LINGUO-STYLISTICS OF HORROR IN E.A. POE'S SHORT STORIES

Zaruhi Antonyan[*]

https://orcid.org/0009-0005-8965-950X
Yerevan State University

Horror is a genre of science fiction which is intended to, or has the capacity to frighten, scare or disgust the readers by inducing feelings of horror and terror. This piece of fiction in prose of variable length also shocks and startles the readers inducing feelings of repulsion or loathing through creating a frightening atmosphere. Horror is frequently supernatural, though it can be non-supernatural. Often the central menace of a work of horror fiction can be interpreted as a metaphor for the larger fears of a society. The present investigation of horror in E. A. Poe's short stories through the linguo-stylistic and case study methods of analyses aims to disclose the very distinct role of horror fiction in the perspective of human emotions – a kind of "mediator" between the world and its reflection in the language. The results show that emotions as a psychological, physiological and philosophical phenomenon verbally reproduce the emotional attitude of the person towards the world, that emotions are contained, fixed, expressed and indicated in utterances in the form of ideas – and as such – emotions are a perfect object of linguo-stylistic study.

Keywords: *emotions, fear, horror fiction, Poe, stylistic devices, expressive means.*

Introduction

The five basic emotions, namely *happiness, sadness, fear, anger,* and *disgust* are identified so far as the strongest of human emotions. *Horror* is an innate emotion and a variety of fear. The set it occurs in includes such emotions as acute stress reaction, anger, anxiety, fright, joy, panic, and sadness. Horror fiction is based on emotion, psychology and cognition, and uses language as a window into the categorization of emotions.

Horror is closely related to, but should be distinguished from, anxiety. Horror is a feeling induced by perceived danger or threat which causes a change in metabolic and organ functions and ultimately a change in behavior (Ohman, 2000).

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[*] zaraantonyan@ysu.am

In speech, tone of voice, volume, and speech rate are quite sufficient for conveying the real fear that the speaker experiences. In written language, however, this interpretation becomes more complex. The writer is supposed to use a number of different linguistic and stylistic means to commit horror to paper and make the readers feel it. Before passing to our main task of observing the main and widely used linguistic and stylistic means of expressing the given emotion in horror fiction in general and E. A. Poe's short stories in particular, let us discuss human emotions (horror included) from a linguistic point of view.

Emotions: a linguistic perspective

Originally emotions have been the subject of study of separate sciences – psychology, physiology, philosophy. These sciences gave rise to such interdisciplinary fields of study of emotions as anthropological linguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, and communicative linguistics.

As emotions are one of the most important factors in forming human mentality, psycholinguistics is closely connected with the linguistics of emotions. Emotions are central, core qualities of a human being whose emotional state controls the selection of linguistic and stylistic means, which can be verbal and non-verbal according to the situation. Emotions are specific forms of interaction of a human being and environment, they help us to cognate the world and define our place in it. The problem of the investigation of linguistic expression of emotions is one of the most difficult problems in modern linguistics and the development of its research is sophisticated enough.

The roots of linguistics of emotions, including horror, date back to an old dispute of a large group of linguists about whether linguistics should be interested in emotional components. Some linguists (Sapir, 1921, pp. 2-3) considered that the basic function of language is the cognitive (informative) function and did not pay attention to the investigation of emotional components of language. Others (Foolen, 2012, pp. 5-6) considered the expression of emotions to be the central function of language. They concentrated on emotiveness of language, speech and text in correlation with neurobiology, cognitive and communicative sciences defining emotion as a form of world reflection in human conscience to denote some mental experience, connotation and feeling.

According to Ekman (2007, p. 8) the relationship between language and emotions can be viewed from two viewpoints. Firstly, language, in a broad sense, can be viewed as "being done" (performed). From this viewpoint, it is commonly assumed that people, at least on occasions, have emotions, and that being emotional, gains its own agency, in a variety of ways impacting the communicative

situation. Secondly, this can be indicated extra-linguistically (by facial expressions, body postures, proximity, etc.) in terms of suprasegmental and prosodic features, and in terms of linguistic (lexical and syntactic) forms. In this view, language and emotion are two concurrent, parallel systems in use, and their relationship exists in that one system (emotions) impacts on the performance of the other (language). Both of them share their functionality in the communicative process between people.

Carroll (1977, p. 12) assumes that language in a way refers to, and therefore reflects objects in the world, among them – emotions. Language is a means of making sense of emotions, and as such can be used as a starting point to explore the world of emotions in different languages as well as in different "language games".

The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is *fear* which is an emotional, rational and behavioral response to a potentially dangerous object, event, situation or action. At the prospect of coming into closer contact with it, the experiencer wants to withdraw. An absolute opposite to rational fear is *panic*. This type of fear implies complete loss of rational control over emotions and uncontrolled behavioral reactions which characterize the psychotic behavior of large groups of people, even crowds. Hence, the psychological term *crowd panic* (Apresjan, 2007, p. 19). Fear is expressed by several lexical items in English – *to get scared, to get frightened, to get a scare, to be shit-scared,* etc. There is also a special word to express the above-mentioned notions – *terror* and its derivatives – *to terrify, terrifying, terrified.* This kind of fear involves a very strong physiological and uncontrolled behavioral response, which is reflected in language as *to go pale with terror, one's blood turns icy with terror, to freeze/numb with terror, to flee in terror,* etc. As to *horror*, it is an emotion which combines the elements of fear and disgust. It is a borderline emotion, a fact which is manifested even in its metaphorical conceptualization. While horror produces some typical terror-like reactions, it also involves some disgust-type reactions; e.g. *horror iced (curdled) one's blood; to shrink in horror,* but also *to vomit in horror* (one cannot vomit *in terror*). Horror is an example of removing barriers between emotion clusters, which is a very typical phenomenon for English.

Interestingly, though both strong fear and disgust components seem to be present in horror, their sum does not equal its meaning. A very subtle description of horror by Solomon (2003, p. 5) points out something monstrous and ghastly instead of something normal and familiar. However, the most common explanation of horror is actually connected with fear.

Kövecses (1990, pp. 4-5), focusing on the linguistic expression of emotions, pointed out that many figurative phrases that express emotions are either metaphorical or metonymic in nature. The author lists the following common

metonymies associated with fear: physical agitation (*to be shaking with fear*), increase in heart rate (*the heart pounded with fear*), lapses in heartbeat (*to make one's heart miss a beat*), blood leaves face (*to turn pale*), skin-shrinking (*the skin prickling with fear*), hair-straightening (*to be a hair-raising experience*), inability to move (*to be rooted to the spot*), drop in body temperature and inability to move (*to be frozen in one's tracks*), inability to breathe (*to gasp with fear*), inability to speak (*to be struck dumb*), inability to think (*to scare someone out of one's wits*), sweating (*the cold sweat of fear*), nervousness in the stomach (*to get butterflies in the stomach*), dryness in the mouth (*to be scared spitless*), screaming (*to scream with fear*), ways of looking (*fear in her eyes*), startle (*to make someone jump out of one's skin*), flight (*to flee persecution*), etc. Metaphors associated with fear are also rooted in bodily experiences. For example, in *fear is fluid in a container* the body itself is conceptualized as a container that can be filled with an emotion (Kövecses, 1990, pp. 70-73). Other metaphors that reflect the feeling state of fear within the body are *fear is a burden* in which fear is equated to a physical weight pressing down on one internally, and *fear is an illness* (e.g. *The town was plagued by fear*), in which fear becomes sickness. Other fear metaphors imitate bodily states as well, but as an outside force acting against the body. Of the types highlighted by Kövecses (1990, pp. 74-78), these include *fear is a vicious enemy* (*to be choked by fear*), *fear is a tormentor* (*to be tortured by the fear of what was going to happen*), *fear is a supernatural being* (*a ghastly scene*), *fear is an opponent* (*to be overcome by fear*), *fear is a natural force* (*to be engulfed by panic*), and *fear is a superior* (*actions to be dictated by fear*).

In fiction, the expression of emotions, including fear and horror, takes place on all linguistic levels: phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, and the level of figurative language use which is the most effective one. The figurative language is expressed in stylistically appealing stylistic devices and expressive means and helps to convey the message in a much more engaging and notable way.

Stylistic means of expressing horror in E.A. Poe's works

The very beginning of horror fiction is connected with the works of English authors who followed and developed the Gothic tradition (Wright, 2007). They created characters that became archetypes for the genre of horror (monster, vampire etc.). Unlike science fiction and fantasy, the definitions of the genre of horror do not stand on the structure of various works, they rather focus on the esthetic aspect and emotions which are evoked in the readers (fear and horror). Based on this, horror is defined as "a genre of popular literature focused on evoking emotions of dread, fear and tension" (Prohászková, 2012, p. 132). The genre is characterized by dynamism, and therefore it is necessary to note that some

archetypes keep developing along with the genre and new archetypal characters are created continually.

Since human imagination is unlimited, a wide number of fearful archetypal characters (vampires, werewolves, zombies monsters, mad scientists, demons, ghosts/spirits, eternal wanderers, serial killers, psychopaths, bad kids, antichrists, freaks or villains) and places (cemeteries, abandoned castles, dark forests, castle ruins, old houses, haunted houses) have been created in horror fiction (Fear in Literature, n/d). Despite the fact that by the development of science many so far inexplicable phenomena have been explained, these archetypes and legends keep being used in literature and other branches of art. Three genres are based on fear and imagination: science fiction, fantasy and horror, which together form a so-called **fantastic triangle**.

Horror fiction, expressed in the forms of short story and novel, has its subgenres:

- Rural Horror, also known as "redneck horror" (situated in places far from civilization);
- Cosmic Horror (of civilizations coming from outer space);
- Apocalyptic Horror or the end-of-the-world horror (about the end of the world caused by various factors);
- Crime Horror (based on a detective plot with an addition of horror elements);
- Erotic horror (combining sensual or sexual imagery with horror overtones);
- Occult Horror (focusing on the arrival of the antichrist, cults, mysticism, curses and so-called occult sciences);
- Psychological Horror (based on the fear of the protagonist, his feelings of guilt, his faith and unstable emotional state of mind (Prohászková, 2012, p. 133).

The tradition of horror stems from the form of the short story that elaborates the horror motive in a shorter time and enables the reader to have a more detailed and more personal contact with the plot. In the 1830's a literary dawn in the history of the weird tale came in the person of renowned and unfortunate Edgar Allan Poe (Masters, 2013). Due to his pervasive potency of mind, Poe became an opener of artistic vistas. Consequent writers may have produced greater single tales than his but it was he who taught them the art which they were able to carry to greater lengths. All the coming generations too owe to him for the modern horror-story in its final and perfected state. The tales of logic and ratiocination, forerunners of the modern detective story, are not to be included at all in weird literature. Another group deals with abnormal psychology and monomania as it expresses terror but not weirdness.

The best examples of stylistic devices and expressive means, phrases, idioms, metaphors, similes and interjections verbalizing emotions of horror/fear are widely used in Poe's horror stories. The short story *The Tell-Tale Heart* (Poe, 1983, p. 255) is full of emotions of the protagonist. Throughout the story we witness the disgust, horror and alarm that the murderer and his victim experience. The reason of murder is the victim's *pale blue eye, with a film over it*. The protagonist describes his feelings about that eye by means of the following **idiom** expressing horror.

> 1) *Whenever it fell upon me, **my blood ran cold.*** (p. 255)

In the successive example the author presents the penetrating sound of terror, and reading the following lines the reader imagines how horror sounds:

> 2) *Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was **the groan of mortal terror**. It was not a groan of pain or of grief – **oh, no!** – it was **the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe.*** (p. 257)

The **interjection** *oh, no!*, in its turn is a stylistic tool expressing horror.

In the example given below, Poe uses an **idiom** to express the fear that the murderer feels at the sight of the filmed eye:

> 3) *It was open – wide, wide open – and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness – all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that **chilled the very marrow in my bones**; but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person: for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot.* (p. 257)

In the next examples E. A. Poe again demonstrates his skill in conveying the internal growth and the sound of horror.

> 4) *Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. **It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. The old man's terror must have been extreme! It grew louder**, I say, **louder every moment***! (p. 258)
>
> 5) *And now at the **dead hour** of the night, amid the **dreadful silence** of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to **uncontrollable terror**. Yet, for some minutes longer I*

> *refrained and stood still. But the beating **grew louder, louder**! I*
> *thought **the heart must burst**. (p. 258)*

Going any further we witness the murderer's inner terror, we hear the noise of his conscience. Poe has used **repetitions, interjections** and **exclamations** to enhance the utterance and to convey the panic to the reader.

> 6) *No doubt I now grew very pale; but I talked more fluently,*
> *and with a heightened voice. **Yet the sound increased** – and*
> *what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound – much such a*
> *sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. **I gasped for***
> ***breath** – and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly*
> *– more vehemently; but **the noise steadily increased.** (p.259)*
> 7) ***It grew louder – louder – louder!** And still the men chatted*
> *pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not?*
> ***Almighty God! – no, no! They heard! – they suspected! – they***
> ***knew!** – they were making a mockery of my **horror**! – this I*
> *thought, and this I think. (p. 259)*

In the short story *Berenice* (Poe, 1835, pp. 333-339) the author describes the horror the protagonist feels when he sees the white teeth of his epileptic bride realizing what he has done with her.

In the first example (8) the fear is expressed via **idioms** and **epithets** that create the tense atmosphere:

> 8) *Was it my own **excited imagination** – or the misty influence*
> *of the atmosphere – or the **uncertain twilight** of the chamber –*
> *or the gray draperies which fell around her figures – that*
> *caused in it so **vacillating and indistinct an outline**? I could not*
> *tell. She spoke no word, **I – not for words could I have uttered***
> ***a syllable. An icy chill ran through my frame; a sense of***
> ***insufferable anxiety oppressed me; a consuming curiosity***
> ***pervaded my soul; and sinking back upon the chair, I***
> ***remained for some time breathless and motionless, with my***
> ***eyes riveted upon her person.** (p. 334)*

Then the author describes the face and particularly the teeth of Berenice that scared him to death. The use of **repetition**, **expressive adjectives**, **epithets** and **interjections** obviously conveys the intended message.

9) *The eyes were **lifeless**, and **lustress**, and seemingly **pupil-less**, and I shrank involuntarily from their **glassy stare** to the contemplation of the **thin and shrunken lips**. They parted; and in a smile of peculiar meaning, the teeth of the changed Berenice disclosed themselves slowly to my view. **Would to God that I had never beheld them, or that, having done so, I had died**!* (p. 334)

10) *I saw them now even more unequivocally than I beheld them then. **The teeth! – the teeth! – they were here, and there, and everywhere, and visibly and palpably before me; long, narrow, and excessively white, with the pale lips writhing about them,** as in the very moment of their first terrible development.* (p. 334)

In the next example (11) are presented the protagonist's memories mixed with horror. They are expressed through the usage of an idiomatic phrase and metaphor:

11) *Why then, as I perused them, did the hairs of my head erect themselves on end, and **the blood of my body became concealed within my veins**?* (p. 336)

In the end, the horrible truth is disclosed and the hero of the story finally remembers what he did that night with the corpse of Berenice, buried still alive:

12) ***With a shriek I bounded to the table**, and grasped the box that lay upon it. But I could not force it open; and **in my tremor it slipped from my hands**, and fell heavily, and burst into pieces; and from it, with a rattling sound, there rolled out some instruments of dental surgery, intermingled with thirty-two small, white and ivory-looking substances that were scattered to and fro about the floor.* (p. 336)

Ligeia (Poe, 1983, p. 90) is one of E.A. Poe's short stories possessing some elements of supernatural horror. The story is about the protagonist's love – Ligeia, who dies and then resurrects, scares life out of the hero. The author creates the mysterious atmosphere by choosing respective **metaphors** and **epithets** very carefully.

13) *It might have been midnight, or perhaps earlier, or later, for I had taken no note of time, when a sob, low, gentle, but*

> *very distinct, **startled me from my revery. – I felt that it came**
> *from the bed of ebony – **the bed of death. I listened in an agony***
> ***of superstitious terror** – but there was no repetition of the*
> *sound*. (p. 102)

Then E. A. Poe masterly describes the physical changes and consequences of horror upon the protagonist:

> 14) *Through a **species of unutterable horror and awe,** for*
> *which **the language of mortality** has no sufficiently energetic*
> *expression, I felt **my heart cease to beat**, my **limbs grow rigid***
> *where I sat.* (p. 104)

After some time the sounds coming from the bed are repeated: the corpse begins to revive, thus shocking the hero. E. A. Poe presents the effect of horror on the protagonist's psychology lexically, through **repetitions** and **metaphors** and by means of a **rhetorical question**.

> 15) *An hour thus elapsed when (**could it be possible?**) I was a*
> *second time aware of some vague sound issuing from the region*
> *of the bed. **I listened – in extremity of horror.** The sound came*
> *again – it was a sigh. **Rushing to the corpse, I saw – distinctly***
> ***saw – a tremor upon the lips**. In a minute afterward they*
> *relaxed, **disclosing a bright line of the pearly teeth.***
> ***Amazement now struggled in my bosom with the profound***
> ***awe which had hitherto reigned there alone**. **I felt that my***
> ***vision grew dim, that my reason wandered**; and it was only by*
> *a violent effort that I at length succeeded in nerving myself to*
> *the task.* (p. 104)
> 16) *__I trembled not – I stirred not__ – for **a crowd of unutterable***
> ***fancies connected with the air, the stature, the demeanor of***
> ***the figure, rushing hurriedly through my brain**, **had paralyzed***
> ***– had chilled me into stone**. I stirred not – but gazed upon the*
> *apparition. **There was a mad disorder in my thoughts – a***
> ***tumult unappeasable.** (p. 106)

William Wilson (Poe, 1983, p. 127) explores the theme of the double. The first self haunts the protagonist and leads him to insanity and also represents his own insanity, while the second self represents the conscience. Poe describes the struggle between two selves of William Wilson step by step. The bad and spoiled William

feels inexplicable horror towards the good, honest William and always runs away from him. In the first example (17) the protagonist is scared to death when he sees William's face in the darkness. The author uses **metaphors, exclamations, rhetorical questions**, **lexical units expressing horror** to convey the shock that the protagonist experiences.

> 17) *I looked; — and* **a numbness, an iciness of feeling instantly pervaded my frame. My breast heaved, my knees tottered, my whole spirit became possessed with an objectless yet intolerable horror. Gasping for breath,** *I lowered the lamp in still nearer proximity to the face.* **Were these — these the lineaments of William Wilson?** *I saw, indeed, that they were his, but* **I shook as if with a fit of the ague in fancying they were not. What was there about them to confound me in this manner**? *I gazed; — while* **my brain reeled with a multitude of incoherent thoughts.** *Not thus he appeared — assuredly not thus — in the vivacity of his waking hours.* **The same name! the same contour of person! the same day of arrival** *at the academy! And then his dogged and meaningless imitation of my gait, my voice, my habits, and my manner!* **Was it, in truth, within the bounds of human possibility, that what I now saw was the result, merely, of the habitual practice of this sarcastic imitation? Awe-stricken**, *and with a* **creeping shudder**, *I extinguished the lamp, passed silently from the chamber, and left, at once, the halls of that old academy, never to enter them again.* (p. 137)

Then occurs their second meeting after a long interval. William again feels overwhelming sickness and horror when he hears his double's voice. This is expressed through **repetitive rhetorical questions**:

> 18) *While he spoke, so profound was the stillness that one might have heard a pin drop upon the floor. In ceasing, he departed at once, and as abruptly as he had entered.* **Can I— shall I describe my sensations? — must I say that I felt all the horrors of the damned? Need I say that I was afraid, that I felt the sick fear of those who are judged forever wrong?** (p. 142)

At the end of the story two Williams meet, and the furious William kills the other one with his sword, and only then he realizes that he has killed his own self, as the other William Wilson was no one else but himself.

To sum up, we would like to state that E. A. Poe's horror stories have some typical characteristics: they all are built on the protagonists' feelings, particularly fear, in extremely tense and, in some cases, even unrealistic situations.

Conclusion

Emotions have an important cognitive role in speech, as they are elements of the speaker's inner world. They are an important part of interpersonal relations, and they always take part in the activities of perception, interpretation, and formation of speech. Our emotions are composed of a subjective component (how we experience the emotion), a physiological component (how our bodies react to the emotion), and an expressive component (how we behave in response to the emotion). In fiction, in horror fiction, in particular, the expression of emotions, including fear and horror, takes place on all linguistic levels: phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, and the level of figurative language use which is the most effective one. The latter is expressed in linguistically appealing stylistic devices and expressive means and helps to convey the message of fear in a much more engaging and notable way.

The tradition of horror greatly elaborated by Edgar Allan Poe brought the modern horror-story to its final and perfected state. Masterfully depicting and verbalizing emotions of horror/fear, Poe created best examples of stylistic devices and expressive means: phrases, idioms, metaphors, epithets, similes, interjections and words indicating fear. His short stories are full of emotions of fear of his protagonists, then being conveyed to the reader. The application of stylistic devices and expressive means to describe fear aims at depicting the disgust, horror and alarm that the protagonist (often he himself), murderers and victims experience.

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ՄԱՐՄԱՓԻ ԼԵԶՎԱՌՃԱԿԱՆ ԱՌԱՆՁՆԱՀԱՏԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ Է. Ա. ՊՈՅԻ ՊԱՏՎԱԾՔՆԵՐՈՒՄ

Ձարուհի Անտոնյան

Մարդկային հույզերը` որպես հոգեբանական, ֆիզիոլոգիական և փիլիսոփայական հասկացություններ, վերարտադրում են մարդու հուզական վերաբերմունքն աշխարհի նկատմամբ և հանդես են գալիս լեզվական արտահայտություններում ամրագրված` զգացմունքների և հույզերի տեսքով, և որպես այդպիսին` լեզվաճական ուսումնասիրության հետաքրքիր առարկա են: Գեղարվեստական արձակի սարսափ ժանրը գիտաֆանտաստիկ գրականության տարատեսակ է, որը նախատեսված է կամ նպատակ ունի

ընթերցողին փոխանցելու վախի և սարսափի զգացողություններ, ցնցել և ապշեցնել նրան։ Ակնհայտ է, որ վախի զգացումի լեզվական հանճարեղ պատկերումը միայն կարող է արթնացնել նման զգացողություններ ընթերցողի մոտ, ինչն էլ կարողանում է անել Է. Ա. Պոն իր սարսափ պատմվածքներում՝ կիրառելով բազմաթիվ և բազմազան ոճական հնարներ և արտահայտչամիջոցներ՝ փոխաբերություն, հռետորական հարց, բացականչություն, մակդիր և այլ գրական միջոցներ։

Բանալի բառեր՝ *հույզեր, վախ, սարսափ, սարսափ ֆանտաստիկա, Պո, ոճական հնարներ, արտահայտչամիջոցներ։*