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Time in A.S. Pushkin's drama Boris Godunov.

by

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Contents

Introduction

We live in a rapidly changing world. Modern man seems obsessed with time and its effect upon him. The desire for understanding the category of time and for examining it in its subtlety captures the minds of scientists and philosophers. Literature also does not stand aside, becoming more and more the art of time.

In the last decades there have appeared in literary criticism a considerable number of works dedicated to the temporal aspect in Russian literature. Despite this fact, only a few of them consider time in drama, giving preference to prose and poetry, although the problem of the temporal patterns in drama is of great interest to literary scholarship. It is applicable, in particular, to those dramatic works in which an author creatively approaches the problems of the representation of time. One of the works which radically changed the temporal concept in drama is A.S. Pushkin's tragedy Boris Godunov.

Time, as well as space, in literature are of crucial significance because they organize the semantic structure of all literary works. They provide an integral perception of the text and are, therefore, major characteristics of the imaginary world. Studies to date on Boris Godunov have focused primarily on language and style and very seldom on structure. It would be valuable to trace and discuss the patterns and interactions

of time and space, because in Boris Godunov Pushkin applied an innovative approach which transformed this genre into what is known now as modern drama. Time and space became real dynamic forces that defined the course of events. Therefore, their study might, for example, help to clarify why this famous drama, written in 1825 and published in 1831, has practically never been staged.

Drama is a combination of both temporal and spatial aspects. Stage space is an important coordinate in the analysis of theatre as performance, where the gradual unfolding of a play through time and in time is combined with its spatial representation on stage. In theatre, drama becomes "visible" due to the process of "materialization in space of what has hovered only in time."[1] However, drama in its written form relies more on the temporal aspect.

Since the nature of this dissertation is limited in length, the present work leaves the question of the scenic realization of Pushkin's tragedy outside of its analysis,[2] proposing to view Boris Godunov as a text. Such an approach is conditioned by the fact that a text, allowing for the availability of a plurality of perceptions, is an indivisible and fixed verbal form of existence and does not permit itself to be changed in any manner, as

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1 V.E. Meierkhol'd, Stat'i, pis'ma, rechi, besedy, t. 1 (Moskva, 1968) 149. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Russian are mine.

2 Consequently, the spatial aspect in this dissertation is mentioned only incidentally and only in those cases when the examination of the temporal aspect inevitably involves mentioning or consideration of the spatial one.

would occur in the process of scenic realization.

This dissertation contains three chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter considers the temporal character and peculiarity of temporal patterns in drama as a distinctive type of artistic work. The second chapter gives a review of Pushkin's ideas on the subject of dramatic art and historical drama, considering the poet's approach to the reformation of the given genre as a system which came into existence as a result of his long meditations about the fate of Russian theatrical art. As Shklovskii points out:

> By creating new methods of analysis of reality, the writer cannot help but devote some time to the analysis of the new method itself.[3]

Such a review of Pushkin's ideas and analysis of his own method helps us understand the tasks which Pushkin had in mind when preparing and working on his drama, as well as in the period that preceded its publication. It also makes the perception of Boris Godunov easier. Moreover, this research would be incomplete without a consideration of Pushkin's views on theatre and drama, for the examination of the temporal patterns in the tragedy would not be based on his conscious intention.

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3 V.B. Shklovskii, Povesti o proze: Razmyshleniia i razbory, t. 1 (Moskva, 1966) 246.

As one of its semantic elements, the temporal aspect in the tragedy is examined on three levels: description, representation and meaning. The summary of the analysis and the questions which arose during this research are in the conclusion. My analysis of time in the drama is based on the text of the tragedy as it appeared in the most complete to date publication of Pushkin's works: A.S. Pushkin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, t. 7 (Moskva, 1948) 3-98.

Chapter One

Time in Drama

Drama is a work for the theatre, a complex system that includes diverse subsystems or "codes." The dramatic text manifests the duality of its existence in verbal and scenic forms. In this we find the fundamental distinction between a theatrical work and any other type of literary creation.

In its written form the dramatic text is expressed through its linguistic material, while on stage the means of its embodiment is the actors' play. Thus a theatrical work consists of two processes: reading and scenic realization. During both of these processes the work assumes a certain temporal organization in terms of its verbal and non-verbal components. The artistic existence of the work becomes dependent on its temporal structure.

As it has been repeatedly said in criticism, the aspiration to perceive the outside world in time and through time is an important feature of both literature and theatre. Likhachev notes that time is the "object, subject and means of representation" of literature.[4] His words are echoed in the Pinto's statement:

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4 D.S. Likhachev, Poetika drevnerusskoi literatury in: Izbrannye raboty v trekh tomakh, t. 1. (Moskva, 1987) 491.

> The structure of existence known as temporality is so closely related to narrativity that it becomes the structure by which narratives are distinguished from other genres of verbal art. As time cannot be extricated from and is so fundamental to the narrative, it has long been the object of manipulation, speculation, and study, be it from the point of view of authors themselves (cf. Sterne) or through the (not always) more analytic approach of literary scholars.[5]

Despite numerous statements of the essential nature of time in drama, few critical works have been written on the subject. Moreover, a comprehensive and logically well-composed investigation that combines formal and semantic approaches to the analysis of the temporal patterns in dramatic art is presently unavailable in modern literary criticism. Nevertheless, in this chapter I try to apply those findings that have been achieved in scholarship on the temporal patterns in the narrative fiction, which are appropriate to the discussion of time in drama. Such an approach is necessary in order to set the proper perspective.

The peculiarity of drama, as Pfister notes, lies "in the absence of the mediating, fictional narrator."[6] It is obvious that

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5 J.C.M. Pinto, The Reading of Time: A Semantico-Semiotic Approach (Berlin-New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989) vii.

6 M. Pfister, The Theory and Analysis of Drama (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 5.

this statement is incomplete regarding a dramatic work as a work for reading, where an author's presence is perceived in the stage directions, composition of the work, and in time as a compositional feature, as well as in the list of dramatis personae, which usually stands at the beginning of a theatrical work. The subject (author) of narration is simply hidden from us behind a series of verbal exchanges between characters. Since the author intentionally refuses to speak for himself and to conduct the narration, time, as well as space, determines the progress of the text, while the arrangement of events involves emphasis and subordination. Furthermore, we can consider time as an organizing principle not only of drama, but of any artistic text, because, as Pinto relates, "the narrative (in whatever form it may take, be it oral storytelling, fiction or drama) is a temporal art in that it tells or recounts events in an organized fashion"[7] according to an a priori concept of time. Driver states that the dramatist "must decide or assume a certain role for time to play in the unfolding of his story — whether time is creative or destructive, objective or subjective, constant or fluid, important or only casual. And he must relate that understanding of time to the time of performance of the play."[8]

The element of time is most important for the analysis of

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7 Pinto 5.

8 T.F. Driver, The Sense of History in Greek and Shakespearean Drama (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960) 15.

both the action and the structure of a dramatic work, because both are defined by time. The events, which either precede or follow each other, constitute a complex line, thanks to which a spectator or a reader is able to note the way time moves in an artistic work, even if nothing is said about time itself. Moreover, as Driver emphasizes:

> The form of a play is the expression of a temporal action set within a certain social reference and a certain (explicit or implicit) cosmic frame.[9]

Time in a dramatic work varies in its duration, speed and uninterruptedness. We are able to witness a long or short period of time, its slow or fast flow. The temporal pattern may have an uninterrupted or dotted, broken character, and be successive or inconsequential, where the action moves backwards or leaps forward, etc. Time in its various manifestations proves to be not only a compositional feature,[10] but also a phenomenon of style, or even a feature of a literary

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9 Ibid 83.

10 A well-known example of time as a compositional feature is J.B. Priestley's Time and the Conways (1937). All three acts of this play take place in the same room in the Conway's house, but while Acts I and III take place on an Autumn evening in 1919, Act II takes place on an Autumn evening in 1937. By choosing this arrangement of temporal ordering the dramatist is able to articulate the contrast between the hopes and expectations of the young generation after the end of the First World War and the frustration of these hopes in the face of reality. For a more detailed account of time in J.B. Priestley's play see Pfister, 278.

school.[11] In addition, the dramatist always "exploits the possibilities of varying the time-ratios in order to throw the contextual centrality of certain fictive periods into high relief against the background of other periods belonging to the total span of the sujet."[12]

We may thus trace the chronology of events in a dramatic work and single out the various temporal arrangements of events in it, whether it be the succession of events, where one incident follows another, the simultaneity of events[13] or the pattern where events coincide or their coincidence is implied without visible dramatic conflict, as is the case in Boris Godunov, to make up the dramatic situation. Therefore, Pfister's observation seems to be correct:

> ...simultaneity applies both to actions and events that are presented scenically and those that occur off-stage and which are related verbally, either as they occur or

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11 Styan notes that startling manipulations of tempo, which enhance the importance of a particular situation, are associated most often with non-realistic plays, that is, for instance, with Romanticist plays. See for additional explanation J.L. Styan, The Elements of Drama (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960) 153.

12 M. Sternberg, Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978)19.

13 Simultaneity is constituted by information transmitted simultaneously using a number of techniques, that is, by events presented on stage and off-stage at one and the same time.

retrospectively.[14]

It is worth noting that time can have not only a successive, linear pattern, but it can also move along a vertical, symbolic line as, for instance, in Iu. Lermontov's Masquerade. Vertical time in this drama is embodied in the image of fatal temporal measurement of Destiny, which manipulates its heroes' lives.[15]

Past, present and future in drama are balanced, because past events are scenically introduced in the present and have a tendency for forward movement. Langer claims that drama's "basic abstraction is the act, which springs from the past, but is directed towards the future, and is always great with things to come."[16] For all that he overlooks that his definition is applicable to the classical type of drama, for instance, to the drama of classicism or to Pushkin's Boris Godunov, but not to plays without plot, that is, those in which information is conveyed successively but only to present a static condition.[17] Therefore, it is necessary to rephrase Langer's words in a more cautious manner in order to be more flexible and reflect the

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14 Pfister 276-77.

15 On time in Masquerade see M.Ia. Poliakov, V mire idei i obrazov (Moskva, 1983) 313.

16 S.K. Langer, The Dramatic Illusion, Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art (New York: Scribner, 1953) 306.

17 See Pfister 277.

character of modern scenic art: each moment of drama is based on events that took place in the past and have a certain anticipation of events that are to happen in the future.

As was stated earlier, a dramatic action may have as its basis a thread of episodes which directly result from each other temporally, or it may have as well a thread of episodes separated by time intervals. A dramatic work may also have a more intricate temporal organization: episodes connected by the general movement of time into the future interlace the past, present and future as, for instance, heroes' recollections about the past or their imaginary pictures of the future alternating with action that lies in present.

The peculiarity of temporal movement in drama, in my opinion, is contained in the fact that scenes from the heroes' past or their recreations of future events, unfolding in front of the audience's eyes, acquire the character of being in the present, while for the protagonists of the drama they are in their past or in the future. But only when the display of past or future events in drama is completed, does it acquire for the audience the character of temporal remoteness backwards or forward and begin to coincide in the consciousness of the spectator with the movement of time as it is seen by the eyes of the protagonists of the drama.

Time in the artistic work, and in drama in particular, is the combination of the objective time of the represented event and subjective time, as it is perceived by the work's heroes. For

these characters time can crawl or run, stop for a moment or acquire the character of being lost.

Therefore, to the qualities of objective or subjective time in drama as a theatrical work may be added the time of the spectator or reader, if the drama is read. The author always considers how much time his work would take for the spectator to see it staged or for the reader to read it. This length Likhachev calls "the true 'measure' of the work."[18]

In reference to the length of drama, Elam justly notes that it is not constituted "by the initial or final state of affairs represented but by the entire sequence of actions, events or situations dramatized."[19] The temporal structure of drama, as he explains, indicates movement from an initial state to a final state through a series of intermediary states. While Elam misses mentioning that the temporal structure of a play is directly connected with the created meaning, Beckerman considers units of time not only as an indication of such movement, but as "the contextual frames within which the drama evolves."[20]

We must also note the moment when time in the dramatic work is interrupted by a soliloquy, or by the hero in

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18 See Likhachev 493.

19 K. Elam, The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama (London and New York: Methuen, 1980) 117.

20 B. Beckerman, Dynamics of Drama: Theory and Method of Analysis (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1979) 37.

modern drama, or by the choir in ancient tragedy,[21] in order to explain the action on stage and give some commentaries. Such interruptions consume performance time, and momentarily halt the action of the play. In these moments the action dies down and recommences when the soliloquy or address is completed. The peculiarity of the temporal pattern of such interruptions is in that they have a certain duration, but the time of the play's action stops. Pfister concludes that such dramatic elements "do not stimulate the linear development of the plot but serve to deepen and intensify a particular moment."[22]

From the point of view of the time stream, that is, the stream of historic time, artistic works are quite rigidly classified in the criticism: they may be closed or open. In closed works time makes an exclusive circle. Being held inside the plot's frame, it is not connected with the events that take place outside of the work's boundaries, that is, with historic time. In N. Gogol's The Inspector General two days essentially turn into one, into a flash, where everything is divided between today and tomorrow. Real time here intrudes into the fantastic closed

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21 In the epilogue of B. Brecht's The Good Woman of Setzuan one of the actors apologizes to the audience for the lack of a final dénouement and invites it to find its own solution to the dilemma presented in the play.

The chorus in ancient tragedy is a figure that does not participate in the action and has the function of commenting on the dramatic situation to the audience without getting involved in the conflict. For the more detailed account of this dramatic feature see Pfister 74-76.

22 Pfister 279.

time of the small city living according to its laws. The theme of a man, who happened to be not the one he was thought to be or he could be, demanded extremely concentrated time.[23]

In open works time is included in a wide stream of events unfolding on the background of a precisely defined historical epoch. Open time presupposes availability of other events, happening simultaneously outside of the work's boundaries, outside of its plot.[24]

As an example of open time in drama we may consider M. Bulgakov's Flight. Poliakov notes that the play's tempo is defined by the central image of "running."[25] As in a kaleidoscope, railway stations, docks, Constantinople and Paris flash by in the drama. Freely varied artistic time gives a feeling of the simultaneity of what is happening, of the world as a single whole taken in different aspects and seen from different angles.

When I said that dramatic works are rigidly classified from the point of view of the time stream, I meant that this classification does not presuppose the availability of works that combine both open and closed temporal relations with reality. Nevertheless, as will be shown later in the case of Boris

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23 About time in The Inspector General see M.Ia. Poliakov, Voprosy poetiki i khudozhestvennoi semantiki (Moskva, 1978) 68.

24 See for additional explanation Likhachev 495-96.

25 About time in Flight see Poliakov, V mire idei i obrazov (Moskva, 1983) 308.

Godunov, such a peculiar combination is possible and, therefore, requires special attention.[26]

In terms of the representation of the past in drama, it must be noted that it does not assume modernization by contemporaneity. Contemporaneity retains the property of being the form of vision of the past events, but must not penetrate into their depiction, misrepresenting the peculiarity of the past. Bakhtin emphasizes that "every great and serious contemporaneity requires an authentic profile of the past, an authentic other language from another time."[27] This thought is especially true with regards to Pushkin's tragedy and finds an echo in the poet's views on dramatic language.

An original and well substantiated point of view on the problem of dramatic composition belongs to Eisenstein, who pointed out that in drama we see a withdrawal from the principles of narrativity and everyday occurrence to the entirely symbolic plane, which reveals the inner meaning of everyday life's dramatic nature. Proceeding from this, he considered dramatic composition as resting upon multi-chained repetitions. Hence, the problem of the temporal and spatial organization of drama is connected with the principle of multi-leveledness (многоступенчатость), which is a fundamental

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26 See on this Conclusion of this dissertation 91, 96.

27 M.M. Bakhtin, Epic and Novel. In: The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin, ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin and London: University of Texas Press) 417. All the subsequent citations in English from Bakhtin's works and all references to his works are to this edition.

feature of dramatic composition. Thus, drama becomes created not by the linear movement of the series of events, but by the explosive transition from one episode to another as if the preceding one is tossed out by the one that follows. Multi-leveledness finds its expression in the ever increasing zones of conflict, and in the conversion and steady raising of microsituations into situations. Unlike narrative planes, such a chain of levels creates a breadth and range of action. The linear and leveled movement of motifs goes not along a straight line, but along levels of repetition.[28]

In addition, much may be said about the interaction of the time of the author/dramatist and time of the spectator/reader. Pinto believes that literary narratives have two different sequences: "one that is presented to the reader, not necessarily the chronological, experiential one, and one that is reconstructed retrospectively by means of a rearrangement of the given in accordance with what the reader feels is his/her experience of time, i.e., a directional flow (and this is one of the imports of the notion of time as law). This experience of time regulates both sequences."[29] Moreover, Pinto states that the experience of time is "the principle behind the author's artistic arrangement of events and it is the principle that presides over the reader's reading. Being a law, it is shared by writer and

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28 S.M. Eisenstein, "K voprosu mizanstseny" in: Izbrannye proizvedeniia v 6 tomakh, t. 4 (Moskva, 1966) 717-38.

29 Pinto 6. This statement is applicable to drama as one of the narratives and equally to both the spectator and the reader.

reader alike."[30]

The relations of the writer and the spectator/reader are extremely complex. Any literary work is a verbal expression of what a writer, a man who writes a work and who lives at the same time, as Bakhtin calls it, "his biographical life,"[31] wants to say. The structure of a literary work, the selection of heroes, the choice of the narrative event, etc., are the signs of the author's presence in it, his attitude towards his creation. According to Bakhtin:

> The represented world, however realistic and truthful, can never be chronotopically identical with the real world it represents, where the author and creator of the literary work is to be found.[32]

Thus, we witness the duality of a literary work. Though it reflects the attitude of the author, conveys his writing experience to the spectator/reader, and patently or subtly reproduces his thoughts and feelings, it represents in its completed form a fictional world that lives by its own laws, which are uncontrollable by the will of their creator. In this

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30 Ibid.

31 For more information about the relationship between the author of the work and the reader see Bakhtin, Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel 254-58.

32 Bakhtin, Epic and Novel 256.

sense the following words of Pushkin are quite demonstrative:

> L'Auteur dramatique ne peut répondre des paroles qu'il met dans la bouche des personnages historiques. Il doit les faire parler selon leur caractère connu. Il ne faut donc faire attention qu'à *l'esprit dans lequel est conçu l'ouvrage entier*, à l'impression qu'il doit produire (XIV, 78).[33]

Likhachev points out that when in a literary work the author is able to create the time of the action which is happening, and when time assumes the character of being inherent to this particular work, then drama and theatre appear. Such a work "lives not only in its own time, but in real time."[34] However, the time of a literary work will always be in some sort of a conflict with the time of the spectator/reader. Likhachev characterizes such a clash as "the struggle for immortality of the artistic work, for its overcoming of real time."[35]

Retracing the history of Russian literature from the tenth

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33 Letter to A.Kh. Benkendorf of 16 April 1830 in: A.S. Pushkin, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 16 tomakh (Leningrad, 1937-59). Italics are in the original. All further references to Pushkin's articles and letters in French or in my translation into English are to this edition and are given in the text directly, with volume and page number(s) indicated in parentheses.

34 Likhachev 628.

35 Ibid.

to the seventeenth century, Likhachev notes that the development of literature reflects a movement toward increasing figurativeness. In particular, he writes:

> From a designation, a sign, and a symbol the verbal art increasingly moves to representation and to creation of illusion of reality. Precisely in this connection artistic time emancipates itself more and more from real time and acquires its independent and inward completeness.[36]

The distinctive trait of time, in Likhachev's opinion, lies in the fact that the past receives its own existence and has a tendency to develop inside itself, in its own succession. Thus, the illusion of the real development of time, where the past becomes present, is created. The spectator/reader is captivated by the action and is, as it were, carried away into this past. Being conscious that he deals with past events, he, however, plunges into them so much that "he begins to perceive to a certain degree this past as his present."[37] The spectator/reader begins to live a dual life: his own and the life of the work he is observing or reading about.

According to Beckerman, theatre is a potential source of "immense impact upon the audience, if the selection of elements and the shape imparted to them create a sympathic

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36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

resonance."[38] He explains this phenomenon by the fact that "dramatic activity, even in its most direct depiction of life (for instance, in a documentary play), is reduced to a severely restricted time-space."[39] To make it more clear: time in its concentrated theatrical or literary form influences an audience, demanding the concentration of emotions.

The very form of theatre emphasizes the importance of time. Beckerman describes the audience's notion of time and the specifics of theatrical time as follows:

> The gathering together of an audience and its knowledge of a reasonably specific playing time provide the frame of clock-time. Periodic intermissions emphasize this frame, cutting it off from sensed-time and yet promising a return. <...> The framing itself heightens the duration. The spatial arrangement further concentrates the block of time reserved for the presentation. Within the temporal-spatial frame, the audience perceives time as activity and through the perception enjoys a heightened sense of life.[40]

Reading the work or observing its pace from the

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38 Beckerman 61.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

auditorium, we gradually move from its beginning to its end. Ingarden considers such a movement of the spectator/reader perception as a distinctive trait of any literary work.[41] However, as Likhachev emphasizes, the literary work is not only perceived by the spectator/reader in the specific, particular moment of observing the action of the staged play or reading, but also when the process of observing/reading is already completed. Likhachev notes that only when this process is completed, does the literary work exist for the spectator/reader as a single whole. Moreover, repetitive readings or reviews "fix the artistic perception of the work as a single whole."[42]

The interaction of the represented world with the world of the work's author as well as the world of the spectator-reader is extremely complex in its nature. Each literary work, as Bakhtin notes, has two events: the event that is narrated in it and the event of narration itself, where listeners/readers participate themselves. In particular, Bakhtin writes that "these events take place in different times (which are marked by different durations as well) and in different places, but at the same time these two events are indissolubly united in a single but complex event that we might call the work in the totality of

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41 R. Ingarden, Selected Papers in Aesthetics, ed. P.J. McCormick (Wien, München, Washington, D.C.: Philosophia Verlag: The Catholic University of America Press, 1985) 22. Here a literary work is understood as any type of narrative art, including drama.

42 About perception of an artistic work see Likhachev 537.

all its events, including the external material givenness of the work, and its text, and the world represented in the text, and the author-creator and the listener or reader; thus we perceive the fullness of the work in all its wholeness and indivisibility, but at the same time we understand the diversity of the elements that constitute it."[43]

Hornby clearly states that "a play is unified by the very nature of its relationship" to the spectators. It is perceived as a whole, because we can see it whole. Comparing real life and drama, Hornby writes:

> In real life, our perception of things and events is always fragmentary; whatever we are perceiving always has further aspects of itself that at a given time are unavailable, backgrounds, causes, ramifications, and effects that we do not know about. This does not mean that we are not perceiving things wholistically; on the contrary, we are constantly forming integrated wholes out of what we perceive, but these wholes are in turn constantly being broken up, expanded, contracted, or displaced.Meaning continually competes with

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43 Despite the fact that Bakhtin's discussions are related to narratives without considering the dramatic genre, they seem to be true and equally applicable to drama. At the same time the category of listener/reader, which Bakhtin uses, could be broadened by including a spectator in it. See Bakhtin, Time and Chronotope 255.

confusion.[44]

In drama, according to Hornby, we know that "everything we see on the stage is there to contribute to our understanding, and that, conversely, nothing that we need to know is left out."[45] Hornby fails to see one detail of no small importance, that is that there are plays which demand from the spectator a certain grounding, historical knowledge and even knowledge of the devices of theatrical art, without which the perception of drama in its completeness is practically impossible.[46] For instance, without knowledge of the historical facts an integral perception of Boris Godunov is unrealizable. To understand his tragedy, according to Pushkin, one must read Karamzin's The History of the Russian State.[47] The spectator's intuition, to which Hornby refers, will never be a substitute for the knowledge of history, the absence of which in an unprepared spectator will discourage his interest to the scenic action,

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44 R. Hornby, Drama, Metadrama, and Perception (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1986) 111.

45 Ibid.

46 Seneca, while writing his tragedies, expected a well prepared audience, which knows the unfolding of the plot and even what would the dénouement be. One of his favourite devices was the perspective of mythological associations which lay far beyond the tragedy's plot boundaries and demanded from the spectator a great deal of knowledge.

47 In his letter to N.N. Raevskii of 30 January or 30 June 1829 Pushkin wrote: "Voici ma tragédie puisque vous la voulez absolument, mais avant que de la lire j'exige que vous parcouriez le dernier tome de Karamzine" (XIV, 46).

leaving the feeling of time wasted.

Until now we have been considering the importance of the temporal category for the theatre, the character and peculiarity of the temporal patterns in drama, and how represented time is perceived by the spectator/reader. It is important now to move on to consider how time is represented in art, and in drama in particular.

The problem of temporal representation is examined in detail in Eisenstein's article "Montazh 1938."[48] It is surprising that only Eisenstein has attempted to analyze the techniques employed in art in dealing with this problem. He shows that the mechanics of making the image of time in art consists of a chain of representations of separate aspects, which later gather together into one image. Eisenstein understands a work of art dynamically as "a process of forming images in the mind of the spectator" (302).[49] He notes that "the image of a scene, an episode, a production, etc., does not exist as a ready-made datum but must evolve, must unfold" (302).[50] This image enters our consciousness and through the totality of separate details it is retained in our minds and in our memory,

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48 On the problem of representation of time and techniques of its representation see S.M. Eisenstein, "Montazh 1938 (1938)" in: Izbrannye proizvedeniia v 6 tomakh, t. 2 (Moskva, 1964) 160-71.

49 All English translations from Eisenstein are quoted from S.M. Eisenstein, "Montazh 1938" in: Selected Works, vol. 2, ed. M. Glenny and R. Taylor, trans. M. Glenny (London: BFI Publishing, 1991). The page number refers to this translation and is given in the text.

50 Ibid.

inseparable from the whole. Every spectator/reader gives rise to his/her own image of time and has his/her own notion of it. Eisenstein writes:

> All these conceptions are, as images, individual and different, yet at the same time they are thematically identical. (310)[51]

He emphasizes that for each spectator/reader, every such image is "simultaneously the author's image and — equally — his own image, which is alive and 'intimate' " (310).[52]

Thus, tracing the main theoretical propositions that presently exist in concerning time in drama in modern literary criticism, we can say for certain that time has the function of strengthening all the elements of a theatrical work, forming its integrity. Guided by the research on the question which has been completed to date, it seems expedient to move to the analysis of the temporal patterns in Pushkin's drama Boris Godunov, touching firstly upon the subject of the poet's views on scenic art and his plan for the transformation of Russian drama.

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51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

Chapter Two
The system of Pushkin's views on the problems of theatre and drama.

The unique character of Pushkin's tragedy Boris Godunov lies in the fact that it was designed to elaborate the basis of modern Russian drama and create the preconditions for the appearance of Russian theatre in its contemporary understanding. Departing from the theatrical system then extant in Russia, Pushkin drew up new principles for the dramatic work and the relation of literature to reality, which was dictated by the time:

> The spirit of the time demands important changes on the dramatic stage. (XI, 141)[53]

The old classical repertoire was leaving the stage. The theatre of the early nineteenth-century was of a mixed character, a distinctive trait of any transitional period in the history of art. At that time there coexisted on the Russian stage such heterogenous genres as historical tragedy and drama, heroic comedy, military drama, Romantic drama and comedy,

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53 Draft prefaces to Boris Godunov (1830).

far-fetched comedy with satirical songs, etc.[54]

The theatrical system of Classicism was gradually being supplanted by Romantic works. Rectilinear in their composition and anti-historic[55] in their nature, classical tragedies, constrained by the unities of place, time and action, yielded the stage to Romantic plays, based on the principle of freely dramatized prosaic and poetic works of Russian and foreign literature.

Such was the state of Russian theatre to the moment when Pushkin began to work on Boris Godunov. Later, in 1828, the poet, confident that the obsolete forms of Russian theatre required reforms, wrote about the things that concerned him while he was composing his tragedy:

> Having been expelled from Moscow and Petersburg society since 1820, I could only observe the direction our literature was taking by reading reviews. Following the heated arguments about Romanticism, I imagined that we had indeed tired of the decorum and perfection of classical antiquity and of the pale, monotonous copies of its imitators, that our jaded taste demanded other,

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54 For a more detailed account of the state of the Russian theatre of the early nineteenth-century see B.P. Gorodetskii, Dramaturgiia Pushkina (Moskva-Leningrad, 1953) 22-55.

55 The method of historical application to contemporaneity mechanically transferred the arrangement of social forces, contemporary to the author, to the past and introduced topical questions into tragedy. Thus, tragedy became deprived of its truly historical meaning.

> stronger sensations and was seeking them in the turbid but boiling sources of a new, native poetry. (221)[56]

The ways of development of the new Russian drama still had to be defined and waited to be elaborated. "We have no drama," Pushkin wrote in 1823 in his letter to Prince Viazemskii (62).[57] Discontent with the condition of the Russian stage lead the poet to thoughts about the future of the theatre, the aims of tragedy as a genre, and the purpose of a dramatist. Pushkin's thoughts about drama and dramatic art acquired an especially intensive character in 1824-25 in connection with his tragedy about Godunov:

> ...je n'ai pas à la lettre d'autre compagnie que ma vieille bonne et ma tragédie; celle-ci avance et j'en suis content. En l'écrivant j'ai réfléchi sur la tragédie en général. (XIII, 197)[58]

In the attempt to resolve the questions that arose before him while he was writing Boris Godunov, Pushkin used as a

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56 Letter to the Editor of the Moscow Herald (1828). Pushkin's articles and letters are quoted from the English translation Pushkin on Literature, sel., trans. and ed. T. Wolff (London: Stanford University Press, 1986), except where indicated. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text directly, with page number(s) indicated in parentheses.

57 Letter to P.A. Viazemskii of 6 February 1823.

58 Letter to N.N. Raevskii. Second half of July (after 19 July) 1825.

basis the latest achievements of theoretical and practical theatrical thought. In that period the poet reviewed, pondered and evaluated all of the dramatic systems familiar to him.[59]

Refusing "the mannered rules of the French stage" (62),[60] Pushkin came to realize the necessity of working out a new basis for dramatic art. His thoughts about the reformation of tragedy — "peut-être le genre le plus méconnu" (XIII,197)[61] and "most lacking in verisimilitude (invraisemblables)" (130)[62] among other poetic genres — are the thoughts about the destruction of the "arbitrary rules" of action, place and time, which deprived a dramatic work of verisimilitude.

Classicism imposed on drama Newton's dualistic system of absolute time and space that was in opposition to the relative, concrete temporal and spatial coordinates. Subsequently, time and space in classical dramas existed independently from the unfolding events. Because of this, each

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59 Along with Shakespeare Pushkin read Goethe. He wrote to P.A. Viazemskii in April/first half of May (?) 1824: "Reading Shakespeare and the Bible, though the Holy Ghost sometimes appeals to me, I prefer Goethe and Shakespeare" (88).

In his letter to L.S. Pushkin of 14 March 1825 the poet asked his brother to mail the following books: Byron's Conversations, Fouché's Mémoires, Talia, Starina, J.C.L. Sismondi's De la littérature du Midi de l'Europe, and A.W. von Schlegel's Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur. See Pushkin XIII, 151.

In the letter to L.S. Pushkin of 22 and 23 April 1825 the poet wrote that he received among other books Schiller's Œuvres dramatiques, Byron's Don Juan, and "the new Walter Scott." See Pushkin XIII, 163.

60 Letter to P.A. Viazemskii of 6 February 1823.

61 Letter to N.N. Raevskii. Second half of July (after 19 July) 1825.

62 On tragedy (1825).

of the events happened in a strictly defined, unitary place and at an exactly delimited temporal moment.

"Conspiracies, declarations of love, councils of state, festivities," that took place in one room, as well as "excessive speed and concentration of action" (130) were, in Pushkin's opinion, the absence of art.[63] The limitations of place and time in drama inevitably lead not to the display of formation and development of characters, but to representation of the last stage in this process, while for Pushkin dramatic events were always a complex and contradictory process of development. Insisting upon the total elimination of the unities of place and time that restrained and bound action on stage, Pushkin defended the observance of unity of action as "the first concern of dramatic art" (130),[64] the pledge of entertainment.

As a true rule of tragedy the poet considered "la vraisemblance des situations et la vérité du dialogue" (XIII, 197),[65] not "verisimilitude as something strictly observed in the costumes, and in period and local colour" (264).[66] In the

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63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 Letter to N.N. Raevskii. Second half of July (after 19 July) 1825.

66 Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife (1830).

We read in the original: "Если мы будем полагать правдоподобие в строгом соблюдении костюма, красок, времени и места, то и тут мы увидим, что величайшие драматические писатели не повиновались сему правилу" (XIII, 177). Fel'dman points out that in these words the conceptions of "time" and "place" sound not like the classical convention of unities, but as the definitions of the concrete

tradition of classical poetics, the hero's character did not evolve and his language therefore expressed a certain stereotype, as if in every speech he could reveal the invariable, hardened traits of his personality, Pushkin wrote:

> Un conspirateur dit: *Donnez-moi à boire* en conspirateur — et ce n'est que ridicule. Voyez le Haineux de Byron (*ha pagato*) cette monotonie, cette affectation de laconisme, de rage continuelle, est-ce la nature? De là cette gêne et cette timidité de dialogue. (XIII, 197-98)[67]

At the same time the poet admired Shakespeare, who "ne craint jamais de compromettre son personnage, il le fait parler avec tout l'abandon de la vie, car il est sûr en temps et lieu de lui faire trouver le langage de son caractère" (XIII, 198).[68] These words echo in Pushkin's later thoughts:

> L'Auteur dramatique ne peut répondre des paroles qu'il met dans la bouche des personnages historiques. Il doit les faire parler selon leur caractère connu. (XIV, 77-78)[69]

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circumstances of actions, to which the necessity of attention was proclaimed by the Romantics. See O.M. Fel'dman, Sud'ba dramaturgii Pushkina (Moskva, 1975) 66.

67 Letter to N.N. Raevskii. Second half of July (after 19 July) 1825. Italics are in the original.

68 Ibid.

69 Letter to A.Kh. Benkendorf of 16 April 1830.

For Pushkin language existed at the intersection of the comic and the tragic and represented the "tension, the occasionally necessary refinement of popular turns of phrase" (130).[70] As early as in 1823 he wrote to Viazemskii:

> ...I would like to preserve in the Russian language a certain biblical obscenity. I do not like to see traces of European affectation and French refinement in our primitive language. Coarseness and simplicity suit it better. (75)[71]

Pushkin thought that it was necessary for the new Russian tragedy to "shed its aristocratic habits" (267),[72] to create its own language. The language of this tragedy would be not the "measured, haughty and decorous" (267) language of aristocracy, but "the free judgements of the market-place" (267). In the poet's understanding the future development of tragedy on Russian soil lay in the refusal of the classical rules and of the "forced adaptation of everything Russian to everything European" (267). This led to the search for a new language, and to the study of the passions of Russian people, "the sinews of its heart" (267), in which this tragedy would find

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70 On tragedy (1825).

71 Letter to P.A. Viazemskii of 1-8 December 1823.

72 Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife (1830).

an echo. This new language, in the poet's opinion, must become popular and comprehensible to the people. Pushkin felt "that even the illustrious must speak of simple things as simple men" (266).[73]

For Pushkin the question of language was not solved by the primitive usage of coarse jokes and the inclusion in a dramatic work of scenes from the life of the common people. It was much more complex and directly connected with the question of verisimilitude in art. Popular vulgarity in a tragedy is acceptable only when it is required by the truth of life. According to Pushkin, "a poet should not voluntarily assume the mores of the market-place — but if he cannot, there is no need for him to try to replace them ["coarse jokes and scenes of low life"] with something else" (248).[74]

In 1830 in his article "Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife" Pushkin returned to his thoughts about verisimilitude, deepening and developing them. In his attempt to resolve the tormenting question: "What kind of verisimilitude then are we to demand of a dramatist?" (264), the poet, considering the problems of the subject and aims of drama, came to the following conclusion:

> The truth concerning the passions, a verisimilitude in the feelings experienced in given situations — that is what

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73 Ibid.

74 Draft prefaces to Boris Godunov (1830).

our intelligence demands of a dramatist. (265)

Arguing against those who thought that the nature of dramatic art excludes verisimilitude, Pushkin compared drama with prosaic (the novel) and poetic (the poem, the ode, the elegy) genres[75] and noted that unlike in these genres, the verisimilitude of a work written for theatre lay "in the verisimilitude of feelings," which were capable of overcoming theatrical convention and joining the audience chamber, "divided into two parts, one of which is filled with spectators, who agreed upon etc. etc." (XI, 177).[76] "The truth concerning passions" was able to break the insurmountable obstacles which separated the audience and the stage. The absence of obstacles would lead to a broadening of "the same small, confined circle" (267) of spectators and would favour such a development that the Russian tragedy would be able "to set up its stage" (268) and to acquire "a public" (267), that is a wide circle of admirers.

To declare the necessity of an objective artistic method

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75 In particular, Pushkin wrote about verisimilitude in the prosaic and poetic genres: "Reading a poem or a novel, we can often lose ourselves in the thought that the events described are fact and not fiction. Reading an ode or an elegy, we can think that the poet portrayed his real feelings in actual circumstances" (264).

76 Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife (1830).

In the earlier dated letter to N.N. Raevskii we find a similar thought: "...quel diable de vraisemblance y a-t-il dans une salle coupée en deux moitiés dont l'une est occupée par deux mille personnes, qui sont censées n'être pas vues par ceux qui sont sur les planches" (XIII, 541).

for the dramatist did not mean for Pushkin the denial of the creative side of writing in favour of the dry, literal and unbiased narration of the historic events.[77] Quite the contrary, it implied the author's deep personal interest in the material, expressed in "a deep inner conviction" combined with "independent inspiration" and "self-denial" (268).[78] According to Pushkin, a dramatic poet should combine a sincere, profound and "a thorough investigation of the truth" with "the liveliness of a youthful, fiery imagination" (268).

Pushkin wrote about the direction in which Russian theatre should be developed:

> ...I am firmly convinced that the popular rules of Shakespearean drama are better suited to our stage than the courtly habits of the tragedies of Racine... (248)[79]

Ordering his tragedy "according to the system of our Father Shakespeare" (221), Pushkin voluntarily declined to follow the traditions of French classical theatre, replacing the notorious three unities "by the true representation of the people of the period and of the development of historical

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77 Pushkin's thoughts mainly referred to the problems of the theory of historical tragedy.

78 Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife (1830).

79 Draft prefaces to Boris Godunov (1830).

characters and events" (221-22).[80] In the poet's opinion, a truly Romantic tragedy is one which has "the trace of the sincere and free-flowing current" (222).

Moralization and a one-sided interpretation of events, limited to "the high society's influence" (11, 140),[81] were alien to Pushkin. He thought that no one possessed the right to censure a writer who accepted personal responsibility for the works he had created:

> A dramatist must be judged by his own rules. (132)[82]

Pondering the question: "What is necessary to a dramatist?" (264), Pushkin formulated the answer in the following manner:

> A philosophy, impartiality, the political acumen of an historian, insight, a lively imagination. No prejudices or preconceived ideas. *Freedom* . (264)[83]

Freedom in the poet's understanding was a complex whole, representing the combination of freedom from outward

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80 Letter to the Editor of the Moscow Herald (1828).

81 Draft prefaces to Boris Godunov (1830).

82 Letter to A.A. Bestuzhev of End of January 1825.

83 Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife (1830). Italics are in the original.

circumstances, that is from the dictates of censorship and the tzar's court, who saw in Boris Godunov the events which "semblaient présenter des allusions aux circonstances alors récentes" (XIV,78),[84] and inward freedom, the recognition of the poet's right to accept responsibilities for his own works. In this sense the following lines from Pushkin's letter to Benkendorf, as a matter of fact addressed to Nicholas I, are significant:

> Ma tragédie est une œuvre de bonne foi et je ne puis en conscience supprimer ce qui me paraît essentiel. <...> je viens supplier Sa Majesté de me délier les mains et de me permettre d'imprimer ma tragédie comme je l'entends. (XIV, 78)[85]

According to Pushkin, a free work was a work where an author gives "free and bold play to his imagination" (266).[86] Discarding the "one-sidedness" stipulated by the three unities of French classical theatre,[87] Pushkin decided to follow

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84 Letter to A.Kh. Benkendorf of 16 April 1830. The Tzar and his entourage saw in Boris Godunov allusions to the Decembrist rising as well as to the assassination of Paul I by Alexander I in 1801.
About the problems connected with the publication of the tragedy and complications with its censorship see Gorodetskii 218-40.

85 Ibid.

86 Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife (1830).

87 In his letter to A.A. Del'vig of early February 1826 Pushkin wrote:

Shakespeare in his "free and broad portrayal of characters" (247)[88] without "timid primness, ludicrous pomposity" (266),[89] which was expressed not only in style, but most of all in a "slavish passion for kings and heroes" (275).[90] Believing that Romanticism with its "sincere and free-flowing current" (222)[91] was the only acceptable solution for the Russian stage, Pushkin proclaimed that the highest form of boldness was "the boldness of invention, of creation, in which a vast plan is encompassed by creative thought" (214).[92] The works of Shakespeare, Dante, Milton as well as Goethe's Faust, and Molière's Tartuffe were the embodiment of such boldness for the poet.[93]

Answering the questions: "What is worked out in a tragedy? What is its aim?", Pushkin wrote:

Man and the people. The fate of Man, the fate of the

"Let us be neither superstitious, nor narrow-minded like French tragedians; but let us look on tragedy as Shakespeare did" (XIII, 259).

88 Draft prefaces to Boris Godunov (1830).

89 Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife (1830).

90 Of Walter Scott's Novels (1830).

91 Letter to the Editor of the Moscow Herald (1828).

92 Draft Foreword to 'Excerpts from letters, thoughts and comments' (1827).

93 See Draft Foreword to 'Excerpts from letters, thoughts and comments' (1827): XI, 61.

people. (263)[94]

The reconstruction of a century represented in its totality and the display of a man's fate against the background of the historical fate of a society constituted for Pushkin the subject of a tragedy, its highest meaning:

> What attracts the attention of the intellectual spectator more than the depiction of great national events? — Hence, history transferred to the stage. The people, as well as Tsars portrayed before us by a dramatic poet. (XI, 421-22)[95]

Thus, in Pushkin's meditations about the ways of development of drama the question of a new, unprejudiced approach to the historical material and of a dramatist's creative method was defined:

> He [a dramatist] had to avoid dodging the issue and, in leaning to one side, sacrificing the other. Neither he himself, nor his political opinions, nor his secret or open prejudices, were to find expression in his tragedy — but only the people of the past, their minds, their prejudices.

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94 Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife (1830).

95 Draft plans of 'Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife' (1830).

> It is not his business to excuse, condemn, or prompt. It is his business to resurrect a past age in all its truth. (268)[96]

The handling of real historical events along with the presentation of the hero in the truth of the past age served as an effective prerequisite for the renewal of the dramatic system of Pushkin's time. The views on the problems of the theatre stated in the poet's articles and letters were not only theoretical elaborations, but found their practical embodiment in the tragedy Boris Godunov with its free and natural current of life and "the mental outlook and language of those days" (248).[97]

The aspiration of the poet to present "in dramatic form one of the most dramatic epochs of modern history" (247)[98] led him to elaborate artistic devices which were able to convey the free and broad temporal stream of unfolding events. In this sense Fel'dman's observation about spatial and temporal aspects in Boris Godunov is of interest:

> The independent, open-ended episodes that constitute the play's composition, embrace portions of the

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96 Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife (1830).

97 Draft prefaces to Boris Godunov (1830).

98 Ibid.

> historical process, while preserving their natural spontaneity. It was impossible to fuse these episodes into monolithic acts: they are not brought together in one place and not conceivable without the temporal distance that separates them. Their dispersedness in time and space is their fundamental characteristic. Space and time in Boris Godunov are completely real forces that define the progression of events.[99]

Bakhtin noted that a change in spatial and temporal conceptions precedes both the formation of new genres and the transformation of existing ones.[100] Indeed, the fact that Pushkin completely destroyed the classical requirements of the unities of time and place led to the creation of a deeply original and innovative dramatic work. Abandoning the traditions of classical theatre, it founded the principles of modern theatrical art and influenced the whole further development of Russian drama.

Meierkhol'd saw in Pushkin "the organizer of the production," who "not only writes plays, but also rejects the canons of the preceding periods and tries to create a new form," "suggests the technical features, which will later on become firmly established by the director of the future," and,

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99 Fel'dman 61.

100 M.M. Bakhtin, Zametki in: Ocherki po istoricheskoi poetike: Literaturno-kriticheskie stat'i (Moskva, 1986) 513.

at the same time, offers along with the text "the elegant system of theatre of the future, reformed according to his projections."[101] Formulating the question of the uneven development of literature and theatre and revealing the deeply grounded contradictions that existed between Russian literature and theatre in the nineteenth century, Meierkhol'd wrote:

> If we trace the history of Russian theatre of the second half of the nineteenth century (taking the period of Russian theatre after Pushkin) and the beginning of our century, we will see that the failures of all kinds of theatrical performances, the lack of success of a whole series of great dramatic undertakings were conditioned mainly by the fact that directors were concerned only to keep intact by all means the whole, so-called scenic apparatus. They never considered that a number of dramatists created dramatic works, which were written not for the stage techniques of their time, but with the idea that these techniques should be changed. Among dramatists of this type, where the dramatist wants to be the organizer of his plays as well, in the first place we must put Pushkin...[102]

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101 V.E. Meierkhol'd, "O Pushkine" in: Stat'i, pis'ma, rechi, besedy, t. 2 (Moskva, 1968) 419-33.

102 Ibid 428.

Thus, Pushkin was a reformer of the dramatic system of his time. In his theoretical elaborations and their practical incarnation he not only predicted changes in scenic techniques, but he also wrote his tragedy "not for the techniques of his time, but wishing to change these techniques."[103]

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103 Ibid 421.

Chapter Three

Time in A.S. Pushkin's drama Boris Godunov.

> ... Construe the times to their necessities,
> And you shall say, indeed, it is the time,
> And not the King, that doth you injuries.
>
> Shakespeare. The Second Part of
> King Henry the Fourth. (act IV, sc. 1)[104]

The dramatic principles espoused by Pushkin in his early work on tragedy forced him resolve quite complex compositional problems as well as practical issues to do with the creation and interpretation of scenic images and characters.

The principle of dramatic composition is an extremely important problem peculiar to drama. In his tragedy Pushkin applied the idea of unfolding the action so that most of the events take place before audience's eyes. In a play of this type, unlike Classical tragedy, the tension increases gradually and is resolved finally by a dénouement arising logically from the events unfolding throughout the tragedy.

In his desire to give Russian theatre new forms, different

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104 Shakespeare, The Complete Works, ed. G.L. Kittredge (New York: Ginn and Company) 606.

from the canons of traditional classic tragedy, Pushkin renounced his original intention to divide the tragedy into acts, instead dividing the action into 25 short scenes. Preparing Boris Godunov for publication the poet excluded the scenes "The Monastery Wall" and "Marina's Dressing Room." Hence, the final text of the tragedy consists of 23 scenes.

The unity of place was abandoned completely. The action of the tragedy moves with kaleidoscopic speed from one geographical point to another. The unity of time was also completely abolished. Indeed, not only did Pushkin sacrifice the classical unities of place and time, he barely saved the unity of action, which forces a dramatist to arrange the development of tragic events around one central hero.

Pushkin also rejected one more unity, which was, according to him, "a unity not mentioned by French critics (who probably do not suspect that one can question the absolute necessity for it), that of style — the fourth absolute condition of French tragedy — of which the theatres of Spain, England and Germany are free" (221).[105] In particular, the poet wrote:

> I have replaced the respected Alexandrine by blank pentameter — in some scenes I have even descended to

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105 Letter to the Editor of the Moscow Herald (1828).

> despised prose. I have not divided my tragedy into acts... (221)[106]

Thus, in Boris Godunov we find that some poetic episodes are interrupted by prose insertions, while some scenes are written entirely in prose.

Pushkin did not create a far-fetched plot by way of intentional selection and suitable grouping of historical facts, but planned the tragedy's plot line without disturbing the chronological sequence of recreated historic events. The poet did not want to allow any constraint over the historic material and did not intend to dramatize history, because it was dramatic enough in itself. Pushkin defined his conception as "the idea of presenting in dramatic form one of the most dramatic epochs of modern history" (247).[107]

Not by chance did the author experience difficulties naming his tragedy. In 1825 he wrote to Prince Viazemskii:

> Before me is my tragedy. I have no patience to write its title for you: *The comedy about the real trouble of the Moscow State, Tsar Boris and Grishka Otrep'ev, written by the God's slave Alexander, son of Sergei Pushkin in the year of 7333 in the city of Voroniche.* How does this

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106 Ibid.

107 Draft prefaces to Boris Godunov (1830).

sound? (XIII, 188)[108]

This long, archaic title, focusing not on the hero, but on the historical events, suggests that Pushkin intended to depict in the tragedy a continuum of historical time rather than a single protagonist.

In its final draft, dated November 7, 1825, the title of the tragedy had undergone considerable changes and became much shorter, acquiring the following appearance:

The comedy
about
Tsar Boris and Grishka Otrep'ev
(1825)[109]

Only a little later did Pushkin's tragedy receive its final title Boris Godunov, which, it seems, was a conventional title, not reflecting the truly broad character of the tragedy's action. The author's wish was to fix upon a title which would be more easily understood by the theatrical audience. It was noted by Kudriavtsev, who wrote:

...Pushkin undertakes the task not only of depicting Boris

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108 Letter to P.A. Viazemskii of 13 July 1825. Italics are in the original.

109 About date of the final draft of Boris Godunov and its title see Gorodetskii 115-16.

> as a character as well as his emotional drama, but also "of resurrecting a past age in all its truth"; therefore, he puts into the dramatic situation not only Boris, but also the whole Russian nation; Boris is not a dramatic hero in the traditional meaning of this word, but only a central factor of the action in general. That is why in the manuscript Pushkin entitled his work: "A comedy about *the real trouble of the Moscow State* , Tsar Boris and 'Grishka Otrep'ev,' and finished the manuscript with the following words: "the end of the comedy, wherein the first person is 'Boris Godunov'"...[110]

The uncommon nature of the drama, without a central hero, but where one could find the development of a certain historical situation around which all the characters (both main and minor) are grouped, was not understood in the criticism of Pushkin's time. From the title alone, critics could observe that Pushkin's play was a drama about Boris Godunov, a tsar-criminal. They reproached Pushkin for the false idea upon which the author based his tragedy, as well as for the way in which he divided his interest between two heroes, Godunov and the Impostor. On the same basis, critics also accused Pushkin of incoherence of composition and lack of coordination of some scenes that constitute the tragedy.

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110 I.M. Kudriavtsev, "Ideia 'Borisa Godunova' i khudozhestvennyi realizm dramy" in: A.S. Pushkin: Sbornik istoriko-literaturnykh statei, ed. V. Pokrovskii (Moskva, 1905) 662. Italics are in the original.

These critics failed to see that Pushkin did not create a tragedy of characters or customs, but a historical tragedy, where images of Boris, the Impostor, Shuiskii and others are the different aspects of an unfolding historical canvas.[111] From this point of view, as Bondi notes, "both the choice as well as the alternation of single scenes lose their apparent fortuity; they form a regularly and artistically developing composition."[112] Boris Godunov is a tragedy built not upon the depiction of separate fates, but on an integral course of history in its logical progression. To this Nepomniashchii relates Pushkin's words from his draft "On tragedy": "The interest lies in the unity" (XI, 39).[113]

Pursuing his views on the character of the dramatic art, in Boris Godunov Pushkin completely renounces his own way of thought and moves toward represented time. The author withdraws, forcing the spectator/reader to forget about him, but to see and hear only the dramatis personae and the events unfolding on the stage. A sensitive critic, Viazemskii wrote:

...the truth is astonishing, the sobriety, the tranquillity.

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111 Pushkin defined his tragedy in the following manner: "Vous me demanderez: votre tragédie est-elle une tragédie de caractère ou de coutume? J'ai choisi le genre le plus aisé, mais j'ai tâché de les unir tous deux" (XIII, 198). See Letter to N.N. Raevskii. Second half of July (after 19 July) 1825.

112 S.M. Bondi, O Pushkine: Stat'i i issledovaniia (Moskva, 1978)194.

113 In the original we read: "Интерес- единство." See on this V.S. Nepomniashchii, Poeziia i sud'ba (Moskva, 1983) 234.

The author is almost invisible.[114]

Historical time in a work of art is recreated by the use of real, historical facts. Simultaneously, the creative method of an author allows for the reinterpretation of real events and also the inclusion of fictitious events and heroes into the time continuum of the artistic work. As Bakhtin observes:

> The represented world, however realistic and truthful, can never be chronotopically identical with the real world it represents, where the author and creator of the literary world is found.[115]

Thus, the time of a historical literary work is a peculiar combination of the real historic time plane and the imaginary time plane. This notion is reflected in Pushkin's words about how he wrote Boris Godunov:

> J'écris et je pense. La plupart des scènes ne demandent que du raisonnement; quand j'arrive à une scène qui demande de l'inspiration, j'attens ou je passe par-dessus — cette manière de travailler m'est tout-à-fait nouvelle. Je sens que mon âme s'est tout-à-fait développée, je puis

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114 P.A. Viazemskii. Letter to A.I. Turgenev. Cited from S. M. Bondi, O Pushkine: Stat'i i issledovaniia (Moskva, 1978) 197.

115 Bakhtin, Time and Chronotope 256.

créer. (XIII, 198)[116]

As a writer creating a historical drama, Pushkin endeavoured to combine within himself both the poet and the historian. Along with this he thought that the most complete and vivid rendering and recreation of history would be done the best possible way, namely by means of poetry.

"The history of a people belongs to the Poet" (135), stated Pushkin not long before he started working on Boris Godunov.[117] In his tragedy he approached history as a poet, aiming to animate it by the strength of his imagination. Instead of historical narration, Pushkin revived "a past age in all its truth" (268), giving a lively picture of the past with its heroes and events. At the same time, Pushkin progressively and successively was trying to achieve an artistically recreated life which would not lose its authentic historicity. To create an artistic and at the same time authentically historical work, it was necessary to study the remote epoch as deeply as possible.

Undoubtedly, The History of the Russian State served for Pushkin as an important source of acquaintance with the events of Russian history from 1598 to 1605. In 1825 he disclosed to Zhukovskii :

... My tragedy is growing and I hope to finish it by the

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116 Letter to N.N. Raevskii. Second half of July (after 19 July) 1825.

117 Letter to N.I. Gnedich of 23 February 1825.

> winter, consequently my reading consists solely of Karamzin and the chronicles. What a marvel these two volumes of Karamzin are![118] What vigour! C'est palpitant comme la gazette d'hier... (158)[119]

We find similar words in the "Draft prefaces to Boris Godunov," which is dated later, 1830:

> I followed Karamzin's lucid unfolding of events and tried to glean from the chronicles both the mental outlook and language of those days. These are rich sources! I do not know whether I proved capable of using them. At least my labours were both zealous and conscientious. (248)[120]

Even though in his letters and articles the poet does not say anything about other sources, as already noted by Pushkinists, Pushkin studied not only Karamzin's work and the chronicles while preparing the tragedy. By the time the poet began working on his drama, several relics of the past of paramount importance for understanding the Time of Troubles

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118 Pushkin is referring to volumes X and XI of Karamzin's The History of the Russian State.

119 Letter to V.A. Zhukovskii of 17 August 1825.

120 Draft prefaces to Boris Godunov (1830). As Fel'dman wittily notes, "A *lucid* unfolding of events is the intentional dramatic principle, as opposed to the obscuring, intriguing one." See Fel'dman 61.

had already been published. In particular, there were the New Chronicler ("Новый Летописец"), the Tale of the Life of Tsar Fedor Ivanovich ("Повесть о житии царя Федора Ивановича") compiled by Patriarch Iov, the Legend about the Siege of Troitse-Sergiev Monastery narrated by Avraamii Palitsyn ("Сказание Авраамия Палицына об осаде Троице-Сергиева монастыря"), the Deed on the Election of Boris Godunov ("Грамота об избрании Бориса Годунова"), the Chronicle about Many Revolts and Destruction of the Muscovite State ("Летопись о многих мятежах и разорении Московского Государства"), Novikov's Old Russian Library ("Древняя Русская Вифлиотека"), an essay by Captain Margeret Estat de l'Empire de Russie, and I.I. Golikov's multi-volume work Acts of Peter the Great <...> ("Деяния Петра Великого ‹...›)."[121] Many facts about the time of Boris and the Impostor were collected by Shcherbatov in the seventh volume of his History of Russia. Examining the tragedy, we find in it traces of familiarity with facts that Karamzin does not mention. Thus, we can see the

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121 As Listov and Tarkhova demonstrate, while working on the tragedy in 1824-25, Pushkin read Golikov's work, in particular, the first three volumes of the eighteen-volume Supplements to Acts of Peter the Great (Moskva, 1790), where the historical account starts from the reign of Boris Godunov, and used the information from this source in his drama along with Karamzin's The History of the Russian State. See V.S. Listov, and N.A. Tarkhova, "Trud I.I. Golikova Deiania Petra Velikogo <...> v krugu istochnikov tragedii Boris Godunov." In: Vremennik pushkinskoi komissii (Leningrad, 1983) 113-18.

extent of Pushkin's knowledge of the historical events.[122]

Time in Pushkin's tragedy is quite extensive and covers a period of more than seven years. Since the poet did not divide the play into acts, the spectator/reader was able to perceive the free motion of history without visible prompts from the author. Four dates that follow the titles of scenes, which Pushkin retained after completing his work on the tragedy, became precise points of reference. They fix the drama in time, making the task of its perception easier. In addition, they mark the stages of the plot's development and point out the compositional originality of the tragedy. Rassadin points out that "the dates which for Pushkin, perhaps, signified only temporal turning-points, nevertheless, reflected also the turning-points of the plot."[123] He explains:

> ...it is precisely because some dates are preferred to the others, and considered as meaningful, that such a selectivity unintentionally and naturally made the chronology serve the thought.[124]

The dates in the subtitles are as follows:

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122 See I.N. Zhdanov, Istochniki 'Borisa Godunova' in: A.S. Pushkin: Sbornik istoriko-literaturnyx statei, ed. V. Pokrovskii (Moskva, 1905) 602. Also see A. Tyrkova-Williams, Zhizn' Pushkina, t. 2 (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1948) 83-84.

123 St.B. Rassadin, Dramaturg Pushkin (Moskva, 1977) 15.

124 Ibid 15.

"The Kremlin Palace" (February 20, 1598) (scene 1);
"Night. A Cell in the Chudov Monastery" (1603) (scene 5);
"The Lithuanian Frontier" (October 16, 1604) (scene 14);
"A Plain Near Novgorod Severskii" (December 21, 1604) (scene 16).

First, we will reconstruct the motion of historical time recreated by Pushkin in Boris Godunov in relation to the dated scenes and to the events of the tragedy as a whole.

"The Kremlin Palace" (scene 1) takes place on February 20, 1598, the day preceding the election of Godunov as Tsar. Its date corresponds to Karamzin's data:

> ... on February 20 Iov, the clergy and the noblemen announced to Godunov that he had been elected as Tsar not only by the people of Moscow, but by the people of the whole of Russia. Nevertheless, Godunov for the second time replied that the height and aureole of Feodor's throne terrified his soul; he swore again that even in the secrecy of his heart such an impudent thought would not be conceived by him; he saw tears, heard the most moving persuasions, but remained inexorable; he turned out his tempters, the clergy and the Synod, from the

Monastery, and ordered them not to come back. (X, 133)[125]

The conversation between princes Shuiskii and Vorotynskii refers us to the prehistory of the tragedy. The first reference has a quite recent character and relates to the refusal of Godunov to ascend the throne:

Vorotynskii

But now a month has passed,
Since, shut up in the convent with his sister,
He seems to have forsworn all that is worldly. (3)[126]

The second reference, which is contained in Shuiskii's speech, indicates the more remote event that left traces on the whole tragedy — the assassination (in Pushkin's interpretation it is, undoubtedly, assassination) of Tsarevich Dimitrii in Uglich. According to Karamzin, it took place on May 15, 1591.[127]

Both Shuiskii and Vorotynskii go to the Red Square to

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125 Here and subsequently all citations from Karamzin's The History of the Russian State are from N.M. Karamzin, Istoriia Gosudarstva Rossiiskogo, izd. 5, kniga III (tt. IX, X, XI and XII) (SPb, 1845); Reprint (Moskva, 1989). The references to the volume and page number (s) are given in the text.

126 All citations in English from Boris Godunov are from A. Pushkin, Boris Godunov, trans. Ph.L. Barbour (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text directly, with page number(s) indicated in parentheses.

127 Karamzin X, 77.

find out about Godunov's negative decision. In "The Red Square" (scene 2) deacon Shchelkalov announces to the people from the red staircase that Boris has refused to become Tsar and that the Great Sobor resolved "To try for the last time the power of prayer...":

> Tomorrow the Most Holy Patriarch,
> Preceded by the Holy Banners and
> The Ikons of Vladimir and the Don,
> Will rise exalted from a great Te Deum
> Sung in the Kremlin, and with him the Synod,
> The Conclave of Officials, Deputies,
> And all the Orthodox of Moscow — we
> Will all again go pray to our Tsaritsa,
> That she take pity on our orphaned Moscow
> And bless the coronation of Boris. (11)

"The Maidens' Field. Novodevichii Monastery" (scene 3), where the people beseech Boris to accept the throne, depicts the events of February 21, 1598.[128] Thus, the first three scenes are united by the twenty-four hours that pass between the twentieth and twenty-first of February.

"The Kremlin Palace" (scene 4) is based on the facts of the events that took place from February 26 to September 1, 1598. Boris agreed to ascend the throne on February 21. He spent the

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128 Karamzin X, 133-36.

next five days in the Novodevichii Monastery, and on February 26 he entered the capital:

> After the liturgy Boris expressed his gratitude to the memory of the two main sources of his grandeur: in the temple of St. Michael he prostrated himself in front of the graves of Ioann and Feodor... (XI, 5-6)

This very moment is depicted by Pushkin:

> Boris
> Now let us go do homage to the graves
> Where Russia's bygone rulers take their rest... (17)

Without any interruption of state business Godunov continued to stay in Novodevichii Monastery right up to his ceremonial entry into Moscow on April 30:

> On this very day the people dined in the Tsar's palace: the guests were uncountable, but all, from Patriarch to beggar, were invited. (XI, 9)

In Pushkin we find:

> And then, bid all the people to a feast —
> All, from the great lords to the neediest blind man;

Give all free entry; all are the precious guests. (17)

Boris's coronation took place on September 1, 1598:

... The Tsar, overshadowed by the First Priest's hand <...> declared publicly: "Father, The Great Patriarch Iov! God is my witness that there will be neither orphan, nor poor in my kingdom." (XI, 14)

With this exclamation Pushkin begins scene 4 in the Kremlin Palace:

Boris

You, Father Patriarch, all you boyars!
Behold before you now my soul laid bare:
You have perceived that, yielding, I accept
The power supreme with fear and humbleness. (17)

Thus, time in "The Kremlin Palace" is quite conventional. Here on two pages Pushkin concentrated the period of a little more than six months, condensing it in the tragedy to several minutes. The succession of events was not meaningful for him. More likely, their essence was more important for the poet. Several events distanced from each other in time merge into one whole. Those episodes from real life that remained outside the boundaries of the scene and could not influence the

movement of the tragedy were discarded by Pushkin.

The temporal concentration of the fourth scene, symbolizing the destruction of historical succession and of gradualness in the display of events, prepares us to perceive the swift movement of artistically recreated history. Details are not as important to Pushkin as crucial moments. Events in Boris Godunov are expressed by their culminations. Shklovskii pointed out that laying out a work "in small chapters allows to give the precise depiction of single scenes and eases the task of omission of unimportant moments."[129]

After the fourth scene the tragedy leaps forward in time: five years pass from the day of Boris's election to the throne. Pushkin omits the events that happened in Russian history during that time. He is more interested in the fact that on the stage of history there had appeared a new dramatis personae — the Impostor. "Night. A Cell in the Chudov Monastery" (1603) — is the only scene among the four named earlier without a date. Here we witness the origin in Grigorii's mind of the impudent idea of assuming the name of the assassinated Tsarevich. Any origin of the idea in history as well as in legend or myth was not reflected in a concrete date, therefore Pushkin limited himself only to dating the year in the subtitle. Moreover, the scene in itself of the conversation between Pimen and Grigorii is the result of the author's imagination.

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129 V.B. Shklovskii, Tetiva: O neskhodstve skhodnogo (Moskva, 1970) 115. Shklovskii's note refers to L. Tolstoi's novels. However, it is true regarding Pushkin's tragedy as well.

In "The Palace of the Patriarch" (scene 6) the Abbot of the Chudov Monastery reports to the Patriarch about Grigorii's escape:

Abbot

He ran away, holy Patriarch — in fact, the day before yesterday. (31)

In "The Tsar's Palace" (scene 7) Boris delivers his famous soliloquy:

I've reached the highest power;
My sixth year I'm already calmly ruling,
Yet in my soul there is no happiness. (34-5)

The Tsar has a presentiment that his time, the days of his reign, have come to an end:

In vain the necromancers augur me
Long days of reign, days of untroubled power —
Neither the power nor life itself now cheers me.
I sense a threatening bolt and blight from heaven.
There is no joy for me. (35)

In his soliloquy Boris sums up his reign. Even though his time is not over, the future events connected with the name of the

Impostor receive an inward logic. The time of the morally broken Boris continues its movement by inertia and ceases to be controllable. It is not subject to any laws. Boris's personal time henceforth dissolves in the general objective movement of historic time.

In "An Inn on the Lithuanian Frontier" (scene 8) Grigorii successfully runs away from Boris's Police. Karamzin gives the following facts about the circumstances of Grigorii's flight: deacon Evfim'ev "being a relative by marriage to one of the Otrep'evs <...> gave the disfavoured Deacon a chance to run away (in February 1602) together with two monks from the Chudov Monastery <...> the madman chose the most reliable way to reach his goal — Lithuania! (XI, 74)

Thus, Pushkin diverges from Karamzin's dates and places Grigorii's flight in 1603. Real time is reinterpreted by the author and moves according to the laws of the artistic work. It must be repeated that it is not the exact dates which are valuable for Pushkin, but the very fact of the flight, not the real time of the true historic event, but the artistic assimilation of this event. It is paramount that the event does not contradict the movement of dramatic narration, but lives according to its laws.

In "Moscow. Shuiskii's House" (scene 9) Afanasii Pushkin tells Shuiskii the news about Impostor's appearance. He also laments Godunov's intention to abrogate the transfer of

peasants on St. George's Day[130]:

> And now he's set to quash St. George's Day —
> We are no longer lords of our own lands.
> Don't dare dismiss an idler! Willy-nilly,
> You'll give him food! Don't dare coax into service
> A laborer! (5)

Again the action of the tragedy refers us to prehistory, to the law of 1593 issued by Godunov under the reign of Feodor. This law was intended to consolidate the middle class of landowners, in which Godunov tried to find support for his continuation of Ivan the Terrible's policy towards the boyars, a wealthy feudal group. However, the consequences of this law, which led to the discontent of wealthy landowners as well as to mass flights of peasants, had a pernicious effect on Godunov's reputation. Karamzin wrote about it:

> The harm was so great that Boris <...> in 1601 again permitted the peasants of the landowners of modest means, and of Boyars' Children and of others <...> to move on a certain day from one landowner to another *of the*

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130 St. George's Day (November 26 of the old style calendar) was established in 1497. During a week preceding and a week after this day peasants would change their landowners. This custom was profitable for the wealthy landowners, who were able to lure peasants from the small landowners. St. George's Day regulations were elaborated in 1550 but not altered in principle.

same wealth,[131] but not all at once, and not more than two at a time. (XI, 51)

In "The Tsar's Palace" (scene 10) Boris learns the news about the Impostor from Shuiskii. Thus, this scene in its temporal relation follows the preceding scene — "Moscow. Shuiskii's House." We witness the swift spread of the news that Dimitrii is alive. Both scenes are confined to twenty-four hours. Early the previous day a courier had come from Cracow to Afanasii Pushkin's house. The same night this news reached Shuiskii, who the following day told it to Godunov. The circle closed. The subsequent events according to the logic of development of the tragedy's action do not require Boris's participation in them, and the action moves to Cracow.

In "Cracow. The House of Wisniowiecki" (scene 11) the Impostor gathers the armed forces and prepares for the Russian campaign. On the next day he will set out and stay for three days in the castle of Mniszek in Sambor.

The scenes "The Castle of Voyevod Mniszek in Sambor" (scene 12) and "Night. A Garden. A Fountain" (scene 13) are united by place and time. In scene 12 Marina arranges a tryst with the Impostor:

Yes, by the fountain in the linden-walk!
I'll be there at eleven tomorrow night. (83)

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131 Italics are Karamzin's.

Thus, time in both scenes is confined to twenty-four hours. In "Night. A Garden. A Fountain" the Impostor has a conversation with Marina. His last phrase is:

> But, the die's cast, I move my troops tomorrow. (99)

Thus, scenes 6 — 13 are not dated and become inserted into the time boundaries fixed by scenes 5 and 14, that is 1603 — October 16, 1604. The author's selection of events and their arrangement are subordinated not to the chronicle reproduction of history, but to the artistic disclosure of its movement. Thanks to the availability of "points of reference," the undated scenes of the tragedy receive a temporal correlation, which eases the spectator/reader's task of perception. The unity of time, which binds some scenes, slows the time of action, in this way concentrating our attention on important moments in relation to the plot: the spreading of rumours about the Impostor, and the explanation to Marina which once and for all persuades Otrep'ev that there is no return.

Pushkin dated "The Lithuanian Frontier" (scene 14) October 16, 1604, which corresponds to the date we find in Karamzin:

> ... and October 16 they [Impostor's armed forces] marched into Russia... (XI, 86)

Like the two previous dates, the day of crossing the Lithuanian frontier is crucial for the development of the tragedy's plot since it represents a change in the plot's direction.

The action of "The Tsar's Council" (scene 15) moves back to Moscow. Here Pushkin combines events historically distant from each other by several months. As Gorodetskii noted, the meeting of the Tsar's Council in fact took place before the Impostor's occupation of Chernigov on October 26, 1604. However, Godunov says the following about receiving the threatening letter from the Impostor:

> Can it be true? An unfrocked fugitive,
> A monk, is leading outlaw troops against us,
> And dares write threats to us! This is enough!
> It's time to tame the madman. (103)

In reality the Impostor forwarded this message to Godunov not earlier than February 1605.[132] In it the Impostor "reproached Iov with abuse of the Church's power in favour of the predator, while promising his Tsar's favour to Godunov, if he left the throne and public life peacefully, shut himself up in a cloister and lived for the sake of saving his soul" (XI, 103).

In the scene "A Plain Near Novgorod Severskii" (December 21, 1604) Pushkin presents the battle that ended

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132 See on this Gorodetskii 170.

with the Impostor's victory. Again, the date reflects a crucial moment of history, but this time the action of the tragedy swings towards Moscow, once and for all marking the reverse direction in the progression of events. As is the case with scenes 6 — 13, it is not the temporal markers which are of importance, but the logic of the plot.

Pushkin borrowed some details for scene 16 from the description of another battle, which took place on January 21, 1605 at the village of Dobrynichi near Sevsk, and ended with the Impostor's defeat. In that battle two foreign squads participated in the ranks of Godunov's forces — those of the Frenchman Margeret and the German Rosen.

"A Square Before the Cathedral in Moscow" (scene 17) is connected logically with the movement of the plot. Being temporally unmarked, it characterizes qualitatively the action of the tragedy, since the dead Tsarevich is already not identified with the Impostor: "... the Tsarevich/doesn't give a hang about Otrep'ev" (117). What is alive is the very idea of dismissal of the unpopular Boris from the throne. It is no longer important who will take the vacant seat.

"Sevsk" (scene 18) and "A Forest" (scene 19) are temporally consecutive. In "Sevsk" the Impostor announces the battle with Boris's forces: "We fight tomorrow!" (125) In "A Forest" we meet the Impostor lightheartedly perceiving his defeat and making himself comfortable for a night's halt in the forest.

"Moscow. The Tsar's palace" (scene 20) is disjoined from the preceding scene by a temporal interval. In it we learn that the Impostor has reassembled his scattered army and is attempting once again to possess the Muscovite throne. We also witness the unexpected death of Tsar Boris, which took place on April 13, 1605.[133]

The time of "The Headquarters" (scene 21) is undefined. This scene, where Pushkin tries to persuade Basmanov to betray Boris, logically results from the news that the Impostor has reassembled his scattered army and is threatening Moscow from Putivl's walls, as we learned in scene 20.

In "The place of Executions" (scene 22) Gavrila Pushkin informs the people that Russia has submitted to Dimitrii and that he comes to Moscow "with love, and peace" (147).

The action of the tragedy finishes with the well-known date of June 10, 1605, which was implied by Pushkin and did not need to be stated. "The Kremlin. The house of Boris" (scene 23) is based on the following facts:

> On June 10 Princes Golitsyn and Mosal'skii, and officials Molchanov and Sherefedinov, escorted by three savage-looking strelitzs came to Boris's house... (XI, 118)

Thus time in Boris Godunov is not chronicle time, with its thoroughly narrated events, nor is it a one-for-one

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133 Karamzin XI, 104.

representation of Karamzin's History.[134] It is rather the time of an artistic work which combines imaginary events and heroes with exact historic facts. A period of Russian history spanning more than seven years is condensed into 93 pages of text. As is justly pointed out by Fomichev, Pushkin did not aim at "the exact recreation of historical events <...> in the actual succession of the scenes, but rather followed above all his own artistic purposes."[135]

The peculiarities of the temporal patterns of the tragedy's heroes are connected with the general way that time evolves in the work. Within this framework personal time is subordinated to historic time and is reinterpreted by the use of artistic devices.

In the tragedy the Impostor appears from a state of non-existence and returns to a state of non-existence. Non-existence is the dream that denies the real life of Grigorii Otrep'ev, a man who becomes what he is not in reality. He wakes up in a cell in the Chudov Monastery from the prophetic "diabolic visions" in order to go down in history as the False Dimitrii:

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134 Rassadin divided Pushkin's tragedy into three parts according to the four crucial dates given in the subtitles, and came to the erroneous conclusion that Boris Godunov is "clearly a chronicle," especially in the scenes, starting from "The Lithuanian Frontier." See Rassadin 29-30.

Blagoi's opinion, that Pushkin simply takes from Karamzin's History "a certain time segment" and "having no constructive changes, transfers it to his tragedy," is absurd. See D.D. Blagoi, Tvorcheskii put' Pushkina (Moskva-Leningrad, 1950) 418.

135 S.A. Fomichev, Poeziia Pushkina: Tvorcheskaia evoliutsia (Moskva, 1986) 147.

I dreamt a dream in which a breakneck staircase
Guided me up a tower. From the height,
Moscow appeared to me a swarming anthill.
Below, the crowds were seething in the square
And pointing up at me with mocking laughter;
And I became ashamed and terrified,
And falling down head foremost, I awoke.
And three times have I dreamed this selfsame dream.
Isn't it strange? (23)

He carelessly falls asleep in the forest, putting the saddle of his dying horse to become again Grishka Otrep'ev. The time of Grigorii is closed. It is not the time of history, but the time of originating the impudent thought and the time of its death. Otrep'ev completed the mission that history destined for him. History turned out to be unsubmissive to the mercenary interests of Grigorii, who will enter the memory of descendants under an assumed name.

Researchers have already noted that in Boris Godunov Pushkin plays with stage directions, giving the Impostor different names.[136] At the same time, critics overlook the

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136 See on this G.A. Gukovskii, Pushkin i problemy realisticheskogo stilia (Moskva, 1957) 47; S.V. Shervinskii, "O naimenovanii deistvuiushchikh lits v dramakh Pushkina," Izvestiia AN SSSR, ser. lit. i iaz. t. 21, no. 4 (Moskva, 1962) 302-12; St. Rassadin, Dramaturg Pushkin (Moskva, 1977) 11-12; M.A. Poliakov, Voprosy poetiki i khudozhestvennoi semantiki (Moskva, 1978) 109-10; V.S. Nepomniashchii, Poeziia i sud'ba (Moskva, 1983) 243.

change in names in the stage directions connected with Boris. Nevertheless, these changes are equally important for the tragedy's understanding and as semantically meaningful as the variation in the Impostor's names.

Thus, before ascending the throne Boris Godunov is simply called Boris in "The Kremlin Palace" (scene 4) where he appears in the tragedy for the first time: "Boris, Patriarch, and some boyars" (17). In "The Tsar's Palace" (scene 7) we already see the Tsar allotted by power after swearing the oath. Finally, in "Moscow. The Tsar's Palace" (scene 20), the last appearance of Godunov, Pushkin again returns to the name of his hero: "Boris, Basmanov" (131). In this way he lowered the period of Godunov's reign in the tragedy and shaded the illegality of his governing and the depravity of the Tsar.

The case of Otrep'ev's names, which Pushkin gives in the tragedy, is more complex. In the beginning he is called Grigorii. After he jumps out of the window at the very end of "An Inn on the Lithuanian Border" (scene 8), Grigorii transforms into the Impostor in "Cracow. The House of Wisniowiecki" (scene 11), claiming that he is Tsarevich Dimitrii. The jump out of the window becomes the symbol of a flight to obscurity, in an adventure with an unpredictable end. In the same scene we find the stage direction: "Poet (approaches, bowing deeply and seizing Grishka by the skirt of his robe)" (81). In this way Pushkin shows that Otrep'ev is still half-way between the Impostor and Dimitrii. Thus, the gradual temporal

transformation occurs of an unknown monk into the False Dimitrii.

At the end of scene 11 the guests in the house of Wisniowiecki shout the following, truly believing that Otrep'ev is the real Dimitrii:

> En route! En route! All hail, long live Dimitrii!
> Hail, hail, all hail, Great Prince of Muscovy! (83)

Without delay, in "The Castle of Voyevod Mniszek in Sambor" (scene 12) the Impostor becomes Dimitrii, which follows from Mniszek's speech telling Wisniowiecki about his advice given to Marina a moment ago not to let Dimitrii slip away, as well as from the stage direction: "Marina (softly, to Dimitrii)" (83), and from the cues of the Gentleman addressing the Lady.

In the scene "Night. A Garden. A Fountain" the Impostor makes a declaration of love to Marina, who does not suspect the deception and addresses him as Dimitrii, demanding from the Impostor that he reveal his "very soul's own secret hopes,/Set purposes, and even apprehensions" (89). The wish to dispel the "terrifying doubt" (91) that Marina is choosing his rank of tsar, not Otrep'ev himself, prompts "the young impostor" (95) in an unsophisticated impulse to unmask himself. Learning that it is not Dimitrii before her, but "a poor monk" (93), Marina for the moment does not know what to do

next, but the thought of the Tsar's throne wins her over, and she makes the Impostor swear that he will reveal his true origin to no one. Grigorii, proving to Marina that she can fearlessly forget her "birth and maiden's blushes" (95) in order to join her fate to his, assumes the Tsar's role. He is no longer the Impostor, but Dimitrii:

Dimitrii (proudly)
Ivan's dread shade adopted me as son;
It gave me from the grave Dimitrii's name;
It made all men around me rise as one,
And doomed Boris as victim to my fame.
I am the Tsar's heir! (97)

But Otrep'ev understands that it is not the name that is important, as he tells Marina:

Well, you know
That neither king nor Pope nor high grandee
Is pondering the truth of my poor words!
Be I or not Dimitrii — what's that to them?
Just that I am the pretext for dissension
And war. That's all they need. (99)

And Pushkin does not make us wait, renaming the newly appeared Dimitrii the Impostor again.

Dimitrii's name comes to the surface again in "A Plain Near Novgorod Severskii" (scene 16), where the Impostor's forces win over Godunov's army:

Poles

Victory! Victory! Glory to Tsar Dimitrii! (115)

Later we see Dimitrii mounting a horse and regally giving orders:

Sound the cease-fire! We have won. Enough! Save Russian lives! Cease fire! (115)

When depicting the Impostor's successful campaign that opened to him the road to Moscow's throne, Pushkin appropriately chooses the name Dimitrii.

In "Sevsk" (scene 18) Otrep'ev, interrogating the prisoner, who knows about his deception, becomes again the Impostor. In "A Forest" (scene 19), where his forces sustain a defeat, he is renamed the False Dimitrii and then without delay he is renamed the Impostor. In this way Pushkin emphasizes the delusive hopes of Otrep'ev to gain the Tsar's throne and gradually reduces him to non-existence.

Thus, by playing with the names of the heroes, the author shows the stages of development of their characters which correspond to the temporal turning-points in their fates. Time,

reflecting the development of a certain quality of a protagonist's character at a particular moment in his life, becomes for Pushkin a precondition for choosing one name or another.

While many critics contemporary to Pushkin were perplexed in their search for the central hero of the tragedy, Kireevskii saw in Boris Godunov the clear presence of a non-scenic and even non-material hero:

> The shadow of the slain Dimitrii reigns in the tragedy from beginning to its end, rules over the movement of whole events, serves as a link among all characters and scenes, arranges in one perspective all the separate groups, and gives to the diverse colours a single common tone, a single bloody tint. To prove this would mean to rewrite the whole tragedy.[137]

The mentioning of the boy Tsarevich first appears in the conversation of Shuiskii and Vorotynskii. The fact that Boris was the perpetrator of Dimitrii's death is unquestionable for Shuiskii. In his opinion, Godunov will step over the blood of the innocent boy to ascend "the vacant, Tsar-less throne" (5).

The shadow of Dimitrii disturbs not only Godunov, who senses "a threatening bolt and blight from heaven" (35) and

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137 I.V. Kireevskii, Obozrenie Russkoi Slovesnosti za 1831 god in: Polnoe sobranie sochinenii I.V. Kireevskogo, t. 1 (Moskva, 1861)92. Reprint by Ardis: Ann Arbor.

realizes that he has "angered heaven" (63), but also Grigorii, who learns from Pimen that the assassinated Tsarevich, if he were alive, would be the same age as Otrep'ev. In this coincidence Grigorii sees a sign from heaven, the covenant of his fate. The thought that he would pose as Dimitrii and ascend the Russian throne materializes in him and begins to control him, animating the phantom of the Tsarevich.

Here we may go beyond Kireevskii's observation and say that one more non-scenic hero is present in the tragedy, and this hero is God.[138] The eternal and timeless themes of guilt and God's punishment — the themes of responsibility for human acts, as well as for inactions — are unambiguously expressed in Boris Godunov throughout the whole drama. It is significant that Pimen tells Grigorii:

> Think for a moment, son, of the great Tsars!
> Who is above them? God alone! (25)

These words find support in Pater's speech addressed to the impostor:

> Your words, your deeds — the people judges these;
> What you intend — that only God can see. (75)

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138 In his letter to P.A. Viazemskii of April/first half of May (?) 1824 Pushkin wrote: "Reading Shakespeare and the Bible, though the Holy Ghost sometimes appeals to me, I prefer Goethe and Shakespeare" (88). Despite the slightly ironic tint of this Pushkin's statement, the Bible's influence on the author of Boris Godunov is obvious.

Boris appeals in vain to the Sovereign Father for blessings on his reign. God glorifies Godunov in order to take vengeance for the assassination of one of his angels.[139] Someone who came to power by stepping over blood could not be a righteous man. Materializing in Grigorii, Dimitrii's phantom forces Otrep'ev to address the following words to Godunov, words that find an echo in the cues of Pimen and Pater:

> And you will not escape a worldly doom,
> As you will not escape the doom of God. (31)

This statement of the Impostor is symbolic. It relates not only to Boris, but to Otrep'ev himself, who like Godunov will become the Tsar's assassin.

Hence, the preparatory stage of Godunov's clash with Otrep'ev is marked in the tragedy. It is not a skirmish for the throne, but a conflict between different manifestations of guilt and the realization of God's penalty for selfishness and thirst for personal glory and power, which, according to Pimen, brings "dire disaster, never known before!" (27). The time of both Boris and the Impostor flows parallel in the tragedy and never crosses, thus corresponding with the truth of history. From this

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139 In "The Tsar's Council" (scene 15) Patriarch retells the story of a blind shepherd, who once heard Tsarevich's voice, saying:

> 'I am Dimitrii, the Tsarevich. God,
> The heavenly Tsar, has placed me in his choir
> Of angels, and I work great wonders now. (107)

point the scenes alternate from one hero to the other, where the parallelism of scenes highlights the culpability of the heroes. We do not find in the tragedy the physical clash of two antagonists, since God's penalty assumes rather a moral character.

Boris Godunov is a tragedy without a future, without the sort of future, that, projecting from the present, will find its response in the hearts of the protagonists' descendants, as they study "the past fate of their native land" (21). The heroes of this tragedy of the Time of Troubles live according to totally different laws, where "now" (теперь) stands in opposition in "then" (тогда). Shuiskii tells Vorotynskii:

> Now's not the time for memories.
> I often even recommend forgetting. (19)

In such silent indifference to both the past and present all the troubles of the Moscow state, all the "dark crimes" (21) of this epoch for which the descendants will have to "humbly supplicate the Saviour" (21) are concealed. The Impostor sets his hopes on the fair-tempered tolerance and disbelief of the Russians when he warrants Pater that before two years have passed "all my people, all the Eastern Church,/Will recognize the sway of Peter's vicar" (75). As regards the indifference and sinfulness of the Russian people, Pimen points out as well:

We have affronted God; we have transgressed:
As ruler, we have chosen for ourselves
A regicide. (27)

The conflict of the tragedy finds its appreciable expression in the scene "The Tsar's Palace," where we see the opposition of "an empty name, a shadow" (73) materialized as a "brazen-faced impostor" (57), and Tsar Boris. The remoteness of Cracow, where the False Dmitrii is, and Moscow is not an obstacle to the tragedy's conflict, because this conflict has a moral character. Hence Godunov's order to fence Russia off from Lithuania "With barriers, so that not a single soul/May pass the line" (71) is physically unrealizable: there is no salvation from "a sound", from "an apparition", as Godunov calls the Impostor. The moral penalty has a temporal nature and is tormenting precisely because of its duration, reaching a certain limit, an inward rupture, the discord between a man and his conscience:

Ah, I am well aware: naught can appease us
Amidst our worldly infelicities —
Naught, naught — unless it be our conscience only!
Thus conscience, uncontaminated, triumphs
Over evil, over dark calumny.
But if a single stain has set to breed there —
Just one, and that by merest accident —

Then, woe! As with some pestilence, the soul
Will burn away, the heart will fill with gall,
'T will, like a mace, beat on one's ears with censure;
And everything brings nausea — and one's head
Swirls round, and blood-stained boys before one's
eyes —
And one would flee, but whither? Horrible!
Yet, piteous he, whose conscience is unclean. (37)

The slain child that Godunov saw in his dreams for thirteen years on end torments Boris. He questions Shuiskii in the hope that the assassinated boy in Uglich was not Dimitrii. This would clear his conscience, affirm the legality of his reign and save him from God's punishment as personalized in the appearance of the Impostor. But Shuiskii's answer is negative: "Three days/I visited his body in the minster <...> No, sovereign lord, there is no doubt. Dimitrii/Sleeps in his tomb" (73), and does not save Boris from the torments of conscience: the slain Tsarevich will always be for him a live reproach. Shuiskii's negative answer is strengthened in "A Square Before the Cathedral in Moscow" (scene17), when Godunov asks the Simpleton (юродивый) to pray for him, but the Simpleton shouts after Boris, exiting a square, and proclaims the sentence of God's doom, henceforth making Tsar's inward torments even more tormenting:

No, no! I can't pray for a Tsar like Herod. The Virgin will not let me. (119)

Both repudiation in the prayer and the prohibition of the Virgin expressed by the Simpleton symbolize that Boris is deprived from the support from heaven. Thus, Boris's fate in the tragedy becomes predetermined, which is confirmed by the following action. The torments of a guilty conscience are not cured by time. The dying Godunov says:

And I alone shall answer God for all. (135)

In "The Place of Execution" (scene 22) Gavrila Pushkin announces to the people that Boris's death is God's inevitable punishment of the criminal:

He [Impostor] had set to liquidate his foe,
But God's doom had already struck Boris. (145)

However, Boris Godunov's tragedy is the tragedy of guilt not fully admitted. Giving his last admonitions to Feodor, Godunov speaks frankly:

O God, my God!
I shall appear before You soon — and I
Have no time now to cleanse my soul with penance!

But this I feel — my son, you are far dearer
To me than God's grace for my soul. (135)

Like Godunov, the Impostor cannot get rid of the Tsarevich's phantom. He does not have the power to change his "Tsar's birth" decreed by an undiscerning fate, but at the same time voluntarily assumed by him. His subjectively free actions become fused with the will of fate. Otrep'ev prays to Marina:

Oh, let me but forget for one lone hour
The cares and worries of my destiny!
Yourself — forget that you behold before you
A Tsar's son! (89)

However, for Marina as well as for others he is Dimitrii and no one else. He went too far, betraying "God and the Tsars" (95). Grigorii is unable and has no right to decline the role fate has destined for him. It is not he who directs fate, but fate that directs him to what it predestined for Otrep'ev, what is expressed in Marina's words:

But, as God is my witness, till your feet
Are resting on the dais of the throne,
Till Godunov is overthrown by you,
I will not hear more monologues on love. (99)

Pushkin gave Marina Mniszek only one scene, but this scene resembles a flash. After the meeting with Pimen, this is the second decisive clash of Otrep'ev with fate. Marina's time is adventurous time directed at reaching her goal of becoming Tsarina. Pushkin wrote about Marina:

> Elle n'a eu qu'une passion et ce fut l'ambition, mais à un degré d'énergie, de rage qu'on a peine à se figurer. (XIV, 46)[140]

Time is of exceptional value for Mniszek. She hastens the Impostor:

> The hours fly by, and time is precious to me... (89)

She is not meant to hear the Impostor's "love's petition" (89). Every minute bringing the Tsar's throne nearer is precious for her. She interrupts Otrep'ev's love outbursts with the energetic phrase:

> Not now, prince! You are lingering, and meanwhile
> The warm adherence of your henchmen cools.
> From hour to hour, the danger and the hardships
> Become more dangerous and harder still. (91)

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140 Letter to N.N. Raevskii (?) of 30 January or 30 June 1829.

Marina's rush into the future is staggering. She impels the Impostor, who for a certain moment was ready to shrink from his long-premeditated plans, to action:

> It is high time! Wake up, delay no more!
> Make haste and lead your regiments to Moscow.
> Clean out the Kremlin! Sit on Moscow's throne;
> Then send a marriage embassy to me. (99)

During his tryst with Marina the Impostor suffers inward division, but it is not a division provoked by torments of conscience as in the case of Godunov. It is more likely the realization of his own divided self. The slain Tsarevich stands between the False Dimitrii and Marina. The Impostor wants to distance himself from the phantom. His statement that "Dimitrii's long been dead/And buried and will not be resurrected" (93) contradicts the truth. Dimitrii is the eternally living idea of redemption from guilt, the idea of punishment. The Impostor himself is the bearer of this idea:

> Ivan's dread shade adopted me as son;
> It gave me from the grave Dimitrii's name... (97)

As the bearer of an idea, he gradually loses his personality and becomes in reality the living dead. In this sense the cues of the people in "A Square Before the Cathedral

in Moscow" (scene 17), where anathema is called out for Grishka Otrep'ev, are characteristic:

> First
>
> Let them go on cursing as much as they want; the Tsarevich doesn't give a hang about Otrep'ev.
>
> Second
>
> But they are singing a Requiem Mass for the Tsarevich now.
>
> First
>
> A Requiem Mass for somebody who's alive? Just let them see what's in store for them, the atheists! (117)

The peculiarity of the Impostor's image in the tragedy lies in the duality of the hero's personality. On the one hand, he is a plaything in the hands of destiny, "the pretext for dissension/And war" (99). On the other hand, he consciously chooses for himself to be Tsar in Moscow, taking advantage of the coincidence in age with the slain Tsarevich. Both paths, one way or another, lie through blood. It may be "pure" blood, which is the Impostor's aspiration to take vengeance on Godunov for his sin of the slain Tsarevich, or "impure" blood — the slaughter of his Russian brothers. The Impostor would like to avoid bloodshed, but this idea does not remain in his head

for long. Unlike Boris, who bears God's punishment for his sins and is tormented by the thought that he came to power through the murder of a Tsar, the tragedy of the Impostor lies in the absence of torment of his conscience and in his inability to acknowledge his own guilt. His plan is to arrange it so that the blame for the crimes he is planning would fall on Godunov:

> Oh, Kurbskii, Russia's sacred blood will flow!
> You are pure: for the Tsar you've taken up
> The sword. But I lead you against my brothers.
> I've summoned Lithuania against Russia.
> I show the foe the hallowed road to Moscow,
> The fair. Yet, may my sin not fall on me,
> But you, Boris, you! Murderer of Tsars!
> Forward! (101, 103)

In the tragedy's finale the problem of the Tsar's murder arises again, but this time it is the murder of young Feodor Godunov, who took Boris's place. It is the problem of coming to power through blood, finding its echo in Shuiskii's words which I have already quoted:

> Now's not the time for memories.
> I often even recommend forgetting. (19)

Any oblivion of history, any ascent to power over corpses

leads not to happiness and peace, but to turbulent "stormy times" (109). This motive of Pushkin's drama is strengthened by the two Tsars' murders one following another over a period of 16 years. The time of history as well as the time of Boris Godunov is cyclical. Pushkin shows that the tragedy of bloodshed would be averted, not were it for the temporizing and passive attitude of Shuiskii — "Just now, we'd better hold our tongues" (61)[141] — who did not "unmask the underhand assassin" (5) and passed over in silence Godunov's crime. The speechlessness of personality as well as the speechlessness of the people is the problem of silence, of passive contemplation of bloody crimes, and the problem of indifference, of tolerance, finally leading to the establishment of the Time of Troubles in Russia, when the state suffered great and irreparable losses. Hence, silence in Boris Godunov becomes the semantic and compositional frame of tragic inaction. The blame for all the misfortunes of the Russian state lies not only on Godunov and the Impostor, but on Shuiskii and the people as well, or, in a wider context, on the whole epoch that served as the beginning of the Time of Troubles.

The question of an honest attitude to the time of history as well as to the time of personality is resolved in the tragedy by the image of Pimen, in whom, undoubtedly, are reflected the traits of Karamzin. The responsibility of a man for the fate of the state and the submission of personal fate to the fate of

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141 In the original we read: "Мы помолчим до времени" (VII, 41).

society played an important role for Pushkin. In particular, the poet wrote about his hero:

> ... the character of Pimen is not my invention. In him I drew together those characteristics in our ancient chronicles which captivated me: the innocence of soul, the disarming humility, the almost child-like quality which is at the same time combined with wisdom, the pious devotion to the Divine Right of the Tsar, the complete absence of self-regard and partiality, which breathe in these precious memorials of bygone days, among which the embittered chronicle of Prince Kurbskii differs from the others as the stormy life of this exile from Ivan differed from the humble lives of tranquil monks. (222)[142]

Pimen's truthful chronicle is "the duty God ordained" (19) to him. In his opinion, history must convey to descendants "good deeds" and "dark crimes" (21):

> War and peace, the statecraft of sovereign rulers,
> The holy miracles of men of God,
> The heaven-directed prophecies and portents... (29)

Pimen is far from being sinless. Behind his quiet speech

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142 Letter to the Editor of the Moscow Herald (1828).

and humility lie the flights and falls of human passion and all the storms of history. He tells Grigorii:

> ...And sometimes noisy feasts will come to mind,
> Sometimes a war camp, sometimes an encounter —
> The senseless pastimes of one's younger years! (23)

Grown wise with experience, Pimen teaches Grigorii that life acquires sense only when a man is able to defeat selfishness and an irresponsible attitude to his own deeds, to "comprehend the nothingness/Of worldly vanities" (25) and to humble his "suffering and stormy soul" (27). If this does not happen, than the tragedy turns amok, as is clearly shown by Pushkin in Boris Godunov.

Pimen's thoughts about God and his constant references to the Saviour are in fact thoughts about timelessness and the eternal. The eternal does not exist in isolation from the present-day, for the eternal is realized in the present. Through time a man both intuits and perceives the eternal and the timeless.

Thus, Pushkin presents "in dramatic form one of the most dramatic epochs of modern history" (247)[143] and develops in his tragedy "the fate of Man, the fate of the people" (263),[144]

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143 Draft prefaces to Boris Godunov (1830).

144 Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife (1830).

learning from history the lessons for the future generations. Time with its "sincere and free-flowing current" (222)[145] becomes the object of representation in Boris Godunov. The represented time of the tragedy is not the time of the chronicler, but the time of the artistic work, combining "the political acumen of an historian" (264)[146] and a lively poetic imagination.

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145 Letter to the Editor of the Moscow Herald (1828).

146 Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife (1830).

Conclusion

Pushkin's tragedy has an innovative character precisely because of his intentional reformation of the antiquated forms of Russian theatre, which demanded the elaboration of new artistic devices able to convey the free and broad stream of unfolding events. One of those devices was the completely new approach to the representation of time, where time became a real force that determined the intensification of the events in the tragedy and organized its movement. The following statement of Bakhtin, defining the character of represented time, is applicable to Boris Godunov:

> Here the graphically visible markers of historical time as well as of biographical and everyday time are concentrated and condensed; at the same time they are intertwined with each other in the tightest possible fashion, fused into unitary markers of the epoch. The epoch becomes not only graphically visible [space], but narratively visible [time].[147]

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147 This statement of Bakhtin refers to the novels of Stendhal and Balzac, but can be equally applicable to Pushkin's drama due to the character of the time represented in it, where, as in the novels of the great French realist writers, we see "the weaving of historical and socio-public events together with the personal and even deeply private side of life, with the secrets of the boudoir; the interweaving of petty, private intrigues with political <...> intrigues, the interpenetration of state with boudoir secrets, of historical sequences with the everyday and biographical sequences." See Bakhtin, Time and Chronotope 247.

Pushkin's drama is of dualistic nature. It is simultaneously closed and open. On the one hand, it is closed due to its compositional frame. According to Lotman, in a work of art the course of events comes to a halt when the narrative is broken off.[148] It is true that what is beyond the frame of the tragedy is unknown for us. Of course, we are able to conjecture the events, but being outside of the limits of the tragedy, they are the result not of the author's, but of the spectator's/ reader's imagination and, therefore, will never become a part of Boris Godunov.

On the other hand, it is a tragedy of the open type, since historical time itself is open, and the events of the drama take a quite distinctive place in Russian history. Being directly connected with the preceding and the subsequent movement of real history, they are inserted in the historic stream and defined by it. The present of the tragedy becomes inconclusive, by its very nature demanding continuation and, subsequently, moving into the future. As Bakhtin emphasizes, "when the present becomes the center of human orientation in time and in the world, time and world lose their completedness as a whole as well as in each of their parts."[149] Developing his thought, Bakhtin wrote in particular on the interrelations of time and the structuring of the artistic image:

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148 On the role of frame in a work of art see Iu.M. Lotman, Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta (Providence: Brown University Press, 1971) 255-65.

149 Bakhtin, Epic and Novel 30.

> Every event, every phenomenon, every thing, every object of artistic representation loses its completedness, its hopelessly finished quality and its immutability that had been so essential to it in the world of the epic "absolute past," walled off by an unapproachable boundary from the continuing and unfinished present. Through contact with the present, an object is attracted to the incomplete process of a world-in-the-making, and it is stamped with the seal of inconclusiveness. No matter how distant this object is from us in time, it is connected to our incomplete, present-day, continuing temporal transitions, it develops a relationship with our unpreparedness, with our present. But meanwhile our present has been moving into an inconclusive future. And in this inconclusive context all the semantic stability of the object is lost; its sense and significance are renewed and grow as the context continues to unfold. This leads to radical changes in the structuring of the artistic image. The image acquires a specific actual existence. It acquires a relationship — in one form or another, to one degree or another — to the ongoing event of current life in which we, the author and readers, are intimately participating.[150]

These ideas of Bakhtin about the correlation of past,

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150 Ibid 30-31.

present and future, as well as about the temporal connection between the life of the work of art and a human life are directly related to Pushkin's tragedy, where the echo of times is appreciable and visible. Boris Godunov's subject-matter acquires contemporary topicality due to the reinterpretation of the present reflected in the tragedy. The work's active move into the future, expressed not only in the image of Pimen, who by writing his chronicle aspires to convey to his descendants "the past fate of their native land" (21), but also in the nature of the idea of responsibility of a generation for the fates of their country, which we find in the tragedy.

As regards the compositional features of Pushkin's tragedy, we have to keep in mind the following observation of Meierkhol'd:

> Each scene of Boris Godunov by no means serves as a preparation for the scene that follows. No! It represents an independent value; it, as in a musical work, being a part in itself, prepares the necessity of appearance of the next part in order to create a monumental form, a new musical work in which there will be 24 or 25 parts.[151]

Unlike Meierkhol'd, for whom the composition of Boris Godunov resembled a musical composition, Eisenstein noticed in Pushkin cinematic thinking. The parallelism of scenes as well

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151 Meierkhol'd 422.

as the parallelism of planes in the scenes themselves allow us to move both in time and space, as in cinema. From a combination of single scenes, the fragments of historic reality organized by temporal succession, arises the integral canvas strengthened by idea of the perniciousness of silence, the idea of guilt of both personality and people before history, the idea of the culpability of time. The central feature, strengthening the whole movement of Boris Godunov, is precisely this idea. Therefore, all attempts to search for the main material hero and calculations of the number of the scenes given to Boris and the Impostor, connected with this search, are pointless. The attempts to divide the tragedy into acts in an endeavour to adjust Pushkin's work to the existing theatrical standards are equally hopeless.

In conclusion, I should comment on the generic peculiarities of Boris Godunov. It is a tragedy of the Shakespearean type, correlating man and the world, as well as man and history in a multiform way. As in Shakespeare, reality in Pushkin's drama is disclosed in time and space. History is not gathered in a single knot and is not presented at a critical moment of high tension and its resolution. The personalities of Boris Godunov's heroes are not constant, but evolve. Unlike in Shakespeare, however, it is not so much a tragedy of characters as a tragedy involving the whole nation, strengthened by the idea of the guilt of a whole generation before history. Moreover, it is a tragedy of time, a tragedy of a whole epoch in

the history of the Russian state.

Being a tragedy of not fully admitted and unrealized guilt, Boris Godunov has much in common with the tragedy of antiquity from the point of view of availability in it of a truth that lies beyond personality. We find in it God, punishing in Boris his excessive selfishness and thirst for power. We also find fate – not subordinated to God, but incomprehensibly coordinated with his will and leading Grigorii Otrep'ev to his personal catastrophe. The fate of the Impostor is predictable, but inevitable. It incites Otrep'ev to subjectively free actions, that is, actions fused with his wishes and plans, and it is precisely through them that it leads the hero to catastrophe. It is simultaneously the means of expression of the "tragic irony" peculiar to the tragedy of antiquity, as well as the means of expression of "romantic irony" peculiar to Romantic works.

Boris Godunov is without question a tragedy, but a tragedy which distinctively combines in itself the achievements of the tragedy of antiquity and of Shakespearean theatre, both so intensely studied by the Romantics. Hence, it is not a coincidence that Pushkin defined its genre as the genre of a "truly Romantic tragedy" (222).[152]

Speaking about Boris Godunov as a tragedy, we cannot ignore that Pushkin's intention was to realize in his work the

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152 Letter to the Editor of the Moscow Herald (1828).

principle of the mixing of the comic and tragic genres.[153] We clearly see in Pushkin's drama the elements of tragicomedy where the same events are shown from both the comic and tragic perspectives, thus strengthening each other. Like a conflict in tragicomedy, the conflict in Boris Godunov is pointedly not resolved, and the plot presupposes the continuation of action, while the dénouement does not claim to be the finale, and the spectator/reader is invited to conjecture future events. Thus, we are able to connect the dualistic nature of Pushkin's drama, its being simultaneously closed and open from the point of view of the time stream (that is the stream of historic time) to the mixing of the comic and tragic in it.

The problem of Boris Godunov's genre is quite complex and cannot be resolved within the limited space of this dissertation. It requires special attention and analyses as does the problem of the interaction of spatial and temporal components in the tragedy, which would help to shed light on the compositional and semantical peculiarities of Pushkin's work and make its understanding more clear.

Thus, Boris Godunov is a tragedy that represents a special system, not resembling the system of traditional theatre, but one that, at the same time, developed on the basis of this theatre and absorbed all its best achievements. It is a deeply

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153 See On tragedy (1825). In "Notes on Popular Drama and on M.P. Pogodin's Martha, the Governor's Wife" (1830) Pushkin wrote: "Let us note that high comedy is not based solely on laughter, but on the development of character, and that it frequently approaches tragedy" (265).

original dramatic phenomenon with its distinctive artistic devices, where not the least role was played by the poet's creative work with the category of time.

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Time in A.S. Pushkin's Drama Boris Godunov.

Abstract

Pushkin's tragedy Boris Godunov is one of the works that radically changed the temporal concept in theatrical art. The author applied an innovative approach which transformed this genre into what is known now as modern drama. Time became real dramatic force that defined the course of events.

Despite numerous statements of the essential nature of time in drama, few critical works have been written on the subject. However, the problem of the temporal patterns in theatrical works is of great interest to literary scholarship, because it organizes the semantic structure of all literary works and provides an integral perception of the text.

This dissertation considers Pushkin's views on theatre and drama. The examination of the temporal patterns in this tragedy are based on the poet's conscious intention to reform the antiquated models of Russian theatre. Such a task demanded the elaboration of new artistic devices able to convey the free and broad stream of unfolding events.

The temporal aspect in Boris Godunov, as one of its semantic elements, is examined on three levels: description, representation and meaning.

This dissertation demonstrates that the poet's completely new approach to the representation of time helped to create a deeply original dramatic phenomenon, a special system, not resembling the system of traditional

theatre, but one that, at the same time, developed on the basis of this theatre and absorbed all its best achievements.