lord, Hassan. Their romance is discovered by Leila's master who, as punishment for her infidelity, executes Leila by throwing her into the sea. The Giaour takes revenge for the death of his lover, and while Hassan is looking for a new wife, he kills him. Then he retires to a monastery, where he makes a confession to a monk. The narrative poem is often considered to be a tale of forbidden love and revenge. However, the poem has also been interpreted as a blurred allegory of the situation in Greece, in which Hassan embodies the Ottoman Empire; Leila represents the beautiful Greece that has been destroyed by Ottoman tyranny; and the Giaour stands for the helpless Western Europe, which, after failing to provide meaningful help, resorts to senseless violence in revenge [WATKINS 1985: 877].

The author's intention behind the use of the fragmented form employed in the poem can perhaps be explained by a desire for a kind of dramatic effect, mysterious atmosphere, and authenticity. The dramatic character may arise from the fact that in many cases we find gaps at important sections of the plot, which definitely increase tension and suspense. For example, let us see how the execution of Leila is narrated. First of all, this event takes up only 14 stanzas of the poem, which is very brief compared to the fact that it causes the main conflict of the plot. This part is divided into two verses and is narrated by the fisherman who also talks about how he was approached to take part in the execution as part of the story of the actual death of Leila, which is actually longer than the description of the execution itself. The division between the two parts is also visual because of the use of asterisks between the verses. In the first part, the fisherman uses metonymy and fragmented imagery (describing only their body parts, clothing items and weapons) to refer to the group of people asking to use his boat to throw Leila into the sea.

I hear the sound of coming **feet**,
But not **a voice** mine **ear** to greet;
More near – each **turban** I can scan,
And silver-sheathed **ataghan**;
The foremost of the band is seen
An emir by his garb of green:
[BYRON 1963: 159; emphasis mine]

We also find dialogues between the fisherman and Hassan's crew. The dramatic effect of these parts comes from the omission that can be detected in these dialogues, the actual purpose of why Hassan's people want the boat of the fisherman is not mentioned, readers have to guess:

‘Ho! Who art thou?’ – ‘This low salam
Replies of Moslem faith I am.’
‘The **burden** ye so gently bear,
Seems one that claims your utmost care,
And, doubtless, holds some **precious freight**,
My humble bark would gladly wait.
[BYRON 1963: 160; emphasis mine]

Leila, the victim is also not mentioned specifically, but the words “burden” and “precious freight” are used to refer to her. Then, we find 10 lines that an unidentified person, one of Hassan’s crew, says to the fisherman as the boat reaches the exact spot for the execution. The tension is raised since at the end of this verse, we have an incomplete line, where the missing parts are signalled with asterisks:

‘Thou speakest sooth; they skiff unmoor,
And waft us from the silent shore;
Nay, leave the sail still furled, and ply
The nearest oar that’s scattered by,
And midway to those rocks where sleep
The channeled waters dark and deep.
Rest from your task – so – bravely done,
Of course had been right swiftly run;
Yet ‘tis the longest voyage, I trow,
That one of – ***

Sullen **it** plunged, and slowly sank,
The calm wave rippled to the bank;
I watched **it** as **it** sank, methought
Some motion from the current caught
Bestirred **it** more, – ‘twas but the beam
That checkered o’er the living stream:
I gazed, till vanishing from view,
Like lessening pebble it withdrew;
Still less and less, a speck of white
That gemmed the tide, then mocked the sight;
And all its hidden secrets sleep,
Known but to Genii of the deep,
Which, trembling in their coral caves,
They dare not whisper to the waves.
[BYRON 1963: 160; emphasis mine]

As we can see in the segment above, when Leila is thrown into the sea, the fisherman refers to her with the singular, neuter, third-person pronoun “it”, making Leila not just a victim of violence, but a nameless and voiceless sacrifice. This omission can strengthen the dramatic effect of the execution: the reader must piece the event

together from these small references and based on the advertisement at the beginning of the poem.

Fragments can create mystical, mysterious atmosphere which along with the ambivalent, plays a prominent role in Romantic literature. Texts composed with constant interruptions, ellipses, omissions, where fragmentation is present in the structure, thought or imagery, may be suitable for expressing something supernatural and mystical [CHRISTIE 2016]. In both *The Giaour* and *A Hero of Our Time*, we can find themes and motifs like sin, death, and predestination that are difficult to express with words, so trying to somehow put them to words might cause fragmentation in structure.

By the authentic character of a fragment, I mean the artistic "practice" or "trick" when the author indicates to the reader in a preface, afterword, or in a footnote that they found or heard the story in an already fragmentary form and that they rather present themselves as only a kind of editor. As already mentioned above, in the case of *The Giaour*, the fragmentary nature ("disjointed fragments") is indicated in the "advertisement", the short instruction in prose at the beginning of the work. What is more, at the end of the poem, Byron attached a footnote with information about the origin of the plot and why the poem is fragmented:

I heard it **by accident** recited by one of the coffee-house storytellers who abound in the Levant, and sing or recite their narratives. – The additions and interpolations by the translator will be easily distinguished from the rest by the want of Eastern imagery; and I regret that my memory has retained so **few fragments** of the original.

[BYRON 1963: 184; emphasis mine]

The expression "by accident" immediately draws our attention to a common romantic "trick" that is also characteristic of 19th century Russian literature. This element of randomness was also used by Pushkin in the fictional origin story of *The Tales of the Late Ivan Petrovich Belkin* [«Повести покойного Ивана Петровича Белкина»], and in various short stories by Gogol and Turgenev. Drozda also pointed out that, according to the fictional origin story, *A Hero of Our Time* as a novel also comes together almost "accidentally" [DROZDA 1985: 32]. The travelling officer who is the anonymous narrator of Lermontov's novel originally set out the goal of writing a travel journal, which turns into a novel focusing on Pechorin right in front of the reader. It seems that this change of the planned genre is caused by a series of totally random, unexpected events: first, meeting Maksim Maksimich, who tells a story about his friend, secondly, accidentally meeting Maksim Maksimich again, then that particular friend from the story, finally, Pechorin being cold and rude to Maksim Maksimich, which leads the travelling officer to acquire Pechorin's diaries from Maksim Maksimich. Based on Drozda's approach to randomness in the novel, Kroó suggests in her recent monograph about *A Hero of Our Time* that by emphasizing the unpredictability of real life, literature can go beyond simply representing life as anticipated, whether through artistic constructs or real-life experiences. She claims that the novel can reflect the chaos and unpredictability

of life, which allows it to transcend the limitations of conventional realism [KROÓ 2020: 95].

We know from his preface to Pechorin's diary, that the travelling officer edited the diary before publishing, just like Byron, who also indicates in the footnote quoted above that the translator might have made modifications and even additions to the original text. He explains the fragmentary nature of the poem; its shortcomings and possible omissions might have been caused by the limitations of human memory. This is also not without precedent in romantic poetry: let us think of Coleridge's poem *Kubla Khan*.⁴ The plot of *The Giaour* came to the author through the intermediary of a translator. Then Byron specifically emphasizes that the story he heard, which he was finally able to recall in his memory during the period of creation, is also only a "few fragments of the original". Although the footnote emphasizes that the coffeehouse storytellers sing or recite their stories, we have no precise information as to whether Byron heard the story in prose or in the form of a song, whether there was a change in genre, as in the case of *A Hero of Our Time*, when Lermontov also apologizes to the reader in a footnote for turning Kazbich's song into a poem, even though it was told to him in prose.

The different and often completely opposite points of view allow the reader to objectively interpret the events and characters. At least four different voices can be distinguished in the work: the voices of the poet, the Muslim fisherman, the Christian monk, and the giaour we hear in first person singular in his confession. At this point, it is definitely worth noting that Leila's voice is completely absent from the poem just like Bela's or Princess Mary's and the other female characters' perspective are missing from *A Hero of Our Time*. In my opinion, it can be stated that in *The Giaour* we see a rudimentary version of the narrative structure of Lermontov's novel. In *A Hero of Our Time*, we also begin to get to know and understand the hero's personality and thinking from the external point of view and then we gradually move towards Pechorin's own, internal perspective. Firstly, the travelling officer conveys Pechorin to the reader from the perspective of Maksim Maksimich, in the next part he adds his own observations and experiences, which are followed by Pechorin's personal point of view, diary entries, and confessions about himself. This structure is definitely more complex than the two separate external points of view and the internal world revealed in the Giaour's confession in Byron's poem, but it certainly shows a parallel, and it is also significant that Lermontov's novel is also characterised by only male perspectives.

⁴ In the preface, Coleridge explains the subtitle of his poem ("A Vision in a Dream. A Fragment") and how the complete poem appeared to him in an opium dream. After waking up, while writing down the poem, he was disturbed and therefore was unable to finish it. Coleridge did not publish the poem for decades, and even then, only did so because of Byron, who saw serious value in it. However, whether this story is true, or whether there was actually serious editing behind the fragmentary nature of *Kubla Khan*, has never been conclusively proven by scholars, and indeed, the identity of the person who arrived "from Porlock on business" and disturbed the poet while he was writing remains one of the greatest literary mysteries to this day [NEWLYN 2002].

At the beginning of the poem, an unidentified lyrical speaker also appears and delivers a eulogy in the first 180 lines over Greece, once bastion of democracy, but at the time of the plot, a prey to tyrants. This section is characterized by a sense of longing and nostalgia, but we also find bizarre poetic imagery in it, for example, when the lyrical speaker praises the beauty of a dead woman's body. Furthermore, we can state that in *The Giaour* the narrative emphasis is perhaps not on the plot of the narrative poem itself, but rather on the contrasts and common features between the different points of view. Both the fisherman and the friar are not only narrators, but also characters in the story at the same time, just like Maksim Maksimich in *A Hero of Our Time*. Even though they come from different backgrounds, both the fisherman and the friar seem to evaluate the Giaour and his actions similarly: neither can understand him. We witness the same phenomenon in *A Hero of Our Time*: although Maksim Maksimich likes Pechorin, even he regards him and his actions as unusual. This might be explained by the heroes' complete isolation and alienation from the environment and society they live in.

Although, the poem has reversed a usual orientalist point of view (looking at the "exotic other" from a Western perspective), since the fisherman narrator is part of the foreign culture, most postcolonial scholars like Edward Said agree that Byron's "Oriental verse tales" are idealised and stereotypical representations of the mysterious and fictionalised East [SAID 1978]. The "exotic other" and the "mystified elsewhere" is the Caucasus Mountains in 19th century Russian literature. In *A Hero of Our Time*, we see the usual orientalist perspective (outsider looking at the "other" culture), with Maksim Maksimich's point of view as a kind of in-between perspective. However, it can be evident that Lermontov uses this usual orientalist perspective to show a mirror to society and to ridicule it. Originally, the travelling officer set educational purpose of his writings to share his experiences with the public who know so little about life in the Caucasus Mountains. The story of Bela and Pechorin would have been only a short, temporary digression for this travel journal. However, after that, the traveling officer no longer tries to write down any more stories – mostly because at this point the travelogue has already begun to develop into a novel. As he progresses on his journey, the anonymous narrator's interest in travel itself decreases, the extremely detailed and vivid travel descriptions at the beginning of the chapter "Bela" become increasingly scarce, and in the chapter "Maksim Maksimich" he skips the landscape descriptions with explicit ellipsis and turns his attention to the personality of Pechorin.

Despite the multiple narrators and different points of view, external and internal perspectives, the reader can feel that it is not possible to get the full picture of the Giaour's and Pechorin's complex personalities. It might be explained by the fact that they are struggling to understand themselves, the motivation behind their actions and they are in constant conflict with themselves. However, we also know that in case of both works, the reader is presented with only parts of these characters' stories. In case of Pechorin, the anonymous narrator writes in his introduction to Pechorin's diary that "I have inserted in this book only those portions of the diary which refer

to Pechorin's sojourn in the Caucasus. There still remains in my hands a thick writing-book in which he tells the story of his whole life" [LERMONTOV 2008].

The fisherman's narration begins with a description of the beach, during which we see the Giaour on horseback for the first time. We find a reference to time in the text:

Till Port Leone's safer shore
Receives him by the lovely light
That best becomes an Eastern **night**.
[BYRON 1963: 155; emphasis mine]

Later, the narrator clarifies further, it is not on an ordinary night, but the eve of an important holiday:

To-night – set Rhamazami's sun –
To-night – the Bairam feast's begun –
[BYRON 1963: 156]

This is the 9th month of the Islamic lunar calendar, during which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. Its name comes from the word *ramida*, which means "dryness, heat". The month of Ramadan commemorates the revelation of God's will to the Prophet Muhammad. According to tradition, God gave the Quran from heaven to the Prophet Muhammad, who retreated to Mount Hira to meditate and fast. According to Islamic belief, during that time the gates of hell are closed and the demons are chained, so this month is a time of peace and spiritual purification, despite the hardships [ADIL 2016]. The timing of the event is also significant from a chronological perspective, as the Giaour appears immediately after the holiday, which may also foreshadow his diabolical qualities: the gates of hell have opened, the demons have been unleashed. The other holiday mentioned, Bairam's feast, is a holiday which commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son to God [ADIL 2016]. This is also significant from the point of view of the plot, as it foreshadows the execution of an innocent character, Leila's sacrificial role.

After this, we find several jumps in time, both to the past and the future: the narrator recalls Hassan's childhood but also describes the deserted, ruined palace after Hassan's death, which is both a clear foreshadowing of the Giaour vicious attack and a vivid example of the appearance of the ruin motif in the romantic fragment. Most scholars agree that in the 18th and 19th centuries the ruin motif clearly became an unavoidable, central entity – whether it is about visual arts or literature. It can be stated that the fragment and the ruin are clearly related concepts: on the one hand, due to the connection of the part vs. whole problem that can be perceived in both, and on the other hand, due to the temporality that is emphasized in both the fragment and the ruin [BÖHME 1989]. The description of the ruins in *The Giaour* contains familiar elements: although the speaker first identifies it as a tomb, it turns out that this life has not disappeared, nature has slowly taken over the building left behind by people. Certain rooms and parts of the palace have been taken over by animals. In my opinion, the descriptions of the ruins in the work serve mostly

to create a dramatic effect; by describing the former living space abandoned after Hassan's death, the narrator projects the Giaour's reckoning deed.

Although the main characters' death is revealed at different points in the works (in *The Giaour* it is the last six stanzas, while in *A Hero of Our Time* Pechorin dies in the preface to the Diary), we find similarities in the narration of these events, too. In both works, it is extremely brief, almost an essentially insignificant fact presented by the narrators. The travelling officer mentions it in a single sentence: "I learned not long ago that Pechorin had died on his way back from Persia." [LERMONTOV 2008]. It is important to mention for only one reason: the anonymous narrator can now publish Pechorin's diary so that his life can serve as a lesson for readers. Zsófia Szilágyi sees the significance of placing the death of the protagonist in the middle of the novel in that the plot cannot of course end with the death of the protagonist, and if we consider the plot as a model of human life defined by linearity and closed by death, we must define it as unfinished [SZILÁGYI 2002: 19]. In Byron's work, on the other hand, after his confession to the monk, in the last six stanzas we read about the death of the Giaour, which seems insignificant because he took his secrets with him to his anonymous grave; in fact, not even the friar who heard his confession knows his name or sees him as anything more than a murderer. The significance of the lines that conclude the work lies rather in the fact that the narrator himself characterizes the story as a fragment:

This **broken tale** was all we knew
Of her he loved, or him he slew.
[BYRON 1963: 184; emphasis mine]

The fact that Lermontov himself translated excerpts of Byron's narrative poem proves beyond any doubt that he knew *The Giaour* and thought about it. I believe that the aspects presented above in this paper convincingly illustrate the relationship between Byron's *The Giaour* and Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*, which we find in the examination of the narration, chronology and structure. After examining certain examples from Byron's narrative poem and Lermontov's novel, it can be stated that the structure of the work, built from omissions and fragments, cannot be the result of the brevity of the authors' life, but is the result of a well-thought-out, elaborated authorial concepts. In my opinion, fragmentation plays an important role in both *The Giaour* and *A Hero of Our Time*: besides creating a mysterious atmosphere and dramatic effect, it emphasises the alienation of the heroes and the complexity of their personalities. The omission in narrating certain events and the fragmented chronology also encourage the readers' active participation and interpretation.

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