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**EQUAL AND CONTRASTIVE FEATURES OF FEMALE AND MALE**  
**CHARACTERS IN WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

**Bachelor's thesis**

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**Study program:** Foreign Languages and Intercultural Communication

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**Thesis supervisor:** PaedDr. Alexandra Mandáková, PhD.

**Declaration**

I hereby declare that this Bachelor's thesis represents my own original research and writing and that I have referenced all appropriate source materials.

Date:

.....

Signature

## **Acknowledgement**

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## **ABSTRAKT**

HUSÁROVÁ, Paulína: *Rovnaké a kontrastné vlastnosti ženských a mužských postáv v dielach Williama Shakespeara* – Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave. Fakulta aplikovaných jazykov; Katedra interkultúrnej komunikácie. – Vedúca záverečnej práce: PaedDr. Alexandra Mandáková, PhD. – Bratislava: FAJ EU, 2024, 51s.

Hlavným cieľom záverečnej práce je zanalyzovať vnútorné a vonkajšie charakteristické črty konkrétnych ženských a mužských postáv z vybraných diel Williama Shakespeara a rozhodnúť o ich podobnosti alebo rozdielnosti. Naša práca pozostáva z troch hlavných kapitol. V prvej kapitole sme sa venovali stručnému opisu života autora, vzniku a vývoju jeho diel, ďalej uvádza faktory, ktoré spisovateľa pravdepodobne ovplyvnili, a v neposlednom rade popisuje kritikov jeho diel z rôznych období. Druhá kapitola sa venuje priblíženiu použitia psychologickkej analýzy postáv a charakteristike ženských a mužských rolí v Alžbetínskom období. Tretia a finálna kapitola zahŕňa samostatnú analýzu postáv v Shakespearových hrách, konkrétne v dvoch tragédiách – *Rómeo a Júlia*; *Othello*; a dvoch komédiách – *Ako sa vám páči*; *Skrotenie čertice*, a sústreďí sa na ich vzájomné porovnanie. Záver práce sa venuje výsledkom, ktoré sme zistili porovnaním osobnostných vlastností postáv a zároveň obsahuje zistené prvky, ktoré podporili alebo vyvrátili naše hypotézy.

**Kľúčové slová:** Shakespeare, postavy, literárne diela, literárna kritika, sociálne roly, rodové rozdiely

## ABSTRACT

HUSÁROVÁ, Paulína: *Equal and contrastive features of female and male characters in works of William Shakespeare* – University of Economics in Bratislava. Faculty of Applied languages; Department of Foreign languages and intercultural communication. – Supervisor: PaedDr. Alexandra Mandáková, PhD. – Bratislava: FAJ EU, 2024, 51p.

The main aim of this thesis is to analyse the internal and external characteristics of specific female and male characters in selected works of William Shakespeare and to decide about their similarities or differences. Our work consists of three main chapters. In the first chapter, we deal with a brief description of the author's life, the origin and development of his works, then the factors that probably influenced the writer, and last but not least the critics of his works from different periods. The second chapter is devoted to the approximation of the use of psychological analysis of characters and characteristics of female and male roles in the Elizabethan period. The third and final chapter includes a separate analysis of characters in Shakespeare's plays, specifically in two tragedies – *Romeo and Juliet*; *Othello*; and two comedies – *As You Like It*; *The Taming of the Shrew*, and focuses on their comparison. In conclusion, we present the results found by comparing the personality traits of the characters and it also contains the elements observed for evaluation of our hypotheses either proved or refuted.

**Keywords:** Shakespeare, characters, literary work, literary criticism, social role, gender differences

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## INTRODUCTION

The author of 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and several other poems, is known in every corner of the world. To this day, William Shakespeare is considered to be a literary genius not only for the plot, genre or language in each of his plays. He is praised for creating a rich tapestry of original characters, each with their own distinct personalities, motivations and roles, that are recognised in the narratives. He experienced a multifarious society in his lifetime – not only he lived in a time with a vast range of political regimes, and social expectations of men and women which were also very different in comparison to nowadays. The evidence of this is his works, and above all his characters, which cover almost every possibility of what a character could be. He covered positions of all classes in the Elizabethan era – roles of the upper class, the middle class, the working class, and even the poor ones. Regardless of the social status of a character, i.e. whether it is a King, Queen, Earl, Bishop, Friar, Bookkeeper, Fool, Servant or Orphan, the reader can see the character live through a complete spectrum of human experience from youthful curiosity, innocence, and first love, as well as intense emotions such as guilt, grief, loss, hatred, prejudice, and rebellion. Swarniti (2021) describes literary works as intertwined with expression, overflowing with human elements such as emotions, passion, and convictions, which creates admiration.

Works of William Shakespeare offer a wide variety of characters and their features, particularly of the main protagonists as well as supporting roles. This is an infinite source for the diverse analysis of Shakespearean works, from which we have chosen a distinct aspect as the gender – i.e. equal and contrastive features of female and male characters. These character features underwent our socio-psychological analysis as we mention further.

We have to look at Shakespeare and his works from the point of his epoch but there are features as gender roles which can be reflected in any historical time. For these reasons, we have aimed at the analysis of personality traits which can be applied to many kinds of role models of females and males.

Many critics have analysed and looked deeper into the personas created by William Shakespeare. Some of them have used various psychological methods, because in their opinion, these characters are similar to the people in real life, and so it is necessary to take into consideration not only what we know about them, but most importantly what we feel

about them. In addition, every reader is different and for that reason, our view on the very same character can be distinguished, ultimately the overall impressions can be so distinct, as if we do not even analyse the same character. In other words, it is almost as if each reader created a new character every time – a character that becomes alive through the reader's eyes.

# 1. SHAKESPEARE

There is little known about the early ages of William Shakespeare - an English playwright, actor and poet, born in Stratford-upon-Avon. His date of birth is not certain, but it is believed he was born on April 23rd. 1564, however, he was baptised on the 26th of April 1564. While the details of his education are not well-documented, Shakespeare probably attended the King's New School in Stratford. His education likely included Latin literature and the classics. When he was 18 years old, he married Anne Hathaway and a year later their first daughter Susanna was born. Later two more children were born, the twins, Hamnet and Judith. He started as an actor and also worked as a dramatist often improving the works of other writers. He moved to London, while his family stayed in Stratford-upon-Avon, visiting them regularly.

For most of his career, he wrote for a group called The Lord Chamberlain's Men (a company of actors), which he later part-owned. This company together built the Globe Theatre in 1599 in London, where the plays of William Shakespeare were performed. Richard Burbage, a prominent English actor in the late 16th and early 17th centuries and one of the most celebrated actors of the Elizabethan era, bought rooms at Blackfriars and started to convert them into a theatre and after he died, his son James Burbage, also a famous actor, turned the Blackfriars Theatre into a private playhouse, that Shakespeare and his company continued to use for their performances. Meanwhile Shakespeare's son, only 11 years old Hamnet died, the event that surely influenced the writer's life. When James I came to the throne, Shakespeare's company was taken under the royal patronage and the name changed from "The Lord Chamberlain's Men" to "King's Men". During one of his plays in 1613, specifically Henry VIII, the Globe Theatre caught fire because of a firing of a small cannon that set fire to the thatched roof and burnt down. A year later they rebuilt the theatre more finely.

In 1616, on the day of his birthday, William Shakespeare died. His works were seen by the public eye only thanks to his friends John Heminges and Henry Condell. They collected the written plays and had them printed. This collection is known as First Folio, containing 36 of his plays, released in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death. Over the 17th century, the works were published three more times in the same format and sequence – Second, Third and Fourth Folio.

## 1.1. Editing of works:

Bad Quarto (1603)	Good Quarto (1604-5)	First Folio (1623)
<p><i>Ham.</i> To be, or not to be, I there's the point, To Die, to sleepe, is that all: I all: No, to sleepe, to dreame, I mary there it goes, For in that dreame of death, when wee awake, And borne before an euerslasing Iudge, From whence no passenger euer returnd, The vndiscouered country, at whose sight The happy smile, and the accursed damn'd. But for this, the ioyfull hope of this, Whol'd beare the scornes and flattery of the world, Scorned by the right rich, the rich cursed of the poore? <b>The widow being oppressed, the orphan wrong'd, The talke of hunger, or a tyrants raigne, And thousand more calamities besides, To grunt and sweate vnder this weary life, When that he may his full <i>Quies</i> make, With a bare bodkin, who would this indure, But for a hope of something after death?</b> Which puzles the braine, and doth confound the sense Which makes vs rather beare those euilles we haue, Than flie to others that we know not of. I that, O this conscience makes cowardes of vs all, Lay in thy orizons, be all my finnes remembered.</p>	<p><i>Ham.</i> To be, or not to be, that is the question, Whether tis nobler in the minde to suffer The flings and arrowes of outrageous fortune, Or to take Armes against a sea of troubles, And by opposing, end them, to die to sleepe No more, and by a sleepe, to say we end The hart-ake, and the thousand naturall shocks That flesh is heire to; tis a consumption Deuoutly to be wish't to die to sleepe, To sleepe, perchance to dreame, I there's the rub, For in that sleepe of death what dreames may come When we haue shuffled off this mortall coyle Must giue vs pause, there's the respect That makes calamitie of so long life: For who would beare the whips and cornes of time, Th'oppressors wrong, the proude mans contumely, The pang of despiz'd loue, the lawes delay, The infolence of office, and the spurnes That patient merit of th'vnworthy takes, When he himselfe might his quietus make With a bare bodkin; who would fardels beare, To grunt and sweat vnder a wearie life, But that the dread of something after death, The vndiscouer'd country, from whose borne No trailler returns, puzzels the will, And makes vs rather beare those ills we haue, Then flie to others that we know not of. Thus conscience does make cowardes, And thus the native hiew of resolution Is sicklied o're with the pale cast of thought, And enterprizes of great pitch and moment, With this regard their currents turne awry, And loofe the name of action. Soft you now, The faire <i>Ophebia</i>, Nymph in thy orizons Be all my finnes remembered.</p>	<p><i>Ham.</i> To be, or not to be, that is the Question: Whether 'tis Nobler in the minde to suffer The Slings and Arrowes of outrageous Fortune, Or to take Armes against a Sea of troubles, And by opposing end them: to dye, to sleepe No more; and by a sleepe, to say we end The Heart-ake, and the thousand Naturall Shockes That Flesh is heyre too? 'Tis a consumption Deuoutly to be wish'd, To dye to sleepe, To sleepe, perchance to Dreame; I, there's the rub, For in that sleepe of death, what dreames may come, When we haue shuffled off this mortall coyle, Must giue vs pause. There's the respect That makes Calamity of so long life: For who would beare the Whips and Scornes of time, The Oppressors wrong, the poore mans Contumely, The pang of dispriz'd Loue, the Lawes delay, The infolence of Office, and the Spurnes That patient merit of the vnworthy takes, When he himselfe might his <i>Quies</i> make With a bare Bodkin? Who would these Fardels beare To grunt and sweat vnder a weary life, But that the dread of something after death, The vndiscouer'd Countrey, from whose Borne No Traueller returns, Puzels the will, And makes vs rather beare those illes we haue, Then flie to others that we know not of. Thus Conscience does make Cowards of vs all, And thus the Native hew of Resolution Is sicklied o're, with the pale cast of Thought, And enterprizes of great pitch and moment, With this regard their Currents turne awry, And loofe the name of Action. Soft you now, The faire <i>Ophebia</i>? Nymph, in thy Orizons Be all my finnes remembered.</p>

Picture 1: Bad Quarto, Good Quarto and First Folio

(Bad Quarto, Good Quarto and First Folio, 2021, Available on:

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/05/Bad\\_quarto%2C\\_good\\_quarto%2C\\_first\\_folio.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/05/Bad_quarto%2C_good_quarto%2C_first_folio.png) )

A "Bad Quarto" is considered a less reliable or less accurate early edition of a Shakespearean play. Bad Quartos are often thought to be derived from memory, shorthand notes, or reconstructed versions rather than authoritative sources. These quartos might contain variations in language, scenes, or even entire acts compared to the more accepted versions of the plays. A "Good Quarto" is considered a more authoritative or accurate early edition of a Shakespearean play. It is believed to be closer to the author's original manuscript or the official playhouse manuscript. According to Michael Dobson (2011), the First Folio could have made Shakespeare's works more available, as it was a single book, its publishers however bought the rights to the earlier quartos which made some of the plays less accessible.

The majority of the plays attributed to Shakespeare in later editions were not published until around seven years after he passed away. The few that were released during

his lifetime seem to have been introduced to the public without the author's careful attention, and thus probably without his awareness

In the 18th century, many individuals started editing the Folios. Each of them tried to eliminate the textual difficulties, so the texts are familiar to the then-current audience, without leaving out Shakespeare's influence and reputation.

The first one to start this not-such-an-easy task was Nicholas Rowe in 1709 - Octavo, 6 volumes (Octavo is a classical format, and "6 volumes" refers to the number of separate books or parts that make up a complete work). He decided to add a list of all characters at the beginning of each play, made a complete division of the plays into acts and scenes and also included stage directions. Rowe enriched the books in honour of their original creator, by including a little section about Shakespeare's life at the beginning of the collection.

In 1725 Alexander Pope (quarto, 6 volumes) revised and altered Shakespeare's plays in the manner of a literary editor, seeking to enhance their appeal to audiences of his era. He aimed to identify and establish the most genuine and authoritative texts attributed to Shakespeare. Like Rowe's, Pope's Shakespeare edition from 1723-25 highlights his intention to "correct" the errors of previous editions. According to Johnson (1765), Pope went through the old copies, which no one had bothered to check previously, and fixed many lines to make them correct again. He followed Rowe and reprinted his work with little added value. Pope was notably struck by what he perceived as Shakespeare's exceptional talent for realistically and uniquely portraying his characters.

Eight years later, in 1733, Lewis Theobald (octavo, 7 volumes) used the Elizabethan parallels as a guide to some brilliant amendments. He followed his work named: *"Shakespeare Restored; or, A Specimen of the Many Errors As Well Committed As Unamended by Mr. Pope, in His Late Edition of This Poet"*.

The list of editors continues with Thomas Hanmer, William Warburton, Thomas Edward, Samuel Johnson, Edward Capell, George Steevens, Edmond Malone (considered to be the best of the century's edition, of Shakespeare's editors) and more. Usually, each of them followed and relied on the previous editor.

The Elizabethan plays were worked and reworked frequently, and the ones by William Shakespeare were no exception. In the view of Marcus Walsh (1997), some eighteenth-century editors, notably Pope, Bentley and Warburton, have been accused of

adopting a grossly subjective aesthetic approach, changing the texts of Shakespeare and Milton more or less freely to accommodate them to their tastes.

Shakespeare's works were meant to be for an audience – theatre, not for a reader. Regarding the era, in which his plays were composed (the Elizabethan era), it needs to be kept in mind that the language of the 16th century has changed until today noticeably through all those years. Editors around the world helped present-day readers with a simpler, more modern, direct style. The works have been edited and re-edited for many years, but the core, overall impression and mostly the characterization of the individual personas of Shakespeare's works stay without a change.

In this work, I deal with the characteristics of characters – whether it is a protagonist (main character), antagonist (enemy), deuteragonist (secondary character, important supporting role), or any other type of character, female or male, and search for their different as much as equal features. Since it is a play, the task of actors in theatres is to portray the roles as well as they can, according to the written work, and even though the texts have been edited, Juliet will always be Juliet and Hamlet remains Hamlet.

## **1.2. Acts and scene division:**

Of the original quartos of Shakespeare's plays, not one of them was divided into numbered scenes, only *Othello* was divided into acts. In 1709, Nicholas Rowe's edition was the first to divide all the plays into numbered acts and scenes.

The early English plays incorporated the structural element of dividing into scenes, where a new scene commenced when the stage was clear and the action non-continuous. However, the division into acts emerged as a later convention, possibly influenced by classical drama. Before 1607, only a few plays intended for adult dramatic companies were segmented into acts, but post that period, nearly every printed play for these companies consisted of five acts. Gary Taylor theorized that the shift to act-intervals coincided with the transition of adult companies from outdoor to indoor theatres, such as the acquisition of the Blackfriars playhouse by the King's Men in August 1608. Consequently, Shakespeare's later plays were seemingly crafted for a different structure of act sequence compared to his early and middle works.

### 1.3. Aspects that influenced the playwright:

Shakespeare's work was influenced by a wide variety of classical and Italian literature, English history, contemporary drama, the practicalities of theatre, religious and philosophical ideas, the socio-political context of his time, personal experiences, language, and a deep understanding of human nature. The combination of these influences contributed to the timeless and universal qualities of his plays and poetry.

As an actor, playwright, and shareholder in the Globe Theatre, Shakespeare was deeply involved in the practical aspects of theatre. His experiences in the world of Elizabethan theatre strongly influenced his understanding of the audience, stagecraft, and the demands of the profession.

Shakespeare had professional relationships and friendships with other playwrights and actors of his time, including Christopher Marlowe. These relationships might have influenced the exchange of ideas, collaborative efforts, and the overall theatrical landscape.

Loss of his son, Hamnet, who died at the age of 11. The grief and sorrow associated with the loss of a child might have influenced the themes of mortality, grief, and loss that are present in some of his works. It is questioned, whether the character Hamlet – at least his name, was not inspired by the author's son. The similarity in names has led to speculation about a potential connection. However, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that *Hamlet* is directly inspired by the personal tragedy of Hamnet's death.

Most of his works were produced between 1589 and 1613. He wrote primarily comedies. In total, William Shakespeare is the author of 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and several other poems.

His works in chronological order presented by William Shakespeare's scholar, Sir Edmund Kerchever Chambers:

- *Henry VI, Part 2* (1590–1591)
- *Henry VI, Part 3* (1590–1591)
- *Henry VI, Part 1* (1591–1592)
- *Richard III* (1592–1593)

- *The Comedy of Errors* (1592–1593)
- *Titus Andronicus* (1593–1594)
- *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593–1594)
- *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1594–1595)
- *Love's Labour's Lost* (1594–1595)
- *Romeo and Juliet* (1594–1595)
- *Richard II* (1595–1596)
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595–1596)
- *King John* (1596–1597)
- *The Merchant of Venice* (1596–1597)
- *Henry IV, Part 1* (1597–1598)
- *Henry IV, Part 2* (1597–1598)
- *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598–1599)
- *Henry V* (1598–1599)
- *Julius Caesar* (1599–1600)
- *As You Like It* (1599–1600)
- *Twelfth Night* (1599–1600)
- *Hamlet* (1600–1601)
- *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1600–1601)
- *Troilus and Cressida* (1601–1602)
- *All's Well That Ends Well* (1602–1603)
- *Measure for Measure* (1604–1605)
- *Othello* (1604–1605)
- *King Lear* (1605–1606)
- *Macbeth* (1605–1606)
- *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606–1607)
- *Coriolanus* (1607–1608)
- *Timon of Athens* (1607–1608)
- *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (1608–1609)
- *Cymbeline* (1609–1610)
- *The Winter's Tale* (1610–1611)
- *The Tempest* (1611–1612)

- *Henry VIII* (1612–1613)
- *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1612–1613)

#### 1.4. Shakespeare's Criticism

During his life and afterwards, Shakespeare experienced fame, but also critical attention. Shakespearean critics analyse various aspects, such as the themes, characters, plot, language, and literary techniques used by the writer in his plays and sonnets. They take into consideration the historical and cultural context in which the works were written and performed. Putting their knowledge into practice, they share interpretations and evaluations, contributing to ongoing discussions about Shakespeare's legacy. Among the most significant Shakespearean critics are Harold Bloom, A.C. Bradley, John Dryden, Samuel Johnson, T.S. Eliot, etc.

Several critics focused specifically on the characters of Shakespeare's plays, which were used in this thesis as sources of information.

One notable example is Samuel Johnson (Dr. Johnson), who praises Shakespeare's skill in creating characters in his book "*Preface to Shakespeare*" from 1765. He suggests that Shakespeare's characters are based on universal principles, keeping life's essence alive. According to the neo-classical belief of representing general nature accurately, even the simplest aspects of nature endure through time. This timeless quality gives great art its lasting appeal across generations. He explains that Shakespeare's characters behave and express themselves under the sway of those common emotions and principles that stir every mind, sustaining the entire flow of life.

William Hazlitt is another remarkable critic. In his work "*Characters of Shakespeare's plays*" from 1817 he discusses the authentic portrayal of Shakespearean characters and their significance. He comments that Shakespeare's characters are so natural. Hazlitt examines various plays from Shakespeare's repertoire, providing insights into the motivations, traits, and development of characters. For example, Hazlitt argues that the criticism of *Romeo and Juliet* overlooks Shakespeare's portrayal of youthful passion rooted in anticipation rather than experience, capturing the boundless desires and infinite expectations of youth before they are tempered by reality. Hazlitt praises Shakespeare's

masterful creation of contrasting characters in *Othello*, especially between characters Othello and Iago. *As You Like It* is a play where the sentiment and personalities of the characters take precedence over their actions, and it is more about what they say rather than what they do.

Harold Bloom, in his book *Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human* from the year 1998 suggests that Shakespeare's characters are incredibly detailed and psychologically rich, shaping our understanding of humanity in literature. Bloom's examination offers profound insights into Shakespeare's characters and their lasting importance. "No other writer, before or since Shakespeare, has accomplished so well the virtual miracle of creating utterly different yet self-consistent voices for his more than one hundred major characters and many hundreds of highly distinctive minor personages." (Bloom, 1998, p. 17)

In the 20th and 21st centuries, Shakespeare's criticism has experienced a remarkable expansion, witnessing the emergence of diverse critical approaches. Psychological and psychoanalytic critics, exemplified by scholars like Ernest Jones, have delved into character analysis through various psychotic behaviours.

## 2. CHARACTERS OF THE ELIZABETHAN ERA

### 2.1. Women in the 16th century:

The role of women in society was extremely restricted. They were property of their father, until the day they married, when they became a property of the husband. Marriage itself was an agreement for power, legacy or land in exchange, and all was in favour of the husband only. Every woman had to be obedient, patient, modest, kind, silent, submissive. She should fulfil her duties and also abstain from activities that displeased her husband. At those times women's sexuality was mystic and feared by men. Their value was based on physical appearance. Their job was domestic chores and raising kids.

Shakespeare's female characters are multifaceted and contribute to the exploration of various themes, including love, power, family, and social expectations. They have been updated for over four centuries to reflect evolving perspectives on the nature and societal roles of women. In the times of Shakespeare's England, female characters were traditionally portrayed by men.

As described by Carol Thomas Neely (1993), Shakespeare himself did not speak from a female perspective or advocate for women's rights, however, his portrayal of women in his works is comprehensive. He skilfully captures and reimagines the complexities of women's societal roles, embodying and exploring the inherent contradictions. Through his male and female characters, Shakespeare articulates the tensions and dynamics within relationships between men and women. His depiction often sheds light on these issues more vividly than historical accounts, which frequently overlook or diminish the voices of women.

Typical examples of female-type characters in Shakespeare's plays:

- Tragic Heroines:

Examples: Juliet (*Romeo and Juliet*), Desdemona (*Othello*), Ophelia (*Hamlet*)

These characters often experience tragic circumstances, facing love and loss, and their stories explore themes of fate, social constraints, and the consequences of their choices.

- Comedic Heroines:

Examples: Rosalind (*As You Like It*), Beatrice (*Much Ado About Nothing*), Viola (*Twelfth Night*)

Comedic heroines are witty, clever, engage in wordplay, and navigate romantic entanglements.

- Strong and Assertive Women:

Examples: Katherina (*The Taming of the Shrew*), Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth*)

Females who defy traditional gender roles. They are assertive, ambitious, and challenge social expectations.

- Villainesses:

Examples: Regan and Goneril (*King Lear*), Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth*)

Their motivations may include ambition, deceit, or betrayal, and their actions contribute to the conflicts in the plays by their manipulation of others.

## **2.2. Men in the 16th century:**

The period of Elizabeth I's rule in England was a time in which society valued men and women differently. Men were the ruling voice over all aspects of society. Men, as opposed to women, controlled their societal role. They inherited all the property – wealth and estates. It was assumed that they were the only gender that could think rationally because females seemed to be driven by feelings and passion. In Elizabethan times wealthy men were clergymen, diplomats, lawyers; and they also dominated religious institutions. Basically, they were politicians, leaders and decision-makers. Men were expected to exhibit qualities such as courage, honour, and loyalty. James W. Stone (2010) comments on man's selfish desire to interpret himself as completely independent from women, but eventually his illusions end up being shattered.

Male characters in Shakespeare's plays are diverse and multifaceted. However, there are some common characteristics and archetypes that often appear in his plays. These characteristics are shaped by the social norms, expectations, and dramatic conventions of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras.

Typical examples of male-type characters in Shakespeare's plays:

- Tragic Heroes:

Examples: Hamlet (*Hamlet*), Macbeth (*Macbeth*), Othello (*Othello*)

Tragic heroes often have noble qualities but possess fatal flaws that lead to their downfall. They grapple with internal conflicts, face external challenges, and experience tragic outcomes.

- Comic Heroes:

Examples: Touchstone (*As You Like It*), Benedick (*Much Ado About Nothing*), Puck (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

Comic heroes are witty, clever, and often engage in humorous situations. They may participate in wordplay, disguises, and romantic entanglements typical of Shakespearean comedies.

- Villains:

Examples: Iago (*Othello*), Richard III (*Richard III*), Edmund (*King Lear*)

Machiavellian villains are cunning, manipulative, and often driven by ambition. They use deceit, manipulation, and psychological tactics to achieve their goals.

- Wise Counsellors:

Examples: Friar Laurence (*Romeo and Juliet*), Polonius (*Hamlet*), Gonzalo (*The Tempest*)

Wise counsellors offer guidance and advice to other characters. They may possess wisdom, experience, and a sense of morality. Their counsel can impact the decisions and actions of the main characters.

- Royalty and Leaders:

Examples: King Lear (*King Lear*), Henry V (*Henry V*), Duncan (*Macbeth*)

These characters hold positions of power and authority. Their stories often involve political intrigue, issues of leadership, and challenges associated with ruling.

## **3. SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

### **3.1. Psychology**

A character analysis involves thoroughly examining the characteristics, personality, and significance of a specific character within a narrative. It also entails discussing the character's overall contribution to the storyline.

Our focus in this thesis is on the personality of a character through psychology. Psychology is the scientific study of mental processes and behaviour, which examines personality by investigating the formation and evolution of individual traits, exploring how these traits combine to shape one's distinct personality type over time. Based on the Oxford Dictionary, personality is defined as the characteristics and qualities of a person as a whole.

### **3.2. Analysis**

Understanding a character's mental processes in a literary work can be achieved by analysing their actions and behaviours as well as their speeches. Playwrights put life in their characters through actions, dialogues and monologues. "One problem with analysing the ideological implications of full-length narratives is that they are often too long, too shapeless and multifarious, and therefore hard to compare" (Fransen, 2016, p.17).

Shakespeare understood the power of presenting characters not only through their own actions but also through their perceptions and interactions with other characters. By allowing the audience to see a character through the eyes of others, Shakespeare enriches the characterization by providing multiple viewpoints and perspectives. This way depth and complexity are added to the portrayal of characters, as it reveals how they are perceived, interpreted, and judged by those around them. It also allows a reader to understand the relationship among the characters.

While analysing a character, we pay attention to several details:

1. Personality – the things that make the character unique, including their perspective and any other distinguishing details and characteristics.
2. Behaviour – what the character does, and how they act.

3. Motivation – reasons for the character’s behaviour, what makes the characters behave the way they do, and what drives them to make certain decisions.
4. Relationships – interactions with other characters, forming connections.

Just like Hazlitt, in this thesis, we chose to see and understand the characters of the plays through feelings.

### **3.3. METHODOLOGIES**

#### **3.3.1. Main Aim**

The **main aim** of this thesis is to survey and depict the equal and contrastive features of female and male characters in the works of William Shakespeare. We would like to gain a deeper understanding of the personal characteristics of characters and their development during the plays and be able to think critically, according to which features will the characters be put into contrast.

The goal is to see the character as a whole person, based on the author’s description (not their function from the literary point of view but analysing the main characters by the same criteria as the supporting characters for the sake of their socio-psychological assessment) and notice the differences in the personal features of the 16<sup>th</sup> century’s characters in contrast to the females’ and males’ roles as known nowadays.

After proper analysis and comparison, we should be able to deal with these Hypotheses:

Hypothesis nr. 1: There are more individual differences among female characters, than among male characters conspicuous in the dramatic works of William Shakespeare
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Hypothesis nr. 2: There is more flexible development of Shakespearean female dramatic characters in comparison to Shakespearean male dramatic characters.
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### 3.3.2. The Subject of the Survey:

Choosing two tragedies and two comedies of the works of William Shakespeare, in which we observe the traits of each important female and male character based on reading the particular plays, particularly *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *As You Like It*, and *Taming of the Shrew* during which we strongly paid attention to the behaviour and details about characters and their personal development during the plays.

I have chosen characters from Shakespearean tragedies and comedies due to their fictional origin. Analysis of characters from historical plays might have led to some kind of biased evaluation of these characters because of their already existing historical reputation.

According to the read texts, we had to assess what impressions the characters make and see how much they reflect similarities and differences. The comparison is done in the category *Male vs. Female*, in the category *Male vs. Male* and, in the category *Female vs. Female*. We always notice the contrast between the characters from one specific work. Our analysis of characters is mostly between the main protagonists of a work but in some cases between the main and supporting roles. There are many characters in each of the plays, but the examination is done among those characters, which are provided with a sufficient amount of data, e.g. monologues, dialogues, character descriptions, etc. The characters are compared in their strongest aspects.

We intended *to analyse the character traits of the chosen literary characters* from the psychological point of view, i.e. we have assessed the following features *in these categories*: **Personality traits, Love, Friendship, Main interest and Transformation.**

## 4. CHARACTERS ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON

### 4.1. Romeo and Juliet

**Romeo** is a young man in the house of Montague. He is sad that Rosaline's (his first "love") feelings are not returned. He is often lost in his own world and lives in his imagination. After meeting Juliet, she becomes his sole focus and reality. Romeo's love for her is such a strong one that it replaces any feelings he used to have for his previous crush, Rosaline, just like the sun outshines the stars. He expresses his feelings for Juliet in the Balcony scene. He does not even try to deny his feelings when he realises all the intimate dialogue between him and his love was overheard by his friend. He only comments that it is easy for the ones who never loved to make fun of a lover.

Romeo:

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

(Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Collins Classics, 2011, Act II, Scene II, p. 83)

Romeo is later challenged to fight with Tybalt, and in those times, not accepting to fight was a sign of cowardice. Romeo is conscious of how much Tybalt is important to Juliet and for that reason he refuses. Later on, the match happens anyway, Tybalt is murdered by Romeo's hand and his punishment is exile. That makes Romeo incredibly mad and sad – his emotions match Juliet's energy in this situation perfectly. Eventually, just like Juliet, he cannot bear the thought of living without his love and so he rather dies with her.

**Juliet** is a young girl in the house of Capulet. Initially, she is an obedient daughter, but after encountering Romeo, she seems a bit foolish and straight, as she says herself in one of the dialogues with Romeo.

Juliet:

Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,

I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,

So thou wilt woo. But else, not for the world.

In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,

And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light.

(Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Collins Classics, 2011, Act II, Scene II, p. 89)

In this whole scene, Juliet portrays the typical behaviour of a young girl in love, but she is not ashamed to admit it. She is supposed to marry Paris, a gentleman, who any woman would not have a reason not to marry. When the story continues, Juliet's love transforms from a foolish love into a real love. She also starts to have an attitude to sexuality. When Romeo has to go to exile after he kills Tybalt, she is not sad as much about her cousin's death, as she is about Romeo's fate. Her only concern is that she cannot see her husband. In the moment she is about to drink the potion, she starts to have doubts. She fears for her life and realises that there is a chance of never waking up, but she takes the risk anyway, which portrays her bravery. She does it because it represents hope for not marrying another man and staying loyal to her love, Romeo. After she wakes up in a tomb with her husband dead, she decides to end her life. She could have lived many more years, but she decided to join her love in the afterlife. An impulsive reaction of a young girl, but after seeing her character's growth, her final decision was brave and strong.

**Capulet** a proud man, hates the Montague family. As a father, he seems to want the best for her daughter Juliet, but when she tells him what she really wants he becomes insensitive, violent and brutal. He calls Juliet a wretch, tells her they are cursed by having her as a child and that he would rather see her dead/would kill her if she did not marry Paris – the man he chose for her. He knows his power and he uses it to get whatever he wants. After losing a child because of his pride, he makes peace with Montague.

**Montague** is equally stubborn as Capulet. Powerful heads of rich well-known families hold a grudge against each other, because of their pride. An ancient conflict, that none of them wanted to stop, until a point when they lost what they held most dear. Here is love for their children shown, their death could mean a new conflict by accusing and speculating, but they learnt their lesson – how foolish they were – so they finally made peace.

**Lady Capulet** is a mother to Juliet; she has an aura of a cold-hearted and unsympathetic woman. She feels hatred towards the Montague family and every time there is a chance she seeks punishment or revenge on them. She is very attentive to her social status, which is why she wants to marry her daughter to young Paris to strengthen their family's standing in society. As a wife, she often attempts to calm Capulet's nerves when he gets angry at Montague with a desire to fight him, or at Juliet when she disobeys him.

**Lady Montague** is a mother to Romeo, she is very protective and many times worried for her son, which is a sign of her nurturing and caring nature. She searches for Romeo immediately when she sees a quarrel in the streets. After he is exiled she feels deep sorrow and worries about his safety.

**Nurse** had probably more importance in Juliet's life than her mother. Her form of speech is a bit dull and frequently sexual. She has no control over her tongue just like her emotions. With her warm, affectionate and caring nature, she always means wellbeing for Juliet no matter what. She knows Juliet well, maybe even better than Lady Capulet. When problems occur, she tries to help the young lovers, even when she knows that it could represent trouble if her masters found out.

**Friar Lawrence** – even he is a Friar – has a “higher” role on Earth (from a religious view), many times he acts almost against the law. Perhaps he recognizes true love. When Romeo is exiled, Friar Lawrence cheers him up and tells him to have hope and courage. He helps Juliet again when he gives her the potion he made himself. He is the “conductor” of where the story is going – he makes all the plans for the marriage, where they meet, how to ensure Juliet doesn't marry Paris, letting Romeo know about the plan, etc. All these actions show how witty, compassionate and kind he is.

**Mercutio** is a witty, high-spirited, brave young man. He often changes the meaning of someone's speech or transforms it so it has a sexual or ambiguous meaning. He has never been in love and so he makes fun of Romeo because of Rosaline. Hazlitt (1817) commented that the character of Mercutio in this play is one of the most mercurial and spirited of the productions of Shakespeare's comic muse.

**Tybalt** is an overconfident, arrogant person, who hates Montagues very much and always searches for a conflict with them. He is confrontational, always looking for a fight, and he is known to be a skilful swordsman. He is dearly loved by his cousin – Juliet, and the Nurse as well. Eventually, he dies by Romeo's hand.

Tybalt:

What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word,

As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.

(Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Collins Classics, 2011, Act I, Scene I, p. 25)

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>ROMEO</b>	<b>JULIET</b>
<b>Personality traits</b>	Loyal, brave, sensitive, romantic, determined	Initially innocent and obedient, brave, devoted, romantic, determined
<b>Love</b>	Sudden love for Juliet, intense and romantic. Has also sexual interests	Intense and true love for Romeo, starts to have attitude to sexuality
<b>Friendship</b>	Strong connections with friends like Mercutio and Benvolio	Close to her Nurse, relatively deep connections.
<b>Main interest</b>	Juliet, love, keeps a strong bond with his friends	Romeo, love, independence
<b>Transformation</b>	Shift from a love-sick youth to a devoted partner driven by love	From an obedient girl to a courageous young woman, driven by love

Table 1: Comparison of the characters Romeo and Juliet

The nature of both characters is loyal and obedient as they initially follow the wishes of their families, but their romantic trait drives them to bravery, thanks to which they eventually pursue their devotion to follow their own interests – love. Their goals are very similar because they both seek each other’s company and strengthen their love. Their feelings are profound and real. Romeo’s love is sudden with sexual interest, whereas Juliet starts having the attitude to sexuality later as her feelings progressively grow. Romeo’s connections with others differ from Juliet’s. He has a strong friendship with Mercutio and Benvolio, Juliet on the other hand does not have deep connections, perhaps only with her Nurse. The pair undergoes a significant change as Romeo transforms from a young boy with a superficial view of love to a man devoted to his loved one, and Juliet changes from an obedient girl into a brave and devoted woman.

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>TYBALT</b>	<b>MERCUTIO</b>
<b>Personality traits</b>	Arrogant, provocative, impulsive, confrontational Dedicated to defending his family's honour	Witty, carefree, quick-temper, confrontational
<b>Love</b>	No attitudes towards love	Is sceptical, never had a love interest
<b>Friendship</b>	No deep connections	Deep connections with his friends, fiercely protective over them, duels Tybalt on Romeo's behalf
<b>Main interest</b>	Honour, loyalty, feuding	Humour, friendship, freedom
<b>Transformation</b>	Does not undergo a significant change – Hatred towards the Montagues from the beginning till the end of his life.	Not a significant change - Considered feud of the families unnecessary, stays lively, high-spirited and humorous even in the moments of his demise.

Table 2: Comparison of the characters Tybalt and Mercutio

Tybalt and Mercutio are equally confrontational, each of them however has a different motive for it. Tybalt is a provocative fellow, who is looking for a conflict everywhere he goes under preference of defending his family's honour, while Mercutio is naturally quick-tempered and is easily provoked. In addition, Tybalt wants to prove his loyalty towards his family and so he considers it a privilege to fight. Unlike Tybalt, Mercutio does not support the conflict of the families and thinks it is not necessary. Mercutio longs for freedom and wants to stay care-free. He expresses his loyalty elsewhere – to his friends, especially to Romeo. Friendship in Mercutio's life is important, but in Tybalt's not so much. Their opinion about love is however similar. None of them has a romantic interest or share deep feelings for someone. Mercutio feels sceptical towards love and uses this topic as an object of humour. This duo does not undergo any significant transformation – Tybalt keeps hating Montagues and Mercutio still cannot understand that unreasonable feud.

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>LADY CAPULET</b>	<b>LADY MONTAGUE</b>
<b>Personality traits</b>	Very formal, reserved, adheres the social expectations of a woman in her position	Affectionate, nurturing, caring, adheres the social expectation of a woman in her position
<b>Love</b>	Seems to fulfil her duties as a wife, little emotional connection with her daughter	Seems to fulfil her duties as a wife, deeply cares and shows maternal instincts for her son
<b>Friendship</b>	No connections except with her family	No connections except with her family
<b>Main interest</b>	Caring for social status, to improve the social standing of her family	Peace and harmony in her family, safety of Romeo
<b>Transformation</b>	Not a significant change, Eventually makes peace with the Montague family and sees her mistake	Not a significant change, Eventually makes peace with the Capulet family and sees her mistake

Table 3: Comparison of the characters Lady Capulet and Lady Montague

Lady Capulet and Lady Montague are very similar personas mainly in their external appearance. They are both loyal women, whose behaviour meets the expectations of a good wife. They support their families and present themselves in public as women from an important family of the upper class. Lady Capulet, however, seems to care about her social status a bit too much, which is in contrast to the main interests of Lady Montague, who above that cares about her family's well-being and peace. Lady Montague's continuous concern for her son Romeo is proof of how loving, affectionate and caring her character really is. Lady Capulet, on the other hand, does not have such a strong relationship with her daughter Juliet, she appears cold-hearted and wants to marry Juliet to improve their social status, even if it means unhappiness for her daughter. In the end, they show that both of them truly love their children after they are found dead. They understand their mistakes and eventually end the feud of families by making peace.

## 4.2. Othello

**Othello** is a Moor – a black-skinned African man. An honourable, brave general, who loves Desdemona and trusts the two-faced Iago. His character embodies nobility, trust, tenderness, and generosity. Initially, he does not believe in Desdemona and Cassio's affair, but later on, he is convinced by Iago about Desdemona's unfaithfulness and so Othello promises to kill them both. However, he does not really want to kill his wife. Later he becomes confident about Desdemona's disloyalty and seeks revenge, which takes thorough possession of his mind and grows stronger every moment. He promotes Iago to lieutenant and orders him to kill Cassio. He cannot contain his rage any longer and he slaps Desdemona in public. Othello ends up smothering his wife with a pillow. He stabs Iago and kills himself. "Othello has very strong positive emotion towards his new wife at the beginning of the play, but this positivity quickly degrades as Othello falls deeper and deeper into Iago's deceit." (Nalisnick, Baird, 2013, p. 481)

Othello:

I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee. No way but this -

Killing my self, to die upon a kiss.

[Falls on the bed and dies.]

(Shakespeare, Othello, Collins Classics, 2011, Act v, Scene II, p. 151)

**Iago** is a villain of the story, who hates Othello and is mischievous. His villainy lacks a sufficient reason. He tricks Rodrigo into fighting Cassio, which leads Cassio to lose his rank, of which Iago is jealous. He later manipulates Cassio to appeal to Desdemona to talk Othello into giving him his post back. He uses their meetings as evidence of their affair, which is obviously a lie he tells Othello. He uses a lost handkerchief as another evidence of Desdemona's infidelity. He later manipulates Cassio to talk to him about his affection for Bianca, so it sounds as if it is an affair with Desdemona, knowing Othello is listening. He tells Rodrigo it is a good idea to kill Cassio, but he ends up being injured. Iago finishes him off so he cannot reveal his plans. He changes the reputation of poor Desdemona completely, and Othello considers her character to be an evil one.

**Desdemona** is the wife of Othello. Her character is extremely loyal and tender. Respectful to both her father and her husband. She travels to Cyprus with her husband to

support him during a war. She wants to help Cassio to restore his title. Desdemona is slapped in public by her husband, yet she obeys him. She does not understand the motives of his behaviour, but still, she does not think him ill. Desdemona is murdered by her husband, but she dies innocent.

**Brabantio** is the father of Desdemona, who is outraged when he learns about his daughter marrying the Moor. He could not believe that she could ever love him, which shows distrust of his daughter. He shows his temper when he says he is happy that he does not have more children when he is outvoted by people saying they believe the marriage is out of love.

**Cassio** is a lieutenant, who loses his post and tries to win it back by begging Desdemona to talk to the Moor about giving his rank back to him. He trusts Iago and considers him a friend and colleague. In the end, he is Othello's successor and it becomes his job to punish Iago for the evil things he has done. His motives for his actions are pure and just.

**Rodrigo** is hopelessly in love with Desdemona and jealous of Cassio's rank, which makes him act impulsively. He trusts Iago and considers him a friend. He picks up a fight with Cassio, because Iago advises him, that after killing Cassio, he could get closer to Desdemona. He ends up dead for trusting the evil Iago, who is eventually the one that kills him.

**Emilia** is Iago's wife. Faithful and empathetic woman. Iago commands her to steal a handkerchief that Othello gave to Desdemona. She normally obeys her husband, but not when she knows of his wrongdoings, and how much it would have hurt the ones she cares about. When asked about Desdemona's infidelity, she defends her and swears Desdemona is innocent and would never be unfaithful. She is killed by her husband when she realises how he manipulated all of them and tells it to Othello.

**Bianca** is a woman of lower-class, who is in love with Cassio and desires a more serious relationship with him. Her feelings are genuine and pure. Iago uses her as a tool to manipulate others, she is, however innocent in that matter.

<b>FEATURES</b>	<b>OTHELLO</b>	<b>DESDEMONA</b>
<b>Personality traits</b>	Noble, confining, tender, generous nature, unstoppable when gets angry.	Respectful, loyal, obedient, kind, compassionate
<b>Love</b>	Loves Desdemona deeply, but later he trusts the lies that turn the love into hatred.	Loves Othello deeply, even in times of his unacceptable behaviour.
<b>Friendship</b>	Connection with Iago, whom he trusts, with others mostly professional relationships	Close relationship with Emilia, shows kindness and empathy towards Cassio
<b>Main interest</b>	Fulfilling the duties of a general, maintaining order within the army, being a good husband to his wife	Fulfilling the duties as a wife, supporting her husband, helping others
<b>Transformation</b>	Honourable and loving at first but through lies and manipulation becomes jealous, obsessed and murderous	Not a significant change - Stays true to herself - obedient, loving, innocent.

Table 4: Comparison of the characters Othello and Desdemona

Characters Othello and Desdemona seem to be almost perfect examples for everyone, as they both meet the expectations of their gender roles as well as their duties. Othello is a noble, honourable gentleman, while Desdemona is an obedient, loyal wife who is kind to everybody. It could be a perfect couple, for they love each other deeply. They express their feelings to others differently – Othello trusts Iago with his life (which is in this case a mistake), however, he does not form any other deeper connections. For him, professional relationships are the most important, which is logical because he is the general, who needs to keep his status. Desdemona is kind and compassionate and she is willing to form a closer relationship with everybody. Only one of them lets the intrusive thoughts win over his beliefs and change them completely. It is Othello, whose deepest sentiment is changed by a

bystander. He is tricked with lies that weaken his mind, and as a result, he murders the one he cares about the most. Desdemona’s nature is perhaps stronger, due to her unyieldingness about what she believes in her heart to be true. Even though she felt the shift of her husband’s feelings about her, she never questions her or his love.

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>CASSIO</b>	<b>IAGO</b>
<b>Personality traits</b>	Gullible, honourable, diplomatic, just	Manipulative, malicious, jealous
<b>Love</b>	Relationship with Bianca, not clear if has deeper feelings	Mariage to Emilia, not clear if he really loves her
<b>Friendship</b>	Closer relationship with Bianca, friendly with Desdemona, relationship with colleagues is mainly professional	No connections, only pretends to be a friend of everyone
<b>Main interests</b>	To seek Othello’s trust and get his position back with colleagues is mainly professional	Revenge
<b>Transformation</b>	Not a significant change – Stays loyal to his general till the end, when he manages to gain back his trust	Not a significant change – during the whole play he has a dark purpose and it is the cause of his own death

Table 5: Comparison of the characters Cassio and Iago

One of the very few similarities between the characters Cassio and Iago is that they stay true to themselves and never hesitate. Cassio is loyal to Othello and keeps searching for ways to gain his trust back, Iago, in contrast, has everyone’s trust and keeps using it against them over and over again. His manipulative and deceitful behaviour proves, that it is not in his interest to make true friends. It is questionable whether he even truly loves his wife, considering the fact that he lies and manipulates her too. Cassio’s behaviour shows his

honesty and integrity, which are exactly the qualities enabling him to gain a deeper understanding of the ones he encounters.

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>DESDEMONA</b>	<b>EMILIA</b>
<b>Personality traits</b>	Kind, tender, obedient, respectful, loyal	Empathetic, kind, loyal, protective
<b>Love</b>	Loves her husband deeply, fulfils her duties as a wife	Fulfils her duties as a wife, whether she has romantic feelings for Iago is unclear
<b>Friendship</b>	Friendship with Emilia, friendly towards Cassio	Friendship with Desdemona to whom she is an attendant
<b>Main interest</b>	To fulfil her duties as a wife, also as a daughter, and help her surroundings which she cares about	To fulfil her duties as a wife and as a servant to Desdemona, her well-being
<b>Transformation</b>	Not a significant change	She becomes aware of Iago's deceitful nature close to her tragic end

Table 6: Comparison of the characters Desdemona and Emilia

It is obvious that Desdemona and Emilia are very similar. Not only in their values but also in their behaviour. Loyalty, kindness, empathy and respect come as the second nature to them, just like their objective in life – to be a good wife and please husband, according to which treat their surroundings. Apparently, their only difference is their fate. Desdemona dies without having any knowledge of what is happening, whereas Emilia realises the cruel reality of her husband's doings just before her death.

### 4.3. As You Like It

**Rosalind** is an intelligent, quick-witted, and resourceful daughter to Duke Senior. Despite being banished from the court, she maintains her composure and takes responsibility for her destiny. In the Forest of Arden, disguised as a male shepherd called **Ganymede**, she demonstrates her sharp intellect and cleverness, guiding others through their romantic entanglements while exploring the complexities of love herself. Her charm lies in her ability to navigate situations with humour and grace. In one of the dialogues with Celia, she shows how passionate and in love with Orlando she really is and also how demanding she can be:

Rosalind:

Alas the day, what shall I do with my doublet  
and hose? What did he when thou saw'st him? What  
said he? How looked he? Wherein went he? What  
makes he here? Did he ask for me? Where remains  
he? How parted he with thee? And when shalt thou  
see him again? Answer me in one word.

(Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Collins Classics, 2011, Act III, Scene II, p. 59)

**Orlando** is depicted as a noble and brave young man with a passionate heart. He is deeply in love with Rosalind and demonstrates his affection through acts of bravery and devotion. However, Orlando also exhibits a certain naivety and impulsiveness, particularly in his interactions with the other characters, such as his brother Oliver. Despite his flaws, his sincerity and earnestness make him a sympathetic figure. In the forest, he is enriched by his encounters and gains valuable lessons along the way, which lead to his personal growth, self-discovery and longing for a more meaningful existence.

**Oliver:** Oliver initially embodies the role of the antagonist, displaying jealousy and cruelty towards his brother Orlando. However, his character transforms encountering Rosalind and Celia in the forest, when he falls in love with **Aliena**, who in reality is a disguised Celia. He befriends his brother Orlando towards the end of the play.

**Celia** is portrayed as Rosalind's loyal and devoted cousin. Despite being the daughter of Duke Frederick, she chooses to accompany Rosalind into exile, demonstrating her loyalty and affection. She tells herself that she would follow Rosalind to her exile or die if she had to stay without her. She sees their journey to the forest as a way to liberty, not banishment, which portrays her bravery. Celia sometimes disguises as **Aliena**. Her unwavering support of Rosalind highlights the strength of their bond and the power of female friendship, although she is not fully convinced that Orlando is as much in love with Rosalind as she is in love with him.

**Duke Senior:** Duke Senior represents wisdom, resilience, and a deep connection to nature. Despite being exiled from court and living in the forest of Arden, he embraces his new surroundings with gratitude and dignity. His speeches reflect a profound appreciation for the simplicity and beauty of the natural, offering comfort and wisdom to those around him. Duke Senior serves as a fatherly figure, guiding his fellow exiles and embodying the themes of redemption and renewal. According to Charles Cowden Clarke, The Duke shows appreciation for the kindness he receives, stays strong in tough times, tolerates unkindness, and quickly forgives any harm done to him. His moral strength is both gentle and powerful.

**Duke Frederick** is a brother of Duke Senior. Duke Frederick is depicted as a tyrannical ruler, who longs for more power. His ruthless nature and lack of empathy is shown when he banishes Rosalind and takes control of the dukedom. However, as the play progresses, Duke Frederick undergoes a transformation, ultimately experiencing a change of heart and embracing a more benevolent outlook. His redemption adds depth to his character and reinforces the play's themes of forgiveness and reconciliation when he is converted by a religious man. Afterwards, he bequeaths the crown to his brother and gives him back their lands.

**Jaques** is characterized by his melancholic disposition and philosophical outlook on life. He is often depicted as a detached observer, offering cynical commentary on the follies of humanity. Despite his pessimism, Jaques also possesses a certain depth and complexity.

**Touchstone** is a court jester. He provides comic relief with his witty banter and playful antics. He is quick-witted and disrespectful, often using humour to comment on the absurdities of life. Touchstone's interactions with the other characters highlight his sharp intellect and bright observations. Despite his status as a fool, Touchstone is not without wisdom, offering insights into human nature with laughter.

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>ROSALIND</b>	<b>ORLANDO</b>
<b>Personality traits</b>	Intelligent, strategic, brave, resourceful	Passionate, brave, romantic
<b>Friendship</b>	Deep connection with her cousin Celia, friendly with people she meets in the forest	Genuine connection with his servant Adam, Ganymede, eventually brotherly love towards Oliver
<b>Love</b>	Love at first sight with Orlando, makes a bond with him even when disguised as Ganymede	Falls in love with Rosalind, is romantic and not ashamed to show his feelings
<b>Main interest</b>	Orlando, love, finding happiness for herself and the people around her	Rosalind, love, personal growth and a more fulfilling existence
<b>Transformation</b>	Gains a deeper understanding of the virtues of life, becomes an independent woman,	Gains a deeper understanding of the virtues of life, makes peace with his brother Oliver

Table 7: Comparison of the characters Rosalind and Orlando

The pair represents another couple that seem to be destined to be together. They are both approachable people, open to anyone they meet along the way, who happen to fall in love with each other at first sight. Their existence becomes almost the substance of each other's existence. Together with their friends and new acquaintances, they share new experiences, learn what more the world has to offer and eventually both grow up to a more sophisticated individuals empowered by love.

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>TOUCHSTONE</b>	<b>OLIVER</b>	<b>DUKE SENIOR</b>	<b>DUKE FREDERICK</b>
<b>Personality traits</b>	Clever, humorous, sarcastic, loyal	Passionate, jealous, malicious	Wise, thoughtful, brave, just	Cruel, longs for power, authoritarian
<b>Friendship</b>	Connections with Rosalind and Celia	Connection with Aliena	Connections with people in the forest during exile	Connections with family members
<b>Love</b>	Affection towards Audrey	Falls in love with Aliena	Loves his family, daughter Rosalind	No love-interests or deeper connections
<b>Main interest</b>	To serve Rosalind	To seek power, to be worthier than his brother	To live peacefully after exile	To rule and expand his power
<b>Transformation</b>	Not a significant change	From malicious to making peace with his brother and finding brotherly love	Learns to appreciate life more after exile	Is converted by a religious man, gives the crown to Duke Senior

Table 8: Comparison of the characters Touchstone, Oliver, Duke Senior, Duke Frederick

The personality traits of these four characters are very different. Touchstone is clever, however he gives the impression of almost a fool who does not care that much about anything. Duke Senior is on the other hand thoughtful and wise according to which he acts. Similarities are mainly between Duke Frederick and his son Oliver, who are equally aggressive, authoritarian and seek more power. Touchstone, Oliver and Duke Senior are willing to create more profound relationships or strengthen their already existing ones. Duke Frederick does not have closer friends, perhaps he cares only about his family, but others do have someone to share their love with. In the case of Oliver, he falls in love with Aliena; Touchstone feels affection towards Audrey, whom he meets in the forest; and Duke Senior's love for his daughter seems infinite. With their desires Duke Frederick and Oliver are the

same - more power and want to be more powerful than his brother. Duke Senior probably accepted his fate and his solely objective is to live his final days peacefully. Touchstone's objective is simply to serve Rosalind. He does not undergo any major transformation, while Oliver makes peace with his brother Orlando and stops quarrelling with him for power or authority. Duke Senior realises there are yet more experiences to live after he reunites with his daughter, but the most significant change happens in the life of Duke Frederick, who is converted by a religious man after which he does what is right – gives back the crown and lands to his brother Duke Senior.

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>ROSALIND</b>	<b>CELIA</b>
<b>Personality traits</b>	Intelligent, strategic, brave, resourceful	Loyal, gentle, brave, affectionate, smart
<b>Friendship</b>	Deep connection with her cousin Celia, friendly with people she meets in the forest	Deep connection with her cousin Rosalind, friendly with people she meets in the forest
<b>Love</b>	Falls in love quickly and easily, and is devoted to her love Orlando	A deeper connection with Oliver, is more cautious about love
<b>Main interest</b>	Orlando, love, finding happiness for herself and the people around her	To be a loyal companion to Rosalind
<b>Transformation</b>	Gains a deeper understanding of the virtues of life, becomes an independent woman,	Gains a deeper understanding of the virtues of life, develops greater empathy.

Table 9: Comparison of the characters Rosalind and Celia

Female characters Rosalind and Celia have been best friends since childhood, but they have some differences which add to the dynamics of their relationship and the situations in which they find themselves. Both are intelligent and courageous, yet Celia's bravery goes hand in hand with her loyalty. She equally portrays these traits when she decides to follow Rosalind to exile when she can stay and live in a castle. She even calms Rosalind by explaining the exile to the forest of Arden as an opportunity for an adventure, rather than punishment. They

are warm towards those they meet, resulting in Rosalind's finding love as well as Celia's, even though Celia is a bit more cautious about love. Rosalind's main interest becomes her love, Orlando and at the same time she wants to bring happiness to the people living in the forest. Celia's objective remains to keep Rosalind company and be loyal to her. Eventually, she gains a new perspective on life and gains a deeper understanding of its virtues, exactly like Rosalind.

#### **4.4. Taming of the Shrew**

**Katherine** is the main character of the play, the daughter of Baptista. She is a quick-tempered, sharp-tongued, rebellious young woman. She is not willing to fulfil any societal expectations of women, nor obey anyone. She is jealous of the way her father treats her sister, Bianca, and that is the reason for her rage. She keeps insulting all the suitors – hers and Bianca's, and so she goes by the name 'the shrew'. She says Bianca is their father's treasure and must find a good husband, while she is humiliated and carries a reputation of a devil. After she is promised to Petruchio, who she calls a fool, a mad-brained rudesby. Katherine starts changing her behaviour thanks to the influence of her husband. In the view of Bloom (1998), Katherine's feelings for Petruchio are true. According to him, Katherine was pushed to violent behaviour by her father, who prefers her sister Bianca, and so Kate desperately needs rescue, which she finds in Petruchio when he shows interest in her.

**Bianca** is a younger daughter to Baptista and the complete opposite of her sister. She is feminine, obedient, gentle, soft-spoken and complies with the societal norms of women or at least she seems to be like that. Many suitors desire her father's consent to marry her, but she can marry only after Katherine, who sometimes torments even her own sister. She elopes with Lucentio. In the final scene, she makes Lucentio an object of ridicule for believing in her wifely obedience. She obeys her father but eventually marries someone else over her father's preferred suitor for her.

**Petruchio** is a gentleman of Verona and the only man daring to become a suitor of Kate. He is confident, quick-witted and strategic. He finds a way how to deal with Katherine – to tame the shrew, after he marries her for her dowry, which shows how cunning he is.

Petruchio:

I will be master of what is mine own.  
She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,  
My household stuff, my field, my barn,  
My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything.

(Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew*, Collins Classics, 2013, Act III, Scene II, p. 74)

He treats her very strictly, but at the end of the play, he succeeds and makes Katherine more obedient than any other wife of their friends. His behaviour changes Katherine, however, it is not clear if he does it out of love or solely to have an obedient wife.

**Baptista** is a wealthy father to Katherine and Bianca. He is kind, but superficial because he prioritises their marriage for fortune than for their happiness. He decides that Katherine must marry before Bianca may take suitors.

**Lucentio** is Bianca's suitor, who is love-struck at first sight. He comes to Padua intending to further his education, but he falls in love. He does not want to marry Bianca only for her fortune, he is romantic and affectionate. He disguises himself as a tutor, and switches places with his servant, Tranio, to get closer to Bianca and spend more time with her. He is a bit impulsive, yet devoted and hopeful. His intentions are pure. In the meantime, the real Tranio steps into the competition for Bianca, but Lucentio and Bianca secretly marry.

**Hortensio** is a Bianca's suitor. He shows his cleverness when he presents Katherine to Petruchio as a suitable wife. He knows only then he could marry Bianca when someone would take Katherine's hand. He pretends to be a music teacher "Litio" to get closer to Bianca. After Bianca marries Lucentio, he quickly forgets about her and takes a rich widow for his wife. He remains a friendly figure to Petruchio, an assistant to tame the beast.

**Gremio** is an old, unattractive suitor of Bianca. He is very persistent and competes with the other suitors even when it is clear to him that his chances are low. He knows the temper of Katherine and does not believe a suitor would be found for her. He is cowardly, fearful that the assertiveness of Petruchio will offend Baptista. His speech is often ironic and rude and when speaking of Katherine, he refers to her as "the devil's dam", "this fiend of hell". His foolishness is shown when he hires a tutor for Bianca, but he hires Lucentio, disguised as Cambio, who is also in love with Bianca. Gremio is determined to get Bianca's hand but keeps counting on playing up to Baptista. His feelings for the younger daughter are real and profound.

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>KATHERINE</b>	<b>PETRUCHIO</b>
<b>Personality traits</b>	Rebellious, aggressive, disrespectful, persistent, witty	Confident, fearless, authoritarian, cunning
<b>Friendship</b>	No connections, isolates herself	Connections with friends, his servants and associates
<b>Love</b>	Sceptical about the idea of love and marriage	Marries for fortune, not specified if his feelings for Katherine are profound and real
<b>Main interest</b>	Freedom, to defy societal norms	Pursuit of wealth, power and authority
<b>Transformation</b>	Significant change, from independent girl to obedient woman and wife fulfilling all the expectations of her role	Initially a gentleman, later becomes strict and tough

Table 10: Comparison of the characters Katherine and Petruchio

The substance of Katherine's behaviour meets the one of Petruchio, as they can be both considered to be witty, fearless and sometimes aggressive. Katherine does not seek company and prefers to stay isolated, unlike Petruchio surrounded by friends. His main goal is to gain fortune and he sees the opportunity for it by marrying Katherine, who on the other hand has no desire of getting married. She wants to stay independent and definitely not settle for the status of a wife with ascribed rules. Petruchio initially seems friendly and gentle, but his change of behaviour starts after he needs to put up with Katherine, who undergoes a significant change under the attention of her husband Petruchio. He turns her into the most obedient wife among all others.

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>LUCENTIO</b>	<b>HORTENSIO</b>	<b>GREMIO</b>
<b>Personality traits</b>	Witty, romantic, devoted, competitive	Witty, cunning, superficial	Silly, persistent, fawning, fearful, competitive
<b>Friendship</b>	No deep connections, friendly with Tranio	No deep connections, keeps Petruchio's company	No deep connections
<b>Love</b>	Falls in love with Bianca at first sight	No profound feelings	True feelings for Bianca
<b>Main interest</b>	To win Bianca's love and marry her	Bianca's hand in marriage, mostly cares about wealth	To win Bianca's love and marry her, mostly cares about wealth
<b>Transformation</b>	Shift from interest in higher education to finding love and accepting the marriage responsibilities for love	Initially fights for Bianca, but in the end, he accepts she loves another and marries the widow, prioritising financial security	Not a significant change

Table 11: Comparison of the characters Lucentio, Hortensio, Gremio

Lucentio, Hortensio and Gremio are all Bianca's suitors, and their main objective is to win her hand in marriage. Lucentio is the only one who wants to marry Bianca for love, others do it for fortune. Even though Gremio also truly loves Bianca, his main aim is wealth. They are all competitive. Unlike Gremio, Lucentio as well as Hortensio is witty and cunning. Only Lucentio has true friendship, and Gremio or Hortensio have deep connections, although the latter keeps Petruchio's company, it cannot be defined as friendship. Visible transformation can be evidenced in Lucentio, who turns his status of a student into a responsible husband; and in Hortensio, who stops fighting for Bianca and marries a rich widow.

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>KATHERINE</b>	<b>BIANCA</b>
<b>Personality traits</b>	Rebellious, aggressive, disrespectful, persistent, witty	Submissive, gentle, soft-spoken, innocent
<b>Friendship</b>	No connections, isolates herself	No deeper connections, is friendly towards Cambio, who is in fact Lucentio
<b>Love</b>	Sceptical about the idea of love and marriage	Willing to discover love, accepts the suitors and falls in love with one of them
<b>Main interest</b>	Freedom, to defy societal norms, her father's love and understanding	To fulfil societal norms and expectations, attracting her suitors
<b>Transformation</b>	Significant change, from an independent girl to an obedient woman and wife fulfilling all the expectations of her role, a role model for all women and wives	Obedient to her father, but ends up marrying someone else then he chose for her, Initially, everybody thinks of her as obedient and example of what a wife should be, in the end she becomes "shrewish" herself

Table 12: Comparison of characters Katherine and Bianca

The play itself is known for two sisters who could not be so different and after an analysis, it is clear why. Katherine is rebellious, aggressive, disrespectful and Bianca is submissive, gentle, and respectful. While Bianca is open to new acquaintances and possible discovery of love, Katherine is holding back from both of these kinds of relationships. All of this creates a negative perception of her character. It might seem that Katherine's main interest was to be rebellious and defy all norms compared to Bianca. The older sister was, however, obviously sensitive and wanted her father to love her equally as Bianca. Eventually, we can see an enormous change in Katherine's character - she turns into the perfect wife, making her sister Bianca seem like a bad one now.

## 5. CONCLUSION

William Shakespeare's enduring legacy as a literary genius does not come only from the intricacies of his plots, the diversity of genres he explored, or the mastery of language evident in each of his plays. Rather, it is his unrivalled ability to craft a rich tapestry of original characters that sets him apart. Throughout his works, Shakespeare presents a multifaceted array of individuals, each endowed with their own distinct personalities, motivations, and roles within the narratives. The enduring relevance of Shakespeare's characters lies in their universal appeal. While rooted in the context of his era, their struggles, desires, and conflicts resonate across time and culture. Critics and scholars have delved deep into the psychological depths of these personas, recognizing them as reflections of the human condition itself and so have we.

This thesis was meant to explore the gender dynamics present in Shakespeare's works, recognizing that while they are products of their time, they also offer insights into timeless aspects of human nature. By examining the similarities and differences between male and female characters, we gain a deeper understanding of Shakespeare's portrayal of gender roles.

Regardless of the genre of the play, we concluded that the characters, after their precise analysis in all three categories; *Male vs. Female*, *Male vs. Male*, and *Female vs. Female* in the tragedies *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Othello*, as well as in the comedies *As You Like It*, and *Taming of the Shrew* exhibit both similarities and differences. It might be suggested that in the comparison of males vs. females, there are more similarities when the two are in love.

Hypothesis nr.1, which states: There are more individual differences among female characters, than among male characters conspicuous in dramatic works of William Shakespeare was refuted. Comparison in the category of *Male vs. Male* indicates more differences, for example, comparison of the pair Cassio vs. Iago; the trio Lucentio vs. Horatio vs. Gremio; or the quartet Touchstone vs. Oliver vs. Duke Senior vs. Duke Frederick. In the category of *Female vs. Female* have more similarities been found, for example in the case of Desdemona vs. Emilia; or Lady Capulet vs. Lady Montague. I might propose that each specific gender truly behaves exactly as real people in that historical era. Men had more rights and were superior, in other words, they were free. Therefore, the male characters too,

could do almost whatever they liked. Women, on the other hand, had their roles prescribed and were expected to behave a certain way in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nevertheless, I do not think all females were the same in Elizabethan England, just as all female characters are not the same in Shakespearean works. The proofs are the characters Katherine from *Taming of the shrew* – the rebel; or the heroine of *As You Like It* – Celia.

Hypothesis nr. 2, which states there is more flexible development of Shakespearean female dramatic characters in comparison to Shakespearean male dramatic characters was refuted as well. After a detailed analysis, characters such as Juliet, Rosalind, Celia, Katherine as well as Romeo, Othello, Orlando and Oliver, represent both gender categories and prove, that there is a flexible development in both categories. Both female and male characters undergo significant transformations in the plays.

Overall, our analysis helps us to have a better idea about the characters of Shakespeare's plays and their differences and similarities. Undoubtedly, more literary works as well as more characters by William Shakespeare could be included to get more detailed outcomes.

## RESUMÉ

Predmetom skúmania našej práce boli postavy diel Williama Shakespeara, konkrétne skúmanie ich charakteristických črt. Tejto téme sme sa rozhodli venovať, pretože Shakespeare patrí medzi najpopulárnejších a najuznávanejších spisovateľov všetkých dôb a jeho diela, rovnako ako aj jeho postavy, sú známe po celom svete. Fiktívne postavy sú pre čitateľov obrovskou súčasťou kvalitného literárneho zážitku najmä vtedy, ak sa s nimi dokážu stotožniť a porozumieť im. Práve toto sa podarilo autorovi – vytvoriť postavy, ktoré sa zdajú byť takmer živé. Mužské, rovnako ako ženské postavy sú tak komplexné a schopné prenášať ľudské emócie a skúsenosti, že zanechávajú trvalý dojem na čitateľa či diváka.

Cieľom tejto práce bolo analyzovať mužské a ženské postavy v tvorbe Williama Shakespeara, konkrétne vo vybraných dielach *Romeo a Júlia*, *Othello*, *Ako sa vám páči* a *Skrotenie čertice*. Prvé dve diela patria do skupiny tragédií, druhé dve diela sú komédie. Je všeobecne známe, že Shakespeare písal aj historické hry, avšak tieto diela sme sa rozhodli nezakomponovať do našej práce z toho dôvodu, že tieto postavy sú založené na skutočných osobách z minulosti. Dá sa teda povedať, že postavy ako Henrich VIII., Eduard IV., či Jana z Arku nie sú tak úplne Shakespearovými výtvormi. Ich povest' je známa aj bez nutnosti preskúmania týchto diel a tak by mohlo dôjsť zavádzajúcemu ohodnoteniu postáv. Po výbere diel pre náš výskum sme sa venovali ich pozornému prečítaniu, počas ktorého sme sa sústredili na charaktery, nie však z ich literárneho hľadiska, ale predovšetkým z psychologického hľadiska. Rovnako ako kritik William Hazlitt sme sa rozhodli skúmať postavy prostredníctvom našich pocitov.

V prvej časti práce sa venujeme samotnému autorovi, kde v krátkosti uvedieme jeho osobný život, pôsobenie a tvorbu, až následne spomíname editáciu či kritiku jeho diel. Uvádzame aj aspekty, ktoré ho pri tvorbe veľmi pravdepodobne ovplyvnili a inšpirovali. Spomínaní kritici boli zároveň aj akýmsi vzorom pre našu praktickú časť. Mnohí z nich sa totiž venovali špecificky postavám Shakespearových diel a tak každý prispel do jasnejšej predstavy o písaní tejto práce. V druhej časti opisujeme sociálne roly oboch pohlaví z historického hľadiska a uvádzame rôzne typy postáv a ich príklady z rôznych známych Shakespearových diel. V druhej časti opisujeme sociálne role oboch pohlaví z historického hľadiska a uvádzame rôzne typy postáv a ich príklady z rôznych známych Shakespearových diel. Zároveň sa v tejto časti venujeme aj bližšiemu opisu psychológie a analýze fiktívnych postáv, ktoré boli našou metodikou porovnávané podľa kategórií, ktoré sme si stanovili. V

tretej a finálnej časti sa venujeme opisu konkrétnych postáv jednotlivých diel, teda ich psychologickú analýzu, v rámci ktorej si dôkladne všimame ich vnútorné a vonkajšie charakteristické črty, ktoré následne porovnáme. Diela Williama Shakespeara prekypujú postavami, avšak rozbor bol možný vykonať len s takými, ktoré poskytujú čitateľovi dostatočné množstvo informácií pre ich kompletné pochopenie. Aby bola analýza kvalitne spracovaná, vybrali sme charaktery, ktoré mali v dielach najväčšie množstvo prejavov, - dialógov a monológov, alebo boli detailnejšie spomenuté v predslove, alebo ich osoba bola dostatočne opísaná ústnym podaním inej postavy. V každom diele sme porovnávali postavy v rámci troch kategórií: *Mužské vs. Ženské*, *Mužské vs. Mužské*, a *Ženské vs. Ženské.*, pričom sme sa vždy držali rovnakých kritérií, konkrétne: Osobnostné vlastnosti, Priateľstvo, Láska, Cieľ, a Vývoj. Pre lepšiu orientáciu v analýze a jej následnom zhodnotení sme pre každé porovnanie vytvorili tabuľku, na ktorej môžeme lepšie pozorovať rozdiely aj podobnosti.

Dôležitou súčasťou našej práce bolo stanovenie si cieľov. Hlavným cieľom boli zistiť ako veľmi sú mužské a ženské postavy Shakespearových hier podobné a odlišné, a zároveň sme chceli zistiť, či sú postavy vytvorené na obraz skutočných ľudí z prostredia, v ktorom autor pôsobil. Okrem cieľov sme si určili aj dve hypotézy. Prvá hypotéza predpokladá, že v Shakespearových dielach je medzi ženskými postavami viac výraznejších rozdielnych črt ako medzi mužskými postavami. Druhá hypotéza uvádza, že v dielach Williama Shakespeara ženské postavy podliehajú výraznejšiemu vývoju v porovnaní s mužskými postavami.

Vykonané analýzy ženských a mužských postáv dokázali, že naše vopred stanovené hypotézy sa nepotvrdili. V prvom prípade je to presne naopak – zdá sa, že mužské postavy sú častokrát rozdielnejšie, či už v ich náture alebo správaní. Pravdepodobne to súvisí s obdobím, kedy boli postavy vytvorené. Bolo to obdobie, kedy mali muži viac práv a slobody, preto mali viac možností byť kým chceli a správať sa ako chceli. Umožňovalo to každému mužovi byť odlišný od toho druhého, na rozdiel od žien, ktoré veľmi na výber nemali, pretože sa museli správať presne podľa noriem, inými slovami mali rovnaký cieľ. Nemôžeme ale povedať, že všetky ženy, teda postavy ženského pohlavia v skúmaných hrách boli rovnaké. Sú medzi nimi aj výnimky, napríklad Katarína z diela *Skrotenie čertice*, Emília z *Othella*, alebo dokonca aj Júlia z tragédie *Rómeo a Júlia*. Každá z nich sa ocitla v situácií, kedy konala podľa toho čo cíti a čo naozaj chce, aj napriek tomu, že to nebolo v súlade s očakávaniami. Druhá hypotéza sa taktiež nepotvrdila. Nedá sa argumentovať, že ženské postavy podliehajú výraznejšiemu vývoju v porovnaní s mužskými postavami. Charaktery

oboch pohlaví prechádzajú zmenami, avšak ani v jednom prípade nedochádza k zmene mužov ani žien v každom prípade. Môžeme uviesť, že ani jedno z pohlaví postáv v dielach Williama Shakespeara nezažíva výraznejšiu alebo častejšiu premenu.

Dovolím si tvrdiť, že postavy diel sú vysoko pravdepodobne stvorené na obraz ľudí z obdobia, kedy boli vytvorené, teda z Alžbetínskej éry, z obdobia, kedy v Anglicku vládla kráľovná Alžbeta. Je potrebné si uvedomiť, že doba v ktorej žili autori, ovplyvňuje aj ich diela a následne aj konkrétne postavy. V šestnástom storočí boli roly mužov a žien veľmi odlišné od dnešnej reality a predovšetkým pre ženy to boli časy, kedy nesmeli takmer nič. Mali obmedzené práva, nesmeli dediť ani vlastniť majetok a ich úlohou bolo starať sa o domácnosť, podporovať a predovšetkým poslúchať manžela. Ich rola bola predpísaná a spoločnosť mala od nich určité očakávania, ktoré sa v dnešnom svete zdajú byť úplne absurdné. Vykonanú analýzu postáv z daného obdobia považujem za dôležitú, pretože reprezentuje nádej na to, aby sme medzi nimi našli aj také, ktoré žili nie tak celkom podľa pravidiel. Ak sa medzi hrami Williama Shakespeara nájdú osobnosti, ktoré, povedzme, nespĺňali normy, je uveriteľné, že aj v reálnom svete také existovali.

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