

'Untenanted Throne Престол Безвластный' and 'Borrowed Robes':

A Comparative Study of Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

Hi Kyung Moon*
Sun Choi**

I

Pushkin's interest in Shakespeare began in 1823 at Odessa and continued well into 1824 when he moved to Michailovskoe. During this period he read Shakespeare extensively, concentrating mostly on his major tragedies and histories such as *Richard III*, *King John*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *Henry IV*. It was also during this period that Pushkin developed an interest in Russian life and history and this interest, combined with the inspiration which Shakespeare's plays gave him, resulted in his historical drama *Boris Godunov* (1825).

Shakespeare's influence on Pushkin has been remarked upon even during Pushkin's lifetime and various aspects of the influence have been commented upon.¹ *Boris Godunov* shares with many of Shakespeare's histories and tragedies a major preoccupation, namely that of usurpation. That both Shakespeare and Pushkin, despite the differences in their historical backgrounds, should have been interested in this question is not a coincidence. The question as to who should be occupying the throne is one that was of

* 고려대학교 영어영문학과 교수

** 고려대학교 노어노문학과 교수

utmost sensitivity in the historical situations of England in Shakespeare's time and Russia in Pushkin's time. Shakespeare lived at a time when succession was a cause of much anxiety for Englishmen, who did not want to see the repetition of the bloody history of the past. The accession of James VI of Scotland to the English throne was hailed by many with relief, although the possibilities of insurrection still existed. Pushkin too lived at a time of political instability, which was eventually to lead to the December uprising.

However it is not with Shakespeare's histories but with his tragedy *Macbeth* that *Boris Godunov* shares certain affinities which knit the two plays closer together than with others. Both Macbeth and Boris are heroes who also happen to be murderer-usurpers. They both attain the throne through the murder of the legitimate king or heir; they are both considered tyrants; and they both suffer from pangs of conscience. But apart from these superficial similarities, more important questions the two plays raise are the nature of kingship, of political authority and legitimacy, which the choice of usurpation as a subject naturally entails.

In the two plays these ideas are brought forward by a set of images. When Macbeth, after having successfully vanquished the rebels, is addressed by the newly given title of the Thane of Cawdor, he asks, "Why do you dress me/ In borrowed robes?" (I. iv. 106-7) At the beginning of play, Boris is asked to fill the "untenanted throne престол безвластный"(Кремлевские палаты, 28), although the very next lines designate him as a murderer and render him an inappropriate candidate for the role.

The question that these images immediately raise is: "Does the throne and the robe belong to anyone by an inalienable right?" Macbeth and Boris put on the robe and ascend the throne to become kings but the throne and the robe are the things they have usurped and the plays show how they come to assume roles which do not belong to them and in which they do not feel at ease. What these images ultimately reveal is the split and discrepancy between the outer man who sits on the throne, wearing the crown and the robe and the inner man behind these outward

symbols of sovereignty. The discrepancy raises a whole series of questions concerning the nature of political authority and kingship, the basis on which it is founded, the question of legitimacy and the process of legitimation, and ultimately the nature of man as a political being. Both writers address these questions by turning to their past histories, more specifically to the periods in the history of both countries marred by great dynastic struggles.

II

Shakespeare's interest in politics is expressed mainly through his English histories, dealing mostly with the dynastic struggles between the houses of Lancaster and York in the War of the Roses, which only came to a close with the triumphant accession of Henry Tudor. When the Tudor reign ended with the accession of James I, Shakespeare had stopped writing histories and had turned to tragedy, producing his greatest and darkest works including *Macbeth*. He moves away from the interest in the great historical changes and the fate of the nation to the problem of individual and his suffering. Yet Shakespeare never entirely loses his interest in political questions and by choosing to deal with usurpation, Shakespeare once again addresses the questions directly. *Macbeth* is a tragedy with overt political implications. In turning to the remote history of Scotland in a play which was performed before the king, Shakespeare was deliberately drawing attention to these aspects, the aspects which assume added significance when we consider that the play directly refers to one of James's ancestors in the figure of Banquo.

Until recently Shakespeare's histories have been read as offering a unified historical narrative expressing a politically and morally orthodox monarchist philosophy of history. In this philosophy the Tudor regime is celebrated as the divinely sanctioned legitimate regime, which can ensure the

nation its political stability. This is the extreme conservative view of history which Tudor historians such as Edward Hall had propounded and which critics such as E. M. Tillyard endorsed. According to this view the body politic or the state is considered not only in the political and secular sense but also in the metaphysical sense as one of the functions of a universal order, created and governed directly by God's Providence.² The monarch was thus seen to have two bodies, the body natural and the body politic in the same body. Francis Bacon, writing of James and the unification of Scotland and England under him, expressed it as "the perfect union of bodies, politic as well as natural". (Kantorowicz, 24-41). Under this ideology, rebellion and usurpation are sins against both king and God. Even Henry V, the ideal king, does not entirely get over the stain of his father's usurpation of the crown from Richard II and prays before the great battle of Agincourt:

Not to-day, O Lord!
O! not to-day, think not upon the fault
My father made in encompassing the crown.

(IV. i. 312-4)

It is difficult to see how deeply the Elizabethans, including Shakespeare, held on to this view of kingship. Or is this philosophy of kingship strategies of legitimation through which the dominant ideology sought to validate its own political and moral power? (Tennenhouse, 72-85). There is no doubt that the overt political message behind *Macbeth* is an orthodox one of the highest degree and that Shakespeare had intended this to be so. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare combined two different stories — those of Donald and of Macbeth — and made significant changes to render the story dramatically effective as well as politically orthodox. In the first place, the original Duncan in Holinshed's chronicle, which Shakespeare used as his source, was a younger and feebler king. By making Duncan a saintly and older man, Macbeth is made more evil and the murder of such a king

becomes a damnable act as Macbeth himself acknowledges:

Besides, this Duncan
 Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues
 Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
 The deep damnation of his taking-off,

(I. vii. 16-20)

In the original story Macbeth had a genuine grievance whereas in Shakespeare the only reason for his treason is his "Vaulting ambition"(I. vii. 27). The changes that he made in the role of Banquo too are most interesting. In Holinshed Banquo is one of the chief accomplices in the open rebellion. Shakespeare makes Banquo an innocent victim and changes the rebellion into a secret murder and ignores the ten years of good rule under Macbeth.

The sinful nature of Macbeth's murder is also reinforced by a series of images and allusions, which draw close parallels between the breaking of the moral, political and natural order. As a norm or status quo, nature is constantly evoked to show that it will rise up against the murder of the lawful king. Thus on the night of the murder, the elements are in turmoil and a series of unnatural events occur: the dark night strangles the day, a falcon is moused by an owl-hawk and Duncan's tame horse turns wild and savage. Scotland under the usurped rule of Macbeth, groaning under the tyrant yoke, is a nation diseased. Against a whole range of such images stands the idea of sanctity and saintliness of the king. This idea is embodied not only in Duncan but more particularly in Edward the Confessor, the saint-king of England. The long section describing his miraculous power of healing is a strong endorsement of the divine nature of the king as God's anointed deputy on earth. The end of the play which sees the restoration of the legitimate ruler is a return to order and stability. In this way the entire play can be read as a cautionary tale against rebellion

and usurpation.

This kind of interpretation of history has recently come under challenge by critics who see in Shakespeare's plays other interests and processes at work. As Knapp points out, Shakespeare knew that politics was the art of accommodation and survival and there is more awareness of Machiavellian process at work than is thought by Tillyard(Knapp, 183-210). Such an awareness is sharply brought into focus in *Richard II*, where the king's will to be the sole representative of God comes into conflict with his subjects's desire to split the king's being into one natural body capable of death and another immortal body capable of succeeding to a different person. What occurs in other words is demystification of kingship and this process is made possible by usurpation which opens up the gap between the two bodies of the king and thus brings into interrogation the nature of legitimate authority. In *Macbeth*, the process of demystification occurs through a cluster of images which show up the split in the outer public man and the inner man, the man who has donned the robe of kingship and the man who exists behind this symbol. As Shakespeare writes in *Measure for Measure* authority is something that one puts on as a piece of clothes: "man, proud man/ Dressed in a little brief authority"(II. ii. 121-2). This concept is given a more concrete expression in *Macbeth* through the recurring images of clothes and dressing (Spurgeon, 325), which in turn exposes the theatrical nature of kingship and ultimately of human life.

Read from this point of view, in *Macbeth* can be found even from the beginning the elements which undermine and subvert the orthodox political message. The reign of Duncan as portrayed at the opening of the play has nothing of the stability and peace that should accompany such a virtuous God-sanctioned king, and the social order is one of, as Eagleton puts it, "routine oppression and incessant warfare"(Eagleton, 2). The play opens with the rebellion of Macdonald, which is swiftly followed by those of Cawdor and of Macbeth. These rebellions therefore appear not as isolated events but as habitual occurrences. The parallel between Cawdor and Macbeth, which is emphasized through the conferring of the title of Cawdor on

Macbeth, is carried further in Duncan's implicit trust in both of these betrayers. Duncan says of Cawdor:

There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face:
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

(I. iv. 11-4)

The lines might well apply to Macbeth himself and Duncan's inability to see through appearance makes him a ruler who has no understanding of the less scrupulous, Machiavellian politics where the art of dissimulation is one of paramount importance. Duncan does not seem to learn from his mistakes and this leads us to question his fitness to govern effectively in a world where duty, loyalty and trust do not always exist. Duncan's son Malcolm, on the other hand, perhaps by virtue of his experience, is more wary, less trusting and more capable of manipulation and dissimulation to attain his end. The long and tedious section in which he tests Macduff, painting himself to be even blacker than Macbeth, is an instance of masterly playacting which deceives even the hardened Macduff. Malcolm presents himself as black and white at once and when he suddenly sheds this pretense and shows himself to be all white, Macduff is at a loss: "Such welcome and unwelcome things at once/ 'Tis hard to reconcile" he says (IV. iii. 139-140). Malcolm is the legitimate heir of Duncan and it is fitting that his restoration should signal a return to order. Yet such a section subverts the orthodox meaning by undermining Malcolm's identity.

This question which is but lightly touched upon in the case of Malcolm is given a fuller treatment in Macbeth. From the very beginning, Macbeth's identity is made ambivalent through the witches's prophesy: he is called at once the Thane of Glamis and Cawdor and is told that he would be king. In the course of the play Macbeth plays all these three roles. The first is his by his birthright, the second earned by merit and the third

usurped by murder. When he is addressed by the name of Cawdor, he asks, "Why do you dress me/ In borrowed robes?" Macbeth is ill at ease and Banquo thus excuses him:

New honours come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould,
But with the aid of use.

(I. iii. 142-4)

Similarly Angus sums up Macbeth's kingship in these words:

Now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.

(V. ii. 20-2)

Angus regards kingship as a role that is too big for Macbeth but this is not entirely justified in that Macbeth is by no means a dwarfish figure. The more important meaning of this image is that the robe does not belong to him and therefore does not fit him. Then to whom does this giant's robe belong? Malcolm is the legitimate owner of this robe but Malcolm is hardly a giant figure in the play. The real significance of the image lies not in whether the robe belongs to Macbeth or to another, but that man is always assuming roles and playing a part like an actor on the stage. This idea is brought out sharply in *Richard II*, where Richard says:

Thus play I in one person many people,
And none contented. Sometimes am I king,
Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,
And so am I. Then crushing penury
Persuades me I was better when a king;
Then am I kinged again — and by and by
Think that I am unkinged by Bolingbroke

And straight am nothing.

(V.v.31-8)

In this way being king is merely playing king, being allowed "a little scene/To monarchize, be feared, and kill with looks"(III. ii. 164-5). Similarly Macbeth in his last great soliloquy reaches an understanding of the theatrical nature of all human endeavours, not only of kingship but also of life itself. We are all actors who are given our roles to play on the stage for a brief while:

Life's but 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.

(V. v. 23-7)

As one who holds the centre of the stage, on whom all eyes are turned, to be king is doubly to be an actor and if so, then kingship is not an inalienable right given to God's elect but a role which anyone could assume by assuming the outward symbols of kingship, such as the kingly robe, the crown or the throne. Taken in this sense, all robes are borrowed robes and all thrones are empty and politics becomes entirely a matter of assuming roles. In this context usurpation ceases to become a sin and can be seen merely as a natural stage in the struggle for power. This also makes it possible to argue that the important point about usurpation is not so much how legitimate a given ruler is but how successfully he can legitimate and validate his authority. In a sense Macbeth fails not only because the logic of tragedy requires his fall but because he is not unscrupulous and Machiavellian enough to feel comfortable in the role that he has chosen for himself. Having internalized the orthodox political moral of the sinfulness of usurpation, Macbeth is too ill at ease and too tormented to play his

chosen role successfully, as his breakdown at the banquet scene reveals.

III

These less orthodox ideas with their subversive implications are but implied in *Macbeth* but in *Boris Godunov* they rise to the surface, exposing Machiavellian processes at work behind the world of politics. Pushkin took the story of Boris Godunov from the tenth and eleventh volumes of Karamzin's Russian history (1818-1824). Karamzin attributed Boris's and Russia's misfortunes to the murder of Dimitry and portrayed both Boris and Grigory as evil rulers whose usurped reigns marked dark times for Russia. As a historian Karamzin is a conservative one who espoused the belief in a political order based upon God-sanctioned legitimate rule.

Although Pushkin used Karamzin as his source, Pushkin gives in his play a different interpretation of the events. His interest in the ruler and in political authority goes back to 1810 and through his reading of Karamzin and Shakespeare Pushkin was inspired to probe deeply into these issues. Just as Shakespeare had turned to the troubled times in English history, Pushkin turned to the years immediately preceding the Time of Troubles, a period which witnessed a series of usurpation, bridging the gap between the dynasties of Rurik and Romanov. Pushkin's rejection of Karamzin's conservatism makes it more plausible to suppose that it was not the orthodox historian that he saw in Shakespeare. On the contrary, what probably interested him more in Shakespeare is the way Shakespeare's plays, despite their overt conservative messages, go on to interrogate the very nature of political authority and in this interrogation the two writers draw close in their understanding of the theatrical nature of political life which requires from its participants the art of dissimulating and acting, and of the subsequent split in the symbols of sovereignty and the inner man behind the symbols.

The political life is exposed in *Boris Godunov* as one of pretense, and the difference between Macbeth and Boris is that whereas Macbeth arrives at this insight through his intense suffering, everyone in *Boris Godunov* seems to be aware of its nature from the start. From the very first scene Pushkin explodes any illusion one may have of notions such as truth, loyalty and legitimacy. In the opening of the play when Vorotynsky asks Shuisky how the excitement will end, Shuisky's cynical answer makes it clear that he regards it all as a piece of drama in which the people, Boris, and even they themselves play a part.

Чем кончится? Узнать не мудрено:
 Народ еще повоет да поплачет,
 Борис еще поморщится немного,
 Что пьяница пред чаркою вина,
 И наконец по милости своей
 Принять венец смиренно согласится;
 А там — а там он будет нами править
 По-прежнему.

(Кремлевские палаты, 6-13)

These words of Shuisky's are ironic, since he then goes on to reveal that it was Boris who had killed the boy Tsarevich and that he could have exposed Boris. What prevented him, he declares, was Boris's total composure and shamelessness:

Он, признаюсь, тогда меня смутил
 Спокойствием, бесстыдностью неожиданной;
 Он мне в глаза смотрел как будто правый:
 Расспрашивал, в подробности входил —
 И перед ним я повторил нелепость,
 Которую мне сам он нашептал.

(Кремлевские палаты, 44-49)

Here we get a glimpse of Boris as a supremely capable actor, who is able not only to cover up his own guilt with a coolness so lacking in Macbeth, but also to force others to pretend by the sheer force of his personality. Shuisky, not being a fool, goes along with Boris's game with a tacit understanding that the pretense is to be kept up. But by speaking of Boris as a murderer in the very first scene when he is about to ascend the empty throne, Pushkin questions his fitness to be Tsar. Macbeth was called "a dead butcher" at the end of the play, but Boris is given this appellation from the beginning, as Shuisky calls him "зять палача и сам в душе палач". Yet the nobles and the people choose to have him as their ruler, although some are fully aware of his moral unfitness to ascend the throne. According to Shuisky, Boris has even less right to be king than they have, who are after all princes of noble blood. Vorotytsky says, "ведь мы б имел и право/Наследовать Феодору". Shuisky's reply to this is, "Да, боле,/Чем Год унов" and he mentions the possibility of stirring up the people against Boris. The only thing that prevents them is Boris's cunning, his ability to win the people with love and fear, and their own loss of power and wealth as a class. What this scene makes clear is that neither moral unfitness nor lack of lineage is an obstacle to gaining power, that the empty throne is up for the grab for anyone who has the power to do so. The events of the play which end with the rise of Grigory the Imposter bear out the truth of this.

The whole of the opening of the play which deals with the way Boris ascends the empty throne — Boris's initial refusal to accept the crown, the people's pleading and his final acceptance — has a theatrical quality, which sets the tone of the entire play. Boris, the people and the nobles all take part in one big drama, where everyone tacitly understands that it is all a pretense. After having murdered for power, Boris's humility and refusal of the crown, reminiscent of Richard III, can only be taken as an astute strategy for legitimation. His refusal incites the people to beg him to take the crown and this enables him to claim that he has been elected by the will of the people.

But this scene is full of irony. The theatrical nature of the political game is exposed in the tears that people shed more than anywhere else. There is something chilling in the way a woman throws down her baby to make him cry at an appropriate moment as there is something comic in the way that tears are rung by resorting to onions. When Boris finally accepts the throne, his words of acceptance ring with irony:

Обнажена моя душа пред вами:
Вы видели, что я приемлю власть
Великую со страхом и смирением.

(2. Кремлевские палаты, 2-4)

Baring of one's soul before another is something no one is capable of doing in this world where everyone must dissimulate and wear masks. Such a moment is kept for a very different Boris for a very different hour. In his moment of privacy in the scene "Царские палаты", Boris is conscience-stricken and tormented by guilt, showing the inner man to be very different from the so composed and shameless one seen by Shuisky. In this moment of solitude Boris acknowledges to himself the reality of his suffering and the vanity of human life as well as the meaninglessness of ambition and power:

Ни власть, ни жизнь меня не веселят.

(Царские палаты, 17)

Ах! чувствую: ничто не может нас
среди мирских печалей успокоить.

(Царские палаты, 46)

The hiding of one's real self behind various masks and roles as the circumstance demands is best illustrated in the brief exchange between Shuisky and Vorotynsky. When Boris is made Tsar, Shuisky declines to remember

that he had ever said anything against Boris:

Теперь не время помнить,
 Советую порой и забывать
 А впрочем, я злословием притворным
 Тогда желал тебя лишь испытать,
 Верней узнать твой тайный образ мыслей;

(2 Кремлевские палаты, 28-32)

Shuisky, who thus has a memory that is conveniently malleable, clearly has a more Machiavellian understanding of politics than Vorotynsky, who appears naive against him. Shuisky has no illusion as to what being a courtier involves, that being one requires skill in assuming roles and in playing parts. Truth, duty, loyalty, honesty have no reality, whether it is in the ruler, the courtier or the people. It is he who tells Boris later of the fickleness of the mob:

Но знаешь сам: бессмысленная чернь
 Изменчива, мятежна, суеверна,
 Легко пустой надежде предана,
 Мгновенному внушению послушна,
 Для истины глуха и равнодушна,
 А баснями питается она.

(2 Царские палаты, 82-87)

It is not the truth but the fable that is required and history in this sense is a series of tales, which must be acted out briefly on the stage, as Richard II and Macbeth well knew.

What then counts is not reality but appearance, the show rather than the inner truth, the process of legitimation which gives authority an appearance of legitimacy rather than legitimacy itself. And a successful ruler is not one who adheres to truth and virtue but one who understands the Machiavellian principles behind politics, who, without illusion, can manipulate various

forces to attain his end. Boris himself is a fairly good example of this. He is without illusion about the support of the people, who can turn against him any moment. He knows he has not succeeded in winning the people, in spite of his good rule:

Живая власть для черни ненавистна.

Они любить умеют только мертвых.

(Царские палаты, 23-24)

Pushkin wrote to Viazemsky in September 13th, 1825 (Пушкин, 1996, 458) that he was judging Boris from a political point of view, and from this point of view Boris was a good ruler who successfully ruled during the period of rapid changes when Russia was moving into a new phase in its history. Accepting cruelty and murder as part of the struggle for power, Pushkin thought Karamzin was naive when he accused Ivan IV of cruelty, and criticized Tacitus for describing Tiberius as a tyrant (Пушкин, 1996, 294). Pushkin treats Boris from a more realist point of view, and even on his deathbed the political necessity of giving advice to his son to ensure a successful rule is a more urgent business than looking after his own soul. Like Shakespeare's Henry IV, Boris gives his son's reign a legitimacy that his own did not have.

Но чувствую — мой сын, ты мне дороже

Душевного спасенья... так и быть!

Я подданным рожден, и умереть

Мне подданным во мраке б надлежало;

Но я достиг верховной власти — чем?

Не спрашивай. Довольно: ты невинен,

Ты царствовать теперь по праву станешь,

(Москва, Царские палаты, 60-66)

But he is only too well aware that reigning rightfully is no guarantee

against treason and rebellion, and it is chiefly the Machiavellian lesson of maintaining power that Boris teaches his son Feodor. He suggests as advisor Shuisky, who ironically is a character less distinguished for his truth and loyalty than by his cynical understanding of the ways of the world. Boris knows Shuisky to be a man who cannot be trusted (А Шуйско му не должно дове-рять: Уклончивый, но смелый и лукавый...)(2. Царские пала ты, 59-60) and yet in recommending him he knows that Feodor stands a better chance of survival with the help of such a man than otherwise. Yet ironically, Shuisky fails to live up to Boris's trust in not giving the necessary support to Feodor in his downfall.

It is because Boris knows that pretense and appearance are everything that he experiences such a fear when Grigory the Imposter suddenly appears on the scene:

Пустое имя, тень —
Ужели тень сорвет с меня порфиру
Иль звук лишит детей моих наследства?

(2 Царские палаты, 150-152)

As in *Macbeth*, the putting on of clothes and thereby assuming different roles is made complicated in the figure of Grigory. Grigory puts off his monkish habit and turns himself into a monarch. In this process, however, he is given the name of the Imposter, making it clear that there is a split in what he is and what he professes to be. Like Macbeth, who has three titles given to him, Pushkin gives Grigory four different names: Grigory, the Imposter, False-Dimitry and Dimitry. His identity is fluid as he assumes one and casts off another. By replacing the name of Grigory with that of the Imposter or Dimitry, it is as if Pushkin wanted to show that he has no identity other than the false ones he assumes. Boris calls him an empty name, a shadow and one of the mendicant friars Varlaam says nobody knows who he is and where he comes from (“Неведомо кто, неведомо откуда”)(Корчма на литовской границе, 33). Patriarch describes Grigory

as having donned a stolen chasuble, like Macbeth’s borrowed robe:

Бесовский сын, расстрига окаянный,
 Прослыть умел Димитрием в народе;
 Он именем царевича, как ризой
 Украденной, бесстыдно облачился;

(Царская дума, 48-51)

The split between the inner man and the clothes is once again brought out in the scene with Marina. Just as Boris is allowed his more private and human moment, so Grigory is allowed the same moment of sympathy in the love scene with Marina. In a rare moment when any character reveals his inner self to another being, Grigory confesses to Marina:

Я миру лгал; но не тебе, Марина
 Меня казнить: я прав перед тобою.
 Нет, я не мог обманывать тебя.
 Ты мне была единственной святыней,
 Пред ней же я притворствовать не смел;
 Одна любовь принудила меня
 Все высказать.

(Ночь. Сад. Фонтан, 130-138)

But the supreme irony of this scene is that Marina does not want the truth. She does not love Grigory but the name Tsarevich and Grigory reproaches her with “Не говори, что сан, а не меня / Избрала ты” (Ночь. Сад. Фонтан, 80-81). But this too is ironical in that Grigory too judges people by their clothes (“я узнаю на них/ Земли родной одежду”(Краков. Дом Вишневецкого, 66-63). To Marina it does not matter whether it is the real Tsarevich or an imposter as long as the pretense is kept up. Moreover, it is not only to Marina that the true identity of Grigory remains unimportant. The rest of the world who is bent on making him Tsar feels the same, and this, for example, can be seen in the scene where the poet,

knowing full well who Grigory/Griska is, still calls him “Great Tsarevich, Resplendent Prince”. While saying this, the stage direction instructs the poet to bow before Grigory clutching his robe.

Поэт (*приближается, кланясь низко и хватая Гришку за полу*):
Великий принц, светлейший королевич!

(Краков. Дом Бишневецкого, 62-63)

Grigory himself too is only too well aware of the pretense behind it all:

Димитрий я иль нет — что им за дело?
Но я предлог раздоров и войны.
Им это лишь и нужно,

(Ночь. Сад. Фонтан, 197-199)

The truth of this is borne out in one of the last scenes when the character Pushkin and Basmanov, intent on seizing power, discuss the use they will make of Grigory:

Быть может, он Димитрий настоящий,
Быть может, он и самозванец; только
Я ведаю, что рано или поздно
Ему Москву уступит сын Борисов.

(Ставка, 16-19)

In this way Grigory’s accession to power does not even depend on something as unambiguous as winning a battle. When he is defeated, all seems lost and all that Grigory can do is to go to sleep, a reaction so unheroic and feeble that it verges on the comic. In the world of Machiavellian politics, the seizing of power, however, does not depend upon heroic deeds. It depends more upon an ability to grasp right opportunities, to plot and to playact successfully. Boris’s timely death provides an opportunity for insur-

rection and in order to seize power all it needs is a ceremony publicly proclaiming Grigory as Dimity the Tsar. In other words, what is needed is not a military victory but a successful staging of a scene, which gives the semblance of legitimacy, which turns fiction into fact, an imposter into a tsar. The character Pushkin who realizes this thus promptly organizes an occasion for such a proclamation.

Although Grigory is an imposter, this does not rule out the possibility that he could turn out to be a good ruler. This is shown through the complex use Pushkin makes of the various names under which Grigory speaks. In the scene where Grigory woos Marina, Pushkin suddenly changes his name from the Imposter to Dimitry and then reverts back to the Imposter. Pushkin also makes him speak as Dimitry after Grigory has gained a victory. This unusual change in the way the writer calls his character is conspicuous, and it is significant that the parts where Grigory is made to speak under the name of Dimitry are the parts where he most shows some of the qualities which go into the making of a good ruler. For instance, in the wooing scene Grigory emerges from the role of a lover to one who has conquered his passion to proudly claim for himself his destiny as Tsar. In the battle scene, again Grigory is portrayed as a ruler who cares for his people. In these moments Grigory is shown to be a ruler who lives up to the name of Dimitry and Pushkin implies through this that the ability to rule well is more important than the birthright.

Grigory's replacing Boris's heir at the end of the play constitutes the second usurpation in the play. In this second usurpation, however, the people are finally reduced to speechlessness. This ending is ambiguous and has been interpreted in a variety of ways. The silence of the people who have heard the cry from within, Pushkin tells us, is that of horror. Before the shameless lie of Masalski that Feodor had poisoned himself, the horrified silence can signify the sudden awareness on the people's part of the true nature of politics and a recognition that they too had perhaps been unwitting accomplices in the political game. It is possible that Pushkin, by leaving the end of the play in this open way, may have wanted to show

this moment of awareness as a moment of truth in which is exposed the fundamental contradiction in human nature when man as a political being is shown to be at odds with man as a moral being.

IV

In *Macbeth* and to a greater extent in *Boris Godunov* the world of politics is a world where men must hide their true selves and assumes identities which the story requires of them. Thus Macbeth is at once Glamis, Cawdor and king, a murderer and dead butcher. Boris is tsar but also a butcher at heart, a murderer, finally a monk. In all these different roles which they assume, hides true Macbeth and Boris, the inner man whom only the readers are allowed to see. The robes they put on to play their respective roles are at odds with the inner man and they thus become contradictions to themselves, ill at ease and divided in themselves. These contradictions belong not only to the usurpers but to all rulers, and lie at the core of man as a political being. It is perhaps these contradictions that Shakespeare and Pushkin wanted to expose as they wrote of their usurper heroes.

Notes

1. Алексеев, М. П., *Избранные труды: Пушкин. Сравнительно-исторические исследования*. Ленинград, 1984. 253-293; Левин, Ю. Д., *Шекспир и русская литература*. Ленинград, 1988. 32-49; Лотман, Л. М., *Комментарии к Борис Годунов*. СПб. 1996; Штейн, А., *Пушкин и Шекспир: Шекспиrowедение*. 2 т. 1976. Москва, 1977. 144-175.
2. This view is well illustrated in E. M. W. Tillyard's *The Elizabethan World Picture and Shakespeare's History Plays*.

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Резюме

“Престол Безвластный” и “Borrowed Robes”

Мун Хи Генг

Че Сон

Глубокое кровное родство между Шекспиром и Пушкином чувствуется и в сходстве их взглядов на политику и политическое поведение человека, которые выражены в пьесах “Борис Годунов” и “Макбет”. Герои пьес завладевают тронном посредством убийства короля или наследников. Но их просят принять законное правление и провозглашены законным правителем, и они оставались в течение всего своего правления легитимными. Здесь мы можем видеть, что между человеком и тем, что он символизирует, существует противоречие. Это противоречие между публичной фигурой правителя и его личностью поднимает вопрос о природе законной власти как таковой. Кажется, что Шекспир косвенно, Пушкин менее косвенно говорят нам, что царствование само по себе не великое, неотчуждаемое право, данное божему избраннику, а роль, которую каждый может взять на себя, присвоив внешние символы власти — такие, как царское платье, корона или трон. В этом смысле никому не предназначено судьбой носить царскую одежду, и все троны изначально пусты. Государь как политическое учреждение продолжает жить, если эту роль исполняет любой актер, который просто должен надеть соответствующую одежду и корону. Итак, политика становится в полной мере областью театральной игры и каждый пра-

витель более и менее чувствует противоречие между внешним символом и внутренним человеком. И это противоречие принадлежит не только узурпаторам, но и всем правителям. В широком смысле это противоречие лежит в центре человека как политического существа вообще. И вот что Шекспир и Пушкин хотели выражать, когда они писали о узурпаторах.