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## Introductory note

Magic, understood as man's will to power, includes the attempt to control time. The text below examines this issue in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, linking it to the author's cultural context. This discourse is not disconnected from the contemporary world, where politicians control the lives of

billions of people by following their own fantasies, and man's will to power has acquired new dimensions with the development of technology and the conquest of space.

Investigating the way magic and time interweave in the plot texture of *Macbeth* is an opportunity to delve into the theo-philosophical consistency of Shakespeare's theatre. From the last decades of the 1400s till around the mid 1600s the concern with the practice of magic unified European monarchs, independent intellectuals, illiterate people and religious authorities. Shakespeare resonated with this concern and his plays illustrate or allude to various understandings of magic, including its juxtaposing with theatre in *The Tempest*. Another shared aspect in early modern Europe was the anxiety about the future of a world in rapid transformation and in particular the perspective of the nearing day of judgement people believed in, which made the topic of time highly relevant, as philosophers, visual artists and writers, including Shakespeare, certify.

The reconstruction of *Macbeth's* conceptual background hinges on the main ideas circulating on magic and time in early modernity and on Shakespeare's personal contributions. A definition of magic encounters the difficulty of separating it from religion on one hand and from science on the other, as I have shown in a previous study.<sup>[1]</sup> Nevertheless the various rituals, disciplines, operations and experiments designated by this term have their trans-historical specificity which can be summarized as follows: (1) they function on the assumption of man's intrinsic power to control the visible and the invisible, actuating his free will to provoke changes in Nature and in his or other people's lives; this places magic outside a moral compass and accounts for its qualification as either benefic or malefic according to its effects; (2) analogical thinking and the belief in the power of words, images, numbers and combinations of substances build the foundation of magical theories and of their practical applications; (3) the main procedure common to all operators, highly cultured or not, is binding, actualized as uniting heavenly energies with earthly objects (astral magic), fusing feminine and masculine substances to obtain the philosophical stone (alchemy), fastening charms to a person, or blending ingredients for healing or harming potions. Intersubjective magic is an important subspecies, analyzed in detail by Giordano Bruno in his *Theses of Magic*, in particular in *De Vinculis in genere*, and it consists in binding a soul, in other words controlling the emotions and imagination of a *bonding object* who becomes psychologically dependent on the *bonding agent*; (4) magic is allegedly based on the assistance of spiritual entities, conceived as intermediaries between human reality and the invisible powers of the universe; they are attributed reason, passions and intentionality, can be good or bad and are called indiscriminately angels, spirits, demons, creatures, fairies, devils. (5) magic tends to control time by annulling the distinction between past and present in conjuring the dead, by



changing the future with human operations that accelerate processes unfolding naturally in time, or by manipulating it through prognostication.

Two contrasting evaluations of magic marked early modernity and both had their roots in antiquity. Inspired by the foundational myth of perennial philosophy, which included Neoplatonic and Gnostic sources,<sup>[2]</sup> the Florentine philosopher Marsilio Ficino considered magic an instrument to redeem nature and humanity from the decay caused by the original sin. His philosopher-magus was supposed to act as a priest and a healer relying on a tradition of wisdom he believed delivered to Adam by God in the garden of Eden. His followers in this line of thought<sup>[3]</sup> included the English polymath John Dee. This view on magic conflicted with the one advocated by religious authorities that considered it a form of heresy and embarked on expunging it by radical methods, like burning the practitioners at the stake. The inspirer of this approach was Augustine of Hippo, who in *De civitate dei* (Book VIII, 14-22) and in *De doctrina christiana* (Book II, 20-24) claimed that pagan cults and practices like divination, analyzed in *De divinatio daemonum*,<sup>[4]</sup> rested on a pact between adepts and demons. This turned every ritual outside the Christian practice or the exercise of human arts into demonic magic interpreted as an instrument the devil used to undermine God's salvation plan for humanity. The distinction Augustine established between the miracles of saints and the prodigies of magicians was mainly the purpose of their action: magicians operated motivated by selfish ends, saints used the power granted to them by God to work for the common good.<sup>[5]</sup>

In early modernity women started to be considered as the most liable to consort with Satan, as stated in Kramer and Sprenger's *Malleus maleficarum* (1486), which attributed them inordinate destructive power. King James I was convinced that witches conspired to harm him. In the anonymous *Newes from Scotland* (1591) the witches confessed the devil's hatred against the King and the attempt to destroy him. Their execution 'for example sake' was meant to underline the fact that the *King is the child & servant of God... he is a true Christian, and trusteth in God, and consequently God is with him*.<sup>[6]</sup> In 1597 James authored a dialogue on the danger of witchcraft entitled *Daemonologie*, polemizing with authors like Johann Weyer and Reginald Scot who denied the reality of witchcraft with logical arguments. In 1604, after becoming king of England, he passed a statute against witches, and ordered the public burning of Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*.

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is aligned with Augustine's and King James' ideas on magic. The political parable conveyed by the play opposes legitimate kings like Duncan and the English king to the tyrant Macbeth by using the Augustinian contrast between sainthood and demonic magic. Commenting King

Duncan's murder, Macduff refers to him as *The Lord's anointed temple* (2.3.67), which echoes Augustine's statements on saints: "In them God Himself commands, for they are His temples, and they burn with love of Him, despising their own private power."<sup>[7]</sup> The English King has saintly qualities he uses for the benefit of the community, which dovetails with the English monarch's function as head of the church. Thus, he can cure *the evil*<sup>[8]</sup> with his touch, (*Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand*; 4.3.144),<sup>[9]</sup> and his work is classified as *miraculous*, an epithet that in Shakespeare's vocabulary refers to the manifestation of the divine.<sup>[10]</sup> By contrast, Macbeth destroys human lives for his selfish ends siding with the devil which manifests itself in female figures that control him psychologically. The three witches, the classical Hecate and Macbeth's *fiendlike queen* (5.8.69) seem to confirm King James' idea about the dangerous affiliation of women with demonic magic. However, Banquo's doubt about the witches' identity as women: *You should be women,/ And yet your beards forbid me to interpret/ That you are so* (1.3.45-7), may go against this claim by hinting to the male culture that hides behind the entire witchcraft phenomenon and to the theatrical reality where female figures were played by male actors. The ambiguity regarding the witches' identity extends to their forecasts which trap Macbeth's imagination. Their intention is to subvert values and create confusion: *Fair is foul, and foul is fair* (1.1.12), picking up an object of manipulation that is easily confounded, like Macbeth, and this finds a confirmation in Augustine's semiotic theory, which points out that "the society of men and demons being constituted as it were, by «a pact of faithless and deceitful friendship» is self-stultifying in that the pattern of signification is constantly subverted within it by the 'spirits who wish to deceive' manipulating the signs «so that they affect different people in different ways, according to their own thoughts and presumptions»".<sup>[11]</sup>

In addition to being framed by Augustine's vision, the playwright's description of Macbeth's charming process reveals contiguities with Bruno's observations on the binding procedures in *De Vinculis* (1591). The question whether Shakespeare may have consulted Bruno's works or the books the Italian philosopher made a synthesis of in his theses,<sup>[12]</sup> remains unanswered, but the play proves its author was very knowledgeable about magical procedures and their effects on the psyche. The witches appear in thunder and lightning and vanish into the air (1.3.81) just as air demons do according to Bruno's cited work (XIII, 103). Timing is essential for the charming operations, Bruno compares with sowing: throwing the seeds at the wrong time does not produce the desired effects (XXVI, 69). The witches appear in a moment when Macbeth is elated by his victory in battle (*They met me in the day of success*, 1.5.1-2), which reinforces his self-confidence, rendering him open to new opportunities, and right before he finds out he was named Thane of Cawdor, which confirms the verity of the first forecast. In art. XXX of *De Vinculis* Bruno identifies sight, hearing and the mind or imagination as the

gates through which the hunter of souls can snare his bonding objects (451). Both the witches and Lady Macbeth seem to know this: the former arouse Macbeth's sense of wonder with their appearance and unexpected forecasts, the latter decides: *Hie thee hither,/ That I may pour my spirits in thine ear/ And chastise with the valor of my tongue/ All that impedes thee from the golden round/ Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem/ To have crowned withal* (1.5.24-9). There are various factors that determine the success of a bonding operation. One of them is to activate the bonding object's fantasy, as imaginary things have a stronger capacity to bind than real objects (*La magia matematica*, XIII, 103; *La magia naturale*, 273-5). The prospect of becoming a king immediately inflames Macbeth's fantasy, that produces *horrible imaginings* of Duncan's murder (1.3.138-9). Following the rules of magic, he should have fantasized about the objects of his desire, the crown and the king title, but these *horrible imaginings* match the profile of a man *professionally murderous*, as Harold Bloom defines him,<sup>[13]</sup> used to obtain success by killing.

Another condition for an efficient binding is the faith or credulity of the bonding object.<sup>[14]</sup> Credulity depends on defective critical capacity but has likewise an emotional basis revolving around personal biases or secret desires. It is easier to bind with ambiguous predictions, because they create mental confusion and in the end the bonding object chooses to interpret the message according to his or her aspirations. Macbeth pertinently epitomizes credulity, unlike Banquo who reasons critically on the predictions (*Can the devil speak true?* 1.3.107) and assumes the witches are *instruments of darkness* who/ *Win us with honest trifles, to betray's/ In deepest consequence* (1.3.123-6). It is suggestive how Macbeth places the forecast outside ethical norms (*This supernatural soliciting/ Cannot be ill, cannot be good*, 1.3.130-1) to embrace it without remorse as it fits his ambition. The passage from his initial doubt that for him *to be king/ Stands not within the prospect of belief* (1.3.73-4), to claiming that *two truths are told/ As happy prologues to the swelling act/ Of the imperial theme* (1.3.127-91) after only the first prophecy was confirmed, illustrates his wishful thinking, that continues to guide him till the end, stimulated by his wife's rhetoric and the witches' second divination in act IV, which convinces him of his invulnerability. In the last confrontation with Macduff he confidently declares having a *charmed life* (5.8.12).

Bruno claims that all types of bonds can be boiled down to love and considers the bonding object's self-love or *filautia* as essential in the charming operations. As any part of reality aspires to perfection, self-love reveals the object's inner aspirations the bonding agent can take advantage of. (XIII, 469-71). This stands out through Macbeth's evaluation of the witches' *perfect'st report* (1.5.2) as his model of perfection was to be king, while his self-love is referred to by Hecate who qualifies him in

front of the witches as *a wayward son,/ Spiteful and wrathful, who as others do,/ Loves for his own ends, not for you* (3.5.11-13).

The gist of magic is to induce man-centered changes in reality, altering the features of time. The play reveals that time control is equally the prerogative of absolute monarchy both in its good and in its tyrannical version. Duncan modifies his subjects' lives deciding their execution if they are traitors, as the Thane of Cawdor, or their progress on the social scale, as he promises Macbeth: *I have begun to plant thee and will labor/ To make thee full of growing* (1.4.28-9). The English monarch controls time by his gift of prophecy,<sup>[15]</sup> and as a healer he is able to prolong his subjects' lives. The king who is *the Lord's anointed temple* (2.3.67) governs time actuating the divine will that manifests itself through him, while the usurper Macbeth turns Scotland into a place where *violent sorrow seems/ A modern ecstasy* (4.3.169-70) serving the devil's strife to subvert creation. His awareness of controlling everybody's time emerges in prospect of Banquo's murder, when an apparently innocuous announcement: *Let every man be master of his time/ Till seven at night.* (3.1.40-41) sounds retrospectively as a gloomy threat. The idea that a political leader can shape time according to the divine plan or hold it captive following his devil-inspired ambitions is rendered explicit when Macduff enters with Macbeth's *cursèd head* (5.8. 55) in the final scene proclaiming: *Time is free* (5.8.55).

The monarchs' imprint on the course of history is set in the play against the background nexus between time and eternity at the foundation of Christian doctrine. The dichotomy eternity – time was theorized first by Plato in *Timaeus*. In Plato's view, Time was created together with the universe, as an image or imitation of eternity moving according to number (37d). The sun, the moon and the five other stars were generated 'to set limits to and stand guard over the numbers of time'(38d), therefore time was conceived as measurable and circular, coinciding with the astronomical cycles. Augustine took over the idea that the beginning of the world and the beginning of time are the same (*City of God*, XI, 6),<sup>[16]</sup> attributed eternity to the divine reality and conceived time as linear, moving towards the second coming of Christ and the day of judgment, understood as the end of history (*City of God*, XX). Historical time that can be measured objectively by days, nights, and so on, gives the believers the possibility to atone for their sins, so it has an eschatological and a moral dimension, but it is also the only *medium* through which the devil can impact the divine plan. Thus, history is the stage on which the drama of eternal salvation or eternal damnation is prefigured and, according to the theological narrative the impact of demonic magic has consequences in eternity, as it wins more souls for Satan's dominion in the afterlife. This is alluded at both by Banquo, when he ponders that the instruments of darkness *Win us with honest trifles, to betray's/ In deepest consequence* (1.4.122-6),

and by Macbeth who is aware that in playing the script authored by the demons he has given his *eternal jewel to the common enemy of man* (3.1.68-9), gambling with his chances of salvation. As the time of human permanence on earth ends with the last judgment, it keeps a record of all deeds done. Macbeth knows this, as before killing Duncan, he asks the *sure and firm-set earth to take the present horror from the time,/ Which now suits with it* (2.1.57-61). This prayer reveals his awareness that human condition is enfolded in the space-time unity emerged with the beginning of divine creation. The progress of events in space is simultaneous to the unfolding of time, which occurs by actualizing the seminal reasons, or rational seeds, that represent the specimens of things emanating from the divine mind and forming the patterns of creation. This idea of Stoic origin taken over by Christian Platonism is merged in *Macbeth* with the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20 and Luke 8:4-15. Banquo asks the witches: *If you can look into the seeds of time/ And say which grain will grow and which will not, Speak then to me....* (1.3.58-60). In act 4, scene 1, Macbeth conjures the witches for more predictions, even if this will bring destruction of man's traces on earth (churches, palaces, pyramids) and of nature's regenerative resources, kept in the seeds of things or *germens*: ... *though the treasure/ Of nature's germen tumble all together/ Even till destruction sicken, answer me/ To what I ask you.* (4.1.80-3). Time evolves as life's reproduction process. Just as plants need a specific interval to grow from seeds, human events take time to instantiate and reveal God's plan. But Macbeth and his wife do not have patience for a natural growth to take place, which had been promised by Duncan (*I have begun to plant thee... 1.4.28*), they prefer the shortcut of murder, acting unnaturally and disturbing nature's course with their acts. By its very essence magic offers a shortcut to desires which triggers a modified perception of time; Macbeth experiences it immediately after the encounter with the witches. His first reply: *So foul and fair a day I have not seen* (1.3.38) shows that he is tied to the present, he lives in the day, even if he is not able to qualify it as foul or fair. After he receives the forecast, the acute sensation that his life is about to change spells out as time acceleration: *Come what may,/ Time and the hour runs through the roughest day* (1.3.146-7). As he has just been launched into the domain of the possible, the present loses its ontic status and he ascertains that *function/ Is smothered in surmise and nothing is/ But what is not* (1.3.137-142). Lady Macbeth has the same perception of the present as devoid of substance and replaces it by an intense feeling of anticipation: *Thy letters have transported me beyond/ This ignorant present, and I feel now/ The future in the instant* (1.5.54-6). From that moment on, the Macbeth couple develop what may be called a syndrome of sempiternity. They are physically in the present, but mentally and emotionally in the future, trying to beguile and mock time<sup>[17]</sup> in order to anticipate the prophecy, utterly convinced like Lady Macbeth that Duncan's murder *shall to all our nights and days to come/ Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom* (1.5.66-9). The presentification of the future occurs by promptly

acting. At first Macbeth is reluctant to kill Duncan, but his wife admits no hesitation: *Art thou afeard/  
To be the same in thine own act and valor/ As thou art in desire?* (1.7.39- 41), which means she wants pure action without any reflection before or after committing it: *These deeds must not be thought/  
After these ways; so, it will make us mad* (2.2.36-37). Macbeth learns his wife's lesson so well, that he makes this side remark finding out that *Macduff is fled to England* (4.1.164):

Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits.  
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook  
Unless the deed go with it. From this moment  
The very firstlings of my heart shall be  
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,  
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:  
(4.1.166-171).

The simultaneity of thought and action that transforms reality is ascribed to God, but it is also an aspiration of magicians, who understand their art as *imitatio Dei*.<sup>[18]</sup> As agents, magicians engage in a race with time, by envisaging themselves as its driving force and finally its substitute.

This is exactly Macbeth's and his wife's mental attitude, until they start discovering its downsides. When the dreamed of future, obtained by annulling Duncan's, Banquo's and Macduff family's future, becomes present, Lady Macbeth finds out that *Nought's had, all's spent./ Where our desire is got without content./ 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy/ Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy* (3.2.5-8). The agents who rejected doubt discover it in the doubtful joy, the killers encounter the fear of being killed as Macbeth recognizes that they *eat their meal in fear and have terrible dreams* (3.2.18-19).

The fable of the time mockers who are mocked by time includes the *as if* perspective that breaks the balance between reason and imagination in favor of the latter. Magic empowers Macbeth, as in a Faustian bargain, but weakens his logic, inducing that mental confusion the demon-witches were after: he believes the prophecy regarding himself, and acts on it granting it absolute value, but thinks he can impede Banquo's prophecy to produce a line of kings to come true. When he is haunted by Banquo's ghost, he realizes that "excluding a person from life does not erase her from being, to which she belongs by the act of creation and even less does it enlarge one's own portion of being."<sup>[19]</sup> After



the second prophecy which said that he *shall never be vanquished until/ Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill/ Shall come against him* (4.1.114-6) he is convinced that an unnatural thing like a moving forest is not possible, reassured that *our high-placed Macbeth/ Shall live the lease the nature, pay his breath/ To time and mortal custom* (4.1.120-122). But dying naturally is not for someone who lived unnaturally, and he cannot pay his breath to time as long as he tried to mock it. Ironically, justice is restored following the principle of similarity at the base of magic. Macbeth, the usurper who competed with time violently to anticipate the prophecy, is killed by Macduff, whose birth was violently anticipated, as he was *untimely ripped* from his mother's womb.

The overlapping of action with time has a philosophical rationale in Aristotle's *Physics* (IV.10-14), a familiar reading in Shakespeare's England. Action can be assimilated to motion and change and according to Aristotle's definition time is motion and change (IV.11-25), or rather time is the measure of motion, and motion is the measure of time (220b1-15), and motion and time are a perpetual succession (219b1-10). Aristotle recognizes that only the present, the *now*, has an existential value, as it stands between past and future, parts of time of dubious onticity, since *one part of it has been and is not, while the other is going to be and is not yet*. (218a1). *Time, then, also is both made continuous by the 'now' and divided at it* (220a1-10). The division refers to *now* as having a *before* and an *after*, as *now* marks the end of the past and the beginning of the future (222a10). Before murdering Duncan, Macbeth perceives the *now* as a divisive limit described spatially– *here upon this bank and shoal of time* – and realizes the impossibility to take out from the present the historical and afterlife consequences of his criminal act and enjoy only its success:

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly. If th'assassination  
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
With his surcease success, that but this blow  
Might be the be-all and the end-all – here,  
But here upon this bank and shoal of time,  
We'd jump the life to come.  
(1.7.1 – 6)

After committing the murder, the *now* has become past, but the protagonist is more than ever aware of his deed's divisive nature, as it has completely altered the quality of his existence, which coincides with the quality of time.

Had I but died an hour before this chance,  
I had lived a blessed time; for from this instant  
There's nothing serious in mortality:  
All is but toys. Renown and grace is dead,  
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees  
Is left this vault to brag of.  
(2.3.89-94).

For Aristotle time is measurable as locomotion and alteration (223b1-20), but there needs to be a rational soul to measure it (223a15-30). Augustine is also concerned with the question of measuring time and its dependency on a measuring subject. In his *Confessions* (11.26.33) he analogizes the phenomenology of time measuring to reciting poems:

We do not measure poems by pages, for that would be to measure space not time; we measure by the way the voice moves in uttering the poem, and we say: "it is a long poem, for it consists of so many lines; the lines are long for they are composed of so many feet; the feet are long for they include so many syllables; this syllable is long for it is the double of a short syllable" ( 251).

This analogy between time and the wordy reality of poems may have appealed to Shakespeare if we consider Macbeth's soliloquy after his wife's death, where tomorrow *creeps in this petty pace from day to day/ To the last syllable of recorded time*.

Inquiring into the nature of time as subjective reality Augustine infers that it is a form of *distentio animi* (*Confessions*, 11.26.33, 252), translated as extension of the soul or mind, which implies that human consciousness is constitutive of time,<sup>[20]</sup> and this includes the awareness of one's past preserved in memory, the realization that objective time is a witness to human deeds, and applying judgment to decisions and facts. It is this dimension of being in time that Lady Macbeth tries to exclude from their lives, but she discovers that by exercising her will she cannot erase the murder from her memory which haunts her to the point of showing on her *violent hands*, driving her mad and pushing her to commit suicide (5.8.70-71). Unlike her, Macbeth filters his decisions through his consciousness, he knows that *we still have judgment here* (1.7.8) and takes into account the consequences, but he is too weak and ambitious to behave righteously and once he slides down this

path, he accepts that *Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill* (3.2.56).

Removing consciousness from their lives and chasing the future, the couple lose the present, and with it the sense of reality: when he hears about his wife's death, Macbeth dismisses it as an event of the present, and equates it to a word: *She should have died hereafter;/ There would have been a time for such a word* (5.5.17-8). This is an occasion to contemplate his life, that appears as *a walking shadow, a poor player/ That struts and frets his hour upon the stage/ And then is heard no more. It is a tale/ Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,/ Signifying nothing* (5.5.17-27). The sense of emptiness the protagonist experiences is the realization of their perpetual run after tomorrows (*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow*, 5.5.19) that turned inadvertently into a long line of yesterdays, nullifying their chance to consciously give substance and meaning to their existence.

Various sources have been identified for the tragedy of Macbeth, from Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Hector Boece's *Scotorum historiae a prima gentis origine* (1526), the folklore, books on magic, including King James' *Daemonologie*, classical sources like Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Book VI, for the scene when the witches prepare the hell-broth (4.1.4-34), or Erasmus' memoirs *Colloquia* for Macbeth's discourse on dogs and men (3.1.92-101). One can add to these Augustine, Aristotle and possibly Bruno or other authors belonging to the Christian Platonism of the Renaissance, also known as perennial philosophy, which have contributed to the conceptual density of the play. The merit of Shakespeare is to have elaborated all his sources poetically into theories that are valid beyond the play's historical context. Thus, he grasped the connection between politics and fantasy, disclosing the impact of a powerful man's charmed mind on historical time and the life of an entire nation. He captured the harmful effect of boundless ambition on the natural balance, offering the monarchic version of the Faustian myth. Yet, one of the strongest theses the play conveys is the interpretation of the Macbeth couple's political adventure as a troublesome relation with time, grounded in what we have called a syndrome of sempiternity. Failing to valorize the present meant for the Macbeths missing the opportunity to solidify their path to salvation. Yet the necessity to give substance to life by an active consciousness that has a grip on time can be applied in any religious or non-religious context. The only way to avoid being swept away by the passage of time without giving a meaning to one's existence is living in the present, and this has been recognized by philosophers, religious thinkers and people practicing various forms of meditation in eastern and western cultures. By focusing one's attention on the *now*, consciousness can expand into an extra-temporal dimension. At that point the subject reaches an approach to mortality that is drastically different from Macbeth's, and has been synthesized in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Ludwig Wittgenstein:

Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death. If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present. Our life has no end in the way in which our visual field has no limits.  
(*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, thesis 6.4311).<sup>[21]</sup>

## Notes

1. Dragnea Horvath, Gabriela, *Theatre, Magic and Philosophy, William Shakespeare, John Dee and the Italian Legacy*, London and New York: Routledge, 2017, Ch.4, 53-61. [↑](#)
2. Ibid., Ch.1, 21-30. [↑](#)
3. Followed in Italy by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Francesco Giorgio Veneto, Girolamo Cardano, Giovanni Battista Della Porta and Giordano Bruno, and beyond the Alps by Johannes Reuchlin, Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, Paracelsus, Guillaume Postel, Johann Weyer, Jakob Böhme. [↑](#)
4. On divination in Augustine's thought, Karin Schlapbach, *Divination*, in K. Pollmann, W. Otten (eds), *Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*, Oxford: OUP, 2013, 132-134. [↑](#)
5. Markus, Robert A., "Augustine on magic: A neglected semiotic theory", *Revue des Études augustiniennes*, 40, 1994, 379-80. [↑](#)
6. Dragnea Horvath, Gabriela, op. cit., 99-100. [↑](#)
7. Markus, op. cit., 379. [↑](#)
8. King's evil or scrofula. [↑](#)
9. Edition consulted: *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*, Orgel Stephen and Braunmuller A.R., (eds) New York and London: Penguin Group, 2002. [↑](#)
10. Dragnea Horvath, Gabriela, op. cit., 110-12, 118, 213. [↑](#)
11. Markus, op.cit. 384. [↑](#)
12. Plato, Aristotle, Ovid, Cicero, Lucretius Pliny, Plotinus, Proclus, Iamblichus, Marsilio Ficino, Agrippa cfr. notes, passim. in Bruno, Giordano, *De Vinculis in genere in Opere magiche*, edited by Michele Ciliberto, translation and notes by Simonetta Bassi, Elisabetta Scapparone, Nicoletta Tirinanzi, Art.I, 418-9. [↑](#)
13. Bloom, Harold, *The Invention of the Human*, London: Fourth Estate, 1998, 530. [↑](#)
14. Bruno, op. cit, *La magia matematica*, VI, 9. [↑](#)



15. "He hath a gift of prophecy,/ And sundry blessings about his throne/ That speak him full of grace" (4.3.157-9). [↑](#)
16. More on the topic: Van Oort, Johann, "The end is now: Augustine on History and Eschatology", HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies, Vol 68, No 1, 2012. [↑](#)
17. Lady Macbeth: To beguile the time/ Look like the time; ... look like the innocent flower,/ But be the serpent under't. (1.5.62-65). Macbeth: Away, and mock the time with fairest show;/ False face must hide what the false heart doth know (1.7.81-82). [↑](#)
18. Dragnea Horvath, Gabriela, op. cit., Ch. 7 *Art as imitatio Dei*, 85-92. [↑](#)
19. Ibid., 83. [↑](#)
20. Augustine, *Confessions*, tr. F.J. Sheed, introduction Peter Brown, ed. Michael P. Foley, Indianapolis/ Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006, n.94, 252. [↑](#)
21. Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, tr. C. K. Ogden, introduction Bertrand Russell, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & CO.LTD, 1922, thesis 6. 4311, 88, electronic version: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5740/>

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



## Gabriela Dragnea Horvath

Gabriela Dragnea Horvath, PhD, published essays, book reviews, translations of poetry and short stories in magazines and anthologies in Italy, Romania, USA, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, Switzerland. She also authored a monograph in Italian, *Shakespeare ermetismo, mistica, magia* (Rome, 2003); has co-authored a book of fiction in Romanian (*Preludi epici Epic Preludes*, Bucharest, 1990), has co-translated with Stuart Frieberg and Adriana Varga the volume *Hands Behind My Back*, by Marin Sorescu (Oberlin Translation Series, 1991) prefaced by Seamus Heaney. In 2017 her study *Theatre, Magic and Philosophy: William Shakespeare, John Dee and the Italian legacy* was published by Routledge. She taught for the Liberal Studies Program at NYU Florence.