THE IMAGE OF AMIR TEMUR (TAMERLANE) IN EDGAR ALLAN POE'S POEM

Sherzod Yakubov Kamildjanovich
Lecturer, RANCH Technological University
Khorezm, Urgench, Uzbekistan
ORCID: 0009-0007-3725-912X
e-mail: sherzodyakubov554@gmail.com
telephone number: +998937525595

Abstract: This paper examines the representation of Amir Temur in Edgar Allan Poe's poem Tamerlane (1827). It argues that Poe transforms the historical conqueror into a Romantic figure whose ambition is accompanied by emotional loss and regret. Through textual and historical-literary analysis, the paper shows how the poem shifts attention from military achievement to the conflict between public success and private fulfilment. The study also considers the influence of Romanticism and Orientalist conventions on this literary image.

Keywords: Amir Temur; Tamerlane; Edgar Allan Poe; American literature; Romanticism; Orientalism

Amir Temur, known in much of Western literature as Tamerlane, has been represented differently across historical and literary traditions. Historical accounts discuss his political authority, military campaigns, and cultural patronage, whereas literary works often select particular aspects of his reputation to express the concerns of their own time. The American literary image of Temur developed largely through European historical narratives and literary traditions. By the time the figure reached American writing, he had already passed through several layers of cultural interpretation.

One of the most notable early American works to use this figure is Edgar Allan Poe's poem Tamerlane, published in 1827. Rather than offering a detailed account of Temur's life or military career, Poe presents a speaker looking back on choices made in pursuit of ambition. The poem's main interest lies not in the events of conquest but in the emotional consequences of sacrificing personal attachment for greatness. This focus makes Poe's Tamerlane a literary character rather than a reliable historical portrait.

The central conflict of the poem is the tension between ambition and personal fulfilment. The pursuit of power promises distinction and achievement, yet it is associated with the loss of love and the recognition of missed opportunities. Through retrospective reflection, the protagonist becomes aware that worldly success cannot necessarily repair emotional damage. Temur's name and reputation provide the poem with a figure of extraordinary ambition, while the narrative turns that ambition into a study of regret. In this way, the poem shifts the emphasis from public action to private consciousness.

This transformation reflects important features of Romanticism. Romantic writers frequently explored intense emotion, isolation, memory, and the conflict between personal desire and social or worldly aspiration. Poe's protagonist fits this pattern because his defining experience is an inner struggle rather than a military achievement. The historical figure becomes a means of examining a universal question: what is the value of success if it comes at the cost of emotional fulfilment?

The poem can also be considered in relation to Orientalism, understood here as the Western literary practice of representing Eastern figures through selective or symbolic images. Poe does not provide a detailed account of Central Asian society or Temur's historical role. Instead, the Eastern identity of the protagonist creates a distant, grand setting for a personal tragedy. This does not make the poem

© 2026 London International Monthly Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. All Rights Reserved.

historically comprehensive; it shows how a writer can adapt a non-Western figure to the aesthetic needs of a particular literary culture. European Romantic writing, including works by Lord Byron, formed part of the wider context in which such figures became available to American writers.

The analysis leads to two main observations. First, the image of Temur in Poe's poem is mediated by European cultural traditions rather than based on a detailed engagement with Central Asian history. Second, Poe's principal innovation is the psychological reinterpretation of the conqueror: military and political power recede, while ambition, loss, and regret become central. The poem is therefore valuable as evidence of early American literary imagination and its engagement with global historical figures, not as a substitute for historical biography.

In conclusion, Poe's Tamerlane transforms Amir Temur from a renowned conqueror into a Romantic figure defined by the conflict between public achievement and private loss. This representation reflects the priorities of Romantic poetry and the selective use of Eastern historical figures in nineteenth-century Western literature. Reading the poem in this way helps distinguish the historical Temur from the literary character and demonstrates how a distant historical figure can be reshaped to explore experiences that are presented as universal. A further comparative study of Poe and European writers would help clarify the differences between American and European literary interpretations of Temur.

References

1. Jackson, P. (2023). Amir Timur. Oxford Bibliographies. https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780199791279-0241
2. Poe, E. A. (1827). Tamerlane. In Tamerlane and Other Poems.
3. Sayidova, S. N. (2023). Works dedicated to the image of Amir Temur in English literature. International Journal of Literature and Languages, 3(5). https://doi.org/10.37547/ijll/volume03issue05-05
4. Tasheva, N. Z. (2023). Characterization of the image of Amir Temur in Christopher Marlowe's drama Tamerlane the Great. International Journal of Literature and Languages, 3(2). https://doi.org/10.37547/ijll/volume03issue02-08

© 2026 London International Monthly Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. All Rights Reserved.