

## The Problem of “A Strong Personality” in Shakespeare’ Dramas: Richard III and Macbeth

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### ABSTRACT

*The given article claims to identify and describe the character of a strong personality by means of analyzing Shakespeare’s poems named “Richard III” and “Macbeth” through lexical-semantic approach. Based on the theoretical model of the Renaissance, the author proves that the point of intersection of two renowned Shakespeare’s tragedies based on neo-romantic attitudes and Renaissance anthropocentrism, is the concept of a “strong personality”, which is in polemical dialogue with the world and with its own soul.*

**KEYWORDS:** *character, play, tragedy, symbolism, strong personality, lexical-semantic approach*

### Introduction.

In the XV-XVII centuries, due to the connection of the crisis of positivism, the view of the historical process changed significantly. History is now understood not as the progressive formation of mankind, but as a movement not subject to objective laws, a field of struggle for irrational forces. At the same time, a new understanding of the "great man" and his role in history is being born. It gets its extreme expression in the cult of a strong personality, which developed into the Nietzschean and Shakespearean idea of a "superman" who is "on the other side of good and evil", capable of deciding the fate of nations. The issue of the cosmic scale of the tragic appears with particular force in Shakespeare in Macbeth. What are the sinister figures of witches? the witches in Macbeth are not everyday figures, but symbolic and poetic images. Our consciousness does not need confirmation of their everyday reality, for they are poetic reality. They are real and at the same time unreal. They do not exist outside the consciousness of Macbeth and Banquo, to whom their sinister fate, crown and death are prophesied, but only in different ways: to Macbeth - spiritual death and fragile power, Banquo - physical death and lasting power in posterity.

The very beginning of the tragedy introduces us into its atmosphere. A terrible round dance of witches foreshadows a monstrous trampling on humanity. The evil they embody is rooted in the basest in nature. Their ugliness is a symbol of everything ugly in life. They have their own terrible humor, their monstrous jokes are associated with death, and for them the highest joy is the chaos of senseless murders and cruel suffering. They giggle at the sight of the hanged and rub their bony hands, smelling the smell of human blood. Their speeches are full of nonsense, but it should be so, because they embody that element of life where reason is powerless, where blind passion reigns and a person turns out to be a plaything of primitive dark instincts that lie in wait for that fateful moment when they can completely take over his soul.

For Banquo, the witch is something plucked by nature from its depths, as alien and evil. But this is not how Macbeth looks at them. He regrets that this vision has disappeared, he would like to listen to the prophetic wives more and more in order to find out the details of his predicted fate. That which vaguely lurked in his soul suddenly appeared before him in all the dazzling temptation. The specter

of power beckoned him, and Macbeth's passions began to boil, bubbles of his ambition rose. But Macbeth knows that his desires are contrary to nature and humanity. He needs support for his aspirations, for he realizes that they are hostile to the laws of humanity. Like other ambitious people, he believes in the predestination of his destiny by higher powers, which should justify him in his own eyes and in the opinion of others.

The poetic symbolism of the tragedy emphasizes from the very beginning the struggle between good and bad principles. The round dance of witches, which serves as a prologue to the tragedy, ends with the words: "Erase the line between good and evil. We will rush upward through the rotten steam" (I, 1). And how the same motive sounds like an echo in the first words of Macbeth when he appears before us: "Was there ever a worse and more glorious day?" (I, 3). The whole tragedy is really filled with the struggle of these two principles: life can be both disgusting and beautiful, and so can a person be. The struggle between these principles takes place in the soul of Macbeth.

Macbeth does villainous deeds, but he is not a villain like Richard III, Iago, or Edmond. Those were deprived of nature or society. They felt slighted, they were aware of their inferiority. Macbeth is not prejudiced in any way. He appears before us at the beginning as the embodiment of genuine human power. He has both the strength and the courage, and the field to use them. His valor evokes universal admiration, success accompanies him, and his exploits are rewarded with dignity. Richard, Iago and Edmond did not receive anything from life, they had to snatch gifts from her that would compensate for the inferiority of their natural abilities or social status. It is enough for Macbeth to be himself for his life to be full.

But the fact of the matter is that a worm of ambition nests in his soul. The more he gets, the more he wants. And although he is truly beautiful the way he is, it begins to seem to him that his human dignity is not truly appreciated. He has no equal in the prowess that adorns a warrior. He is a regal man. Next to him, even King Duncan himself looks small, with all his kind-heartedness and respect for other people's merits.

In the soul of Macbeth, a desire flares up to crown his human kingship with kingship. In this he is the direct opposite of Lear. He wanted to assert his human greatness by giving up the power and the crown. Macbeth longs to establish himself as a person by becoming king.

But for Macbeth there is no direct and honest path to the throne, which he has always walked until now. His path is blocked not only by Duncan himself, but also by the heir named by him - Prince Malcolm. A struggle begins in Macbeth's soul. Although Macbeth became for us the same embodiment of ambition, as Othello - jealousy, the fact of the matter is that ambition is not the essence of the hero's nature. Just as Othello is naturally not jealous, so is Macbeth not ambitious by nature. In his nature, the main thing was the free manifestation of his human power. Circumstances, however, led to the fact that he was faced with a contradiction - the dignity of a person is not combined with an equivalent social position. In this respect, Macbeth is decisively different from Richard III. The cruel hunchback had no formal and human rights to rise above everyone else in the country. He usurped these rights by acting cunningly and cruelly. Macbeth also has no legal rights. But he believes that he has a natural right to this because of his personal merit.

There is no greater mistake than thinking he is just a villain. In that case, there would be no tragedy. It consists precisely in the fact that a beautiful, truly great man is dying.

Macbeth's ambition is not a product of empty, unfounded vanity. It is as ugly a perversion of human dignity as King Lear's. But we see Lear from the very beginning already in the grip of false concepts, from which he later, after going through suffering, is freed. His way of the cross is a tragedy of purification. Macbeth's tragedy is that he takes the path of crimes that defile his soul. He sinks deeper and deeper into the mud of inhumanity, reaching the point of complete dullness of feelings.

And yet he remains human. There is one feature that most likely reveals to us the attitude of Shakespeare towards his heroes. This is their poetry and musicality. Shakespeare's villains lack a sense of beauty. They are smart, bold, decisive, but the spirit of poetry touches them only from the outside. The same Richard, Iago and Edmond fully confirm this.

But where we hear the voice of poetry, where the speech of the hero is full of music, there are people in front of us who have preserved their humanity. It can be clouded by bad passions, but we feel that the basis of the spiritual world of such a hero is an innate knowledge of genuine human values.

Direct confirmation of this in relation to Macbeth comes from none other than his own wife. When she says that he is "by nature drunk with milky gentleness," she reveals the essence of Macbeth's nature. Even if this is a flaw in her eyes, we understand that it is precisely this "weakness" that not only makes Macbeth human, but also constitutes the cause of his tragic mental anguish ... Shakespeare's Machiavellian villains did not recognize human values. They believed neither in love, nor friendship, nor duty, nor honor. For them, these are empty words. And Macbeth knows the price of all this. While doing evil, Richard III and Iago experience no feeling other than satisfaction with the fact that their cunning is bearing fruit. They fearlessly trample humanity, while Macbeth shudders at the very thought that he will violate moral laws.

Richard III "was written in 1592-1593. The author turned to the events of the end of the reign of Edward IV and to the reign of Richard III. The chronicle poses two problems: 1) what will become of a strong personality if she is immoral and fights for power in unrighteous ways; 2) the struggle between two ideas about the state - the state - a patrimony, an estate, belonging to a dynasty, property around which feuds are possible; a state is an economic, geographic, political, national integrity that lives by its own laws.

In the center of the play is a strong personality - Richard III. He is already from birth different from everyone else, he is an outstanding person even in his appearance: humpbacked, short, ugly. This is a personality of great inner strength, he strives for his goal, subordinates everything and everyone to it. The only passion of all the characters in the play and Richard is power, politics. He strives to become a king and does everything for this, even condemning to death innocent children who can threaten his plans to seize the throne. The hero has an extraordinary gift of persuasion, he always achieves his goal. Shakespeare depicts a vivid scene of the seduction of Lady Anne (the daughter-in-law of Henry VI, who was killed by Richard, her husband was also killed by him). Anna follows her father-in-law's coffin, on the way she is met by Richard, who decides that in order to achieve his goal, he needs to marry her. Shakespeare was reprimanded by many for the inaccuracy of this scene, but the historic lady Anne did indeed marry the historic Richard of Gloucester. After Gloucester's flattering speech, Lady Anne changes her attitude towards him, and although there is still no complete affection, there is no longer any hatred in her attitude. Satisfied with his skill, Richard delivers a revealing monologue:

Whoever seduced women like that?

Who managed to seduce a woman like that?

She is mine! But you don't need it for long.

How! I, who killed my husband and father,

I took possession of her in the hour of bitter anger,

When here, choking on curses,

She sobbed over the bloody plaintiff!

### Conclusion

To sum up, Shakespeare uses here the device of self-characterization of the hero. The playwright emphasizes that for all his talents, Richard never managed to deceive the people. Having destroyed all his rivals, he was already supposed to become king, but he wanted the people to proclaim him king. But ordinary people feel in him an evil force, an insidious tyrant. The silence of the people predicts the death of Richard. The hero opposed himself to everyone: relatives, people, nobility. Everyone perceives him as a usurper, so it is not surprising that his opponent Henry Richmond receives the support of the broad masses, in him the people see a liberator from a usurper, a king of a new type who will be able to create a strong state - an absolute monarchy.

In the confrontation between Richard and Richmond, the struggle between two views on the state was reflected, Richard III, the bearer of the old views, is doomed. The ideological meaning of the play lies in the affirmation of the idea that historical movement is progressive, and everything that hinders progressive development is swept aside by the very course of events. Shakespeare emphasizes that a strong person who does evil, violates moral norms, will not stay on the throne, she is doomed to defeat, which is what happens to Richard III.

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