Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Style
of Writing in Graded Reader Publications

Bachelor Paper

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Analýza prozaického stylu Edgara Allana Poea v publikacích Graded Readers

Bakalářská práce

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Poe, Edgar Allan: The Black Cat and Other Stories, Penguin Classics
Poe, Edgar Allan: Tales of Mystery and Imagination
Poe, Edgar Allan: The Philosophy of Composition
Fletcher, Richard M.: The Stylistic Development of Edgar Allan Poe
Lerner, Arthur: Psychoanalytically Oriented Criticism of Three American
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Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá otázkou zachování autorského rukopisu Edgara Allana Poea ve zjednodušených publikacích, tzv. Graded Readers, určených pro studenty anglického jazyka, jimž jejich jazyková úroveň neumožňuje číst literární díla v původní podobě. Tento druh publikací je rozebrán s ohledem na jejich účel a autorka se též podrobněji věnuje rozdělení do jednotlivých jazykových úrovní. Poeův typický styl psaní je charakterizován v úvodní kapitole, přičemž důraz je kladen především na zpracování témat, využití specifické slovní zásoby, strukturu textu a samotnou techniku kompozice. Na základě této charakteristiky se prostřednictvím textové analýzy originálu Poeovy povídky "Černý kocour" ("The Black Cat") a jeho zjednodušené verze (upravené v rámci vydavatelství Penguin Readers) autorka pokusí zjistit, do jaké míry tato adaptace vyhovuje Poeovu původnímu autorskému záměru.

Abstract

This paper deals with the question of retaining Edgar Allan Poe's writing style in Graded Reader Publications, form of literature that helps students enjoying reading in foreign language, no matter what their language skills are. This type of literature is defined according to its purpose and the author of this paper also pays attention to particular levels of grading of language. Poe's writing style is characterized with regard to choice of themes, distinctive vocabulary, text structure and the specific technique of composition. In the last chapter, the original version of Poe's short story "The Black Cat" is compared to its simplified version, graded according to the language levels of Penguin Graded Readers. The aim of this analysis is to determine whether Poe's unique writing style is retained in the adapted versions of his works.

Contents

1. Introduction

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849), the American poet, short story writer, essayist and literary critic, is possibly considered one of the greatest and the most complex figures of American literature. He is remembered mainly as the excellent figure of the genre of modern detective story, however, his literary career did not comprise only of writing short stories, although his tales of macabre are probably the works that even a Philistine knows for sure. Yet it would not be fair to call Poe an artist of melancholy prose dealing with nightmares, hallucinations and perverse crimes. He composed excellent poetry, distinctive with its melodiousness and the pure intention of communicating Beauty; and also his accomplishments in criticism were major. What all his works have in common is the special attention Poe paid to the composition – the theme, the structure and the length were always planned before he started writing, and his vocabulary was chosen with an immense care so that it would form a piece of text that is uniquely 'Poesque' in its character and mood, and stands out among other texts of his contemporaries.

On the one side, there is the strongly individualized writing style of Edgar Allan Poe; on the other one, readers are presented with simplified versions of his stories through the medium of graded readers literature. Graded reading, as a way of language learning, focuses on adapting well-known literary works for students of foreign literature who want to enjoy reading, no matter what their language skills are. On this account, the original texts have to be simplified according to particular language levels, graded in respect of employed vocabulary and grammar. Since many restrictions in use of the language apply, it is obvious that the final adaptation is more or less only rewritten piece of text that has one aim – to be comprehensible for the multitude of readers.

Poe's reader may wonder how incomplete indeed is such a piece of text that he or she is presented with – adapted version of a story originally written by Poe, for instance "The Black Cat", which is regarded one of his best prosaic works and employs all his typical writing techniques. Comparing this text to the original story, the reader may come to the conclusion that Poe's unique style of writing, together with Poe's original intention, are not retained in graded readers at all. And, this is exactly the thesis this paper deals with.

2. EDGAR ALLAN POE'S STYLE OF WRITING

2.1. Classification of Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe in his rather short artistic life (1809-1849) ruled – with more or less success – the literary world of horror and death, introducing a new type of fiction and poetry ahead of its time that have had a significant impact on the world of literature. While European Romanticists based their writings on respect for nature and romantic love, Poe dealt with exploring the dark side of human life and even his "romantic" poetry chants beautiful women who are, however, dead. Clearly, Poe was criticised and even ignored in the United States for his tales of macabre that somehow did not match American literary taste of that time. Therefore, a question might be raised, whether Poe in his works really is as *"Romantic"* as the period he was as a writer and poet born into. While only few American writers (among them for example Herman Melville, William Faulkner or Walt Whitman) recognized his genius, his tales and balladic poetry were quite influential in France, gaining the interest of many poets and writers. As Moskowitz points out, Charles Baudelaire translated the majority of Poe's stories and also some of his poems into French (Moskowitz 11) and Poe's influence on Baudelaire's own poetry that is so typical for his obsession with macabre imagery and morbid themes, cannot be denied. According to Regan, Poe was also admired by French poets following the school of *Symbolism* – for instance Stéphane Mallarmé, or the later authors Paul Valéry and Marcel Proust (Regan 67). Although many consider Poe in a certain way Symbolist, and we actually might call Poe's works "symbolic", calling Poe himself a *"Symbolist"* is very misleading.

Symbolic works aim on depicting things that cannot be described rationally – that means especially emotions and moods. With the help of a *symbol* that represented the contact between real world and world of our soul, Symbolists strived to perceive the works of art with all five wits, laying stress on figurativeness and melodiousness. This approach is similar to the approach of Poe who emphasized the mood of his stories and poetry as well as the overall musical effect. In his highly descriptive tales, he dealt with the inner emotions and state of mind of an individual struggling with certain impulse to

be malignant, a motive which he or she can neither understand nor anticipate, but which definitely makes him or her suffer in the end. Poe seems to hide the actual meaning behind the veil of ambiguity that offers considerable number of interpretations as there are so many readers who would understand it in a different way according to their varying backgrounds and tenths of other factors. This implies that Poe almost instinctively employed a 'symbolic' way of expression in his writings, however, he did not apply symbols consciously to achieve the same effect that Symbolists would create on purpose. In fact, Poe despised 'symbols' as "tricks which are utilized to confuse and deceive the reader without providing him with clarification and enlightenment" (Fletcher 13). He uses expressions as symbols of various meanings, but "'symbol' is the sole expression that vanishes from his vocabulary" (Fletcher 13). He uses words for their indefinite, evocative connotations, creating an atmosphere the reader becomes part of. He strives self-consciously for this effect which he wants to impart to his reader, therefore he communicates through complex associations of ideas that could (and should) encourage the reader's imagination. In other words, like a 'Symbolist', Poe creates an atmosphere that should be experienced by the senses rather than the logical mind; however, his approach to 'symbols' is completely different from the idea of Symbolism.

It seems right not to try to categorize Poe at all. He has written his tales and poems in the era of Romanticism but his Gothic Romanticism did not meet with the interest of an average American reader of the nineteenth century; his works are highly symbolic yet we cannot call him a 'Symbolist' for he did not use symbols in the same way Symbolists did, and, above all, composed his works long before Symbolism was even accepted as an artistic movement. Compared to his contemporaries who are easy to classify, Poe "resists easy interpretation and broad generalization" (Fletcher 106). Perhaps he should be called 'Romantic' after all for he was mainly striving for effect in his works, his aim being not to deliver a moral message but to create a story or poem that would present its reader with the sense of Beauty. And instead of praising beauty in its classical concept of the eighteenth century, which he rejected, Poe dealt with unusual and mysterious beauty that was more acceptable to the values of Romanticism than to any other literary movement of that time.

2.2. Themes

Before accusing Poe of celebrating the morbid and grotesque, enjoying analyzing the process of dying and all perverse that troubles the nineteenth century morals, thus coming to a conclusion that Poe was actually insane, a brief look into his life might help to find out where his fascination with macabre and death in particular stems from.

Edgar Allan Poe was born to life that could be considered, by some, truly a nightmare. His life might well have been his own creation, a tale of unfulfilled love and death, ending in a tragedy. He might have destroyed himself with alcohol but nothing could have beaten the fears he faced and the thought of death in love that was haunting him the whole life. As Regan states, after Poe's father abandoned his wife and three children, Poe's mother travelled through many cities acting on various stages to support her family as best as she could. This style of living soon scarred her health and in 1811 she died (Regan 179). Edgar was placed into a family of merchant John Allan who was evidently unsupportive and emotionally detached from the boy. Lack of parental and emotional support might have been the initial impulse that has driven Poe to drinking, causing him many problems later in his life. Although Poe frequently tried to quit drinking, he never stopped, endangering his brain with a constant portion of alcohol, and there might be a question whether he reached his full capabilities as a writer and whether the themes of death and horror in his writing would be less macabre were it not for his drinking and traumatic youth.

After Poe's beloved foster-mother died in 1829, Poe was disowned by John Allan, and left unsupported (Moskowitz 3). The most important woman of his life became his cousin Virginia Clemm whom he married in 1836 (Regan 180). When she died early in 1847 (Regan 180), Poe sustained another terrible lost and was left alone and ill, drowning his sorrow in drinking and erratic writing. It comes as no surprise that his desires slowly turned from life towards death, making the worst enemy his beloved friend, and above all – a possible solution.

As already foreshadowed, one of the themes that remarkably appear in Poe's stories and poems is *death*; and while many authors share with Poe their interest in horror, terror, death, various obsessions, fears and the perverse, Poe takes one step further, exploring the processes of death in nearly all of his works, to name the best known, for instance "The Fall of the House of Usher", "The Pit and the Pendulum",

"The Tell-Tale Heart", "The Masque of the Red Death"; or works such as "Ligeia" and "The Raven" dealing with death of beautiful young women. Although love is dealt with in the majority of his poems, using the term 'love poetry' for Poe's verse would be inappropriate. Love presented by Poe is usually idealized, it is not an object of passion but representation of beauty that is fragile and ephemeral. The object of narrator's affection is then a *"supernal beauty"*, a woman almost too perfect and divine for real world; she is young, innocent, beautiful and frequently dead – which is about as unattainable as a loved one can get, however, it does not weaken the lover's devotion for her at all. Death of a beautiful woman is according to Poe the "most poetical topic" (www – Philosophy of Composition):

> …I asked myself – "Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the universal understanding of mankind, is the most melancholy?" Death – was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?" ... the answer, here also, is obvious – "When it most closely allies itself to Beauty: the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world – and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover." (www – Philosophy of Composition)

The use of the 'dead beauty' motif could be explained by the unfortunate early deaths of women he loved. To Poe, beauty was evidently something "which was to be lost, was not to be enjoyed, and above all was to bring a good deal of suffering" (Lerner 62). Yet he does not focus only on death of beloved women but also on death in general as well, for example in the tale "The Masque of the Red Death" where he deals with the idea of extinction of an entire population by means of illness. But while any other author might lead the people to overcome the evil and start over, Poe accepts no happy-ending and lets the characters to lock themselves behind the gates of the mansion and die there.

Poe's style of composition emphasises hiding the original meaning behind the suggestive one. As implied by Fletcher, the suggestiveness of meaning has according to Poe a great effect on the reader's sense of horror and fear and it is evidently the "highest power" that is within the ability of the writer to control (Fletcher 97). Death certainly is one of the subjects that we might fear the most, or to be more specific, the process of dying itself. And this is exactly what obsessed Poe, ways in which death occurs and the moment of falling from life to death, moment of clinical and biological death, itself. The vortex allusion of sinking into and out of consciousness as the mind comes near to death is greatly described in the story "Pit and the Pendulum". It can be considered a "simple

tale of torture at the hands of the Inquisition on the one hand" or an "Apocalyptic vision of the Last Judgment on the other" (Fletcher 102). Above all, however, it is a vivid image of a nightmare, a mental struggle of an individual who is going to die and cannot affect his fate any more, feeling (not only) spiritually isolated from the surrounding world, and possibly going insane:

> What boots it to tell of the long, long hours of horror more than mortal, during which I counted the rushing oscillations of the steel! Inch by inch – line by line – with a descent only appreciable at intervals that seemed ages – down and still down it came! … I prayed – I wearied heaven with my prayer for its more speedy descent. I grew frantically mad, and struggled to force myself upward against the sweep of the fearful scimitar. And then I fell suddenly calm, and lay smiling at the glittering death, as a child at some rare bauble. (Tales 171)

Speaking of torture, not only Poe depicts suffering as a consequence of acts of the others, he also pays attention to self-torture, a strange sense of self-destruction that is secretly hidden in the soul of each individual. Poe believes that the *perverseness* is a primal instinct that rules the dark side of our behaviour, forcing us to betray ourselves in our morality. Yet he does not see the perverse as a moral evil but rather the opposite of creativity (and we should be aware of the term 'perverse' that does not have, in this case, any narrower denotation, such as we use when speaking of sexual 'perverseness', et cetera). When Poe's narrator commits an act of evil, he violates his own spirit, losing his comfort and confidence, acting from impulses of self-destruction he could not control. He regrets and even if he could not have defied his actions, he is oppressed by his conscience, which finally ruins him, leading him to reveal his secret. However, this process is not typical for insane characters – Poe proves that even a completely rational individual may become overpowered by his "dark side" since he is able to explain logically what has brought him to his own ruin.

Poe's most successful portrayal of perversity is perhaps illustrated in his tale "The Black Cat". The narrator has a black cat that he dearly loves, however, one day he captures the unfortunate animal and pokes out its eye. And here comes the sorrow and the guilt of being unable to resist the impulse of perversity beyond his control:

> The spirit of perverseness, I say, came to my final overthrow. It was this unfathomable longing of the soul *to vex itself* – to offer violence to its own nature – to do wrong for the wrong's sake only – that urged me to continue and finally to consummate the injury I had inflicted upon the unoffending brute. One morning, in cool blood, I slipped a noose about its neck and hung it to the limb of a tree –

> hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes, and with the bitterest remorse at my heart – hung it *because* I knew that it had loved me, and *because* I felt it had given me no reason of offence – hung it because I knew that in so doing I was committing a sin – a deadly sin that would so jeopardise my immortal soul as to place it – if such a thing were possible – even beyond the reach of the infinite mercy of the Most Merciful and Most Terrible God. (Tales 191)

As if regretting his actions, the narrator finds another cat to adopt but later on his attitude changes and his regret grows into hatred, supported in part by realizing that the new cat looks alike the dead one, even having only one eye. He soon fancies the cat as an evil creature, a 'tormentor of his heart'; and it is completely up to the reader to decide whether the animal is evil by nature, as the narrator suggests, or if he is only projecting his own beliefs onto the cat. Finally, while the narrator goes entirely out of his mind and attempts to kill the cat with an axe, he eventually murders his own wife who tries to save the cat's life. Then he bricks his wife into a wall to conceal his crime. When the police come, he stays completely calm until they are about to leave, finding nothing, and surprisingly interrupts them:

> 'Gentlemen', I said at last … 'I delight to have allayed your suspicions. I wish you all health, and a little more courtesy. By-the-bye, gentlemen, this – this is a very well-constructed house.' … 'I may say an *excellently* well-constructed house. These walls – are you going, gentlemen? – these walls are solidly put together;' and here, through the mere frenzy of bravado, I rapped heavily, with a cane which I held in my hand, upon that very portion of the brickwork behind which stood the corpse of the wife of my bosom. (Tales 196)

The final horror of the story reflects the horror of the narrator who, unable to control his own life, in an inconceivable act of perversity betrays himself in face of the police and points to the place where he buried his wife.

Contemplating other distinctive motifs typical for his works, Poe sometimes uses the allusions to *vortex*, for instance guiding his character to descend a circular stairway ("The Black Cat") or letting a swirling sea to swallow him ("A Descent into the Maelstrom"). According to Jungian psychology, water is generally regarded the symbol of our unconsciousness; and vortex may then represent the process of falling from consciousness into unconsciousness, or the motif of falling into a dream. Reference to *dreams* is very frequent in Poe's stories, and so typically for him, those are rarely pleasant night fancies we desire to experience. Some of his characters tend to talk about the subconscious dream state, they may wake up from their nightmares or question if

they are actually awake or dreaming, which is described for instance in the story "Pit and the Pendulum". Fletcher explains that:

> …the narrator has so far fallen into a hypnagogic state of suspended animation that he has literally become a victim of 'clinical death', he is in a condition that is neither that of death nor life. … he finds himself existing as life-in-death. But there is also the danger that he may be in the other condition of death-in-life; perhaps he has been buried … while still actually alive. … He has achieved the ideal state of 'double identity' beloved by Poe and the Gothic writer. (Fletcher 111)

Poe continues the narration with details of his hero's continual states of "deep sleep", unconscious moments between life and death, and reminds us of another frequently repeated motif – a *heart* that is important as both the life-essential physical part of human body and the centre of our emotion and experience. Faithful to the Romantic principle, Poe places the emphasis on the heart (representing emotion) rather than on the head that represents intellect and rational thinking.

Significant events in Poe's stories often begin with dusk and end with daybreak, and Poe especially loves mentioning the "witching hour" of twelve midnight. However, Poe usually does not use clear reference to time and place – an approach that can be found in other works of Romanticist literature – and many of his stories and poems are set in ambiguous times and places, being truly *"Out of Space – out of Time"* ("Dream-Land", Mabbott 344), which might on the one hand cause the reader to spend more time to identify with events in the story, yet on the other hand, it makes Poe's works universal and contemporary to readers of any era.

Poe's stories are usually presented by an *un-named narrator*. He is not supposed to be considered Poe himself – he is just a character narrating the story although the reader may feel that the narrator may reflect Poe's own personal struggles. Some of the narrators are sane, some are clearly not, but they are always distinct from each other as a "universal" character who tells all the stories is impossible to find. According to Fletcher, Poe "recognized the importance of character development for his stories only after he had first exhausted the surface possibilities of Gothicism" (Fletcher 119). Comparing the characters of Poe's early stories with those of stories written later in his career, the earlier heroes really cannot be taken seriously for they are too 'Gothic' and too stereotyped (which often involves self-destruction). The narrator is simply only an 'eye' commenting on the events. As Poe's characters develop through the years, finally

a real personality can be seen, not a stereotype, narrator who reacts emotionally in various situations and at least gives the illusion of being a human of flesh and blood.

Poe employs the first person narration where 'I' serves as a persona guiding the reader through the story as well as an 'eye' that enables the reader to view the action. Many times, the theme of two sides of oneself (both good and evil contained within the same person) appears, as Fletcher remarks: "Poe repeatedly used the *double identity* (the Doppelgänger) figure traditionally beloved by the Romantic, Gothic writer, the individual who functions on both levels of the spirit and the flesh." (Fletcher 118) As Fletcher explains, Poe applies the motif of the fractured image in several ways; no matter if the personal characteristics are shared by two persons who may become united as single entity (Fletcher 118) as presented in "Ligeia", "Fall of the House of Usher" or "William Wilson", or if he attempts to combine "multiple facets of human character and personality into one specific character" (Fletcher 119) who is introduced in stories such as "Pit and the Pendulum" or "The Black Cat".

Although detective stories remained constant in structure and style over the years, and the framework did not advance significantly beyond the level to which it was invented by Poe, modern readers may consider Poe's detective stories a little bit old-fashioned. However, the types of characters Poe invented – either the "bi-part detective, sensitive resonator and shrew analyst" (Fletcher 130) or the criminal motivated to commit any act of evil – remain the key elements in detective genre; and while appreciating Poe's genius, his poetry that is even today popular among readers of all age, should not be forgotten to mention as well.

2.3. Poe's Vocabulary

Poe's major poems probably would not be as remembered as they are today were it not for their unique vocabulary, and similarly, it is hard to guess whether it is due to Gothic themes or to Poe's distinctive way of expression that his short stories are remembered so well.

To focus on prose at first, vocabulary of Poe's early stories is at first sight *'Gothic'*, describing mysterious places and psychologically complicated characters, all this being typical for the "Gothic, German novel from which Poe as well as many

another contemporary writers derived the physical environment of their tales." (Fletcher 93). Yet Poe does not introduce the very typical characters of the traditional Gothic horror story – ghosts, vampires, zombies. As a result, Poe's readers are presented with an atypical Gothic story with an atypical vocabulary that may be called 'Gothic' but contains also vocabulary of romantic ballads and is highly distinctive and individualized. This vocabulary is relatively limited and repetitious in the same particular words that Poe uses with mechanical stereotype again and again to achieve the effects and mood he desired, employing expressions such as *"fate", "grotesqueness", "writhe", "delirious horror", "vision", "deadly nausea", "thrill", "lurid", "tormented", "darkness", "grave", "corpse", "deadly", "spirit", "magically", "indescribable", "nothingness", "silence", "unearthly", "ghoul", "weir", "toneless", "sear", "unalterable", "ineffable", "soundless", "melancholy", "oppressive", "singularly", "dreary", "gloom", "sentiment", "depression of soul", "sensation", "sickening of the heart", "sublime", "shadowy fancies", "impression", "lustre", "ghastly"* and many others. Although all these words may be a part of anyone's vocabulary, Poe makes them reappear so often and so cleverly that once we read enough of his writings and become familiar with his expressions, we are able to recognize readily the style as being typically and uniquely Poe's, or to say – *"Poesque"*.

Not only Gothic expressions are typical for Poe's diction. According to Mabbott, Poe, who was classically educated, knew English Bible and quoted it quite often. He was familiar with English and Greek literature, read in French and showed interest in Latin and Italian (Mabbott XXVI). This had little influence on his poetry but in his prose, Poe's use of *foreign expressions* and associations is obvious. He uses mottoes and quotations from well-known works of literature as prefaces to his stories, including mostly dicta in *French* (for instance in "The Fall of the House of Usher"), *German* ("The Mystery of Marie Rogêt"), *Latin* ("The Pit and the Pendulum"), *Greek* ("Silence – A Fable"), and *English* (for instance in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" or "Ligeia"), quoting from the Bible as well ("Shadow – A Parable"). Poe's intention is not clear – whether he used his opening mottoes to remind the reader of his erudition or to indicate the character and mood of the following narrative, however, it is evident that he usually did not bother himself with translating the quotations into English. This is

also the case of French, German and Latin expressions that occur within the text of the stories and that sometimes may become puzzling for the reader, as in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", where a quotation from "Nouvelle Héloïse" by Rousseau closes the last paragraph, representing the very last sentence of the whole story:

> 'Let him discourse; it will ease his conscience. I am satisfied with having defeated him in his own castle. Nevertheless, that he failed in the solution of this mystery is by no means that matter for wonder which he supposes it; for, in truth, our friend the Perfect is somewhat too cunning to be profound. In his wisdom is no *stamen*. … But he is a good creature after all. I like him especially for one master-stroke of cant, by which he has attained his reputation for ingenuity. I mean the way he has *"de nier ce qui est, et d'expliquer ce qui n'est pas."* ' (Tales 90)

Regarding Poe's technique of writing, the stories are usually bound together with certain *key words* that appear at the beginning of the narrative and then occur several times in particular paragraphs. These words are often substituted with various synonyms but still, the idea of repeating the emphasized expressions with monotonous regularity can be seen. Concerning key words within one paragraph, an excerpt from "The Pit and the Pendulum" proves to be a good example:

> The <u>vibration</u> of the <u>pendulum</u> was at right angles to my length. I saw that the <u>crescent</u> was designed to <u>cross the region of the heart</u>. It would *fray* the serge of my *robe* – it would <u>return and repeat its operations</u> – again – and again. Notwithstanding its <u>terrifically wide sweep</u> (some thirty feet or more), and the <u>hissing vigour of its descent</u>, sufficient to *sunder* these very <u>walls of iron</u>, still the *fraying* of my *robe* would be all that, for several minutes, it would accomplish. And at this thought I paused. I dared not go farther than this reflection. I dwelt upon it with a pertinacity of attention – as if, in so dwelling, I could arrest here the <u>descent</u> of the <u>steel</u>. I forced myself to ponder upon the sound of the <u>crescent</u> as it should <u>pass across</u> the *garment* – upon the peculiar thrilling sensation which the *friction* of *cloth* produces on the nerves. I pondered upon all this frivolity until my teeth were on edge. (Tales 172)

In this paragraph, the reader is presented with the motif of the pendulum, descending down and tearing the narrator's clothes. The word 'pendulum' and its synonyms are repeated five times, with reference to the movement of the pendulum another seven times (<u>underlined</u>). The word 'robe' and its synonyms are mentioned four times and words connected with tearing the robe appear another four times (*italics*). In a paragraph consisting of 166 words, mention of the main motif then represents twelve percent of all words; and considering the fact that the total number of sentences is nine, a thoughtful

reader must come to the conclusion that nearly each sentence in this paragraph contains direct reference to the main motif.

Poe seems to use all of the words that he can possibly fit into one sentence, thus forming long complex sentences that, with appropriate use of colons, semi-colons and dashes, often extend over the whole paragraph. A modern reader may sometimes feel that the long descriptive sentences are difficult to comprehend, yet the text still retains certain elegance:

> I looked at the delicate outlines of the nose – and nowhere but in the graceful medallions of the Hebrews had I beheld a similar perfection. There were the same luxurious smoothness of surface, the same scarcely perceptible tendency to the aquiline, the same harmoniously curved nostrils speaking the free spirit. I regarded the sweet mouth. Here was indeed the triumph of all things heavenly – the magnificent turn of the short upper lip – the soft, voluptuous slumber of the under – the dimples which sported, and the colour which spoke – the teeth glancing back, with a brilliancy almost startling, every ray of the holy light which fell upon them in her serene and placid, yet most exultingly radiant of all smiles. I scrutinised the formation of the chin – and here, too, I found the gentleness of breadth, the softness and the majesty, the fullness and the spirituality, of the Greek – the contour which the god Apollo revealed but in a dream, to Cleomenes, the son of the Athenian. ("Ligeia", Tales 227)

It is remarkable that Poe's style of writing is so powerfully descriptive that it makes it easy for the reader to identify with anything he tried to portray. He relies heavily on sensory imagery, as for instance in "The Pit and the Pendulum", considering particularly sight – by repeating the verb 'see' and its synonyms in every paragraph of the story; smell – "…it swept so closely over me as to fan me with its acrid breath. The odour of the sharp steel forced itself into my nostrils." (Tales 171); and sound – use of onomatopoeic words such as 'swung' or 'hissing'. The resulting effect is that the scene and the atmosphere Poe describes really can be literally 'seen', 'smelled', and 'heard'.

Later in his career, when Poe turned from the tale of the Gothic and grotesque to other mediums, including the detective story, he employed different type of vocabulary; and as remarked by Fletcher, after Poe returned to his earlier love – poetry – after 1845, the number of tales he wrote dropped off dramatically (Fletcher 100). As Fletcher adds, Poe's diction then became more stylistically relaxed, more casual and informal (Fletcher 100) compared to his early dialogues that seem too ornate and sometimes archaic, fairly anything but normal speech. However, he stayed constant in the mechanical and repetitious use of words, with strong reliance on focusing the paragraphs around key

words and their synonyms, to the very end of his prose career; and due to his skill and care with which he constructed his stories, what he says is clear and completely understandable.

To understand Poe's literary genius, his poetic vocabulary should not be disregarded as well for it influences his prosaic vocabulary to a great extent, and, moreover, Poe occasionally inserts verse into his stories, which is the case of "Ligeia" or "The Fall of the House of Usher" where he presents the reader with his poem "The Haunted Palace".

Although regarded the master of a detective story, Poe was by choice a poet, as Mabbott claims, and he adds:

> He began to be one in boyhood, and continued to write verse to the end of his life. His actual product is small, but the proportion of excellence is surprisingly high, and, as is not always true of lyric poets, his powers never waned; they increased. … Recognition came early from those close to him, and the world was to know him as "Mr. Poe the poet" from 1845, when "The Raven" appeared. There has never been even a temporary decline of his popularity among general readers. (Mabbott XXIII)

But what is the reason for Poe's popularity as a poet? It might be either its melancholic mood or the motif of unattainable beauty that makes the poem successful yet it could be also the harmony and melodiousness of the diction that is so readable (which applies to Poe's prosaic works as well). As Fletcher states, like the French Symbolists who admired him, Poe takes music as the prototype of all art for it is a medium that is least distinguishable from its subjective or objective reference (Fletcher 25). Moreover, Lerner explains:

> Poe's poetic endeavors were based on a definite belief that he had of poetry: "A poem, in my opinion, is opposed to a work of science by having, for its *immediate* object, pleasure, not truth; to romance, by having for its object an *indefinite* instead of a *definite* pleasure, being a poem only so far as this object is attained; romance presenting perceptible images with definite, poetry with *in*definite sensations, to which end music is and *essential*, since the comprehension of sweet sound is our most indefinite conception. Music, when combined with a pleasurable idea, is poetry; music without the idea is simply music; the idea without the music is prose from its very definitiveness." (Lerner 47)

Following Lerner's thoughts in this quotation, the conclusion he presents is that in Poe's poetry, meaning is subordinate to sounds. Thus, onomatopoeia undeniably plays important role in the process of choosing the right expressions for his lyrics, for

whatever denotative meaning a word may have, when pronounced, it is heard by everyone in exactly the same way. Therefore, Poe strived to limit his poetic vocabulary to a narrow range of onomatopoeic words, especially those concerning the melancholic and mournful, that would repeat themselves in his verses and create a total harmony of tones. Due to this approach, Poe's poems are written in ordinary language, and usually somehow lack the sophisticate content, but as was already claimed above, the emphasis lies on the proper mixture of sounds and mood that in its effect evoke a mysterious, gloomy atmosphere. It is also worth mentioning that the dramatic effect often depends on the reader's assuming that Poe and the narrator of the poem (or, in the same way, narrator of the prosaic story) is the same person. In case this conclusion is reached by the reader, it means that the vocabulary is chosen appropriately to the mood and atmosphere that, in the end, the reader considers realistic enough to identify with. (And as Fletcher pertinently points out, Poe's use of words depends on the same principles of suggestion and effect as, for instance, the use of background music for sound tracks of horror movies (Fletcher 60)).

Over the years of his career, Poe became increasingly skilful to treating sounds. In the best of his poems Poe employs a constant refrain (such as *'nevermore'* in "The Raven") and places the emphasis on use of words with open vowels, thus creating impressive melancholic sound effect, for instance, repeating open *'o'* in "The Raven":

> "Be that our sign *o*f parting, bird *o*r fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting--
> "Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plut*o*nian sh*o*re!
> Leave n*o* black plume as a t*o*ken *o*f that lie thy s*o*ul has sp*o*ken!
> Leave my l*o*neliness unbr*o*ken!--quit the bust above my d*oo*r!
> Take thy beak fr*o*m *o*ut my heart, and take thy f*o*rm fr*o*m *o*ff my d*oo*r!"
> Qu*o*th the Raven, "Neverm*o*re."
>
> <div align="right">("The Raven", Mabbott 369)</div>

Open *'o'* is pronounced approximately nineteen times which is quite a high rate in the total of sixty-six words forming this stanza that proves to be a typical piece of Poe's finest poetry, characteristic with the stress on the onomatopoeic sounds and mournful refrain. To give another example, among others, *'w'* and *'l'* sounds reappear frequently, achieving a mournful effect as well:

> If I cou*l*d d*well*
> *Wh*ere Israfe*l*
>   Hath d*wel*t, and he *w*here I,
> He might not sing so *wil*d*l*y *well*
>   A morta*l* me*l*ody,
> *Whil*e a bo*l*der note than this might s*well*
>   From my *l*yre *w*ithin the sky.
>
> <div align="right">("Israfel", Mabbott 176)</div>

To list another example – common repetitions of *'p'* and *'r'* are apparent in stanzas of "The Haunted Palace". In the effect, according to Fletcher, by pronouncing these sounds, the rolling cadence throughout the stanza is maintained (Fletcher 43):

> In the g*r*eenest of ou*r* valleys
>   By good angels tenanted,
> Once a fai*r* and stately *p*alace –
>   *R*adiant *p*alace – *r*ea*r*ed its head.
> In the mona*r*ch Thought's dominion –
>   It stood the*r*e!
> Neve*r* se*r*a*p*h s*pr*ead a *p*inion
>   Ove*r* fab*r*ic half so fai*r*!
>
> <div align="right">("The Haunted Palace", Mabbott 315)</div>

Fascinated with the musicality of sound, Poe sometimes tends to omit sounds or letters in the middle of words such as *'over'* to *'o'er'* in order to shift temporarily the accent, thus creating the so-called 'syncopation' that is typical for instance for jazz music. As a result, the in other way useless words are being transformed to fit the intended metrical feet of the poem:

> *'Tis* not to thee that I should name –
> Thou *can'st* not – *would'st* not dare to think
> The magic empire of a flame
> Which *ev'n* upon this perilous brink
> Hath *fix'd* my soul, *tho' unforgiv'n*
> By what it lost for passion – *Heav'n*.
> I *lov'd* – and O, how tenderly!
>
> <div align="right">("Tamerlane", Mabbott 30)</div>

As to be seen in the above mentioned examples, Poe was skilfully manipulating words to create a perfect rhyme. But as Mabbott declares, he might have composed the poems according to his "own pronunciation", explaining: "He lived chiefly in Richmond and Baltimore … thereafter in Philadelphia and New York. He spoke with a slight Southern Drawl. Hence he rhymed *sister* and *vista*, *ha'nted* and *enchanted*." (Mabbott XXV) Yet

Poe was very precise in composition of his verses and instead of writing new poems again and again, he rather focused on constant improving of the small volume of works he has already written, concerning some of his short stories as well. It is doubtable whether this was really necessary but what is evident – without continual refining of his works, Poe probably would not have been able to gain such skill to express his feelings and ideas in such a limited space.

2.4. Composition

There are two main ways in which Poe reworked his works – first one focusing on length and the second one dealing with punctuation. From the various published versions of Poe's poetry, it is clear that most of his creations had been considerably shortened over the years. (All of the amended versions are listed for example in first volume of Mabbott's "Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe") Poe cut for instance " "Tamerlane" from the 406 lines of his 1827 edition to 243 for "Al Araaf, Tamerlane and Minor Poems" in 1829" (Fletcher 26), and "Al Araaf" was cut in length by almost a half for the second edition of 1829 as well. Some of the other significant revisions that might be mentioned include changing four of total of fifteen lines of "To Helen", more than half of the lines of "Israfel" and verbal changes, dropping lines and adding new ones to "The City in the Sea". Even his most famous poem "The Raven" was reprinted sixteen times during Poe's lifetime. Not only was Poe experimenting with cutting, changing or adding lines, reworking ideas and rearranging words, he was also constantly revising punctuation as well. Use of commas, semi-colons and dashes varies in different versions of his major poems, however, his changes in punctuation probably should not serve as crucial help to understanding the meaning, but rather as a suggestion of possible pauses in reading. Going back to prose, Poe paid special attention to punctuation in his stories as well but the more characteristic feature of his prosaic style is that he was especially fond of putting certain expressions into italics. Whether this was only one of many ways how to establish an individualized and distinguishable vocabulary or a method how to ensure that the reader with average intelligence would receive the author's idea, may be a point for further discussion. But what can be stated for sure is that once Poe decided to change his approach to improve his works, he

remained loyal to that method and over a considerable period of time refined his texts all in the same way.

In addition to revising the most successful works during his career, Poe also developed his philosophy about the process of writing both poetry and prose, as to be understood due to his critical works. His literary criticism is either specific – critical reviews of his contemporaries with reference to their works, or abstract – represented by his critical essays on his own conception of literary technique. The spirit of his critical studies of other writers "is that of what he felt himself to be, - an apostle of Taste" (Stedman & Woodberry XIII), emphasizing the main purpose of artistic works, which is according to Poe especially to communicate a sense of Beauty. It might be due to his temperament, that his criticism "exhibits impatience, arrogance, and disdain, and is sometimes as brutal and long-drawn as that of the Scotch reviewers whom he censures" (Stedman & Woodberry XVI). But in the same way as he is able to point out the weak points, he could enthusiastically praise the best writers and their creative powers. However, while dealing with women authors, his reviews are always rather kind:

> …where the gentler sex is concerned, there seems but one course for the critic – speak, if you can commend – be silent, if not; for a woman will never be brought to admit a non-identity between herself and her book.(Stedman & Woodberry XX)

In Poe's opinion, the best writer was always "the best critic, both of other authors and himself" (Stedman & Woodberry XVI). There is no objective evidence of Poe's self-criticism, but at the time he created his major works, his writing technique was already clear to him. Probably the most comprehensive essay on his writing technique is represented by "The Philosophy of Composition" that was published in 1846, following the great success of "The Raven". Here, Poe focuses on presenting his view of literary work and its purpose in general, as well as the particular technique he employed when composing his most successful poem. As he claims, the "radical error … in the usual mode of constructing a story" (www – Philosophy of Composition) is that any artist should think about his story line, the plot and the dénouement in detail before he or she starts writing, instead of trying to "profit from sudden bursts of creative spirit" (www – Philosophy of Composition). In addition, the effect and originality must always be considered. Poe uses "The Raven" as the principal example to prove that none of his works is being composed by accident. After choosing the medium of a poem and

selecting appropriate length of about one hundred lines (for the literary work shall be neither too short, nor too long to serve its purpose), the "province of the poem has to be specified" (www – Philosophy of Composition). Poe chooses 'Beauty', and explains:

> That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect – they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of soul – not of intellect, or of heart… (www – Philosophy of Composition)

And because Poe's approach is rather atypical from the Romanticist one, the Beauty is referred to in the tone of melancholy for "the death … of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world" (www – Philosophy of Composition). Next, monotonous and repetitive refrain that remains the same at the end of each stanza, has to be defined, and since it has to be brief, finally Poe chooses one word – 'nevermore' – that, comprising the combination of mournful sounds *'r'* and long *'o'*, helps to achieve melancholic mood. By combining all the ideas, Poe concludes that the lover, lamenting his deceased mistress in the most possible sorrow, tortures himself with asking philosophical questions, getting continuously the same answer – 'nevermore' – repeated by a Raven that stands for the "bird of ill omen" (www – Philosophy of Composition), and serves the suggested melancholic mood better than introducing another person to the dialogue. Based on this conclusion, "the last stanza with the climax, the rhythm, the metre, general arrangement of the stanza and all other circumstances concerning the dialogue" (www – Philosophy of Composition) can be arranged.

Considering that "The Raven" was composed exactly according to this technique, there is no doubt in admitting that in the 1840's, Poe was writing at his best. And it would not be fair to call him an insane artist of nightmares, hallucinations and perverse crimes. He created excellent prose and beautiful verse, being credited as the remarkable figure of detective story, and the author of "The Raven", which is one of the most popular and best-known poems ever. The question would be why Poe did not experience the success while still alive. The American public evidently did not, except for few faithful readers and general appreciation of "The Raven", recognize Poe's literary genius, criticising his obsession with themes that were not appropriate to write about and were recoiling his obvious fascination with death. However, as ironic as it

may sound, it is typical for human nature, after all, to explore the dark sides of our lives. We might attempt to deny our curiosity in things that frighten us or shock but still we keep seeking them. Fear is an emotion that all of us paradoxically enjoy, maybe for it is an emotion that reminds us of our mortality, an emotion that assures us we are alive. Poe's choice of the topic is definitely one of the things that distinguishes him from his contemporaries, showing perhaps his courage to stand out among typically Romanticist authors describing wonderful nature and romantic love, themes that are so pleasant to read about, however, themes that are anything but exciting. And if we add the 'Poesque' prosaic vocabulary with its typical expressions arranged into highly descriptive dictum depicting all of the sides of human character; the poetic vocabulary with its wonderful tonal harmony and pure intention to communicate a sense of Beauty; and the typical atmosphere and mood of Poe's works, we get a piece of text that is so uniquely individualized and so distinguishable, that it rates second to none in the American literature of the nineteenth century. And even if Poe's language might be sometimes difficult to understand, even today, the subject matter he deals with is up-to-date.

3. GRADED READER PUBLICATIONS

3.1. Learning Foreign Language through Reading

Generally, there are two main reasons to read – firstly, for pleasure and secondly, to gain information. However, there is one more reason for a learner of foreign language to read – it is an excellent way of getting familiar with the foreign language the learner strives to learn. Through reading, students can gradually build up an understanding of how various grammatical devices are used to present ideas and information, and due to these examples, they might be helped to apply grammar rules more effectively. They also have a chance to see how particular vocabulary is used in a natural way, which helps understanding the meaning of unknown words, so that the readers are able to add the new expressions to their active vocabulary, thus improving their speaking skills. This is the main way for a student to gain control of an adequate vocabulary for through reading he or she can best understand which words are appropriate in which contexts. As Hedge explains, through reading, the learner "is exposed to the lexical items embedded in natural linguistic contexts, and as a result they begin slowly to have the same meaningfulness for him that they have for the native speaker" (Hedge 23). This involves developing a more complete comprehension of the words' meaning and possible uses.

A learner beginning to read in a second language starts by looking at each letter of each word to decode the word, and, with mechanical translating into his or her mother tongue, keeps each word in working memory while the next word is processed. By the time the reader gets to the end of the line, trying to form a meaningful sentence out of previously translated words, the first words may have been forgotten and, therefore, very little meaning of the text is retained. As the reader's ability improves, he or she can decode words faster and remember previous words more easily, moving from decoding the word by word to the processing of short phrases of text. At this level, the reader should already be able to understand non-comprehended parts of the text by more effective use of background information and the familiar vocabulary of the sentence, and also of the preceding or following sentences, which provide him or her with

sufficient information that help him or her to make an intelligent guess of the possible meaning of the unknown word. In this way, the reader is encouraged to use techniques which native speakers use when, for instance, dealing with difficult technical texts full of unknown terminology. This implies that it is a mistake to study a text as a series of independent units. While learning foreign language through reading, there is no need to understand every single sentence in a text. As acknowledged by Grellet, "if reading is to be efficient, the structure of longer units such as the paragraph or the whole text must be understood" (Grellet 6). Therefore, as he follows, the reader should focus on the overall meaning of the text, its function and aim, rather than working with specific ideas (Grellet 6). If this is to be achieved, it is essential for the student to choose an appropriate text, so that it is not unnecessarily difficult to understand. Otherwise the shift from decoding mechanically word by word to the level of decoding whole phrases and general ideas will not occur. The reader would be focused on intensive study of difficult and non-comprehended words and phrases instead of receiving sufficient practice at moving smoothly over the page.

As mentioned above, reading is a constant process of guessing. It is an active skill, depending on the reader's ability to predict what comes next. This is extremely difficult in case that the text is very complex in structure and presents a lot of new information, thus putting too much stress on a short term memory. To achieve a progress in reading skills, it is essential to pick up a piece of text that is not too difficult to follow. This is particularly important for the foreign language student, who may not only be discouraged from reading for it represents hard work connected with constant memorizing, but also feel insecure with skipping unknown words. Hedge sums it up:

> We read, in a sense, what we expect to read, using our knowledge of language and our knowledge of the topic to predict to a large degree what comes next and so move on quickly. Foreign language learners may have problems in this area. Knowledge of the language may well be inadequate and if the subject is unfamiliar, reading with understanding may be very difficult. (Hedge 32)

It is obvious that successful reading is determined not only by the reader's abilities and knowledge, but also by the linguistic difficulty and content of the book he or she is reading. Therefore, in the early stages of language learning, it is wise to take the advantage of various Graded Reader publications offering vast number of interesting

texts, presenting themes, stories and subjects that learners with different language knowledge, from Beginners to Intermediate, are likely to want to read about.

3.2. What are Graded Readers

Graded Readers are a form of language learner literature referring to texts that have been adapted, or, 'graded', to suit the comprehension level of the intended reader. In other words, these are books specially written for foreign language learners, used by learners at specific stages of their learning to practise reading, gain reading fluency and especially to develop their knowledge of language use at the levels of vocabulary and language structure, thus helping them to develop competence and confidence in reading in foreign language. Through reading, various skills can be acquired. The main ones, as listed by Grellet, are: recognizing the script of a language, deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items, understanding explicit information as well as information not explicitly stated, understanding the communicative value of sentences and utterances, understanding relations within the sentence and relations between the parts of a text through lexical and grammatical cohesion devices, identifying the main point or important information in a piece of discourse, skimming, or scanning to locate specifically required information (Grellet 4-5). As a result, due to work with Graded Readers, the learners can see "how the grammar and vocabulary they have learned actually demonstrate the rules of grammar and a range of vocabulary" (Hedge 26-27). The reading materials are usually accompanied by a list of activities and exercises to check students' understanding, and audio recordings to help improving proper pronunciation and intonation are available as well. Together with free photocopiable worksheets providing additional background information about the book and its author and more activities to practise new vocabulary and grammar, the publishers' web pages usually offer also free Teachers' Guides for more lesson ideas and photocopiable placement tests to help to decide when students are ready to move up to the next language level. Therefore, Graded Reader publications should not be treated simply as a device for promoting reading but rather as a total language learning resource.

Nowadays, a wide range of graded reading material is available at different levels, suitable for all learners of the English language, irrespective of their language abilities.

To be able to choose an appropriate level, it is necessary for the reader to understand what types of control apply in the language of Graded Readers, in other words, what are the principles of grading literature and what does the process of simplification involve.

3.3. The Process of Simplification

Writing Graded Readers is a very specialized kind of writing, demanding skill and considerable literary sensitivity. Whether creating a simplified version of an existing book, which follows the text of the original but uses various principles of simplification to bring it to a required grade level, or writing a new story according to strict language specifications, the author of such a piece of text must assume the process of reading comprehension as understood by a foreign language learner, especially the way a student deduces meaning from text, and what language features might cause difficulty in inferring meaning. The language grading involves three types of control – lexical, structural and information, as stated by Hedge, who explains:

> If the purpose of Graded Readers is to introduce students gradually to increasing levels of difficulty in text, then each level must achieve a controlled balance between familiar and unfamiliar language. The language of a Graded Reader therefore demonstrates one or more types of control. (Hedge 2)

Concerning *lexical control*, a brief look at publishers' catalogues is sufficient to understand how Graded Readers are divided into levels to enable students to choose the appropriate level according to their range of vocabulary. The system of lexical grading is to a certain extent unique for each publisher of Graded Readers and it is notable to say that even if the levels in two series appear to have a similar number of headwords, those words are not necessarily the same. However, a Teachers' Handbook or a Guide accompanying the reading materials offer a list of the complete vocabulary employed within particular grades. According to Thomson Graded Readers, selecting each language level's vocabulary is a careful and precise process:

> The vocabulary at each level is established by referring to corpus-based lexical research, and a thorough analysis of commonly-occurring words in course materials, readers and narrative text. The grammatical syllabus reflects the level of most commonly used structures at a specific level within mainstream ELT. (www – Thomson ELT)

It is undoubtedly hard to decide what amount of unfamiliar words should be included in the text. In general, for intensive reading, it might be acceptable to introduce quite a lot of new words, for the process of reading is careful and slow, while for extensive reading, it would be appropriate to present the reader with a rather smaller number of new words for the aim is to gain reading fluency, not to refer to a dictionary several times within one paragraph.

Vocabulary is a very important factor in simplifying reading materials but obviously not the only one. *Structural control* dealing with the language structure plays an important role in language simplification as well. One of its aims is to control the sentence length so that it is neither too long nor too complex to be comprehended by the reader. For instance, Hedge clarifies that "The permitted sentence length at the beginner level of 'Heinemann Guided Readers' is two clauses forming a compound sentence with the conjunctions *and*, *but* and *or*" (Hedge 9). The main focus of structural control is to introduce gradually various grammatical devices so that they correspond with the expected language ability of a reader dealing with particular language grade. According to Hedge, another possible area of difficulty in a text is to be found in "the reference system, the way in which words such as pronouns substitute for and refer back to noun phrases" (Hedge 13). At the lower levels of Graded Reader publications, there is an evident attention paid to omitting pronouns referring to a noun, every time it is possible to repeat the noun that was already mentioned in the text before. This reduces the possibility that the reader may find himself or herself confused about to which noun phrase the pronoun refers.

The term *information control* (from John Milne's Handbook to 'Heinemann Guided Readers' – Hedge 14) stands for systematical omission or alteration of too detailed descriptions of settings, events and characters in the adapted story. As already mentioned before, a text, which is full of new information, becomes hardly comprehensible for a reader with limited knowledge of the foreign language. Therefore, if the readers should be able to read the story successfully, information must be presented in an easily understandable form and in a reasonable amount, which results in leaving out all descriptions and information that are not crucial in understanding the flow of events. The most evident devices used to control the information content of a story, are listed by Hedge as: limiting the number of characters or the depth of their

definition, controlling the range and complexity of situational or cultural background, which may involve omitting the whole episodes of a story, avoiding the technique of flashback and, instead, using a chronological narrative, keeping a reasonable length of chapters and writing an introduction which clarifies context and characters (Hedge 15).

Besides the above mentioned types of control, Hedge brightly stresses the effect of technical details. It would be a mistake to underestimate the use of illustrations, the size and type of print, the layout of the text and the attractiveness of cover, which may support readers' motivation and interest in reading. More than that, illustrations may be invaluable aids for comprehension of unfamiliar situations or may help the reader to imagine the setting of the events in case that any detailed description has to be left out due to controlled language of the adapted text.

Employing all of these simplification processes proves that the vocabulary, grammatical structure and content of every Graded Reader are carefully graded to make sure the reading material suits the reader's language abilities and enables him or her to enjoy reading second-language written literature irrespective of his or her language level. At the lower language levels, this means adapting the language to a very plain level through simple vocabulary and grammatical devices, with the main focus on supporting the reader's interest in reading. Once the reader feels comfortable with reading at first level, he or she moves up through the book series by reading texts with more challenging vocabulary, grammar and plot. The higher the language level, the more extensive vocabulary and more complex grammar structures are gradually introduced, resembling more the original texts.

3.4. Penguin Readers Language Levels

Since the fourth chapter of this paper deals with Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Black Cat" adapted as a Graded Reader by the Penguin Books Ltd. Publishers, the following grading of language corresponds with the division into language levels according to the Penguin Reader Publications.

Penguin Graded Readers publications are graded at seven levels of difficulty from 'Easystarts' to 'Level 6', as presented on the Penguin Readers official web site (www. penguinreaders.com):

The first grade, *"Easystarts"*, includes only 200 most frequently used headwords, comprised mainly of simple nouns and adjectives; personal and possessive pronouns; adverbs of frequency, place and time; simple conjunctions such as 'and' or 'but' to join words, phrases and clauses; simple verbs in present simple and present continuous; et cetera. The text structure is based on simple one-clause sentences, or two clauses joined with 'and', 'but' or 'or'.

The second grade, *"Level 1 – Beginner"*, includes 300 most frequently used headwords and in addition to *"Easystarts"* grade introduces for instance possessive form ('s); gerunds for activities and pastimes; demonstrative and interrogative pronouns; quantifiers; verbs in negative imperative forms, present continuous with future meaning, past simple, 'going to' and 'would like' phrases; and others. Considering sentence structure, two clauses joined with 'because' are added as well.

The third grade, *"Level 2 – Elementary"*, consists of 600 headwords and enhances the *"Beginner"* grade for example with indefinite pronouns; comparative adjectives and superlatives; past simple tense of some commonly used irregular verbs; common phrasal verbs with transparent meanings; irregular adverbs of manner; comparative and indefinite adverbs; and conjunctions related to time. Regarding sentence forming process, direct speech with subject/verb inversion; reported speech with present; and 'that' clauses are added.

The fourth grade, *"Level 3 – Pre-Intermediate"*, uses 1,200 headwords, adding to the previous *"Elementary"* language level among others reflexive and relative pronouns; predeterminers; distributives; all cardinal and ordinal numbers; comparative adverbs; verbs in the form of present perfect simple and past continuous; modal verbs; question tags; and common phrasal verbs with non-transparent meanings. Sentences with one main and one subordinate clause; zero and first conditional; reported speech; defining relative clauses; participle clauses; and other language structures are being gradually introduced.

The fifth grade, *"Level 4 – Intermediate"*, includes 1,700 headwords. Texts adapted according to this level also use for instance reciprocal pronouns;

comparative/superlative adjectives with less/least; simple passive verb forms (except for modal perfects); present and past continuous passive verb forms; present simple for future reference; present perfect continuous; past perfect; or positive question tags following positive statements. The reader is already presented with complex sentences (where the relations between clauses are uncomplicated); non-defining relative clauses; second conditional; if clauses; and reported speech with past tense reporting verbs.

The sixth grade, *"Level 5 – Upper Intermediate"*, consisting of 2,300 headwords, introduces more complex verb forms and sentence structures such as past perfect continuous; 'get something done' phrase; embedded, defining relative clauses; or third conditional.

The seventh grade, *"Level 6 – Advanced"*, is with 3,000 headwords the highest language level a reader of Penguin Graded Readers may come across with. He or she is getting familiar with, for instance, verbs in future and modal perfect forms; more complex use of modal verbs; mixed conditionals; inversion after 'hardly', 'no sooner' et cetera. (www – Oxford UP)

3.5. Retaining Authenticity

Working with Graded Readers is undeniably a great way of improving considerably language skills. However, what is appreciated by teachers and readers, might not be sympathized with by others, for it is often difficult to retain the quality and impact of the original, a book with a certain literary value. Therefore, as Nuttall emphasizes, simplification of the original texts for the purpose of graded reading has to be done "with discretion" (Nuttall 32). As the book is simplified, many of the complex structures, that are hard to comprehend, are removed. But the author of such text needs to be careful that he or she does not go too far in removing the textual quality and discourse structure of the original. It is essential to take into account the author's point of view, intention, and tone and style of writing. With this in mind, simplification has undeniably brought to life many books which would be, otherwise, for a foreign reader completely dead, but as Hedge states, it has "also murdered not a few whose lives might have been saved" (Hedge 40).

A simplified version of an original text, however carefully written, absolutely cannot keep the original individuality of style. Each writer has his or her own style of expression, they employ different techniques to compose their works, they use different sentence structure, different vocabulary and description techniques, thus creating certain mood, atmosphere and character that make the work unique in style, and distinguish it from creations of other authors. Since Graded Readers are adapted to present the reader with a simplified version of a particular story, so that it can be easily understandable for any student of foreign language no matter what their language skills are, especially with the beginner levels, they cannot retain all of the original intentions, attitudes and writing techniques. However, what the Graded Readers can do, is present readers with a simplified but well written story that keeps the interest of learners, motivates them to read, and helps them to develop their language skills, while at least trying to resemble the original as much as possible. To what extent such an effort might be successful, is dealt with in the fourth chapter of this paper, where the original story "The Black Cat" by Edgar Allan Poe is put in contrast with its adapted version by David Wharry, an author of the Penguin Graded Readers.

4. TEXT ANALYSIS

In this chapter, Edgar Allan Poe's prosaic writing style is compared to simplified writing style of Graded Reader Publications. The following analysis is based on comparison of the original text of Poe's short story "The Black Cat" and its adapted version retold by David Wharry according to Penguin Readers *'Level 3 – Pre-Intermediate'*, consisting of 1,200 headwords. The aim of this analysis is to determine to what extent is Poe's unique style of writing retained in a text intended to be well understandable for readers with limited knowledge of the English language.

Before focusing on the vocabulary, it would be appropriate to start with the story title, which is in both pieces of text identical. This may sound unnecessary to study but it is not a rule that the story title always stays unchanged, as for instance in the case of "The Masque of the Red Death" that is adapted as "The Mask of the Red Death" in Penguin Readers.

At the first glance, it is obvious that the 'Gothic' diction – which is so typical for Poe's writing style – is not followed in the adapted version of the story, where neither archaic expressions nor 'Poesque' words employed in the original tale, such as *"tortured", "phantasm", "sagacious", "tomb", "grave", "maltreating", "damnable atrocity", "disgust", "debauch", "extreme terror", "agony", "ghastly", "spirit of perverseness", "conflagration", "dread", "bitterness of hatred", "portraiture", "assassination", "imperceptible", "mournful", "corpse", "decayed", "exasperated", "wretchedness", "detested creature", "tranquilly"* or *"brute"* are to be found. On the contrary, the diction Wharry uses is modern and simplified, and follows the rules of language simplification so that it could suit the needs of a pre-intermediate reader. 'Poesque' words or foreign expressions are usually replaced with more comprehensible synonyms, while there are several approaches to substituting them. In many cases we can find appropriate synonyms that resemble the number of words as well as their meaning, no matter if it is only one word or a phrase:

Poe: "The whole house was blazing." (Tales 191)
Wharry: "Our house was burning!" (Black Cat 3)

Poe: "I rapped heavily" (196)
Wharry: "I knocked hard" (10)

Poe: "red extended mouth and solitary eye of fire" (196)
Wharry: "his red mouth wide open in a scream, and his one gold eye shining like a
      fire" (10)

Occasionally, the less comprehensible expression has to be explained with the help of a

phrase consisting of familiar words, instead of using a one-word synonym:

Poe: "adjacent garden" (192)
Wharry: "garden of the house next door" (5)

Poe: "gin-nurtured" (190)
Wharry: "mad with drink" (3)

Poe: "intoxicated" (190)
Wharry: "full of drink" (2)

Wharry's choice of synonyms is not always that precise, for instance while he refers to

alcohol as to 'drink'. This might be misleading for a 'drink' does not necessarily have to

stand for 'alcoholic beverage'. Moreover, a modern reader should be acquainted with

the word 'alcohol', which is international and therefore should be easy to understand.

Another example that some of Wharry's synonyms do not correspond with the meaning

of the original word, might be found in the passage where the narrator explains that he

hesitates to harm the second cat because:

Poe: "of absolute *dread* of the beast" (193)
Wharry: "[I] was *afraid* of the animal" (6)

Even though both authors put the word in italics, in the original text, Poe uses word

with much stronger connotation.

Poe was a master of language and used various synonyms whenever it was

possible. It is obvious that the use of synonyms in Graded Readers is very limited for

the reader's vocabulary is not sufficient to understand so many diverse words. As an

example, here are synonyms used by the narrator to refer to his cat:

Poe: 'cat', 'pet', 'brute', 'detested creature', 'crafty animal', 'hideous beast', 'victim of
      my cruelty', 'tormentor', 'fellow', 'the thing', 'monster'

Wharry: 'cat', 'animal'

Besides causing the unwanted effect of monotony, the less frequent use of synonyms also weakens the emphasis on sensory imagery that Poe relies on. His use of various verbs of perception, helping the reader to literally 'smell', 'hear' and 'see' everything that is described, is somehow fading on pages of the reworked story.

Particular – mainly 'Gothic' / 'Poesque' – words are repetitive in Poe's "The Black Cat", especially in order to emphasize narrator's feelings and thoughts. They usually reoccur several times within a page or a paragraph, but sometimes they are repeated one immediately after another thus creating the effect of melodiousness, resembling the alliteration of onomatopoeic words that Poe used in his poetry to achieve desired harmony of sounds:

> And now I was indeed <u>wretched</u> beyond the <u>wretchedness</u> of mere humanity. And a *brute beast* – whose fellow I had contemptuously destroyed – a *brute beast* to work out <u>for *me*</u> – <u>for me</u>, a man fashioned in the image of the High God…
>
> (Tales 194)

This approach to repeating words for emphasis is not followed in the adapted version, causing inevitable loss of dynamics within the story telling. Wharry naturally uses words over and over again but mainly because he is restricted in the use of vocabulary, and therefore has no choice but to use the same word again. But this is scarcely done for effect, while Poe repeats the words on purpose.

One of Poe's writing techniques is using mechanical repetition of *key words* that bind the paragraphs together and represent the main theme or motif in the paragraph. It is impossible to use this technique of introducing new synonyms with the graded story because – as was already stated – the pre-intermediate reader does not have sufficient vocabulary to be able to read such a complex piece of text, consisting mainly of 'Poesque' key words. However, in the following example, Wharry deals with the problem of key words quite successfully:

Poe: For my own part, I soon found a <u>dislike</u> to it arising within me. This was just the reverse of what I had anticipated; but – I know not how or why it was – its evident fondness for myself rather <u>disgusted and annoyed me</u>. By slow degrees, these feelings of <u>disgust</u> and <u>annoyance</u> rose into the <u>bitterness of hatred</u>. I avoided the creature; a certain sense of shame, and the remembrance of my former deed of cruelty, preventing me from physically abusing it. I did not, for some weeks, strike, or otherwise violently ill-use it; but gradually – very gradually – I came to look upon it with unutterable <u>loathing</u>, and to flee silently from its odious presence, as from the breath of a pestilence. (193)

Wharry: But, as the weeks passed, I began to <u>dislike</u> the animal more and more. I do not know why, but I <u>hated</u> the way he loved me. Soon, I began to <u>hate</u> him – but I was never unkind to him. Yes, I was very careful about that. I kept away from him because I remembered what I did to my poor Pluto." (6)

While Poe constantly used complex sentences that sometimes extend over the whole paragraph, due to structural control, sentences in Graded Readers have to be considerably shortened and simplified, thus forming shorter paragraphs that do not correspond with the length and content of paragraphs in the original story. Therefore, certain elegance of expression disappears, and a significant loss of descriptiveness can be observed as well. Poe's detailed depiction cannot be followed in the adapted version that apparently favours a "less-is-more" approach. According to Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition", each literary work should be of a certain length so that it is neither too long, nor too short to be interesting enough and to deliver successfully the intended message. Poe always precisely planned the structure of his stories and poems in advance, which is impossible to do with Graded Readers, publications that aim on simplifying the original text to suit the needs of readers with limited knowledge of foreign language. However, speaking of Wharry's "The Black Cat", 'simplified' unfortunately often means 'shortened'. By applying information control, many important details including rich descriptions of the environment and events, as well as details on the characters' psychology that are so typical for Poe's writing style, are left out. It seems that sometimes, Wharry leaves out descriptive passages even when there is no need to do so for they do not contain too much new vocabulary but, still, there are also few good examples of passages where the original sentences and phrases were shortened by Wharry, while the original meaning is still retained and the reader gets, although in a simplified way, all the details he or she needs:

Poe: "On the night of the day on which this cruel deed was done,…" (191)
Wharry: "That night…" (3)

Or for example while the narrator is looking for a new cat after he has killed Pluto:

Poe: "…to look … for another pet of the same species, and of somewhat similar appearance, with which to supply its place." (Tales 192)
Wharry: "I searched for another black cat, of the same size and type as Pluto." (5)

Similarly, Wharry also rewrites the passage dealing with the white shape on the second cat's breast in a good way. Moreover, he keeps the less comprehensible expression 'gallows' and wisely explains its meaning in a footnote as "the place where criminals are hanged" (Penguin 7):

Poe: "It was now the representation of an object that I shudder to name … the image of a hideous – of a ghastly thing – of the GALLOWS! – oh, mournful and terrible engine of horror and of crime – of agony and of death!" (193-194)

Wharry: "…the shape of an object I am almost too afraid to name… It was that terrible machine of pain and death – yes, the GALLOWS!" (6-7)

However, in many cases, the original sentence or phrase is shortened and it is possible to notice an obvious shift in meaning:

Poe: "One day she accompanied me, upon some household errand, into the cellar of the old building which our poverty compelled us to inhabit." (194)

Wharry: "One day she came down into the cellar with me to cut some wood." (7)

Or while the narrator thinks about getting rid of the body of his wife:

Poe: "…I deliberated about casting it into the well in the yard – about packing it in a box, as if merchandise, with the usual arrangements, and so getting a porter to take it from the house." (194)

Wharry: "I thought of throwing it into the river at the end of the garden. I thought of putting it into a wooden box and taking it out of the house that way." (9)

Concerning the first underlined word, association of 'stream of water' that we get with the word 'river' is not much close to the meaning of the word 'well', standing for deep reservoir of standing water. Also, Poe's narrator does not mention the material of which is the box made, and he thinks of getting a porter to take it, while Wharry's adaptation suggests that the narrator would take the box out of the house by himself. In the last example, Wharry changes even the entire setting:

Poe: "…upon the dead of one of the immense hogsheads of gin, or of rum, which constituted the chief furniture of the apartment." (192)

Wharry: "…on top of a cupboard, near some bottles of wine." (5)

This might seem puzzling for the reader who, during reading, might get a particular idea of the settings where the events take place and now is confronted with details

introducing a completely different cultural background for the wine bottles might suggest the events take place in a place with different atmosphere than the hogsheads of gin and rum would logically create.

In many cases, following the information control, various information considered unimportant by Wharry are logically left out to shorten the text:

Poe: "We had birds, gold-fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and *a cat*." (189)
Wharry: "We had all sorts of birds, gold-fish, a fine dog and *a cat*." (1)

In this way, in several passages, additional information or reference outside the frame of the story is omitted although there certainly must have been a reason why Poe mentioned it:

Poe: "I determined to wall it [corpse] in the cellar – as the monks of Middle Ages are recorded to have walled up their victims." (195)

Wharry: "…I decided to hide the body in one of the walls of the cellar." (9)

In the following example, Wharry leaves out details the reader might need either to understand the context or to perceive the mood of the narrative:

Poe: "…I was answered by a voice from within the tomb! – by a cry, at first muffled and broken, like the sobbing of a child, and then quickly swelling into one long, loud, and continuous scream, utterly anomalous and inhuman – a howl – a wailing shriek, half of horror and half of triumph, such as might have arisen only out of hell, conjointly from the throats of the damned in their agony and of the demons that exult in the damnation." (196)

Wharry: "A voice came from inside the wall, in answer to my knock. It was a cry, like a child's. Quickly, it grew into a long scream of pain and horror." (10)

But Wharry should not only be criticised for omitting words that might – or might not – be important for the context. On the contrary, he sometimes even adds words to provide better explanation of the events:

Poe: "…I was aroused from sleep by the cry of 'Fire!'" (191)
Wharry: "I woke up … I heard people outside shouting, 'Fire! Fire!'" (3)

Rarely, the original text is actually more condensed than the simplified one, expanded even with whole sentences:

Poe: "When it [cat] reached the house it domesticated itself at once, and became immediately a great favourite with my wife." (193)

Wharry: "He came all the way home with me – we now had another house – and came inside. He immediately jumped up on to the most comfortable chair and went to sleep. He stayed with us, of course. He loved both of us and very soon he became my wife's favourite animal." (5-6)

In this example, the attention should be paid also to the way the narrators refer to the cat. At the beginning of the story, Poe refers to his cat Pluto as to 'him' but after he deprives him of an eye, he starts to address the cat 'it'. Later on, the same change happens in referring to the second cat – as narrator's love of his cat turns into hatred, the way he refers to the cat turns from 'him' to 'it'. Wharry is, however, not so consistent. In the case of the first cat, he follows the original but as the story proceeds, he refers to the second cat as to 'him' although Poe's narrator already speaks of 'it' – the "brute beast". On the contrary, Wharry is consistent in the way he refers to nouns and noun phrases by repeating them, instead of using pronouns that might be difficult for the reader to identify in regard to what phrase they refer to.

Finally, in order to retain at least something of Poe's writing technique, few passages resembling the original text in the most possible way, or short sentences that are actually quoted from Poe's text, can be found in Wharry's adaptation:

Poe: "Pluto – this was the cat's name – was my favourite pet and playmate." (190)
Wharry: "Pluto – this was the cat's name – was my favourite." (1)

Poe: "'Gentlemen,' … 'I delight to have allayed your suspicions. I wish you all health, and a little more courtesy. By-the-bye, gentlemen, this – this is a very well-constructed house.' … 'I may say an *excellently* well-constructed house. These walls – are you going, gentlemen? – these walls are solidly put together;'…" (196)

Wharry: "'Good day to you all, dear sirs.' … 'Yes, this is a well-built old house, isn't it? Yes, a *very* well-built old house. These walls – are you going, gentlemen? – these walls are strong, aren't they?'" (10)

Considering the visual aspect, Wharry attempts to stress the words Poe places in italics as well, as proved in the above listed excerpts. Wharry's technique here meets with Poe's intention of emphasizing important words to assure the reader will get the message Poe wanted to communicate. Poe was an impeccable speller, but rather an inconsistent one. Although born as an American, he often used British spelling. In his

works, both 'color' and 'colour' appear, however, when he decided for particular spelling, he followed it throughout the whole story. And so does Wharry – both original and adapted versions of "The Black Cat" are written according to British spelling rules; moreover, both authors are consistent in avoiding contracted verb forms. Furthermore, what is imitated quite effectively is the use of punctuation, especially dashes.

"The Black Cat" is one of the most powerful Poe's stories, perhaps his most successful portrayal of perverseness. Therefore, it might come with surprise that the word 'perverseness' or any of its synonyms is not mentioned in the adapted story even one single time, and, moreover, the motif of perverseness is not dealt with in the adapted story at all, while it actually is the main theme of the whole narrative, and the narrator of the original story is caught philosophizing about this question in several paragraphs, for instance:

> And then came, as if to my final and irrevocable overthrow, the spirit of PERVERSENESS. Of this spirit philosophy takes no account. Yet I am not more sure that my soul lives, than I am that perverseness is one of the primitive impulses of the human heart – one of the indivisible primary faculties, or sentiments, which give direction to the character of man. Who has not, a hundred times, found himself committing a vile or a silly action, for no other reason than because he knows he should *not*? Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgment, to violate that which is *Law*, merely because we understand it to be such? This spirit of perverseness, I say, came to my final overthrow. It was this unfathomable longing of the soul *to vex itself* – to offer violence to its own nature – to do wrong for the wrong's sake only – … (Tales 191)

The complexity of Poe's thought and the care, with which he describes it, is evident. Therefore, it is striking that the original paragraph concerning the theme of perverseness is completely left out in the Graded Reader text. It might be due to the information and structural control that this motif does not appear in the adapted version at all, however, while perverseness is the main theme of the whole story, Wharry's choice to leave out any mentions about perverseness shall be regarded, with respect to the message of the original text, disastrous.

Another typically 'Poesque' technique is detailed description of the character's feelings. Poe places emphasis on narrator's emotions such as sorrow, guilt, hatred or fear, and lets him constantly comment on the events not only as an 'eye' – somebody who describes what he observes – but also as a human being with heart. This seems not to be of such importance for the author of the graded story as he frequently leaves out

the whole passages dealing with narrator's psyche, or, at least reduces them with omitting considerable number of significant details:

Poe: "…[I] hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes, and with the bitterest remorse at my heart – hung it *because* I knew that it had loved me, and *because* I felt it had given me no reason of offence – hung it *because* I knew that in so doing I was committing a sin – a deadly sin that would so jeopardise my immortal soul as to place it – if such a thing were possible – even beyond the reach of the infinite mercy of the Most Merciful and Most Terrible God." (191)

Wharry: "I had to do it – I could not stop myself. I did it with a terrible sadness in my heart – because I knew it was evil. And that was *why* I did it – yes! I did it *because I knew it was evil.*" (3)

To summarize the excerpt from the Graded Readers text, the narrator feels sorry but he had to hang the cat because it was just evil – and he knew it. With a closer look at Poe's text, the narrator deeply regretted his evil act, however, hung the cat even if he knew that it loved him, that he had no reason to do it, and, that he knew it was against the morals – he was acting against his will, driven by impulse of perverseness. Again, it is only matter of opinion, whether including more details would be in contradiction with the information control or whether it would actually help the reader to understand Poe's original ideas. The following excerpt represents another example of avoiding detailed descriptiveness of narrator's feelings that is again missing in the adapted text, especially the lack of conscience:

Poe: "Had I been able to meet with it, at the moment, there could have been no doubt of its fate; but it appeared that the crafty animal had been alarmed at the violence of my previous anger, and forebore to present itself in my present mood. It is impossible to describe, or to imagine, the deep, the blissful sense of relief which the absence of the detested creature occasioned in my bosom. It did not make its appearance during the night – and thus for one night at least, since its introduction into the house, I soundly and tranquilly slept; aye, *slept* even with the burden of murder upon my soul!" (195)

Wharry: "He did not come back during the night either. And so, for the first time in a long time, I slept well." (9)

The narrative is often interrupted with narrator's remarks – he usually comments on the events as a person awaiting his execution, reminding the reader that the story is being retold by him, and relived once again, for instance: "I blush, I burn, I shudder, while I pen the damnable atrocity." (Tales 190) or "I am above the weakness of seeking

to establish a sequence of cause and effect between the disaster and the atrocity. But I am detailing a chain of facts, and wish not to leave even a possible link imperfect." (Tales 191) None of comments like these are to be found in the adapted version of the story, thus removing the technique Poe uses to introduce the narrator, his thoughts, and his interaction with the reader. Regarding the narrators, there is a difference in the way Poe's and Wharry's narrators address the reader. Poe always addresses the reader in the third person while Wharry employs direct addressing:

Poe: "The reader will remember…" (193)
    "…it would be difficult to make the reader comprehend." (193)
Wharry: "…everyone will tell you this." (1)
    "If I tell you why, you will not believe me. You will think I am mad." (6)

Wharry's approach actually seems to be more effective in gaining the reader's attention. The reader might get the impression that Poe refers to the reader as to some unknown person, while Wharry's direct addressing that is used in the adapted story makes its reader feel that he or she really is part of the story, which is otherwise hard to experience since the simplified story lacks Poe's emphasis on sensory imagery. However, visual imagery is encouraged by the use of illustrations that help the reader to follow the story line and get the details that have to be omitted due to information control.

To conclude, there is no doubt that the story is adapted to meet the requirements of a non-native speaker. Regarding the lexical control, the used vocabulary omits typically 'Poesque' expressions and substitutes them – with more or less success – with more modern words that are easier to comprehend and are a part of a limited vocabulary of 1,200 headwords. As a result of both structural and information control, the simplified narrative does not resemble the original text in many aspects. Many words, phrases and even paragraphs are completely left out at the expense of certain elegance of Poe's way of expression and detailed descriptiveness. Poe's emphasis on narrator's changing character, his feelings, qualms of conscience and his state of mind in general disappears, as well as any mention of the main theme of perverseness that is surprisingly not dealt with in the adapted story at all.

The overall impression of Wharry's text is not so powerful for the original mood and atmosphere of the story are affected by restrictions resulting from the language

grading. Considering all the rules and types of control that are applied in the process of simplification, in many cases, Wharry has no other choice but to completely suppress Poe's writing style and techniques that, in the end, produce such a unique and distinctive piece of text. However, Wharry sometimes seems to go too far in the process of simplification, especially when dealing with important details concerning the flow of events and the main character's complex psychology. As a result, Wharry presents the reader with quite an interesting horror story about a man whose life was destroyed by an evil cat, instead of complex psychological study of perverseness, guilt and violence, narrated by a double identity hero who seems to be insane but is clearly not, since he is able to rationally explain what has brought him to his (self-)destruction, originally presented by Poe.

5. Conclusion

Not so many American writers ruled the literary world of short stories with the same success as Edgar Allan Poe did. Although his literary genius was not recognized while he was alive, today we remember Poe as the author who introduced to the reader a modern detective story that deals not only with the crime and its resolving, but also with detailed psychology of the main characters. The focus always lies on the un-named narrator, frequently a double identity hero, who is driven by his passions and emotions, as well as his fears, guilt and conscience. Over the years, the detective story did not advance significantly beyond the level, to which it was developed by Poe, and the structure remained nearly the same. Furthermore, the types of characters Poe created are still the key elements in modern detective genre.

Poe's stories are very powerful in their effect. The descriptiveness of both settings and state of mind of the narrator are so impressive, that it is easy for the reader to become part of the story. It is mainly due to the vocabulary Poe employed, that the atmosphere can be literally perceived by the reader. Poe's choice of vocabulary is precise – he pays extra attention to various synonyms and uses them as key words that bind the story together. As a result, certain repeated expressions seem to be invented by Poe himself, although they may be part of anyone's vocabulary. Yet while used by Poe, they help to create a uniquely 'Poesque' way of expression that is, despite of its complexity, very elegant.

Almost all of Poe's stories deal with the main motif of death and other motifs such as guilt, fear, torture and self-destruction constantly occur in Poe's works. It is apparent that a nightmare of unattainable love, probably stemming from deaths of his beloved women, haunted Poe during his whole life. Yet it still would not be right to speculate whether he would write his best works were it not for all of the tragedies he lived through.

Poe composed excellent verse that influenced many poets, especially French Symbolists. He sought for a perfect rhyme, for expressing the sense of Beauty, and for an absolute harmony of tones. This, again, would not be achieved without precise

choice of words. In order to improve his works, he rewrote his main poems as well as some short stories several times, focusing mainly on refining his vocabulary and use of punctuation. According to him, writing technique should be of the utmost importance for every author. His opinion was that the best writer always plans the structure, plot, and writing technique of his story in advance, before he or she starts writing, and impatiently criticised authors who did the opposite. Probably the most comprehensive essay in which he deals with writing technique is "The Philosophy of Composition". Here, on the example of "The Raven", Poe proves that none of his works is composed from a sudden and chaotic burst of creative spirit.

This implies that although Poe was not able to organize his own life, he was a master of organizing the writing process of his works. While he was thinking about the structure of his works, he did not fail in considering even the seemingly insignificant details, paying extra attention to each comma and dash. His short stories represent works of art that are distinctive in the themes they deal with, in their mood, diction and structure, while Poe's way of expression is unique and hard to imitate.

Considering all of these facts, it might sound almost impossible to attempt to simplify one of Poe's best stories, "The Black Cat", according to the pre-intermediate language level of graded reading, and retain both his unique writing style and his original intention, which is mainly to portray the spirit of perverseness. And here the reader already comes across the first – and the most significant – imperfection in the simplified story. Wharry seems to completely ignore the main theme of perverseness, since there is neither a single mention of this motive, nor any synonym referring to it. This may be caused by information control he has to follow, but he also completely leaves out phrases, sentences and sometimes even whole paragraphs dealing with the narrator's feelings, cogitation, and his state of mind in general, that are essential for the reader to understand the type of character the narrator represents. The adapted version of the short story thus lacks the focus on study of human psyche, which is so important for Poe. Regarding the lexical control, 'Poesque' expressions, foreign expressions, and vast range of descriptive adjectives, typical for Poe's elegant and descriptive way of expression, are missing as well. However, speaking of individual words and short phrases, Wharry does not leave out all the less comprehensible expressions. In most cases, he substitutes them with more frequent words used in everyday speech that

satisfy the needs of a reader with limited language skills. Unfortunately, Wharry sometimes uses synonyms with meaning that does not correspond with the denotative meaning of the original word, or synonym with different connotation, thus causing possible shift in meaning and especially mood of the whole paragraph. Furthermore, the effect of key words fades. Wharry naturally repeats certain words but mainly because of the limited vocabulary he is forced to use, while Poe mechanically repeated important words on purpose as one of linking devices within the text.

While Poe's sentence structures are complex, the graded text proves to serve the requirements of a non-native speaker by consisting mainly of simple sentences. The whole story is shortened to be more comprehensible, and therefore does not follow Poe's statement in his "The Philosophy of Composition" that each literary work has to be of a certain length – neither too long, nor too short – to achieve the effect of delivering the intended message.

Wharry imitates quite effectively Poe's writing technique while dealing with punctuation, consistency in spelling, and emphasizing particular words by putting them into italics, though. Yet his narrator addresses the reader directly, instead of referring to him or her in the third person as to be seen in the original text, and he does not use the reference to the cat in the same way as Poe does.

To sum up, there is no doubt that Wharry's text has been simplified to satisfy needs of a pre-intermediate reader. The vocabulary is very limited, thus creating effect rather of monotony than of an elegant and colourful narrative, and although occasional exact quotations from the original text can be found, Poe's diction is indeed not resembled with a greater success. The overall impression of the text is not so powerful for it lacks the original mood and atmosphere. It is essential to admit that writing Graded Readers is a very tricky process for the author of such publication has to follow many restrictions in use of language that the process of simplification involves, thus concluding that within the limitation he had, Wharry did quite a good job, after all. However, as a result of extensive modification of the original text, the reader is presented with quite an interesting horror story about an unfortunate man who happened to have an evil cat with supernatural power, instead of a complex psychological study of perverseness, guilt and violence, presented by a narrator who is compelled to ruin his own life with qualms of conscience.

6. Résumé

Edgar Allan Poe je po právu považován za jednoho z velikánů americké literatury. Asi bychom nenašli mnoho spisovatelů, kteří vládli literárnímu světu hororu a melancholie tak pevnou rukou, jako právě on. Ačkoli za svého života nebyl v USA svými kolegy považován za významného spisovatele, francouzští symbolisté v něm viděli svůj vzor a například poezie Charlese Baudelaira nese známky podobných motivů a témat, jakými se zabýval ve svých dílech i Poe. Na rozdíl od amerických kritiků devatenáctého století dnes již uznáváme Poea jako autora hororových povídek, nadaného básníka, významného literárního kritika, esejistu, a mistra moderní detektivní povídky. Poe se zaměřoval především na psychiku hlavního hrdiny – bezejmenného vypravěče – jehož jednání je ovlivňováno nejen jeho silnými emocemi, ale také obavami, pocitem viny a výčitkami svědomí. Od dob, kdy Poe napsal své první detektivní povídky, se přístup autorů k tomuto žánru nějak významněji nezměnil, a tak se nám i dnes dostávají do ruky příběhy s podobným rámcem děje, přičemž moderní detektivové i zločinci mají podobné rysy osobnosti, jaké kdysi vykreslil Poe.

Poeovy povídky zaujmou především působivou atmosférou, která čtenáře okamžitě vtáhne do děje. Poe pečlivě vybírá právě taková slova, která zapůsobí na čtenářovu představivost a umožní mu vcítit se do hlavního hrdiny a doslova vidět, slyšet a cítit to, co prožívá i on. Velký důraz je kladen zejména na obrovskou škálu synonym, která se objevují v celém textu jako 'klíčová slova', jejichž prostřednictvím je čtenář průběžně seznamován s autorovými hlavními myšlenkami. Tato pro Poeův styl typická slova se v textu opakují tak často, že působí dojmem, jako by je Poe sám vytvořil, i přes to, že mohou patřit do slovní zásoby kteréhokoli člověka. Ale je to právě práce s bohatou slovní zásobou, díky které je Poeův vypravěčský styl tak jedinečný, a i přes svou velkou popisnost působí 'vznešeným' a uhlazeným dojmem.

Většina Poeových povídek se zabývá tématem smrti, a ostatními motivy jako jsou například vina, strach, trýznění a sebedestrukce. Poeův život by mohl být stejně dobře jeho vlastnoručně napsaným příběhem smutku a osamění a je zřejmé, že výběr témat má užší souvislost s jeho dospíváním v rodině bohatého, ale odtažitého obchodníka Johna

Allana. Taktéž není pochyb o tom, že představa nenaplněné lásky ho po smrti jeho matky, pěstounky, první lásky, a nakonec i milované ženy pronásledovala celý život, a promítla se tak do témat mnoha jeho povídek a většiny básní.

Poeova poezie je jedinečná svou hudebností a zdánlivou prostostí, což ocenili mimo jiné i francouzští symbolisté, např. P. Verlaine, S. Mallarmé či A. Rimbaud. Podobně jako v próze, Poe pečlivě vybírá onomatopoické výrazy, a ve snaze, aby docílil dokonalého rýmu, své básně neváhá přepracovat i šestnáctkrát v řadě, jako tomu bylo například v případě básně "Havran". Tu uvádí i jako hlavní příklad ve své eseji "Filozofie básnické skladby", kde se snaží dokázat, že žádné z jeho děl není napsáno na základě jakéhosi náhlého výbuchu kreativity. Poe věřil, že tvorbě každého literárního díla by mělo předcházet přesné určení techniky psaní, zápletky, dějového rámce, i samotného vypravěčského stylu, a neváhal kritizovat své současníky, kteří tak nečinili. Z toho vyplývá, že Poe, i přes neschopnost zorganizovat si svůj vlastní život, byl mistrem v organizaci psaného projevu. Pokud přemýšlel o uspořádání svých děl, nikdy neopomněl sebemenší detaily a pečlivě zvážil umístění každé čárky a pomlčky. Na základě toho docházíme k závěru, že Poeův způsob vyjadřování je jedinečný, těžko napodobitelný. Jeho díla jsou charakteristická především výběrem tématu, vysokou popisností děje i prostředí, do kterého jej zasadil, velkým důrazem kladeným na psychologii hlavních postav, i samotným stylem psaní, jímž své myšlenky vyjadřuje.

Pokud vezmeme v úvahu všechny tyto aspekty, musíme považovat snahu o přepracování jedné z nejlepších Poeových povídek, jíž "Černý kocour" ("The Black Cat") bezpochyby je, na zjednodušenou verzi, nereálnou. Při slovní zásobě dvanácti set základních slov (úroveň Pre-Intermediate) je téměř nemožné povídku přepsat, a zachovat přitom Poeův jedinečný styl vyjadřování a záměr, kterým je především zobrazení lidské zvrácenosti. Již zde se setkáváme s prvním zásadním nedostatkem zjednodušené verze – Wharry zcela ignoruje hlavní motiv povídky, jímž je právě zvrácenost lidské povahy, a v celém textu jej nezmiňuje ani jednou. Důvodem může být omezená slovní zásoba, která mu neumožňuje téma zvrácenosti jakkoli popsat, či kontrola srozumitelnosti obsahu, jež je jednou z metod uplatněných při zjednodušování literárních děl v rámci Graded Readers. Faktem ovšem je, že Wharry vynechává fráze, věty a někdy i celé odstavce týkající se nejen zvrácenosti, ale i vypravěčových pocitů, jeho myšlenkových úvah a problematiky lidské psychiky obecně, čímž narušuje Poeův zájem

o psychologii postav. Co se týče výrazů typických pro Poeův styl vyjadřování - slov cizího původu a široké škály popisných adjektiv a synonym, většina z nich v textu chybí.

Pokud mluvíme o jednotlivých slovech a frázích, samozřejmě není pravidlem, že Wharry vynechává všechny hůře srozumitelné výrazy. V mnoha případech je nahrazuje srozumitelnějšími synonymy, které se objevují v běžné mluvě a mohou tak lépe vyhovovat potřebám čtenáře s omezenou znalostí anglického jazyka. Bohužel, ne vždy význam Wharrym použitého synonyma odpovídá významu původního slova, které použil Poe. Tím se mění význam konkrétní věty, a jedná-li se o slovo související s hlubší myšlenkou, i význam celého odstavce. Poněkud slábne i efekt klíčových slov, jež Poe mechanicky opakoval pro neustálé připomenutí hlavní myšlenky nebo motivu povídky, a využíval je též jako spojovací výrazy zaručující plynulost toku myšlenek v textu. Ve zjednodušeném textu se určité výrazy také opakují, nemůžeme ale předpokládat, že se tak děje z jiného důvodu, než jakým je nutná omezenost slovní zásoby výsledného díla.

Wharryho povídka na rozdíl od originálu sestává především z kratších jednoduchých vět a vychází tak vstříc jazykové úrovni čtenáře, pro kterého je určena. Celá povídka působí zkráceně a odporuje tak Poeovu tvrzení, že každé literární dílo musí mít určitý, předem daný rozsah (nesmí být ani příliš dlouhé, ani příliš krátké), aby byla hlavní myšlenka díla čtenářem skutečně pochopena. Nicméně, Wharry celkem úspěšně napodobuje Poeovu techniku psaní, když klade důraz na stejné užití pomlček a čárek, dodržuje britský pravopis a důležitá slova zvýrazňuje kurzívou. Přesto nacházíme další nesrovnalosti, především ve způsobu oslovení čtenáře a užití osobních zájmen.

Je třeba uvést, že text, který Wharry vytvořil, musí odpovídat jazykové vybavenosti mírně pokročilého čtenáře. Slovní zásoba je velmi omezena a ačkoli v textu najdeme několik přesných citací z originálu, Poeův barvitý styl vyjadřování nemohl být ani v nejmenším napodoben, čímž vyprávění postrádá svou typickou atmosféru a melancholický nádech. Adaptace literárních děl do podoby Graded Readers je samozřejmě úkol nesnadný. Pokud zohledníme četná omezení ve využití (nejen) jazykových prostředků, kterými byl Wharry svázán, musíme uznat, že nakonec odvedl dobrou práci. Nicméně, výsledné dílo, které se nám dostává do ruky, je jakýmsi monotónně vyprávěným příběhem o nešťastném muži a kocourovi s nadpřirozenými schopnostmi, namísto souhrnné studie lidské zvrácenosti, viny a násilí, popisované člověkem, který je výčitkami svědomí dohnán k vlastnímu pádu.

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ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI

Název práce	Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Style of Writing in Graded Reader Publications Analýza prozaického stylu Edgara Allana Poea v publikacích Graded Readers
Autor práce	Eva Pinkrová
Obor	Anglický jazyk pro hospodářskou praxi
Rok obhajoby	2008
Vedoucí práce	Mgr. Olga Roebuck, M. Litt.
Anotace	Bakalářská práce se zabývá otázkou zachování autorského rukopisu Edgara Allana Poea ve zjednodušených publikacích, tzv. Graded Readers. Poeův typický styl psaní je charakterizován v úvodní kapitole, styl Graded Reader Publications v kapitole druhé. Závěrečná kapitola je věnována textové analýze originálu Poeovy povídky "Černý kocour" ("The Black Cat") a jeho zjednodušené verze (upravené v rámci vydavatelství Penguin Readers), s cílem zjistit, do jaké míry tato adaptace vyhovuje Poeovu původnímu autorskému záměru.
Klíčová slova	Edgar Allan Poe Graded Readers The Black Cat