

RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN TUDOR ENGLAND AND THEIR RESONANCE IN ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE

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INTRODUCTION

In literary criticism of the 21st century, the dominance of an integrative approach is becoming more and more evident. It leads to the expansion of the issue, the enrichment of the arsenal of methodological strategies and, eventually, to scientific discoveries that go beyond one area of knowledge. Awareness of pragmatic productivity and epistemological promise of this approach significantly intensifies the dialogue between different sciences, which in turn promotes the creation of a “new alliance between different types and branches of knowledge”¹.

Interdisciplinarity is gradually becoming a prominent feature of modern scientific discourse, as evidenced in particular by the targeted priorities of many associations and the topics of conferences and projects initiated by them. For instance, the interest of the European Shakespeare Research Association has focused on the constitutive role of Shakespeare in the European identity. As it mentioned on their official website: “In order to define this role and the sense of European selfhood at various moments in the history of the Continent (including the British Isles), scholars have studied the shared memories going back to the Greeks and the Romans, but also the 400 years of Shakespearean appropriations, all against the objectives for a European federation based, in addition to economic and political goals, on explicit cultural ideals and objectives”².

With intervals of every two years the European Shakespeare Research Association has organized International Conferences devoted to the multidisciplinary topics such as *Shakespeare and European Politics* at Utrecht (2003), *Shakespeare, History and Memory* at Krakow (2005), *Shakespeare, Nation(s) and Boundaries* at Iasi (2007), *Shakespeare and*

¹ Зусман В.Г. Диалог и концепт в литературе. Нижний Новгород, 2001. С. 5.

² European Shakespeare Research Association. URL: <https://www.um.es/shakespeare/esra>.

Conflict at Pisa (2009) and *Shakespeare and European Theatrical Cultures* at Gdansk (2017).

At the end of the last century researchers, including Clifford Geertz³ and Richard Nitch⁴ expressed concerns about the seriousness of the threats that blur the disciplinary boundaries; however, today we can state the positive aspects of this process. Here, in particular, the emergence of new interdisciplinary branches of the humanities (literary anthropology, imagology, border studies, trauma and memory studies, etc.), and the enrichment of the categorical and terminological paradigms of many sciences should be mentioned.

The extension of the conceptual thesaurus of the literary studies evidenced by such publications as *The Projective Dictionary of the Humanities* by M. Epstein⁵. As for enriching its methodological resources it is evidenced by a great success of *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms* by Irene Rima Makaryk⁶. This fundamental guide to the field of literary studies provides concise explanations of numerous linguistic, philosophical, psychological etc. approaches applied to literature texts. It has recently been translated into several foreign languages including Arabic and Chinese.

Studying the specifics of the literary process of a particular historical age through the prism of an interdisciplinary approach broadens the horizons of interpretation of specific works of art, reveals the relationship of literature with other cultural phenomena and sociocultural contexts, and also allows us to feel how the mechanisms of creating collective memory about particular historical trends, events, or personalities work in the texts.

The research is focused on the specificity of the correlation of religious discourse and literature in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603). An interdisciplinary approach generates an understanding of some aspects of Elizabethan public polemics rooted in

³ Geertz C. *Zastane światło. Antropologiczne refleksje na tematy filozoficzne / Przekład i wstęp Z. Pucek*. Kraków, 2003. S. 120.

⁴ Нич Р. *Антропология культуры. Культурна теория літератури. Поетика досвіду*. Львів – Київ, 2007. С. 15.

⁵ Эпштейн М.Н. *Проективный словарь гуманитарных наук*. Москва, 2017. 616 с.

⁶ *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms* / ed. by Irene Makaryk. Toronto, 1993. 656 p.

religious issues through the literary texts. Moreover it gives a possibility to outline the main directions of the religion impact on Elizabethan literature.

1. The English Reformation

The complexity of the religious situation, due to the very nature of the English Reformation, caused a considerable increase in attention to matters of religion. This caused the emergence of the so-called “religious prose”, which represented all the moral and ethical Christian standards of Anglican, Catholic, and Puritan orientations and had a significant impact on secular literature. P. Collinson argues: “religious and moral values and intentions pervaded a great many literary genres, just as ‘religion’ itself was not a discrete phenomenon but something which permeated virtually all areas of early modern culture”⁷. As H. Craig points out: “Religion was the most absorbing subject to the Elizabethan mind”⁸.

So, it seems very appropriate to at least briefly outline the specifics of the English Reformation movement to make an adequate idea about the peculiarity of English humanism, about the place and role of the theological and denominational aspects in the worldview of the Elizabethans.

The religious situation in England in the second half of the 16th century was marked by tension and instability, although compared with the oppressive actions of the first reformer Henry VIII and the bloody terror of Mary Tudor (the Catholic Queen), the religious policy of Elizabeth I was rather loyal and prudent.

The reform of the church, initiated by Henry VIII in order to strengthen the position of absolutism and the abolition of England’s dependence on Rome in matters of faith, was fully in line with the interests of the Crown and was applauded by the ruling classes, who were able to expand their own landholdings at the expense of the confiscated monastic property. At that time in England, as in Europe in general, there was rather critical attitude towards the abuse of Roman curia and clergy.

⁷ Collinson P. *English Reformations. A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* / Edit. Michael Hattaway. Oxford, 2003. P. 27.

⁸ Craig H. *The literature of the English Renaissance: 1485-1660*. New York, 1966, P. 67.

A well-known expert in Early Modern English history J. Youings states: “The Reformation in England may be said to have begun in the years 1533-4 when, by a series of Acts of Parliament, Henry VIII detached his country’s Church from obedience to the Pope in Rome”⁹. But the struggle for the liberation of consciousness from the control of priests, as W. Moody and R. Lovett emphasize, began in England two centuries before by Wycliffe, and despite the pursuit of the Lollard movement, continued until the reign of Henry VIII. This movement, strengthened by the example of the reformers of Germany and Sweden, provided moral support for the political separation of Henry from Rome in 1534¹⁰.

The specific character of English humanism in the first half of the 16th century, which focused on the ethical problems of the Christian faith (William Grocyn, John Colette, Thomas More, Thomas Elliott), created a favorable foundation for the spread of reformist sentiment. At the beginning of the century, the ideals of secular piety and the moral imperative of spiritual self-improvement on the basis of the study of the *New Testament* became widespread. An important role in this process was played by *Enchiridion militis Christiani* (1503) by Erasmus of Rotterdam and *The Twelve Rules of John Pico della Mirandola* (1505) by Thomas More, which encourage a man to spiritual struggle. The Erasmus’ work that outlines the views of the Christian life and teaches the soul of a true Christian how to worship God was translated into such European languages as Check (1519), German (1520, 1521, 1529), Dutch (1523), French (1525, 1529, 1527), Spanish (1527, 1528), Italian (1531), English (1533, 1534). English translation of this *Handbook of the Christian Soldier* by William Tyndale became very popular among his countrymen. I. Ossinovskiy argues that “in the XVI century there were ten reissues of Tyndale’s translation, six of them were published during the reign of Henry VIII, one – at the reign of Edward VI, two editions appeared in the time of Queen Mary, and one publication was released in the time of Elizabeth I. So Erasmus’ compendium of humanistic piety turned to be the text acceptable for Tudors”¹¹.

⁹ Youings J. *Sixteen-Century England*. London, 1984. P. 179.

¹⁰ Moody W.V., Lovett R.M. *A History of English Literature*. New York, 1964. P. 66.

¹¹ Осинковский И.Н. «Енхиридион» Эразма и некоторые особенности его интерпретации в тюдоровской Англии. *Эразм Роттердамский и его время*. Москва, 1989. С. 185.

Translating biblical texts into English was an extremely important event in the spiritual life of a nation that had an impact on many areas of human activity¹². G. Hammond draws attention to the fact that “Bible translation had a major cultural role in areas other than English Bible versions. Translations and paraphrases of the Psalms, for instance, repeatedly embodied significant personal and national issues”¹³.

The first Bibles in English that appeared between 1380 and 1397 are traditionally associated with the name of John Wycliffe. However, according to the authors of the fundamental *Dictionary of the Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (1992), Wycliffe only initiated and inspired direct translators, presumably Nicholas of Hereford and John Purvey¹⁴. Although the Wycliffe Bible was distributed only in handwritten manuscript (since the first printing house was opened later: in 1455 by Guttenberg in Germany and in 1475 by Caxton in England), it was actively used by the Lollards – preachers and participants of anti-Catholic movements of the 14th and 15th centuries. The numerous manuscripts of the English Bible “remained in secret circulation even into the sixteenth century, some beautifully illuminated, clearly considered as treasured objects”¹⁵.

The first of the English translations of *The New Testament* belongs to William Tyndale (1494–1536), who is also called “the Father of the English Bible.” Published in Hamburg in 1525 Tyndale’s translation of *The New Testament* the next year was acknowledged heresy and disseminated in England only secretly. In 1531 W. Tyndale translated *The Book of Jonah*, and in 1534 in Antwerp he reissued English version of the New Testament with revisions and corrections. Bishop of London Tunstall and Thomas More tried “to put the author on the right track”, but he continued to consider his own position to be pleasing to the Lord, patriotic, and highly moral. He was proud of his sacred mission as he wanted to make every poor peasant know Scripture as the most learned

¹² Торкут Н.М. Перші англомовні переклади Біблії та їхній вплив на літературний процес. *Біблія і культура: Зб. наук. статей*. Чернівці, 2000. № 1. Т. 1. С. 138–141.

¹³ Hammond G. Translations of the Bible. *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* / Edit. Michael Hattaway. Oxford, 2003. P. 171.

¹⁴ A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature / ed. by David Lyle Geoffrey. Michigan, 1992. P. 875.

¹⁵ Nicolson A. God’s Secretaries. *The Making of the King James Bible*. New York, 2005. P. 248.

priest did. In his letters from Antwerp Tyndale assured his compatriots and the government of England that the main purpose of his painstaking work was to ensure that everyone who was able to read their native language had an opportunity to become acquainted with Scripture. In *The Obedience of a Christian man* (1528) he substantiated his appeal to the national language tradition by referring to the authority of the apostles who addressed the Lord in their native language. Tyndale proclaimed: “All the prophets wrote in the mother tongue ... Why then might they (the scriptures) not be written in the mother tongue ... They say, the scripture is so hard, that thou could never understand it ... They will say it cannot be translated into our tongue ... they are false liars”¹⁶.

Such argumentation resonates with the idea expressed by Erasmus of Rotterdam on the pages of *The Paraclesis*, a kind of apology for publicly available translations of Scripture. According to the Dutch humanist, teaching the Bible, intended for the average layman, will promote active penetration of *the New Testament* ethics into the minds of the people and will intimate the perception of Christ as the Living God. However, Tyndale, being close to Erasmus in understanding the importance of “popularizing” the biblical texts, diverged significantly with him in his function of translator, as he deliberately sought to impose on the reader the Protestant interpretations of Scripture.

The negative attitude of Henry VIII to the Tyndale’s inflammatory notes, which clearly lacked proper reverence for royal authority, and the overtly Protestant spirit of this English-speaking Bible, which appeared somewhat premature in 1525, led to the tragic paradox of 1536: he was executed as a heretic. According to John Foxe, the last words of this martyr of faith were an appeal to God with a plea: “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes”¹⁷. W. Tyndale didn’t managed to complete his translation of *the Old Testament*, and after his martyrdom this work was finished by John Rogers who used the pseudonym of Thomas Matthew. In 1537 so-called *Matthew’s Bible* was printed by Antwerp friends of W. Tyndale. A. Nicolson argues: “The king licensed 1,500 copies of it and Matthew’s became the first Bible in English that could be legally sold in England”¹⁸.

¹⁶ Tyndale W. *Doctrinal Treatises* / Ed. by H. Walter. Cambridge, 1848. P. 161.

¹⁷ Foxe J. *Acts & Monuments* / ed. by Pratt Josiah. London, 1877. P. 43.

¹⁸ Nicolson A. *God’s Secretaries. The Making of the King James Bible*. New York, 2005. P. 249.

The first Bible published in England (1535) was Miles Coverdale's translation, which was based on Tyndale's English text and a German-language translation by Martin Luther. In 1537, with the personal permission of King Henry VIII, the Coverdale Bible was re-published together with the English version of the Gospel of Matthew by John Rogers. Just a few years later his *The Great Bible in English* has become a must-have book in every Anglican parish.

Subsequently, the Puritan exiles, who were severely persecuted during the reign of the Catholic Queen Mary Tudor (1553–1558), published the so-called *The Geneva Bible* (1560) in Switzerland. This book contains *The Old Testament*, *The Old Testament*, *The Apocripha*, a *Psalter* and *Prayer Book*. Besides it includes beautiful illustrations, maps, tables and appendices aimed to make the process of reading the Holy texts easier. G. Hammond suggests that “probably every literate Elizabethan owned and read the Geneva Bible, making it perhaps the single most influential English book ever published”¹⁹. This very version of the Bible was taken by the pilgrims and colonizers to America

However, the Puritan interpretation of Holy Scripture did not completely satisfy Elizabeth I, and the spread of this Bible in England posed a certain threat to Anglicanism, so in 1568 the official text of *The Bishop's Bible* was published and soon the clergymen started using it in church practice. This version was a result of collaboration of 17 translators who worked under the guidance of Matthew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury. A. Nicolson suggests: “Their rather ponderous style, and the absence of Geneva's helpful notes and hints on how to interpret the scriptures, never made *The Bishop's Bible* very popular, although it was the one from which lessons were read every Sunday in Elizabethan England”²⁰.

In 1582, in France, the exiled Catholics William Allen and Gregory Martin prepared and published a Catholic version of the English translation, “the Rheims Douai Bible”.

In spite of the large number of English versions of the Bible, work on a new translation began at the initiative of the Hampton Court Conference (1604). It was a joint meeting of representatives of the High Church (Anglicans) and English Puritans for discussion with King

¹⁹ Hammond G. *Translations of the Bible. A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* / Edit. Michael Hattaway. Oxford, 2003. P 166.

²⁰ Nicolson A. *God's Secretaries. The Making of the King James Bible*. New York, 2005. P. 250.

James I of England the Millenary Petition (a document which contained a series of requests for reforms initiated by puritan ministers). As a result of the four-year work of fifty-four experts from Oxford, Cambridge and Westminster, the famous King James Version (*The Authorized or the King James Version*) appeared in 1610. It synthesized a positive experience from all previous editions, and due to its high level of adequacy and stylistic excellence remained the most beloved Bible of the English nation for a long time.

The emergence of the English Bible texts had extremely important political and cultural implications. First, it provided an English-speaking religious service that strengthened the position of the national church, which separated from Rome. Second, Scripture became available to a large part of English society, and it opened the prospect of direct communication between the believer and the Creator, forming a kind of intellectual and spiritual basis on which the perception of reform ideas was quite natural and organic. In addition, the use of the English Bible texts made a great contribution to the final implementation of English into all spheres of both social and private life. A kind of “symbol of consolidation” of Latinized English for the educated strata and the simple everyday language of ordinary Englishmen became the *The Book of Common Prayer* of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury (the first book – 1549, the second book – 1552), which stood at the origins of the tradition of church preaching at that time.

Consequently, the English Reformation, which was undertaken on the initiative and under the direct control of the Crown, responded to the political interests of Tudor absolutism and the social and spiritual needs of the society, which felt the urgent need for intellectual and religious expression as well as for national self-identification²¹. The nature and peculiarities of the course of the Reformation processes in England are covered in detail in the numerous studies of the historians G. Trevelyan²², S. Skazkin²³, Y. Saprykin²⁴, V. Shtokmar²⁵, S. Bindoff²⁶,

²¹ Торкут Н.М. Специфіка Реформації в Англії та її вплив на літературний процес. Вісник Запорізького державного університету. Запоріжжя, 2001. № 4. С. 121–127.

²² Trevelyan G.M. *English Social History: a survey of six centuries*, Chaucer to Queen Victoria. London, 1946. 628 p.

²³ Сказкин С.Д. Возрождение, гуманизм, реформация / С. Д. Сказкин Сказкин С.Д. *Из истории социально-политической и духовной жизни Западной Европы в средние века*. Москва, 1981. С. 175-187.

and in the works of the specialists in the history of religion and theology²⁷. Therefore, in this research, we will only address those aspects of the problem that are directly related to the cultural development of the society of that time.

2. Elizabethan Religious Politics

Having inherited the English throne from Mary Tudor (1553–1558) who was a zealous Catholic, Elizabeth, along with a number of controversies that were tearing up society, gained a renewed religious dependence on the papal curia. The changes that were made in the religious sphere by Henry VIII (1509–1547) and Edward VI (1547–1553) were almost completely nullified during the reign of the Catholic reaction (1553–1558), and the active supporters of Protestantism were subjected to severe persecution. Thereby, in 1555, Mary Tudor abolished *The Act of Supremacy* adopted by Parliament in 1534, returning England to the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church. Although she didn't dare to return to the church the monastery lands confiscated by Henry VIII, she made all sorts of obstacles in the way of Protestants. In 1553, at the request of the Queen, Parliament abolished the religious legislation adopted by Edward VI; the leading figures of the Reformation such as John Hooper, William Latimer, Mark Ridley were executed as apostates, and Archbishop Cranmer, one of the associates of Henry VIII, was deprived of his religious status. It was then that the religious epistolary tradition (the so-called "letters of exile") was born. Some years later, due to the Catholic proclamations, pamphlets and tracts, it grew into a rather powerful and surprisingly influential religious promotional writing (Stephen Brinkley, Richard Hopkins, Robert Parsons, Thomas Cartwright, Richard Hooker, etc.).

²⁴ Сапрыкин Ю.М. Английская реформация: документы и материалы. Москва, 1990. 104 с.

²⁵ Штокмар В.В. Очерки по истории Англии XVI века. Ленинград, 1957. 160 с.

²⁶ Bindoff S.T. Tudor England. New York, 1977. 320 p.

²⁷ Потехин А. Очерки из истории борьбы англиканства с пуританизмом. Казань, 1894. 188 с.; Вейш Я.Я. Религия и церковь в Англии. Москва, 1976. 182 с.; Reardon B. Religious Thought in the Reformation. New York and London, 1981. 342 p.; Cameron E. The European Reformation. Oxford, 1991. 576 p.; Heal F. Reformation in Britain and Ireland. Oxford, 2003. 584 p.; Brentnall J.M. The English Reformation. A New Study. URL: https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/81fb15b2/files/uploaded/The_English_Reformation.pdf.

Elizabeth, who was forced to follow Catholic rites during the reign of Mary, did not want to support Catholicism for her own sake. The marriage of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn was not recognized by Rome so their daughter's rights to the throne was considered by Catholics as dubious or even illegal. Therefore, at the beginning of her reign, as noted by A. Potekhin, Elizabeth tried to maneuver between the numerous adherents of Protestantism and no less numerous Catholics²⁸. And for a while, she was able to do it successfully. It is significant that when during the coronation (January 1559), which took place under Roman Catholic rite, the City Corporation presented the new queen with an English Bible, she kissed it and called it the best gift.

However, in 1559 the anti-papal tendencies began to intensify in Elizabeth's policy: Parliament declared her the rightful queen and approved two acts of the royal supremacy (*An Act for restoring to the crown the ancient jurisdiction over the state ecclesiastical and spiritual*) and the introduction of a single order of worship. The second Act stated the Church of England as an independent from Rome, so all the sermons and worship should be in English but there kept some church rites close to Roman Catholic Church. According to the first act, the queen was proclaimed not the supreme head, but only the supreme governor of the church. However, this effectively abolished the spiritual authority of the Pope in England. In order to avoid misunderstanding among Roman Catholics connected to the Supremacy Oath, the Queen in the so-called "injunctions" issued in 1559 emphasized that she did not assume spiritual power, but only assumed the power already possessed by her predecessors, the great kings Henry VIII and Edward VI.

According to A. Potekhin, the emergence of these "insinuations", as well as the moderation of Elizabeth's first steps in the religious sphere, were due to the widespread dissemination of profane and satirical pamphlets, which "described, for example, how a woman who had been appropriated the rights of the head of the church, amuses herself with dancing"²⁹. Among the devoted Catholics and even among a part of the Protestants, the fact of the ecclesiastical rule of women did not cause approval. Thus, the religious casuistry of the queen, the supreme ruler of the church, was an act of political compromise, which in fact only

²⁸ Потехин А. Очерки из истории борьбы англиканства с пуританизмом. Казань, 1894. С. 83–85.

²⁹ Потехин А. Очерки из истории борьбы англиканства с пуританизмом. Казань, 1894. С. 89–90.

concerned the name, without touching the substance of the case. In the view of a famous religious publicist of that time Richard Hopkins who translated *A Memorial of a Christian Life* into English considered the Queen's power in the religious sphere as unlimited.

Therefore, Elizabeth built her religious policy in the years 1558–1564 taking into account the presence of two extremely powerful churches (the Catholic one and the Protestant one), without giving absolute advantage to either of them. However, her policy was always focused on the strengthening of the absolutism and the strengthening the national church.

In 1559, according to A. Smith, the English National Church “lacked adequate doctrinal, disciplinary or philosophical bases”³⁰. This made the English Reformation significantly different from the Calvinist and Lutheran Reformation movements, and allowed Elizabeth to create an Anglican Church, whose main feature was eclecticism. It was the eclectic combination of some purely Protestant postulates with the Catholic ones, and predetermined the specific relatively peaceful coexistence of the three Christian currents Catholicism, Anglican Protestantism, and Puritanism, whose struggle and reciprocal influence marked the entire reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The problem of the cultural implications of the English Reformation is still neglected by both cultural scholars and literary historians, although it is undoubtedly worth analyzing. This research only deals with some of its aspects.

If for Italy, and to some extent for France and Germany, the balance between the concept of humanism and the Reformation was important, then for England, where humanism neither acquired the power, nor became a dominant component of the formation of a world outlook, the reformist ideology comes to the fore³¹. The peculiarities of English humanism have been elucidated in numerous articles.

The processes of religious transformation in Elizabethan England weren't clearly consistent, which was thought to be the second (after the eclectic) important feature of the English Reformation. And this is obviously related to the two-component reformist ideology, which combined the system of views of official Anglicanism and Puritanism

³⁰ Smith A.G. *The Emergence of a Nation State. The Commonwealth of England 1520–1660*. New York and London, 1984. P. 140.

³¹ Торкут Н.М. Специфіка становлення і розвитку гуманізму в Англії (до постановки проблеми). *Ренесансні студії*. Запоріжжя, 2002. Вип. 8. С. 59-75.

and the radical reformist ideology of the Calvinist supporters who upheld the interests of the bourgeoisie and the new nobility.

The most of the numerous metaphors by which Elizabeth Tudor was present in the literature of her time and in the collective memory of the English nation (the Fair Queen, Gloriana, Astraea, Cynthia) reflects her leading role either in the sphere of culture or in the political and religious life of the society.

3. Literature and Religious Discourse: the Peculiarities of Correlation

The English Renaissance literature was saturated in religious discourse and the role of the Reformation with its deep penetration into the Holy Scripture was impressive. The English translations of the Bible had an impact on the literary process of the Tudor period in several directions. Firstly, from the middle of the 16th century the Bible became the main book of the average English layman. Not only it was the source of sacred truths and the highest authority in the fields of morality, ethics, and religion, but also it formed certain aesthetic stereotypes. Hence, the style of the Book of Books, the manner in which the spark of Divine light presented itself to the world, was perceived as the most perfect of standards. It is noteworthy that the leaders of the intellectual movement of the mid-fifties Roger Ascham and Thomas Eliot, and the Puritan preachers of the seventies Philip Stubbs and Stephen Gosson, and the authoritative theorists of art George Pattenham and Philip Sidney encouraged people to follow the style of the Bible and referred to the Scriptures as God-given and unsurpassed models that are worthy of imitation. Thus, one of the leading styles of Elizabethan literature, the so-called *plain English prose style*, is closely connected to the popularity of the English translations of the Bible.

Secondly, the rejection of the dogmatic and scholastic interpretations of the Bible, caused by the popularization of the English texts of Scripture and the intelligibility of the word of God even for the poorly educated people, gave a powerful creative impetus, revived the interest of the art in the religious topics and facilitated reinterpretation of certain biblical motives, images, etc.

Both the English Renaissance drama (from John Bale to William Shakespeare), and Elizabethan fiction in her finest examples (which came from the pen of George Gascoigne, John Lilly, Philip Sidney, Thomas Lodge, Robert Green), and poetry (from Edmund Spenser to

John Donne) relentlessly turned to the curative source of the Book of Books, borrowing plots and motives (J. Bale, R. Greene, E. Spencer) or at least images (Henry Chettle).

In addition, the emergence of religious and political pamphlets, the final genre structure of English martyrology and sermons and the formation of genre canons of religious lyrics of the early 17th century were also to some extent caused by the widespread distribution of the English versions of the Bible.

Finally, it should be noted that during the 16th century the attitude towards the Word changed significantly, both towards the Word of God and towards the word of the art. The peak point in this process of comprehending the essence and role of the Word was the famous poem *Paradise Lost* (1667) by John Milton. Its main question concerns the nature of the Word, which is “the Divine creating force, that was given to homo sapiens who is able to use it at his own discretion, both for good and for evil...”³².

Many of the Protestant theories had the common key idea of the individual’s responsibility to God (without the mediation of the church). This idea not only laid the foundations for forming a cult of personal initiative (which would later become an important component of bourgeois type of consciousness), but also stimulated the growth of individuality in literature. The heightened intimacy of religious prose (at least in its epistolary and pamphlet versions) in the context of the rapid growth of the role of prayer (that is, individual communication of man with God) contributed to the activation of the psychological concepts in the arts. Referring to the renowned specialist O. Bafield, the psychologist I. Kon notes that “The Old English includes only 13 words with the prefix *self* but after the Reformation their number grew rapidly and at the end of the XVI century there appeared introspective terms dealing with internal psychological *state* of the personality: *aversion, dissatisfaction, discomposure*”³³.

In this context, the flourishing of lyrical poetry, including the sonnet, and the growing role of meditations, lamentations, and audio-dialogues in the artistic structure of the novel, seem natural. The interaction of poetry and religion in the late Renaissance in England was rather close

³² Чернозёмова Е.Н. "Потерянный рай" Джона Мильтона. Комментарии. Планы. Разработки. *Anglistica*. Москва, 1997. Вып. V. С. 61.

³³ Кон И.С. Открытие "Я". Москва, 1978. С. 205.

and effective. It led to the rising of the Psalms translation (Ricard Stanyhurst, Philip and Mary Sidney, Abraham Fraunce, Emilia Lanier and some others) that inspired the quantitative movement in national poetry. Anne Lok, who is considered to be the first religious poetess writing in English, translated the fifty-first Psalm in the form of poetic meditation. The countess of Pembroke Mary Sidney completed the sequence of Psalms translations begun by her brother Philip Sidney. He managed to translate 44 Psalms and after his premature tragic death his sister continued this work. Mary Sidney's sophisticated versions of Psalms 44–150 circulating in manuscripts had a great success among her contemporaries. Under the influence of the Psalms translations Emilia Lanier wrote her religious poem *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611) where the story of Christ is retold from a female perspective³⁴.

In accordance with the concept of E. Clarke, "In the early seventeenth century there was intense consideration of the nature of holy poetry. The pioneers of Reformation had identified a need for sacred verse to replace profane song in the vocabulary of ordinary men and women; the frantic translation and paraphrase of biblical verse which marked the late sixteenth century was part of an answer to that perceived problem"³⁵. The real masterpieces of lyrical expression of religious experience were created by so-called Metaphysical poets (Abraham Cowley, John Donne, John Cleveland, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Andrew Marvell, and Richard Crashaw). J. Dreher argues: "Metaphysical poetry is related to religious belief, sometimes as an expression of religious belief and other times as a basis for religious belief... Religious experience arouses emotions like wonder, awe, consolation dread, hope, and love; all feelings that turn our minds to beauty, goodness or the sublime"³⁶.

During the reign of Elizabeth, high levels in the realm of sacred and secular music were reached. The most prominent composers of the era were Christopher Tye, Thomas Tallis, Robert White, John Dowland and

³⁴ Resnick Sh.K. Elizabeth I and the 1559 Act of Uniformity: A Study of the Impact of Gender Roles and Religious Conflict ; A Dissertation ... Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Davie, Florida, 2017. 199 p.

³⁵ Clarke E. Religious verse. *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* / Edit. Michael Hattaway. Oxford, 2003. P. 404.

³⁶ Dreher J.H. Metaphysical Poetry as an Expression of Religious Experience and Foundation of Religious Faith. *Forum on Public Policy: A Journal of the Oxford Round Table*. URL: <https://forumonpublicpolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Dreher.pdf>.

Thomas Morley³⁷. The patroness of the performers and composers was the Queen herself, who, according to her numerous biographers, had extraordinary abilities for playing the virginals, composition and dances, as well as a good taste of music. A famous Elizabethan pedagogist Richard Mulcuster who was also an Anglican priest highly appreciated the Queen's love to music and arts:

*The Queen, the glory of our age and isle
With royal favour bids this science smile;
Nor hears she only others' labour'd lays,
But, artist-like, herself both sings and plays.*³⁸

The role of Elizabeth in the development national musical tradition was very important. J. Buxton proves: "Queen's own liking for ceremonial in the church, for such things as Cross and candlesticks on the altar (which were christened or anathematized as the Offendicle) and her appreciation of good music were distrusted and criticized by the more extreme among the Reformers; but she had a short way with Puritans, and soon suspended her Archbishop Grindal from his functions for too much favouring them. In the creation of the Anglican choral service and anthems the Queen's personal taste was therefore of the first importance"³⁹.

The shift in emphasis to the problem of individual guilt and individual responsibility of man to God was noticeable both in interpretations of some historical facts, and in the drama and prose of the Elizabethan period. In addition, the activities of Puritan preachers, who, despite the pressure of the government (1564–1570), declared a kind of war on the Anglican Church (pamphlet *Parliamentary Observations*, 1570), instilled in the minds of the masses the new ideal of a church organization. It was a congregation of believers instead of a mystical cosmos of the universal hierarchy. And this ideal has undoubtedly become one of the many factors that subsequently led to the destruction of the traditional world picture during the last decade of the 16th century.

³⁷ For a fuller information, see: Майкапар А.Е. Музыкант елизаветинской Англии: статус, амбиции, контакты. *Культура Возрождения и общество*. Москва, 1986. С. 219–231; Музыкальная эстетика западноевропейского средневековья и Возрождения / Ред.-сост. В. П. Шестаков. Москва, 1966. 574 с.

³⁸ The quotation is taken from Buxton J. *Elizabethan Taste*. London, 1963. P. 172.

³⁹ Buxton J. *Elizabethan Taste*. London, 1963. P. 180.

The Anglican Episcopal Church, like society as a whole, has been the object of shattering criticism of the Puritans. Protesting against the inconsistency of the royal policy in the religious sphere, they demanded that the church was finally cleared of the remnants of Catholicism. In their numerous pamphlets the puritans insisted on the urgent need to get rid of the duality of Anglicanism. The most representative in this aspect are *Oh, Read over D. John Bridges* (1588) and *The Just Censure* (1589) published under the pseudonym of Martin Marprelate. Filled with numerous Bible quotes and examples from ecclesiastical history, Puritan proclamations against the official church, its worship, ordinances, hierarchs, undermined the reputation of Anglican priests, sometimes even inciting the congregation to church pogroms. The repressive measures of the Crown against the Puritans, the prohibition of publishing their tracts and pamphlets did not give the expected results. From the realm of theological, the confrontation between Anglicanism and Puritanism gradually shifted to other areas (political, social, cultural and educational). The Reformation with its religious and political disputes produced a powerful wave of the prose and poetic pamphlets that can be considered as an early stage of journalism⁴⁰.

It should be noted that the anti-Puritan orientation of the policy of Elizabeth, which intensified (for example, in 1565–1575 when Parker was Archbishop of Canterbury, and in 1583–1593, in the first decade of the Archbishop John Whitgift) and weakened (for example, during the first six and last ten years of the reign of Elizabeth, as well as during Archbishop Grindal's years of 1575–1583), did not lead to a definitive suppression of Puritanism. The anti-Catholic actions of her government, dictated primarily by political considerations, had more tangible consequences.

At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, the number of zealous Catholics, according to some historians (including Henry Thomas Buckle⁴¹), reached half of the entire population of England, and according to other historians (for example, T. Macaulay⁴²) – was only a

⁴⁰ Moody W.V., Lovett R.M. A History of English Literature. New York, 1964. P. 67.

⁴¹ Бокль Г.Т. История цивилизации в Англии. В 2 т. Санкт-Петербург, 1866. Т. 1. С. 156; Бокль Г.Т. Отрывки из царствования королевы Елизаветы. Санкт-Петербург, 1868. С. 3.

⁴² Маколей Т. Полное собрание сочинений. В 6 т. Санкт-Петербург, 1861. Т. II. С. 102.

twentieth part of it. Interesting information about it is given by A. Potekhin: “At the beginning of 1559 the Spanish ambassador, de Feria, reported to King Philip that two thirds of population in England was Catholic, and this fact made him believe in the final victory of Catholicism as the true religion”⁴³.

By the end of the 16th century, the English Catholics, who had never been able to unite and create any united current or opposition, were no longer a serious threat to the official church, and restoration of the power of the Pope in England had become virtually impossible. Unlike the Puritans, who, despite some government pressure, were still able to publicly declare their views, the Catholics were either forced to hide their thoughts or emigrate. Particularly worse was their situation after 1570, when Pope Pius V issued the bull *Regnans in Excelsis*, in which he excommunicated Elizabeth and all her subjects, the Anglicans, from the Catholic Church and called on the British to rebel against the Queen. The fanatical Catholic John Felton is known to have fixed to the gates of the Bishop of London’s palace near St. Paul’s Cathedral a text of this bull proclaiming “Elizabeth, the pretended Queen of England and the servant of crime”. The bull argues: “We charge and command all and singular the nobles, subjects, peoples and others afore said that they do not dare obey her orders, mandates and laws. Those who shall act to the contrary we include in the like sentence of excommunication”⁴⁴.

It should be emphasized that it was between 1570 and 1588, when the so-called “recusant devotional prose” flourished. Nearly two hundred of recusant texts were published abroad or secretly in England after 1558. Among them there were several masterpieces of the genre: *A brief discovrs contayning certayne reasons why Catholiques refuse to goe to Church* (1580), *The first booke of the Christian exercise* (1582), *The Copie of a Leter wryten by a Master of Arts of Cambrige*, also known as *Leicester’s Commonwealth* (1584) by Robert Parsons, *An Admonition to the Nobility and People of England and Ireland* (1588) by William Allen, as well as many “minor” aesthetically pleasing works by the English Catholics (Thomas Harding, Thomas Butler, Laurence

⁴³ Потехин А. Очерки из истории борьбы англиканства с пуританизмом. Казань, 1894. С. 79.

⁴⁴ The quotation is taken from Campbell L. Tudor Conceptions of History & Tragedy in “A Mirror for Magistrates”. Berkeley, 1936. P. 206.

Thomson., Richard Bristow, Edward Rishton)⁴⁵. C. Sullivan, who wrote a fundamental comprehensive survey of this literature phenomenon, substantiates the hypothesis as for the target of the recusant literature: "The subject which a Catholic text discusses is fixed; the material of the faith is, in terms of rhetoric, a series of commonplaces. Nor can the speaker's approach be altered; since an interpretation provided by the Church is regarded as immutable ... Vernacular meditations, hagiographies, and catechisms were produced in order to persuade the reader to true devotion, to change himself rather than the texts"⁴⁶.

However, the failure of Pope Gregory XIII's expedition to Ireland (1579) and the subsequent massacre of the Papists, the revelation of Babington's plot and the execution of Mary Stuart or Mary I of Scotland (1587), and, finally, the defeat of the Spanish "Invincible Armada" completely broke the Catholic opposition and caused the decay of the Catholic religious' prose after 1588.

The most influential text among the works written by English protestants during the reign of Elizabeth was the *Acts and Monuments* (1564) by the famous martyrologist John Fox⁴⁷. This book – more familiar under the title the *Book of Martyrs* – combines the representation of English history on the basis of the Bible with the numerous descriptions of the sufferings of Protestants under the Catholic Church. J. Foxe proclaimed the English to be God's chosen people whose predestination was to put down Antichrist identified with the pope. with particular emphasis on England and Scotland. Foxe's book that went through four editions in the author's lifetime (1516–1587) was available in all parishes for the use of the clergy and ordinary parishioners. It also had an impact on both English character and English literature. A.H. Dodd argues: „The author of *Euphues* is just as sure that 'the living God is onely the English God' as the martyrologist himself; in *Henry the Eighth* even Shakespeare, whose patriotism never sinks to these depths, borrows for Cranmer's messianic prophecy at the christening of Elizabeth the symbol of the vine which stood in Old

⁴⁵ For a fuller discussion see: Bennett H.S. *English Books & Readers, 1558 to 1603*. London, 1965. P. 112–129; Roberts J. R. *A Critical Anthology of English Recusant Devotional Prose, 1558–1603*. Pittsburgh, 1966. 322 c.

⁴⁶ Sullivan C. *Dismembered Rhetoric: English Recusant Writing, 1580 to 1603*. Madison, 1995. P. 14.

⁴⁷ The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online. URL: <http://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe> [Accessed: 01.03.11(e.g.)].

Testament psalm and prophecy for regenerate and glorified Israel. Religion and patriotism were at one, and in this lies one of the keys to the greatness of the age⁴⁸.

The echo of interfaith discussions, the open declaration of one's own religious views, or at least the hidden propaganda in favor of one of the denominations is quite common in the pages of Elizabethan fiction and drama.

All the Elizabethan dramatists as well as other intellectuals touched on religious issues: Christopher Marlowe was accused of atheism, Ben Jonson converted to Catholicism, a famous playwright John Marston stopped his successive career and became an Anglican priest⁴⁹. The wide spectrum of the topic "Shakespeare and Religions" have been thoroughly analyzed in numerous works by Shakespearean scholars⁵⁰.

The problems dealing with the peculiarities of representation of religious ideas in romances and poetry of the Elizabethans are worth of deep and multidimensional study. The importance of discovering religious implications in the texts of English Renaissance writers was emphasized by R. Helgerson who points out that chivalry romance and Catholicism was as important for Thomas Lodge as Greek romance and Calvinism for Robert Greene⁵¹. Catholicism or Protestantism were not opposed to humanism in the outlook of "men of letters", but the magnitude of their influence on the worldview and of the Elizabethans produced so-called creative (aesthetically productive) consequences. This, in fact, is one of the specific features of English humanism: coinciding in time with the Reformation movement, it did not confront the religious outlook, but focused on the ethical values of Christianity, proclaiming the need to improve the Church, personality and society.

CONCLUSIONS

The usage of integrative approach which combines the information and observations from different humanities (history, theology, cultural

⁴⁸ Dodd A.H. *Life in Elizabethan England*. London, 1961. P. 87.

⁴⁹ Briggs J. *This Stage-play World. English Literature and its Background. 1580–1625*. Oxford, New York, 1983. P. 66.

⁵⁰ Shell A. *Shakespeare and Religion*. London, 2015. 308 p.; *Shakespeare Survey* 54. *Shakespeare and Religions*. / Ed. by P. Holland. Cambridge, 2001. 372 p.; Eaton T.R. *Shakespeare and Bible*. London, 1858. 188 p.

⁵¹ Helgerson R. *The Elizabethan prodigals*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1976. P. 121.

studies, literature studies etc.) enables to highlight the main areas of interaction between English Reformation and Elizabethan literature. Without the recent works of contemporary experts in English history and cultural studies, the profound research of documents and literary texts of the Renaissance epoch there was no the necessary basis for a deep penetration into the essence of religious controversy and its resonance in different spheres of spiritual and intellectual life of the Elizabethans.

Therefore, in Elizabethan England, the intense religious (inter-denominational) struggle, despite the overtly political nature of the Reformation, and possibly due to it, did not lead to such tragic consequences as in Germany (the Great Peasant War of 1524–1526), France (Bartholomew Night, August 24, 1572) or Switzerland (the long civil war of 1579–1590). Religious confrontation in England took place mostly in the cultural sphere, spilling over into the controversy of puritans and theater defenders on Poetry (1570–1590)⁵², giving rise to numerous varieties of religious literature and causing saturation of drama, poetry and prose with religious issues, Christian motives and burning theological problems.

In the scholarly discourse at the end of the XX century the English Reformation is sometimes treated as a historic failure (C. Haigh⁵³, E. Duffy⁵⁴). This opinion seems unconvincing: as it was demonstrated in this article the Reformation caused the cardinal shifts in the intellectual life, culture and mentality of the nation. The impact of religious issues is evident in all the spheres such as government internal and foreign policy, science and education, literature and arts, way of thinking and values system.

SUMMARY

The article offers an interdisciplinary survey of the disputable issue of the English Reformation impact on the different aspects of contemporary social life, culture and literature, in particular. The author considers the key points of religious discourse in Renaissance England through the

⁵² Торкут Н.М. Проблеми генези і структурування жанрової системи англійської прози пізнього Ренесансу (малі епічні форми та «література факту»). Запоріжжя, 2000. С. 78–87.

⁵³ Haigh Ch. *English Reformations: religion, politics and society under the Tudors*. Oxford, 1993. 380 p.

⁵⁴ Duffy E. *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580*. Yale, 2005. 700 p.

prism of its specific correlation with politics, the monarchs' personalities, as well as the public and private life of their subjects. The usage of integrative approach that combines experience of historians, theologians, and literary scholars broadens the horizons of interpretation of such cultural phenomena as translating the Bible, the religious controversy, the matyrologues, the puritans attacks against the theatre, the recusant prose and the metaphysical poetry etc. A special attention is given to the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603) as a time when the effects of Reformation became noticeable in both internal and external affairs, as well as in literature and the arts.

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