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Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures, Faculty of Arts, Charles University

**Posudek na diplomovou práci Bc Anny Malé, roz. Ohlídalové**  
**“Political Rhetoric in Shakespeare’s Drama”**

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The submitted MA thesis is a valuable addition to Shakespeare studies. I particularly appreciate the meticulous and very detailed close readings, the genuine work with text. This is not some general treatise on the discursive politics and/or the politics of discourse (?) of power, as ever so often recently happens. This is a genuinely thorough interpretation of selected passages from several Shakespeare’s plays. The choice of plays ultimately proves sound and functional for the argument, the structure of the thesis is logical and clear. I also value the ability to analytically categorise the individual rhetorical strategies and instruments (rhetorical figures) used by the speakers for the range of reasons outlined.

As a result, the thesis is an independent piece of individual research, a product based on detailed interpretation. What could have brought the thesis one more notch higher is some form of inclusion of the state of the art, i.e. current research on this topic. Politics in Shakespeare has recently been a rather hotly debated issue and much has been written on this topic. A brief overview would have been appreciated; as it is, there is no critical reflection of this. Especially in Shakespeare studies, I am convinced that critical contextualization is advisable. Also, some more connection with Tudor aesthetics, e.g. visual etc. representations of the body of the king/queen, may have proved fruitful; or, at least provided a period context.

I would also like to hear some explanation as to the choice of plays. The thesis displays a free compilation of histories, Roman plays and tragedies. What exactly are the criteria for selection? For example, if more of the Henriad plays were included, would that change the conclusions?

A minor question concerning an otherwise very good analyses – if I understand correctly, in the analysis of Lady Macbeth’s speech (*M*, I, vii, 48-62) you seem to be implying something about determination of character (i.e. the future stated by the witches as the whole motivation for the actions of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth). Can we go back to this and have more explanation of this notion of what seems to be pre-determination?

Last, but in this case really not least – it seems probable that the author did not pay enough attention to the final submitted version. In my printed and otherwise beautifully bound copy, just as in the SIS version, page numbers disappear after page 1, the introductory paragraph is indented throughout, the name of the editor is in italics just as the whole title, Sir Thomas Elyot/Eliot appears freely in both versions, “a” is used with a plural noun – and all this appears on page 1! Moreover, the lack of page numbers and no chapter numbers makes reading a rather difficult matter.

Despite the above comments, I certainly find the thesis fully in compliance with all requirements for academic work on such level. Therefore, I recommend it for defense. In light of some critical comments made above, I propose the grade of very good (**velmi dobře**). The final grade will depend on the quality of the defense.

V Praze dne 4. 9. 2019

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