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***SOUDNÉ SESTRY* TERRYHO PRATCHETTA - ANALÝZA A  
POROVNÁNÍ SE SHAKESPEAROVÝM DÍLEM**

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**TERRY PRATCHETT'S *WYRD SISTERS* - ANALYSIS AND  
COMPARISON WITH SHAKESPEARE'S WORK**

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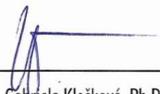


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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis deals with Terry Pratchett’s *Wyrđ Sisters*. It analyses excerpts from the book and compares them with Shakespeare’s plays that have inspired the book – *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. The thesis has three chapters. The first studies the settings, themes and characters of *Wyrđ Sisters*. The second chapter deals with philosophy behind theatre and imagination and belief. The third chapter then studies magic and witchcraft and compares Elizabethan view of magic with that seen in the book.

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## INTRODUCTION

The thesis deals with Terry Pratchett's book *Wyrd Sisters* and compares its themes, motives and settings with those of Shakespeare's plays that inspired the book. Its goal is to analyse excerpts from the book and use them to compare the original plays with Pratchett's own take on things. All of that in order to find out how *Wyrd Sisters* differs from the plays it draws on. The thesis is going to focus on shared aspects of both works and will avoid analysing the *Wyrd Sisters* as a whole as a thesis of that manner has been published previously.

Terry Pratchett was an acclaimed story writer and author of many fantasy novels who received many awards for his books and young adult novels. He was born in 1948 and died in 2015 of Alzheimer's disease. His Discworld series consists of over forty novels including *Wyrd Sisters* which is the sixth novel of the series and the second one that includes witches. It is one of the two early Pratchett's works that draws on Shakespeare's plays, the second one being *Lords and Ladies* that is inspired by *Midsummer's Night Dream*.

Given that Terry Pratchett's book uses Shakespeare's plays as the main source for its plot and setting, it is worthwhile to study the theatre of the time and compare the reality, the fiction and the parody arising from both. To do so, the thesis will be divided into three chapters. Each is going to deal with topics shared by both the originals and *Wyrd Sisters* and compare the two realities.

The first chapter is called Themes and Characters, it explores themes of guilt, doubt and revenge in order to find out how each of the authors handled these topics and if there are any differences in their approach. Similarities between characters and settings will also be dealt with there. The second chapter is named Theatre. There, the topics of philosophy and imagination will be explored. It will study how theatre and approach to it is dealt with in the book and the plays. The third and the last chapter is called Magic and Witchcraft as supernatural plays an important role in both Elizabethan drama and fantasy books. It appears to be a crucial part of the plot of *Wyrd Sisters* and the thesis is going to study how its capabilities, use and public opinion differs from that of witchcraft in Elizabethan times.

For the purpose of the thesis, *Daemonologie* by King James I of England will be used to provide a background to the study of how witches were perceived by Shakespeare's contemporaries and authorities at the time. For the theory behind Shakespeare's work, Martin Hilský's book *Shakespeare a jeviště svět* will be used alongside book by Hellen Hackett *A Short History of English Renaissance Drama*.

## 1 THEMES AND CHARACTERS

Pratchett's *Wyrd Sisters* draw on Shakespeare's plays *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. Pratchett (2006) compared Ank-Morpork to Elizabethan London and on many occasions the similarities between the settings arise in the books. The references to Shakespeare's plays range from broad to very specific and they are numerous throughout the entire book. For the purpose of this thesis only those major were chosen to be analysed and compared.

The two plays whose influence can be felt in *Wyrd Sisters* are *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. The very first page of *Wyrd Sisters* leaves no doubt as to what it is inspired by. The book starts with a coven of three witches on a moor during a thunderstorm. The first few dialogs are in fact directly taken from *Macbeth*, but immediately Pratchett puts his own spin on things. "When shall we three meet again?" There was a pause. "Well, I can do next Tuesday." (Pratchett, *Wyrd Sisters*, 1989, p. 5) This lets reader know that this will not be a serious book and that unlike *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, *Wyrd Sisters* is a comedy.

The city of Ank-Morpork may represent London but also has traits of Italian city state as it is ruled by a tyrant. The most important aspect of this is the Dysk. It is a theatre that is being built by Tomjon and his theatre company in Ank-Morpork and it is apparently the first theatre of its kind in the world. It is a counterpart to The Globe, the theatre which as Hellen Hackett (2013) wrote was where Shakespeare's theatre company would play. "All the Disc is but an Theatre, he wrote, Ane alle men and wymmen are but Players." (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 213) This extract is directly related to the play *As You Like It* and it is one of many times Shakespeare's works are referenced in the book. It is nearly a precise citation but with "world" replaced with "disc" to better fit the Discworld narrative. Ank-Morpork can be considered London also for the reason that the true heir of the kingdom flees to it and returns from it to reclaim his kingdom just like Malcolm. While this does not wholly come out the same way as in *Macbeth*, the city serves the same role.

Kingdom of Lancre in this case fulfils the role of Scotland. It has moors, deep woods and mountainous ranges that keep it isolated from the rest of the world. In a sense it is also a fairy tale kingdom, where magic is aplenty and most witches and mages come from there.

### 1.1 THEMES

The greatest difference can perhaps be found in the way main themes of Shakespeare's plays are dealt with. According to Hilský (2010) for *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* these are doubt, guilt and revenge. In *Hamlet* the theme of revenge is explored throughout the entire plot and from many different viewpoints. We see Hamlet's revenge but also that

of Laertes. The other important aspect is doubt. Hamlet often doubts whether he should enact his revenge and whether his vengeance is based on truth. Then we have *Macbeth*. The play deals with guilt that eventually turns the murderers insane and where revenge eventually comes full circle. All of these themes are also present in *Wyrd Sisters* but with Pratchett's own spin on things.

### 1.1.1 DOUBT

First take doubt as an example. A. C. Bradley (2005) wrote that the heroes and heroines in Shakespearean tragedies do not only fight their enemies but also fight with themselves. It can be found in Hamlet where entire monologues are dedicated to doubt. Nothing in the play is certain. Is the ghost real? Is it a demon or is it the spirit of Hamlet's father escaped from purgatory? Does it speak the truth? Is Claudius really a murderer and many other questions arise. Even Macbeth doubts if he should kill Duncan. The lack of doubt directly opposes the realities of Shakespeare's plays. None of the protagonists of *Wyrd Sisters* face inner strife comparable to that expressed by Shakespearean heroes like for example Hamlet.

However in *Wyrd Sisters* there is very little doubt. Everything seems certain. But that itself is a means to compare to the Shakespearean tragedy. Bradley (2005) noted that the sense of fatality and inevitability is a part of Shakespearean tragedy. Destiny is often spoken of in *Wyrd Sisters*: “‘You are witches. That means you have to care about things like truth and tradition and destiny, don't you?’ ‘That's where you've been getting it all wrong,’ said Granny. ‘Destiny is important, see, but people go wrong when they think it controls them. It's the other way around.’” (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 331) That is very much true for most of the characters in *Wyrd Sisters*. Hwel speaks about his destiny and that he had broken it by becoming a playwright. Tomjon breaks his destiny by refusing to become a king. So does the Fool. It shows where the book diverges from the plays where the characters are unable to shake the bonds of their tragic fate.

The very polar opposite of doubt is present. Overconfidence in certain things is especially apparent with the witches. They never doubt anything, until they do and then again, if they are forced to change their plans, they always do it without ever admitting doubt. It seems to be a significant part of “headology” as they call it. There are always confident that things will end up the way they want them to and quite often they do simple because they stalwartly believed it. This may have something to do with induced magic but it is

nearly impossible to tell due to how blended the borders between magic and science on Discworld are.

### **1.1.2 REVENGE**

The theme of revenge is also important to both *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. Hilský (2010) wrote that in the Elizabethan tragedies, revenge would often come full circle. By avenging a crime, the cycle would begin anew. The question of revenge is often pondered by Hamlet. However, the topic of revenge is harder to find in *Wyrd Sisters*. Some could say it is even omitted from the book entirely. Tomjon, son of the murdered king, does not even know who he is. He never wanted revenge simply because he had no idea that he was entitled to one. What brings him back to Lancre is not a need to enact justice but to earn some money and stage a play that was meant to rehabilitate Duke Felmet. This way the whole concept of staging a play to prove the guilt of the murderer is turned on its head.

But revenge is present nevertheless. The Duke goes mad entirely and then slips and falls to his death. The Duchess is imprisoned and well cared for, but she later tries to escape and despite the uncertainty that arises in the end, it would seem that the revenge is enacted on her by the kingdom itself as she is eaten or killed by the animals of the kingdom. This way justice is delivered to all the guilty without anyone getting their hands bloodied. The cycle of revenge is therefore broken. It could be presumed that this is because this is young adult literature, but the behaviour of the witches hints that this happens on purpose. At many times it is said that they could use magic to get rid of the Duke and the Duchess, but they never do as that would not be the proper way, even though they never specify what would be the correct solution. At first the witches do not even want Tomjon to ever return to Lancre. Although the crown does indeed end up with Tomjon but it is because it is the only way for them to dispose of it safely. It would seem that they are doing everything to stop revenge from coming full circle.

### **1.1.3 GUILT**

Guilt plays vital role in the story of *Wyrd Sisters* just as it does in *Macbeth*. It is a main driving factor for Duke Felmet. He represents an excellent example of a man driven insane by his guilt. It very slowly destroys him from the inside, much like Macbeth. His desperate attempts to cover up the crime and any memories of it is what eventually brings his demise. It is because of how hard he is trying to cover up the truth that bring back the true heir to the throne. Evil forges his own demise. But we also get to see the other side of it in his wife. Lady Felmet unlike him does not suffer from the guilt, quite on the contrary.

Duke Felmet is haunted by his conscience throughout the entire play. Both literally and metaphorically as the ghost of the dead king haunts him for most of the story. Hallucinations of the murder, visions of blood on his dagger hand, whispering in his ears and growing paranoia all lead to him crumbling in the end.

## 1.2 CHARACTERS

Many of the characters have direct counterparts in Shakespeare's plays. They are usually quite easily distinguished but they are never the exact copies of the original characters nor are they their polar opposites. They may have the same roots but quite often the roles they play quite vary from those in original stories to a point where they can easily be regarded as wholly independent. The witches are also present in *Macbeth* but their characters are not very much explored and will not be dealt with in this chapter. As for witches' magic and customs, they are explored in another chapter of the thesis.

### 1.2.1 THE GHOST

When describing various plot similarities throughout the entire book, the ghost has to be mentioned even though his importance is somewhat disputable. While the ghost in *Hamlet* plays a vital role it is harder to justify his role in *Wyrd Sisters*. In *Hamlet* it is him who reveals that Hamlet's father was murdered by Cladius, but even then Hamlet doubts the ghost's motives and goes to stage the play to see how Cladius will react to seeing his own crime coming to life in front of him. But in *Wyrd Sisters* it is proven that the ghost of king Verence is who he actually claims to be and is not doubted at any time as there are entire chapters dedicated to him and Death explains to him how ghosts work in the very beginning of the book.

In *Wyrd Sisters* everyone knows that the old king was murdered by Duke Felmet. There is no doubt as to who did it. It is the way things are and always were. The witches do not care for politics unless politics start to take interest in them. What truly sets off the plot is the fact that Duke Felmet decides to get rid of the witches because they saved the royal child and because they refuse his authority. The role of the ghost is much closer to the role of Banquo's ghost. When the ghost appears in *Macbeth* it is a symptom of Macbeth's madness and the guilt he feels. The ghost of king Verence furthers Duke's insanity at every opportunity. He even manages to manifest for a few seconds and wield a knife when particularly angry but not even then does the Duke see him.

That is another difference between the ghosts. For example in *Hamlet*, everyone is capable of seeing the ghost, but in *Macbeth*, only Macbeth does. It might be down to the

ways of looking at ghosts. Hilský (2012) said that there were three different outlooks on ghost in the Elizabethan times. The first possibility is that it could be an illusion, an apparition used as a mask by the Devil to further his goals. That would also be the opinion expressed by King James I in *Daemonologie*. The other possibility is that it was really a soul of a dead person having escaped from purgatory for a short time, perhaps thirsting revenge or signalling some other intrusion to the natural order. The third option is that it is a creation of a sick mind. The first two options are then considered by Hamlet in his decision making process, while the third is discarded as other people than Hamlet had seen the ghost, but works very well with *Macbeth's* setting. Only Macbeth is capable of seeing the ghost. In *Wyrd Sisters* the witches directly state that only magic users and close relatives can see ghosts. The second group however, does seem to have some problems with that. Neither the Fool nor Tomjon actually saw the king, who was supposedly their father. They have at moments felt his presence, but never directly communicated with him. In the end, this paradox is explained by Granny Ogg. At the very end she reveals that the king is not in fact the father of either of them. Instead it is the Fool's father who was their father.

The fact that he is not seen by any other characters but the witches makes the role of the ghost somewhat debatable for most of the book. The only time he helps further the plot is when he manages to lock Greebo in a castle in order to get the attention of the witches. This results in Nanny Ogg being imprisoned by the Duke and leads to an escalation of conflict between Granny Weatherwax and the Duke during which the ghost briefly manifests. Otherwise, the ghost only appears in the end when he possesses Tomjon's body in order to blame the Duke for his murder. But to an observant reader this hints at something amiss with the story.

### **1.2.2 THE FELMETS**

Duke Felmet and his wife are one of the main characters of the novel. It would be easy to call them the main antagonists of *Wyrd Sisters* but in fact, that is not quite true as one may later find it that he pities Duke Felmet. Their characters are closely associated with motive of guilt. They are perhaps one of the most interesting characters when looking for their counterparts in Shakespearean plays. Duke and Duchess are essentially Lord and Lady Macbeth, but there are some connections between Duke and Claudius as well. Both Duke and Claudius murdered a close relative.

As for the Duchess, she is based off of Lady Macbeth. When comparing Duchess to Lady Macbeth, one may find some interesting character traits about her that do not quite fit

the settings of *Macbeth*. The explanation could be found in the following excerpt from a speech made by Lady Macbeth when she learns about the arrival of King Duncan and decides hasten the prophecy:

“... vnsex me here,  
And fill me from the Crowne to the Toe, top-full  
Of direst Crueltie: make thick my blood,  
Stop vp th' accesse, and passage to Remorse,  
That no compunctious visitings of Nature  
Shake my fell purpose, nor keepe peace betweene  
Th' effect, and hit.”

(Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 2000, Act I, Scene 5)

When Lady Macbeth has her speech she essentially describes the Duchess who is indeed cruel and remorseless.

Lady Felmet is a cold and ambitious woman, who always thought of everyone as either weak or strong. She thought that everyone is motivated by fear. She manipulates her husband to murder the king and the only other heir to the throne. She is sadistic and skilled in torturing people. She thinks more of her husband as a burden and has had some number of husbands before him as well. She only married Duke Felmet in order to be married to someone who can inherit the throne. Their marriage was purely practical. She is described as a large woman wearing red velvet and reminds her husband of galleon under full sail.

When shown the truth about her by the witches, she does not give in to guilt as they would have expected, instead it only strengthens her resolve. She feels no remorse for her crimes. In that she differs greatly from Lady Macbeth who eventually caves in under the weight of her guilt and goes insane. Even after being defeated, she never gives up and plans her revenge. She is probably the one true villain in the book. In the end, she meets her demise by the means of animals of the kingdom which she hated. However, her death is not described and even *Turtle Recall* lists her as possibly dead. This is much akin to murder of Duncan, which is also not shown to the audience and it creates a powerful dramatic effect.

On the other hand there is the Duke. His counterpart, Macbeth, was a brave warrior, but Duke Leonel Felmet is nothing like him. He is described as insect-like wearing a lot of rings. He is in a way craven and much less ambitious than his wife, but when assaulted directly he can defend himself very well - much like an animal driven into a corner. He is much less ambitious and rather skittish. He married the Duchess because he was fascinated by power and he felt that the Duchess embodied it. As the story progresses he turns more

and more insane until in the end he is no longer able to tell the difference between what is real and what is not. He uses a theatre knife to stab a couple people and then tries to commit suicide. After that, he believes himself to be a ghost, only to die seconds later due to slipping and falling to his death from the battlements. He constantly washes his hands with continuously rougher and rougher tools, because he sees blood on them, nearly ending up disfigured. This is a very interesting aspect of the story as in the original it was Lady Macbeth who saw blood stains that drove her insane. This role reversal hints at the difference between the two stories, where the Duchess is more masculine than the Duke.

The aspect of masculinity in *Wyrd Sisters* is quite apparent. It almost seems as if Pratchett granted Lady Macbeth her wish and in turn thought about what husband for such a wife would be like. Duke Felmet could easily be recognized as a stereotype of henpecked husband. His story is somewhat tragic, much like Macbeth's. He would quite probably never muster the courage to kill the king if it was not for the clever manipulations by his wife. Also just like Macbeth, he lacks the strength of character to deal with his conscience after the crime. In the end, Duke Felmet becomes nothing but a pitiable creature.

### 1.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The settings of *Wyrd Sisters* share many similarities to locations in Shakespeare's plays like London, Scotland or Denmark and there are often references to real world locations. However, the kingdom of Lancre does not draw only on Shakespeare, but also it is reminiscent of a fairy tale kingdom. All the main themes that are present in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are present in *Wyrd Sisters* as well but often they are twisted. This may be the reason why *Wyrd Sisters* is a comedy despite sticking to the same themes. Doubt is replaced with certainty, revenge never comes full circle and guilt is shown in both its extreme ends represented by the Felmets. Dealing with guilt plays an essential part of the story as it guides actions of Duke Felmet and leads to an escalation of conflict with the witches. At the same time it is also the solution to the conflict. In that way, the evil sows the seeds of its own destruction in both works.

The characters of *Wyrd Sisters* may share some similarities with those that they originate from but they eventually diverge from the originals in one or more ways. Pratchett seems to utilise the stereotypes created by Shakespeare and then further builds on them, sometimes even completely changing the characters in the process. Despite all the changes they can still easily be recognized as characters originating in Shakespeare's plays by a common reader.

## 2 THEATRE

During Renaissance times, theatre in England saw some major changes. At the end of the 16th century, first commercial playhouses were built, which allowed large amounts of people to be present and witness the plays. At the same time, the invention of the printing press allowed the plays to be spread in written form to prolong its life and increase its revenue. In England, the sovereigns like Queen Elizabeth I or her successor King James I often took upon themselves the fashion of becoming patrons of certain talented individuals that in turn produced numerous plays that contributed to the English language and culture. Helen Hackett (2013) estimated the number of plays written between 1560 and 1642 to around 3000.

### 2.1 PHILOSOPHY

“All the world’s a stage” from Shakespeare’s play *As You Like It* is more than a phrase. As Helen Hackett (2013) said in her book *A Short History of Renaissance Drama*, it was an important mindset of the time. Writers in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods would compare life to theatrical performance. From birth to the grave people would play their assigned roles. In *Wyrđ Sisters*, one can find traces of such a way of thinking, albeit in a bit different way. At the beginning of the book, it is mentioned that the theatre holds a mirror up to reality, which seems much in accordance with Shakespeare’s view at first. This quote may be directly traced to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, where the topic of mirrors is touched upon. “Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o’erstep not the modesty of nature; for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as ’twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.” (Shakespeare, *The Tragedie of Hamlet*, 2000) Act III. Scene II.

According to Hilský (2010) the view on the purpose of theatre from Hamlet is nowadays a widely accepted one, but may not necessarily mean what it seems to be at the first glance. He writes that theatre in the play is not meant to be a true reflection of life. Instead it is meant to be more of a looking glass or an x-ray that reveals the inner truth of things. The purpose of theatre in Hamlet is to reveal the King’s guilt. To force him to confess his crimes. However, in *Wyrđ Sisters* the metaphor later takes on a different form: “This is Art holding a Mirror up to Life. That’s why everything is exactly the wrong way round.” (*Wyrđ Sisters*, p. 283) This is mentioned during a performance of a play that pictures witches as evil, wicked, and ugly and King Verence is pictured as a bad king, while his murderer,

Duke Felmet, is pictured as a good king by the actors. This does not seem very much in accordance with the *Hamlet's* version. It is rather literal and hints that theatre is instead strangely twisted. Everyone is the exact opposite of who he really is.

While the first version of Pratchett's statement is following the Renaissance view, the second one does not do so entirely. It rather seeks its own path and explores a different point of view on theatre. Terry Pratchett hints that theatre is not only mimicking real-life, but by doing so, it changes it to better suit it. To change history, you do not need to change what happened, only the way it is remembered. The way people imagine and remember has had a great deal of influence on the drama in the Renaissance times. While the playwrights would not admit to it, even they changed the way things had played out in the past.

An example of such behaviour can be seen in Shakespeare's work as well. In *Macbeth*, he touches on the subject of witches. At the time, his patron and the king of England was James I, who ruled in Scotland before and has personally involved himself in witch trials. He considered himself an authority on the subject of witchcraft and held it a serious threat. He even wrote a treatise on the subject called *Daemonologie*. Taking the threat of witches seriously in *Macbeth* may be another way of flattering his patron. However, things go deeper than that as it can be seen in this extract: "‘You tell me history is what people are told?’ said the duchess. The fool looked around the throne room and found King Gruneberry the Good (906-967). ‘Was he?’ he said, pointing. ‘Who knows, now? What was he good at? But he will be Gruneberry the Good until the end of the world.’" (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 175)

Hilský (2010) wrote that the play is based on historical events described by Holinshed's *Chronicles* and the king James I himself traced his lineage to one of the characters Banquo, who was involved in the murder of the King Duncan according to the chronicles themselves. However, because the king claimed to be related to Banquo, it would be unfitting if he took part in the assassination. Not to mention that in 1605, King James I was the target of the Gunpowder Plot by Guy Fawkes and his position as *Dei Gratia Rex* was somewhat shaken. It is possible that without alternate sources describing the events, the result would be that Shakespeare's version would be regarded as historical, despite being false – adjusted to better suit the circumstances of Shakespeare's time. In this way, it is no different than the play staged in *Wyrd Sisters*. When *Macbeth* sees the procession of eight kings behind Banquo, not only does this mark his failure but it is also a homage to King James I, who was supposedly the ninth king in this line, thus boosting his legitimacy among the common people. Hilský (2010) then said that whether this was done on purpose and ordered directly by the king is not known. However the symbolism is clear. King James I is

a descendant of Banquo and therefore is destined to rule. Banquo was a good man who did not partake in the assassination of King Duncan. As for *Wyrd Sisters*, duke Felmet orders the creation of the play to justify his rule and to silence any rumours that he took part in the assassination of the king. His plan almost seems a success until the witches decide to intervene.

## 2.2 IMAGINATION AND BELIEF

Imagination played an important role in Renaissance theatre. Hellen Hackett (2013) said that in spite of the new purpose built commercial playhouses equipped with trapdoors and other mechanism allowing for some previously unseen effects, the theatre still lacked scenery at large and therefore it had to mostly rely on the viewer's imagination. The most valuable property of the troupe was often the costumes, which were usually richly decorated and coloured accordingly to symbolise a certain emotion. There were also many props used in the plays to create a visual spectacle and simple special effects. Even Shakespeare recognized the importance of imagination and it itself became a topic for some of his most famous monologues like the speech of Theseus from Act 5 Scene 1 of *Midsummer's Night Dream* in which he criticizes imagination but ends but celebrating it instead. Also the play within the play in *Midsummer's Night Dream* concerns itself with this phenomenon. It shows how too much or too little faith in performance can break the illusion of theatre. For example when one of the actors has to play a wall, or one who is dressed in a lion's costume has to declare that he is not in fact a lion but a man. This is of course a hyperbole and a parody. In a famous prologue speech from Shakespeare's *Henry V*, this phenomenon is addressed directly, when the actor invokes the powers of viewers' imagination: "Can this cock-pit hold the vasty fields of France? Or may we cram within this wooden O the very casques that did affright the air at Agincourt? ...let us, ciphers to this great account on your imaginary forces work. Suppose within the girdle of these walls are now confined two mighty monarchies... Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them, printing their proud hoofs o'th' receiving earth; For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings." (Shakespeare, *The Life of King Henry the Fifth*, 1997, Prologue)

In *Midsummer's Night Dream*, Oberon simply declares "I am invisible." and that is all that is necessary as long as the audience believes it. Not that the theatre would not use any special effects whatsoever. Hackett (2013) said that some plays would often have special requirements in that regard. She mentions the play *Battle for Alcazar* by George Peele that listed three vials of blood, sheep's bladder holding liver, heart and lungs as necessary props.

The cooperation between the players and the audience was highly praised, which explains the reaction of the leader of the players in *Wyrld Sisters*, Mr. Vitoller, who thanks Granny Weatherwax after the show, despite the fact that she interrupted the play at many points with her loud remarks. Such involvement was encouraged and the players often interacted with the audience directly engaging with them at times. Although in this case, it could be argued that her reaction was not caused by superior imagination but rather lack of thereof. She thought the theatre was real. Later, when the play is over, they go to the backstage to talk with the owner of the troupe. The following is said: “‘I hope we didn’t upset things,’ said Magrat. ‘My dear lady,’ said Vitoller. ‘Could I begin to tell you how gratifying it is for a mere mummer to learn that his audience has seen behind the mere shell of greasepaint to the spirit beneath?’” (*Wyrld Sisters*, p. 42)

It was through the skilful use of language that the play was meant to capture the imagination of the audience and engage it in the play, which was greatly aided by education in the art of rhetoric being a standard at the time. Much of the education at the time was founded on classical plays. Hackett (2013) listed Ovid, Virgil, Horace or Cicero among the authors whose plays were used to educate young boys.

Words seem to have power in Pratchett’s books. They do not just summon the imaginary forces as they did in Renaissance drama, but they directly change the world itself. The phenomenon is directly addressed in a conversation between the Fool and the duchess: “‘It seems that words are extremely powerful,’ she said. The fool nodded. The power of words have sustained him through the hell of the Guild. Wizards and witches used words as if they were tools to get things done, but the Fool reckoned that words were things in their own right. ‘Words can change the world,’ he said.” (*Wyrld Sisters*, p. 172)

Words are often used in magical rituals on Discworld, but in this excerpt the Fool hints that words have a power even without magic being involved. The question therefore is where does this power come from? An answer to this might be found in *Turtle Recall: The Discworld Companion ...so far*. In the entry: “Libraries, Nature of” it is noted that large quantities of books distort time and space. This does not apply only to Discworld as all libraries in the multiverse are connected by the so called L-Space. The reason behind this is not necessarily magic or at least it is not specifically mentioned by the entry. A following equation is noted: “Knowledge = Power = Energy = Matter = Mass” (Pratchett & Briggs, *Turtle Recall*, 2013, p. 228). This could be explained as: words are in essence a way of conveying and storing knowledge. Therefore words have power, weight and impose a certain pressure on the reality all of which increase with the amount of knowledge they hold. This

is categorized as induced magic by *Turtle Recall*. It can be used by non-practitioners to “induce” magical potential in items and living creatures. This can stem from usage or belief. This is then confirmed in the book itself. One of the characters, Granny Weatherwax, thinks about this: “The theatre troubled her. It had a magic of its own, one that didn’t belong to her, one that wasn’t in her control. It changed the world, and said things were otherwise than they were. And it was worse than that. It was magic that didn’t belong to magical people. It was commanded by ordinary people, who didn’t know the rules. They altered the world because it sounded better.” (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 282)

While Pratchett attributes theatre magic-like powers, it is not the performance or performers themselves that have the power, the words do. In the next citation, one can see clearly that it is the words that have the aforementioned power: “The words washed over them in the breathless air. This was real. This was more real even than reality. This was history. It might not be true, but that had nothing to do with it. Granny had never had much time for words. They were so insubstantial. Now she wished that she had found the time. Words were indeed insubstantial. They were as soft as water, but they were also as powerful as water and now they were rushing over the audience, eroding the levees of veracity and carrying away the past.” (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 282)

In the case of theatre, it is the power of belief that gives words power to change reality. Imagination, or what people believe in, becomes one and the same thing with reality. This is not only the case with theatre. Examples of “induced magic” can be found throughout the book at large. Royalty, for one, is directly mentioned in the entry and one of the items that holds power is the deceased king’s crown. When deciding about what to do with it and where to hide it, Granny Weatherwax says the following: “‘I don’t reckon there’s many crowns. They have this way of being found, anyway. They kind of call out to people’s minds. If you bunged it under a stone up here, in a week’s time it’d get itself discovered by accident. You mark my words.’ ‘It is true that,’ said Nanny Ogg, earnestly. ‘How many times have you thrown a magic ring into the deepest depths of the ocean and then, when you get home and have a nice bit of turbot for your tea, there it is?’” (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 32)

It is a proof of what is mentioned in the *Turtle Recall* that even ordinary items can acquire magic-like properties by usage and belief. These items can even be half alive. Granny later puts on the crown and sees visions of the crown’s past, this hints that the crown has a kind of memory. Later they decide to hide the crown in a prop box with other crowns that the actors brought with them. There it loses its power, because it is among other fake crowns that the players use for their performance. Therefore no one believes that it is real. “...But

they look realer than this one. Do you think that's strange?' 'Things that try to look like things often do look more like things than things. Well-known fact,' said Granny.' (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 36)

A similar thought may be found in *Hamlet* as well. After Hamlet stands witness to the actor's performance of a Hecuba speech, he is in awe by the lengths to which the actor goes to make his performance believable. He then goes on and laments how his own grief vanes in comparison with the player's despite it being altogether fake and unfounded on any emotions whatsoever. However, it – just like the fake crowns - appears more believable than his own sorrow:

“Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all his visage wan'd;  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!  
For Hecuba?  
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her?”

(Shakespeare, *The Tragedie of Hamlet*, 2000, Act II., Scene II.)

As Hilský (2010) wrote, making distinction between real and false is one of the core motives of *Hamlet*. The most important information in the play is conveyed to Hamlet by an illusion of his father. Claudius seemingly acts like a kind and loving king but in fact he is a murderer and tyrant. He has to act all the more convincingly for he knows that he is not what he pretends to be. The same goes for Hamlet, who pretends to have turned mad. According to Hilský the whole play is filled with lies and illusions and the reader never quite gets to uncover which is which in the entirety.

### 2.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

While the philosophies of theatre share the same basis for both Pratchett's and Shakespeare's works and are based on the same saying, they both diverge in the end. In Shakespeare's work theatre is used to reveal what is hidden and at the core of things, while in Pratchett's work theatre serves the needs of those who want to use it for their own purposes be it to reveal the truth or to bend it.

It would appear that Pratchett and Shakespeare both knew the power and importance of words stemming from imagination and beliefs and employed it in their stories. The power of words plays a major role in their works. In Shakespeare's settings, Hamlet believed that by merely staging a play showing the circumstances of his father's murder will force his uncle Claudius to confess his guilt. It seemingly worked as the king cannot bear to continue watching. In *Wyrd Sisters* the staged play is used to make people believe something different than what is real and again this works until the witches foil Duke Felmet's plan by forcing the actors to reveal the truth using a spell. At that point the Duke cannot bear his guilt anymore and caves under the accusations. In this both authors seem to be in accordance.

### 3 MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT

Supernatural plays an important role in both stories. In *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* it is strange occurrences that set the story in motion. In *Hamlet*, it is the appearance of the ghost, father of Hamlet, who claims to have been murdered by his brother. Hamlet is then forced to contemplate the ghost's message and decides to seek proof of his uncle's guilt. In *Macbeth* there is the prophecy of three "weird sisters" that sets Macbeth on a path to become king and his descent into madness. The setting of *Wyrd Sisters* is different from the two. It is a fantasy novel and magic is clearly abundant in the world. The entry for Magic in *Turtle Recall* even compares magic to a fundamental force like gravity and people are somewhat used to it being a common occurrence.

The frequency of supernatural occurrences in Shakespeare's works is quite high. Supernatural motives appear in *Tempest*, *Midsummer's Night Dream* and both *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Hackett (2013) claimed that supernatural was a popular topic in Elizabethan Drama. Other writers in the same period also employed these motives. H. W. Herrington (1919) listed following as some of the examples: Middleton's *Witch* or Johnson's *Mask of Queens*. Some of the most famous witch trials took place in Britain long before Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. His patron, King James I of England, was directly involved in witch trials of North Berwick. Later James I wrote down an account of these trials and it became part of his book *Daemonologie* which was published in 1597, a few years before the first staging of *Macbeth* and deals with the subject of witchcraft. It is possible that the last chapter of this book called "Newes from Scotland" which describes witch trials of North Berwick inspired Shakespeare to write *Macbeth* as there are certain similarities between the two.

#### 3.1 ELIZABETHAN MAGIC

King James I (2012) writes in the preface of *Daemonologie* that he had published the book primarily to convince the reader of the fact that witches are real and are servants of Satan himself. The king was disturbed to find that there were those who doubted that there were servants of the devil among the population and wrote a book for the purpose of informing the people of the dangers of witchcraft and those who partake in it. Because this book was published a few years before the staging of *Macbeth* and was written by Shakespeare's patron, it is possible to use this book as a contemporary source of knowledge regarding witchcraft and magic in the times of Shakespeare.

The first two chapters of the book are written as a dialogue between two philosophers. One is Philomantes, who is sceptical in terms of magic and witchcraft. In the very beginning

he even expresses the idea that witches are not real. Epistemon on the other hand is very knowledgeable on the subject and he condemns those who practise the art of magic. He often bases his arguments on certain passages from the Bible and uses them to support his own theories.

King James I separates those who practise magical arts into two categories, both connected closely to the devil and worship of Satan. Firstly, there is Magic, also called Necromancy, and the other group Sorcery, also called Witchcraft. All users of magic are considered sinners under the influence of Satan who are evil and serve the devil's goals. As for reason for people to practise magic, he lists curiosity and poverty. Curiosity often leads people to practise Magic and greed and poverty often lead to the practice of witchcraft.

Necromancers are those with power to commune with the spirits of the dead, mostly using carcasses to divine the future. The difference between Magic and Witchcraft being that Magicians command the forces of Devil, in exchange for their soul. On the other hand, witches are merely slaves to the will of Satan and they give both their body and their soul to the devil. Usually a pact would be struck either on paper signed with magician's blood or in case of many witches the devil would touch them in a certain place, leaving behind a mark.

The book describes various arts and forms of magic performed by those who made a pact with the devil. He also discourages common people from using wards and incantations that are considered heathen, because in such a way they make themselves descend from the grace of God and become vulnerable to the devil's tricks as they are no longer under His protection. A special case is made on the subject of Astrology and Astronomy, where some branches are considered a lawful science, while others such as foretelling of the future based on the movement of the stars is devil's art. Other arts that try to influence rules considered natural as Geomancy or Hydromancy are also works of devil. In general, King James I condemns any arts that divine future from the movements of stars and planets.

As for gender of the magic users in Elizabethan times, according to *Daemonologie* both genders can under certain circumstances fall under the influence of Satan, male users being called sorcerers and female users called witches. The other sort of magic users are called magicians and necromancers. While *Daemonologie* makes no distinction between men and women in terms of severity of their crimes, the public opinion hints otherwise as male magic users usually seem to be taking place of the protagonists in stories and legends. Such example can be found for in Shakespeare's *Tempest*.

Prospero is a sorcerer in the play *Tempest*. Despite being a magic user he is considered to be a protagonist of the play. He uses his magic that he had learned from books

to protect his daughter and control other characters in the play. For example he controls a monster, Caliban, who is a son of Sycorax a witch who is considered evil and malevolent. She does not appear in the play directly but is instead mentioned several times by the other characters. When drawing comparison between the two characters one may in the end find them surprisingly similar in their doing. Both Prospero and Sycorax have children, both have enslaved spirits to do their bidding. It would seem that despite the initial portrayal of Prospero as a protagonist and a hero, this may not be entirely true. One of the differences between Sycorax and Prospero is that in the end, Prospero renounces his magic:

„...But this rough magic  
I here abjure; and, when I have requir'd  
Some heavenly music,—which even now I do,—  
To work mine end upon their senses that  
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,  
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,  
And deeper than did ever plummet sound  
I'll drown my book.“

(Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 2019, Act 5, Scene 1)

He survives and the end is perceived as a happy ending. However, King James I (2012) made no distinctions between those who rescinded their craft or not. All those who use magic should be punished by death. The way of execution could vary from place to place, but the sentence was always the same and no one's life should be spared: “But in the end to spare the life, and not to strike when God bids strike, and so seuerlie punish in so odious a fault & treason against God, it is not only vnlawful, but doubtlesse no lesse sinne in that Magistrate, nor it was in Savles sparing of Agag. And so comparable to the sin of Witchcraft it selfe... (King James I of England, *Daemonologie*, 2012, p. 89) This goes in contrary to how Prospero is perceived by the audience and according to King James I (2012), he should be held responsible for practicing magic nevertheless.

By far the most interesting chapter of *Daemonologie* is the one that distinguishes the miracles of God from the Miracles of Devil. The God's miracles truly change the nature of the world, while Devil's miracles are often only illusions and they do not change the nature of things. It sounds remarkably similar to what is described as magic of sourcerers by *Turtle Recall* and what is described as wizard's magic. Sorcery is very powerful. It can bring things into being or unmake them as needed. However wizards are not able to do such things.

They can create illusions and such, but a law of equivalent exchange applies to them and they are unable to conjure things out of nothingness.

Speaking of powers, witches were largely attributed with powers that helped stir chaos and were able to foresee the future. King James I (2012) describes a case he personally attended in the last chapter of *Daemonologie* called Newes from Scotland. The accused witches confessed being able to foresee the future, have knowledge of past things they were not personally present at and cause storms to sink ships. The first described case could miraculously heal, while others could curse others with illnesses, madness, charm them to do their bidding or transport themselves to gathering of witches at great speed. All of these confessions were made only after severe torture was used to interrogate the witches. They also confessed conspiring against the king himself, at many times trying to assassinate him. They failed in their doing only because the king's faith and conviction was too strong for the Devil to overcome.

Some of these powers are shown in *Macbeth*. The three witches appear directly at the start of the play and their prophecies drive the plot from there on. They are described as ugly hags who revel in chaos. The witches are seen by two people, so there is no doubt to their existence. They convey their prophecies unto Macbeth and Banquo. These prophecies later turn out to be true as well as the rest. However, it is hard to tell if the prophecies are self-fulfilling or not. According to King James I (2012) the witches' prophecies are mostly false, but contain some degree of truth, because otherwise it would be impossible to trust them. This also fits the story. If we take the first prophecy, the witches tell Macbeth that he will become the Thane of Cawdor and later the king. He indeed becomes a Thane immediately after and he is left to wonder if the second part of the prophecy is the truth as well. The same goes for the second prophecy which also turns out to be rather accurate.

### 3.2 MAGIC ON DISCWORLD

Magic on Discworld is very different from the one King James describes in his book or the way it is seen in Shakespeare's plays. In *Turtle Recall* Pratchett specifically mentions that there is no light and dark magic on Discworld. Magic is not inherently good or evil. It mostly depends on how the magic is used than anything else. It is considered a force of nature. Sometimes cruel, always necessary for the continued existence of the world as people know it. Without magic the world would wither and die, therefore there is no possibility of getting rid of it.

King James's view on magic mostly stems from Christian tradition. However, there is no such thing as Christianity on Discworld. Its gods are numerous and they hardly ever care about what is going on in the world at large. It is therefore worth noting that there is no simple way to explain the distrust and straight out hatred of witches by Duke Felmet and his wife in *Wyrd Sisters*. They have no reason to believe that the witches conspire against them. One of the first problems they have with the witches happens when it comes down to paying taxes. They never directly refuse to pay taxes, no one simply has the courage to tell them that they should. "Everyone respects the witches. The point is that no-one actually likes them very much." (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 171) This quote sums up the people's opinion regarding witches. It also explains why the people were so eager to turn against them in the first place.

During the first confrontations with witches Duke Felmet asks the captain of the guard, who was meant to forcefully bring the witches to him and failed, if he was put under a spell or if the witches offered him carnal pleasures and satisfied his earthly desires. Duke Felmet specifically mentions having read a book about witches written by wizards from Unseen University where he learned the above mentioned. To this Pratchett adds his own side note: "Written by wizards, who are celibate and get some pretty funny ideas at around 4 o'clock in the morning." (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 57)

Wizards on Discworld are celibate just like monks, priests and other Catholic clergymen in medieval Europe, who would write long treatises on the subject of Witchcraft. In the book he claimed that it is common for witches to perform carnal acts with demons. It would seem that despite lacking the Christian foundation, the knowledge of witches on Discworld originates from similar cultural background. However, wizards are not celibate for religious reasons, it is because every eighth child of a wizard, who was also an eighth child of a wizard, becomes a very powerful being called Sourcerer, who is unrivalled in power by most common wizards. Sourcerers would often wage wars on one another and cause incredible amounts of carnage, the aftermath of which still persists in some parts of the Disc. Therefore wizards are celibate by choice, for their own safety. However, this rule is not enforced as plots of other books by Pratchett *Equal Rites* and *Sourcery* prove. In both of the books children of wizards play a major role in the story. Wizards on Discworld also have a strictly hierarchical structure in which wizards are sorted into orders and grades running up to the eight grade which is the highest, who much like Catholic clergymen who also belonged to certain orders and were part of a larger hierarchy. Wizards on Discworld run the education too. While most of the crafts are taught by various guilds, magic and sciences are taught at Unseen University in Ankh-Morpork. There are faculties of medicine,

minor religions and history but to be able to attend those one must have studied as wizard first. Catholic Church also ran European schools in the medieval times and theology was one of the main pillars of university education.

Witches are very different from their wizard kin. Magic of wizards is mostly based on illusions, occasional fireball and weather making. They use staffs and spell books to unleash magic when needed. Witches do nothing of that sort. As Pratchett (2013) mentions in *Turtle Recall* they do not use staffs nor are they too fond of reading books. They have no formal system of education, a witch is usually chosen and taught by an elder witch and then takes over her teacher's area when she departs the world. This may not necessarily implicate death. Even if the witches have no formal hierarchical structure or leadership, Granny Weatherwax is one of the most respected witches and her word has a great value among other witches. As is mentioned on the cover of the *Wyrd Sisters*: "Witches are not by nature gregarious, and they certainly don't have leaders. Granny Weatherwax was the most highly-regarded of the leaders they didn't have." (*Wyrd Sisters*, 1989)

The witches are usually solitary and the witches' coven of Granny Weatherwax, Nanny Ogg and Magratta Garlick is an exception to this rule. Otherwise witches meet once a year on Lancre's Bear Mountain to attend to Witch Trials. However, there are no magical rituals and naked dancing involved. As it is in *Turtle Recall* most witches are old women who are never naked in public. When making decisions they essentially think for themselves, although there are certain moral codes and unspoken rules to being a witch. For example the rule mentioned in *Wyrd Sisters* not to meddle in politics. Magic is not meant to rule but to be ruled. However, Granny Weatherwax later decides to break this code. The situation is commented on in the book: "'I said, what about this rule about not meddling?' said Magrat. 'Ah,' said Nanny. She took the girl's arm. 'The thing is,' she explained, 'as you progress in the Craft, you'll learn there is another rule. Esme's obeyed it all her life.' 'And what's that?' 'If you break rules, break 'em good and hard,' said Nanny..." (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 171)

The witches themselves prefer not to act directly, they try to make the people resolve their issues themselves instead. The same goes for witches in *Macbeth*. Hilský (2010) wrote that the witches never ordered Macbeth to do anything directly. Instead, they only foretold his future and that way they cleverly manipulated him to do their bidding. Similar attempts can be observed in *Wyrd Sisters*. When the witches decide to start meddling in royal politics, they began with moving time fifteen years forward so that the heir to the throne could challenge the Duke and reclaim the kingdom. They even perform a spell that is supposed to call him back. What they do not anticipate is the fact that he becomes a player just like his

adoptive father and when they use a crystal ball to watch him depart, they believe he has a whole army behind him, while they are all just players accompanying him to stage the play.

Among the things witches do is healing. Surprisingly, their healing methods vary greatly. “All three fulfil the usual daily functions expected of a rural witch: midwifery, the laying out of the dead... and folk medicine. Their approach to this last again used to represent three aspects of witchcraft:” (Pratchett & Briggs, *Turtle Recall*, 2013) Magrat gives patients medication that she observed could help them with the said problem. Nanny Ogg gives them a shot of some alcohol and tells them to do whatever suits them. Granny Weatherwax treats patients with bottles of coloured water and tells them that they will surely cure them. All three approaches work.

The three main kinds of magic on Discworld are intrinsic, residual and induced magic. Induced magic had already been mentioned and explained in the previous chapter. Its characteristic features include the ability to be used even by non-magic users and that is based on belief and usage. Both items and persons can be subject to this magic. Intrinsic magic is somewhat harder to explain. It is a magic that keeps Discworld going. It is compared to quantum physics. It for example explains how there can be different time zones on the Disc, a world which is flat, or the multi-layered dimensional structure of the world. It is the kind of magic which is studied by magicians at Unseen University. Lastly there is residual magic. It is essentially channelled by wizards using staffs or spells. This magic is less powerful than intrinsic magic as conservation of energy applies to it. For a wizard it is easy to create a fire but a wizard cannot conjure things out of nothing. That is an ability that sourcerers possess. They are infinitely more powerful than wizards and can destroy or create with as little as a thought. At the time of *Wyrd Sisters* they are very rare on Discworld and only one has appeared in the books.

It is worthwhile to mention that on Discworld the witches and wizards are separated by gender. Woman cannot study at the Unseen University and cannot officially become a wizard. While there are not such restrictions to applying to men and witchcraft, witches are always female in the books. In a book that precedes *Wyrd Sisters - Equal Rites* - a woman indeed becomes a wizard by a mistake of her grandfather, who forgets to make sure what her gender is and thinks she is the eighth son of his eight son and gives her his staff. At first she is taught by Granny Weatherwax, but when she realizes that her magic is of a different kind than witches' magic she arranges for her to travel to Ankh-Morpork. Later she manages to gain entry to the Unseen University as a cleaning maid and there she learns the art of wizards. This means that women can in theory become wizards, but due to rules, they cannot

be officially accepted into the University. As Pratchett wrote: “With one exception (during the Archchancellorship of Cutangle) Unseen University has never admitted women. Usually this is said to be on the grounds of plumbing problems, but probably the real reason is an unspoken dread that women, if allowed to mess around with wizardry, would probably be embarrassingly good at it. And less likely to do what they’re told.” (Pratchett & Briggs, *Turtle Recall*, 2013, p. 370)

Magic is also hereditary. For example the Weatherwax family has produced many powerful witches but also a male wizard - an Archmage - Galder Weatherwax. Hence it does not seem that there is a difference in the nature of magic of the wizards and witches and it seems that they are able to use both in some very rare cases. Although there is no known example of a male witch in the Discworld series. The kind of magic women use seems to depend on hereditary predispositions and education on the subject.

As for the outwards look of the witches, they do not really differ from those in *Macbeth*. Both Granny Weatherwax and Nanny Ogg wear black robes and hats and Granny oftentimes express her disappointment of her good looks and the lack of warts. The only witch that differs from the three is Magrat Garlic who is much younger than the others and wears a lot of occult paraphilia and seems to represent the younger generation of witches, who are much closer to the current perception of witches.

### 3.3 EXAMPLES OF USING MAGIC IN *WYRD SISTERS*

There are many examples of uses of magic in *Wyrd Sisters*. However it is important to make a distinction between magic and so called “headology” which is a term used for psychology in the book. Oftentimes the witches deliberately choose not to employ magic. They do not use magic to manipulate other people. They use many different methods of psychological pressure to gain a leverage on a person who they want to influence. Sometimes they use magic to help their efforts in influencing people.

#### 3.3.1 SUMMONING DEMONS

At one point in the book, the witches conduct a ritual of summoning to summon a demon. The purpose of this ritual is to find out more about what is happening to the kingdom. They perform the ritual in an old cauldron for washing clothes that stands in a shed behind Nanny Ogg’s house. When talking about the requirements for such a ritual this talk is exchanged by the characters: ““Oh, but you can’t. Not here. You need a cauldron, and a magic sword. And an octogram. And spices, and all sorts of stuff.’... ‘You don’t need none of that,’ she said. ‘You need headology.’” (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 93) They then proceed to use a

bleached copper stick, old washing soda, soap flakes, a scrubbing brush and a washboard to summon the demon.

“‘You listen to me, my girl,’ said Granny. ‘Demons don’t care about the outward shape of things. It’s what *you* think that matters.’” (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 94) This passage hints at the fact that was mentioned previously. It is the power of thought that can change the very nature of things. If in the minds of witches the above mentioned items become the required instruments to summon a demon, they are the instruments required to summon a demon. This only continuously blurs out the thin line between what is considered headology and magic.

### 3.3.2 STAGED ENCOUNTERS

A comparison can be drawn between the Discworld’s witches and *Tempest’s* wizard Prospero. Prospero uses magic throughout the play very often to manipulate other characters and make them do what he wants. According to Hilský (2010) Prospero tries to create a kind of artificial feeling of justice being imposed on his brother and his companions. He never confronts his brother directly, but only through Ariel who tells the men that he is a “minister of Fate” and that is Destiny that brought the men on the island and caused the storm to punish them for their sins, namely those against Prospero. In this way Prospero manipulates the characters to do exactly what he wants them to do. He effectively staged the whole play including the shipwreck to achieve what he wanted. Every part of the story is orchestrated by him not only by using magic but clever psychology and rhetoric as well. For example, if he appeared to the castaways himself and claimed to be punishing them, he would appear selfish and thirsty for revenge. Instead he remained invisible and only observed as Alonso and Antonio faced their punishment that they thought was imposed on them by Heaven itself.

This is an excerpt that describes an encounter of a guard who is meant to arrest Granny Weatherwax: “He knocked, very gently. After a wait of several seconds he clamped his helmet back on his head, sad, ‘No-one in. Blast.’, and started to stride away. The door opened. It opened very slowly, and with the maximum amount of creak. Simple neglect wouldn’t have caused that depth of groan; you’d need careful work with hot water over a period of weeks. The sergeant stopped, and then turned round very slowly while contriving to move as few muscles as possible. He had mixed feelings about the fact that there was nothing in the doorway. In his experience, doors didn’t just open themselves. He cleared his throat nervously. Granny Weatherwax right by his ear, said, ‘That’s a nasty cough you’ve got there. You did right in coming to me.’ The sergeant looked up at her with an expression

of mad gratitude. He said, ‘Argle.’ (*Wyrd Sisters*, pp. 55-56) Fortunately she knew about this encounter in advance as she was able to foresee it and therefore was well prepared for it. While that is not described in detail by the book, it is hinted by the excerpt that she had in fact staged this encounter. She made her door creak, possibly many days in advance and quite probably was not even present in her cottage by the time they arrived. Granny Weatherwax had staged this encounter to avoid being arrested. In the end none of the guards who was sent to arrest her succeeds and they end up drinking tea with her and eating cookies. While this sounds like magic or some sort of mind control, one must remember that the guards were absolutely terrified of her in advance. She only cleverly tapped into that terror and used it to her advantage.

Pratchett frequently hints that witches do not use magic often. They prefer to use “headology” and they use magic only if necessary or they use it to further their goals. But it does not seem that any of the guards were put under influence of magic in any way. It was merely through clever manipulation and preparation that she achieved this. Magic was perhaps somewhat involved, but not in any major way. Many other encounters in the book end up the same way. The witches do not need to actually use their magic to achieve many of their goals. However, “headology” does not seem to work on Duke Felmet, quite possibly because he is mad and is getting madder as the story progresses. They are often forced to use magic to deal with situations around the Duke. “She hadn’t faced anything like this before. The man was clearly mad, but at the heart of his madness was a dreadful cold sanity, a core of pure interstellar ice in the centre of the furnace.” (*Wyrd Sisters*, p. 154)

It would seem that both Prospero and the witches use staged encounters to help sway the situation in their favour. These almost theatrical performances make up the core of their art. It is also what limits witches in their power. In order to avoid overusing magic they have to maintain a certain public visage. That seems to be a reason why they do not strike down the Duke and the Duchess which they at times consider and certainly seem capable of. Magic is there to be ruled, not to rule as they often say.

### **3.3.3 TIME SHIFT**

The most powerful magical act that is performed is doubtlessly the time shift caused in order to move the kingdom fifteen years into the future. Without knowledge this would be nearly impossible for most magic users on Discworld. However, they state that because they are not in fact speeding up time or actually moving the kingdom in time it is much easier for them to do. They only slow down time in the kingdom to a point when it barely moves.

In order to do this they have to mark the area by flying over the entire border of the kingdom in a single night. Or as we learn later the time limitation is until a cock crows.

The act of cock crowing announcing a new day is present in Shakespeare's work as well. When Hamlet meets the ghost of his father they only have time until the cock crows at which point the spirits of the dead have to go back underground. When the witches are casting their spell to move the time by fifteen years they have to do so before the cock crows. They would not have made it if it was not for an intervention by Nanny Ogg who had her children silence every cock in the kingdom to prevent the spell from breaking.

This power does not have a counterpart in Elizabethan magic, it is more probable it stems from folk tales. The other witch that is attributed with such power is connected to many of the Discworld variants of certain fairy tales. Black Aliss who was involved in the Discworld variations of Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella and Hansel and Gretel.

#### **3.3.4 KINGDOM WAKES**

In *Wyrld Sisters* everyone knows that the king was murdered, yet they do not do anything about it, because most consider it a natural order of things. This contradicts the view on regicide expressed by Shakespeare. In *Macbeth* the murder of the king is accompanied by many unnatural events that signals an intrusion to the natural order and the upcoming chaos. The sky is dark even in the day, the owl ate a falcon and king's horses ate each other. The same happens in *Hamlet* where the murder of the king is followed by his ghost appearing and walking the battlements in full armour. According to the characters all these supernatural events are symbols of something evil happening within the kingdom.

In *Wyrld Sisters* the idea is expanded upon. Kingdom of Lancre is, to a degree, alive. Most of the time it is dormant and that way, it went unnoticed by the witches. The idea of inanimate things having a consciousness has been dealt with earlier in the thesis, on the example of the crown. Induced magic can be largely blamed for this. As Granny Weatherwax notes, the mind of the kingdom is a collective one, composed of memories and stray thoughts of its inhabitants current and past. It is later discovered that the kingdom is unhappy with its rulers because they do not care about it. It then possesses the minds of all animals within the kingdom to get the attention of witches and make them act. It is the kingdom itself that later enacts vengeance on the Duchess as the animals eat her alive.

### **3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The witches seem to be rather powerful. From what can be seen in the book, the witches can read other people's minds, have a certain degree of knowledge regarding the

past and future events and they have flying brooms. They can use their mind control abilities even on inanimate objects made of stone or wood. They have the ability to summon demons and can manipulate time. In the end it is very hard to determine where exactly their powers have a limit. On the whole, Discworld witches seem more powerful than those described in Shakespeare's work.

Hilský (2010) said that Shakespeare's contemporaries had very different opinion of witches present in *Macbeth* than people do today. According to them witches drew power directly from the Devil. Witches had the power to destroy the natural order and uproot moral values. The witches in *Wyrd Sisters* do the contrary to that. They maintain moral values and make sure the natural order is preserved. This is very apparent when they find out that the kingdom itself is upset about the Duke's rulership. This is among the things that forces them to act in order to maintain balance. It is important to remember that magic on Discworld is considered a part of natural order, so using it moderately does not truly count towards upsetting it.

The witches are presented in a different light than in Shakespeare's work so that despite doing nearly the same things, perhaps being even more powerful than in Shakespeare's work, they come out as good characters in the book. Not all witches are good and one particular example is mentioned many times in the book. It is a witch called Black Aliss, who apparently was a very powerful witch from times past. The stories that are told about her are usually quite reminiscent of fairy tale stories. An example that is often mentioned is a story of Sleeping Beauty. Black Aliss moved a castle forward in time by a hundred years and had weeds grow all over it. She is another proof that witches, and magic users in general, are not inherently good and it is all based on their perception by public. So while we may perceive the witches as good, some of the characters in *Wyrd Sisters* think differently, because the witches challenge their authority or as is the case with the common people, they are simply afraid of them and their power. People are scared of the witches because they know their secrets and sins. They knew the local people from birth and have a great knowledge of things past. That helps them maintain their authority. The public opinion on witchcraft that we see in *Wyrd Sisters* sticks remarkably well to that described in *Daemonologie* despite not being based on the Christian traditions and the Bible. It would seem that the background which the knowledge of witches comes from - the Church and the wizards - share some similarities like celibacy and hierarchical structure.

Many of the powers described by *Daemonologie* are found in *Wyrd Sisters*. The summoning of the demons, predicting the future and knowing the past, both are present. The

witches have control over some of the elements as is proven when Magrat Garlick causes a prison door to spring to bloom. The witches also have power to communicate with the dead and have the ability to heal. However the line between magic and science is blurred in *Wyrdsisters* and at times it is hard for the reader to tell which is which. Otherwise the magic fits well with *Daemonology*. The witches themselves do not truly differ from those found in the Shakespeare's plays. It is the perception of the reader that has changed since the times of Shakespeare.

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## CONCLUSION

While *Wyrld Sisters* draws on Shakespeare's plays, the novel remains largely independent of the original works and it can stand on its own. It employs the same themes like guilt, doubt or revenge, but always uses them in a different way or shows their different aspects. This is also one of the reasons why Pratchett's work ends up as a comedy and not a tragedy unlike *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. Pratchett took the aspects of Elizabethan tragedy and by slightly changing the characters, the outcome was considerably different.

The philosophy behind the book stems from Shakespeare but in the end shows an entirely different approach to theatre than that of his. Shakespeare apparently believed that theatre should serve the purpose of revealing the truth, but in *Wyrld Sisters* it is shown that more often theatre twists and bends the truth to better fit its time. However, both writers share the belief in power of words and theatre. Words play a major role in the magical system on Discworld both as a means of storing knowledge and transferring it. Imagination works akin to magic on Discworld. Collective imagination can even create consciousness in inanimate objects and give them supernatural powers. Shakespeare shows similar belief in the strength of imagination in many of his plays.

The power of magic users on Discworld seems to be the same, if not greater than in Shakespeare's plays. The examples of uses of magic are almost identical to the ones found in the plays and the powers witches are attributed with by *Daemonologie*. Only few of the powers shown in *Wyrld Sisters* have their origin in fairy tales or other sources. Public's perception of the witches appears to be the same in both the plays and *Daemonologie* and the opinions expressed are also very close to the ones in *Wyrld Sisters* in spite of different cultural backgrounds and the lack of Christian faith in Pratchett's setting. Only the perception of the reader has perhaps changed from that of Elizabethan audience. Despite the witches doing nearly the same things, it is probable that the reader will perceive the witches as good, unlike those in *Macbeth* or the ones described in *Daemonologie*. Overall, it would seem that Pratchett followed the plays very closely in this regard.

To conclude, Shakespearean influence can be felt throughout the entire book. While many themes of *Wyrld Sisters* stem from Shakespeare, they often diverge from the originals at important points. That is the reason why Pratchett could deal with the same themes and topics, but the end result is a comedy and not a tragedy like the plays *Wyrld Sisters* draws on. The only exception for this is magic, which is remarkably similar to that presented in Shakespeare's plays in spite of different setting. It follows very closely the rules and

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capabilities of magic users in Shakespeare's plays with only small exceptions like the time warp that come from fairy tales. It is obvious that Pratchett was well aware of the characteristics of Shakesperean tragedy and was familiar with the characters of the plays and he used that knowledge to skilfully and wittily play on them in his story. His book shows surprising depth which many readers would not expect in this genre.

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## SUMMARY IN CZECH

Tato práce se zabývá knihou Terryho Pratchetta *Soudné sestry*. Analyzuje výňatky z této knihy a porovnává je se Shakespearovými hrami, kterými byla tato kniha inspirována – Hamletem a Macbethem. Tato práce se skládá ze tří kapitol. První kapitola studuje zasazení, náměty a postavy *Soudných sester*. Druhá kapitola se zabývá filozofií divadla, představivostí a vírou. Ve třetí kapitole jsou probírána témata magie, čarodějnictví a alžbětinský pohled na magii a porovnává je tím, která se vyskytuje v *Soudných sestřích*.