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Diplomski rad

'Supernatural elements in Richard III
and Macbeth'

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Preface

William Shakespeare is widely regarded as the greatest writer in English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. In the period of Elizabethan literature, he stands out as a poet and dramatist as yet unsurpassed.

The term Elizabethan literature refers to English literature produced during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603).

English history represents very important source for history plays. The 'War of Roses' between York and Lancaster had very big influence on history plays. It is assumed that 'Richard III' was created in 1592 or at the beginning of 1593. It represents the oldest English history play. Text of the play has very complex history and it is noticeable that it has certain problems. The play is grouped among the histories in the First Folio and is more often classified as such. Occasionally, it is termed as a tragedy. History of dynasty Tudor served as an important source for Richard's characterization. Relief portraits of the last ruler of York dynasty already existed in that sources, so that material could be effectively transformed into dramatic form. Throughout the play Richard's character constantly changes and shifts and, in doing so, alters the dramatic structure of the story. Richard immediately establishes a connection with the audience with his opening monologue. He introduces the audience with his immorality, and at the same time treats them as if they were co-conspirators in his plotting.

Shakespeare used various supernatural elements in this play. For example, invocations of God and divine forces, curses, superstitious beliefs and ghosts.

In the beginning, Shakespeare's tragedies were experimental, and under the influence of dramatic literature. Today, when we want to draw attention to Shakespeare's most dignified achievements, we mainly point out his tragedies.

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'Macbeth' is not discussed as a history play like other English plays taken from the same source . It belongs to Shakespeare's later tragic period . It is written after Hamlet , Othello and King Lear .The material for this tragedy is taken from the Scottish history (XI century) .In ' Macbeth' Shakespeare points out the first years of the ruling of James I .

In Shakespeare's tragedies human situation is not given as it is case in Greek tragedies.The main hero has certain responsibility in creating his own life path .At the crossroad of life, he had to choose which life path to take.Shakespeare gives the opportunity to his hero to start the action by himself.Shakespeare's tragedies represent the tragedies of action .Macbeth is pushed into criminal action by external factors. Lady Macbeth takes a great deal of responsibility for Macbeth's criminal behaviour.She manages to implant the seed of evil inside of his soul .His destiny is fatal .Macbeth ends up deeply disappointed in his life surrounded by fear ,hate, and curses.Great number of supernatural elements are used in this tragedy .The appearance of the Three Witches is one of the supernatural elements . Their appearance in the beginning of the tragedy differs from their second appearance.Macbeth is determined to provoke the second appearance of the Three Witches. With their premonitions the Three Witches also represent the trigger for Macbeth's criminal behaviour. .

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1. Biography

William Shakespeare (baptised 26.April **1564** ;died 23 April **1616**); widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist .He is often called England's national poet and the 'Bard of Avon'.

His surviving works, including some collaborations ,consist of about 38 plays ,154 sonnets ,two long narrative poems and several other poems. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any playwright.

He was born and raised in Stratford –upon - Avon. At the age of 18 he married Ann Hathaway, with whom he had three children Sussana ,Hamnet and Judith. Between 1585 and 1592,he began succesful career in London as an actor , writer and part owner of a playing company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men.He appears to have retired to Stratford around **1613** ,where he died three years later. Few records of Shakespeare's private life survive,and there has been considerable speculation about such matters as physical appearance,sexuality,religious beliefs , and whether the works attributed to him were written by others .

Shakespeare produced most of his pieces between **1589** and **1613** .This early plays were mainly comedies and histories ,genres he raised to the peak of sophistication and artistry by the end of 16th century.he then wrote mainly tragedies until about 1608 ,including Hamlet ,King Lear ,Macbeth ,considered some of the

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finest works in the English language. In his last phase, he wrote tragicomedies, also known as romances, and collaborated with other playwrights.

Many of his plays were published in editions of varying quality and accuracy during his lifetime. In **1623**, two of his former theatrical colleagues published the First Folio, a collected edition of his dramatic works that included all but two of the plays now recognised as Shakespeare.

Shakespeare was a respected poet and playwright in his own day, but his reputation did not rise to his present heights until the 19th century. The Romantics, in particular, acclaimed Shakespeare's genius, and the Victorians worshipped Shakespeare with a reverence that George Bernard Shaw called 'bardolatry'. In the 20th century, his work was repeatedly adopted and rediscovered by new movements in scholarship and performance. His plays remain highly popular today and are constantly studied, performed and reinterpreted in diverse cultural and political contexts throughout the world.

Shakespeare wrote tragedies 'Hamlet', 'King Lear', 'Othello', 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Macbeth'...; comedies: 'The Merchant of Venice', 'The Merry Wives of Windsor', 'Much Ado About Nothing'...; romances: 'The Winter's Tale', 'The Tempest'; history plays: 'Richard II', 'Richard III', 'Henry IV', 'Henry V'...

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2. Elizabethan literature

The term Elizabethan literature refers to the English literature produced during the reign of Queen Elisabeth I (1558-1603). The Italians were particularly inspired by Seneca major tragic playwright and philosopher, the tutor of Nero. The English playwrights were intrigued by Italian model of a conspicuous community of Italian actors (Giovanni Florio had brought much of the Italian language and culture to England). William Shakespeare stands out in this period as a poet and playwright as yet unsurpassed. Shakespeare was very gifted, and he surpassed 'professionals' as Robert Green who mocked this 'shake -scene' by low origins. In his later years, Shakespeare (marked by the early reign of James I) wrote what have been considered his greatest plays: Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Anthony and Cleopatra, The Tempest. Shakespeare also popularized the English sonnet which made significant changes to Petrarch's model.

2.1 English Renaissance theatre

English Renaissance theatre, also known as early modern English theatre, refers to the theatre of England, largely based in London. It includes works of W. Shakespeare, Christopher Marlow and many other playwrights.

The term 'Elizabethan theatre', properly covers only the plays written and performed publicly in England during the reign of Queen Elisabeth. Most famous plays were written and performed during the Elizabethan era.

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2.2 Theatres

Archaeological excavations of the foundations of the Rose and Globe ,in the late twentieth century showed that all the London theatres had individual differences, but with similar general plan .The public theatres were three stories high, and built around an open space at the centre. Stage was surrounded on three sides by the audience. The upper level ,behind the stage could be used as balcony, as in Romeo and Juliet.

When the Globe burned down in June **1613** , it was rebuilt by tile roof. Globe was built in **1595** by Shakespeare's playing company ,the Lord Chamberleins' Men.

2.3 Elisabethan scene

' During the Shakespeare's period ,world represented residence of evil spirits, who were classified by demonologists into four categories : earth, water, air and fire .Those who were engaged into rituals of black magic ,their helpers and demons (and those who worshiped them) were despised in the eyes of ordinary people'*. In those days most people believed in witches and witchcraft, so it can be said that these beliefs (to a certain point) had influenced Shakespeare's work , for example 'Macbeth.' It was considered that all spiritual world except for the angels , were dishonest.

The period of Renaissance represented ending of man's spiritual liberation from religion, social organization and scholastic of middle century. Peace

*Vilson ; 'Suština o Šekspiru' (Novinsko –izdavačko i štamparsko preduzeće 'Kultura'; Beograd)

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and order, which moaned under the anarchy of 'War of Roses', were finally established. In Shakespeare's historical pieces we can sense a fear from returning of anarchy. The new aristocracy appeared in order to replace the feudal system.

People worshipped their queen and she instilled hope into their hearts. She gave them the sense of stability and the source of amazing power. Her royal residence represented the symbol of national life. The Palace was a stage at which, almost every young man, for whom Elisabeth felt affection, could distinguish himself.

3. Shakespeare's history plays - in general

English history represents a source on which Shakespeare's historical plays were founded. Very big influence on his plays had 'War of Roses' between York and Lancaster. However, except from the history in general, very important political figures also had big influence at Shakespeare's history plays. The best example for mentioned above represents history play 'Richard III'. 'Shakespeare felt that Richard III had some monstrous power inside himself.' *

So, we can say, that history had served as 'an inspirational well' for Shakespeare's history plays. Actually, some Shakespeare's plays tell us a story about the political fall of some very important figures from the English history. The instability of political power was pointed out through Shakespeare's plays.' According to Nikola Koljević, 'all the Shakespeare's pieces, which are

* Nikola Koljević; 'Šekspir tragičar' ('Svjetlost', Sarajevo 1981)

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founded on last four hundred years of English history ,are classified as 'history chronics' .And, pieces which were engaged in older history are classified as tragedies'**.

Shakespeare takes great deal of poetic liberty while transforming history material into dramatic shape . In order to accomplish impressive stage effect ,Shakespeare summarised history events and changed their order.The most impressive example of all is Richard's courtship to Lady Ann .Richard intercepts procession which was transporting Henry's dead body .Henry IV was Ann's father –in- law .(Richard III killed Henry IV , and he also killed Ann's husband). Richard successfully gets Ann's affection , she agrees to marry him.When considered historically interval of time in this scene is compressed.Actually, it can't be said for the fact that Richard III had killed Henry IV .After the death of Ann's father-in- law ,she had married Richard III,three years later .

3.1 History play 'Richard III '

It is assumed , that Richard III was create in **1592** or at the beginning of **1593** . Richard III is the oldest English drama ,and it succeeded to maintain its popularity even today . Text of the play has very complex history ,and it is noticeable that it has certain problems . Version of the 'Richard III' ,printed in First Follio ,probably represents combination of text from third and sixth quatro edition and manuscript.It is considered, that text from First Follio is much more precise ,and that

** Nikola Koljević; 'Šekspir tragičar',('Svjetlost',Sarajevo 1981)

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it has about 2000 lines. Those lines do not appear in earlier editions.

'Richard III' takes a very important place in the further development of Shakespeare's dramatic art. Through the piece of Richard III, is displayed the final phase of the Civil War and ascension to the throne of the dynasty Tudor, which was meritorious for the final peace and welfare in bloody England.

It is noticeable, that there is a big contrast between various elements. Mainly, we can single out the differences between old and new, between traditional shapes, characters, and style on one hand and the original shapes on the other hand.*

It is important to mention, that Seneca had a very big influence on 'Richard III'. For example, some rituals and festive characteristics of individual speeches, chorus comments, appearance of spirits, and motive of revenge, and also maintenance of the main hero to accomplish his personal criminal goals.

New art of characterization had appeared. The character of Richard III is considered as the first character in English literature, who is realized as a complete psychological being. The big influence on the characterization of Richard III had his individual way of expressing opinion, reaction of the character to external events, comments of the other characters. Shakespeare had helped himself with

* (Veselin Kostić; 'Šekspirov život i svet I', 'Srpska književna zadruga' Beograd 1994)

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important sources to accomplish that kind of effect in characterization. For example, history of dynasty Tudor was important foundation for his accomplishments. Relief portraits of the last ruler of York dynasty already took place in that sources. He was in power for a short period of time, so that could be effectively transformed into dramatic form.

' Machiavelli's ideas had very recognisable influence at the play 'Richard III'. Many characters in English plays were realised under the influence of characteristics of Machiavelli's heroes. Characteristics that distinct Machiavelli's heroes are intelligence, strength, attractive appearance; but, he is extremely malicious and hypocritical. He is ruthless toward those who consciously or unconsciously interfere with his criminal plans.'**

' The main source of Richard's strength dries up. That main source represents the source of his absolute immorality. He is transformed from Satan's servant, who is self-conscious and self-content into completely different human being. Now, he consents to be measured by the ethical norms of his surroundings.'***

3.2 Shakespeare's tragedies- in general

Human situation in Shakespeare's tragedies is not given, as it is case in Greek tragedies. Shakespeare gives certain amount of power to his main characters while creating their own destiny. He gives to them liberty in a process

** Veselin Kostić; 'Stvaralaštvo V. Šekspira I', (Srpska književna zadruga; Beograd 1994)

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creating their own life paths. In fact, philosophy of his heroes can not stay unchanged. Shakespear puts certain limits before his characters ,and brings them into various situations of crisis . In that way ,his characters are forced to change themselves ,to overgrow themselves. Similar process of transformation is given in 'King Lear .

Shakespeare's main character has opportunity to initiate the action by himself. That initial freedom overgrows into tragic inexorability. His tragedies represent tragedies of action .For Shakespeare , action and destiny are at the same level, they are identical.It is considered,that the plot of the tragedy is not concentrated on a pure tragic experience.Main character carries some deep personal drama inside himself,but the other characters are also carriers of their own dramas.Shakespeare maintains to alleviate tragedy in some moments and to lighten it up with unexpected comedies. At first, Shakespeare's tragedies were experimental , and under the influence of dramatic literature.Today, when we want to point out Shakespeare's most dignified achievements ,we mainly point out his tragedies.

***Kostić,Veselin;'Stvaralaštvo V.Šekspira I '(Srpska književna zadruga,Beograd 1994)

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3.3 Tragedy 'Macbeth'

The exact text from 'Macbeth' is hard to determine, mainly because of the interpolations. It is considered, that some of the pieces of Macbeth are additions from the Thomas Midelton's pen. 'Macbeth' is considered as one of the shortest pieces from Shakespeare's cannon, and it has only two thousand lines.

'Holinshed's chronics **1587**' served as the only Shakespeare's source for Macbeth. According to Holinshed, Macbeth was the commander of the army of King Duncan, whom he killed, and then he took over his throne in **1040**. He reigned until **1057**, when he had lost the battle and was executed by Malcolm III. Shakespeare degrades Holinshed's Macbeth morally and humanely. Because of that, we feel that Macbeth is much bigger criminal than other Shakespeare's characters. 'Macbeth' is not discussed as a history play like other English plays taken from the same source. It belongs to Shakespeare's later tragic period. It is written after 'Hamlet', 'Othello', 'King Lear'. The topic of this piece is taken from Scottish history of XI century.

In 'Macbeth', Shakespeare calls attention to the first years of James's I ruling. He specifically calls attention to the fact that James I was superstitious. In the first scene of the fourth act, Shakespeare alludes at the unification of two crowns, English and Scottish under the government of king who is non-historical antecedent of Banquo.

The topic of tragedy is taken from Scottish history. That way, Shakespeare had flattered to monarch, who was obsessed with his native country and especially with its past. He fawningly portrays character of Banquo

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,antecedent of James I.) In this Shakespeare's tragedy, Banquo is embodiment of honourable man who is connected with Duncan's murder.

Shakespeare puts Macbeth into difficult situations, and in that way, he manages to evoke certain dosage of understanding and pity toward Macbeth. So reader neglects the fact that Macbeth's nature is morally negative, and gets an impression as if he is his accomplice.

4. Supernatural elements in 'Richard III' and 'Macbeth'

4.1 Supernatural elements in 'Richard III'

Throughout the history play 'Richard III' Shakespeare wants to point out the fact that monarchy is very important. He assures us that state of any country is painted through the political body who rules the country. If we assume that king of the country is a wise man, and that he has a strong character and will, then we can conclude that balance in the country is established. But, the evil characteristics of the king points out the disorder in the state and society. Richard III followed his own ambitions and that way balance in his kingdom was destroyed. From Richard's success, some monstrous tyranny was born.

The playwright who had an important influence at the character of Shakespeare's Richard was Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe becomes famous thanks to his plays in which dominates exceptionally superior character, while the other characters are less important in comparison with the main character, 'they serve as the wheels of the mechanism of the plot.'*

*Veselin Kostić; 'Stvaralaštvo V. Šekspira I (Srpska književna zadruga; Beograd 1994)

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In the beginning of the play Richard acquaints us with his intentions and reveals to us who he actually is. He reminds us that his characteristics are similar as the characteristics of Prophet from Mediaeval Renaissance's moralities. Prophet animated public with his intrigues. Actually, Prophet represents embodiment of evil.

This scene is not very long, but it represents one of the courageous scenes in Shakespeare's canon. From historical view, in this scene, a large time difference between individual events is displayed. Richard compares Ann with angels, assuring himself that he had committed the crime in honour of an angel (in Ann's honour). But, when Lady Ann finally gives in to Richard's courtship, her angelic figure is metaphorically seduced by evil.

On many occasions, Ann put curses at Gloster. She begs God to punish Richard with his powers. She points out the strength of his sin with words:

Lady Anne

'Oh God this blood madest, revenge his death;
Oh earth which this blood drinkst, revenge death; Either heaven with
Lightning strike the murderer death;....'

('Richard III ' Act I, Scene II,)

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While mourning because of the death of Henry IV, Lady Anne equate Richard III with evil. In those days, it was believed that dead people bleed in the presence of their murderers:

Lady Anne

' Oh gentleman see, see dead Henries woundes
Open their congealed mouthes and bleed afresh...'

('Richard III' ; Act I, Scene II)

She thinks that Henry's mouth began to bleed because of the Richard's presence.

Ann compares the murderer of Henry IV with flood. According to some believes, the monstrous sin was provoked by the first flood. Shakespeare uses this kind of comparison in order to point out the magnitude of Richard's sin.

Lady Anne

' Blush, blush thou lumpe of foule deformity,
For tis thy presence that exhales this bloud
From cold and empty veines where no bloud
Dwells'

('Richard III' ; Act I, Scene II)

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In Ann's eyes ,Richard's damnation is much bigger because of Henry's positive nature .Henry was,as Ann says ,kind ,honourable and good man.One of the Ann's curses brings out the elements of darkness .

The Queen Margaret also brings out the supernatural elements of darkness into the play.The darkness manages to win over the light,which means that evil is back on the throne .

' In Shakespeare's plays , time and place of the plot are incompletely determined. When Shakespeare gives the exact information about the time and place of the action ,we can be certain that that action has a very special meaning.'**

The motive of revenge represents the trigger for the action.The Queen Margaret embodies revengfulness. She manages to bring into close relationship the past, present and future with the help of forecast :

Lady Margaret

'O but remember this another day, heart.

When he shall split thy very heart

With sorrow,

And say poor Margaret was prophetesse...'

(Richard III ; Act I,Scene III)

Gloster killed husband and son of Queen Margaret .Queen Margaret

** Jan Kot ; 'Idalje Šekspir '(preveo s poljskog P. Vujčić-Noví Sad ; Prometej' 1994

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...

First Witch 'All hail Macbeth ! Hail to thee Thane of Glamis'

Second Witch 'All hail ,Macbeth Thane of Cawdor'

...

Macbeth 'Stay you imperfect speakers ,tell me more :

By Sinel's death I know am thane of Glamis

But how of Cawdor.'

('Macbeth', Act I ,Scene III)

In the play ,the Three Witches represent darkness ,chaos and conflict ,while their role is as an agent and the witness.During the period of Shakespeare's creative work , witches were seen as something worse than rebels.It is unclear whether they control fate,or whether they are mainly their agents .The Three Witches defy logic ,as they are not subjected to the rules of real world. The Witches' lines in the first act 'Fair is foul ,and foul is fair. Hover through fog and filthy air .'brings a sense of confusion.The play is filled with situations where evil is depicted as good ,while good is rendered evil.Their main task is to seek trouble for the mortals around them.

While the witches do not tell Macbeth directly to kill Duncan,they use a subtle form of temptation when they tell Macbeth that he is destined to be a king.By placing this thought in his mind they effectively guide him toward the path of his own destruction.

Macbeth

'Say from whence

You owe this strange intelligence? Or why

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Upon this blasted heath you stop
our way with such prophetic
Greeting? Speak I charge you'

('Macbeth ' ; Act I ,Scene III)

Shakespeare wants to represent to the public the monstrous world of hell.

He wants to introduce us with the mind of murderer and the evil side of his thoughts.

The Shakespeare's most famous heroin Lady Macbeth overgrows her humanity and becomes an ambitious bitch. She wants to abandon her female nature in order to accomplish her disastrous goals. She calls out for the powers of hell and begs them to deprive her body from her sex. Lady Macbeth thinks that that it is the only way in which her body can be possessed by pure evil. She violates the picture of any woman in the eyes of female population.

Lady Macbeth 'Come you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts ,unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of clirest cruelty !make thick my blood.'

(Macbeth ;Act I ,Scene V)

Every woman represents embodiment of motherhood and breadwinner(wet-nurse) ,but Lady Macbeth manages to ruin that picture. She calls out for evil spirits to come and to transform all the natural things into unnatural.' Like Richard, Lady Macbeth also makes an evil- doer of herself ,and she Accomplishes that by the act of conscious repressing of her own humanity.'*

*Hugo Klajn ;'Šekspir i čoveštvo' ('Prosveta' ,Beograd ,1964)

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Both Lady Macbeth and Macbeth are transformed. Her being is deprived of her sex, and Macbeth also forgets that he is a human being, that he was born by a woman. 'Again, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth share equal part of responsibility with the cosmic powers of evil for the crimes they have committed.'**

Transformed like that they assume characteristics of devil.

The world of evil conquered the world of normal and ordinary life. The element of darkness is very important because it symbolises the powerful existence of misfortune throughout the whole tragedy. Almost all the great scenes happen during the night. We can isolate the scene in which Duncan was murdered. This scene begins with Macbeth's vacillating, and finally his decision to commit a crime. This act of murder was followed by very dramatic events. Macbeth is horrified by his own act of murder. He is aware that there is no coming back, that he is damned. 'The Duncan's murder, which represents self-transforming act for Macbeth (the murderer), unables him to return to the path of goodness.'*** The night of crime is elongated, and there is a very good reason for that. In that way, Shakespeare wanted to emphasise the magnitude of the crime. Terrible things happen during the night, far away from the eyes of other people. It seemed that that night would never pass, and that light do not have enough power to beat it.

**Vilson ; 'Suština o Šekspiru' (Novinsko izdavačko i štamparsko preduzeće 'Kultura' Beograd)

*** Veselin Kostić ; 'Stvaralaštvo V. Šekspira' (Srpska književna zadruga, Beograd 1994)

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'By th' clock tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp
Is't night predominance, or the day's flame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb ,
When living night should kiss it.'

(Macbeth ;Act II ,Scene IV)

It is very important to mention the next scene of darkness. In the dark ,under the weak light of candleless Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep .With that scene Shakespeare manages to bring into connection the darkness in any man with the darkness that exists in the external world.While sleepwalking,Lady Macbeth tries to wash imaginary bloodstains from her hands .Painful contractions of Lady Macbeth's body are actually contractions of her conscious.For her, the only way out from that nightmare is suicide.

Lady Macbeth 'Here's the smell of blood still :
All the smells from Arabia will not sweeten this little hand
Oh ,oh '

(Macbeth ; Act V ,Scene I)

' The scene with Porter is of very great importance ,especially for Shakespeare's contemporaries.Through the character of Porter Shakespeare represents guardian of the Hell.This is displayed through the part of the first speech In that part Beelzebub is mentioned, but also the Hell and sinners'.****

****Kostić ,Veselin ; 'Stvaralaštvo V.Šekspira II'(Srpska književna zadruga ,Beograd 1994)

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'Here's knocking indeed! If a
Man were porter of hell-gate ,he should have
Old turning the key .'
Knocking within
'Knock
Knock,knock ! Who 's ther ,i' the name of
Beelzebub?Here's a farmer that hanged
Himself on the expectation of plenty : come in
Time;have napkins

(' Macbeth' ; Act III,Scene II)

When murder was over the darkness had gone .Actually,with that act ,the retreat of evil is indicated.The retreat of darkness is represented as imaginary spectacle among the clouds.With the scene of knocking , Shakespeare sends us a message that normal life is returning.

Magdafa's entrance into Macbeth's court is shown as an entrance of Christ into Satan's territory.After the murder of Duncan ,Macbeth worries about the second part of the prediction.Macbeth's world becomes unreal,his communication with real world is very weak.After the murder of Banquo,Macbeth has hallucinations of Banquo's spirit.At the banquet ,Banquo's ghost enters and sits at Macbeth place.Only Macbeth can see him .

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Macbeth

'Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo

Down

Thy crown does smear mine eye-balls.And thy hair...'

(Macbeth ; Act I ,Scene IV)

The three witches visited Macbeth once more.They conjure up three prophecies, which tells him that'non of woman born shall harm Macbeth .'

He seeks for his salvation in the reality ,but he lost the ability to percieve the real world. Macbeth feels the emptiness inside of himself. His soul is dead,he is not capable to feel the sadness because of the death of his wife.He has no power over his emotions.Macbeth is not capable to morrow for his wife.His life lost every sense,his tragedy is without catharsis.Political and spiritual redemption is denied to Macbeth.

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Conclusion

In Shakespeare's period world represented residence of evil spirits, who were classified by demonologists into four categories: earth, water, air and fire. In those days people believed in witches and witchcraft. Shakespeare's literary work was under the influence of these superstitious beliefs. He also used many other supernatural elements in his literary pieces. The struggle between good and bad is metaphorically represented through the struggle of divine characteristics and evil characteristics of his heroes.

In 'Macbeth', the shortest and most compressed Shakespeare's tragedy, uncontrollable ambition incites Macbeth and his wife Lady Macbeth to murder the rightful king and usurp the throne, until their own guilt destroys them in turn. In 'Macbeth' Shakespeare adds supernatural elements to the tragic structure. Macbeth is forced to choose the path of crime and self-destruction under the influence of external factors.

Richard III displays his intellectual superiority by the isolation from reality and external world which surrounds him. He constantly changes his roles. His criminal behaviour is incited by his own complexes. Just when we thought that he had reached the final level at the path of success, his own self-destruction began. He had lost his superiority; his moral and spiritual state of being had changed. Supernatural elements in 'Richard III' helped Shakespeare to make its plotting more interesting. Lady Margaret's curses, Lady Ann's comparison of Richard with evil, and many other supernatural elements evoke in readers' trepidation of the final outcome of the play.

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Shakespeare used supernatural elements under the influence of superstitious beliefs of his time. He gain benefit from combining supernatural elements with his wealthy immagination and various history sources ; this formula ensured his position of literary genius for many centuries. He had shared his most precious treasure with us, and that way ,with his literary accomplishments, he left inerasable traces in English literature and also in the world –famous literature. .

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