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"LOOK HERE, UPON THIS PICTURE, AND ON THIS": MYTHOLOGICAL AND LEGENDARY SOURCES IN THE MIRROR OF SHAKESPEARE'S "HAMLET"

The article is focused on the intertextual level of metatextuality in William Shakespeare's "Hamlet". Contemporary Shakespeare studies have formed a clear idea of the complete list of possible plot sources that the English playwright could have used when creating his masterpiece. However, the question of how exactly the medieval legendary revenge story is transformed by the Renaissance genius into the tragedy of a reflecting personality seeking to comprehend the essence of existence and put right the time that is out of joint still remains open. In this context, the application of the theory of metatext seems to be productive, since Shakespeare not only significantly modifies, to some extent modernizes and conceptually upgrades the borrowed folklore and literary material in accordance with his own creative vision, but also resorts to its imaginative interpretation, preserving some elements while transforming or even leaving others out. Therefore, the purpose of the article is to explore the complex dialogical relations between the Renaissance as a text and the literary text created in this era as a result of Shakespeare's original reinterpretation of a number of mythological motifs, semi-legendary storylines and works of his predecessors. The relevance of the topic is due to the permanent actualisation of the metatextual potential of Shakespeare's tragedy in the literature of the following epochs and the need to understand the complex system of its metatextual connections with the primary sources.

The analysis demonstrates that Shakespeare's play has almost completely re-accentuated the semantics of the medieval legend. Shakespeare's borrowing of the legendary plot made possible the collision and dialogue of differently charged cultural layers – the medieval and Renaissance ones – within one literary work, which, in turn, largely determined the extremely complex ambivalent nature of the character of Hamlet.

Key words: metatextuality, prototext, discourse, Shakespeare, Renaissance, Hamlet, genesis, plot.

Introduction. More than four hundred years after the first performance of Shakespeare's "Hamlet", thousands of readers, theatre-goers, directors, researchers, critics, and writers are still trying to unravel the mystery of its magnetic appeal. Everything related to the writing, publication and interpretation of this play keeps provoking lively discussions in Shakespearean circles. The abundance of creative and research interpretations of the tragedy, its powerful reverberations in various spheres of public life including art, politics, mass media, and advertising have led to the emergence of a specific communicative phenomenon called the Shakespeare discourse. However, even with all the data collected by numerous scholars whose efforts have resulted in several centuries of meticulous and assiduous work, it is puzzlingly difficult to determine the nature of the popularity and extraordinary impact of this literary masterpiece on world culture today. "Hamlet" remains one of the most complex and challenging works in the world literary canon.

In recent years, a number of new problems have been added to the range of debatable issues that traditionally raise new waves of polemics (the nature of Hamlet's hesitation, the axiological

semantics of the protagonist's image, the nature of the relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia, Hamlet's attitude towards Gertrude, etc. It is not in the least surprising, as by all criteria, "Hamlet" is a metatext, that is, a text of secondary origin, which, in relation to the late Renaissance as the main text, performs the functions of description, commentary, interpretation, modelling, and also acts as a medium that ensures dialogical contact between the culture-making and culture-perceiving consciousness, making it possible for society to regulate itself effectively. A large number of creative interpretive models that focus on exploring the motivation behind the actions of Shakespeare's characters (including works by J. Updike, D. Wroblewski, K. Cavafy, A. Murdoch, M. Haig, etc.) are shaped by a complex system of metatextual connections, which in turn give the tragedy a special semantic depth and enigmatism.

The fact that within the Hamlet discourse a fairly wide range of imaginative approaches to the more obscure passages of Shakespeare's masterpiece often engage the texts that served as plot sources of the tragedy, raises the question of the correlation of the semantic resources of these texts. This is what led to the choice of the topic of the paper, the **aim** of which is to address the complex dialogical relationship between the epoch as a text and the literary text written in this epoch as a result of Shakespeare's creative reinterpretation of a number of mythological motifs, semi-legendary storylines, and works of his predecessors.

Literature review. The issues related to the primary sources of Hamlet have repeatedly attracted the attention of Shakespearean scholars. Researchers agree on the fact that Shakespeare's main plot source was the Scandinavian saga about the son of the late King Horvendil of Denmark named Amleth, who pretends to be mad in order to take revenge on his uncle Fengon for his father's death. John Dover Wilson suggests that Shakespeare knew this legendary story well thanks to his acquaintance with the text of the chronicle "Gesta Danorum" by the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus (c. 1150–1220), which was published in Paris in 1514. However, it is also believed that Shakespeare might have used the French-language interpretation of the story of the Danish prince, which was proposed by the Renaissance novelist François de Belleforest in his collection "Histoires

Tragiques" (1570). As N. Torkut notes, taking Saxo Grammaticus's text as a basis, François de Belleforest "made some changes to the plot of the Scandinavian saga, saturated it with classical and biblical allusions, gave the protagonist a courtly colouring, and introduced many moralistic digressions and didactic passages, as a result of which the text became twice as long as the Latin source. By the way, it is in François de Belleforest's version that the reader encounters the first mention of the Ghost, which encourages the prince to take revenge" [Torkut : 20–21].

It is axiomatic in modern Shakespeare studies to acknowledge that even before Shakespeare's tragedy was first staged, the Elizabethan audience had already been well acquainted with some of the conflicts of the Prince of Denmark's tragic story owing to the so-called Ur-Hamlet, a play the text of which has not survived and the authorship of which is attributed to the famous playwright Thomas Kyd.

Shakespearean scholars J. Taylor and R. Ellrodt see in some passages of Shakespeare's tragedy echoes of philosophical ideas set forth in Michel Montaigne's treatise "Essays" (1588) [Taylor : 37–50], and A. Rowse finds in Hamlet's soliloquies obvious parallels with Timothie Bright's "Treatise on Melancholy" (1586) [Rowse : 294].

Therefore, the question of how exactly the medieval legendary story of revenge is transformed by the Renaissance genius into the tragedy of a reflective personality seeking to comprehend the essence of existence and set right the time that is out of joint deserves special attention. The theory of metatext can become a productive analytical strategy here, since one of the manifestations of metatextuality in Shakespeare's "Hamlet" is the intertextual level, which includes all metatextual connections between "Hamlet" and other texts that possess the nature of commentary, interpretation, description, modelling, etc. In the first place, it is a genetic intertextual connection. This type of intertextual contact is established between the text itself and its source or sources [Lazarenko : 7].

Main body. As in the case of the greater part of Shakespeare's canon, the plot of "Hamlet" is not an original creation of the great playwright, but a reworking of a story borrowed from a bloody "revenge tragedy" by an unknown author that has not been preserved. "It is important to recognise,"

says Dmytro Nalyvayko, "the fundamentally innovative nature of Shakespeare's "Hamlet", which with its themes and the peculiar type of hero opened up far-reaching prospects for modern European literature. Having taken the age-old story of blood revenge, Shakespeare filled it with a completely new content, with problems that would become the pivotal point for the self-awareness of the European intelligentsia of the modern times, especially of the XIX–XX centuries, which, in our opinion, also explains the phenomenal resonance of the tragedy over the centuries" [Nalyvaiko : 646]. However, tracing and exploring the roots of the tragedy seems to be of special importance, because, as a prominent researcher of folklore and literary sources of "Hamlet" Sir Israel Gollancz wrote, the legend about Hamlet, although it was amazingly transformed by Shakespeare's genius, remains the very essence of the play [Gollancz :1].

As noted above, the plot of the tragedy, which originates from the Scandinavian saga of Prince Amleth, was first written down by the Danish medieval monk and scholar Saxo Grammaticus at the end of the third and beginning of the fourth books of the Latin-language chronicle "Gesta Danorum". According to the legend, Prince Amleth, showing great courage and cunning and pretending to be insane, takes bloody revenge on his father's murderer and becomes king of the country. Saxo Grammaticus's Amleth is a determined and purposeful young man who knows exactly what he wants and confidently pursues his goal. He is not tormented by any moral hesitation or remorse.

Researchers have determined that the legend has extremely deep and extensive roots. It has been established that the name of the legendary hero Amleth was first mentioned in the famous poetry manual by Icelandic scholar Snorri Sturluson, "The Prose Edda" (1230), the second part of which contains lines about Amleth's mill attributed to Snebjorn, a Scandinavian poet and sailor. Linguistic evidence suggests that these lines were composed between 1010 and 1020 AD [Gollancz : 1–2].

As for the historical background and the primary sources of the legend recorded by Saxo Grammaticus, scholars differ in their views. On the one hand, there exists an opinion that the legend narrates the story of a real person. On the other hand, researchers point out that it is impossible to find a historical basis, and that the likely impetus for the legend could have been the borrowing of the plot of the Roman legend about Brutus. The "Roman" theory considers the central episode of the plot to be the hero's act of bloody revenge against his father's murderers. A competing hypothesis is the proposition that the emergence of the legend of Amleth is the result of the heroisation of the Germanic myth of a god who dies and then resurrects. Proponents of the mythological hypothesis believe that the episode of the meeting and intimate relationship between Amleth and a spy girl sent by the king is the key to the legend, as it represents the marriage of the god to the goddess of fertility [Frenzel : 279].

It seems that both theories provide an important basis for further interpretation of the plot as it was developed by Shakespeare. They indicate that the plot has a significant archetypal component, which is treated by the playwright in a new way. The relationship between the archetypal figures of "father", "mother", "son", "husband" and "wife" is conceptualised by Shakespeare in a completely new semantic dimension, which is complicated by a set of religious, philosophical and political connotations.

The name of the protagonist is also interpreted depending on the two versions concerning the origin of the legend. According to the mythological hypothesis, the name Amleth was formed from the compound "*Aml-Oði*", which translates as "the god of Óðr". Proponents of the Roman hypothesis claim that the name Amlóði is equivalent to the Roman Brutus, meaning "stupid, mad" [Frenzel : 279–280]. This version is particularly important for contemporary Hamlet studies, as it lays the foundations for understanding the character of Hamlet through the image of a jester and a trickster.

There is another hypothesis linking the prince's name to Celtic heritage. The Irish were supposedly the first literate people the Danes met. The Celtic alphabet consisted of a rather limited number of letters, and therefore larger letter combinations had to be used to represent one sound. So, the name "Amleth" could be a Latin transliteration of the Celtic transcription of the typical Scandinavian name "Olaf". As we can see, it is quite legitimate to think that the plot recorded by Saxo Grammaticus was formed in the context of the interaction of various influences including Celtic, Roman, Greek, Byzantine, etc.

Summarising the results of contemporary research on the Amleth legend, we can conclude that its genesis was a complex and multifaceted process that did not result in a single version of the story, but in many parallel versions that further evolved and were modified in their own historical and cultural environments. For example, according to researchers, the Icelandic saga "Ambales- eðr Amlóðasaga", written down after the Reformation, is completely independent of Saxo Grammaticus's retelling. This version contains several differences from the legend, retold in the "Gesta Danorum": during an enemy attack, the sons are forced to watch their father being killed; brother Sigurdur cannot hide his pain and is executed, while Ambales (who later receives the nickname Amlóði) pretends to be mad and escapes death [Frenzel : 279–280].

However, it was Saxo Grammaticus's version that proved to be the most productive and influential. It gave rise to a whole branch of translations and literary variants (for example, Danske riimkrønike efter Gotfrid af Ghemens (1495), a Danish translation of Wedel (1575), Amlóðasaga Harvendilssonar) [Frenzel : 279–280]. In 1514, an edition of Saxo's chronicle appeared in Paris, later translated by François de Belleforest.

It was the translation of the legend included in the fifth book of the collection "Histoires tragiques" by François de Belleforest that became one of the major turning points that largely determined the further functioning of the plot. Belleforest's translation almost completely preserves the plot outline of the legend as presented by Saxo Grammaticus. The rather minor differences in the plot scheme and characterological features can be explained by the author's desire, on the one hand, to "correct" the legend, to bring its plot in line with the characters and their motivations, and, on the other hand, to modernise the legend and make it an illustration of his own views on morality. In Belleforest's text, there is also a certain "bifurcation" of Hamlet's character (the legendary Hamlet the warrior and cunning feudal lord is opposed to Hamlet the philosopher and moralist created by Belleforest), which indicates the formation of a new vision of this character. Perhaps it is precisely due to the element of modernisation and moralisation introduced by Belleforest that this collection soon became quite popular and played an important role in circulating the legend in England.

Unfortunately, we do not know in what form the story about Hamlet reached England. However, it is certain that one of the first dramatisations of the legend was performed in 1589. It was in 1589 that Thomas Nashe, in his preface to Robert Greene's novel "Menaphone", ironically wrote about "whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls, of tragical speeches" [Nalyvaiko : 644]. The authorship of this play has been the subject of scholarly debate. However, the most common version is that this bloody tragedy was created by Thomas Kyd. It could have been the direct source of Shakespeare's masterpiece. Unfortunately, the text of the Ur-Hamlet has not been preserved, and today scholars do not know how the events unfolded in the tragic story of Prince Hamlet, which was retold to the English audience by an unknown author. Therefore, it would be extremely difficult or even impossible to determine what Shakespeare added and what he omitted in his own interpretation of the story compared to its likely direct source. However, no less interesting results can be obtained by comparing Shakespeare's "Hamlet" with its medieval prototype, preserved in Saxo Grammaticus's chronicle [Saxo Grammaticus] and François de Belleforest's "Histoires tragiques" [Belfore].

Shakespeare preserved only the main episodes of the legend, completely removing the entire backstory that preceded the death of King Hamlet, and killing his protagonist immediately after taking revenge on his uncle (in Saxo and de Belleforest, Hamlet becomes king, goes to England, remarries, and dies in battle only after returning to Jutland). And yet, the parts of the legend left out by Shakespeare have a significant impact on the content of the fragment that the playwright chose to use for his play. The omitted episodes are mentioned by the characters and are the root of everything that happens in the tragedy. These are the duel between King Hamlet and the King of Norway, the marriage of King Hamlet and Gertrude (but the focus is on their married life), the birth of Prince Hamlet, and the murder of King Hamlet by his brother Claudius.

In Shakespeare's play, in the episode of the king's murder, the motif of ambush (for Saxo) / murder at a banquet (for de Belleforest) is replaced by poisoning. In Saxo's and de Belleforest's versions, the truth about who killed the king was

known to everyone, and only the true motivation for this act was hidden. In Shakespeare's version, the poison is a means of misleading the Danish court. This transformation made it possible to logically develop the motifs of the Ghost's revealing the truth and Hamlet's hesitation, excluding a clear conclusion about whether the Queen was involved in the murder. In addition, the manner in which the motifs of fratricide are reinterpreted fully reflects the specifics of the late Renaissance social context, when open conflicts were rare and most problems were solved through intrigue, secret murders, and poison.

Some of the episodes that took place after Hamlet's revenge are represented in the text of Shakespeare's tragedy in a transformed and integrated form. For example, the episode of Hamlet's return to Jutland and his confrontation with Wiglek (the king who attains the throne of Jutland when Hamlet leaves for England) is important: Hamlet realises that if he accepts Wiglek's challenge, he will die, and so he is forced to choose between an honourable death and a life of dishonour. The problem of choice is embodied in Hamlet's monologues and is considered one of the central themes of Shakespeare's play. However, Shakespeare's answer, if it can be found in the text at all, is not as unequivocal as it is in the legend.

Also worthy of note is the motif of Hermetrude, the protagonist's second wife, swearing to be faithful to Hamlet prior to his battle with Wiglek. This motif is clearly reflected in the dialogue of the actors in the production of the mousetrap. Given the circumstances in which Hamlet wrote the text of this dialogue, we can assume that such an episode really took place in the married life of King Hamlet and Gertrude. It is believed that the image of Gertrude is a kind of fusion of the characters of Gerutha and Hermetrude (the name "Gertrude" largely resembles a blend of the names "Gerutha" and "Hermetrude").

Interestingly enough, the characters from the legend, which were not included by Shakespeare into the tragedy, turned out to be also important. While Hamlet's grandfather and the King of Britain are excluded from the new context altogether, such characters as King Hamlet (Horvendil in Saxo's version), the daughter of the King of Britain, and the new King of Denmark, Wiglek, significantly influence the characters created by Shakespeare, although they do not even make appearance within the play. For example, Horvendil, who becomes King Hamlet in Shakespeare's text, is no less positively characterised

in the tragedy than his prototype. At the same time, the idealised portrait of the king created by Hamlet contrasts with a more realistic portrayal of him. This image is crystallised on the basis of remarks about his impulsiveness (quarrel with the ambassadors of Poland) and the large number of grave sins he would have to atone for (according to the king himself, as well as Prince Hamlet). Hamlet's idealisation of his father is to some extent symbolic of the harmonious worldview that was destroyed when the prince realised the imperfection, injustice and cruelty of the world around him.

It can be assumed that the character of Ophelia was created as a kind of antithesis to the image of the daughter of the king of Britain from the medieval legend. Both girls are soft, gentle, patient and submissive creatures. They are forced to choose between loyalty to their father or their beloved. But while the daughter of the King of Britain makes her choice in favour of Hamlet, Ophelia remains obedient to her father. In both cases, the girl's father dies. It seems that Ophelia is also contrasted with the character of a beautiful girl who, in the legend, warns Hamlet about the trap and helps him get out of the predicament. Ophelia does not try to have any impact on the course of events.

Finally, the character of Wiglek could have been the inspiration for the character of Laertes, because the legend also draws a parallel between the characters of Hamlet and Wiglek and emphasises the similarity of the situations in which they found themselves, just as the tragedy shows the similarity of the fates of Hamlet and Laertes. In the legend, the protagonist hesitates before the battle with Wiglek's troops and fears his death, just as Hamlet does in Shakespeare's tragedy.

Regarding the fragments of the legend borrowed by Shakespeare, it should be noted that the playwright did not use all the plot motifs, but largely rethought the borrowed part of the plot scheme and enriched it enormously, giving it new semantic layers. Shakespeare preserved the following episodes:

– Hamlet's pretence of insanity;

– the emergence of a trap plan involving a beautiful girl;

– Hamlet's communication with the girl who was sent to him;

– Hamlet killing a spy in his mother's room;

– Hamlet's conversation with the Queen;

– the journey to Britain;

– the swapping of the letter on the ship;

– Hamlet's murder of his uncle.

These episodes will be repeatedly used as structural and semantic constants in the creative elaborations of this plot scheme, but in Shakespeare's text they were, of course, radically reinterpreted and transformed by the genius of playwright. For example, the idea of pretending to be a madman, which turns into a kind of a game with the entourage, comes from the saga retold by Saxo Grammaticus. But in Shakespeare, it becomes more complex, multi-level, and acquires new subtle meanings. The "old" and "new" Hamlets even imitate different types of madness. For example, in Saxo's text, the prince pretends to have some form of a disease, as a result of which the intellect loses certain functions. In Shakespeare, on the contrary, madness sharpens the mind, it acquires new, albeit somewhat distorted functions related to creativity, wit, and analysis. The game, which started with a specific pragmatic goal (to hide true feelings and thoughts and avoid danger), eventually grows into something more significant, meaningful, even symbolic. It is a game with a double bottom, motivated by the desire to put everything and nothing into words at the same time. In this game, Hamlet finds solace by revealing his own passion for acting.

In addition to reinterpreting the motifs present in the legend, Shakespeare also adds new episodes: the love between Hamlet and Ophelia, the arrival of the actors, the "mousetrap", King Claudius' prayer, the pirates' attack on Hamlet's ship and his early return to Denmark, Ophelia's death, the conversation with the gravediggers, the digging up of the old jester's skull, the fight between Hamlet and Laertes at Ophelia's grave, the duel between the prince and Laertes with a rapier, the deaths of Laertes, Gertrude and Hamlet by poison.

In Shakespeare's tragedy, significant changes also occur at the level of characters. The images of Hamlet, Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are characterised by a significant semantic development. Such characters as Ophelia and Laertes can be said to be "born" only in

Shakespeare's play, although it is likely that they were created on the basis of a reinterpretation of their legendary prototypes. In this context, it is appropriate to cite Dmytro Nalyvayko's convincing conclusion: "Shakespeare transforms the epic plot-storyline into a plot-situation, which is no longer based on the protagonist's deed, and this deed itself, the murder of the usurper Claudius, is moved to the end of the work and depicted as an accident, not distinguished in the rapid flow of events. At the same time, the story of the Danish prince turns into a tragedy of the consciousness of a thinking person who comprehends the truth of life and is increasingly exposed to the falsity and baseness of the world around him. This is the fundamental innovation of Shakespeare's tragedy, which highlights the conflicts and collisions that will become crucial in the literature of later epochs" [Nalyvaiko : 646].

Conclusions. The use of the theory of metatextuality in the process of analysing the intertextual relations between W. Shakespeare's tragedy "Hamlet" and its genetic sources provides grounds to assert that the plot and character transformations introduced by the playwright allowed, first of all, to create a dramatic atmosphere unique in its tension as well as intellectual and spiritual intensity and richness. The play almost completely re-accentuated the conceptual content of the legend. Everything that Hamlet does and says in Shakespeare's tragedy sets him apart from his environment, emphasises his belonging to some other dimension, or even three dimensions, which are constantly intertwined, forming a complex web of meanings.

One dimension is more archaic, associated with the mythological, folklore and legendary past of the plot, the second one is the level of the late Renaissance consciousness of a young intellectual, and the third is the timeless dimension of universal problems and truths. Shakespeare's borrowing of the legendary plot made possible the collision and dialogue of differently charged cultural layers – medieval and Renaissance ones – within one work, which, in turn, largely determined the extremely complex ambivalent nature of the image of Hamlet.

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«ПОГЛЯНЬТЕ-БО НА ЦЕЙ ПОРТРЕТ І ЦЕЙ»: МІФОЛОГІЧНІ ТА ЛЕГЕНДАРНІ ДЖЕРЕЛА У ДЗЕРКАЛІ ШЕКСПІРОВОГО «ГАМЛЕТА»

Стаття присвячена розгляду внутрішньотекстового рівня метатекстуальності трагедії «Гамлет» Вільяма Шекспіра. У сучасному шекспірознавстві сформовано чіткі уявлення про повний перелік ймовірних сюжетних першоджерел, якими міг послуговуватися англійський драматург при написанні свого визначного твору. Втім, питання про те, як саме середньовічна легендарна історія помсти перетворюється під пером ренесансного генія на трагедію рефлектуючої особистості, яка прагне осягнути сутність буття і «виправити вивих часу», все ще залишається відкритим. В цьому контексті продуктивним бачиться використання теорії метатексту, адже Шекспір не лише суттєво видозмінює, до певної міри осучаснює і концептуально оновлює запозичений фольклорний і літературний матеріал відповідно до власного творчого задуму, але й вдається до його художньої

інтерпретації, зберігаючи одні елементи, трансформуючи чи взагалі залишаючи поза увагою інші. Тож мета статті полягає в осягненні складних діалогічних відношень між епохою Ренесансу як текстом та літературним текстом, який був створений у цю епоху внаслідок творчого переосмислення В. Шекспіром низки міфологічних мотивів, напівлегендарних сюжетних ліній та творів його попередників. Актуальність проблематики зумовлена перманентною актуалізацією метатекстуального потенціалу шекспірівської трагедії в літературі наступних епох і потребою осмислення складної системи її метатекстуальних зв'язків з першоджерелами.

Здійснений аналіз демонструє, що на сторінках п'єси відбулася майже повна переакцентуація ідейного навантаження середньовічної легенди. Запозичення Шекспіром легендарного сюжету уможливило зіткнення і діалог "різнозаряджених" культурних пластів – середньовічного і ренесансного – у межах одного твору, що, в свою чергу, великою мірою обумовило надзвичайно складний амбівалентний характер образу Гамлета.

Ключові слова: метатекстуальність, прототекст, дискурс, Шекспір, Ренесанс, Гамлет, генезис, сюжет.