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AMERICAN POETRY IN PERIODICALS MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS
ITS PRESENTATION AND CRITICAL RECEPTION IN POLAND
IN THE YEARS 1945-1980

In Poland, a country where very few collections of American poetry are published and the history of translating American poetry is full of gaps and very inconsistent, an enormously important role in presenting the literary output of poets from across the Atlantic falls onto magazines, periodicals and newspapers. Not only should they present contemporary American poetry but also supply the Polish reader with information about poets and their work. Facts which are obvious to American readers are often overlooked by Polish recipients because of their poor sense of chronology and knowledge of the American poetic tradition. As the Polish readers have no possibilities of buying books of American poetry, they should, at least, be able to satisfy their curiosity in this field in the literary press. In Poland the delay in publishing American poetry amounts to twenty or more years; additionally in the period under discussion translators and editors preparing poetic volumes were so very much occupied with classics that they did not notice how once contemporary poets grew old and that a new generation took their place. The gaps between the classical and contemporary, the old and the young generations could be and in many cases were, bridged by periodicals and magazines. The cycle of preparing and printing any periodical is much shorter than the procedure of publishing an anthology or a collection of poems; thus periodicals have a great advantage of time over books.

Their editors are less restricted in respect of their own literary tastes and by the obligation to present only good poems and acknowledged poets. Also while the publishing houses prefer to select from poets with established poetical reputations, periodicals and magazines can experiment. However, this does not mean that periodicals do not present classical poetry; Whitman, Dickinson, Masters, Frost and Sandburg invariably find their place on the columns of the literary press, but their domination there is not as prominent as in books of poetry.

The role of literary press is not confined exclusively to the presentation of poems; it is equally vital in presenting reviews of collections of poems, articles on specific poets and general articles on the history and the present day of American poetry. In the years 1945-1980 the information, articles, notes, discussions and reviews dealing with American poetry were published in ninety six various periodicals, newspapers and magazines. The value of this information was diversified starting from short notes announcing the publication of a poetic volume to reflexive paragraphs and discerning reviews written by eminent critics and translators. The names of some poets were frequently mentioned while others did not attract any attention and their literary output was not commented upon. In any case, periodicals were the most important means of popularizing American poetry and not a bad one if we judge by the number of presented poets, their poems and general criticism. American poetry is well received in Poland though its knowledge is still far from satisfactory, in spite of the numerous attempts of the editors and translators at making it more widely known.

The period of time taken into consideration in the present analysis embraces thirty five years. During this time the presentation of American poetry in periodicals, magazines and newspapers had its better and worse years. Its popularity seemed to grow with the years passing after World War II. The activity of the publishing houses and press companies was revived spontaneously after 1945 but not much attention was paid to American poetry.

The interest in American poetry in the first decade after

the Second World War was relatively small. Especially in the years 1945-1950 the number of poems published was small. Out of the very few poets presented, the most frequently published ones were Robert Frost, Nicholas Vachel Lindsay, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Edgar Lee Masters, Archibald MacLeish, Carl Sandburg and Walt Whitman, all of them well-known poets, with an established position on the American literary scene. It is worth mentioning that just after the war, editors had no information about American poetry, so the assumption to publish classics first was an understandable one, though on the other hand so few poems were published, that they did not give the reader even a vague knowledge of American poetry. In the background remained such poets as: S. V. Banet, W. Brynner, J. S. Cotter, E. Curran, O. Dodson, J. G. Fletcher, M. Gold, H. Hodegorn, F. Johnson, E. Markham, H. L. Johnson, which perhaps is not a great loss as time has proved. Some of these names are quite obscure today. Also the titles of some magazines in which their poetry was published sound somewhat alien to present day Polish reader: "Odrodzenie", "Kobieta Dzisiejsza", "Dziś i Jutro", "Nauka i Sztuka", "Wiśń", "Świat Przyszłości", "Prawo Człowieka", next to ones of greater importance: "Twórczość", "Odra", "Przekrój", or "Tygodnik Powszechny". Undoubtedly the first place on this list in the number of poems published falls to "Odrodzenie", a magazine founded in 1944 with K. Kuryluk as editor-in-chief (published till 1950).

The editors of the late forties had no preconceptions in selecting poems for publication and no clear policy as to what the Polish reader should be presented with. The fifties are much more difficult to evaluate. The beginning of this period brought the publication of poems of little poetic value, but important from the political point of view of the era. Thus the reader got translations of Howard Fast's and Ethel Rosenberg's political poems; could appreciate the poetic creation of C. J. Brumberg, S.A. Brown, J. S. Cotter, W. Cuney, R. Davidson, A. A. Duckett, S. Heym, R. Menden, M. Quin (Ryan Paul), E. Segal - poets almost forgotten today but at the time willingly published in "Dziś i Jutro" or "Nowa Kultura". Out of this mass of mediocre writing emerged the names of Langston

Hughes, Edgar Lee Masters and Thomas Merton; the poems of the first one were published in "Dziś i Jutro", "Nowa Kultura", "Słowo Polskie" and "Sprawy i Ludzie", while those of the two others in the Catholic weekly "Tygodnik Powszechny". Their position was confirmed by time and by the fact that during the next twenty five or more years the editors always found place for their poetry on the columns of Polish magazines.

In the history of translating and publishing the year 1955 stands out because of the relatively high number of publications as well as the telling fact that this profusion was not accompanied by a vast representation of poets. Only three of them had their poems published in Polish translations, and the one who occupied almost all the space was Walt Whitman. Indeed 1955 was the year of Whitman, as then the centenary of the first publication of "Leaves of Grass" in the USA was celebrated. Whitman with his democratic outlooks suited the political atmosphere of the time.

"Whitman recalled the lost innocence, and his naive philosophy was to be a shot of fresh blood for the fading ideals of the more or less liberal democratic systems - the idea which many of his translators in various countries liked very much"¹. However, no political interpretation could spoil the appeal and poetic value of Whitman's poetry, no misinterpretation could damage his poetic reputation. The interest of critics and translators was very profitable for the reader who received a taste of his poems and a really great number of articles, some of them quite illuminating. Any selection of poetry is better than none, especially that poetry speaks best for itself. Whitman's poetry, in quite a broad, but politically oriented selection was published in the 50's in a wide range of magazines and newspapers of a more general character. Walt Whitman's poems were also published in the sixties and seventies, but never after 1955 were they so numerous. It is worth observing that his poems were very rarely published in the respected literary magazines

¹ H. K r z e c z k o w s k i, Komu potrzebna biografia, "Twórczość" 1972, nr 9, p. 120.

such as "Poezja", "Życie Literackie" or later in "literatura na Świecie".

Walt Whitman is a record holder in the number of articles published dealing with his life and poetry. As many as twenty six articles appeared in 1955, in the year when Whitman had his great come back in Poland. Walt Whitman was always enthusiastically received as an optimistic antagonist of imposing any limitation upon human nature. "The joy of life, health and power, the rise of a free individual, the brotherhood of people, the unity of man with the powerful forces of nature, resound in these poems. First of all he put in them an overwhelming sympathy with those who consider themselves the most humble in the world"². The critics stress Whitman's affinity to simple people, the brotherhood, vitality, energy and affirmation of life that he propagated. "Whitman's praise of a simple worker and not only the magnates of industry, beautiful ladies and great leaders, his praise of flesh and blood - caused, in his lifetime a real shower of reproaches on the part of the bourgeois critics"³. Whitman was the first poet who made America, his country, such an important element of his poetry. "Whitman loves and embraces his country as one would a friend. If he himself is the protagonist of his poems - America is an active background - an element present everywhere. The pages of the poet's books reflect the huge continent like the waters of the ocean [...] But to the poet's heart closer than the stars and stones are the people of his country - their galvanized bodies, their vigilant thoughts - people, these leaves of grass, of which the nation consists"⁴.

Apart from biographical details the critics paid quite a lot of attention to the novelty of formal elements in Whitman's poetry. "He wrote poems not connected by any rhyme but by a specific rhythmical cadence of a peculiar melody resembling the

² Z. t u b i e Ń s k a, Opiewał pracę i pokój, "Ilustrowany Kurier Polski" 1955, nr 157, p. 5.

³ G. B i d w e l l, Walt Whitman - poeta życia powszedniego, "Problemy" 1955, nr 7, p. 468-473.

⁴ M. B i e s z c z a d o w s k i, Wiatr od Hudsonu, "Dziś i Jutro" 1955, nr 14, p. 8.

chorus of a Greek tragedy with its profusion and variety of rhythms. We can also look for the prototypes of this poetics in ancient Hebrew literature and Biblical verses with their characteristic melodic prolixity. The poet himself stated that the sound of the ocean was the analogy for his poems"⁵. These facts do not sound revelational to an American reader who hundred years after the publication of "The Leaves of Grass" cannot be shocked by Whitman's voice which became the fundamental part of the American poetic tradition. Whitman's voice, however still sounded new for the Polish readers and contrasted with poetic canons acknowledged in our poetry. "Whitman broke with the accepted forms of versification. His verses are sometimes bristling with the richness of words quite unexpectedly arranged. Elsewhere his poetry is characterized by an intentional monotony of words"⁶. Janina Szot in "Tygodnik Powszechny" adds: "The style and images were taken from the Bible and Old Hebrew poetry: the accumulation of synonyms, the parallelism of sentences and phrases, antonyms, supplements, graduation, rhetorical questions, the most lofty words next to the most common ones [...] The most characteristic features of Whitman's poetry are: love, democracy, religion, a longing for life in freedom, an unlimited belief in the kindness of God, people and the universe"⁷.

The late fifties, starting from 1957 brought in some fresh air into magazines and periodicals. The scene of foreign poetry translations became more lively, corresponding more to the needs of readers and the willingness of editors and translators to present good American poetry in a wider selection. The number of both, articles and poems published grew steadily in the late fifties and early sixties but still the amount of publications was not particularly high. The list of names of poets whose poetry was presented to the Polish reader was not parti-

⁵ J. S k o k o w s k i, Wieszcz z Manhattanu, "Żołnierz Wolności" 1955, nr 113, p. 4.

⁶ Z. t u b i e ń s k a, Opiewał pracę i pokój, "Ilustrowany Kurier Polski" 1955, nr 157, p. 5.

⁷ J. S z o t, Walt Whitman, "Tygodnik Powszechny" 1955, nr 28, p. 6-7.

culary long but some new important names found their place on it; next to: R. Frost, L. Hughes, V. Lindsay, H. W. Longfellow, A. MacLeish, E. L. Masters, C. Sandburg or W. Whitman appeared the names which from then on would constantly be present in the literary press; first of all that of Ezra Pound, then E. E. Cummings and E. Dickinson as well as those of L. Ferlinghetti, D. Finkel, R. Lowell, M. Moore, H. Nemerov, Th. Roethke or W. Stevens. Their poetry was published mainly in such magazines as "Kultura", "Nowa Kultura", "Twórczość", "Tygodnik Powszechny", "Współczesność" or "Życie Literackie". Also in 1960, a popular weekly "Przekrój" began the publication of Ogden Nash's humorous poems in the translation of L. J. Kern. In the years 1960-1969, sixty three Ogden Nash's poems were presented and in Poland the fact should have made him one of the most widely known American poets.

The mid-fifties in America resounded with the voices of the "Beat Generation". This literary and social phenomenon was not overlooked by Polish critics. Starting from 1958 till the late seventies the spirit of the Beatniks constantly emerged anew in the Polish magazines. The ideals, the programme or the anti-programme of the Beat Generation were first presented through articles considering the social reasons and implications of the movement, its outward forms and manifestations rather than the literary achievements of the poets who were said to belong to this group. The first poem of L. Ferlinghetti was published only in 1960, Ginsberg's in 1963 and the few poems could not give the reader an idea as to the kind of their poetry. The movement and its representative were introduced in critical articles but not through their own poetic voice.

The "Beat Generation" was frequently compared to the "Lost Generation" of the twenties: "At first glance, the »Beat Generation« is a new, degenerated version of the »Lost Generation«. Undoubtedly there are some resemblances between the generations after World War I and World War II but there are also considerable differences. The »lost« were fertilized by the contact with Europe, still lit by that last ray of its glory"⁸. "The

⁸ The Beat Generation, a reprint from "New Statesman", "Nowa Kultura" 1958, nr 41, p. 8.

Bohème of the twenties . was a protest against provincialism, smugness and moral hypocrisy which ruled America of that time. It was a movement in the name of civilization; with intelligence, intellectual refinement as its ideals. The Bohème of the fifties is totally different. First of all it is hostile to civilization. It worships primitivism, instinct, energy and blood"⁹. The Polish critics analyzed social aspects of the "Beat" movement and the place of the Beatniks in the American society. The "Beatniks" were frequently called, after Jack Kerouac "the children of the sad American paradise" who do not try to struggle against the political establishment and the American way of life but only negate them. "Their rebellion may be defined not so much as aimless but as one without a destination. It is a rebellion which does not prepare, does not intend to prepare any social change"¹⁰.

In other articles critics compared the "Beat Generation" with the Angry Young Men, but they usually considered their philosophy "simpler and more expressive than the fairly intellectualized sulks of the »Angry« in England"¹¹. The generation turned against wealth and luxury, against progress, radio, television, mechanization and the amenities of contemporary life. Leszek Elektorowicz wrote:

The Beatniks want to shock, they break with conventions; they recite their poems in the cafes of San Francisco to the rhythm of jazz, they drive their cars on the roads of America, drink alcohol, smoke marijuana. Drug addicts? Alcoholics? Erotomaniacs? Homosexuals?¹²

Such questions were quite frequent among critics, other doubts concerned the literary output of the group.

The phenomenon called »Beat Generation« was considered by some a social one: a rebellion against the conformity of life

⁹ Signed "krz", Cyganeria nieuków, "Nowa Kultura" 1958, nr 29, p. 12.

¹⁰ Beat Generation, "Przegląd Kulturalny" 1959, nr 13, p. 8.

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² L. E l e k t o r o w i c z, Beat Generation, "Odra" 1959, nr 35, p. 2.

and its philosophy, against the dullness and the attitude of insipid materialism. Another opinion treats the Beat movement, first and foremost, as a literary phenomenon. The bizarre clothes and unconventional behaviour of the group are only a superficial expression of deeper and more meaningful changes¹³.

The critics were very careful in forming their opinions about the literary achievements of the Beatniks as they did not know if they would stand the test of time.

Serious is not the 'beat literature' itself but the fact of the existence of boredom, spiritual emptiness, a willingness to self-destruction, even if this readiness exhausts itself in gestures and does not seem to threaten with any violent actions. Apparently none of the critics sees any outstanding artistic values in this literature, at least no one imagines the possibility of using it only for aesthetic pleasure¹⁴.

The same problem looks somewhat differently from the perspective of time. In 1969 Juliusz Kydryński wrote:

As far as their significance is concerned, the writers of the 'Beat Generation' did not produce any masterpieces, but if we consider the social response they got, they cannot complain. The beat movement fulfilled, especially in its first manifestations (literary and moral) an undoubtedly positive function, turning away from the society living in the cogs and rigours of American supercivilization, the 'Beatniks' protested against its antihumanistic and antihumanitarian manifestations, against its adoration of money, finally against its brandishing the atom bomb¹⁵.

The discussion on the Beat Generation continued in the following years. Much was said about it in the reviews concerning the anthology "Wizjonerzy i buntownicy", edited by Teresa Truszkowska in 1976 and published by Wydawnictwo Literackie, which contained the poetry of that period. Later "Nowy Wyrzaz" came out with a retrospective article on the literary achieve-

¹³ Młodzi poeci amerykańscy, "Nowa Kultura" 1961, nr 14/15, p. 16.

¹⁴ Beat Generation, "Przegląd Kulturalny" 1959, nr 13, p. 8.

¹⁵ Juliusz Kydryński, Koniec Drogi, "Dziennik Polski" 1969, nr 261, p. 4.

ments of the 'Beat Generation'¹⁶. In the seventies the critics no longer denied the literary values of the poetry written by the Beatniks claiming that:

The contemporary avant-guard came into being on the verge of the sixties in the shade of the skyscrapers of Manhattan and in the neighbourhood of the busy avenues of San Francisco. It appeared with the beat noise and reflectivity of the protest songs rejecting the appeased revolts. It was preceded by Oldenburg's happenings and pop art, when New York became the centre of artistic dissidents, dethroning old Europe which was too deeply entangled in conventions. Only London tried to defend itself in its salons of modern art. Such was the background of the American poets whom the critics called the 'Beat Generation'¹⁷.

The debates of the "Beat Generation" extended far beyond the sixties. But apart from the interest in "Beat Generation" that period was also characterized by a general interest in American poetry and its history.

The year 1965 brought the founding of a monthly "Poezja" ("Poetry"), 1971 "Literatura na Świecie" ("Literature in the World") and 1972 "Nowy Wyrzaz" ("New Expression"). With the foundation of these magazines the number of presented poets, articles and poems published grew considerably.

The aim of the monthly "Poezja" is to present poetry from all over the world together with its critical evaluation. Though much space is occupied by the literary output of Polish poets, the literature of other nations, English and American among them is not neglected. In the years 1965-1980 "Poezja" presented such poets as F. E. Cummings, L. Hughes, R. Frost, V. Lindsay, E. L. Masters, E. Pound, Th. Roethke, W. Stevens, as well as R. Brautigan, Ch. Bukowski, M. Hales, D. Hall, H. Nemerov, E. Rolfe or M. Rukeyser - this list of names is not full but seems to embrace the most important ones. Indeed, in case of "Poezja" and a few years later "Literatura na Świecie" a separate essay could be written presenting in greater detail

¹⁶ W. B. Fleischmann, Spojrzenie na pisarzy Beat Generation, transl. A. Adamiak, "Nowy Wyrzaz" 1979, nr 1, p. 97-103.

¹⁷ W. Paźniewski, Tezeusz w Supermarkecie, "Poezja" 1973, nr 4, p. 58.

the achievements of its editors, translators and critics. The collective work of the editorial staff of "Poezja" under the leadership of J. Z. Jakubowski and starting from 1972 of B. Drozdowski, "Literatura na Świecie" with W. Kubacki and W. Sadkowski as editors-in - chief, who in the years 1971-1980 edited the monthly with the help of a great number of eminent poets, translators and critics, and "Nowy Wyrzaz" edited by Jan Witan, then by Janusz Termer, gave the Polish reader a wider access to contemporary American poetry. The profile of "Literatura na Świecie" differs from that of "Poezja", which is a poetic magazine only. "Literatura na Świecie" presents the latest literary achievements of poets and prose writers from various countries, criticism by Polish critics and reprints of critical articles from abroad. It aims at publishing the latest literary works but does not omit works of the older generation if the editors feel that they are worth presenting to the Polish reader. Thus we have the names of R. Frost, V. Lindsay, R. Lowell, E. L. Masters, E. Pound and W. C. Williams as well as R. Bly, V. Cantosky, G. Corso, S. Dabney, A. Ginsberg, D. Justice, H. Norse, F. O'Hara, M. Piercy, S. Plath, W. Stafford, or J. Wright.

Contemporary American poetry is elegant, it maintains quite a good standard. But it does not surpass it. And that is its tragedy. Only one poet - Ezra Pound - who is almost unknown in our country, surpasses it in all respects and utterly stands out from the general background¹⁸.

Starting from 1956 Pound's poetry was published in various periodicals ("Literatura na Świecie", "Magazyn Kulturalny", "Poezja", "Twórczość", "Tygodnik Powszechny", "Współczesność" and "Życie Literackie") in the translations of: K. Boczkowski, B. Drozdowski, J. Niemojowski, J. Prokop, J. M. Rymkiewicz, A. Szymański or quite recently L. Engelking. In spite of the editorial plans a separate collection of Pound's poems was never published, but in the number of poems published in periodicals he is in the lead. He is also a leader in the number of cri-

¹⁸ J. S t a w i Ń s k i, Przedmieścia USA-poezja, "Przełęcz Kulturalny" 1957, nr 4, p. 11.

tical articles concerning him that appeared in periodicals. Pound's critical reception in Poland is ambiguous. It is additionally encumbered with Pound's fascist outlooks and his collaboration with Mussolini.

However, the punishment inflicted on man cannot include his creation. It belongs, no matter if we want it or not, to the general output of human thought, which is always endangered with the risk of mistake [...] In case of Pound this risk was always big. And this was his tragic fate. In search of pure art he cut the roots joining the thought with the concrete and became not a citizen but an exile of the world¹⁹.

Most critical articles appeared after Pound's death in 1972. Ezra Pound was a legend but not a positive one.

The fact of collaboration with fascism decided about his life and work, and he paid for it one of the highest prices that any writer did in the 20th century [...] He was the victim of his own theory of freedom of choice, a poet who thought that he had reached the standard where any activity, became, par excellence creative and who already in his life time became a historical figure, the object of defending meetings and justifying explanations. Time cannot exculpate him but it gives the necessary distance to understand the incomprehensible mental aberration into which he was pushed also by art, the domain of immoral selfishness²⁰.

The critics do not doubt the artistic values of the poems written in the twenties of our century as "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" or the ones collected in "Lustra". However, the evaluation of Pound's "Cantos", especially "The Pisan Cantos" is controversial. Krzysztof Mętrak thinks that:

Pound achieves the tone of genuine greatness only in the post-war »Pisan Cantos« a document of consciousness of a man who had gone through hell and came out in the daylight as a victim of history²¹.

¹⁹ E. Życieńska, Po śmierci Ezry Pounda, "Poezja" 1973, nr 4, p. 75.

²⁰ K. Mętrak, Śmierć w Wenecji, "Literatura na Świecie" 1973, nr 3, p. 303-304.

²¹ K. Mętrak, Śmierć w Wenecji, "Literatura na Świecie" 1973, nr 3, p. 315.

But whatever the critical opinions about Pound are, one must acknowledge his poetic genius.

One does not have to agree with him, but it is hard to deny him, an exceptional genius in giving shapes to poems, the »Cantos« in particular ²².

In their articles Polish critics did not aim at any broad generalizations about American poetry and rightly so as American poetry is too varied to be summed up in a few sentences.

However, editors, translators and critics have done a lot to make American poetry known to the Polish reader. Even the greatest sceptics cannot neglect the importance of the literary press in presenting articles on American poetry, reviews of books of poems and anthologies, and the numerous attempts of the editors and translators at making its appeal wider. But the good will of the editors is not a decisive factor in the presentation and critical reception of any foreign literature. The cultural and literary contacts between Poland and the United States are conditioned by many other factors - political, cultural and social. Additionally, in case of the Polish literary and publishing scene, one has to take into consideration other limitations such as the problems of the printing industry, limited number of the literary press titles and the limited circulation of the existing periodicals. These obstacles are sometimes so great that they obscure the clear vision of American poetry and its reception in Poland.

On the whole the critical reception of American poetry in Poland was more factual than critical, more concentrated on specific poets than synthetic, trying to embrace the American poetic scene as a whole. Frequently the critical opinions were sociologically oriented - stressing the political, economic or social background of the poets and not the artistic values of their work. They did not refrain from moral evaluations which was especially prominent in case of Whitman, Pound or the poets of the Beat Generation. The poems were scattered in various pe-

²² P. Russell, Ezra Pound, transl. M. Niemojewska, "Poezja" 1970, nr 3, p. 65. All the quotations were translated by the author.

riodicals so only a few magazines ("Literatura na Świecie", "Poezja", "Życie Literackie", "Nowy Wyrzaz", "Tygodnik Powszechny") could, on the basis of the poems published, present more general articles and reflexive essays.

It must be also remembered that the present analysis deals only with translations of American poetry and its critical evaluation in Poland without considering Polish language periodicals published abroad. However, this should not significantly change the picture of American poetry and its penetration into the Polish language and culture in spite of the fact that Polish periodicals published abroad seem to be less limited in the sphere of selection, have a more direct access to the newest poems and many eminent translators work for them.

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AMERYKAŃSKA POEZJA W CZASOPISMACH
- PREZENTACJA I KRYTYCZNA RECEPCJA W POLSCE
W LATACH 1945-1980

W latach 1945-1980 rola czasopism w prezentacji tłumaczeń poezji amerykańskiej nie ogranicza się jedynie do prezentacji samych wierszy. Drukuje się wiele artykułów i recenzji przybliżających czytelnikowi zarys historii literatury amerykańskiej i jej społeczne tło.

Informacje, artykuły, notatki, czy dyskusje publikowane były w 96 gazetach, czasopismach, choć wartość tych publikacji była różna, poczynając od wnikliwych artykułów i recenzji, na krótkich informacjach biograficznych kończąc.

W latach 1945-1980 liczba publikacji była mała, a najczęściej przedstawianymi poetami byli klasycy: Frost, Masters, Longfellow, Sandburg, Whitman. Z czasem liczba publikacji rosła i pojawiały się nowe nazwiska, choć niekiedy racje polityczne przesądzały o ich wyborze. Rok 1955 obfitował w wiersze Whitmana, którego demokratyczne poglądy pasowały do atmosfery czasu.

Późne lata pięćdziesiąte przyniosły dużo liczniejsze publikacje tłumaczeń poezji amerykańskiej. Obok nazwisk już znanych pojawiły się nowe: Pound, Cummings, Dickinson, Lowell, Roethke, Stevens. Do tygodnika "Odrodzenie", gdzie początkowo publikowano najwięcej, dołączyły "Kultura", "Twórczość", "Tygodnik Powszechny", "Życie Literackie".

Na łamach polskiej prasy dyskutowano na temat "Beat Generation" i Pounda, obok klasyków przedstawiano bardziej współczes-

nych poetów. Powstawały nowe bardzo znaczące czasopisma: "Poezja", "Literatura na Świecie", "Nowy Wyrzaz".

Recepcja poezji amerykańskiej była częściej faktograficzna niż krytyczna, rzadko pojawiały się syntetyczne artykuły ukazujące szersze tło literackie, a wiele opinii podkradłało polityczne, ekonomiczne i socjalne aspekty poezji, snując rozważania moralne, a pozostawiając na uboczu wartości artystyczne (zwłaszcza w przypadku Whitmana, Pounda, czy poetów "Beat Generation").