Abstract (in English)

The aim of this thesis is to present humoral theory as the means of William Shakespeare’s artistic expression and to show that he created his dramatic characters on the basis of its knowledge. Humoral theory is presented here first in the context of ancient philosophy as a concept which has a key impact on human’s temperament, and this concept is afterwards examined on the basis of period books in the scope of Renaissance aesthetics, philosophy and medicine. The essential texts for this study are De triplici vita by Marsilio Ficino and The Anatomy of Melancholy by Robert Burton. This thesis traces the way by which the theory spread from Italy to England, it examines its impact on period poetics and a possible means by which Shakespeare could have got to know it. In the second part the thesis analyses four specific characters from Shakespeare’s plays and it shows how their temperaments correspond to the period concept of humoral theory. The period concept of humoral theory, which is in its base psychological, is therefore transferred to the area of aesthetics as a distinctive concept of the period theory of drama, which is shown in Shakespeare's emphasis on typological contrast in his dramatic characters.