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Analysis of Imagery System Development in the Individual Style of E.A. Poe

Individual style development over time is found among interesting and important issues of stylometry. In research devoted to authorship attribution, manuscript dating and automatic gender analysis the problem of style variation has been generally addressed at the level of formal characteristics (Rudman 2003; Stamou 2008).

This formal approach was used to study Edgar Allan Poe's style development following with the help of multivariate discriminant analysis (Andreev 2011). Despite Poe's short life the investigation revealed considerable changes in the linguistic properties of his texts written at different stages of his poetic career.

Table 1 presents linguistic characteristics which mark style development and differentiate the three periods of Poe's life. If there are questions I am ready to give more details about these formal characteristics reflecting the model of style changes.

Table 1

Linguistic markers of Poe's style evolution	
<i>Morphological characteristics</i>	
Number of nouns in the first strong position	Number of verbs in the final strong position
Number of verbs in the first strong position	Number of adverbs in the final strong position
Number of adjectives in the first strong position	
Number of adverbs in the first strong position	
Number of pronouns in the first strong position	
<i>Syntactic characteristics</i>	
Number of subjects in the first strong position	Number of attributes in the final strong position
Number of predicates in the first strong position	Number of addresses and parenthesis in the
Number of attributes in the first strong position	final strong position
Number of addresses and parenthesis in the first strong position	
	Number of clauses in a complex sentence
	Number of clauses in a compound sentence
	Number of sentences with partial inversion
<i>Poetic syntax</i>	
Number of lines ending in exclamation marks and question marks	
Number of enjambements	
<i>Rhythmic characteristics</i>	
Number of omissions of stress on the second ictus	
Number of syllables in the anacrusis	

The analysis of these formal features showed that the main tendency in Poe's style development is **wave-like** variation – it is associated with the distribution of parts of speech in the line. During the second period changes take place in the number of different parts of speech placed in different positions of the verse line. This was accompanied by changes in syntax. During the final period of Poe's creative activity the pattern changed again and became more similar to that of the first period.

The aim of this paper is to analyse style evolution from the point of view of poetic images and compare it to the formal features development.

The choice of texts for a research may be carried out in different ways. The study can be based firstly on all texts of the author, secondly – only well known texts, which influenced the public opinion and attracted attention of literary specialists, and, lastly, only those texts, which were chosen for publication by the author himself.

Out of those three possible approaches the latter one was chosen because when the author chooses texts for publication himself, he reveals his stylistic preferences. Thus, the data source for the present study includes lyrics published by Poe in his four collections of poems: 'Tamerlane and Other Poems' (1827), 'Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems' (1829), 'Poems' (1831), and 'The Raven and Other Poems' (1845). In order to preserve homogeneity of the texts only poems written in iamb (they form the majority in Poe's collections) were taken for analysis.

Poe's creative activity is divided into three periods on the basis of his biographical data.

(1) The first period lasts from Poe's first attempts to write verses approximately in 1824 till 1829 when after his step-mother's death he broke connection with his step-parent John Allan and began independent life. This period is represented by the first two collections.

(2) The second period begins in 1830 and ends in 1835 when Poe began to work as an editor and entered literary community. One collection of verse ('Poems') was published during this period.

(3) The third period lasts from 1836 (when he married) till the end of his life in 1849 and is represented by his last collection of poems.

The poetic image is defined as a realisation of metaphorical mapping (Concept 1 – Concept 2) by means of some trope or syntactic figure. Each image realises a certain model of metaphorical mapping, which includes Concept 1 (Target domain which is compared or identified with something) and Concept 2 (Source domain, with which Concept 1 is compared or identified).

In the following example the desolate landscape and ruins left of the magnificent past of the Roman empire become alive, and memories and glory attached to them – their clothes.

Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise
<...>
... the memories that hang upon
And cling around about us as a garment,
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory
(The Coliseum)

The list of the most frequent concepts and their combinations in image models, are vivid and important markers of the author's style.

During the first and second periods Poe focuses on Mental phenomena, which dominate in the function of Target domain. They are metaphorically interpreted mainly as Creatures, Water and Light.

And, in thine eye, the kindling light
Of young passion free
(Song)

And the giddy stars are mute
(Israfel, 1831)

Light from the lurid, deep sea
Streams up the turrets silently
(The City in the Sea, 1831)

Mental phenomena are followed by Time and Existential phenomena the frequency of which slowly rises in the course of time.

Of late, eternal Condor years

So shake the very air on high
<...>
And, when an hour with calmer wings
Its down upon my spirit flings
(Romance, 1829)

Death was in that poison'd wave
(The Lake)

For Poe an extensive way of image creation is typical during these periods of creative activity: there is positive correlation between the frequency of a concept and the number of models in which it is used.

The most common instrument of metaphorical interpretation is the concept of Creature. Perhaps, Poe felt it as intuitively clear and familiar to the reader. In many cases the author does not name the source domain exactly and only hints at it by the context or indicates actions or qualities characteristic of Creatures (e.g. actions performed by humans).

In youth have I known one with whom the Earth
In secret communing held – as he with it
(Stanzas)

Another brow may ev'n inherit
The venom thou hast pour'd on me
(The Happiest Day)

But when the night had thrown her pall
Upon that spot – as upon all
(The Lake)

In the third period Existential phenomena – issues of Life and Death – eternity of the world and brevity of human existence begin to prevail as Target domain.

When the Hours flew brightly by
(Hymn)

The light of Life is o'er!
(To One in Paradise)

A specific feature can be noticed in verse by Poe. At the level of lexical representation names of feelings with positive modus prevail (*happiness, love, hope, faith, bliss, etc.*), but the context rejects the possibility of an optimistic view of human life. The poet uses names of “positive” feelings to describe misfortunes

The highest hope of pride, and power,
I feel **hath flown**
(The Happiest Day)

... my founts of bliss
Are gushing – strange! **with tears**
(To M –)

As a result imagination and dreams which exist only in human mind, become preferable to reality.

Oh! that my young life were a lasting dream!
<...>
Yes! tho' that long dream were of hopeless sorrow.
'Twere better than the cold reality
(Dreams)

One more peculiarity is the increase of the number of lexical units used in the representation of concepts. Thus the concept Light, which is only represented by word '*light*' in early lyrics, in later texts is also realised as types of light and its sources (*light, ray, lightning, star*) “Time”, which is at first only represented by names of time periods (*hour, year*) then gradually enlarges the list of lexical representation (*hour, year, time, future, past*).

It is also possible to analyse the structure of Poe's image system (Fig. 1).

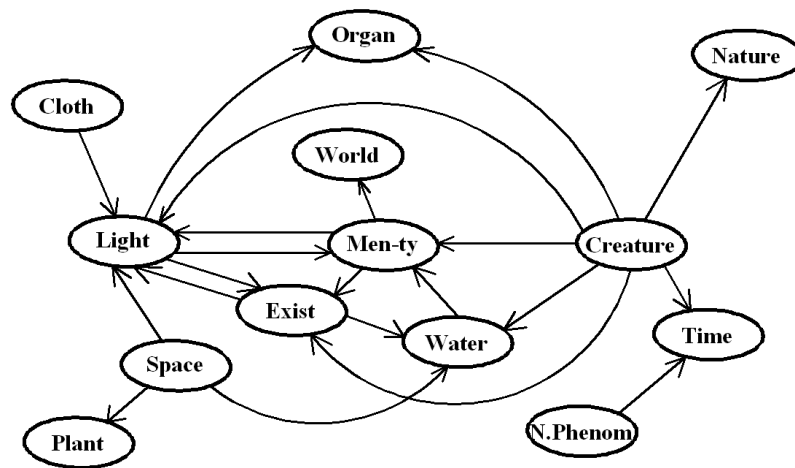


Fig. 1. The structure of Poe's image system at the first period

Figure 1 presents systematic connections between concepts in metaphorical mapping. Arrows indicate the direction of mapping from Source domain to Target domain.

Image system of the early period of Poe's life is poliocentric and closed. The links are distributed between a limited number of concepts. The outer perimeter of the system is formed by links between Organ – Light – Space, Organ – Creature, Water – Space. The periphery is formed by the concepts Time, Nature, Natural Phenomena, Cloth and Plants, which are connected with the system by single links.

During the second period the structure of image system radically changes (Fig. 2). It turns from mainly closed into mainly open, from the integrated into divided into clusters.

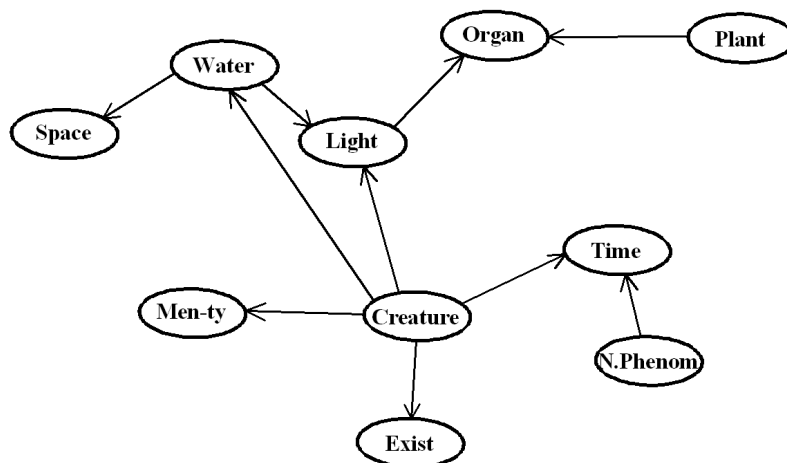


Fig. 2. The structure of Poe's image system at the second period

During the third period (Fig. 3) only radial links are found in the structure of image system.

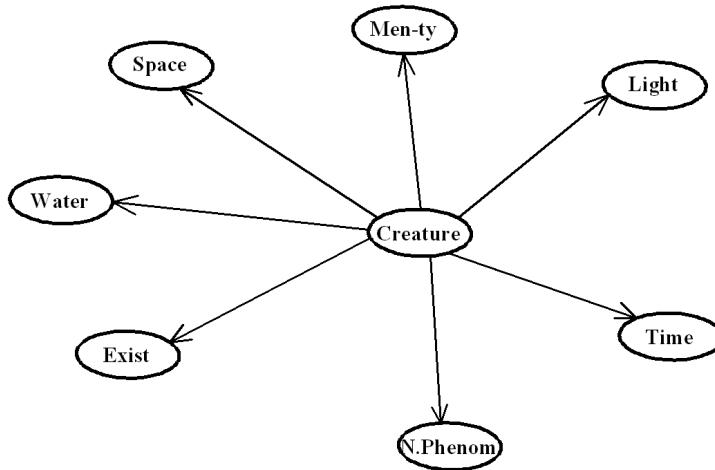


Fig. 3. The structure of Poe's image system at the third period

The system becomes completely monocentric. The process of differentiation of concepts combinability comes to its logical completion. The majority of units of conceptual sphere (Mental phenomena, Light, Space, Existential phenomena) are not systematically combined with one another. Extensive way of image creation is changed into intensive – a limited number of models are used to create new images.

Thus the image system of Poe develops from a high degree to a low degree of integration, from combinability to desintegration, from a complicated structure to a simpler one.

Thus, individual style changes in the course of time both in the formal aspects and imagery, though the tendencies of development are different. Formal analysis reveals wave-like changes of the author's style: in the final period Poe returns to many characteristics of his early lyrics.

Image system development is quite different. There is qualitative change of Concepts in the function of Target domain and gradual reduction of combinability of concepts within images.

It is possible to suggest that this transition from extensive image-building to intensive one is connected with the fact that Poe saw less and less

similarity between things around him and in those cases when the similarity existed in his opinion, he did his most to emphasize it.

References

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Acknowledgements

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