Evolution of Petrarchism in English Literature

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This article discusses the development of Petrarchism in English literature. Its aim is to analyze the emergence, development and main trends of the Petrarchan poetic movement in England. The research methodology is determined by a complex combination of biographical, historical-literary and comparative-historical methods of literary analysis. It was established that the beginning of English Petrarchism can be seen in G. Chaucer's poem Troilus and Cressida. *Its first victorious steps date from the 1530s and are associated with the names of T. Wyatt and H. Howard. It has been noted that, at first glance, there appears to be an almost fifty-year break in tradition in English Petrarchism after the 1540s. However, this impression proves to be misleading, as in the 1590s the first English Petrarchan texts published in the so-called* Tottel's Miscellany *were reprinted again and again. The 1590s saw the second riseof English Petrarchism, which was linked to the unprecedented spread of the sonnet genre in English poetry. At the same time, it has been pointed out that the last Petrarchan sonnet sequences of the Elizabethan era lacked any originality and suffered from all sorts of shortcomings of undisguised superficial imitation. It is concluded that Petrarchism can be considered the main path of English poetry in the sixteenth century.*

Keywords: English poetry / sixteenth century / literary tradition / Petrarchism / sonnet / *Tottel's Miscellany*

Petrarchism is a movement in European Renaissance poetry based on imitating Petrarch's lyrical texts, primarily his *Canzoniere*. The term "Petrarchism" as copying the artistic features of Petrarch's works was first recorded in N. Franco's dialogue *Il Petrarchista*, published in 1539 in Venice. However, it is essential to emphasize that N. Franco was not its author—he only, so to speak, "legitimized" words and concepts that had been used by Italians many years prior because, as it is known, mass

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imitations of Petrarch in the form of using individual images, motifs, or even entire phrases of his texts began during the poet's lifetime. In the second half of the fifteenth century, the manner of his imitating crossed the Italian borders and expanded on the Iberian Peninsula and then to France; at the end of the Cinquecento and Seicento, it was transferred to England, as well as to German-speaking poets, and then to such countries as Poland, Hungary, Sweden, and others.

The subject of this paper is Petrarchism in English literature. Its purpose is to analyze the emergence, development, and main trends of the Petrarchan poetic movement in England. The research methodology is determined by a complex combination of biographical, historical-literary, and comparative-historical methods of literary analysis.

Petrarchan discourse in English literature became a research subject at the beginning of the twentieth century. One of the first works devoted to this issue was P. Borghesi's book *Petrarch and His Influence on English Literature* (1906). Among the later studies of the problem, the works of R. Jack and A. Mortimer are worth mentioning. R. Dasenbrock studied the reception of Petrarchism in the works of T. Wyatt and E. Spenser; G. Waller and R. Young—in the poems of Ph. Sidney; S. Ruffo-Fiore—in the poetry of J. Donne. The influence of Petrarch on the English sonnet writers of the late sixteenth century was disclosed by T. Roche. A separate array is the scientific research of English anti-Petrarchism, that is, various reactions to the mass imitation of Petrarch's texts in English literature done by scholars such as H. Dubrow, J. Mazzaro, P. Ribes, and others.

Petrarch was well-known in England during his lifetime. The author may have visited the country in 1335 or later while traveling through Northern France and the Netherlands. It is known that the first Englishman who knew Petrarch personally was R. de Bury. It is assumed that they met in cosmopolitan Avignon in Cardinal Colonna's house sometime between 1331 and 1333. Petrarch mentioned this meeting in one of his letters. R. de Bury was a typical representative of medieval scholastic philosophy, one of the most educated Englishmen of his time. However, he was very distant from the art, and therefore, he could not appreciate the full extent of the Italian writer's innovative lyrics and his personality in general.

In order to understand Petrarch, one had to be a poet himself—and such an English poet soon appeared. It was G. Chaucer. It is documented that he visited Italy in 1372. The Italian writer was still alive then, but it is not known whether the two poets met. The influence of Petrarch on G. Chaucer is quite significant, although it is worth noting

that it concerns more Latin texts than the *Canzoniere*. Additionally, one cannot fail to mention the Petrarchan allusions in the English poet's famous *Troilus and Cressida*. They can primarily be seen in its first book, where Troilus sings a song, an English translation of the sonnet CXXXII from the *Canzoniere*. However, during the translation, the genre form of the original was violated—instead of 14 lines, the song of Troilus has 21 and consists of three seven-line stanzas; as a result, the work of Petrarch "dissolves" in the text of G. Chaucer, but does not lose its unique Petrarchan flavor.

Like the persona in the *Canzoniere*, Troilus is troubled by the conflicting feelings he has to go through. The Italian author conveyed this state with the help of the well-known metaphorical juxtaposition of ice and fire. He ends his well-known sonnet with the following words: "I do not know what I wish myself, / and tremble in midsummer, burn in winter" (Petrarch 219). G. Chaucer somewhat modified this line, but at the same time preserved the very Petrarchan concept of the ambivalence of the love feeling, giving both joy and torment at the same time: "Through heat of cold, through cold of heat I die" (Chaucer 29). In the song of Troilus, the English poet adheres quite closely to the semantics of the original, except in certain moments. Thus, the initial four lines of G. Chaucer's text reflect the first quatrain of Petrarch's sonnet. However, the English author adds three lines of his own, insightfully depicting Troilus's passion in a sensual, suggestive image—as a spiritual thirst that cannot be tired in any way. The second stanza is the least changed: G. Chaucer completely preserves the theme of Petrarch's quatrain. In the third one, he follows the Italian, developing the protagonist's arguments given in the second quatrain of the sonnet CXXXII, and finally focuses on Petrarch's original sea metaphor, combining it with a medical one. We want to emphasize the last one because this metaphor unites the English poet's text—appearing already in the first line, it passes through the entire poem. It completes it, creating a kind of framing and preparing the ground and appropriate mood for further plot development. To conclude, Petrarch's sonnet was incorporated by G. Chaucer into his *Troilus and Cressida* not just as an extra-plot decorative passage but as a full-fledged narrative element.

The third song of Troilus (Book V) is also a variation on Petrarch's sonnet CLXXXIX, containing metaphors of a ship, a storm, and the guiding stars compared to the eyes of a beloved. However, as in the previous case, the English author abandoned the sonnet form, offering in seven lines of his text the very essence of Petrarchan poetic imagery:

O star of which I have lost the light,
with sore heart I truly should bewail,
that, ever dark, in torment, night by night,
towards my death with following wind I sail:
so that if on the tenth night should fail
your bright beams' guidance for even an hour,
my ship and me Charybdis will devour. (Chaucer 382)

Thus, the Petrarchan sonnet entered the receptive field of English literature through G. Chaucer's adaptation in *Troilus and Cressida*.

G. Chaucer became the first English writer who paid close attention to the intensive development of Italian Renaissance culture and tried to use its achievements in his poems. However, we must admit that his popularization activities could have succeeded more in England. In the fourteenth century, the poet's homeland was not ready to accept the refined style of Petrarch's love poems.

In the fifteenth century, Italian (including Petrarchan) influences in Britain remained insignificant, but the literary exchange between the countries certainly took place. At that time, many Italians came to England for trade and brought manuscripts of Petrarch's works. On the other hand, the Englishmen visited the homeland of the great poet, and although most of them could not understand the greatness of Humanism there, they certainly could not fail to notice new trends in culture and art. In general, it can be assumed that although the Italian author was not famous in England in the fifteenth century, educated Englishmen indeed were acquainted with his works.

Noticeable changes began in the sixteenth century when a kind of fashion for Italy emerged in England. Its first manifestations are observed at the royal court. Thanks to the translation and distribution of books on etiquette, the Tudor court was undergoing an Italian-style transformation. B. Castiglione's work *The Courtier* became vital in this context. Although it was translated into English by T. Goby and printed only in 1561, it is evident that its original text was circulating in English court circles much earlier, in the first half of the century. Henry VIII was an ardent supporter of Italian culture. During his reign, English aristocrats traveled *en masse* to Italy, borrowing not only arts but also habits and style of life. They brought the Renaissance ideas to the aristocratic masses. However, these ideas did not immediately find their way to artistic and literary practice—at first, only some English artists and poets showed a noticeable interest in the Italian Renaissance. So, despite the generally favorable cultural ground, Petrarchism adapted slowly in England. Its language and ideological

paradigm remained strange to writers and readers for a long time. Only in the first quarter of the sixteenth century did Petrarch's manner take root more and more firmly in English literature. To a large extent, this was facilitated by the distribution of book printing and the publication of Italian writers' texts. Therefore, Petrarchism gradually gained momentum in England. By the end of the 1580s, every more or less significant poet considered it a direct duty to write something in the style of Petrarch.

The first serious achievements of English Petrarchism date back to the 1530s and are associated with the names of T. Wyatt and H. Howard, Earl of Surrey. T. Wyatt became the first English poet who fully understood the greatness of Petrarch himself and managed to convey it to his compatriots. It is still being determined when the writer composed most of his poems. It can be assumed that for some time, he did not intend to collect or systematize them, as in the sixteenth century, it was not customary among the aristocratic authors of England to publish their literary attempts. T. Wyatt's poetic texts were first published by the successful London bookseller R. Tottel in the so-called *Tottel's Miscellany* (full title: *Songes and Sonettes Written by the Right Honorable Lorde Henry Haward Late Earle of Surrey, and Other*) on June 5, 1557, already after the poet's death (see Arber). This edition, which is considered to be the first printed collection of new English poetry, consisted of 270 poems (271 in the second edition), 97 of which belonged to T. Wyatt, 40 to H. Howard, 40 to N. Grimald, and the remaining 94 to less significant authors.

T. Wyatt's lyrics in *Tottel's Miscellany* included several sonnets, rondos, ballads, and satires, as well as numerous epigrams and songs (incidentally, it is a reasonably conventional genre, where you can include almost everything that does not "fit" into the classical genre varieties). Petrarchan texts were adjacent to more original works. In this regard, D. Rees notes that two elements can be clearly distinguished in T. Wyatt's poetry—original and borrowed, national and continental—and to underestimate the importance of any of them means to simplify the writer's achievements (Rees 15). Such a view on the poetic works of this author has long been traditional for critical literature because, indeed, a significant part of his love lyrics consists of translations from Petrarch and Italian Petrarchan poets, as well as various kinds of paraphrases and imitations. Moreover, in his original poems, T. Wyatt uses almost the entire arsenal of Petrarchan imagery. His persona complains about the impossibility of conveying the depth and greatness of his love in words; he mentions hot streams

of tears, volcanoes of sighs, and spiritual sorrow that exhausts the body—all this seems to be copied verbatim from the *Canzoniere*. We also come across typical Petrarchan hyperboles and metaphors: the lover is associated with a boat caught in a storm and circling among the rocks without hope of rescue; the cloud of grief closes the stars, which symbolize the eyes of his beloved; the forests are filled with the sobs of the protagonist and the rivers stop because of his complaints; both the earth and the sky mourn with him—only the woman is deaf to his pleas. All this certainly gives reason to speak of T. Wyatt as a typical Petrarchist.

Suppose we consider T. Wyatt's poems in *Tottel's Miscellany* a continuous lyrical text. In that case, it breaks down into a series of repeated situations: love comes to the protagonist, and he hopes it will be mutual, but the woman turns out to be indifferent to his pleas every time. This is followed by a painful breakup and the lover's promise not to love anymore, but the story begins again after some time. In each of these cycles, the protagonist also tries to find an answer to the question of the source of his failures. He understands love as a loss of mind. The conflict between feelings and reason is a common motif in T. Wyatt's poems; his persona constantly vacillates between the defined poles. The lover sometimes affirms his loyalty to Cupid and sometimes refuses love, but such a refusal is never final. At first glance, his previous experience enriches every new feeling of the persona, and he constructs his relationship with a new woman in a new way. So, previously deceived, he no longer wants to be a gullible simpleton and, in one of his poems, promises to be faithful to the Mistress only if she is faithful herself:

> But you, this diuersnesse that blamen most,
> Change you no more, but still after one rate
> Treat you me well: and kepe you in that state.
> And while with me doth dwell this weried gost,
> My word nor I shall not be variable,
> But alwaies one, your owne both firme and stable. (Arber 37)

However, as we can see later, any change in his outlook or behavior is illusory.

Each woman's refusal prompts the lover to reflect on the already passed part of his life. Directing his reflection on the mechanisms of love, he concludes that the reason for his love failures is the inability to express his feelings. Thus, the focus is transferred from the intimate plane to the aesthetic, philosophical one, raising the problem of the

expressive possibilities of language and the functions of poetry in general. It is in this context that the image of the "unkind tongue" created by T. Wyatt should be considered—the tongue is unkind because it is to blame that the protagonist cannot win the reciprocity of the Mistress: "Vnkind tongue, to yll hast thou me rendered" (38). In the end, he concludes that love is, in principle, inseparable from a break: "But all is turnde now … / Into a bitter fashion of forsakyng" (40).

This opinion is expressed in the well-known poem of T. Wyatt "They Flee from Me":

> They flee from me, that somtime did me seke
> With naked fote stalkyng within my chamber.
> Once haue I seen them gentle, tame, and meke,
> That now are wild, and do not once remember
> That sometyme they haue put them selues in danger,
> To take bread at my hand, and now they range,
> Busily sekyng in continuall change. (Arber 40)

The author juxtaposes two timelines in the text: the past when he was happy because women gave him much love, and the present, when he is unhappy because they ignore him. At the same time, T. Wyatt strengthens the erotic element—his love experience vividly turns into a sexual one:

> When her loose gowne did from her shoulders fall,
> And she me caught in her armes long and small,
> And therwithall, so swetely did me kysse,
> And softly sayd: deare hart, how like you this?
> It was no dreame: for I lay broade awakyng. (40)

This contradicts the Petrarchan attitude to a woman's inaccessibility. Moreover, the tradition of unconditional lover's devotion is violated because if the protagonist promised to be faithful in exchange for faithfulness earlier, it is not even about one, but several women at once now.

The author knew that his poems often repeated what he had already said. However, his miserable conditions forced him to write equally sad songs, and he could only hope that fate would one day allow him to write a song of a different character: "And if I haue a chance … / To sing some pleasant song" (Arber 51). At the same time, the impossibility of avoiding repetition adds supplementary elements to the figurative system of T. Wyatt's love lyrics. First of all, the very image of the Mistress is transformed, acquiring features that are not typical for the

Petrarchan tradition. In general, T. Wyatt's protagonist is characterized by admiration for his beloved, but we never see a description of her appearance in all his texts. The protagonist concentrates on his feelings, his relationship with a woman, and the principles of love, but not on its object. From the complex traits, T. Wyatt chooses and especially emphasizes only one—his woman's cruelty. Moreover, the heroine acquires almost sadistic features as she enjoys the protagonist's humility and suffering, literally feeding on them. That is why, at a particular stage of the relationship, a woman turns from an object of desire into an object of hatred. T. Wyatt's persona likes to describe her physical suffering, and with his poetry, he seeks not to favor the beloved but to hurt her: "Passe forth my wonted cryes, / Those cruell eares to pearce, / Which in most hatefull wyse / Doe styll my plaintes reuerse" (56).

Therefore, there are significant differences in many points between Petrarch and T. Wyatt. First of all, T. Wyatt's lover is not the same as Petrarch's lover: he is well aware of his courtly duties to a woman, but at the same time, he wants to have certain rights. Secondly, T. Wyatt, in his love lyrics, explicates erotic motifs that were completely absent in Petrarch's poems. Thirdly, in each new love cycle, T. Wyatt's persona strives to get close to a new woman, and each cycle ends with a rejection of love, which is simply impossible to imagine in the Italian humanist's texts. Moreover, fourthly, the very image of the woman and the model of the relationship between her and the protagonist has little in common with the Petrarchan canon. In general, T. Wyatt interprets his love experience as a relationship with a sadistic Mistress to whom he is forced to submit, because of which, in the end, he begins to hate her and seek revenge. For these reasons, we can conclude that T. Wyatt was not just a translator and imitator of Petrarch, who adopted his poetic technique, the main themes and images of his poetry, his style, and the sophistication of the language, but also an original author.

T. Wyatt's Petrarchan experiments were supported by H. Howard, Earl of Surrey. *Tottel's Miscellany* included 40 of his lyrical works (41 in the second edition). Many of these texts were translated from the *Canzoniere*. However, he had mainly imitated Petrarch's works rather than translated them. One way or another, Petrarchan reminiscences and allusions in H. Howard's poetry are pervasive.

In the very first H. Howard's text in *Tottel's Miscellany*, a circle of themes and motifs is outlined, which will constantly vary in all the author's poems: the woman, to whom the persona's passionate impulse

is directed is unattainable, the lover's sufferings are becoming more robust, and there is no escape from them: "In time my harm increases more and more" (Arber 3). Earl of Surrey also refers to the established rhetoric of Petrarchism, introducing traditional images of the helmsman, the ship, and the "ice fire" ("The frosen hart that mine in flame hath made"; 3) and its antithetical derivatives, such as the opposition "life–death" ("Strange kindes of death, in life that I doe try"; 3). The persona of H. Howard strives to change his predicament and tries to find a place where he can restore his inner balance: "And in my minde I measure pace by pace, / To seke the place where I my self had lost" (4). However, defeat awaits him everywhere, and he does not manage to achieve the desired peace: "But neuer yet the trauail of my thought / Of better state coulde catche a cause to bost" (4). Unraveling the tangle of mental contradictions is considered possible either through the rejection of love, through reunification with the Mistress, or death. The outlined conflict remains unresolved in the analyzed text, so its understanding occurs further in the following two dozen poems. At the same time, the hopelessness of the situation in which the persona found himself is constantly emphasized due to the sharp contrast between the inviolability of his inner longing and the dynamics of the beautiful world surrounding him.

In the IV and subsequent poems of H. Howard's chapter in *Tottel's Miscellany*, the poet's persona tries to penetrate the causes of suffering from love to find their source. The meditative character of the poems is strengthened—the protagonist seems to rise above his situation, trying to analyze it from the position of an observer, not a participant, and describe it from the side. At the language level, this is clearly expressed—the pronoun "he" appears in the text: "I know in heat and colde the louer how he shakes: / In singing how he doth complain, in slepyng how he wakes" (Arber 6). Reflections on the character of one's feelings eventually lead the lover to escape the prison of love by any means. He curses love and challenges it ("I curssed loue"; 8), but the attempt to rebel turns out to be unsuccessful because it violates the eternal laws of Cupid. Therefore, the persona must apologize ("Thou blinded god … forgeue me this offense"; 8), and this increases his torment ("My harms haue euer since increased more and more"; 8). Due to the inability to free himself from the power of love, the protagonist is forced to return to love poetry, so he continues to develop typical Petrarchan themes: he describes a deep wound in his chest (VII), sings of the beautiful Mistress and bitterly regrets the impossibility of reuniting with her (VIII), reflects on the impermanence of earthly beauty (X),

again paints a picture of the permanence of his depressed state against the background of an idyllic evening landscape (X), etc. At the formal level, such a return is marked by transitioning from national verse forms—rhyming couplets of 12 and 14 syllables—to the sonnet form traditional for continental Petrarchism.

The lyrical plot of H. Howard's sonnet "When Windsor Walles Susteyned My Wearied Arme" develops against the background of the picturesque spring nature. However, this landscape plays a function that is uncharacteristic of Petrarchism. While looking through the prison window at the beauty of the meadows and forests, H. Howard's persona nostalgically plunges into memories of his childhood spent in Windsor. However, they are so depressing that he desires to throw himself off the tower. In this poem, the protagonist, for the first time, considers suicide as the only way to solve his internal problems. In the future, this motif will repeatedly appear in H. Howard's poetry. Suicidal aspirations found expression not only in this motif but also in the fact that in the later H. Howard's texts, the image of the Petrarchan lover occurs less and less: the author increasingly avoids the first-person pronoun—his persona no longer talks about his love relationship, but about the relationship of a woman and her friend, and in some texts, the persona is even the woman herself.

The culminating in the sense of experiments with the image of a protagonist is a poem, where, on behalf of the shepherd, Earl of Surrey tells us about the death of the poet—that is, the Petrarchan subject turns here into the object of a narrative. As R. Kuin writes, traditional "Petrarchan texts insisted on the obligatory identity of the lover and the poet" (Kuin 3). However, in this H. Howard's poem, the story's subject is neither a lover nor a poet, which allows the author to focus impartially on the characteristics of the object of such an analysis—the Petrarchan poet in love. The reason for his death is the impossibility of mastering his beloved, who refuses to take seriously not only the protagonist himself but also his poems. The lover chooses death voluntarily and thereby solves a complex set of problems formed by the desire to master the Mistress, the need to create love poetry, and death.

The death of the persona, however, does not mean that the poet ceases to generate Petrarchan text. In the following poems, a new persona appears, which allows H. Howard to understand the Petrarchan problems from other positions. Its main characteristic is an extremely high degree of reflectivity. So, for example, in the poem "Geue Place Ye Louers, Here Before", the poet uses the traditional method of describing the extraordinary beauty of the Mistress, which no other woman

can match: "My Ladies beawtie passeth more / The best of yours" (Arber 20). However, in the text itself, there is no indication that the story's subject is H. Howard's persona. This fact can only be interpreted as a detached use of one of the conventions of Petrarchism. At the same time, the reflective, poetic consciousness of the new persona does not allow H. Howard to abandon the literary tradition, due to which the author occasionally creates absolutely ordinary Petrarchan poems, for example, "As Oft As I Behold and Se."

Thus, H. Howard's Petrarchan text goes through several stages of development. Initially, his persona is in acute conflict between the desire to master the woman and the impossibility of realizing it. An alternative opens before him: to conquer the beloved with the help of love poetry or die. The first phase of the story demonstrates the inability to achieve the lover's goal by the means chosen for this, as well as the immutability of his inner state. At the same stage, he attempts to rebel against the fatal dependence on the Mistress, but love wins. It turns out to be possible to change the situation only through suicide, which is the main theme of the second stage of H. Howard's Petrarchan discourse. The symbolic death of his persona gives him freedom and, in turn, brings to life a new protagonist who interprets love problems from a detached position. In the reflective spirit, the third part of the Petrarchan story of the English poet is sustained.

After the 1540s, according to some researchers, for example, R. Jack or G. Parks, Petrarchism in English literature underwent a complete "rupture" of the tradition, restored only in the 1590s. In our opinion, such a statement is not entirely correct since, during the outlined period, *Tottel's Miscellany* did not lose its popularity. That is evidenced by a compelling fact—the book was reprinted 11 times (twice in 1557, once between 1557 and 1559, twice in 1559, twice in 1565, and also in 1567, 1574, 1585, and 1587). Although not all the authors whose texts were included in it were Petrarchists, such as N. Grimald, it is evident that the tremendous success of the edition was due to the Petrarchan poems. As a result, between the 1540s and the 1580s, the main form of English lyrics was Petrarchan.

The *Tottel's Miscellany* reprints gradually introduced English Petrarchism into the Elizabethan age. At this time (the 1590s), there was a period of the second surge of the Petrarchan poetical movement, when English writers were focused not only on Petrarch and his *Canzoniere* but also on the French followers of the great Italian poet. Generally speaking, European Petrarchism, if we do not consider its Italian version, has undergone nearly the most intense development

precisely on French national grounds. The scale of the Petrarchan impulses here is well described by S. Lee: "There is probably no sonnet of Petrarch, and few of the popular sonnets of his Italian followers, which were not more or less exactly and more or less independently reproduced a dozen times or more in French verse during the later years of the sixteenth century" (Lee xxv–xxvi). The significant distribution of lyrical texts by French authors in England became one of the determining factors of the so-called "sonnet boom" in the end of the sixteenth century. The revolution in French poetry carried out by the poets of La Pléiade resonated with English literature, setting new standards. In the context of these influences, numerous love sonnet sequences concentrated around the image of one woman appeared in England: *Delia* (1592) by S. Daniel, *Diana* (1592) by H. Constable, *Phyllis* (1593) by T. Lodge, *Ideas Mirrour* (1594) by M. Drayton, *Cynthia* (1595) by R. Barnfield, *Fidessa* (1596) by B. Griffin and many others, including anonymous ones, for example, *Zephyria* (1594). In these collections, the sonnet produced by generations of poets over two centuries, revived in France by P. de Ronsard and his comrades from La Pléiade and known in England since the time of T. Wyatt, underwent a vast "growth" of concepts, images, and traditional phraseology.

Elizabethan sonnets often bear explicit autobiographical traces, naturally expanding their themes and issues. However, their form and style always remain unchanged, and the concept of the relationship between the protagonist and his Mistress never goes beyond the traditional Petrarchan model: each Lady, in this sense, reminds us of Laura and each lover of Petrarch's persona. The woman always appears cold, cruel, heartless, and indifferent to her lover but extremely beautiful and virtuous, and the protagonist is timid, meager, and depressed but very faithful and loyal. During the last decade of the sixteenth century, more sonnets appeared in English literature than in any other period. In general, the unprecedented rise of this genre in the Elizabethan era is relatively easy to explain. Since the sonnet at that time was, perhaps, the most convenient form for personal feelings and emotions, nothing is surprising in the fact that in the age, the defining psychological characteristic of which can be called individualism, it served as the primary tool for authorial expression. However, such an intensive distribution of the sonnet in the English literature of that time was also marked by some negative moments. As one repeated in the works of dozens of well-known and hundreds of little-known authors, the genre gradually began to die out. Elizabethan sonnets too often appeared deprived of

poetic invention, artificial and cold. In these texts, Petrarch was no longer translated or imitated but acted as a *zeitgeist*, a general emotional mood. In more detail, let us dwell on the most significant Petrarchists' works during the Elizabethan era.

Ph. Sidney did not consider himself to be a Petrarchist, although he wrote poetry so Petrarchan in its manner that his contemporaries called him "English Petrarch." Ph. Sidney's sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella* was the first complete Petrarchan collection in English literature. Moreover, although the author died in 1586, his works are traditionally analyzed in the context of the 1590s since two of his main books were published posthumously: *Astrophil and Stella* in 1591 and 1598, and *The Defence of Poesy* (under two different names, *The Defence of Poesy* and *An Apology for Poetry*) in 1595. According to P. Herman, both works established a watershed in the history of English Renaissance literature since *The Defence of Poesy* had acquired classic status. At the same time, *Astrophil and Stella* was credited with setting the trend for writing sonnets and sonnet sequences that persisted through the 1590s (Herman 33). The scientist proposes to analyze these texts by comparing them and, more specifically, to study the collection of sonnets in the light of the thoughts about poetry expressed by the author in his *Defence*.

Thus, in *The Defence of Poesy*, Ph. Sidney claims that the key to creating good poetry is the ability to hide literary fiction, the dexterity of the author. The overarching theme of his treatise is convincing the reader of the writer's feelings of sincerity. The poet reflects that he would never believe in most English literature texts under the slogans of unrequited love if he were a woman. He mentions Petrarch, emphasizing that love in the works of his imitators feels rather bookish, not alive, and even the most ardent words turn into ice in their poetry. As we can see, Ph. Sidney is ironic about the basic Petrarchan trope and his creative method. In sonnet XV of *Astrophil and Stella*, this thought is repeated and continued in the poetic form:

> You that do search for everie purhng spring
> Which from the ribs of old Parnassus flowes,
> And everie floure, not sweet perhaps, which growes
> Neare thereabouts, into your poesie wring;
> Ye that do dictionarie's methode bring
> Into your rimes, running in ratling rowes;
> You that poore Petrarch's long-deceased woes
> With new-borne sighes and denisen'd wit do sing;
> You take wrong waies; those far-fet helpes be such

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> As do bewray a want of inward tuch.
> And sure, at length stolne goods do come to light:
> But if, both for your love and skill, your name
> You seeke to nurse at fullest breasts of Fame,
> Stella behold, and then begin to endite. (Sidney 15)

The author emphasizes that if a poet listens not to his heart but to another poet, his lines will certainly sound false. The irony, however, is that the writer puts his reflections on the problems of love poetry into the sonnet form popularized by Petrarch. Besides, his poem is part of a sonnet sequence, the idea of which also belonged to the Italian humanist. Therefore, Ph. Sidney's anti-Petrarchan statements remain in the force field of Petrarchism itself.

The first sonnet of *Astrophil and Stella* outlines the lyrical plot's movement and the circle of central themes. The first is poetry itself (the sonnet I is often called "a sonnet about a sonnet"). Then, in the sonnet II, we can read about the birth of Astrophil's love. The hero does not fall in love with Stella immediately—the feeling of love gradually matures in his soul, along with hopes for reciprocity. However, like any Petrarchan lover, Astrophil must soon admit that a woman's heart is unassailable (XII). He thinks a lot about love, its mysterious nature, laws (XIV), and ways to express feelings, including through poetry. His moods are changeable: sometimes despair at his worthlessness (XVIII), then regret of the mistakes he made (XXI), then resentment at the indifference of Stella (XLV), who, despite her love charms, remains quite an earthly woman (LI). From the sonnet LXII, it becomes clear that the heroine accepted the love of Astrophil but was able to offer him only a high platonic feeling in return, so the man, whose consciousness is already wholly freed from the medieval ascetic restrictions, bitterly refuses Stella's pious love. The first part of the cycle ends with song I, which sings of love and the beloved. The second part begins with the sonnet LXIV, raising the same problem of the incompatibility of a woman's Platonic feelings with the man's earthly needs and desires. Astrophil feels pain and disappointment, and only a chaste kiss from Stella restores joy and hope to his world. In song VIII there is a crucial conversation between Astrophil and Stella. Here, for the first time, we hear the heroine's voice directly through the dialogue—the woman categorically refuses to give in to her moral principles and to sacrifice her precious honor: "Tyran honour doth thus use thee, / Stella's selfe might not refuse thee" (Sidney 115). Therefore, song IX becomes the culmination of Astrophil's suffering. The following texts describe Astrophil's feelings when he is separated from Stella—the hero does not

betray his love but constantly thinks about death. The news about the woman's illness forces him to mobilize his inner strength and return to life. Astrophil once again glorifies the beauty and charm of his beloved, briefly confirming his boundless loyalty and devotion to her (CIII).

Considering his originality and poetic talent, it is impossible to call Philip Sidney only an imitator of Petrarch. First of all, the scale of the author's efforts to form new English poetry should be noted. Experimenting with different poetic dimensions, the poet became the first writer to prove the functionality of the chorea for the English verse. He was also the first to return the feminine rhyme to English lyrics, significantly diversifying its sound. The poet defended natural, straightforward language and avoided unusual words, phrases, archaisms, or neologisms in his texts. Nevertheless, the vocabulary of his sonnets is highly diverse since Ph. Sidney boldly introduced military, legal, political, sports terms, and colloquial words into circulation; that is, he started the language practice that was later successfully continued by J. Donne and the poets of the "Metaphysical school."

A famous contemporary of Ph. Sidney was Edmund Spenser. Turning to the problem of E. Spenser's Petrarchism, it is worth analyzing his *Amoretti*. In this sequence, the poet continues the development of the Petrarchan poetic movement in English literature. However, his works differ significantly from the main product of the Petrarchan tradition in at least one aspect. As H. Maclean and A. Lake Prescott point out, *Amoretti*'s most distinctive feature is the redirection of desire from the unattainable Donna to the woman the poet can marry (Maclean and Lake Prescott 638).

It is well known that E. Spenser wrote his poetry for Elizabeth Boyle, the woman who became his second wife. This fact fundamentally distinguishes him from Petrarch, as well as from T. Wyatt, H. Howard, and Ph. Sidney. E. Boyle, despite the status of the poet's bride in real life, in the world of *Amoretti* acts as a typical Petrarchan Mistress. She is proud and arrogant (V, VI, XXXVI, XLI, XLIX), stingy with manifestations of warm emotions (XIX), impregnable (XXVIII), and cruel (XX, XXXI, XLVIII). She is compared to beasts of prey (LVI, LIII), sometimes with a tyrant (LV), then with an executioner who mercilessly leads his victim to the stake (LVII). However, E. Spenser's persona sees the purpose of his life in only one thing—to serve this woman as conveniently and faithfully as possible (LXXII), to make her immortal through the ages (LXIX, LXXV, LXXXII) because she is the most perfect creation of God, the earthly image of heavenly beauty (IX, LXI, LXXIX).

The purpose of *Amoretti* is declared in the sonnet I: "Leaues, lines, and rymes, seeke her to please alone, / whom if ye please, I care for other none" (Spenser 69). All the attempts of E. Spenser's protagonist to make his Mistress fall in love with him, of course, are fruitless, and it even seems that her icy heart, as if mocking all the laws of nature, becomes even colder from the ardent fiery passion of her lover (XXX). In order to please the capricious Mistress, the protagonist tries on various masks and performs various roles; that is, he tries out all possible ways of behavior, but all in vain because the woman is like a stone:

> Yet she beholding me with constant eye
> delights not in my merth nor rues my smart:
> but when I laugh she mocks, and when I cry
> she laughes, and hardens euermore her hart.
> What then can moue her? if nor merth, nor mone,
> she is no woman, but a sencelesse stone. (90)

When the Mistress is not around, the persona of E. Spenser's sonnets sheds rivers of tears (LXXXVIII), his heart is eager to fly out of his chest like a bird and go to the beloved (LXXIII), and separation from her is equated to death (LXXXVIII). Unable to be near, the lover sends touching letters and envies even the pages of paper that will be looked at by starry eyes and touched by sweet fingers (I).

In general, *Amoretti* covers almost the entire catalog of Petrarchan images, motifs, ideas, and antitheses. Here we have the thematic juxtaposition of pain and pleasure (XXX), despair and hope (XXVI), passion and platonic love (XXI), smiles and gloom (XL), ice and flame (XXX, XXXII), the dying situation of the protagonist (VII, XI, XXV, XXVI), images of siege, war, captivity and slavery (XI, XII, XIV, XLII, LVII), the stereotypical beauty of the woman (XV, LXIV, LXXXI) and her likeness to the sun (LXXXIX), her alienated and haughty behavior (VIII, LXI, LVIII, LIX), the rebellion of the author's persona against the power of his Mistress and capitulation (XLIII), his attacks against competitors (LXXXVI), the motifs of the ennobling power of love (III, LXXX, LXXXV), the endlessly long separation of lovers (LXXVIII, LXXXVI, LXXXVII, LXXXVIII), the traditional laments of the lover and even curses (X, LVIII, LIX). At the same time, no matter how pitiful the protagonist's complaints about love and his misfortune are, through the tearful Petrarchan formulas in *Amoretti* we can see hopeful moods—Petrarchan poetic manner is unable to hide the author's happy state of love.

It is also worth noting that even the greatest poet of the Elizabethan era William Shakespeare could not avoid the influence of Petrarch because, at that time, it was simply impossible to create sonnets and not owe at least something to the Italian author.

Having reached its peak during the reign of Henry VIII at the end of the sixteenth century, the trend for Italian culture and literature in England slowly began to fade. In the Elizabethan era, Petrarch was still read and imitated. However, the first attacks against Petrarchism also appeared, and in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Petrarchan tendencies in English literature had almost become invisible. Petrarchism loses its freshness and attractiveness for readers, becomes dark and pedantic, and cannot continue to exist in this form. The last English poet who still owed something to Petrarch (although not to his love lyrics, but primarily to his prose) was John Milton. His figure stands at the very end of the period of significant Italian influences on English literature and marks the beginning of a new era of national fiction.

Considering all that has been written, the following conclusion can be formulated. The beginning of English Petrarchism can be seen in the texts of G. Chaucer. However, the poet's adaptation of Petrarch's sonnets in the poem *Troilus and Cressida* proved too weak as an impulse for the Petrarchan discourse to spread further in England. Its first victorious steps date to the 1530s and are associated primarily with the names of T. Wyatt and H. Howard, Earl of Surrey, who brought the Italian poetic tradition to English literature. Initially, English Petrarchism took shape as a reading of the translated Petrarch. Nevertheless, it is essential to emphasize that the very first translations of Petrarch's poems in England were not precise. They preserved the traditional poetics of Petrarchism; its tropes and stylistic figures were translated as closely as possible. The images of the protagonist and his beloved were incorporated into the English literary ground. However, even at the most stable level of the Petrarchan artistic system—language—T. Wyatt and Earl of Surrey demonstrated a creative approach to the Petrarchan narrative.

At first glance, after the 1540s, there appears to be an almost fifty-year break in tradition in English Petrarchism since, at this time, it is not replenished by any famous name. However, this impression is misleading since by the 1590s, the first English Petrarchists' texts published in *Tottel's Miscellany* have been repeatedly reprinted and still retained their popularity among the reading public.

In the 1590s, the second rise of English Petrarchism took place, connected with the unprecedented distribution of the sonnet genre in English poetry, which, as it is known, was not Petrarch's invention but

was perceived by European poets inseparably on behalf of the great Italian humanist. After the pirated edition of Ph. Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* (1591), about two dozen sonnet sequences (more than 3,000 poems) appeared in England, which varied the themes and rhetoric of Petrarchan discourse in different ways. At the same time, it is worth noting that the English Petrarchists of the 1590s were no longer focused only on Petrarch's *Canzoniere* but also on numerous indirect sources, primarily the works of various French Petrarchists. As stated in the poetry anthology *Petrarch's Canzoniere in the English Renaissance*:

> When Sidney and his successors revised the love-sonnet they did not have to start where Wyatt and Surrey had left off. In the intervening period Petrarchism had become established as a dominant European mode which could be absorbed by any cultured English poet. There was no need to look back to Wyatt or pore over the *Canzoniere* itself. … In this situation, with Petrarchism a pervasive element in the literary atmosphere, there was no need for any major poet to keep running back to the founding father. (Mortimer 19)

E. Curtius called the literary situation in England in the 1590s the "sonnet plague" (Curtius 225). Its main conclusion and, we must admit, a very disappointing result was that the sonnet genre in English literature had been gradually "emasculated." The last Petrarchan sonnet sequences of the Elizabethan era were utterly deprived of originality and suffered from all possible shortcomings of undisguised superficial imitation.

A separate field of research opens the issue of Petrarchan impulses in W. Shakespeare's sonnets, which were created between 1592 and 1594 and, therefore, also fit into the general context of the Elizabethan "sonnet boom." Because of its complexity, scale, and scientific significance, this problem should become the subject of separate literary explorations.

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Razvoj petrarkizma v angleški književnosti

Članek obravnava razvoj petrarkizma v angleški književnosti, namen pa je analizirati nastanek, razvoj in glavne usmeritve petrarkističnega pesniškega gibanja v Angliji. Metodologijo raziskovanja določa kompleksen preplet biografske, literarnozgodovinske in primerjalnozgodovinske metode literarne analize. Za začetek angleškega petrarkizma velja pesnitev G. Chaucerja *Troilus in Kresida*, prvi preboj tega gibanja pa sega v trideseta leta 15. stoletja in je povezan z imenoma T. Wyatt in H. Howard. Vtis, da naj bi prišlo po letu 1540 v angleškem petrarkizmu do skoraj petdesetletne prekinitve tradicije, se je izkazal za napačnega, saj so bila prva besedila angleških petrarkistov, objavljena v antologiji *Tottel's Miscellany*, do devetdesetih let 15. stoletja večkrat ponatisnjena. Takrat je prišlo v skladu z dejstvom, da se je v angleški poeziji sonetni žanr bliskovito razširil, do drugega vzpona angleškega petrarkizma. Medtem ko lahko izpostavimo precejšnjo neizvirnost in izrazito pomanjkljivost zadnjih petrarkističnih sonetov elizabetinske dobe, ki so očitne površinske imitacije, moramo šteti petrarkizem za glavno usmeritev angleške lirike 16. stoletja.