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REFLECTION OF DEMONOLOGY IN ART AND LITERATURE IN ENGLAND DURING THE RENAISSANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Abstract: Sorcery and sorcerers of all kinds have always occupied a significant place in the life of the people of England, which is reflected in the development of not only history, but also literature and philosophy, reflecting man's centuries-old belief in supernatural forces and the fight against them if these forces were the servants of Satan. Ironically, belief in and struggle against unclean power reached its climax during the Renaissance and Enlightenment, and it was the Renaissance that "brought to life stormy waves of irrationalism and fear" [1], giving the world the Inquisition, and "the reverse side of Renaissance" was the heyday of demonomania, which has gone down in human history as a "witch hunt". [2, pp. 134-135].

Key words: demonology, witch hunt, irrationalism, sorcery, supernatural forces, plays, works of literature, black magic.

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Introduction

Sorcery and sorcerers of all kinds have always occupied a significant place in the life of the people of England, which is reflected in the development of not only history, but also literature and philosophy, reflecting man's centuries-old belief in supernatural forces and the fight against them if these forces were the servants of Satan. Ironically, belief in and struggle against unclean power reached its climax during the Renaissance and Enlightenment, and it was the Renaissance that "brought to life stormy waves of irrationalism and fear" [1], giving the world the Inquisition, and "the reverse side of Renaissance" was the heyday of demonomania, which has gone down in human history as a "witch hunt". [2, c. 134135]. The starting point in the history of the "witch hunt" is Pope Innocent VIII's bullfight "Summis desiderantes affectibus" (1484), which officially confirmed the existence of witches and called for all means to combat them, including the Inquisition. The guide to action was the treatise of German inquisitor theologians G. Institteris and J. Sprenger "The Hammer of Witches" ("Mallēus Maleficārum" - 1486), which caused a powerful wave of witchcraft all

over Europe: from 1450 to 1550 about one hundred thousand "devil's servants" were burned in Germany alone. [3, c. 166.] The people of Albion kept up with the continent in their zeal to end "evil". The intensification of the fight against dark power can be traced back to English law: under Act 1542, witchcraft was punishable by prison, and Act 1563 already introduced the death penalty for major damage caused by witchcraft. With James I's accession to the English throne, the fight against witches became more fierce: in 1604, a law was passed under which all those suspected of sorcery (automatically accused), regardless of the amount of damage caused, were sentenced to death.

A great contribution to witch hunting in England was made by extensive literature on black magic: the book "The Discoverie of Witchcraft by R. Scot" (1584) and "A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft" by W. Perkins were particularly popular. King James I contributed to the purification of the country from witches: in 1597, while still on the throne of Scotland, he wrote the book "Daemonologie" which has been republished twice. His belief in the existence of witches was undeniable,

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and his arguments and proof are undeniable. English playwrights couldn't help but respond to the topic that is so important in society. Witches and sorcerers are frequent characters in plays from the late 16th and first half of the 17th century. The American researcher L. Barber proposed a classification of English plays of this period into 4 categories, reflecting, in general, the main trends in the interpretation of sorcery in them [5, p. 20]. The first category includes plays that present witchcraft as white magic: good wizards, fairies, alchemists, witch doctors and sorcerers act in them. Not only do they not do harm, but on the contrary, they often help the characters in the plays to get out of their predicament and find happiness. In the genre it is a comedy. The second category includes mainly historical plays whose heroes turn to black magic in order to change the course of historical events, reflecting the notion that unclean power was the most important mechanism for successfully achieving ambitious political and military goals. [6, c. 97-98]. Henry VI by W.Shakespeare – is a prime example of this. Before the decisive battle with the English army, Jeanne d'Arc appeals to the evil spirits for help: "You, my spirits, are my patrons, who have flown from the depths of the underworld, bring France back to victory!" [7, p. 173]. By denying her patronage, they doomed her to defeat and captivity.

In the second part of this play, Duchess Gloucester is ready to "summon from the abyss of the underworld spirit" [7, p. 204] in order to enthrone her husband to the English throne. The 3rd category includes plays in which witches, without being directly involved in the development of the plot, create the necessary background and atmosphere. In addition to decorative, witches are given the role of observers, commentators and even judges of the main characters' actions, as we see in Shakespeare's Macbeth. [8] Hecate: "...Macbeth is a villain. Without your witchcraft ideas. You are not the reason he fell into a vice. And he is soulless and cruel" [8, p. 57] Watching the struggle of "good and evil" in the souls of the protagonists, witches voiced the outcome of this struggle: "evil is good, good is evil.» [8, c. 6] . In the plays of the 4th category, witches act as the main characters and the whole action of the play agrees on them, but the distinctive feature of these works is that witches live in modern society with all its realities. Despite the seriousness of the theme, these plays are characterised by a somewhat ironic tone of narrative, which is reflected both in the farcical presentation of a number of scenes and in their genre: tragicomedy or comedy. T. Middleton's tragicomedy The Witch fits perfectly into this category, whose name indicates the main character. And although the action has been moved to Ravenna, the interpretation of the theme of witchcraft and the witch herself clearly fit into the context of modern English reality. The witch's name is Hecate (the ancient Greek goddess of the night, hell and witches), as is the main witch in Macbeth. She is

120 years old. She lives by witchcraft, fulfilling quite everyday orders of "clients" in the field of love and sex: her spells and potions, depending on the request, can enchant the object of love, or cause impotence. This is the order that starts the acquaintance with Hecate, who sets the play immediately in a farcical tone. Middleton's "Witch" is full of black magic paraphernalia and entourage: there is a witch's coven - under Hecate 4 - and incest - Hecate's son is her lover, and an obligatory werewolf cat sawing on a violin and turning into an evil spirit when Hecate leaves in Act 3 for the flight. All the ingredients of witchcraft potions are abundantly represented: fried rats and pickled spiders, the flesh of an unbaptized infant, the blood of a bat, the mass of various impurities: tritons, dwarves, satires, centaurs, fauns, etc., all boiled, floated and rotated around a cauldron boiling on fire. The witches in the play are vicious and vindictive, considering themselves almighty in dealing with ordinary mortals. But their intrigues fail and they suddenly appear helpless and ridiculous - the authors thus seem to reduce the degree of fear of unclean power . As in most plays in this category, the play itself was directed to Middleton by real events: it was at this time that English society was following with interest the divorce proceedings of Lady Francis Howard and the Earl of Essex, which involved the use of witchcraft to deprive the plaintiff of his potency. [10]. The literature reacted instantly to topical events and incidents, including successful "witch hunts", which provided rich material for updating the theatre repertoire. Almost all of the above works were created directly from the materials of the largest witch trials in 1621 and 1633, and the heroine witches' prototypes were real persons, contemporaries of playwrights. The authors left important evidence of the power of the British people's belief in witchcraft and their involvement in the 'witch hunt', revealing also some of the mechanisms of this 'hunt'. And although artistic interpretation of events in the plays does not allow us to call them "documentary", they are undoubtedly a kind of "chronicles" of events reflecting the objective realities of the society of that era. These plays are objectively close in the category in which they were placed by L. Barber . The tragicomedy "The Witch of Edmonton" was based on events that took place in the village of Edmonton, near London, in early 1621. Elizabeth Sawyer, a resident of the village, was accused of witchcraft and harming her fellow villagers. She confessed her atrocities and was sentenced to death by a court on 19 April 1621. This story aroused great public interest and inspired many writers. Throughout the country, songs and ballads were sung about Mother Sawyer's witchcraft and evil spirits that helped to spoil her neighbours. In the same year, the priest's pamphlet was published "The wonderful discoveries of Elizabeth Sawyer, Witch by Henry Goodcole in which he described his visit to the defendant and a conversation with her in the prison

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cell. The leading authors of those years wrote the play "The Witch of Edmont" and in the summer of 1621 have already presented it to the troupe "Servants of Prince Charles". A couple of months later, the play was performed to great acclaim at the Kurtina Theatre in London, and in December 1621 it was performed in front of James I (the last performances of this play took place at Shakespeare's Stratford-on-Avon Theatre in 2014). Success was guaranteed by both the theme and the brilliant work of the authors. The psychology of crime and criminals, revealing the motives that pushed the young Christian into the arms of Satan. And the motives were: poverty, loneliness, social humiliation, hostility and anger towards her neighbours: "persecution and hatred is as if leper" [11, p. 505]. Desperate and driven by a desire to avenge her suffering, she falls into satanic networks: "It doesn't matter if you are a witch or not, if your neighbour thinks you are" [11, p. 506]. Her whole appearance is realistic: old, miserable, dirty, doomed to poverty and rejection - no romanticisation of dark forces. There is no doubt that the authors of the early 17th century believed in the connection between their heroine and the forces of evil, but in their attitude to her there is a clear sympathy and humanism, which, according to some historians, "elevates the Edmont Witch to the level of the great plays of the Elizabethan era". [12]. The second play, representing "real witches" in real life, is the comedy "The Last Lancashire Witches" by playwrights R. Broome and T. Geywood, based on materials the last of the most sensational witch hunts in England in 1633, Lancashire County, especially the Pendel Forest area, has long been notorious as a place of activity for dark forces. In 1612 two high-profile witch cases were already attracting the attention of the whole of England: one of them, 'About the Witches of Pendel', resulted in the arrest and trial of 16 'witches' - one died in a cell before being sentenced, ten were hanged and one was sentenced to civil execution. This story, for a number of reasons, was not reflected in the dramaturgy then. But a new case of Lancashire witches in 1633 blew up all of England. A huge number of people were involved in the process: the accused, i.e. the "witches" themselves, the victims of their witchcraft, witnesses, clerics, specialists in black magic and justice workers. Interestingly, in both cases, in 1612 and 1633, the main witnesses were children: in 1612. - A 9-year-old girl, Jenneth Davis, who "noticed" her grandmother, mother, sister and neighbours in witchcraft, and in the 1633 trial, the 10-year-old Edmund Robinson. In both cases, the verdict of the accused was "guilty". The revelation of the witches in 1633 began with Edmund Robinson telling his father and then the judges about a meeting with the witches on All Saints' Day on 1 November 1633. He went out in the evening to get the cattle and saw two greyhounds on the way: suddenly one of them turned into an old woman, in whom he immediately

recognized a resident of their village, the other turned into an unknown teenager. The werewolves grabbed Edmund and, having already turned into horses, carried him somewhere. They stopped at a house where witches gathered for a coven, among whom he recognized many villagers, recognizing several neighbours who were not in harmony with his family. The boy's memory has kept all the details of his meeting with the witches, but he could not remember how he got out of there: according to his father, he was found in a state of oblivion near the cattle grazing site. Elder Robinson did not hesitate to bring his son's story to justice, and repression began in the area: 60 potential "witches" were arrested, of whom the boy identified 18. At the end of the Lancaster trial, all 18 were found guilty. Rumours of this massive revelation of Satan's accomplices reached London and the king himself became interested in the case as he ordered the criminals and both Robinsons to be taken to London for further investigation. After a meticulous interrogation in which Charles I took part, and a thorough medical examination of the accused in order to identify the devilish marks, the unexpected conclusion was that the accusation was false. This conclusion was soon confirmed by the principal witness, who admitted that he had written the whole story out of fear of being severely punished by his father for being late to meet the flock. Justice was done, but the pseudo witches were not released: the Honourable Judges, afraid of this result in stirring up the people of England, confident of their guilt, decided to put them back in their cells. [13, c. 57-68]. The Lancashire witch trial was so topical, dramatic and exciting that the company "Servants of His Majesty", without waiting for its completion, ordered playwrights T. Gaywood and R. Broome to write a play on his material urgently. Already on 29 July 1634 Lord Chancellor received a petition from the head of the troupe with a request before the premiere of "Lancashire Witches" to prohibit other troupes to play plays about witches [14, page 27]. The premiere took place just a month later on the stage of the Globe, where His Majesty's Servants were playing in the summer period. In winter, the play was repeatedly and with constant success shown at the Blackfriars theatre - according to contemporary reviews, it was the nail of the season [15]. In 1634, the play was published as a separate edition with a prologue addressed to the Earl of Dorset by T. Gaywood, which stressed the play's relevance and modernity: [we are forced from our own nation. To ground the scene that's now in agitation/ 16, c. 217]. It is significant that the authors chose the genre of comedy to interpret such serious and not very funny themes at that time. All scenes connected with witches are solved in comic and farcical keys. Satanic servants plunge society into the darkness of chaos and lawlessness, turning life upside down and creating "monstrous misery", destroying traditional connections and relationships: In the Seelie

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family, the son commands the father, the groom gives orders to the master's son, the daughter honours the mother, the maid dictates her own terms to the master's daughter, and the governess and governess decide to get married and manage the house and the former owners themselves [16, p.]. 145]. Peace and harmony in Lancashire are restored only by exposing the witches and arresting them. The playwrights used all the means from the arsenal of comedy that had accumulated by then: puns, clowning, fights, jokes, music, songs, dances and various stage effects, including "flying witches". At the same time, all the characters in the play with their experiences and fears, the village life of the villagers is portrayed in a very realistic way. The genre of comedy selected by the authors, with its entertaining attributes, should not mislead the authors' views on witchcraft and witches. The play is neither ironic nor satire on witchcraft. There is no doubt in the playwright's conviction about the reality of witchcraft and witchcraft and the guilt of the heroines, given that the verdict justifying the Lancashire 'witches' had not yet been passed by the time the play was written, as evidenced by the epilogue: 'While the right court awaits the witches...'

["...while the Witches must expect their due. By lawfull justice...16, p. 217], and when issued, was not made public. Nevertheless, the play is a comedy and carries a definitely optimistic message, and not just because the authors believe that the court will be 'right'. The genre of comedy itself, chosen by playwrights, the atmosphere of fun and laughter created in the traditions of folk and laughter culture and permeating comedy, was designed to help the audience free themselves from an irresistible fear of the power of hell - after all, it was this fear that led to hysteria, fanaticism and a cruel "witch hunt". With laughter, the authors seem to challenge a person's fear of "...all that is sacred and forbidden" Overcoming this fear, laughter clarified human consciousness and revealed the world to him in a new way" [17]. The topic of witchcraft, "witch hunting", did not leave English literature and drama with the execution of the last witch; it has continued and continues to inspire the authors. Hundreds of works have been written on this topic since then, but it is indicative that the real processes in the context of "witch hunts" reflected in the aforementioned plays of the early 17th century do not leave English writers alone.

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