"Shakespeare in love" / In love with Shakespeare: metatextual potential of John Madden's fictional biopic

«Закоханий Шекспір» / Закохані в Шекспіра: метатекстуальний потенціал фікційного байопіка Джона Меддена

Written by:
Viktoriia Marinesko[43]
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6747-8664
Darya Lazarenko[44]
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3253-4678
Nataliya Torkut[45]
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8905-6769
Nataliia Gutaruk[46]
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7373-5460

Abstract

The paper focuses on the specificity of metatextual potential of John Madden's fictional biopic "Shakespeare in Love" (1998), viewed as a complex metatextualintermedial construct. The metatextual resources of the film are being analysed on three key levels: intratextual (metatextual fragments), intertextual (allusions to the other works of the canon) and extratextual (text as an intersemiotic metatext). On the intratextual level four main forms of metatextual commentary are singled out: a) the paratextual commentary; b) the leitmotif; c) the self-referential fragments; d) the allusions to the present-day realia. In relation to the intertextual level of the film's metatextual potential references to Shakespeare's works are discussed as a metatext which offers an explanation of the sources of Shakespeare's inspiration. Within the extratextual level, "Shakespeare in Love" is viewed as an intersemiotic metatext which comments upon two major semantic fields: the figure of Shakespeare and the epoch of the English Renaissance. The authors also put forward the suggestions for the practical application of the research results.

Keywords: metatext, metafragment, metatextual potential, allusion, paratext.

Анотація

Метою статті є дослідження особливостей метатекстуального потенціалу фікційного байопіку Джона Меддена "Закоханий Шекспір" (1998). Метатекстуальні ресурси фільму реалізовані у 3 ключових площинах: інтратекстуальній (метатекстуальні фрагменти), інтертекстуальній (звернення до інших творів канону) та позатекстуальній   (в якій текст є інтерсеміотичним метатекстом). На інтратекстуальному рівні виділяються чотири основні форми мета текстуальних коментарів: а)пара текстуальний коментар;   б) лейтмотив; в) самореференційні фрагменти; г) натяк на сучасні реалії. На інтертекстуальному рівні усі посилання на інші твори Шекспіра розглядаються як мета текст, який містить пояснення стосовно джерел натхнення В. Шекспіра. На позатекстовому рівні «Закоханий Шекспір» розглядається як інтерсеміотичний метатекст, що коментує два основних семантичних поля: образ Шекспіра та епоху англійського Відродження. Автори також представили пропозиції стосовно практичного застосування результатів дослідження.

Ключові слова: метатекст, метафрагмент, метатекстуальний потенціал, алюзія, паратекст.

Introduction

[43] Candidate of Philological Sciences, Clasic Private University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine.
[44] Candidate of Philological Sciences, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria.
[45] Doctor of Philological Sciences, Zaporizhzhia National University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine.
[46] PhD Student in Philology, Classic Private University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine.

The mystery of William Shakespeare's genius is a powerful magnet that does not cease to attract new generations of interpreters. An outstanding Shakespearean scholar Gary Taylor metaphorically represents the unique nature of Shakespeare's dramatic talent as a "black hole", "Light, insight, intelligence, matter – all pour ceaselessly into him, as critics are drawn into the densening vortex of his reputation; they add their own weight to his increasing mass. The light of other stars – other poets, other dramatists – is wrenched and bent as it passes by him on its way to us" (Taylor, 1990). In the modern intellectual space Shakespeare's creative works are so influential that they have become a 'cultural impulse amplifier' that can be used by other writers to better understand the contemporary context and attract the reader's attention to the most urgent issues. Thus, the Shakespearean discourse which includes all kinds of Shakespeare-related cultural production (Cherniak, 2010), can be viewed as a certain kind of a cultural mirror which allows the civilization to see itself on a new scale. As M. W. Hunt writes, "when we search for Shakespeare, we are also hunting for ourselves, constantly engaged in an internal search for who we are as individuals" (Hunt, 2007). The category that enables the scholars to precisely describe this unique ability of Shakespeare to show humanity its own reflection is the category of metatext. Therefore, the purpose of the paper is is to analyse the metatextual potential of this film, singling out the peculiarities of its realisation on intratextual, intertextual and extratextual levels.

Literature Review

This category entered the terminological space of the humanities in the second half of the twentieth century. The term turned out to be a multifunctional research tool with high analytical potential. As Y. Sokolov observes, the view on the object of research from the position of the meta-level helps to "re-array a long-term and supposedly well-known object into new sections" (Sokolov, 2002). The intense discussion of the metatext problem in linguistics began with the article by A. Wierzbicka "Metatext in the Text" (1978), in which the metatext is represented as "a statement about the very statement" (Wierzbicka, 1978). According to A. Wierzbicka, metatext threads are those elements that organize and comment on the text, making it easier for the reader to comprehend it (Wierzbicka, 1978). The metatext, in the opinion of the scholar, helps to catch the interconnection between the sentences, to discover the 'thinking' structure of the whole (Wierzbicka, 1978).

Therefore, the metatext, described by A. Wierzbicka, is, so to speak, an internal, or synchronous explanatory and organizational mechanism which coexists with the text in one time and space.

Most modern linguists work within the framework outlined by A. Wierzbicka, among them W.J. Vande Kopple (1985), A. Crismore (1989), V.A. Shaymiev (1996), N. Turunen (1999), N.K. Ryabtseva (2005), N.P. Perfilieva (2006), J. Bu (2014), G. Marko (2017), H. Penz (2017), P. Resnik (2017), J. Scherling (2017). Yet, it should also be noted that the recent studies exhibit a trend towards expanding the functional spectrum of the category of metatext including into its instrumentarium all those elements and fragments that not only facilitate the internal organization of the text, but also amplify its self-referential potential and ensure establishing a better connection with the reader. For example, N. Perfilieva in her monographic study "Metatext in the Context of Text Categories" (2006) states that in the way metatext functions in the text, it is "similar to a compass with which we sometimes choose a path out of a thick forest. Metatext exists to signal to the addressee how they should interpret the words spoken by the speaker, the content structure of the text. It 'leads' them through the text, appears in the places of textual tension (according to the prediction of the addressee), creates a 'relief' of the text, since sometimes a complicated text without metatext is unclear" (Perfilieva, 2006). Thus, in the words of D. Lazarenko, the process of development of the linguistic theory of metatext, which began in the 70's of the 20th century and continues today, is marked by the tendency to gradually change the 'depth of field' of the focus of research attention, into which new, higher levels of manifestation of metatextuality gradually fall (Lazarenko, 2010): A. Wierzbicka analyzes the functioning of meta-elements (meta-operators), that is, individual words and phrases (Wierzbicka, 1978); W.J. Vande Kopple, A. Crismore operate with such a generalizing notion as metadiscourse (Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore, 1989) which is becoming increasingly popular in the modern linguistics (Bu, 2014; Jokić, 2017; Marko, 2017; Penz, 2017; Resnik, 2017; Scherling, 2017); N. Turunen considers metatext as a whole system of verbal and paraverbal means (Turunen, 1999); N.K. Ryabtseva speaks about the metalevel of the text (Ryabtseva, 2005); A. Charles sees metatext as a system which can unite several related texts (Charles, 2012). Obviously, in the process of this evolution, an expansion of research horizons can be observed in terms of

involving an extra-linguistic context into the analysis.

This trend brings the lin.guistic understanding of the given category close to the semiotic concept of metatext. Yuriy Lotman views metatextuality as an 'explanatory' function of the text, which can be performed by the whole text as well as its separate fragments (Lotman, 1992). In general, as the researcher points out, any text can perform the role of a descriptive mechanism in relation to the cultural context, serving in this way as a metatext (Lotman, 1992). It seems that the category of metatext interpreted within the semiotic framework can help scholars better understand why some texts occupy the central place in the canon while others remain marginal and are soon forgotten. While W. van Peer and A. Chesnokova (2018) rightfully state that "there is little consensus in literary studies why particular texts are better than others," (Peer & Chesnokova, 2018), the metatextual potential of the text might help explain the work's popularity and cultural longevity.

In line with this synergistic, interdisciplinary approach to the phenomenon of metatext John Madden's film "Shakespeare in Love" (1998) can be viewed as a text with potent metatextual resources.

Methodology

The methodology of this research is based on the theory of metatextuality and modern practices for the interpretation of a literary text, in particular, hermeneutic approaches and the strategy of "close reading." The analytical model is structured around the algorithm for the study of the metatextual potential of the text developed by Darya Lazarenko (Lazarenko, 2009, 2010).

The paper is a case-study of the film "Shakespeare in Love," directed by John Madden and released in 1998, based primarily on the script written by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard (Norman & Stoppard, 2001).

First, it should be emphasised that the research will be based primarily on the text of the script that serves as the main subject of investigation, while purely cinematic aspects will be used as secondary, auxiliary subjects.

Secondly, the research algorithm will be conditioned not so much by the actual cinematic sphere, but by the orientation on the strategies of textual analysis. Such an interdisciplinary approach will allow focusing on aspects of the

biographical reconstruction of the playwright's image, while not neglecting the peculiarities of the intersemiotic transformation of the verbal text into the visual and audial text.

Thirdly, the analysis will focus on the specificity of constructing Shakespeare's image and its internal contradictions, however, in the course of the study, the context will also be widely involved, since for any form of biographical writing the authorial figure and context act as an indivisible, dialectical unity.

As for the *fourth* moment, it should be mentioned that the protagonist of the cinematic biography in our case is not only an outstanding historical personality, but more precisely a writer. In recent decades, both famous politicians, activists and other public figures, whilealso prominent writers of the past are increasingly entering the lens of writers' and director's attention. And although this phenomenon is not new, it seems appropriate to talk about its extraordinary urgency today. The Dutch researcher A. Fokkema emphasises that without excessive exaggeration, the image of the writer can be called traditional for postmodernism (Fokkema, 1999). Modern Western scholars P. Franssen and T. Hoenselaars explain the growing interest in the biographies of writers as a form of a spiritual quest rather than daily adventures: reflecting on the life and work of his predecessor, the modern author ponders over the genesis of literature in general and his own works in particular (Franssen & Hoenselaars, 1999). That is why it seems beneficial to pay attention to the thematisation of the act of writing and the figure of the creator in this film, which will enhance our comprehension of the auto-thematic, auto-referential problems as aspects of the metatextual potential of the film.

To some extent, it can be argued that this cinematic biography is in some sense an embodiment of the biographical method of Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve. After all, the authors of the script are trying to reconstruct the life of their character on the basis of his work. This approach forms the foundation for the multivariable reading of history, which is conditioned, on the one hand, by the degree of subjectivity of the narrator, and, on the other hand, by the impossibility of unambiguous and definitive interpretation of any literary text.

The key characteristics of this cinematic biography are closely linked to the professional self-identification of the scriptwriters and the corresponding professional affiliation of the

main character. Naturally, it directly affects the manner of presentation of the material. So, first, here citations from the works of William Shakespeare are widely used. Secondly, this cinematic biography appears as a kind of implicit dialogue between two writers, which correlates with the profound self-reflectivity as a form of metatextuality. Thirdly, an important part of this film is a literary element that fits this text into a wider discourse, enabling the interaction of interpretations and versions.

Thus, it can be said that the film "Shakespeare in Love" is an extremely interesting multi-dimensional subject of metatextual analysis, which has a pronounced nature of 'double coding': at the surface level, it is a historical film with an intriguing love story and an adventure-packed plot, at a more profound level it is an interdisciplinary metatextual study of the problems of writing, creativity, talent, the writer's life in time and space, which is being conducted on the basis of the texts written by the central figure of the Western culture.

Results and Discussion

The research has shown that in "Shakespeare in Love" the biography of the famous writer is turned into a starting point for creating a unique postmodern historiographic narrative only partially connected to the genre of traditional biography. Along with it a certain 'feedback' develops between the postmodern and traditional biographies, when metatextuality (including metafiction) is intermingled with strategies used more often in the works belonging to the latter group (attention to historical fact and detail, focus on the personality of the writer, etc.). Three key levels on which the metatextual potential of the text is actualised are distinguished: intratextual (metatextual fragments), intertextual (allusions to the other works of the canon) and extratextual (text as an intersemiotic metatext).

On the *intratextual level,* four main forms of metatextual commentary have been singled out:

- the paratextual commentary;
- the leitmotif;
- the self-referential fragments;
- the allusions to the present-day realia.

The *paratext* includes the first frames with introductory titles, the frame with the name of the film, the final frames with the aftermath and the final titles.

1) The first frame is a dark background with the inscription "LONDON – SUMMER 1593". It is important because it shapes the expectations of the spectator along with the title, outlining the chronotope of the film narrative: the golden day of the English theatre, the patron of which was Queen Elizabeth I, the first years of Shakespeare's work, the years of him becoming a poetic and dramatic genius.

Titles following the first frame narrow the focus, "In the glory days of the Elizabethan theatre, two playhouses were fighting it for writers and audiences. North of the city was the Curtain Theatre, home to England's most famous actor, Richard Burbage. Across the river was the competition, built by Philip Henslowe, a business with a cash flow problem ...   The Rose …" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001). This background introduces the biography of Shakespeare into a broader historical context and highlights the leitmotif of rivalry and hostility, which is further developed on several levels:

1. the rivalry between thetheatres;
2. the rivalry between the playwrights;
3. the rivalry between Shakespeare and Wessex;
4. the enmity and rivalry between the Montague and the Capulet in the tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet", which Shakespeare is writing. Such a multilevel conflict allows the director to keep the viewer in constant tension, alternating or showing different storylinesin parallel. For example, it is interesting to look at the parallel editing, when the collision of the Montague and the Capulet at the rehearsal of the Rose theatre is shown simultaneously with the approach of the enraged company of the Curtain, which starts a fight. All the levels of the conflict act as a metatextual commentary in relation to each other.

2) Thereafter on the screen, the viewer can see the decor of the Rose theatre, reproduced quite accurately and in detail. However, the creators of the film here admit one inaccuracy: one of the galleries can be seen bearing the inscription "Totus mundus agit histrionem" (lat.)(that is, "The whole world is acting" or "All the world's a stage" in the classic Shakespearean interpretation). It is believed that this inscription was located on the pediment of the Globe theatre, in which Shakespeare's company acted later (Gillies, 2003). It seems that the director deliberately uses the popular stereotype to create the

most canonical form of the Elizabethan theatre, but also to hint at the further plot developments and help the viewer interpret them, which positions this seeming inaccuracy as a metatextual fragment.

3) With regard to the title of the film, it is introduced after the appearance of Shakespeare himself – at this moment he is writing and throwing crumpled sheets of paper in the direction of the yellow skull, which complements the familiar symbol. The background for the title of the film is one of the most interesting metatextual fragments of the film – Shakespeare is leaning over a sheet of paper and it seems to the viewer that he is working on a play or a sonnet, but then the camera is approaching and one can see that he is trying different ways of writing his own name, "Now we see what he is writing: Will is practising his signature, over and over again. 'Will Shagsbeard…W. Shakspur…William Shasper…' Each time he is dissatisfied, and each time he crumples, and tosses it away" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001). This joke comes from the novel "No Bed for Bacon" co-authored by Tom Stoppard, "He always practised tracing his signature when he was bored. He was always hoping that one day he would come to a firm decision upon which of them he liked best" (Brahms & Simon, 1999). The author plays with a well-known historical fact, which became the pretext for discussion: there were several variants of spelling the name 'Shakespeare', which the playwright himself used. Robert Geal's claim that the given fragment is a riposte in the ongoing debate around Roland Barthes's "The Death of the Author" (Geal, 2014) seems valid as the scene is undoubtedly a metatextual affirmation of William Shakespeare's authorship rights, opposed in its message and modality to the Oxfordian statement that "Anonymous" is making by utilizing the wide-spread brand "William Shakespeare" and "transforming it into a vivid simulacrum" (Torkut, 2013).

This fragment obviously has a deeper meaning. As the Shakespearean scholar and biographer Graham Holderness notes, this scene in the film hints at the problems of modern biographics: here Shakespeare in a comic key tries different identities, as though he is already concerned about the problems that people will encounter later, trying to establish who he was (Holderness, 2011).While the playwright is testing various options for writing his own name, it seems that from under his quilt the name of the film

"Shakespeare in Love" is born. But at this moment the viewer can only guess who exactly or what exactly Shakespeare falls in love with. In conjunction with the image of the act of writing, such a title gives the impression that Shakespeare is in love with his own creativity, his own talent.

4) As for the end paratext, its key feature is the light, optimistic tone. The separation of lovers is not the end, but the beginning: for Shakespeare, this is the beginning of a new creative stage, for Viola – a new life in the 'new world', and at the same time it is the beginning of a new play, "The Twelfth Night". The figure of a girl who, after a terrible shipwreck, steps onto a deserted coast and confidently moves toward facing her destiny, also embodies the playwright's muse, which, in spite of all the travails, will be able to conquer both the new world and the old world. Interestingly enough, Shakespeare himself is aware of the imminent importance of his own creativity, he looks into the future, "It will be a love story … for she will be my heroine for all time" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001).

Thus, it is worth noting that the paratetext performs in the film "Shakespeare in Love" a rather important metatextual role, shaping broad horizons of the recipient's expectations: on the one hand, the viewers are tuned to a romantic comedy, on the other hand, they are ready to receive a more serious historical, sometimes even philosophical aspect of the screen narrative.

The second important manifestation of the metatextual potential of the film is the *leitmotif*, which is repeated in various variants four times commenting on the plot and defining the modality of the audience's response to it:

1) "FENNYMAN: So what do we do? HENSLOWE: Nothing. Strangely enough, **it all turns out well**. FENNYMAN: How? HENSLOWE: I don't know. It's a mystery" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001);
2) "WILL (to HENSLOWE): We are lost. HENSLOWE: No, **it will turn out well**. WILL: How will it? HENSLOWE: I don't know, it's a mystery" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001);
3) "HENSLOWE: Juliet does not come on for twenty pages. **It will be all right**. WILL: How will it? HENSLOWE: I don't know. It's a mystery" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001);
4) "VIOLA: **But all ends well**. WILL: How does it? VIOLA: I don't know. It's a mystery" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001).

The leitmotif appears in the most dramatic and intense moments. Gradually changing, it becomes an almost perfect echo of the title of one of Shakespeare's most famous and at the same time most contradictory comedies – "All's Well That Ends Well." This comedy is often called a 'problem play,' which points to the difficulty with the final identification of its genre. Despite the optimistic finale, the development of action often becomes tragic in its colouring, and it is difficult to say that the ending itself is bright and cheerful. Similarly, the film "Shakespeare in Love" by genre should be attributed to a romantic comedy, but at the same time, it substantially modifies the genre canon, bringing a deep feeling, penetrating lyricism and poetic sadness to the screen narrative.

A distinct metatextual feature of Shakespeare's stylistics, which scriptwriters address, is the expressive *self-consciousness* of the text, its self-reflexivity, and auto-referentiality. Shakespeare in his writings often showed and commented on the act of writing, verbally depicting the image of a writer, a creative person. This auto-referencing is especially noticeable in the "Sonnets" and "Hamlet". But his other works also contain numerous metatextual elements. The scriptwriters widely use this feature of Shakespeare's writing manner. *First*, the protagonist of the film is a writer and the act of writing, paper, pen, ink, poetic lines often appear on the screen. *Secondly*, the script as a whole is a metatext, metafiction– "story about a story," as looks into the creation of "Romeo and Juliet." Events unfolding on the screen and on the stage form parallel conflicts that foster and reinforce each other. *Thirdly*, during the development of action in the film the impression of 'writing live' is created, because all elements which the film contains are constantly being discussed by the actors. For example, at the beginning of the film, Henslowe outlines the potential comedy that Shakespeare supposedly is completing, "HENSLOWE: It's a crowd-tickler – mistaken identities, a shipwreck, a pirate king, a bit with a dog, and love triumphant" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001). All these elements are found later in the film and some of them –crossdressing and mistaken identities, a comic scene with a dog and a triumph of love – are represented twice: on the stage and as part of the actual storyline of Shakespeare and Viola.

This self-referentiality is completely conscious and interpreted by scriptwriters in a comic key. Closer to the end of the rehearsals and, accordingly, the writing of the play, the following humorous dialogue is introduced,

"HENSLOWE: It starts well, and then it's all long-faced about some Rosaline. Where's the comedy, Will? Where's the dog? (to RALPH) Do you think it is funny? RALPH: I was a Pirate King, now I'm a Nurse. That's funny" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001). Writers respond quickly to the critique offered by their own character – in one of the following scenes there is a comic sketch including a dog, not as part of the "Romeo and Juliet" rehearsal, but as a comic relief during the clash of the companies of two theatres – "Rose" and "Curtain", "CRAB, the dog, is yapping and snapping at any legs he can reach. HENSLOWE, a little slow to catch up on the situation, checks the page in his hand. FENNYMAN, much slower to catch up, watches enthralled. FENNYMAN (to HENSLOWE): Wonderful, wonderful! And a dog!" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001).

The profound metatextual self-referentiality of the whole script narrative is summarised in the last phrase of the film said by Viola when she is bidding Will farewell, "Write me well" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001). It seems that this phrase is to some extent a metatextual commentary to the entire fictional biopic in general.

Another vivid example that demonstrates the realisation of the metatextual potential of the film is *addressing the viewer through anachronisms and allusions.* In the film, there is a certain ambivalence of the writers' and director's attitude to the balance of fact and fiction. On the one hand, the creators of the film try to represent 'historical flair' of the chronotope as accurately as possible involving various aspects of the Renaissance reality: the bad teeth, strange toothbrushes, authentic menu in the tavern, popular English dances, rich clothes and complicated hairstyles of the noblemen and their ladies, historical interiors and traditional book formats. On the other hand, there is a number of anachronisms in the film. They are 'intentional' anachronisms, designed to humorously deconstruct the familiar stereotypes. For example, one of such comic anachronisms is Shakespeare's visit to a psychoanalyst, Dr. Moth, "Dr. MOTH, apothecary, alchemist, astrologer, seer, interpreter of dreams, and priest of psyche," (Norman & Stoppard, 2001), who forces William on the couch and interprets all his creative problems in a completely Freudian manner, "WILL: I have lost my gift. It's as if my quill is broken. As if the organ of the imagination has dried up. As if the proud tower of my genius has collapsed. DR. MOTH: Interesting. WILL: Nothing comes. DR. MOTH: Most interesting. WILL: It is like trying to a pick a lock with a wet

herring. DR. MOTH (shrewdly): Tell me, are you lately humbled in the act of love?" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001). Curiously enough, these lines, with their frank physicality and rather bold puns, resemble the experiments of Shakespeare himself, for example, in the dialogues of Katarina and Petruccio. Norman and Stoppard are trying to combine modernity with the Renaissance, and at the same time retain the comic effect of the initial words and situations.

The connection with the reader is also established through other comic allusions that are easily recognized by the audience. For example, having learned that the young actor who played Juliet lost his high voice, Shakespeare desperately appeals to Henslowe: "WILL: What do we do now? HENSLOWE: The show must … you know. WILL: Go on" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001). The quotation from the Queen lyrics in the dialogue of the two Renaissance figures sounds rather ridiculous, thus discharging the tense and dramatic atmosphere of the ending.

In the film, there are also comic anachronisms, appealing directly to the central issues of Shakespearean discourse. For example, at the beginning of the film, the camera zooms in on a shelf in Shakespeare's room passing by a mug with the inscription "Stratford-upon-Avon" – this souvenir is a representative example of the modern Shakespearean industry. An interesting allusion to the "Shakespeare question" and anti-Stratfordian theories is less obvious, "VIOLA: Answer me only this: are you the author of the plays of William Shakespeare? WILL: I am. VIOLA: Then kiss me again for I am not mistook" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001). Viola, in such a strange manner, verbalizes the issue that worries many contemporary Shakespearean scholars and readers: if William Shakespeare was the author of the Shakespearean Canon. All these allusions perform the password function establishing a common cognitive ground with the recipient and indicating the "other-orientation" (Jokić, 2017) of the film's metatextual potential. Thus, in the words of Anna Kamaralli, "using a representation of the way professional actors would prepare for a performance in sixteenth or seventeenth century London, the film inadvertently show[s] us at least as much about our own times as about the period they represent" (Kamaralli, 2011).

The *intertextual level* of the film's metatextual potential includes references to Shakespeare's works and offers an explanation of the sources of Shakespeare's inspiration. The most obvious intertextual connection is the parallel development of Shakespeare's love affair and the writing of "Romeo and Juliet," which has been mentioned above. But the intertextual range of the film is, in fact, much wider. For example, at the very beginning of the film actors stage "Two Gentlemen of Verona" for the Queen. Also, during the development of the relationship between Viola and Will, Shakespeare writes a sonnet which corresponds to sonnet 18 in the actual sonnet sequence, "Shall I compare you to a summer's day?". It is believed that the first 127 sonnets were addressed not to a woman, but to a man, a Fair Friend. But in the film, this situation is skilfully interpreted in a very flexible manner, because Viola is cross-dressing as a boy to get to the theatre, and in this disguise, she impresses Shakespeare with her acting talent and subtle spiritual organisation. Then the deception is revealed, but the cross-dressing becomes part of the game that lovers are playing.

On the *extratextual* level "Shakespeare in Love" can be viewed as an *intersemiotic metatext* which comments upon two major semantic fields: the figure of Shakespeare and the epoch of the English Renaissance.

Shakespeare is represented in the analysed fictional biopic as an ambitious young playwright. Perhaps, it is Shakespeare's age that allows scriptwriters and the director to rethink this stereotyped image in a new and meaningful way.

First, one should pay attention to Shakespeare's appearance. Most of the canonical portraits depict him as a middle-aged man with a serious face, attentive, penetrating eyes, trimmed moustache and abeard, a high forehead, receding hairline, and an earring. In the film, Shakespeare is 29 years old, he is still quite young and it gives the director of the film 'a green street' in terms of constructing Shakespeare's visual image, because no one knows for sure what exactly the playwright looked like at that age. Joseph Fiennes creates on the screen a romantic image of a good-looking and charming young man with a dreamy expression on a noble, kind face. Seriousness, inherent in classical portraits, disappears: Will is mobile, impulsive; a variety of emotions is displayed on his face.

Regarding the character and behaviour of canonical Shakespeare, one should pay attention to the fact that there exists a certain stereotype, consecrated with legends and historical anecdotes (Marinesko, 2015). It is believed that Shakespeare was kind, but was also able to count money and knew how not to lose his own profit.

He is often depicted as a connoisseur of female beauty, but at the same time a modest, calm person. In the film, Shakespeare is overwhelmed by a whirlpool of inspiration and emotions, but even in this unusual context, he manifests some qualities deemed 'traditional' for him, albeit in a somewhat rethought form. First, he is friendly and warm to all the members of the company, although it can be seen that the genius playwright in him is stronger than the simple human being. Secondly, his desire to become rich is expressed in an attempt to fool Burbage and to sell an unfinished play to the two theatres at one and the same time. Thirdly, he undoubtedly appreciates female beauty: his psychoanalyst begins to enumerate women, of which Will told him, but is interrupted, "DR. MOTH (CONT'D): Black Sue, Fat Phoebe, Rosaline, Burbage's seamstress; Aphrodite, who does it behind the Dog and ..." (Norman & Stoppard, 2001). As for modesty and tranquillity, in the film, these features are not at all inherent in him. Moreover, Shakespeare is presented as a rather vain, ambitious and impulsive young man whose temperament fully corresponds to the general atmosphere of the excitement of the Renaissance London atmosphere.

As for the creative aspect of Shakespeare's personality, here a significant transformation can be observed. Ben Johnson, an outstanding contemporary of Shakespeare and his personal friend, wrote about him, "I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing, whatsoever he penned, he never blotted out a line" (Jonson, 2015). In the film, this image is being deconstructed: Shakespeare is shown suffering from creative agony, he not only crosses out some of the lines, but also rejects whole sheets. Moreover, the playwright experiences what is usually called the writer's block. Thus, it can be said that in the film Shakespeare's image is removed from the pedestal, it is brought closer to the modern audience, especially the young audience, the legend turns into a living person.

Speaking about the epoch as an object of the metatextual commentary in the film, one should pay special attention to the theatrical life shown on the screen. It should be noted that not only dramatists, actors and other key figures of theatrical life attracted the attention of the scriptwriters, but also the theatrical microcosm as a whole. The interior of the theatre is very detailed, as well as costumes, rehearsals, texts of plays, main theatrical practices. A striking example is the embodiment of the interactive nature of the Elizabethan theatre, when viewers could interact with actors, shouting out one or another phrase, "VIOLA AS JULIET: Where is my Romeo?" NURSE: (involuntarily) Dead!" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001). At the same time Viola, in no way surprised, continues to recite her own role. Another vivid example is the hint at the practice of 'pirate' publishing the texts of plays by the actors themselves or by those swindlers who recorded the plays under the dictation of actors who gave a detailed account of their own words, but distorted the rest of the text. In a humorous way, this practice is shown on the screen when the prostitute in the tavern is interrogating Ralph, who played the Nurse, what exactly happens in the play, "WHORE (to RALPH): And what is this play about? RALPH: Well, there's this Nurse" (Norman & Stoppard, 2001).

So, as one can see, screenplay writers and the director of "Shakespeare in Love" create a comprehensive and faithful metatextual commentary on the chronotope of the Renaissance England and its vibrant theatrical life. At the same time, the film also has many 'intentional' anachronisms serving as metatextual fragments, which are designed to create a comic, humorous atmosphere, to establish contact with the contemporary audience, and, interweaving the Renaissance and the present, to inveigle the recipient into looking beyond the familiar cultural stereotypes.

Conclusions

As the analysis offered above demonstrates, "Shakespeare in Love" is a unique film which possesses a high metatextual potential that can be used to better understand the cultural specificity of the English Renaissance, its profound connection with the present-day civilisation, modern cultural stereotypes, as well as explore the nature of creativity, the intricacies of the writing process and the semiotics of the theatre. It seems only logical that the metatextual potential of this film can be harnessed in the classroom and used to inform students' understanding of the subject (linguistics of the text, semiotics, theatre studies, cultural studies, literary studies, history, etc.) and motivate them to go into detail, do deeper research and think out of the box, as well as to develop their creativity and critical thinking skills. Shakespeare and his biography can be deemed a perfect experimental ground for this mission. Shakespeare is literally everywhere: not only in terms of language, plots, images, and allusions, but also in terms of the

very way of thinking. Shakespeare has become such a familiar and conventional part of the students' cultural map that any attempt to challenge his canonical position, re-think and re-shape the stereotypes will cause surprise and curiosity, engage the young people in a discussion much better than the usual overexcited yet formulaic panegyrics. This is why it is crucial to show Shakespeare not as a respectable sage from the Chandos portrait and the Droeshout engraving, but as a handsome nobleman from the Cobbe Portrait and a smiling middle-aged man with an ironic spark in his kind eyes of the Sanders portrait. Shakespeare, our contemporary, has to be taken off the pedestal and set free walking among the students – as a young lover, an ambitious achiever, a successful businessman. John Madden's "Shakespeare in Love" accomplishes this task perfectly well. It shows Shakespeare as a young and handsome man whose life is chaotic and messy, bright and inspired – it is a Shakespeare the audience can criticize, laugh at but ultimately fall in love with rather than just behold in awe and silence. This seems exactly what modern students need.

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