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***“Fiend-like Queens and Wolves in Sheep’s Arrays”,
Magic and Witchcraft in Shakespeare’s Plays***

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2. Magic in 16th Century Elizabethan England
3. Magic in other works of the time
4. Comedy: Midsummer Night's Dream
5. Tragedy: MacBeth
6. Romance: The Tempest
7. History Play: Henry IV part I
8. Conclusion

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I declare that I am the author of the bachelor thesis entitled “Fiend-like Queens and Wolves in Sheep’s Arrays, Magic and Witchcraft in Shakespeare’s Plays” with the professional supervision of my supervisor and all the sources have been cited and acknowledged in the Bibliography section of this paper.

in Olomouc on of August 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

In my bachelor thesis, I will deal with the concept of magic and supernatural in Shakespeare's selected works. The main focus of this work is on Shakespeare's portrayal of female and male characters in his magical world – witches, fairies, and sorcerers. On the surface, it seems that Shakespeare's female characters are mostly malevolent, often witch-like women causing evil to others, while men appear to be positive characters. The question is, whether the assumption that Shakespeare depicts male magicians as generally good, while sorceresses and witches as evil, is correct. It is notable that the female villains are punished by men who assert strictly their authority. On the one hand, the portrayed women are evil, on the other, they are strong, demonic, attractive, and powerful. They are punished for pursuing their own wills and equality.

It is necessary to take into an account the overall framework of the society of the Elizabethan era and its outlook on magic and other occultist fields of interest that are closely connected to it, as alchemy, astronomy, and supernatural in general. The belief in spirits and occultism that persisted during the Elizabethan age played an important role in understanding of the plays.

As Lady Macbeth, Oberon, Titania, or Prospero are far not the only characters in the magical Renaissance world, I will briefly describe the concept of magic in works of authors of Shakespeare's age including Robert Greene, John Lyly, Christopher Marlowe, Benjamin Jonson, and Edmund Spenser. References to works of these authors provide a context of the time and illustrate usage of different kinds of sorcery, as magicians, charlatans, fairies, and others. The question arises, whether Shakespeare's depiction of sorcerers, sorceresses, and witches fits into the Elizabethan England's idea of this theme.

A closer look at the status of magicians compared to the status of women involved with magic will be taken, as they were perceived differently, and this distinction supports the idea of these women as evil. Furthermore, several examples of witches and sorceresses will be given, as they are present in literature since ancient

times. The contextual features provide a possibility to compare and closely analyse Shakespeare's characters that use magic.

The selected Shakespeare's plays that will be analysed are: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, and *Henry VI, Part I*. These plays of different genres were chosen on purpose, as it did not seem to be proper to stick to just one kind of plays and I wanted to describe in more detail a comedy, a tragedy, a romance as well as historical play.

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS SUCH AS WITCH, FAIRY, MAGICIAN

First of all, the terms like a witch, a fairy, a spirit, and others will be specified. There are several possible interpretations of these terms and it is necessary to make their meaning clear, as they will be used frequently in this work. Therefore, I will provide brief definitions in this chapter, the main source being *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary*, written by Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra. The terms will be later used in meanings as specified below to avoid any misunderstanding.

Fairy – Most fairy characters appear in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* - Puck, Peaseblossom, Moth, Cobweb, and Mustardseed. In addition, there are Titania and Oberon as the queen and the king of the fairies. Gibson and Esra describe fairies in this way: "*Fairies share some of the characteristics of devils in contemporary stories: they can be cruel, deceitful and mischievous. More positively, they are often associated with rural and wild places and the natural world, in which way they appear like elemental spirits.*"¹

Devil – In Shakespeare's plays, a devil, or devils are often portrayed as comic characters, rather than to be malicious figures, they are ridiculed - e.g. in *Merry Wives of Windsor*.² Gibson and Esra provide this definition: "*A devil is an evil spiritual being (...). In parallel with human hierarchies, devils were thought to be ruled over by a supreme spirit, 'the devil'. He is usually referred to in the singular as Satan (...) who could also be separate characters (as they are treated here). The devils' abode was in hell, to which God had exiled them, but they could travel between places and states of being. They could be summoned by conjuration and possibly even kept as familiar spirits by conjurors.*"³

Magician – Also "conjuror", or "wizard". Prospero (*The Tempest*) acts like a magician, although he is not called like that by Shakespeare, who refers to his magic rather as to "art". Gibson and Esra provide the definition: "*A magician is a practitioner of magic. The term is defined by the activities it suggests rather than being a particular labelled profession – such as astrologer (astronomer). Instead, magicians might be*

¹ Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 93.

² *Ibid.*, 73.

³ *Ibid.*, 71.

*learned scientists and occultists like Doctor John Dee, or village ‘cunning people’, who knew herbal remedies, spells and counter-magics. Magic encompassed a wide range of occult activities.”*⁴

Spirit – Generally, something that connected a body with the soul. However, Gibson and Esra add that *“spirit often referred not to inner or soulful spirits but to demons or devils. These spirits might take up with witches in order to bring about harmful magic, perhaps inhabiting the form of a familiar, a demonic or animal spirit companion. Equally, spirits could be ambient evil creatures wreaking havoc independently in the world, possibly able to be summoned by conjuration. (...) They might change the body from without or send spirits into its cavities and organs to destroy it from within and possibly even damn the soul belonging to the body.”*⁵

Witch – This term covers characters as Joan La Pucelle (*Henry VI, part 1*), the Weird sisters (*Macbeth*), Sycorax (*The Tempest*), in addition to that, Lady Macbeth can be considered witch-like character.⁶ Gibson and Esra provide the definition by George Gifford (seventeenth century minister who wrote about witchcraft): *“A witch is one, that worketh by the Devil, or by some devilish or curious art, either hurting or healing, revealing things secret, or foretelling things to come which the Devil hath devised to entangle and snare men’s soul withal into damnation.”*⁷

⁴ Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare’s Demonology: A Dictionary*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 145-146.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 195-196.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 221-222.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 220.

3. MAGIC IN THE 16th CENTURY ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

Ford in *The Age of Shakespeare* claims that the time of Renaissance brought crucial changes to Elizabethan England, not only to society, but it also changed the overall look at the world. Many aspects of life were influenced - political, religious, and cultural. The idea that the order of the world and nature was ruled by divine powers persisted, however, the impact was also given upon individuals and subjectivity. Though science and education were on its rise, the role of magic, alchemy, astronomy, and witchcraft, was unquestionable.⁸ The strong belief in the supernatural that was present in the society may have contributed to the fact that the Elizabethan era was to a great extent influenced by occultism, which left its trace in philosophy, science, and in literature – it's features are present in works of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Spenser, and others.⁹ The two principal sources of this chapter are *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* written by Yates and *Witch, Warlock, and Magician: Historical Sketches of Magic and Witchcraft in England and Scotland* by Davenport.

3.1. BELIEF IN MAGIC

Davenport observes that the role of supernatural and magic influenced England considerably, as it was not only the subject of literature, but also of the interest of the whole society already since the fourteenth century. Many people believed in the existence of the supernatural and they were influenced by concepts such as the philosopher's stone, "magisterium", or making of gold and silver. Those who made a living based on magic were mostly considered charlatans. However, there were many famous magicians that were influential, one of them being Roger Bacon, educated in Oxford, who dealt with experiments in philosophy and science. He believed in alchemy and astrology, and became a legend also because of his "Brazen Head", which was in short magical copper head, a concept to which later many authors referred. Although,

⁸ Boris, Ford, *The Age of Shakespeare: The New Pelican Guide to English Literature – Vol II*. (London: Penguin, 1982), 15-25.

⁹ Frances Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 87-90. PDF e-book.

for purposes of this work, the main interest in Roger Bacon is that he became an inspirational figure for many authors, among others Robert Greene.¹⁰

3.2. JOHN DEE

Yates notices a figure that influenced the Elizabethan era, John Dee, an occult philosopher and mathematician that was affected by Neoplatonism. He gained a great importance, having patrons in noble families, Dee was even in the service of Queen Elizabeth herself. Besides, he was interested in alchemy, being inspired by Cornelius Agrippa.¹¹ According to Davenport, Dee believed that he could foretell the future from his dreams and that he could see spirits, such as angels, and he was able to communicate with them. These apparitions showed up in his magical mirror, always through a medium, which Dee called a “skryer”, while Dee himself was an observer, who interpreted the situation. Among others, one of Dee’s mediums was Edward Kelly, a magician and a swindler who did not hesitate to break the laws. With Kelly as a medium, Dee’s magic mirror worked perfectly, and although he probably lied to Dee, he believed him.¹² However, they departed after several years of cooperation and the former reputation of the magician declined, nor Queen Elizabeth was not enthusiastic about his abilities anymore. Despite this, Dee’s name was renewed after Meric Causabon wrote a book about Dee’s collaboration with his “skryer”, and it is regarded to be “*the initial product of spiritualism in English literature.*”¹³

3.3. CHARLATANS

Furthermore, Davenport comments that the role of alchemists and magicians underwent crucial changes in the society through time, as the best of them were in service of the noblemen and aristocracy during the 16th century, although, they later

¹⁰ William Henry, Davenport Adams, *Witch, Warlock and Magician: Historical Sketches of Magic and Witchcraft in England and Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1889), 27-36. PDF e-book.

¹¹ Frances Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 88-97. PDF e-book.

¹² William Henry, Davenport Adams, *Witch, Warlock and Magician: Historical Sketches of Magic and Witchcraft in England and Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1889), 69-72. PDF e-book.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 84-90.

become treated as charlatans – and many of them used their “art” to make money on people that believed their tricks.¹⁴

To support this claim, Davenport mentions a figure of Dr. Lambe, who was a charlatan, in a sense that he presented himself as a physician, although he did not have necessary education for such a profession. He was also an astrologer who claimed to have magical abilities. Lambe was in service of the Duke of Buckingham, who was not favoured by the people. As a result, Lambe was called “*Duke’s devil*” and chased and attacked. Although he was escaping, he was finally captured and ended up dying in prison.¹⁵

3.4. SUMMARY

The role of magic and the supernatural in the Elizabethan era is undeniable. The belief in alchemy and astrology was present in the society since the fourteenth century, and it persisted till the time of Renaissance. The occultism influenced many aspects of life and its features are also present in works of Shakespeare, Marlowe or Spenser. Although there were influential figures as John Dee, the philosopher who claimed that he can foretell future, there were also many charlatans.

¹⁴ William Henry, Davenport Adams, *Witch, Warlock and Magician: Historical Sketches of Magic and Witchcraft in England and Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1889), 102-104. PDF e-book.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 123-127.

4. DIFFERENT KINDS OF SORCERY IN OTHER WORKS OF THE TIME

Connected to the context of the Elizabethan period and its approach to the supernatural that was described in the previous chapter, there are many works of Shakespeare's age that involve supernatural elements and witch-like characters, such as ghosts, alchemists, sorcerers, and fairies. I will take a closer look at works written by authors as John Lyly, Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, Benjamin Jonson, or Edmund Spenser. The principal source for this chapter is Herrington's journal article "Witchcraft and Magic in the Elizabethan Drama".

4.1. FAIRY PLAYS

First of all, I will focus on the plays involving fairies, as they were the first of the Elizabethan plays involving magic to be written around the 1580s, as suggests Herrington. An example is John Lyly's *Gallathea or Endymion*, in both the plays appear fairies, however, they do not have any big purpose here, as they only dance or sing. Another play in which we can find fairies and also Oberon, the king of the fairies, is *James IV.* by Robert Greene, where the fairies serve as a chorus of the drama. The figure of Oberon is also important in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, though, I will describe this play in more detail later. At this point, I want to mention the dramatist Benjamin Jonson, as he wrote many plays involving fairies and other supernatural elements. Among these plays belongs *Oberon, Gypsies Metamorphosed* or the *Satyr, The Alchemist*, and many others. It is necessary to mention that the fairies were not that popular later in the Elizabethan drama, the reason probably being that people did not have such faith in mythology as before.¹⁶

4.2. PRACTISING MAGICIANS

Apart from the fairies, next important figures of Elizabethan plays were magicians. Unlike fairies, which were based purely on mythology, the magicians have

¹⁶ H.W. Herrington, "Witchcraft and Magic in the Elizabethan Drama," *The Journal of American Folklore* 32 (1919): 448-53.

had a real basis.¹⁷ These plays were more popular, as people could easily imagine a connection to the real contemporary figures. Examples of these plays involving magicians are Marlowe's *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* or Greene's *The Historye of Fryer Bacon and Fryer Bungay*. Both the main characters of the mentioned plays are so called "practising magicians", which means that their profession of magician involved long studies and they also had to give up their souls to the devil and handle the black magic to gain their abilities and skills. They are interested in philosophy, alchemy, astronomy, and necromancy. Although, the use of dark powers always carries a certain risk of dangerousness, which turns into the bad ending for both the characters.¹⁸

4.2.1. FRIAR BACON AND FRIAR BUNGAY

The figure of Roger Bacon became an inspiration for the play "*The Historye of Fryer Bacon and Fryer Bungay*" written by Robert Greene in 1589.¹⁹ As Santiago in her paper "The necromancer Friar Bacon in the magic world of Greene's comedy *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*" mentions, the drama is a historical play with romantic and magical elements. In the play, the Brazen Head is created by Bacon on purpose of protection of England, but it does not work. Greene involves in his play among others a figure of Henry III., king of Bacon's time, and the reader can therefore gain comparison of the thirteenth century's society and political situation with that of Greene's present.²⁰ The character of Friar is interested into necromancy and occultism, using black magic. Bacon uses these powers, for example, to talk to the Brazen Head.²¹

¹⁷ H.W. Herrington, "Witchcraft and Magic in the Elizabethan Drama," *The Journal of American Folklore* 32 (1919): 448-53.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 458-9.

¹⁹ William Henry, Davenport Adams, *Witch, Warlock and Magician: Historical Sketches of Magic and Witchcraft in England and Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1889), 43. PDF e-book.

²⁰ Victoria, Díaz Santiago, "The necromancer Friar Bacon in the magic world of Greene's comedy *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*," *Sederi* 18 (2008): 6-7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

4.2.2. DOCTOR FAUSTUS

Another work that will be described in more detail is “*The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*”, written between 1588 and 1589 by Christopher Marlowe.²²

Hackett in her publication *A Short History of English Renaissance Drama* explains that Faustus is enticed with black magic as invincible power, it is a form of deity for him. Subsequently, he is convinced by Mephistopheles to give up his soul and in return, Mephistopheles fulfils whatever Faustus wishes. Thanks to Mephisto’s devilish powers, the young doctor can become an invisible ghost, he visits Rome, or he can bring alive Alexander the Great or Helen of Greece. Due to these abilities, Faustus fame grows and emperors and kings want to meet him and see his magical art. Although Faustus sometimes doubts whether he shall return to God, Mephistopheles always convinces him to stay at the side of the devil. After twenty-four years of enjoying the supernatural powers, Faust has to pay back his debts and his soul is damned forever.

As was mentioned, Faustus sometimes question the sides of good and evil, he stands between the Good and Bad Angel, but he finally decides that it is too late and that his sins cannot be forgiven by God. Due to this, Marlowe’s drama can be considered a morality play. There is one point that is necessary to mention, and that is, all the supernatural abilities that Faustus receives are only illusions, they are not real.²³

Similarly to Shakespeare, Marlowe uses powers of spirits and ghosts – Mephistopheles in Faustus and, for example, Ariel, the ghost who serves to Prospero in *The Tempest*, which will be mentioned later in this paper. But there is one crucial difference, as in Greene’s play, magic is depicted as something wicked, devilish, and bad.

²² Christopher, Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*, ed. R. G. Lunt (Glasgow: Blackie & Son, Ltd., 1937), x.

²³ Helen, Hackett, *A Short History of English Renaissance Drama* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2013), 81-83. PDF e-book.

4.3. JONSON'S CHARLATANS

Furthermore, Herrington mentions that completely different view on magicians gives the dramatist Jonson, who wrote satiric plays, for example, "*Devil is an Ass*". He depicts the devil as something not that dramatic as it could have been seen before, but rather as a parodic character.²⁴ As Hackett adds, another play of similar nature is "*The Alchemist*", the comedy that was already mentioned. It shows Subtle and Face, two major characters, the first one being an alchemist, and the other a housekeeper, both of them swindlers. Subtle promises to create a philosopher's stone to several dupes, but his only aim is to gain money by a fraud from the naïve people. His efforts are successful partly because of "scientific" and magical terms he tries to use, however, it sounds ridiculous and it only attributes to the overall satiric tone of the play. Jonson simply mocks thaumaturgy.²⁵

4.4. THE FAERIE QUEENE

Edmund Spenser is the last author that will be mentioned in this chapter. His contribution to the literature connected to the supernatural cannot be denied. Although I described mostly plays previously, Spenser's allegorical poem *The Faerie Queene* that was published in 1590's, as Guenther mentions in her paper "Spenser's Magic, or Instrumental Aesthetics in the 1590 Faerie Queene", is unforgettable impersonating of a magical world. It shows magician called Archimago, who uses his powers to conjure demons, which turn out to be only illusionary. The spells are rather allegorical images invoked by Archimago's figurative language, and the purpose is either to help his friends or to cause evil to his enemies.²⁶ It can be seen as a kind of usage of poetic rhetoric to influence characters' and also readers' imagination and make them fascinated. Spenser also relied on the general belief in supernatural powers and existence of spirits – good as well as the evil ones.²⁷ There can be found

²⁴ H. W. Herrington, "Witchcraft and Magic in the Elizabethan Drama," *The Journal of American Folklore* 32 (1919): 466-7.

²⁵ . Helen, Hackett, *A Short History of English Renaissance Drama* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2013), 124-127. PDF e-book

²⁶ Genevieve, Guenther, "Spenser's Magic, or Instrumental Aesthetics in the 1590 Faerie Queene," *English Literary Renaissance* 36 (2006): 194-196.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 200.

also Merlin's magic mirror in the poem, which is a medium for the apparition of spirits.²⁸ This concept is actually similar to that of *The Historye of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*.

4.5. SUMMARY

The various ways of how the dramatists of the Elizabethan age used magic as a main feature of their plays have been outlined. Various plays are showing fairies, most important of them written by John Lyly and Benjamin Jonson. Another significant kind of plays portrayed magicians using dark powers, as in Marlowe's *Tragical History of Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* or Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. A completely different depiction of magicians can be seen in Jonson's plays, as he satirizes the alchemists and magicians, portraying them as incapable charlatans. The tone of Jonson's plays is less serious than that of Marlowe's or Greene's works. The last literary work mentioned is Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, showing magician Archimago.

²⁸ Genevieve, Guenther, "Spenser's Magic, or Instrumental Aesthetics in the 1590 Faerie Queene," *English Literary Renaissance* 36 (2006): 208.

5. WITCHES AND SORCERESSES

A closer look on sorceresses and witchcraft, in general, will be taken in this chapter. The status of witches will be described, as they were perceived differently than male magicians. Furthermore, I will provide examples of mythical sorceresses and witches, as they share some features with Shakespeare's characters and he even refers to them in his plays. The principal source is Davenport's publication *Witch, Warlock, and Magician: Historical Sketches of Magic and Witchcraft in England and Scotland* and Gibson and Esra's *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary*.

5.1. STATUS OF WITCHES AND PERCEPTION OF WITCHCRAFT

Davenport takes a view that the status of witches changed through the course of time, and it is not easy to specify it as it changed since ancient times to the Renaissance crucially. The witches in ancient times were considered powerful and mysterious women that could use their spells to control nature and cause a chaos. However, they were always perceived differently by the society than magicians. The women that could rule magic were always treated as something of a lower status, unlike the sorcerers that were considered educated men of a high status.

The general belief was that witches were worshipping the devil, to whom they gave up their souls and gained some special skills in return. They often gained a spirit too, often in a form of a cat or a dog. Besides, people believed that witches attended wild celebrations of Sabbat in a company of the devil, their master, whom they vowed their devotion. The celebrations involved also dancing and spiritual ceremonies.²⁹

Furthermore, Davenport mentions that already Bible speaks of witchcraft, both Old and New Testaments. There are mostly warnings about how witchcraft and involvement with evil may be dangerous. In the 6th and the 7th century, the Church acted against witchcraft and sorcery, those who practised it were generally treated as heretics. Since the 12th century, the first trials against witches took place in England. The cases often portrayed accusations of sorcery, questionable practices and evoking

²⁹ William Henry, Davenport Adams, *Witch, Warlock and Magician: Historical Sketches of Magic and Witchcraft in England and Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1889), 203-208. PDF e-book.

of spirits - all these mentioned were treated as acts against God.³⁰ Later, in the Elizabethan period, there was a strict legal prosecution against witchcraft. The general belief in witchcraft and similar practices contributed to the overall atmosphere in the society.³¹

5.2. DISTINCT ATTITUDE TOWARDS WITCHES AND MAGICIANS

Davenport furthermore mentions that the overall attitude of society was more negative towards witchcraft than to magic generally, for example, alchemists and astrologers were treated more permissively than witches. The most probable explanation is that witches were believed to sell their souls to the devil, and therefore, they were damned. Besides, witches were considered women of a low status, and they used the magic for their own vengeful wishes, while magicians were paid for their services and their status was not that low as that of witches. Once one was accused of witchcraft, his fate was sealed and the chance of disposing of the accusation and likely death penalty was almost unreal.³²

The oppression of witchcraft intensified with the reign of king James I., as he was concerned with the supernatural and witchcraft himself. The number of cases of accusations of witchcraft was larger than before and an act that claimed witchcraft to be felony was passed. With James I. on the throne, the real witch-hunt began and many innocent lives were wasted.³³ There were so many allegations that the government had to establish stricter rules for bringing the accused before the court and a committee was established.³⁴

The situation has changed by the end of the eighteenth century when the society finally perceived witchcraft differently. The decrease in belief in witchcraft was much faster among the people of an upper class than among those of a lower class.³⁵

³⁰ William Henry, Davenport Adams, *Witch, Warlock and Magician: Historical Sketches of Magic and Witchcraft in England and Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1889), 213-217. PDF e-book.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 209-210.

³² *Ibid.*, 222.

³³ *Ibid.*, 244.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 281.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 287-288.

5.3. WITCHES AND SORCERESSES IN LITERATURE

As was mentioned previously, characters who use magic appeared in literature far earlier before the Elizabethan period. The existence of witchcraft is noted in Greek mythology, which mentions Circe, Hecate or Medea, and in the Bible, which describes punishments for practising witchcraft and refers to the Witch of Endor. In addition, witches and magical powers became a subject of many legends and folktales, for example of Arthurian legends. The status of witches in literature changed through time, and therefore, the role of witchcraft in the Elizabethan drama will be briefly mentioned.

In this chapter, the most famous literary witches and sorceresses will be described in more detail, as their role is significant in the perception of witchcraft generally. Shakespeare in his plays often uses references to some of the witches and it is clear that he was inspired by some of them. Gibson and Esra's *Shakespeare Demonology: A Dictionary* will be used as a major source in this chapter.

5.3.1. CIRCE

Gibson and Esra describe Circe as "*Greek semi-goddess and witch. (...) She is thus associated with sex, love and their transformative powers for both good and ill. (...) In English literature more generally she also encodes fascination with the exotic, foreign world of the Mediterranean, with its opportunities, traps, temptations and fantasies of pleasure and power.*"³⁶

The mythical witch appears in Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. Odysseus encounters her at the island of Aiaia and describes her as "*dire beauty and divine*".³⁷ Odysseus's men are enticed by Circe's beauty and with help of a magical potion and her magic stick, she bewitches them, turning them into pigs. With a help of a god Hermês, Odysseus manages to resist Circe's charms, which completely amazes her to that extent that she suggests Odysseus that they should make love. He uses this opportunity and his position of power to persuade Circe to swear an oath that she will not cause harm to him or his men anymore. Circe then fulfils her promise and frees

³⁶ Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 54.

³⁷ Homer, *The Odyssey* (London: Everyman's Library, 1992), 169.

Odysseus's men and moreover, she prepares a banquet for them and helps them to set off on the journey.³⁸

Despite Circe's initial intentions, she cannot be described as an essentially evil woman. She uses her charms and her beauty to bewitch the men that visit the island of Aiaia, but finally, she frees them and treats them kindly. McClymont in his paper "The Character of Circe in The Odyssey" suggests, that there is a goodness in Circe since the beginning, as she devotes her attention to a purely feminine activity of weaving the web. In contrary, she is "sexually threatening",³⁹ asking Odysseus to go to bed with her, Hermes warns him that he could be "*unmanned by her*".⁴⁰ McClymont adds, that Circe's character is split into two parts, the first one being evil and sexually tempting woman, the second one being the embodiment of a perfect woman. Though, when she swears the oath to Odysseus, she loses her position of power and superiority that she has as a goddess. By swearing the oath, she is equal to Odysseus. In fact, Odysseus fooled her in a similar manner to that Circe used to fool his men. By gaining the oath from Circe and freeing his men, Odysseus has won a victory.⁴¹

5.3.2. HECATE

Gibson and Esra characterize Hecate: "*In early modern drama Hecate is regarded as the Greek and Roman goddess of witchcraft. Associated with night, the moon, liminal spaces, sorcery, crossroads, magic and the dead, she took a triple or many-faced form and once also had a more positive side as an agricultural goddess. But in Christian Europe in early modern times this aspect was overwhelmed by her perceived evil qualities.*"⁴²

Ronan in his book *The Goddess Hecate* explains that there are several different outlooks on Hecate. In ancient times, she was described as a goddess as in Hesiod's *Theogony* and later as "*goddess of ghosts, magic and the moon*" in *Greek Magical*

³⁸ Homer, *The Odyssey* (London: Everyman's Library, 1992), 172-182.

³⁹ J. D., McClymont, "The Character of Circe in The Odyssey," *Akroterion* 53 (2008): 22.

⁴⁰ Homer, *The Odyssey* (London: Everyman's Library, 1992), 174.

⁴¹ J. D., McClymont, "The Character of Circe in The Odyssey," *Akroterion* 53 (2008): 22-24.

⁴² Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 126.

Papyri.⁴³ Despite the fact that the sources vary in characterizing Hecate, she is always connected to practising magical arts.⁴⁴

The character of Hecate is portrayed in Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*, where she appears together with the Weird Sisters.

5.3.3. MEDEA

According to *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary*, Medea "signifies terrifying and unpredictable vindictiveness, infanticide, as well as love and betrayal. Together with her aunt, Circe, Medea exemplifies the two sides of classical witchcraft, comic and tragic."⁴⁵ Jo and Esra add that the character of Medea is present in two of Shakespeare's plays: *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Tempest*. In the latter play, Prospero refers to Medea's dialogue from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* when he talks about his magic.⁴⁶

Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition describes Medea's magic as evil and destroying, as she did not hesitate to kill her own family members, including her brother or her two children. Among her abilities was the art of conjuring, necromancy, and manipulating the forces of nature. To reach her purposes, she was causing harm to her enemies by using magical herbs. Furthermore, she is said to be enjoying illicit sexual relations. It can be said that she was purely malevolent and powerful sorceress.⁴⁷

5.3.4. WITCH OF ENDOR

The Bible describes witchcraft as a sin that should be punished by death: "You shall not permit a sorceress to live".⁴⁸ According to the book of Leviticus, people should not consult mediums or any sorcerers as they could be "defiled by them."⁴⁹

⁴³ Stephen Ronan, *The Goddess Hecate: Studies in Ancient Pagan and Christian Religion Philosophy, Volume 1*. (Hastings: Chthonios Books, 1992), 5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁵ Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 149.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 149-150.

⁴⁷ Richard M. Golden, *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition*. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006): 741. PDF e-book.

⁴⁸ *The Bible: containing the Old and New Testaments; revised standard version*, transl. from the original languages (London: British & Foreign Bible Society, 1975), 65.

The Old Testament, Book 1 of Samuel, mentions the medium, or the Witch of Endor. Saul expelled all the wizards and mediums out of the land, however, he needed their service, as he was concerned about the approaching battle with Philistines and God did not answer his prayers. He visited a medium at Endor, asking her to conjure the spirit of Samuel, the previous king. The spirit appeared and communicated to Saul that he will be beaten by Philistines and that his sons will die in the battle as a punishment for turning away from God. As Saul was shaken by the horrible vision, the Witch of Endor took care of him and persuaded him to eat.⁵⁰ Although the Witch of Endor is not portrayed positively, the fact that she took care of Saul does not suggest that she would be a purely evil woman.

Gibson and Esra mention that early modern demonologists refused the idea that a woman could conjure a spirit of the dead, they believed that it was a work of the devil. Furthermore, they add that the motif of conjuring of a dead king occurs in several of Shakespeare's works, e. g. in *Henry VI, Part 1* and *2*, *Henry V*, and *Richard III*.⁵¹

5.3.5. MORGAN LE FAY

Martins in her article "Morgan Le Fay: The Inheritance of the Goddess" mentions that the character of Arthurian Legends, Morgan, is based on the Celtic goddesses Morrígan or Welsh Modron. It is open to argument, whether she is a good or a malevolent character. She was first mentioned by Geoffrey of Monmouth in *Vita Merlini*, which was written in 1150. Morgan is there described as a half-sister of Arthur who possesses magical and healing abilities and governs the island of Avalon. She does not have the evil characteristics that became a significant feature for her personality in later texts.⁵² Martins explains that the character of Morgan changed due to the medieval perception of magic in relation to women, as they were often believed to be practising a black magic. To this fact is linked a connection between female magicians

⁴⁹ *The Bible: containing the Old and New Testaments; revised standard version*, transl. from the original languages (London: British & Foreign Bible Society, 1975), 92.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 230-231.

⁵¹ Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 133.

⁵² Anna Rita Martins, "Morgana le Fay: The Inheritance of the Goddess," *Brathair 15* (2015): 158-160.

and sexuality – women practising magic were considered wanton and immoral, which is also the case of Morgan in later texts. There she is described as Arthur’s nemesis, evil woman and she is a realization of “*uncontrollable and magical forces*”.⁵³

5.3.6. WITCHCRAFT IN THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

In his paper “Witchcraft and Magic in the Elizabethan Drama”, W. H. Herrington argues that witches appeared in a relatively late period of the Elizabethan age. He mentions the most famous plays portraying witches, as an example Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, Middleton’s *Witch*, Jonson’s *Masque of Queens*, or Shadwell’s *Lancashire Witches*.⁵⁴

Herrington notes that male magicians were portrayed frequently, for example, in plays written by Marlowe or Greene. He claims the reason is that the Elizabethan period was influenced by real figures as Dee or Agrippa.⁵⁵ On the other hand, portrayals of female magicians were not that frequent. Sorceresses appeared in Lyly’s *Endymion* and Greene’s *Alphonsus or Orlando Furioso*, although, all of them are based on model characters from classical literature. To this contributed the fact that in the Elizabethan period, the women who were to some extent involved in using magical powers were considered indecent.⁵⁶

When Shakespeare’s contemporary authors are taken into an account, John Lyly shall be mentioned, as he used witches as characters. However, he wrote namely comedies, as for example *Mother Bombie*, which portrays a woman accused of witchcraft, though, in an idealised way.⁵⁷ Golden’s *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft* describes Middleton’s *Witch* as a humorous portrayal of witches, among others Hecate that was mentioned previously. The witches are sexually provoking and causing evil, though in an amusing way.⁵⁸ Jonson’s *Masque of Queens* was according to Golden inspired by classical as well as contemporary portrayals of witches. The witches are a

⁵³ Anna Rita Martins, “Morgana le Fay: The Inheritance of the Goddess,” *Brathair 15* (2015): 163-5.

⁵⁴ H. W. Herrington, “Witchcraft and Magic in the Elizabethan Drama,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 32 (1919): 447.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 459-460.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 465.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 473.

⁵⁸ Richard M. Golden, *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition*. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006): 958. PDF e-book.

symbol of disorder and they are in high contrast with positive values that are embodied by the queens.⁵⁹

5.4. SUMMARY

The status of witches changed through time, they lost the status of powerful women that they had in ancient times, and later, they were treated as indecent women that worshipped the devil and they were persecuted. Another important fact is that the attitude towards witches and female sorceresses was different from the perception of male magicians. While witches were considered malevolent creatures causing harm, magicians were treated as professionals and they were paid for their services.

In literature, the presence of witches and sorceresses is dated back to Greek mythology. Circe is described as a goddess, superior to Odysseus and his men, and although she seems to be an evil one, being fooled herself, she finally proves to have a positive side of her personality. Similarly, Hecate was considered a goddess, though, later, the idea of her was connected to committing evil. Next character that was mentioned is Medea, who can be without doubts described as a malevolent woman, who uses forces of magic for her own, evil purposes. The next source, from which we can learn about witchcraft, is the Bible, which speaks of practising witchcraft or seeking its help as of something forbidden, punishable by death, which is illustrated on the story of Witch of Endor. The sorceress Morgan Le Fay is ambiguous, as in earlier texts, she is considered a good character, in later, she is described as evil. It can be said that all of the mentioned witches or sorceresses were powerful and undeniably strong women, regardless whether evil or good.

A closer look on Shakespeare's contemporary playwrights dealing with the theme of witchcraft was taken. The character of a sorceress was not frequent and when it occurred, then it was often inspired by classical literature. On the other hand, characters of witches appeared in plays more often. Lyly's and Middleton's plays portrayed witches in an idealised or a comic way.

⁵⁹ Richard M. Golden, *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition*. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006): 958. PDF e-book.

6. SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

A more detailed look at Shakespeare's concept of magic and depiction of men and women as characters involved with the supernatural in his plays will be taken in this chapter. On the surface, it seems that Shakespeare supports stereotypical portrayal of women, yet they are powerful and demonic, often rejected as they desire to be equal to men. The plays will be analysed as follows: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, and *Henry VI, Part I*.

6.1. SHAKESPEARE IN CONTEXT OF THE ELIZABETHAN ERA AND AUTHORS OF THE TIME

As was mentioned in the fourth chapter, the theme of magic was not unique in the literature of the Elizabethan age, however, the authors portrayed it in different ways. I did not analyse all the authors of Shakespeare's age, yet the most significant ones were mentioned. The characters of fairies were often involved, as well as practising magicians or charlatans. Unlike his contemporaries, Shakespeare did not include characters of practising magicians, as are, for example, Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* or Greene's *Friar Bungay*. Jonson involved magic in his works as well, however, he wrote mostly comedies and he often mocked the characters of magicians. The concept of magic occurred also in the Elizabethan drama, plays involving fairies and witches were written by Lyly, Middleton, and Jonson. Although, Shakespeare took a different perspective on the theme.

A Midsummer Night's Dream can be considered a fairy play, but unlike Lyly's or Greene's plays, where fairies did not have major roles and served like chorus, Shakespeare's fairy queen Titania is one of the main characters. Although the figure of Oberon, the king of the fairies, is involved in Greene's play *James IV* or in Jonson's *Oberon*, the queen of fairies does not have name or important role in these works. It seems that Shakespeare gives her a significant role and therefore a completely different look at the king and the queen of the fairies.

Macbeth portrays magic and the supernatural in a different way, as there are notable characters of Lady Macbeth and The Weird Sisters, who correspond to the

Renaissance image of witches as of ugly creatures connected to the devil, invoking, conjuring, and causing harm.

The central character of *The Tempest* is the magician Prospero, who, unlike Lady Macbeth, is not connected to the devil. Although he seems to be a good sorcerer, he shows manipulative behaviour towards his daughter Miranda. Besides, there can be found a certain analogy in *The Tempest* and *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* by Marlowe, as both the main characters have a spirit in their service, Faustus uses Mephistopheles and Prospero Ariel. Though, Prospero's magic is white, as he is not connected to the devil.

Henry VI, Part I portrays Joan La Pucelle, who proclaims to be determined by God, however, as later turns out, she is conjuring spirits, similarly to Witch of Endor or Medea and she is sacrificing her body and soul, apparently being connected to the devil. It can be said that her abilities are close to the Renaissance idea of a witch.

6.2. COMEDY: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

The play "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*" is usually dated to the years 1595 or 1596. It is a festive comedy drawn on the celebrations of spring, summer solstice, and cycles of the seasons and nature, which are according to the old myths connected to the supernatural events, mysterious atmosphere, and foolish behaviour.⁶⁰ Shakespeare's sources of inspiration were Ovid's "*Metamorphosis*", Apuleius's "*Golden Ass*" and Chaucer's "*The Knight's Tale*" from "*The Canterbury Tales*", as Hilský suggests.⁶¹

Oberon and Titania, the king and the queen of the fairies are not the only magical characters in the play, as there are the trains of the fairies that accompany them, and among others, the fairy Puck. In addition to that there is the character of Hippolyta, the mythic queen of the Amazons, who does not have any supernatural abilities, however, she is an example of a strong woman that can be compared to

⁶⁰ William, Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream – Sen noci svatojánské*, trans. Martin Hilský (Brno: Atlantis, 2010), 13.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

Titania. The principal source of this chapter is *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in a bilingual edition with translation and preface by Hilský.

6.2.1. TWO LEVELS OF THE PLAY – NOBLE AND FAIRY WORLD

There are actually two locations where the play takes place – at a palace of Theseus, the Duke of Athens, and in a magic wood near Athens. Although, the wood is actually not a charming, idyllic place as it would be expected, but rather a dark spot where creepy creatures come alive.

This is directly related to the fact that there are two levels of the play that are blending. First, there is the line of Athenian nobility that is centred around Theseus and his bride-to-be, Hippolyta. The main characters of this line are Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius, and Helena, whose complicated relationships mingle through the course of the play.

The second line concerns the fairyland, where the main course of events is aimed at the rulers, Oberon and Titania. The characters of the magic land interfere into the happenings of the first line and they often wreak a havoc. This concerns namely Oberon and his helper, Puck.

6.2.2. MARRIAGE OF OBERON AND TITANIA: CHAOS AND DISHARMONY

The fairy line begins in the Act II, scene 1., and since the very beginning, it is indisputable that Oberon and Titania have great disharmony in their marriage. We learn from Puck that Oberon is jealous of Titania, who is devoted to a human boy, whom she stole from an Indian king. Since the mentioned scene, there is apparently a notable tension between the queen and the king, which seems to be a struggle for the power, but it can be seen, that they both enjoy it as it is a kind of game for both of them.

While Oberon is jealous of Titania because of the mentioned boy and other men, she is jealous of him because he had an affair with Hippolyta. Simply put, they are accusing each other of infidelity and affairs. From Titania's monologue is apparent that Oberon uses his supernatural powers to govern nature to punish Titania, and by his acts, he overturns the cycle of seasons.

[II.1] TITANIA

*„As in revenge have sucked up from the sea
Contagious fogs which, falling in the land,
Hath every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents.
(...)
The human mortals want their winter cheer.
No night is now with hymn or carol blessed.
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases so abound.⁶²*

Hilský explains that there is a strong motif of chaos and disharmony. Titania's monologue above is a denial of Renaissance's idea of the world order. The movement from chaos to order is linear in "A Midsummer Night's Dream", from the upside-down system of values and events, it all goes to the order at the end of the play.⁶³ In addition to that, it can be seen is a portrayal of chaos and inverted values that rule Oberon and Titania's relationship, and it denies the idea of romantic marriage and love.⁶⁴ The relationship of Titania and Oberon is in a sharp contrast with that of Theseus and Hippolyta. Although Hippolyta was defeated in a battle by him, and as a result, she had to marry him, she is not unhappy about that. Their relationship is more harmonic than that of the other couple, and they have only little conflicts that are always solved mildly.

6.2.3. OBERON'S REVENGE AND RETURN OF ORDER

Oberon decides to punish Titania, taking a revenge on her for her foolish and disobedient behaviour. By the spell of a magical flower called "love-in-idleness", which makes a man or a woman fall in love with the first person they see, he bewitches

⁶² William, Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream – Sen noci svatojánské*, trans. Martin Hilský (Brno: Atlantis, 2010), 132.

⁶³ Ibid., 22.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 133.

Titania. Titania crazily falls for one of the Athenian craftsmen, Bottom, whose head was transformed by Puck to an ass-head. This causes a ridiculous but also humiliating situation for Titania, the queen of the fairies, someone of such a high status, and not only that she falls for a humble man, but in addition to that, he has an ass-head. Oberon is satisfied that Titania has undergone humiliation great enough, and he finally cancels the spell. This can be seen as cruel and malicious asserting of his authority.

6.2.4. ANALYSIS OF TITANIA

The name Titania, according to Hilský, was actually inspired by Ovid's character Diana in his *Metamorphosis*. Although, Diana was a chaste woman, unlike Titania, who acts in a completely opposite way. This fact attributes to the inner inconsistency of her character.⁶⁵

Titania acts as a woman with a great inner power, being respected by others – apart from her husband, Oberon. She gives the impression of a strong woman, ruling the fairyland with a firm hand and she does not conform to the will of her husband easily. Quite surprisingly, she is the only woman in the play that is spellbound by magic, which can sound a bit ironic. Because neither Helena or Hermia fall under the effect of Oberon's spells – it was Lysander and Demetrius from the human level of the play, and then from the "fairy" level, it is only Titania who is charmed. But in fact, Titania's own magic powers are not of a great importance in the comedy. More important is her role in the fairy land and the status of Oberon's wife. It is more about her behaviour than about her supernatural powers, she does not use it at all, unlike Oberon.

However, Walters in her article "Oberon and Masculinity in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*" argues that the role of the fairy queen was perceived differently: it was not the king who controlled the authority, but the queen. Apart from the authority, she enjoyed sexual relationships with her captives. From this point of view, Titania is not a disobedient wife, but rather her typical features of the behaviour of the fairy queen are inhibited by Oberon. When he fails to persuade her to give up

⁶⁵ William, Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream – Sen noci svatojánské*, trans. Martin Hilský (Brno: Atlantis, 2010), 18.

on the Indian boy, he forces his will by manipulation and magic.⁶⁶ This corresponds to the “*renaissance perception of women as disorderly, unruly, and untrustworthy.*”⁶⁷

Hippolyta, the queen of the Amazons, has some features in common with Titania. Apart from the fact that they are both queens, they are capable women with a strong will. They are both oppressed by men who assert their authority on them. Hippolyta had to give up her warrior career as she was defeated in a battle by Theseus, yet she is not going to marry him unwillingly. In several situations she confronts Theseus, though, she is mild, and they are not arguing openly as the other couple. Though, when Hippolyta expresses impatience and strict criticism when watching the performance by Athenian craftsmen. On the other hand, Theseus in this scene expresses more patience, their roles switched.

6.2.5. SUMMARY

In the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which partly takes a place in a fairy land, the most significant characters involved with magic are Titania and Oberon, the queen and the king of the fairies. Their relationship is disharmonic, and there is an obvious tension, which is caused by jealousy, and by the fact that Oberon requires his wife to be completely obedient. He punishes her for her disorderly behaviour in a humiliating way and it can be said that it is a way to assert his authority. Although, Titania is a strong, stubborn woman, who refuses to be in a subordinate role. A possible explanation is that Titania's behaviour is, in fact, common for the queen of the fairies generally. She is treated as an unruly woman by Oberon, and the fact is that she is a powerful woman and it is maybe only her fight for equality with her husband. It cannot be said about her that she would be evil from her essence, from this point of view, she is only a passionate and disobedient woman.

⁶⁶ Lisa, Walters, “Oberon and Masculinity in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,” *A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes, and Reviews* 26 (2013): 157-8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 158.

6.3. TRAGEDY: MACBETH

The tragedy *Macbeth* was written in the year 1606 and its main theme is a crime of regicide.⁶⁸ The supernatural and magical power extensively influence the course of the play. There are two main subjects of the analysis: the characters of Lady Macbeth and the Three Witches. The witchcraft itself is a strong motif in the play, and the fact is that the witch hunts were associated with great cruelty in Scotland, which is the setting of the play. As Hilský says, King James was personally interested into witchcraft, he wrote a book *Daemonology* (1597), which supported the witch hunts. In his book, he states that witches are involved with the devil and that their aim is to destroy king who rules from the will of God. Hilský adds that creation of chaos and ability to foretell the future was commonly ascribed to witches in Shakespeare's age.⁶⁹ The principal source for this chapter is *Macbeth* in a bilingual edition, translated by Hilský.

6.3.1. ANALYSIS OF THE WEIRD SISTERS

The "Weird Sisters" or the "Three Witches" are present in the play from the very beginning. Hilský mentions that the origin of the Weird Sisters is derived from Andrew Wyntoun's "*The Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*", who invented these characters.⁷⁰ Their influence on the court of events in the play – and namely on Macbeth's decisions – is crucial. They do not use charms in the true sense, at least not at the beginning of the play, as they foretell the future. However, they do not speak clearly about the visions, the Three Witches talk in riddles towards Macbeth and Banquo. When the thanes want to know more, the witches disappear.

When Banquo encounters the Weird Sisters for the first time, he describes them as wild, withered creatures with beards. Hilský explains that bearded women were considered witches in the Elizabethan period.⁷¹ They are not described in any way later in the play.

⁶⁸ William, Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, trans. Martin Hilský (Brno: Atlantis, 2015), 20.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 70.

The Weird Sisters always appear and leave the scene together. In addition, the act of entering and leaving the scene is always related to storm or at least thunders. Typically for Shakespeare's plays, the portrayal of chaos is connected to the impact on nature – this could be seen also in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In *Macbeth*, when the murder is committed, a heavy storm and a strong wind come.

Apart from that, there is a connection between the witches and animals, in their dialogues, they mention "killing swine" or transforming themselves into rat – both these were ascribed to witches, Hilský mentions that Scottish witches were believed to harm animals. And the theory that witches had the ability to transform into animals was spread likewise.⁷²

Another significant scene can be found in Act I, scene 3., where the witches dance and conjure. The symbolic of number three is important there and it repeats in the course of the play. Not only that there are three witches, they also repeat the word "thrice", and sometimes, there are some parts of dialogues repeated for three times in the tragedy. The apparitions that are later conjured and successively appear are also three: an apparition with armed head, a bloody child, and a crowned child with a tree in his hand. The number three is believed to have a magic power.

[I.3] ALL
*"The Weird Sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus go, about, about,
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace, the charm's wound up."*⁷³

Later in the play [Act III, scene 5.] appears Hecate, who was a goddess of witchcraft, according to Greek mythology. Gibson and Esra add that she could take

⁷² William, Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, trans. Martin Hilský (Brno: Atlantis, 2015), 67-69.

⁷³ Ibid., 68-70.

“triple or many-faced form” on her.⁷⁴ She describes herself as “*the mistress of yours charms*” and she reprimands the witches for talking to Macbeth into riddles – it leads him to commit terrible acts as murdering, and although they did not use magic to affect him, he acted on the basis of their predictions. However, they use their magic to conjure the three apparitions that were already mentioned above with the help of a potion they created, made of various animal parts and herbs.

All the mentioned facts about the Weird Sisters fit into the Shakespeare’s age image of witches – they are obviously in relation with dark spirits, they conjure, dance, and create potions. They are witches in the true sense. Although, it is necessary to realize that the witches do not try to persuade Macbeth to do anything, they just state what will happen, foretelling the future.

6.3.2. ANALYSIS OF LADY MACBETH

The first time that Lady Macbeth enters the scene is Act I, when she receives a letter from Macbeth, reacting by making a comment on his personality – she thinks he is too weak. Since the very first scene, Lady Macbeth gives an impression of a strong and ambitious woman, who is encouraged to support Macbeth to reach what the witches foretold him – becoming Thane of Glamis and King of Scotland.

In the monologue that follows, Lady Macbeth wishes to get rid of compassion, feminine softness, and weakness. It reminds of a conjuration, and although she does not conjure the devil directly, there is no doubt she invokes darkness and evil spirits:

[I.5] LADY MACBETH

*“(…) Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood,
Stop up th’access and passage to remorse,
(…) Come, thick night,*

⁷⁴ Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare’s Demonology: A Dictionary*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 126.

*And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of Hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry, 'Hold, hold.'*"⁷⁵

When she says "unsex" me, there may be, as Gibson and Esra suggest, apart from getting rid of feminine weakness, relation to the Weird Sisters – it was mentioned that they were bearded, which is unquestionably unwomanly.⁷⁶

In most of her monologues, she is doubting and insulting Macbeth's manhood, calling him a coward and actually, she proves more determination and courage than Macbeth does. While he has inner conflict, doubting whether he shall murder Duncan or not, Lady Macbeth is manipulative, showing inhuman cruelty and insistency. By her determination, she manages to persuade her husband to the horrible act of cruelty. After committing the murder, she shows more rationality than Macbeth, who feels the burden of guilt, while Lady Macbeth remains cold and calm.

However, their roles switch later, after the murder of Banquo. Both the characters of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth undergo development in the course of the play. While Lady Macbeth is a strong and determined woman with no conscience at the beginning of the tragedy, the responsibility of committing the terrible acts and the feeling of guilt and growing feeling of anxiety finally drives her mad. She is hallucinating at night, walking in her nightgown, and making confessions. Lady Macbeth rubs her hands as if she were washing them: she feels the sin of murder on her hands and is not able to get rid of it. Finally, as the guilt is unbearable for her, she commits a suicide.

It seems that Lady Macbeth and her husband reversed their roles: Macbeth's coldness and evilness grow, and while he displayed weakness and little courage at the beginning of the play, he turns to be a villain with no moral constraints. He is later identified with the devil, and the rumours go that he can cure ill people and foretell

⁷⁵ William, Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, trans. Martin Hilský (Brno: Atlantis, 2015), 88-90.

⁷⁶ Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 140.

the future – the special skills he gained probably thanks to some devilish powers. His monologues of conjurations of dark magic and the connection to the devil remind of Faustus and his involvement with the devil, whom he sold his soul.⁷⁷

Both the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are contradictory. Lady Macbeth is strongest at the beginning of the play, where Macbeth is most weak. They both involve with evil spirits and they got punished for that, as it drives them mad. Though, Macbeth's madness is related to his weakness, while Lady Macbeth's madness is more related to anxiety.

6.3.3. SUMMARY

The portrayal of the Three Witches and their acts completely fits into the Renaissance idea. The same case is Lady Macbeth, though, she is not a witch in the true sense, her character shows features of evil and involvement with occultist dark powers. The fact that she wants to get rid of feminine softness suggests that she wants to be equal or even superior to men. Macbeth does not assert his authority on her, she is the stronger one who has to push Macbeth to act. The analysed characters impersonate pure evil and their role is crucial in the play, as well as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as they influence other characters and overall development of the play.

6.4. ROMANCE: THE TEMPEST

The romance *The Tempest* was probably written between the years 1610 and 1611, and it is Shakespeare's last complete play.⁷⁸ The main theme is the father-daughter relationship between Prospero, the magician, and his daughter, Miranda. In addition, there is a strong theme of revenge. Unlike other plays, such as, for example, *The Tragical History of Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* or *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, there is white magic used in *The Tempest*. Prospero is not involved with the devil and although he uses magical abilities of spirits and plays a trick on Alonso and

⁷⁷ William, Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, trans. Martin Hilský (Brno: Atlantis, 2015), 155.

⁷⁸ Sandra, Clark, *Shakespeare: The Tempest (Penguin Critical Studies)* (Suffolk: Penguin Books, 1986), 7.

his company, he wants to punish them but he does not cause any serious harm to them, his purpose seems to be to teach them a lesson.

6.4.1. MAGICAL WORLD OF *THE TEMPEST* COMPARED TO THAT OF *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*

As Clark in her book *Shakespeare: The Tempest (Penguin Critical Studies)* says, there can be found a certain analogy with the comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The similarity does not lie only in the setting, but also in the usage of human as well as supernatural characters. Besides, there is a resemblance between Puck as a spirit of Oberon and Ariel as a spirit of Prospero.⁷⁹

To some extent, Prospero is a similar kind of character to Oberon, as both of them use white magic and rule the nature. The difference is that Oberon is a supernatural character, while Prospero is a human with magical abilities. While both of them seem to be good sorcerers that are benevolent on the surface, they are in fact manipulative men that want to maintain their authority. While Oberon asserts his authority on Titania, Prospero forces his daughter Miranda to behave as he wishes. Both of the men feel superior.

6.4.2. PROSPERO'S MAGIC

At the beginning of the play, Prospero says of himself that he is a scholar that gave up rule over Milan to study "liberal arts", and it is obvious that those were occultist studies. Later, it is mentioned that he knows the art of necromancy, which fits into the concept of magicians in the Elizabethan era. Despite this, he is a sorcerer that uses white magic. To practice the magic, he uses the abilities of spirit Ariel, who obeys his commands, which includes causing storms and taking different forms on him, as mermaid or harpy.

At the same time, there is mentioned a magic book in the play. Prospero mentions it himself several times, referring to it as to "*volumes that I prize above my dukedom*".⁸⁰ Later in the play, the magic book is mentioned by Caliban, who abets

⁷⁹ Sandra, Clark, *Shakespeare: The Tempest (Penguin Critical Studies)* (Suffolk: Penguin Books, 1986), 7.

⁸⁰ William, Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1994), 12.

Stefano and Trinculo to destroy Prospero by burning his books - he says that Prospero will not be able to use his magical abilities without them.

Apart from that, it seems that Prospero uses a magic wand. The usage of a magic wand was not mentioned in the plays about magicians that I described previously. By the end of the play, however, Prospero declares that he will break the wand and bury it in the earth and that he will drown his magic book. This is connected to the fact that he makes the decision to give up on his magic completely.

Moreover, Prospero ascribes a great importance to the stars, Fortune, and astronomy – which again agrees with Renaissance interest in these sciences. It can be seen in Prospero’s monologue:

[I.2] PROSPERO

*“By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune –
Now my dear lady – hath mine enemies
Brought to this shore: and by my prescience
I find my zenith doth depends upon
A most auspicious star, whose influence
If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes
Will ever after droop.”*⁸¹

6.4.3. PROSPERO AND WOMEN

Although it seems that Prospero is a character that is portrayed positively, he, in fact, embodies the patriarchal order of society. The role of the women in the play is inferior. Prospero’s wife does not appear in the play at all, she is mentioned only once by Prospero when he is talking to Miranda:

[I.2] PROSPERO

*“Thy mother was piece of virtue, and
She said thou wast my daughter...”*⁸²

⁸¹ William, Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1994), 12.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 8.

It can be assumed that she does not play an important role, and she is not mentioned anymore in the romance. There are several women mentioned that were nurturing Miranda when she was a child, but their role is not important at all. Prospero points out that he educated Miranda himself and praises himself for it, as he considers himself a good father and tutor. To some extent, he is maybe right - it cannot be said that he would somehow neglect the education or care of his daughter. On the other hand, as was mentioned already, he controls everything that Miranda does and he suppresses her own will.

When he is talking to Miranda, he addresses her nicely, as "*a cherubin*", or "*dear heart*". However, he seems to be pursuing his authority and superiority, he is manipulating her all the time. He loves her no doubts, however, he shows authoritative behaviour as he wants to control Miranda's life all the time. He plans her meeting with the young Prince Ferdinand from the very beginning, and then manipulate the relationship till the end of the play. The manipulation is obvious since the Act I, scene 2., when he plans to allure Ferdinand on Ariel's magic song. Ferdinand is bewildered by Miranda as well as she is by him. Though, it is all planned by Prospero, as he himself declares:

[I.2] PROSPERO

"They are both in either's powers: but this swift business

I must uneasy make (...)".⁸³

Prospero shows his cruelty towards his daughter, saying her "to obey" and act as he wishes. The cruelty lies in his manipulation of the whole course of events. On the one hand, he hopes his daughter and Ferdinand to fell in love with other, but at the same time, he lets them go through all the difficulties and complications. At the end of the play, he admits that it was all just testing of Ferdinand's love. Despite this, it is obvious that he wanted to have control over the situation and namely, over his daughter. This is similar to the behaviour of Oberon, who wants his wife Titania to be obedient as well. Both of them prove to maintain the patriarchal rule over their empires – Oberon of the Athenian wood and Prospero of the island.

⁸³ William, Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1994), 23.

6.4.4. SYCORAX, CALIBAN AND ARIEL

Although, it is not only Miranda who is under the control of Prospero. There is Caliban, the son of Sycorax, “*the foul witch*”, or “*damned witch*” as Prospero describes her. He is a slave to Prospero, and as Gibson and Esra state, he is “*part-human and part-monstrous creature.*”⁸⁴ He is simple-minded and despite Miranda’s efforts to teach him good manners, he remains driven by wild instincts. Even though Miranda is the embodiment of a goodness, she despises with Caliban and she speaks of him as of a villain:

[1.2] MIRANDA

“Tis a villain, sir,

I do not love to look on.

(...)

Abhorred slave,

*Which any print of goodness will not take”*⁸⁵

As Caliban attempted to rape her, she gave up trying to make him more human. His mother Sycorax does not appear in the play herself, however, she is mentioned many times by Prospero, Ariel, and Caliban as well.

Sycorax was a powerful witch born in Argier, from where she was expelled for her evil sorcery. She ruled the island then, and Ariel together with other spirits that are not described in more detail, was in her service, though, he refused to fulfil Sycorax’s vicious commands and she, therefore, punished him by confining him into cloven pine which caused him a great suffering. According to Prospero’s monologues, it seems that she was a powerful and cruel witch, or “*hag*”, as he describes her. Caliban mentions that his mother’s god was Setebos, who, according to Gibson and Esra, may be a term for the devil.⁸⁶ Sycorax was assumingly wicked and evil in her essence. Though, as it was mentioned before, she does not appear in the play herself, her role is not of a

⁸⁴ Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare’s Demonology: A Dictionary*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 45.

⁸⁵ William, Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1994), 17.

⁸⁶ Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare’s Demonology: A Dictionary*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 207.

great importance and her character can be only assumed from the references of other characters.

The spirit Ariel is in Prospero's service, and he is partly under his control as well. The magician blackmails him by the fact that he saved him by freeing him from the mentioned imprisonment. Although Ariel is benevolent and he does not seem to be suffering with Prospero, he dreams about liberty. He is not a slave in the true sense, nor is he imprisoned, as, for example, Caliban, but he has to fulfil Prospero's commands.

6.4.5. SUMMARY

In *The Tempest*, a strong woman character is missing. From this point of view, the romance is different from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Macbeth*. Although the evil witch Sycorax is mentioned, she does not appear in the play herself and she, therefore, cannot influence the course of the play. The most significant and influencing is the character of the magician Prospero, who seems to be asserting his authority over all the residents – temporary or permanent, of the island. On the one hand, he is kind to his daughter Miranda and seemingly, he does everything for her to be satisfied. On the other, he strictly controls her life and everything she does, requiring her to be obedient. Miranda cannot make her own choices and all the actions are controlled by her father, he even plans her falling in love, and then influences the whole course of events. Miranda's mother does not appear in the play at all, and it seems that generally, the role of women in the play is minor. The play portrays the strictly patriarchal rule of Prospero, who seems to be a good sorcerer and father at the first sight, but who in fact seeks control over everything and suppressing free will of his daughter, Caliban, and Ariel too.

6.5. HISTORY PLAY: HENRY VI, PART I

The history play *Henry VI, Part I* was written around the year 1590 and it is set in the context of the beginning of the War of the Roses and the territorial disputes

between England and France.⁸⁷ The role of magic is important in this play, namely because of the character of Joan La Pucelle, a strong, fearless, and resilient woman who shows more bravery than all the French leaders. She claims that she is determined by God to save the country, though, she is dominated by demonic powers and ends up burned up at a stake.

6.5.1. JOAN LA PUCELLE, THE ENGLISH SCOURGE

As Gibson and Esra claim in *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary*: "*Pucelle means 'maid' in French, but is related to the old English slang word 'puzzel', which means 'whore'. Thus Joan's name is a double entendre and signifies her real corruption as a witch...*"⁸⁸ This fact confirms the contradictory view on Joan, who is called "*holy maid*", "*divinest creature*" but also "*devil or devil's Dam*" and "*trull*" in the play. The different perceptions of her vary depending on whether the Englishmen or the Frenchmen speak about her. From the French perspective, she is the saviour sent by God, while from the English, she is a witch interlocked with the devil.

At the beginning of the play, when she first meets with the Dauphin Charles, she claims that she has abilities of heavenly origin to save France and that her visions of God's mother give her no other choice than fulfil her duty. She states that she is most courageous of all women and proves it by winning a combat with the Dauphin himself, who, bewildered, gives her trust and abides by her directions. He seems to be attracted to her, impressed by her capability, but Joan refuses him, claiming that she surrenders everything to her aim of saving the country.

Actually, the situation is unimaginable when the context of the time is taken into an account. A young woman is entrusted by French king, based on her prophecy, to lead the army. Though, she proves that she is capable by relieving Orleans and encouraging the Dauphin and the French army.

⁸⁷ William, Shakespeare, *Histories: Volume I*. (London: Everyman Library, 1994), xiv.

⁸⁸ Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary*. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 135.

6.5.2. JOAN AS EVIL WITCH

While Joan is praised and honoured by the French, proclaiming that she shall be France's saint, the Englishmen lead by Talbot doubt the origin of Joan's powers and blame her for conjuring. They ask her to give her soul to whom she serves, meaning apparently the devil. For them, she is the "woman clad in armour".⁸⁹ It is hardly believable for them that a woman can beat the whole army of soldiers that were previously invincible. Talbot says that it is the fear that Pucelle uses as a weapon, not the physical force. This statement may be true, as the soldiers are running away, driven by fear of Joan. Talbot's belief in Joan's involvement with the devil and black magic eventually proves to be true. Later in the play, Pucelle's achievements are ruined after series of battles, when the French are finally beaten by the English. Joan then conjures the evil spirits and she is willing to sacrifice her body and soul.

[V.3] PUCELLE

*"You speedy helpers, that are substitutes
Under the lordly monarch of the north,
Appear and aid me in this enterprise.
(...)
Cannot my body nor blood – sacrifice
Entreat you to your wanted furtherance?
Then take my soul; my body, soul, and all
Before that England give the French the foil."*⁹⁰

Although the conjuring is successful, the spirits refuse to help her, the situation finally resulting in a complete defeat and Joan ends up captured by York.

Joan is adjudged to be burned to death for witchcraft, and it is clear, that she is completely insane. When her father, a shepherd, is asked to witness at the court, she disowns him, proclaiming that she is of royal origin. She insists on her statement she made at the beginning of the play, that she is innocent holy maid chosen by God to

⁸⁹ William, Shakespeare, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Edition Limited, 1996), 7.

⁹⁰ William, Shakespeare, *Histories: Volume I*. (London: Everyman Library, 1994), 97.

exceed miracles. The accusation of involvement with evil spirits is denied by her. Joan's final monologue portrays her madness, confusion, and the fact that she speaks against what she said previously, still changing her statements. She claims that she is pregnant, even though she proclaimed her purity before. She clearly loses control over her sanity and proclamations. When it is clear, that her life cannot be saved, she curses her enemies.

6.5.3. SUMMARY

Joan differs from the female characters that were described previously, as she can be considered a prophetess and a witch at the same time. Even though she seems to be innocent and determined by God as she herself proclaims at the beginning of the play, it turns out that she is involved with evil spirits and the devil. Despite the initial lack of trust from French king, the Dauphin, she manages to win the battles that appeared to be lost and becomes a threat to the English army. She bewilders not only the Dauphin, but the whole France, and manages to encourage the army. Though, by the English, she is considered a witch from the very beginning, as they do not believe that a woman could be so strong and successful leader and fighter.

Despite being underestimated at first, she proves bravery, capability, and strength to such extent that she is entrusted the leadership of the army, which is unprecedented when the time context is taken into an account. Though, when the victories turn into defeats, she relies herself on evil spirits and confirms the suspicion of being a witch. It can be said that Joan agrees with the Renaissance idea of a witch, as she is capable of conjuring, she has visions and a supernatural power that helps her to win over English army. Besides, the fact that she is burned at a stake completes the idea and connection of Joan to witchcraft.

7. CONCLUSION

The aim of the bachelor thesis is to present Shakespeare's characters who are associated with magic, the supernatural, and witchcraft and particularly his portrayal of female and male characters in the context of the Elizabethan era.

First, the definitions of terms that were later frequently used in the paper were provided. Next, the context of the connection between the Elizabethan period and magic was described, as it played important role in Shakespeare's age. Belief in the supernatural and occultism was present in England, as it persisted despite the rise of science, and it influenced many aspects of life.

Connected to this, the supernatural elements and theme of sorcery were present in the literature of Shakespeare's time. Supernatural characters were among others fairies, mentioned in the plays of John Lyly or Robert Greene. Another significant figure was the character of a practising magician that appeared, for example, in Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* or Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. A different perspective provided Benjamin Jonson, who wrote about alchemists and magicians in a humorous way. Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, on the other hand, portrays magician Archimago and his illusionary spells.

The chapter on witchcraft and sorceresses, their status in society, and their portrayal in literature is included. The notable fact is that women connected to magic were treated differently than men. While men practising magic were paid for their services, women were regarded outcasts of the society and the general belief was that they were worshipping the devil. Women accused of witchcraft were considered evil, and they were strictly persecuted. Next, I named several examples of witches in literature, as Circe, Hecate, Medea, Witch of Endor, and Morgan Le Fay. It was not uncommon that sorceresses were described as goddesses in Greek mythology. The perception of evilness or goodness of these women often varied through time. However, all the mentioned women are portrayed as powerful. In the Elizabethan drama, the character of a sorceress was not that frequent, and if it occurred, then it

was often inspired by mythology. The characters of witches were often portrayed in idealised or a humorous way.

Shakespeare's selected were analysed: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest* and *Henry VI, Part I*. I focused on his portrayal of the supernatural and namely on the female characters of his magical world. On the surface, it seems that he shows women as malevolent and devilish. Though, it is necessary to take a look at their characters in more detail.

In the comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I analysed the character of Titania in relation to her husband Oberon. Titania's supernatural powers are not that important in the play as her status of the queen of magical fairyland – due to this status, she is treated with great respect by others. However, her husband sees her as a disobedient wife and to assert his authority, he punishes her in a humiliating way by bewitching her. Titania's unruly behaviour can be seen as her fight for equality. In addition to that, Hippolyta, the queen of the Amazons, can be compared to Titania. Despite the fact that Hippolyta's relationship to Theseus is more harmonic, it has to be taken into an account that Hippolyta was actually defeated by Theseus in a battle and had to give up her career of a warrior. Both the women's wills are suppressed by their male counterparts.

The tragedy *Macbeth* shows witchcraft in its true sense, Lady Macbeth and the Weird Sisters are evil, both connected to conjuring and causing a chaos. The Weird Sisters are ugly creatures that are able to foretell the future, conjure spirits or transform themselves into animals. Simply put, they clearly fit into the Elizabethan image of witches. Lady Macbeth is invoking evil spirits, desiring to get rid of her feminine "weakness", which suggests that she wants to be equal, or even superior to men. In fact, she proves more courage and determination than Macbeth, persuading him to kill. Lady Macbeth is the one who is manipulative and cruel at the beginning. However, the behaviour of her and of her husband later switches, as she feels the burden of the guilt, she becomes insane and finally commits a suicide. It can be said that both the Weird Sisters and Lady Macbeth agree with the Renaissance idea of women involved with magic as evil witches.

In the romance *The Tempest*, a strong female character is missing. Prospero, the magician, who at the first look seems to be a positive character, is, in fact, showing authoritative and manipulative behaviour towards his daughter Miranda. She is the most important female character in *The Tempest*, though, she is obedient and cannot make her own choices as Prospero controls her life. The role of women in the play is minor, and it portrays Prospero's patriarchal rule.

In *Henry VI, Part I.*, I focused on the character of Joan La Pucelle, a prophetess who claims to be predetermined by God to save France. Although she is underestimated by the Dauphin initially, she bewilders him by her abilities and is entrusted leading the army. However, she is seen as a threat and evil witch by the English, because they do not believe that a woman could have such a success in battles. This later proves to be true, as Joan shows features that are ascribed to witches – she conjures evil spirits, the devil, and she is willing to sacrifice her body and soul to gain success in battles again. She ends up insane, similarly to Lady Macbeth.

As a conclusion, some of the female characters analysed are malevolent and there is a clear connection to evil spirits, as in the case of Lady Macbeth or Joan La Pucelle. However, their behaviour may be regarded as an effort to be equal to men – and they often prove to be more courageous than men. On the other hand, Titania's or Miranda's wills are manipulated by Oberon and Prospero, who make an effort to control their lives, eventually punishing them for disobedience. Despite the fact that both Oberon and Prospero seem to be good sorcerers, they force their authorities and superiority over the female characters.

From this point of view, it seems that Shakespeare actually overturns the image of male and female characters who use magic. It is necessary to realize that he portrays women as strong and powerful, giving them far more important role than other authors of his time.

8. RESUMÉ

Ve své bakalářské práci jsem se zabývala tématem magie a nadpřirozena, zejména ve vztahu k ženským a mužským postavám, vyskytujícím se ve světě Shakespearových her. Na první pohled by se mohlo zdát, že Shakespeare vyobrazuje ženy jako čistě záporné hrdinky, zatímco mužské postavy, například v roli čaroděje, se zdají být často postavami kladnými. Avšak musíme vzít v potaz fakt, že hrdinky jsou povětšinou velmi mocnými, démonickými ženami, jež jsou často utlačovány mužskými protějšky. Zdá se, že tak jejich chování můžeme přisuzovat snaze vymezit se vůči tomuto prosazování mužské autority.

V úvahu musíme vzít mimo jiné i kontext alžbětinské doby ve vztahu k nadpřirozenu. Navzdory pokroku na poli vědy i vzdělání ve společnosti stále přetrvávala víra v nadpřirozeno, magii a čarodějnictví všeobecně, pramenící ze zájmu o okultismus, alchymii a astronomii. Významnou osobností alžbětinské doby byl kupříkladu filozof a okultista John Dee působící mimo jiné i ve službách samotné královny Alžběty, jenž byl znám díky schopnostem jako je předpovídání budoucnosti a komunikace s nadpřirozenými bytostmi.

Práce dále mapuje zpracování tématu magie a postav s ní spjatých v dílech Shakespearových současníků, jež poskytuje možnost do určité míry porovnat zpracování této tematiky z různých úhlů pohledu. V dramatech Johna Lylyho, Roberta Greena nebo Benjamina Jonsona se často vyskytují víly, avšak není jim přikládána příliš důležitá role, spíše vystupují v rámci sboru a tvoří dekorativní funkci. Alžbětinští autoři dále často do svých děl zahrnovali postavu mága. Příkladem je například hra Roberta Greena, *Paměťhodná historie o otci Baconovi a otci Bungayovi*, inspirována skutečnou postavou Rogera Bacona. Jistou protiváhou je potom Marlowova *Tragická historie života a smrti doktora Fausta*. Ačkoliv Faust vede jakýsi vnitřní souboj a váhá, zda se postavit na stranu dobra, či zla, zlo nakonec zvítězí – zaprodá tedy svou duši ďáblu, a na oplátku získá služby Mefistofela. Již výše zmíněný Jonson potom na obdobné téma nahlíží úplně jinak – postavu alchymisty nebo ďábla vyobrazuje komickým způsobem a podává tak satirický obraz. Posledním zmíněným autorem je Edmund Spenser, jenž ve svém alegorickém eposu *Královna víl* zobrazuje postavu kouzelníka Archimaga, jehož magie spočívá ve vyvolávání iluzí.

Dále se práce podrobněji zabývá čarodějnictvím a rozebírá to, jak na něj nahlížela společnost. Faktem je, že kupříkladu v dobách antického Řecka bylo na čarodějnice nahlíženo jako na mocné a tajemné ženy, jež byly schopny ovládat přírodu a způsobovat tak chaos. Avšak tento pohled se postupem času začal proměňovat, ženy spjaté s magií byly považovány za necudná stvoření, jež zaprodala své duše ďáblu, a často byly nuceny žít na pokraji společnosti. Naproti tomu muži zabývající se magií byli vnímáni spíše jako mágové, kromě toho, že za své služby byli často placeni, byli vnímáni jako vážení a jejich postavení ve společnosti tak bylo diametrálně odlišné. Již bible hovoří o čarodějnictví jako o smrtelném hříchu, tento názor se později stal všeobecně přijímaným, a čarodějnice se tak staly pronásledovanými. V Anglii se konaly čarodějnické procesy již od dvanáctého století, v alžbětinské době potom probíhalo tvrdé stíhání, které zmařilo mnoho nevinných životů, a také ovlivnilo všeobecnou atmosféru ve společnosti.

Postava čarodějnice, nebo spíše čarodějky, se v literatuře vyskytuje již v řeckých mýtech, bibli nebo artušovských legendách. Kupříkladu Kirké byla v Odyssei popisována jako bohyně, na Hekaté bylo nahlíženo obdobně, ovšem byla spjata s konáním zla, stejně jako Médea. V bibli potom můžeme nalézt čarodějnici z Endoru, která měla schopnost vyvolávání duchů zemřelých. Artušovské legendy zmiňují rozporuplnou Morganu Le Fay. V dramatech alžbětinské doby se čarodějky objevují například v Lylyho hrách, avšak často jsou založeny na mytologických postavách. Čarodějnice potom můžeme nalézt například ve hrách již zmíněného Lylyho, Jonsona nebo Middletona. Avšak je nutno podotknout, že se jedná o často komická nebo idealizovaná vyobrazení, pokud vezmeme v úvahu dobový kontext.

Praktická část práce se zaměřuje na analýzu těchto čtyř Shakespearových dram: *Sen noci svatojánské*, *Macbeth*, *Bouře* a *Král Jindřich VI*, díl první. V první zmíněné hře jsou nejvýraznějšími postavami magického světa vládci říše víl, Oberon a Titanie. Na první pohled je zřejmé, že mezi nimi panuje jisté napětí, Titanie se odmítá podříditi Oberonově vůli a on ji za toto chování potrestá poměrně ponižujícím způsobem. Její odhodlanost a neústupnost můžeme považovat za jistou snahu vymezit se vůči chování krále víl a vyrovnat se mu.

V *Macbethovi* se setkáváme se třemi čarodějnicemi, děsivými stvořeními schopnými předpovídat budoucnost a způsobovat chaos. Mluví zejména v hádankách, mají zásadní vliv na Macbethovo rozhodování, a tedy i na vývoj děje. Můžeme říci, že kompletně zapadají do představy o čarodějnicích alžbětinské doby. Lady Macbeth zosobňuje silnou a cílevědomou ženu, která vyzývá duchy a žádá je, aby ji zbavili ženské jemnosti a slabosti, sama přitom stále zpochybňuje Macbethovu mužnost, ona je tou silnější a odhodlanější, ačkoliv v negativních konotacích. Chová se ke svému muži velmi manipulativně a přesvědčí ho k aktu vraždy. V průběhu hry se však tyto role začnou obracet, Lady Macbeth dožene svědomí a hrůza napáchaných činů, zešílí, a nakonec spáchá sebevraždu. Macbeth se naopak změní v muže bez morálních zábran, je spojován s temnými silami, a dokonce ztotožňován s ďáblem.

Je nutno si povšimnout, že v dramatu *Bouře* výrazná ženská postava chybí. Analýza se tedy zaměřuje na čaroděje Prospera a jeho vztah k jeho dceři Mirandě. Obraz Prospera zapadá do renesanční představy o čaroději – je učencem, vlastní kouzelnické knihy, zajímá se o okultismus a astronomii. Ačkoliv se zdá, že je postavou ryze kladnou, musíme vzít v potaz, že je, stejně jako již zmíněný Oberon, ztělesněním patriarchálního řádu společnosti. Svou dceru Mirandu má plně pod kontrolou, zasahuje do jejího života ve všech aspektech, chová se manipulativně a nedává jí prostor pro prosazení její vlastní vůle.

Posledním zmíněným dramatem je *Král Jindřich VI.*, kde se analýza zabývá postavou Jany z Arku, jež tvrdí, že je vyvolená Bohem. Musí překonat prvotní nedůvěru, jíž čelí ze strany francouzského krále, avšak ten jí nakonec uvěří a svěří jí velení armády. Ačkoliv Francouzi ji oslavují jako spasitelku, Angličané ji obviňují z toho, že je spřažená s ďáblem. Tato tvrzení se nakonec ukáží být pravdivými, Jana je po počátečních neúspěších zoufalá a je ochotná obětovat svou duši i tělo temným silám.

Ačkoliv hrdinky jako například Lady Macbeth nebo Jana z Arku nemůžou být považovány za kladné, můžeme jejich chování připisovat jakési snaze stát se mužům rovným. Naopak Titanie a Miranda jsou neustále kontrolovány a manipulovány ze strany mužů, kteří si tak vynucují jejich poslušnost. Závěrem můžeme říci, že ačkoliv to tak na první pohled nevypadá, Shakespeare dává ženám mnohem významnější roli než většina autorů jeho doby.

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10. ANNOTATION

- Surname and name: Štänderová Pavlína
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