

УДК 821.111-21(Крэдок Д.). DOI: 10.26170/2071-2405-2025-30-3-29-36.
ББК Ш33(4Вел)5-8,446+ Ш33(4Вел)5-3.
ГРНТИ 17.07.29. Код БАН 5.9.2

THE IMAGE OF PETER I IN JOSEPH CRADOCK'S TRAGEDY *THE CZAR*

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Abstract. The article examines the representation of the image of Peter I in *The Czar* (1777), a tragedy by an English playwright Joseph Cradock, in the context of the “Petrine myth” in the eighteenth-century English literature. The goal of the study is to consider poetological aspects of Peter I’s image, the means of its creation and imagological functions. The originality of the author’s interpretation of the image is explored in connection with characteristic of the tradition of the Russian Tsar’s reception in the English literature of the Enlightenment with emphasis on the specificity of the artistic form and characterology of the tragedy. Thus, the article dwells on Cradock’s interpretation of Russian history of the first decades of the 18th century and his use of anachronisms, directly associated with the compositional strategies of the playwright. The study focuses on the author’s attitude to Peter I, displayed through the arrangement of the system of characters and the use of various means of reflected characterization, including the allusive plane of the dramatic piece. The study highlights the interaction between the elements of classical and sentimentalist poetics and the functions of melodramatic pathos in connection with characterizing the image of Peter I in the structure of *The Czar*. The research also analyzes the peculiarities of the English-Russian cultural dialogue in the tragedy and the specificity of presentation of the image of the Russian Tsar and the image of Russia as a whole.

The Czar was inspired by the “Petrine myth”, which, as it is shown in the article, was partially deconstructed by Cradock. Thus, an apologetic tradition of Peter’s representation in the eighteenth-century English literature was interrupted: the tsar is portrayed in the tragedy first of all as a hostage to his character, unrestrained impulses and anger that lead to the deaths of tsarina and Prince Alexis. The historical material, substantially reconsidered in *The Czar*, made it possible for Cradock to put forward the problems of vice and virtue, role of personality in history, state and civil duty, and dangers of despotic rule. The representation of the image of Peter the Great complies with the classical and neo-classical genre poetics (conflict between duty and sentiment, normativity of artistic form, classical references and, simultaneously, concern with the Enlightenment interpretation of the problems of state government and international relations) and is presented in a polemical political context through the prism of excesses of despotic power. The image of the protagonist is also placed in the focus of the imagological representation which involves the traditional stereotypes of perception of Russia: cold, barbarity, wildness, and despotism, but, on the other hand, the country is depicted as “a blooming garden of the world”, combining the highest merits of European civilizations during the rule of Peter I. This ambivalence confirms the objective inertia of imagological reception and also exposes changes of valorization of the image of Russia, determined by the Western awareness of civilizational shifts that occurred in the 18th century in the national being of the country seen as a culturally distant “other”.

Keywords: English literature; English dramaturgy; English playwrights; literary creative activity; literary genres; literary plots; literary images; plays; English Enlightenment; neoclassical tragedy; Joseph Cradock; Petrine myth; imagological representation; image of Peter I; historic personalities; Russian Czars

For citation: Polyakov, O. Yu. (2025). The Image of Peter I in Joseph Cradock’s Tragedy *The Czar*. In *Philological Class*. Vol. 30. No. 3, pp. 29–36. DOI: 10.26170/2071-2405-2025-30-3-29-36.

ОБРАЗ ПЕТРА I В ТРАГЕДИИ ДЖОЗЕФА КРЭДОКА «ЦАРЬ»

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А н н о т а ц и я . В статье анализируются особенности репрезентации образа Петра I в трагедии английского драматурга Д. Крэдока «Царь» (1777) в контексте «Петровского мифа» в английской литературе XVIII в. Цель исследования – рассмотреть поэтологические аспекты образа Петра I, средства его создания и имагологические функции. Своеобразие авторской трактовки образа протагониста выявляется в связи с характеристикой традиции восприятия русского монарха, сложившейся в английской литературе эпохи Просвещения, с акцентом на особенности художественной формы и характерологии трагедии. Так, выявлены особенности интерпретации Д. Крэдоком русской истории первых десятилетий XVIII в. и функциональная роль авторских анахронизмов, непосредственно связанных с композиционными стратегиями драматурга; представлено авторское отношение к образу Петра I, проявленное через выстраивание системы образов трагедии, средства отраженной характеристики героя, в том числе аллюзивный план произведения; рассмотрено взаимодействие в трагедии «Царь» элементов классицистической и сентименталистской поэтики и функции мелодраматического пафоса в связи с характеристикой образа Петра I; проанализированы особенности англо-русского культурного диалога в трагедии и специфика воплощения в ней как образа русского царя, так и «русской темы» в целом.

Создание трагедии «Царь» было инспирировано «Петровским мифом», который, как показано в статье, был подвергнут драматургом частичной деконструкции, таким образом, была прервана апологетическая традиция восприятия русского монарха в английской литературе XVIII в.: Петр I предстает в трагедии прежде всего как заложник своих слабостей, необузданных желаний и гневливости, ведущих к гибели царевича Алексея и Оттокезы. Исторический материал, значительно пересмотренный в произведении, позволил Д. Крэдоку поставить вопросы о соотношении добра и зла, роли личности

в историческом процессе, государственном и гражданском долге и опасности деспотизма. Образ Петра I выстроен в соответствии с классицистической и неоклассицистической жанровой поэтикой (конфликт долга и чувства, нормативность художественной формы, классические референции и одновременно внимание к просветительской трактовке проблем государственного управления и межнационального взаимодействия) и представлен в полемическом политическом контексте в аспекте эксцессов деспотической власти. Он также находится в фокусе имагологической репрезентации, в ходе которой актуализируются традиционные стереотипы восприятия России (варварство, рабство, дикость, холод), но, с другой стороны, о ней говорится как о «цветущем саде мира», стране, соединившей во время правления Петра высшие достижения европейской цивилизации. Эта амбивалентность является подтверждением как объективной инерции имагологической рецепции, так и наличия определенных изменений ее направленности, связанных с валоризацией образа России, признанием тех цивилизационных сдвигов, которые происходили в национальном бытии России как культурного «чужого» по отношению к Западу в XVIII веке.

Ключевые слова: английская литература; английская драматургия; английские драматурги; литературное творчество; литературные жанры; литературные сюжеты; литературные образы; пьесы; английское Просвещение; неоклассическая трагедия; Д. Крэдок; петровский миф; имагологическая репрезентация; образ Петра I; исторические личности; русские цари

Для цитирования: Поляков, О. Ю. Образ Петра I в трагедии Джозефа Крэдока «Царь» / О. Ю. Поляков. – Текст : непосредственный // Филологический класс. – 2025. – Т. 30, № 3. – С. 29–36. – DOI: 10.26170/2071-2405-2025-30-3-29-36.

A steady growth of interest to the Russian theme in English literature, obvious in the course of the 18th century, was caused, above all, by the vast popularity of Peter the Great, which began after the “Northern Crisis” of 1716–1717 and was spurred by numerous publications of historians, politicians, periodical writers: Daniel Defoe, Richard Steele, Aaron Hill, Oliver Goldsmith, Alexander Gordon, Charles Whitworth, and others. Among the works that greatly contributed to idealization of the Russian Tsar in Britain are *The State of Russia under the Present Czar* by John Perry (1716) and *The Present State of Russia* by Friedrich Christian Weber (1723). M. S. Anderson highlights the fact that British accounts of Peter’s life and deeds did not gain European recognition, comparable to the popularity of Voltaire’s and Fontenelle’s biographical writings, and that many sources, on which English writers on Peter relied, were translated ones [Anderson 2002: 140]. As for the “Petrine text” of English poetic and dramatic works, it did not enjoy continental popularity either, but it is significant in many ways, as it provides a field for a comprehensive analysis of the authors’ interpretation of history, interaction of various genres’ poetological features and literary trends in the making of Peter’s character, and, what is especially important, representation of the image of the Russian Tsar is imaologically significant, being associated with the construction of the image of Russia. These are the basic aspects of the present study that focuses on the tragedy *The Czar* by Joseph Cradock (1742–1826), a writer, antiquary and enthusiast of theatre who was well-connected with Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, Laurence Sterne, Richard Brinsley Sheridan and David Garrick and whose literary heritage includes works of different genres: two tragedies, *Zobeide* (1771) and *The Czar* (1777), a biography, *The Life of John Wilkes, Esq.* (1773), memoirs and literary criticism (*Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs*, 1826), travel writings.

J. Cradock’s literary heritage has been studied insufficiently both in Russia and abroad, and his tragedy *The Czar* is subjected to a detailed analysis for the first time in the present study that is based on genre analysis and imaological approach and relies on the previous research of the Petrine theme in English eighteenth-century literature, especially on the notable works of A. Cross which examine the representation of Peter

the Great mostly in historical and culturological contexts [Cross 1985, 1993, 1998, 2000]. We also rely on the first Russian comprehensive study of constructing the image of Russia in English literature, conducted by N. P. Mikhalskaya [1995, 2012], and a general survey of English 18th century literary reception of Peter I in a paper of N. A. Solovyeva [2001], who just mention J. Cradock’s tragedy. In general works, devoted to English drama, and in Cradock’s biographies, *The Czar* is referred to very briefly, more attention is paid to *Zobeide* [Nicoll 1927: 249; *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre* 2014: 380; Stephen 1887: 436].

When Cradock was writing his second tragedy, than presented to the Russian court and awarded a gold medal by Queen Catherine, the “Petrine myth” had already formed. Its literary origins and development are associated with Moses Stringer’s *Congratulatory Poem, to the High and Mighty Czar of Muscovy, on His Arrival in England* (1698) and Aaron Hill’s poem *The Northern Star* (1718), in which Peter I was lauded as a hero almost equal to Julius Caesar and compared to the sun, whose brightness warms the frozen North and “illuminates even parts of the world beyond Russia’s boundaries” [Cross 1993: 165]. The image of Peter I was also foregrounded in a fragment of James Thomson’s *Seasons* (1744) where he is called the “first of monarchs” who carried out his civilizatory mission triumphantly. Thomson’s Peter is, above all, “a culture-hero of the Enlightenment” [McKillop 1952: 28] and “a model of outstanding leadership and patriotic virtue” [Gottlieb 2001: 47].

The image of the Russian Tsar also appeared in dramatic works since 1700, mostly in comical pieces (this fact can be explained by the decline of tragedy in England, especially in the second half of the 18th century). We find references to Peter I in William Congreve’s *The Way of the World* (1700) and William Burnaby’s *The Ladies Visiting-Day* (1701) representing the figure of the czar in the context of male “despotic power” in Russian families [Cf. Cross 1998: 3–4]. It is only in three plays that he became the protagonist: *The Northern Heroes* (1748), an anonymous farce mixed with the scenes of historical drama, *The Czar* (1777), a tragedy by Joseph Cradock, and John O’Keeffe’s comedy *The Czar Peter* (1790).

In *The Northern Heroes*, the Russian monarch is

opposed to Charles XII as a peaceful leader of the nation, patron of sciences, arts and entrepreneurship, and in *The Czar Peter* he is also greeted as a conductor of great reforms, although his image is depicted in the centre of a love plot and involved in lots of farcial situations which weaken the heroic manifestations of the character [Polyakov 2024].

The playwrights' concern with the figure of Peter the Great was caused not only by the European fame of the Russian monarch, but also by the stable interest of English theatre to historical issues as well as the playwrights' understanding of the necessity to redirect national stage from ancient Roman plots, which had inspired Augustan dramatic writers, to new sources. Peter I was seen as a titanic character comparable to protagonists of ancient tragedies. Thus, in the prologue to J. Cradock's tragedy *The Czar* he was called the "Northern Genius" who had humiliated militant Swedes and Turks and turned Russia from gloom and chaos, from "the realms of night", to light and order. In spite of all the compliments, addressed to Peter I, Cradock was well aware of the neo-classical requirement for a tragic protagonist to be ethically neutral – basically virtuous, but making a fatal mistake provoked by some weakness, a certain personal trait that could lead him to misfortunes. Therefore, the playwright decided to create Peter's character around anger, which he considered his leading feature combined with spontaneity, impulsiveness ("Passions, by turns, like storms o'erwhelm'd his mind" [Cradock 1825: XI]) that brought forth his cruel and unjust decisions:

To noblest actions sudden rage succeeds,

And in those transports Truth and Virtue bleeds
[Cradock 1824: XI].

It is this "weakness" of Peter the Great that leads him to familial losses and unrest in the state, depicted in *The Czar*, the tragedy which presents an amazingly free interpretation of the events of Russian history. The circumstances of Peter's life and deeds were well known in 18 c. England due to numerous publications, including those mentioned above. That is why J. Cradock regarded it important to explain and ground his numerous violations of historical facts in his piece that he called a historical tragedy. The main reason for rewriting Russian history, as he put it, was the necessity to comply with the rules of the genre and create efficient dramatic situations: "If the thoughts in general are poetical; if the incidents appear natural; and the catastrophe well worked up, a few deviations in point of time and circumstances are but little attended to" [Cradock 1824: X]. The author recognizes that some of his personages "are not strictly agreeable to mere fact; but they produce situations which, in a theatre, may have a wonderful effect" [Cradock 1824: X].

The cast of historical personages of the tragedy includes, besides Peter I, his wife Evdokiya Lopukhina presented as Ottokesa (under this name she was known in Europe), her brother Abram Fedorovich, named "Fedrowitz" by Cradock, Peter's son Alexei ("Alexis" in the play), and the monarch's "Swedish trophy" Ekaterina ("Catharine") who was to become the Russian queen. The time of the events that take place in the tragedy can be detected precisely: January 1710,

when Peter I came back to Russia after his victory at Poltava. Some incidents that occur in *The Czar* actually happened at that time, but, as a whole, the tragedy covers a decade of Russian history compressed in one day in strict accordance with the neo-classical unity of time.

In Cradock's interpretation, the tsar not only fell out of love with Ottokesa, but suspected her of infidelity, and Alexis of organizing a plot. The playwright employs anachronisms: history runs that the monarch learned about Evdokia's adultery with mayor Glebov during the trial of Prince Alexey in 1718; besides, in Cradock's play, the latter dies almost immediately after the tsar's return to Moscow, but, actually, it occurred eight years later, as it is fixed in documents. The author also changed the circumstances of acquaintance of Peter with Catharine, which, in his version, was a result of schemes of the tsar's Swedish advisor. Finally, in spite of Cradock's having invented the riot, arranged by Ottokesa's brother, one cannot but note that A. F. Lopukhin shared the views of Peter's opponents, to whom his sister belonged, and was executed afterwards. Reconsideration of Russian history and concentration of dramatic events was important for the author of "The Czar" to build a compact plot and support dramatic tension in the play.

The image of Peter I is exposed gradually, first through characteristics of other personages (the tsar appears on the stage only in the III act), who are juxtaposed to one another and form several contrastive pairs: Peter's antagonist, the courtier ("stol'nik") Fedrowitz, standing for justice and protecting his sister's honour, is opposed to Artamon, a cruel schemer and merciless torturer plotting against Ottokesa and her son Alexis; Fedrowitz's friend Amgar, whose name is not easily associated with Russian onomasticon, disputes about Peter's character with Theoroff, Artamon's accomplice; Desna, Artamon's henchman, not devoid of humanism, dares to pity the suffering tsarina and so is opposed to his master, whose threats he finally has to give in to.

The most complicated of all is Ottokesa's attitude to the tsar, characterized explicitly in the play's exposition and beginning: Peter's wife is waiting for her husband to return triumphantly after his finishing the battle with Swedes and, conversing with her confidante Olaria, extols the monarch's deeds, speaks passionately about her love and devotion to him, her pride for his martial achievements. She goes on glorifying him even when the courtier Amgar arrives from Peter's camp to inform her that "some toying she" has conquered the "cruel czar's" heart, and on learning that the tsar accused her of marital infidelity and her son Alexis of state treason, she blames herself ("I've driven the Czar to seek a kinder home; I've made my son a traitor" [I, 1: 11]). But, being informed that her son is under arrest, she begins to rebel: "Let him become the traitor he is deem'd, / Let him, in one vast ruin, crush the state" [I, 1: 13].

The image of Ottokesa is, no doubt, Cradock's success: the tsarina's character is psychologically complex, combining dignity and self-humiliation, boundless devotion and, in the situation when her son's life is in danger, courage and audacity. In spite of all her

contradictions, her primary concern is well-being of the state and her subjects. Even in prison, having been put to the ominous Black Tower, she rejects Fedrowitz's plan to organize a revolt. In her dispute with the brother, crucial problems of state ethics and humanism are discussed. Fedrowitz insists that violence is necessary to restore justice and save the country from Peter's tyrannical rule, whereas Ottokesa prefers martyrdom to mutiny, foreseeing suffering of people and numerous deaths which the uprising would end in:

I see rebellion in a murth'rous form,
Stalking his guilty rounds, treading on the necks
Of tenderest infants, calling aloud for mercy,
While mothers, fond as I am, plead their woes,
And plead their woes in vain [II, 2: 23].

In these circumstances, Ottokesa is ready to die for her subjects, "give up [herself] to tortures, shame, or death" [Ibid.].

Fedrowitz, who will not put up with Peter's despotism, is presented as a consistent opponent of the tsar, in whose character, nevertheless, he recognizes some virtuous traits ("The Czar himself is nobly-minded", "right-noble", although "subject to the force of new impressions" [II, 1: 14–15]). He admits the power of Peter's love for Catharine, but warns of its destructive power, using an allusion to the story of Antonius and Cleopatra: "<...> like another Anthony, our Czar, / E'en from the summit of imperial sway / Might fall for love" [II, 1: 16]. In Shakespearean tragedy, the strength of Antony's feeling for Cleopatra serves to poetically justify the triumvir of Rome, while Cradock, in the mouth of his character, blames excessive credulity of the monarch, who, being blinded by his passion, fails to judge impartially, rule reasonably. He allies with evil and is ready to ruin his family thus putting the state on the brink of crisis.

The image of Peter I is set in the focus of not only dramatic action, but also imagological representation, so significant for Cradock that he devoted to it a rather extensive scene of the III act, depicting a visit of English ambassadors to the Russian tsar. This scene relies on a historical fact: in 1708, Russian ambassador A. A. Matveyev was arrested in London for a debt, which infuriated Peter I, but Queen Anne did not make concessions to the tsar, having explained that she could not violate legal acts adopted by Parliament. This scandal resulted in promoting a law which provided diplomatic immunity.

In Cradock's tragedy, ambassadors, who have delivered the royal letter with comments on the incident and "offers of friendship" to the Russian court, argue with Peter I about the advantages of their constitutional monarchy over Russian absolutism. Queen Anne, they insist, "is not despotic there, / Her Monarch is the Law" [III, 2: 32]. Peter regards such government unreasonable:

Law! – Law is our Will;
If the supreme has not a right to enforce
The principles he forms, – where is his power?
Is he not merely then a splendid gem,
Set for a crowd to gaze at? [Ibid.]
Peter's argument is that a monarch under Par-

liament's control is devoid of an ability to execute power efficiently, whereas for his opponents it is of utmost importance to prove that English monarchy is more progressive because it prevents any abuses of one-man rule and secures stability and historical succession of the forms of national life, social and religious:

'Tis Britain's boast,
No power despotic can destroy the work
Her generous sons have wrought <...>
Their laws are founded on the rock of justice;
Their throne and altars bid the world defiance;
Britain – by Britain only can be conquered [III, 2:

33–34].

Certainly, the ambassadors' boastful speeches represent not only the author's position, but, above all, the tradition, deeply rooted in English national consciousness, of reception Russia from the point of view of cultural distancing, as the "other", "foreign", uncivilized and culturally inferior nation. In particular, Cradock actualizes the basic West / East imagological opposition in the aspect of contrasting democracy and despotism.

The scene with the ambassadors, not organic in the plot, violates the unity of action – in this point we cannot but agree with an author of the *Monthly Review*, who wondered how the playwright could have included in the action a particular event of relations of the two countries, if it was not associated with the piece's catastrophe. "The whole scene is an unmeaning and useless excrescence, worthy of a mock-tragedy, and must surely've excited laughter", the journal's critic wrote [The *Monthly Review* 1825: 27]. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the scene is devoid of parodic or comic contents and that an apparent reason for its inclusion in the text was Cradock's desire to appeal to the audience's national feelings and emphasize an exemplary character of the English model of government in comparison with the Russian ways of social life and customs that are called "barbaric" and "wild" in the tragedy. The image of Russia is also associated in the play with a number of hetero-stereotypes about winter and frosts, violence and cruelty.

Imagological representation in *The Czar* is conveyed primarily through the image of the protagonist. His ambivalent characteristic ("the all-conquering Czar", "the laurel'd hero" / "the cruel Czar <...> though he rules a world with awful sway, He cannot rule himself" [III, 1: 27]) is complemented by the remarks that in Russia any confessions, agreeable to the tsar, can be got under torture and that perjury in favour of authorities blooms there: "The criminal, whose flesh is harrow'd up / Will not acknowledge treason not his own [III, 1: 27]; "How easy 'tis for a witness to swear / What suits their monarch's will [IV, 3: 52]. These denunciations are put into the mouths of Amgar and Ottokesa, while Catharine glorifies Peter I as a great monarch cultivating Russia as "the flowery garden of the world", combining the highest merits of European civilizations:

<...> whate'er Italia's shores
Have breath'd of softer elegance; what polish'd
France
Has taught in manners and in maxims wise;
Or what fair England's still more favour'd clime,

Storehouse of genius, learning's best resort,
In deep-read science, and improving arts,
Has held in admiration <...> [III, 2: 37].

Thus, Catharine articulates the proteistic character of Russian culture open to European influences.

Ambivalent representation of Russia in the tragedy reveals inertia of imagological reception, caused by stern persistence of national stereotypes, and also it exposes changes of valorization, determined by the Western awareness of the country's progress. Duality is a marking feature of the leader of Russia, too. Contradictions of his character reach their apex in the scene of trial of Prince Alexis, sharpening the tsar's internal conflict of duty and feeling: understanding the necessity to punish the "instigator" of the mutiny, he remains a loving father, hesitating before sentencing his son to death ("Give me some pause; affection struggles yet <...> my heart burst with grief" [IV, 3: 46, 53]). Finally, having confided in Artamon's label, Peter declares that he discards all doubts. He compares himself to Roman fathers who had the right to execute their sons, and rejects any possibility of violating his state duties:

I'll triumph in my justice; how shall we hold
The sceptre of our state with honour'd rule,
If we protect the first offender in it,
In treason and aim'd a parricide? [IV, 3: 48]

Alexis's denial to confess his guilt and humbly to plead for mercy Peter I takes for an affront and a manifestation of pride and orders to execute his son, although later, in the following act, doubts assail him again ("<...> my heart relents / To think I've doom'd a son" [V, 2: 59]).

This display of humanity in the tsar's character is almost immediately mitigated by the line caused by Artamon's new insistent call for revenge:

– the traitress [Ottokesa] dies;

Her shame would haunt me else in midnight dreams.

And Catharine would have cause to doubt my love.

<...> We'll take off Ottokesa [V, 2: 60].

Peter's motives, indecorous and psychologically implausible, expose in him the nature of a bloody hangman, rather he reminds of a protagonist of a drama of honour planning to "treat his honour" by a cold-blooded murder of the adulteress. One can also note that, according to historical facts, Peter I exiled his wife Evdokiya Lopukhina to a monastery, and afterwards her rights were restored.

The image of Peter I is a vehicle of intensive tragic action arranged in such a way that each of the incidents, ordered in a logical sequence, increases the degree of irreparability of the previous events, which reaches its apex by the fourth act, when the reader's assurance of invincibility of evil, depicted in the play, grows stronger. J. Cradock succeeded in not only maintaining, but also intensifying dramatic tension in the final act of the tragedy, in which the image of Catharine, who tries to prevent the bloody denouement with a double execution, is foregrounded.

Catharine is presented in the play as an absolutely virtuous character, an antipode of Artamon who is

one-dimensional in a neo-classical way and embodies absolute evil. Her intelligence, prudence, kind heart and care, her readiness to share all hardships with Peter, "the wintry blast, or <...> the howling desert" [V, 2: 61], captivated the protagonist so irresistibly that he got enamoured with her and declared her a new tsarina. Catharine is wise: having accepted the tsar's proposal, she declares it important for her to deserve people's love in the first place. As soon as she learns that innocent Ottokesa and Alexis have become victims of her father Artamon's schemes, she does everything possible to save them. In the climactic scene, in spite of a mortal threat coming from Artamon, Catharine unmasks the villain before the tsar and renounces the throne in favour of Ottokesa with great dignity. She becomes a truly tragical heroine in the situation when she has to suppress her sincere feeling for Peter and repudiate her father, and she bears her misfortunes decently and stoically. Due to Catharine, the tsar sees the light, but too late: desperate Ottokesa, having lost all her hopes and foreseeing her son's terrible death, takes poison, and Artamon's henchmen murder Alexis before the tsar orders to free him. Thus, poetical justice does not triumph, although in English literary criticism of the eighteenth century it used to be almost a normative principle of drama, but this violation of the rule is the playwright's merit, indeed, as it prevented the tragedy from degrading to the level of a melodrama.

Nevertheless, melodramatic pathos is characteristic of Cradock's piece: it is conveyed through the image of Ottokesa which may be associated with the characters of "she-tragedies" of Thomas Otway, Thomas Southerne, John Banks, and especially Nicholas Rowe, who placed innocent suffering heroines in the centre of dramatic action. Her distress is shown with a great dramatic force, with the use of various forms of psychologism, plastic descriptions, gothic imagery and speech parts, abundant with pathetic words, which intensify the audience's compassion and emphasize the calamitousness of cruel spontaneous actions of Peter I, whose image is represented in accordance with neo-classical principles. His speeches, exclusively high-flown and rhetorical, fail to express authentic emotions: even in the fatal denouement he does not really feel, but mostly declares his feelings: "Oh, I am torn with fierce conflicting passions! <...> Man cannot bear such quick successive torture" [V, 2: 64, 68]. His remorse is rendered sparingly, just in several lines:

<...> my sudden rage –

("Twas Nature's curse) – too oft, alas! prevail'd,
And led me on to deeds my soul abhorr'd [V, 2: 67].

Peter intends, having mourned his victims, having shed "plenteous tributary tears" [V, 2: 67], to show the world a new tsarina in all her radiance and glory. Catharine is presented in his speech in the blaze of a solar metaphor:

<...> my setting sun

Eclips'd with guilt, almost beyond atonement,
Shall end in cloud with me; but rise again

With renovated strength, new-kindled fires,

To show my Catharine to a gazing world [V, 2: 679–680].

In spite of the tragic victims, historical process goes on, and Peter I is ready for new great undertakings ("my sun shall rise again"), but his image has lost its grandeur, it does not have any complexity or depth, or cathartic potential.

The Czar did not get a stage realization, although D. Garrick accepted it for staging in Drury Lane, and after his death R. B. Sheridan did not put it on either, despite given promises. The tragedy was published in 1824 and was almost unnoticed, but for a few brief reviews. Thus, *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* stated that the play, written "conformably to the principles of the old [neo-classical] school", succeeded in maintaining "a powerful interest throughout" [*The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* 1824: 365]. A critical piece in *The Gentleman's Magazine* read that *The Czar* is "tame in action and subdued in tone, seldom rising above a prosaic pedestrian diction" [*The Monthly Review* 1825: 27]. Unfortunately, the reviewer failed to see that the tragedy has an intrigue and lots of manifestations of pathetic style, specimens of poetic presentation of love, and, all in all, it complies with dramatic unities, although the unity of action is violated by the scene with the ambassadors and the plot development is retarded by retrospective digressions (III, 1), the characters' disputes and lamentations (III, 1; IV, 1, etc.). At the same time, the author of *The Czar* followed the rule of neo-classical compositional balance: the acts of his play are almost equal-sized. Strong sides of the tragedy were noted by a critic of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, who compared the challenge Cradock had to confront with that of Shakespeare, who "with wonderful success, contrived to palliate the furious nature of Henry the Eighth, and to give his brutality the appearance of honest bluntness and rough dignity" [*The Gentleman's Magazine* 1824: 61]. The magazine also praised the character of Otokesa, "painted in striking colours", and called Catharine "a model of generous sensibility". The image of Peter I, in the critic's opinion, is depicted "in all his turbulent grandeur, with however some touches of parental contrition, which, though history withholds from him, he doubtless must have felt" [*Ibid.*], the touches too slight, we must add. One cannot but agree with *The Gentleman's Magazine*, that it is the pathos of the tragedy that "maintains a strong interest thro' the

whole" [*Ibid.*], though sometimes the emphasis on purging the audience's pity is excessive.

Contemporary researcher A. Cross thinks that *The Czar*, "for all its pompous language and pretensions as 'an historical tragedy', its unities and proprieties, is essentially a domestic drama" [Cross 1998: 8]. In the aspect of genre identity, Cradock's piece may be qualified as a political tragedy with elements of sentimental drama, but this specification does not change the main point: the image of Peter I is portrayed in it rather schematically and reflects stereotypical and superficial ideas about Russia and Russian history of the first decades of the 18th century in English artistic consciousness. The ways of characterization of the protagonist make obvious the interrelation of classical and neo-classical elements in J. Cradock's poetics. The former are associated with the play's "ancient text" (references to Roman history and mores) and the playwright's addiction to normative poetics, and the latter are manifested in Cradock's attachment to modern history and the Enlightenment ideas concerned with forms of government and relations of national cultures. Representation of historical and political aspects is connected in the tragedy with the author's focus on the plot's emotive potential – the public is associated with the private to appeal to the audience's sensibility, thus both confirming the tendency of sentimentalization of the late Enlightenment English drama and revealing the dynamics of J. Cradock's artistic method which incorporates elements of sentimentalism manifested in the portrayal of the female characters' inner world, their affections for the protagonist, and also in the contradictory nature of Peter I who confronts the tragic dilemma between his public duties and paternal feelings. *The Czar* is the first attempt in the history of dramatic reception of Peter the Great in England to present him as a tragic character, which resulted in partial deconstruction of the "Petrine myth". Thus, an apologetic tradition of Peter's representation in the eighteenth-century English literature was interrupted. Historical material, substantially reconsidered in *The Czar*, made it possible for J. Cradock to put forward the problems of vice and virtue, role of personality in history, state and civil duty, and dangers of despotic rule.

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Дата поступления: 15.09.2025; дата публикации: 31.10.2025

Date of receipt: 15.09.2025; date of publication: 31.10.2025