Ambivalence toward Witchcraft/Sorcery in Literary Works at Renaissance Era

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ABSTRACT

The high period of English Renaissance displays an extravagant productivity in art, letter, science, and exploration. It's an Age of Discovery, with diverse colonies established off England. It's also an Age of Reformation, breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church and leading to the split between Catholic and Protestant. Shifts of official religions in fact lead to some ambivalent attitudes toward witchcraft, magic, the supernatural, and sorcery, as well as indicate the complicated political powers rotation.

In the study, three writers' works will be included in the discussion of the topic related to witchcraft/sorcery to display such ambivalence: In Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Fasutus, sorcery is denied as a necromancy which dooms one to the hell, and is also adopted as a theatrical trick to satirize the Catholic corruption. In Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queene, witchcraft is adopted in the romance as an enemy embodied by diverse characters, but the supernatural also embodies the way out. Ambivalence toward sorcery is prevalent throughout the romance. In Shakespeare's Macbeth, however, witchcraft is, on the surface, a power motivating the protagonist toward the tragic end, but in reality it works as a nihilistic, transcendent power independent from all the events.

Ambivalent attitude toward witchcraft/sorcery in the three works by the three Renaissance literary masters displays the contradictions toward the issue at that era.

Keywords: witchcraft, humanism, order

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