

THE ROLE AND STYLISTIC INNOVATIONS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE IN WORLD POETRY

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Abstract

This article focuses on the legendary personage of world literature, the creator of a number of new genres, a professional American writer, a genius who merged poetic harmony with metaphorical order, a logic writer, a pilgrim in the maze of the unconscious and a man whose works were of little interest for his contemporaries. Moreover, it reveals the literary work of American poet and writer Edgar Allan Poe is of great interest for the literary critics and translators all over the world. Poe's poetry, his main passion, brought him a modest income, so His contribution to the world literature is undoubted, literary critics, his ideas still have an impact on the world culture. His role in world poetry, as well as influence on Russian poetry, namely his stylistic innovations and translation problems of his works.

Keywords: iconic figure, Irish descent, public school, West Point Military Academy, contemporary, tendency, literary heritage, emotional connotations.

Introduction

An iconic figure of world literature, the founder of a number of new genres, America's first professional writer, a master who immeasurably combined poetic genius and mathematical harmony, a knight of logic, a wanderer in the unconscious maze, a man whose work was of little contemporary interest and will always be remembered by posterity Edgar Allan Poe.

Edgar Allan Poe was born on January 19, 1809. His father, David Poe, of Irish descent, soon left the family and little is known of him. His mother, Elizabeth Arnold Poe, an English woman, was a talented and popular actress. But while performing in 1811 on tour in Richmond, Virginia, she fell ill and died. She was twenty-four years old and had three children who after her passing were taken into different families. Edgar was taken in by Richmond tobacco merchant John Allan.

Edgar received a traditional Southern aristocratic upbringing and an excellent education. Biographers assign particular importance to Edgar's five-year stay in England, where Mr. Allan conducted his business. The atmosphere of Stoke Newington, an old London suburb, the lessons of classical languages and mathematics at a public school, the journey across the ocean - all this left an unforgettable impression and was as much for the receptive child as reading Robinson Crusoe and Gothic novels, as it was English poetry.

In 1820 the Allan family returned to Richmond. Years of education and the usual entertainment for the wealthy offspring of Southern families were overshadowed for Edgar by the bitter realization that he was an adopted child, entirely dependent on his guardian's good will. This psychological insult made him constantly seek to distinguish himself from his peers in both learning and entertainment.

After graduating from college in 1826, Poe enrolled at the University of Virginia, founded by Thomas Jefferson shortly before. Having studied there for only a year and having accumulated «debts of honor» (as he was unwilling to yield anything to his fellow nobles from the South), Poe is forced to return home, but, after an argument with his guardian, he leaves the Allan house.

His first collection of poetry, *Tamerlane and Other Poems* by a Bostonian, was published in Boston in 1827 and went unnoticed. Once he finds himself without friends and livelihood, Poe joins the United States Army, where he serves for two years. Then, thanks to the patronage of his adoptive mother, John Allan petitions for Edgar on his admission to the West Point Military Academy. Mrs. Allan died in the autumn of 1829, and in 1831 Edgar left West Point to devote himself to a career in writing and journalism. The same year, with money collected by subscriptions mainly from his fellow cadets, Edgar publishes another collection of his poems. Already at that time he was developing his own concept of poetry, his own philosophy of creativity and his own particular understanding of poetry.

«A poem, in my opinion, is opposite to a scientific treatise in that it sets as its immediate aim pleasure rather than truth, and is opposite to a novel in that the images of the novel are perceived with definite feelings, whereas poetry with indefinite ones, for which music is absolutely necessary, for the comprehension of sweet sounds is our most indefinite conception. Music in association with an idea which gives pleasure is poetry, music without an idea is mere music, an idea without music, by virtue of its certainty, is prose». This is how Edgar Poe wrote in the preface to his 1831 collection [5,123].

Poetry, his main passion, brought him a modest income, so Poe worked for a number of magazines as an editor and literary critic. A number of scholars, particularly Auden, have noted that during this period Poe had to review many of his contemporaries' mediocre works, and the «missteps» in his own short stories are

merely «the missteps of a professional overworked».

Poe's worldwide fame and recognition, gained, unfortunately, after his death, creates a mistaken impression of him as a prolific author. Yet he wrote very little. Poe's canon of poetry numbers just over fifty works, among which we find only two relatively long poems - *Tamerlane* and *Al-Aaraaf*. The rest are rather small lyric poems of various merit. Thomas Eliot once remarked that of all Edgar Poe's poems 'only half a dozen was a real success. Yet no poem, no poem in the world, has had a wider readership, and not so firmly settled in the memory of men, as these few poems of Poe. [10,321]

Poe worked most successfully during the last twelve years of his life. During these years he lived in New York, Boston, Philadelphia - in the centers of the bourgeois High North, whose ideals were deeply strange to him - he was a convinced retrograde, «the aristocrat of the spirit». The antipathy to this new society, the decline of ideals - all this is reflected in the lyrics and short stories of Poe. The problem of ambiguity became a defining feature of Poe's work. His disagreement with bourgeois America began with an aesthetic sense of reality and his identification of the role of art in life. In his philosophical tales, Poe claimed that «under the influence of one-sided progress in science the world has grown old prematurely» («Conversation of Monos and Una»), that the lack of harmony between the development of practical life and the arts would bring the world to ruin and decline.[9,23] This judgement is important for understanding Poe's artistic outlook, his role in the history of literature and the nature of his work. He assigned himself the task of raising the aesthetic level of Americans, he sought to establish an ideal relationship between art and practicality in American society. Charles Baudelaire, who later discovered Poe for the Old World, wrote: «The United States was to Poe only a vast prison, over which he ran like a creature born to breathe dreadfully». This period includes a number of essays («The Philosophy of Creation», «The Poetic Principle», «The Theory of Verse») and critical articles on the

work of Nathaniel Hawthorne, reflecting the creative concept of Poe as a poet and writer. His Philosophy of Creation confirms that when creating images and the entire structure of poetic art, Poe did not use fiction but was strongly oriented towards reality and focused on the theoretical justification of the necessity of romantic expression of the beauty of life.

The main principle of Edgar Allan Poe's poetics is the importance of the emotional and psychological influence of all his works. He called this effect the «totality effect», the most important feature of which was integrity. All aspects of poetic creation, all particular principles of its organization, should be under the totality effect. Edgar Poe's poetry has only one subject - the beauty, understood broadly. The sources of the beauty for the poet are three domains of life: nature, art and the world of human relations, taken, however, in a relatively narrow spectrum. The poet is attracted only to relations that occur as an emotional derivative of love and death.

There are two features of Poe's metaphorism that should be taken into account: firstly, his metaphors are grouped around symbols, which are like a kind of signal lighthouse for the reader navigating the «metaphorical sea»; secondly, the metaphors themselves have an internal tendency towards symbolism and in many cases function as symbols. The difference between the two is sometimes ambiguous. Poe was the first American critic whose work brought the aesthetic theory into a coherent system. In the 1880s his artistic works and aesthetic theory began to influence literature and art. The Symbolists grasped the American Romanticist artistic concept to the full; they highlighted Poe's poetry as well as his «horror» and psychological novels («Ligeia», «Morella», «The Fall of the House of Usher»). Poe was described by the Symbolists S. Mallarmé, P. Verlaine, V. Briusov, K. Balmont, D. Merezhkovsky as the «forefather» of Symbolism itself and particularly of French Symbolism. The work of French ancestors of Symbolism Ch. Baudelaire, T. Gautier, Ch. Lecomte de Lisle and the Symbolists themselves P. Verlaine, A. Rimbaud, and S. Mallarmé, in turn, had a major impact on the

formation of Symbolism in Russia; their experience was in demand, above all, by the «older» generation of Symbolists: D. Merezhkovsky, Z. Hippius, F. Sologub, as well as K. Balmont and V. Bryusov. The talent of Edgar Allan Poe, whose first translations appeared in Russia in the mid-19th century, was only appreciated half a century later by the Symbolist poets, who not only translated his works, but also adopted the aesthetics and poetics of the American author, which was reflected in their works. The problem of E. Poe's influence on the above symbolist poets D. Merezhkovsky, Z. Hippius, F. Sologub, K. Balmont and V. Bryusov has been widely studied in Russian literary studies. [10,45]

The main focus of Edgar Poe's literary heritage is his short stories. It was in the «small-forma» prose that he discovered his brilliant skill and reached the peak of artistic perfection. Continuing the experiments which were begun by Irving, Hawthorne and other contemporaries, Poe completed the formation of a new genre, giving to it the features which we now consider to be essential in identifying the American Romantic novel. Not satisfied with practical results and realizing the necessity of theoretical analysis of his own (and other people's) experience, Poe developed a theory of the genre, which he summarized in an article on Hawthorne published in the 1940s. Poe's important contribution to the development of American and world novelism is the practical development of some of its genre subtitles - the detective, the science fiction and the psychological story. The American Romantics, as we know, had a tremendous tendency to give a vivid inspiration to their most fantastic fictions. The easiest and most traditional device they used was the integration of all kinds of domestic details and details into their narrative. Edgar Poe was the first to try to achieve this authenticity using scientific principles - the foundation upon which all fiction is based. Jules Verne and Herbert Wells, the scholars who introduced the two main branches of science fiction (technological and sociological), universally regarded Edgar Allan Poe as their theoretical forerunner and mentor. Jules Verne

even dedicated one of his novels to his memory.

The American professor Joan Grossman's monograph «Edgar Poe in Russia» is devoted to the analysis of Edgar Poe's receptivity in Russia. [3,15] By examining the evolution of the reception of Edgar Poe in Russia, from the random and imperfect translations of his works in the 1930s and 1980s to the Russian symbolists' admiration of the famous ancestor of decadence, Joan Grossman shows how the great novelists Dostoevsky and Turgenev also reacted to the work of the American novelist. Dostoevsky's interest in the work of the American novelist can be seen not only in his commentary on the three stories of Edgar Allan Poe but also, as Grossman comments, in the author of *Crime and Punishment* himself. Turgenev's mystical works in which the characters are under the influence of magnetism and the living come into contact with the dead are reminders of a favourite subject of Poe's, who tried to go beyond the limits of earthly existence. Joan Grossman points out, however, that the work of Turgenev and Dostoevsky is so original and distinctive that no influence of any kind is involved. One could speak, she suggests, of «the use of certain elements taken from other sources by the writer for his own purposes».

The images in Poe's poetry are universal, without definition or plot, and designed to stimulate the reader's imagination with emotional connotations («mystical meaning»). «Believing that 'the soul of poetry is in doubt', » wrote the prominent American critic W. W. Brooks, «he aspired to embrace 'the unknown, the foggy, the inexplicable'. The images in his poetry do not create images of reality, but stimulate associations that are indistinct, distant, fearful or melancholy, monumental or sad» [10,18].

Precisely this uncertainty of images, the lack of plot in Poe's poetry, combined with a deep prose analysis, has often been (and still is) the main point of criticism of Poe's heritage. Thus, the poet W. H. Auden, in his essay on the poet's life and work, offers an untraditional view for European literary scholarship on both his works

and his personality. Auden argues that Poe – «a talent ridden with day care» - was unable to fully realise his intentions in his lyrics as he had no opportunity to «get his hands on» low-profit poetry and was forced to engage in reviewing books of problematic literary quality in order to feed his family, limiting himself to developing a theoretical framework of poetry essays and critical articles, which were later received as a testimony in Europe.

Poe's work, which was not taken seriously by his contemporaries, became a rediscovery at the turn of the century not only for poets and writers. His poetry, which he called a fusion of ideas and music, could not fail to resonate with composers from various countries - Maurice Ravel and Claude Debussy noted the influence the American poet had on them and wrote music to Poe's subjects, captivated by the sonority of his lyrics. Rachmaninoff composed an oratorio to the text of *The Bells*, translated by C. Balmont. The image of Edgar Allan Poe and numerous allusions to his works are often met in mass culture of the second half of the 20th century - in pop music and cinematography.

In his motherland no one took him seriously, he died in obscurity and hopeless poverty, and his death is steeped in mystery, no less so than his fantastic plots. After the poet's death, he was described as a «demon», a «saint», a «madman», a «psychological phenomenon». Now few would argue with Alfred Tennyson, who called Poe «the most extraordinary talent America has ever produced».

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