

THE MAJOR THEMES IN E. A. POE'S "BERENICE"

The psychological short stories by Edgar Allan Poe play an important place in his works. They are often called "terrible" or "horrible". Their main theme is the tragic consequences of clash of human consciousness, which is a result of the humanistic ideals with new inhuman tendencies. They encountered during the progress of American bourgeois civilization. The writer pays attention mostly to fear: fear of death, life, loneliness, people, madness, knowledge.

In the "Berenice" by E. Poe there is "an image of a beautiful woman". This story is characterized by autobiographic motif as "William Wilson". Egaeus, the protagonist, and Berenice were cousins as E. Poe and his wife Virginia. The expectation of imminent death of beloved is another motif of this story. The protagonist's bride is suffering from a deadly disease and diagnosis is not defined for a certain. We can assume, there is the motif of disease of human soul and body. Egaeus finds some symptoms of unexplained disease for him: "my own disease – for I have been told that I should call it by no other appellation – my own disease, then, grew rapidly upon me, and assumed finally a monomaniac character of a novel and extraordinary form – hourly and momentarily gaining vigor – and at length obtaining over me the most incomprehensible ascendancy". Every day he watches how his beloved emaciates. His attention is focused on her teeth: "The eyes were lifeless, and lusterless, 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!". From this moment Egaeus raves of Berenice's teeth.

Interesting fact, that in 1835 the first publication of this story shocked readers. And in 1940 another version was published. There wasn't said about a scene where Egaeus visits Berenice before her burial and clearly sees that she is still alive as she moves her finger and smiles. In the part of story protagonist dreaming of his beloved teeth: "The teeth! – the teeth! – they were here, and there, and everywhere..." Motive of obsession plays probably the most important role in the story. Influenced by this idea Egaeus subconsciously commits a horrible crime. As you know, awareness of his actions comes after the crime.

The short story "Berenice" belongs to the genre of gothic stories. Its terrible final shocks readers. The main motives are autobiographic, expectations of imminent death, disease of human soul and body and motive of obsession.

The subject for image is a human soul in the short story by E. Poe, what flows into the horror facing with the world, the state of the human psyche, consciousness personality.

Writer's passion to various mental anomalies is commonly known. Noticed that his attention focuses on anomalies, leading to disruption of social and moral law, symbolic of madness has profound social content in the stories by E. Poe, "world of madness" of his characters is based on the careful observation and analysis of the human psyche, a special form of reflection of reality.

LITERATURE

1. Poe E.A. Berenice : [Interenet resource] / E.A. Poe. – The access mode : www.eapoe.org/works/tales/bernicea.htm.