



The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall

Edgar Allan Poe

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En 1835 Poe publico en el Southern Literary Messenger un relato titulado La incomparable aventura de un tal Hans Pfaall. Es una de las historias mas dificilmente clasificables de Poe. En ella un tal Hans Pfaall, desesperado por sus deudas, construye un globo aerostatico y escapa con el a la Luna, donde decide quedarse a vivir. Hasta aqui ya es una curiosidad que Poe decidiera hacer ciencia ficcion, pero lo mas sorprendente es la manera en que presenta el relato. Segun cuenta Pfaall ha decidido quedarse a vivir en la Luna y le pide a uno de los habitantes lunares que baje en el globo a la Tierra y que le entregue el relato que el ha escrito a la raza humana. Poe intenta hacer creer a sus lectores que el texto aparecio en una nota que habia caido desde un globo en Rotterdam. En su cuento, Poe relata las peripecias de Hans Pfaall, un holandés fabricante de fuelles que despega de Rotterdam a bordo de un globo aerostatico acondicionado para poder respirar fuera de la atmosfera. En la canastilla instala sus instrumentos de vuelo: un telescopio, un barometro, un termometro, un electrometro, una brujula, un compas, un cronometro, una campana, una bocina y un aparato para condensar la atmosfera terrestre. Ademas, incluye minuciosas descripciones sobre el viaje, la atmosfera o la Luna que si bien hoy en día nos parecerian incorrectas o absurdas, en su epoca hacian que la historia fuera bastante veridica. Con todo, el engaño no causo el efecto que Poe buscaba, o por lo menos no tanto como los falsos articulos que publico ese mismo año el New York Sun sobre la Luna. Edgar Allan Poe describe por primera vez, en 1835, un viaje tripulado a la luna. Y lo hace 30 años antes de que Julio Verne publicara su celebre novela De la Tierra a la Luna."

The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall Details

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Andrei Tama? says

Poe, în această "proz? scurt? de dimensiuni considerabile", a dat dovadă de o uluitoare imagina?ie (stimulat? poate de opiu?!). Scrierea se prezint? la început ca o povestire, iar mai apoi ca un microroman epistolar. Scris? în 1835, ea prezint? c?l?toria pe lun? a unui anumit olandez numit Hans Phaall, iar -lucru extrem de curios!- prezint? informa?ii care sunt demne de ?tiin?a de ast?zi. Pe mine unul m-a f?cut s? plutesc în balonul improvizat de Hans Phaall, m-a f?cut s? privesc Terra de la în?l?ime ?i mi-a stimulat imagina?ia pân? dincolo de hotarele pe care credeam eu c? le avea.

Desigur, povestea este prin excelen?? neverosimil? (c?ci distan?a dintre P?mânt ?i lun? este totu?i considerabil? ?i nu poate fi parcurs? cu un balon), dar textul trebuie cânt?rit literar, nu ?tiin?ific (cu toate c? Poe dovede?te o excelent? erudi?ie).

Andrei Tama?,
17 decembrie 2015

Lemar says

"Some of the over-wise even made themselves ridiculous by the decrying the whole business; as nothing better than a hoax. But hoax, with these sort of people, is, I believe, a general term for all matters above their comprehension." Hmm, it looks like the enduring charm and relevance of Poe's story does not require much more from me than supplying quotes.

"If a fire wanted fanning, it could readily be fanned with a newspaper."

Our hero, Hans Pfaal, out of work as a bellows maker due to the political absorption of his countrymen, was married to a "notable woman who could manage matters in the world without my assistance" and who looked on him as "good for nothing but building castles in the air." He embarks on an adventure I will do nothing to spoil. I will just contribute a couple of quotes that to me typify Poe.

"my hair stood on end, while I gazed afar down within the awning up abysses, letting imagination descend, as it were, and stalk about in the strange vaulted halls, and ruddy gulfs, and red ghastly chasms of the hideous and unfathomable fire."

"To be sure I arose from a sound slumber, with all my senses in confusion, to the contemplation of a very startling phenomenon, and one which, although expected, was not expected at the moment."

David Wright says

I enjoyed this. The story has the humour of Steampunk before it was even created and the complexity of H G Wells / Jules Verne. The idea of a man travelling to the moon to escape his debts is totally ludicrous but that is what makes this so much fun. The description of the symptoms caused by Oxygen deprivation add a touch of peril to this story, which is only let down by the incredibly detailed equations concerning the mathematics of the travel, entrenching the reader in lines of text that are just too in depth to be easily 'digested'.

Susan says

OMG, the massive boredom. The classic case of instantly forgetting 90% of what I just read.

Neelam Babul says

An awesome tale involving a man who decided to embark on an adventure to the moon to escape from his friends who lent him some money.

An adventurous read.

Brian says

A man dodges some people he owes money and writes them, claiming he escaped on a balloon and made his way to the moon, where he presently writes from, having sent a weird and ugly looking messenger to earth. The vivid flight terrified me but in the end you realize Hans has quite remarkable storytelling abilities in the fiction department. The story received low ratings. I assume people rate it low for the out of date science. Poe gives descriptive detail and scientific data through his character, so convincing a reader wants to think he knows what he's talking about, though he justifies what we now know as impossibility. Poe is the freaking bomb-diggity!!!!

Avel Rudenko says

"The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall" (1835) is a short story by Edgar Allan Poe published in the June 1835 issue of the monthly magazine Southern Literary Messenger, and intended by Poe to be a hoax.

Poe planned to continue the hoax in further installments, but was upstaged by the famous Great Moon Hoax which started in the August 25, 1835 issue of the New York Sun daily newspaper. Poe later wrote that the flippant tone of the story made it easy for educated readers to see through the supposed hoax.

The story opens with the delivery to a crowd gathered in Rotterdam of a manuscript detailing the journey of a man named Hans Pfaall. The manuscript, which comprises the majority of the story, sets out in detail how Pfaall contrived to reach the moon by benefit of a revolutionary new balloon and a device which compresses the vacuum of space into breathable air. The journey takes him nineteen days, and the narrative includes descriptions of the Earth from space as well as the descent to its fiery, volcanic satellite. Pfaall withholds most of the information regarding the surface of the moon and its inhabitants in order to negotiate a pardon from the Burgomaster for several murders he committed as he left earth (creditors of his who were becoming irksome). After reading the manuscript, the city authorities agree that Pfaall should be pardoned, but the

messenger who brought them the text (apparently a resident of the moon) has vanished and they are unable to restore communication with him.

Benjamin Stahl says

Putting aside the impossible amount of detail as to how the protagonist built his stupid balloon (none of that stuff sank in; for the first time in ages, I found myself skim-reading), this story does quite fascinating, especially in the way it describes the character struggling to maintain oxygen as he rises into space. *Hans Pfaal* was pretty long and heavily-written, and was not what I expected or wanted from Poe at all. But having said that, I did quite enjoy this story - especially the ending, which feels very much like something H.G. Wells would have written.

Al Santiago says

Citibank harassing ya? Wells Fargo getting you down? Well blow them the hell up, build a balloon out of trash and sail that mutha to the moon. Or just say you did and see how many people actually believe you.

Sahel Ebrahimi says

The rating is based on personal opinion of how I loved the story. It does not show that there was something wrong with Poe's writing style or his mastery of this craft. Basically, it began very well, the framework was strong and firm as it always is. The ending was highly expected regarding Poe's POV. How a drunk bankrupt strives to higher pillars of astronomic science with his imagination and his own effort was what the story apparently tried to show. However, on a deeper level, Poe was emphasizing how when you are a nobody, does not matter what you do, or what you even invent if the crowd and media have decided to drown you, they will!

Dimitra says

I will say what I always say about Poe, no matter which of his stories/poems I read...
Poe is an artist! Poe is unique!
Poe is mysterious! Poe is scary!
Poe is Poe!!! <3 And I love him!!!
All of his stories and poems give you the chills and you just can't stop reading!!!
If you haven't read any of his work...please do a gift to yourself and go read some!!!

Dewey says

After a long absence from the Poe audiobooks I used to hear on cassette in the car when I was small (with one of those perfect 19th century narrators whose voice sounds like it was imbibed in this person for the sole purpose of reading Poe) - stories, some my all time favorites written by anybody, which included the Black Cat, the Tell-Tale Heart, the Cask of Amontillado, Masque of the Red Death and the two poems the Raven and Annabel Lee - I had a splendid last month or so returning to the world of Poe by borrowing Penguins big collection with an introduction by Will Self, a collection that I plan to buy this year as there will always be a place for Poe on my shelf.

While Will Self's introduction embodies a voice that sounds like it thinks it's the greatest voice to put pen on paper, it was nevertheless an informative introduction insofar as that it makes a very important point: Edgar Allan Poe was not only a horror writer. His contributions to other genres are undeniable, specifically that of science fiction. So after reading the Pit & The Pendulum, which I had somehow not had the chance to read years earlier, I read The Man Who Was Used Up - a pre-Capek robot steampunk story if I ever read one - and the Adventure of Hans Pfaall, considered, from what I've heard, to be the first science fiction story ever.

The first thing I noticed about this story, which is almost long enough to be a novella, is Poe's knowledge of the sciences at the time. Like Octavio Paz and Jorge Luis Borges after him, Poe must have been an encyclopedia child and the effects are stunning to where I might well invest in an encyclopedia when I have children. One main difference between writers of the past and writers today is that the former didn't do as much research while the latter tend to do too much research for their novels, giving contemporary literature a very flat feel in comparison. Hans Pfaall was a nice flashback to a more intelligent era of literature, and in terms of my own perception of Poe this story adds a side to him that few tend to talk about: his intelligence and knowledge, something that also allowed him to write convincing stories taking place on the European mainland, to which he had never been.

Secondly, while this story is about a journey to the moon on a balloon, it is as much down to Earth as it is in the sky. The motivation of Hans Pfaall to avoid his debtors and go somewhere new is something any earthling can relate to. It makes any argument that this story (well liked by Jules Verne, apparently) is science fictions corner stone quite valid, as it embodies science fictions goals to make sense of both the world and worlds beyond quite well.

As is the case with any science fiction that relies on the sciences of its time, Hans Pfaall hasn't aged well in that respect, even though it doesn't detract from Poe's storytelling skills. But even so, longer stories were not Poe's forte and it shows, which is mostly why a star is lost here. But the story ends on a splendid note and any weaknesses in this story are not enough to harm Poe's splendid reputation. I'm glad that I've read this story and I look forward to my next revisiting of Edgar Allan Poe.

Ghofran says

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Robbie Rittman says

I can't help but feel like I was missing something!

There were some amusing moments in this read, like when the moon-man in the balloon dropped 120 somethings onto the head of the pipe smoking townsman, and he pretended not to notice (or at least that's how I read it). But on the whole, what a boring book.

I was astounded that Poe seems to have such a wealth of knowledge on the topic of astronomy, and if it is all accurate, then I admire him even more, but that seemed to be the content of this book. There weren't any really human themes to latch onto for the average person.

In fact - I might go as far to say that Poe did what Pfaall did - he sat down one day in front of a bookstore (perhaps, even, to avoid some of his own creditors) and read a large tome on astronomy. Then he read more and more, and decided to write a story on what it would be like to fly a balloon to the moon. That's all I can imagine he had in mind when he wrote this, as there is not much else of note in this story. I guess there is that one moment of light social criticism, like when Pfaall's clients stop coming because they are too busy revolutionizing, and as such their bellows needn't mending. But that was a very small comment.

Anyway - I am glad to have read it, because it was very impressive on Poe's part - but this story probably won't stay with me. If I should ever like to see or hear about someone going up in a balloon car, I will watch UP.

Murat G. says

p.s.

Bilim,
Hoax,
Din,
1835,
Po, Pi,
2012,
Macera, Anywhere out of the World!

Jes (RebelReads) says

Fun story if you ignore the tedious detail about the balloon.

Birgit says

Nette kleine Geschichte. Mein erster Prosa-Poe. ;)

Die technischen Details hab ich zwar überhaupt nicht verstanden, und die nehmen einen großen Teil der

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Natalie says

Dear Large Crowd of People Smoking Pipes,

Once upon a time I was sad that I didn't have any money. All these collectors kept hounding me and so I ran away to a bookshop and I found a book full of lots of sciency-things.

I loved this book so much I decided that there was really only one thing left to do - attempt to fly to the moon.

Very tricky like I made the collectors help me build a massive balloon. It only took us about 10,000 years to complete.

Finally, the launch day arrived. The nasty collectors helped me set it off and then, for revenge, I blew them up. I was on my way to the moon.

The way to the moon was long. Very, very, very, very long, but not nearly as long as it took to build my brilliant balloon.

Alas, some cats and birds died.

I would love to tell you all about my adventures with the little moon people, but I already took up all the time telling you how I made my balloon.

Sincerely,

Hans Pfaall
