

PASTERNAK'S IMAGE OF THE REVOLUTION OF 1917  
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SYMBOLIC LEVEL  
IN THE NOVEL DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

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## ABSTRACT

The novel Doctor Zhivago is structured in an extremely complex manner. Not only does it contain elements of prose and poetry, but the prose section in itself is poetic in the essence. It is a pattern of images which are both realistic and symbolic.

The symbolism in Doctor Zhivago has been a topic of considerable discussion and controversy almost from the day of the novel's publication. But although various opinions have been expressed regarding the symbolic nature of the novel, apparently no attempt has been made to present a systematized investigation of it.

There seems to be little doubt that a key to a fuller appreciation of Doctor Zhivago is to be found in its symbolism. The purpose of the present thesis is, therefore, a partial investigation of symbolism in the novel. This will by no means be a complete investigation (it is doubtful whether any analysis can be "complete"); it will, rather, deal with one aspect of symbolism: what is perceived to be a symbolic presentation of Russia's revolutionary events.

## TRANSLITERATION

Аа - a	Лл - l	Цц - ts
Бб - b	Мм - m	Чч - ch
Вв - v	Нн - n	Шш - sh
Гг - g	Оо - o	Щщ - shch
Дд - d	Пп - p	Ъъ - n
Ее - e	Рр - r	Ыы - y
Жж - zh	Сс - s	Ьь - i
Зз - z	Тт - t	Ээ - e
Ии - i	Уу - u	Юю - ju
Йй - j	Фф - f	Яя - ja
Кк - k	Хх - kh	

The above represents the system of transliteration which will be used in rendering Russian words, particularly in reference to quoted sources which are in the Russian language. However, in the text of the present thesis, in cases where words, particularly names, have an accepted English form, the accepted rather than the transliterated form will be used. Also, because the basic source of reference will be the English translation of Doctor Zhivago by Hayward and Harari (Wm. Collins Sons and Co. Ltd., 1958), the personal and place names will be rendered in the form in which they appear therein.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
The Literary Value and Political Significance of the Novel . . . . .	2
Symbolism and <u>Doctor Zhivago</u> . . . . .	12
The Revolution and <u>Doctor Zhivago</u> . . . . .	14
II. THE SYMBOLIC LEVEL IN <u>DOCTOR ZHIVAGO</u> . . . . .	19
The Views of R. E. Steussy on Symbolism in the Novel . . . . .	19
The Symbolic Level . . . . .	27
III. THE TWO WORLDS OF YURY ZHIVAGO . . . . .	31
The Russian Pre-Revolutionary Intelligentsia . .	31
Yury Zhivago . . . . .	40
Tonya . . . . .	43
Lara . . . . .	49
The Dilemma . . . . .	56
IV. THE TRAGEDY OF THE REVOLUTION . . . . .	61
Antipov . . . . .	61
Komarovsky . . . . .	70
V. THE DEMISE OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA . . . . .	76
VI. THE FRUIT OF THE FRUIT . . . . .	91
Tanya . . . . .	91
Yevgraf . . . . .	97
VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	102
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	106

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present thesis is to investigate the symbolism in Boris Pasternak's novel Doctor Zhivago in terms of what can be seen as a "symbolic level".

The suggestion that the major characters in the novel play symbolic parts in an allegorical enactment of the Russian Revolution was first put forward by R. E. Steussy in his article "The Myth Behind 'Dr. Zhivago'".<sup>1</sup> The superficial and limited nature of Steussy's investigation, which, it is felt, contains some errors in its conclusions, would seem to justify a further investigation into this aspect of the novel with the objective of presenting a somewhat wider and more detailed analysis.

Boris Pasternak's works did not enjoy a wide popularity in the western world prior to the publication of his novel Doctor Zhivago in 1958. To be more precise, it was the awarding in 1958 of the Nobel Prize for this novel that had the effect of making him an "overnight sensation" -- to a large extent for political reasons. The reaction to the novel in the literary field resulted in a profusion of articles in a number of literary journals which dealt with the novel on a superficial level (understandably), and raised a number

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<sup>1</sup>R. E. Steussy, "The Myth Behind 'Dr. Zhivago'", The Russian Review, XVIII (April, 1959), pp. 184 -- 198.

of questions regarding it. Today, most of the questions remain unanswered.

The present thesis has been motivated by the conviction that the recognition of a symbolic superstructure in the novel will contribute something to the resolution of some of the problems which the novel presents.

The rather specific nature of the present investigation as well as the relative scarcity of critical material of any sort dealing with Pasternak's works, not to speak of that which directly relates to Doctor Zhivago, limits the amount of source material which can be employed. Consequently, this investigation will be centered around the novel with reference to relevant historical sources and such literary material as is available and relevant.

A consideration of a symbolic treatment of the Russian Revolution in Doctor Zhivago pre-supposes a particular understanding of the nature of the novel as a whole, as well as some of its individual elements. It is, therefore, necessary by way of introduction to indicate those of the novel's characteristics which would seem to justify the approach to be taken.

## I. LITERARY VALUE AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The controversy which developed over the Nobel Prize awarded in 1958 to Pasternak for his Doctor Zhivago was

centered upon alleged ideological implications of some ideas expressed in the novel. Doctor Zhivago was hailed in the West, and condemned in the Soviet Union as a moral blow against the established Soviet political system.

A direct side issue in this controversy was the question of the purely literary value of the novel. The official position taken in the Soviet Union at the time, was that the novel, as such, was of no literary significance, and that the Swedish Academy, in awarding the Nobel Prize to Pasternak, was guilty of taking sides in the Cold War. Ilya Ehrenburg, who was in Stockholm when the award to Pasternak was announced, subsequently referred to it as "blatant anti-Soviet politics".<sup>2</sup>

The events of the "Pasternak Affair", as it developed in the Soviet Union, are generally known.<sup>3</sup> Pasternak was reviled as a supreme egotist, an "internal emigrant"; his ability as a writer was questioned. An article by Zaslavsky in Pravda described Doctor Zhivago as "political libel" and

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<sup>2</sup>Ilya Ehrenburg, First Years of Revolution 1918 - 1921 (Vol. II of Men, Years -- Life 3 vols.; London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1962), p 53.

<sup>3</sup>A calendar of events may be found in: "Khronika Sobytij, svjazannykh s prisuzhdeniem Borisu Pasternaku Nobelevskoj premii za 1958 god" (The Chronicle of Events, Connected With the Awarding to Boris Pasternak of the Nobel Prize for the year 1958), Delo Pasternaka, (Munich: Izdatel'stvo Tsentra l'nogo Ob"edinenija Politicheskikh Emigrantov iz SSSR, 1958) pp. 28 -- 36.

its author as an "embittered Philistine".<sup>4</sup>

Ilya Ehrenburg (who had been a close colleague of Pasternak's for a long time), in commenting on Pasternak's portrayal of the Revolution in Doctor Zhivago, stated that Pasternak "never heard the footsteps of the age" and described the novel as being "artistically untruthful".<sup>6</sup>

Pasternak was subsequently voted out of the Union of Soviet Writers and spent the remainder of his days in official disfavour. Something of what the man felt during these days is expressed in his poem "The Nobel Prize".<sup>7</sup>

The reaction in the West was somewhat more varied. The temptation to ascribe a political significance to the novel was, of course, overwhelming. Isaac Deutscher characterized Doctor Zhivago as a "political novel par excellence",<sup>8</sup> and little else. But he chided the Soviet authorities for making such an ado about what he considered to be an outdated, and discredited, point of view presented in a novel of small

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>5</sup>Ehrenburg, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>7</sup>Boris Pasternak, Sochinenija (works), eds. G. P. Struve and B. A. Phillipov (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), Vol. III, p.107.

<sup>8</sup>Isaac Deutscher, "Pasternak and the Calendar of the Revolution", Partisan Review, XXVI (Spring, 1959), 249.

literary value, and in any case, belonging stylistically to a bygone era (the immediately post-revolutionary years). Deutscher's opinion differed from that of the majority of those Western reviewers who looked upon Doctor Zhivago as a political novel, in that he saw in it little that could discredit the Soviet Union. Deutscher's opinion was, of course, influenced by his own particular political orientation.

To others the novel represented a victory for the West. Vladimir Markov concluded that "the novel's greatness lies, historically speaking, not primarily in its artistic aspects. It is a moral victory for Russian post-revolutionary literature".<sup>9</sup> Edgar Lehrman, too, thought that "Pasternak's political comments rather than his literary merits are what have given this novel such extraordinary publicity in the West."<sup>10</sup>

As may be gathered from the above quotations, the strictly literary significance of Doctor Zhivago was, from the start, unclear if, indeed, it was not denied outright. While the greatness of Pasternak's poetry has never been in doubt, Doctor Zhivago, on the other hand, was assigned by many, to

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<sup>9</sup>Vladimir Markov, "Notes on Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago", The Russian Review, XVIII (January, 1959), 22.

<sup>10</sup>Edgar H. Lehrman, "A Minority Opinion on Doctor Zhivago", Emory University Quarterly, XVI (No. 2, 1960), 81.

what James Billington referred to as "a kind of B+ to A-rating on their literary scorecards".<sup>11</sup> It is necessary to consider only a few opinions to see what Billington had in view.

Lehrman has expressed the opinion that, in general, Doctor Zhivago has no "artistic unity".<sup>12</sup> Robert Payne has suggested that "...Pasternak's novel is evidently the work of a poet untrained in the disciplines of novel writing, impatient of all restraints, incapable of keeping his characters in exact focus, and strangely incompetent in his management of many of the episodes in the novel."<sup>13</sup> Richard Stern presents an entire list of what he considers to be weaknesses in the novel. These include, among others, "incredible coincidences, abrupt temporal changes, erratic switches in point of view, lack of preparation".<sup>14</sup>

The novel's protagonist has been singled out for criticism for his apparent moral weakness and what seems to

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<sup>11</sup>James H. Billington, The Icon and the Axe, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1966) p.555.

<sup>12</sup>Lehrman, op. cit., p.82.

<sup>13</sup>Robert P. S. Payne, The Three Worlds of Boris Pasternak (London: R. Hale Ltd., 1961) p.142.

<sup>14</sup>Gleb Struve, "Sense and Nonsense about Doctor Zhivago", Studies in Russian and Polish Literature in Honour of Waclaw Lednicki, Zbigniew Folejewski and others (eds.) (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1962), p 234, citing Richard C. Stern, The Kenyon Review, (winter, 1959), pp.154 -- 160.

be a general "Oblomovite" inertia.<sup>15</sup>

What seems to be at the root of the generally low estimation of Doctor Zhivago are the insistent attempts by many critics to evaluate it according to traditional criteria reserved for prose fiction. Moreover, attempts have been made to place this novel in a class with those of nineteenth-century writers, particularly with Tolstoy's War and Peace and with Dostoyevsky's works.

Gleb Struve has categorically rejected the validity of such comparisons: Doctor Zhivago is a novel of symbolic realism and does not therefore lend itself to evaluation in terms of nineteenth-century psychological realism.<sup>16</sup>

Further, it may be argued that there is a definite over-simplification if not outright misinterpretation involved in viewing Doctor Zhivago as a novel, a prose piece, a story, and nothing more. Doctor Zhivago is constructed on a dimension which is normally not associated with prose fiction. This makes Doctor Zhivago unique, and this fact must be considered in its evaluation.

Incidentally, one is faced from the start with the author's own evaluation of his work. Pasternak, it is well known, regarded Doctor Zhivago as the culmination of his creative life, and saw all his previous work as being

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<sup>15</sup>Lehrman, op. cit., p.80; and Raymond Williams, "Tragic Resignation and Sacrifice", Critical Quarterly, V (No. 1), 14.

<sup>16</sup>Struve, op. cit., p.233.

preparatory to this end. Ehrenburg has suggested one answer to this: "In this, as in many other things, Pasternak repeated the mistakes of a number of other artists. I am thinking of Gogol, who regarded The Inspector General and Part One of Dead Souls as trifles, and thought he had found the right path when he started Part Two."<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, the reverse of this situation is also not without precedent. One is reminded of the reaction of many contemporary critics upon publication of the first chapter of Pushkin's Evgenij Onegin. Pushkin confounded many of his contemporaries by presenting them with a work which did not conform to categories of literature as they were understood at the time, and which, indeed, left them without the necessary "equipment" for its evaluation.<sup>18</sup> An author's stubborn faith in the value of his own work, in the face of general rejection of it, may be an indication that it is being misunderstood.

The key to an understanding of Doctor Zhivago must be sought in what Payne inadvertently touched upon in his negative

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<sup>17</sup> Ehrenburg, op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>18</sup> M. G. Zel'dovich and L. Ja Livshits (eds.), "Spory v svjazi s pervoj, glavoj romana Pushkina 'Evgenij Onegin'" (Controversy in Connection with the First Chapter of the novel of Pushkin "Evgenij Onegin"), Russkaja literatura XIX v., Khrestomatija Kriticheskikh materijalov (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Vysshaja Shkola", 1967), pp. 161 -- 174.

reference to the novel as the "work of a poet impatient of all restraints".<sup>19</sup> Pasternak was a poet. His poetry, particularly early examples of it, is characterized by a complex, multiplanar structure. Symbolism and imagery are, of course, central to it.

Pasternak's earlier prose writings, apart from those of strictly discursive or biographical nature, exhibit essentially the same characteristics that are inherent in his poetry. Payne has made some very keen observations in connection with Pasternak's short stories: The Sign of Apelles, Aerial Ways, Letters from Tula, and The Childhood of Lovers:

Pasternak makes no attempt to come to terms with the accepted method of telling stories: he tells them in his own way in a startling mixture of fact and poetry . . . There are passages of intensely wrought poetic prose followed by conversations which at first give an impression of pure banality, until we realize that he is saying by indirection things which can only be said in this way . . . His prose like his poetry is orchestrated, and does in fact give the impression of a full orchestra rather than a single musical instrument.<sup>20</sup>

Deutscher has suggested that the apparent weakness of Doctor Zhivago must be attributed to the fact that Pasternak had passed over to the novel as a genre extremely late in

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<sup>19</sup>Payne, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>20</sup>Payne, op. cit., p. 68, and 69.

his creative life.<sup>21</sup> It is possible to conclude, however, that Doctor Zhivago does not represent as drastic a departure from Pasternak's earlier works as may seem at first appraisal. Doctor Zhivago, in spite of its outward characteristics, remains essentially a poetic work, "written in Pasternak's own poetic idiom, and should be approached on these terms and on that level."<sup>22</sup>

Struve points out the symbolic nature of Doctor Zhivago and concludes that in his metaphorical writing as it is found in the novel, "Pasternak is much closer to his old poetic manner than he is in some of his recent poetry."<sup>23</sup>

Robert Magidoff, who did an intensive study of "Imagery in the Prose of Boris Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago", was able to conclude, in part, that "Pasternak's imagery is to a large degree responsible for that quality of the prose in Doctor Zhivago which makes it a poet's prose."<sup>24</sup>

Rimvydas Silbajoris has taken essentially the same position:

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<sup>21</sup>Deutscher, op. cit., p. 258.

<sup>22</sup>Struve, op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 236.

<sup>24</sup>Robert Magidoff, "Imagery in the Prose of Boris Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago", Dissertation Abstracts, XXV, p. 5931.

. . . the rich poetic texture of the prose section itself [of Doctor Zhivago], when taken alone, makes us feel that the novel was basically conceived not in terms of correspondences between prose and verse, but as a single poetic statement embodied in two generic forms that eventually blend into a unique new genre.<sup>25</sup>

Pasternak has defined his Doctor Zhivago as a "novel in prose" but if one considers the terms "prose" and "poetry" in the meanings they had for Pasternak it becomes clear that we are not dealing with conventional literary genres. Pasternak made the following statement at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934:

Poetry is prose, not in the sense of someone's collected prose works, but prose itself, the voice of prose, prose in action and not in retelling. Poetry is the language of organic fact, that is, of a fact that has living consequences . . ., poetry is precisely pure prose in its transferred intensity.<sup>26</sup>

What the designation "novel in prose" implies is not the distinction, in the commonly accepted sense, between a novel in prose and one in verse, but precisely the reverse. And, while, obviously, Doctor Zhivago cannot be termed a novel in verse, as Evgenij Onegin is, it is a novel which is poetic not only in language, but in form as well, and in order to be fully appreciated it must be approached as such.

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<sup>25</sup>Rimvydas Silbajoris, "The Poetic Texture of Doctor Zhivago", The Slavic and East European Journal, IX (No. 1, 1965), p.19.

<sup>26</sup>Pasternak, op. cit., p.217. See also, reference of Silbajoris to this in: Silbajoris, op. cit., p.26.

There can be no mistaking the meaning of this statement by Pasternak: "Doctor Zhivago represents an attempt to write in an entirely new idiom, free from old aesthetic and literary conventions."<sup>27</sup>

If Doctor Zhivago is approached from this position, much of what has been cited as weaknesses in terms of criteria intended for prose fiction, becomes effective poetic devices within a poetic framework.

## II. SYMBOLISM AND DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

Proceeding from the basic argument that the key to a full understanding of Doctor Zhivago must be sought in its fundamental kinship with Pasternak's poetry, particularly his early poetry, it would be reasonable to suggest further, that given Pasternak's poetic style, one may expect symbolism to be of central importance in the novel, and that in order to fully understand Doctor Zhivago one must venture beyond that which is readily apparent in it.

This is not difficult to substantiate. There is much readily identifiable symbolism in Doctor Zhivago, in the form, for example, of rain which seems to represent rebirth and purification, the train which is symbolic of the life-path, the Rowanberry tree which is connected with self-sacrifice, and, the often-mentioned religious symbolism.

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<sup>27</sup>Struve, op. cit., p. 233, citing Visto, (June 6, 1959).

Needless to say, interpretation of symbolism always requires extreme caution. There is often a hazardously subtle dividing line between that which may be justified on the basis of objective evidence and that which remains imaginary on the part of the would-be interpreter. The hazards are particularly great if the substantiation of some theory regarding a given work is involved. The temptation in this connection to magnify essentially insignificant elements can be overwhelming. This is directly relevant to the present thesis because the discussion here will involve not only questions of symbolism but also the substantiation of a theory.

Unfortunately, Doctor Zhivago has already been victimized by interpreters. This fact has prompted Billington to refer to the novel as a "buried treasure chest of symbols and allusions".<sup>28</sup> It has also evoked a strong reaction from Struve in the form of his article "Sense and Nonsense about Doctor Zhivago".<sup>29</sup>

An enumeration and discussion of what are considered to be misinterpretation concerning Doctor Zhivago would be largely irrelevant to the present discussion. However where particular ideas and interpretations have a more or less direct

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<sup>28</sup>Billington, op. cit., p.555.

<sup>29</sup>Struve, op. cit.

reference to this discussion, they will be dealt with in the place and context to which they are relevant.

In spite of requirements of objectivity in the study of literature, literary interpretation remains a highly subjective art being influenced as it is by the interpreter's own world outlook and angle of approach. It is unavoidable that there should be considerable controversy over a given work particularly in the initial stages of critical evaluation when the object of study is recent as is the case with Doctor Zhivago. An exchange of opinion may or may not eventually lead to a commonly accepted understanding of Doctor Zhivago, but for the time being it may be safely said that there will be much controversy over this novel, which will see some opinions accepted as others fall by the wayside.

It is hoped that what is to be discussed here will add, if only in a minor way, to a positive evaluation of what is felt to be a great work of art, the significance and beauty of which are, unfortunately, as yet under-estimated by many.

### III. THE REVOLUTION AND

#### DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

It is clear from the title of this thesis that this discussion will deal with what is felt to be a symbolic presentation in Doctor Zhivago of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

A number of points need to be clarified in this connection.

The question of Pasternak's presentation of the Revolution is of course an extremely sensitive one. The entire "Pasternak Affair" revolved around this question. And, while for some literary authorities in the West the theme of the Revolution represents the central significance of the novel, particularly because they prefer to see in it a pro-Western orientation on the part of the author, other reviewers, who are understandably disgusted with the political controversy which the novel evoked, prefer to focus on the other of its themes. And so Helen Muchnic has stated that "Doctor Zhivago is not about the Revolution; it is about how and why poetry is written. The Revolution is but one of its many subjects."<sup>30</sup>

True, Doctor Zhivago is not "about the Revolution"; it is, rather, about life and its meaning in terms of the individual. Into this enter such considerations as the meaning of history, the nature of death and immortality, the nature of art and its place in the life of the individual. But can it be justly said that the Revolution is but one of the novel's many subjects? If the central theme of Doctor Zhivago is life or, as Helen Muchnic suggests, art, then it is developed with the Revolution as background. If one were to

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<sup>30</sup>Helen Muchnic, From Gorky to Pasternak, (New York: Random House, 1961), p.387.

delete from the novel everything which has to do with the Revolution, the novel would be in a very bad state indeed. This would be not because what would remain is of little importance, far from it, but because the other themes in the novel, which in themselves far outweigh the importance of revolutionary events, are nevertheless, superimposed, so to speak, upon the Revolution as a historical event.

The Revolution is the plain fabric upon which the beautiful embroidery, which is Doctor Zhivago, is sewn. The Revolution is that "other drama"<sup>31</sup> in which Zhivago finds himself a reluctant actor. It is because of the Revolution and partly in defiance of it that Zhivago leads a certain type of life. Zhivago's conclusions on history, art, life, death and immortality; on the place of the individual in society, or, more accurately, on the place of society in the life of the individual, are formulated in reaction to, in spite of, or in defiance of the events in which he was forced to participate. This is the significance of the Revolution as an historical event.

Further, this thesis will attempt to show that Pasternak has devoted more attention to the subject of the Revolution than is readily apparent, as an object of special symbolic treatment.

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<sup>31</sup>The reference is to the poem "Hamlet".

It remains to touch upon one additional point. Bolshevik October has been, is, and will no doubt remain an extremely painful subject. There is good reason for this. But Pasternak deals with it as a poet. This is a poet's "image of the Revolution" and, as such, is above the level of polemics. Pasternak has always been above politics, and he remains so in Doctor Zhivago. He sees the Revolution as only a poet is capable of regarding it. Pasternak's "image of the Revolution" is an artistic synthesis of all the contradictions inherent not only in October but in the entire system of events commonly referred to as the Russian Revolution. He speaks of these things in his own terms. Politics have no place here, and if they are considered then it is only as something to be rejected.

If Doctor Zhivago does contain a germ of politics, it is because it speaks of events which are saturated with political significance. The event had and continues to have political significance -- the image has not.<sup>32</sup> This may be difficult to accept. The temptation to judge the Russian Revolution from an anti-Soviet position is powerful. But the

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<sup>32</sup>Blok's "The Twelve" evoked the same type of controversy as did Doctor Zhivago. It is interesting to note how Blok defended himself at the time:

" . . . those, who see in "The Twelve" political poetry, are either extremely blind towards art, or sit up to their ears in political grime, or are possessed by extreme malice, be they enemies or friends of my poem."

author of Doctor Zhivago must be allowed to speak for himself. One would do well to begin by taking Pasternak at his word and accepting, if only at the outset, that in writing Doctor Zhivago he had no intention of discrediting the Soviet Union.<sup>33</sup>

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"I gazed on the rainbow (above the waters and not on the stormy waters of the Revolution) when I was writing 'The Twelve'; from this a drop of politics remained in the poem."

"We shall see what time will do with this. Possibly, every kind of politics is so dirty that one drop of it will muddy and decompose all else; possibly it will not kill the meaning of the poem . . ."

Aleksandr Blok, Sobranije sochinenij v vos'mi tomakh (Collection of Works in Eight Volumes), eds. V. N. Orlov, A. A. Surkov and K. I. Chukovskij (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoj literatury, 1960), Vol. III, p. 474.

<sup>33</sup>This is what Pasternak maintained in his letter of November, 1958 to the editors of Pravda.

Pasternak op. cit., p.228.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SYMBOLIC LEVEL IN DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

This chapter will discuss the basic assumptions upon which the present work will be founded. Because some of these have as their point of departure one particular outside source<sup>1</sup>, which therefore assumes the role of something more than a mere reference, this chapter will include a synoptic review of the ideas presented there. This will establish precisely the degree to which the present thesis represents an outgrowth of the source in question.

#### I. THE VIEWS OF R. E. STEUSSY ON SYMBOLISM IN THE NOVEL

There are two basic theses which underlie Steussy's ideas. The first of these is that "Dr. Zhivago is first and foremost constructed on a myth"<sup>2</sup>, the myth being the inevitability of the Russian Revolution of 1917. This is suggested by the central role which predestination plays in the novel. Predestination is embodied in the novel in the figure of Yevgraf who in relation to Yury plays the negative role of

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<sup>1</sup>R. E. Steussy, "The Myth Behind Dr. Zhivago", The Russian Review, XVIII (July, 1959), pp. 184 - 198.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

his doom. This Steussy supports by the reference, in the novel, to the house in which Yevgraf was born and which seems to represent an ill omen for Yury, by the fact that Yevgraf first appears to Yury on the night of the Bolshevik coup, by the fact that, while suffering from typhus, Yury has hallucinations in which he sees Yevgraf as the embodiment of his death, and finally by the fact that Yevgraf "comes into his own, so to speak," only after Yury's death. The following reference to Yevgraf by Yury is dismissed as not worthy of consideration:

Perhaps in every life there has to be, in addition to other protagonists, a secret, unknown force, an almost symbolic figure who comes unsummoned to the rescue, and perhaps in mine Yevgraf my brother, plays the part of this hidden benefactor?<sup>3</sup>

Yevgraf's birthplace, his oriental features, his appearance on the night of the Bolshevik coup, his "coming into his own" after Yury's death and, finally the euphonic parallelism between "Evgraf" and "Evrazija" [Steussy's transliteration] are cited in support of a "corollary myth" concern-

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<sup>3</sup>Boris Pasternak, Doctor Zhivago, trans. Max Hayward and Manya Harari (London: Wm. Collins Sons and Co. Ltd., 1958,) p. 283.

As has been noted earlier, all references to the novel Doctor Zhivago will be to this edition in translation. This eliminates the necessity of translating passages used in quotation.

Henceforth, references to this novel will be designated by the footnote: Doctor Zhivago, in order to avoid confusion with references to Pasternak's collected works.

ing the Revolution. This myth is "that the Bolshevik triumph was the vindication of the supremacy of Russia's Eurasian substratum over the Europeanized culture of her upper classes"<sup>4</sup> and that Yevgraf is the embodiment of this Eurasian substratum.

In relation to Yevgraf, Yury is defined as symbolizing "the old Europeanized Russian culture of the late Romanov era".<sup>5</sup>

The second fundamental thesis put forward by Steussy is that all the major characters of the novel play symbolic roles (apart from their roles on the personal level) within a general allegorical development of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

Within this formulation Tonya is defined by Steussy as representing the "Bourgeois" Revolution of 1905, and Lara as symbolizing the ideal Revolution. "Apparently the February Revolution if successful would have been this ideal one".<sup>6</sup> These definitions are based on the trend of Zhivago's thoughts during his trip home from the front.<sup>7</sup> Steussy further

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<sup>4</sup>Steussy, op. cit., p.190.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.191.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.196.

<sup>7</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.160.

points out Lara's non-Russian parentage as proof that the ideal Revolution which she represents is of Western origin.

Zhivago in Steussy's view must bear the responsibility on the one hand for Tonya's exile to Europe because of his lack of loyalty to the 1905 Revolution, and on the other for the degeneration of the 1917 Revolution into Bolshevism because of his hesitation to choose between Tonya and Lara.

Of the other symbolic figures, Komarovsky represents, in Steussy's estimation, "all that was evil in old Russia"<sup>8</sup>. In this connection Steussy suggests that in order to accept the theory of the inevitability of the Revolution, "one has to be convinced of the utter and absolutely irredeemable corruption of the old Russian social order beneath its veneer of Europeanized culture".<sup>9</sup>

Komarovsky is the "evil genius" of the entire development, but "all in all . . . [his] role hardly bears close analysis, either on the personal or allegorical level, and one must conclude on reflection that the novel's impact suffers not from a deus ex machina but rather from a diabolus ex machina."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Steussy, op. cit., p.196.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, p.196.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.197.

Steussy casts Antipov in the role of the "failure of the revolution in practice to become worthy of [ the ] Ideal Revolution".<sup>11</sup> He is characterized as the "plodder" to be contrasted with Zhivago, the "genius".

Finally, Steussy points to Tania as the apparent embodiment of hope for the future. He feels, however, that "Pasternak's attempt at worldly optimism, primarily via Tania, . . . lacks conviction, in contrast to the Christian metaphysical hope in the attached poems."<sup>12</sup> He suggests two reasons for this. One is that although Tania is the child of the "pre-war culture and Revolutionary Idealism" she is far removed from them because of the almost inhuman ordeal of her childhood. The second is that Yevgraf, who is to be her guardian, has no "real qualification for bettering her lot".

Steussy's conclusions are precise:

"How can this be interpreted but that Zhivago has written "finis" to the Russia that was? That with the death of Zhivago in 1929 came the end of a cultural era? Further, that his Eurasian successor will never produce a book like the present one?"<sup>13</sup>

What may be concluded of Steussy's ideas? First of

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p.196.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p.197.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p.198.

all, it must be said that his two basic theses concerning Doctor Zhivago represent an astute appraisal of symbolism in the novel. However, on the level of the particular, Steussy makes what are felt to be serious errors. His derivative theories belie a basic error in approach. Particularly striking in this respect is his conception of the Revolution in terms of conflicting cultures. There is no overt evidence in the novel, either on the symbolic level or on the individual level to suggest that Pasternak saw the Revolution in these terms. At any rate, the apparent similarity between "Evgraf" and "Evrazija" which, in the final analysis, remains a matter of opinion, is certainly inadmissible as evidence. There are no "meaningful names" in Doctor Zhivago.<sup>14</sup>

As far as Yevgraf's "opposite" is concerned, it seems that he was defined more in keeping with his perceived relationship to Yevgraf than with any objective evidence concern-

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<sup>14</sup>Pasternak has categorically denied the existence of symbolism in the form of "meaningful names" in the novel. This applies also to the most "obviously" symbolic name, the subject of so much attention by reviewers, that of the protagonist. Pasternak also has stated that Lara's non-Russian parentage is of no significance.

Gleb Struve, "Sense and Nonsense about Doctor Zhivago", Studies in Russian and Polish Literature, in Honour of Waclaw Lednicki, Zbigniew Folejewski and others (eds.) (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1962) p.249, citing Ralf E. Matlaw, The Nation (Sept. 12, 1959).

ing him. While it seems that Pasternak intentionally made Yevgraf ill-defined, there is no such difficulty to be encountered in connection with Yury. On the basis of clear and ample proof it may be shown that Yury represents something other than Russia's pre-revolutionary culture.

In connection with two characters Steussy has failed to ascribe sufficient significance to what are clearly "statements" or interpollations by Pasternak which stand out from the general narrative and demand attention. One such "statement" was concerned with the role of Yevgraf as Yury's "benefactor". It was ignored because it did not fit Steussy's definition of Yevgraf. Steussy also missed the point of a statement on Antipov in the form of Lara's comment about him in these words: "As if a living Russian face had become an embodiment of a principle, the image of an idea".<sup>15</sup>

To Steussy "it seems ironical that this should be said of any single character in the novel, when it applies almost equally to all".<sup>16</sup> It is true that all the major characters in the novel are symbolic abstractions, but this reference to Pasha implies something distinctly different, something extremely important in terms of Pasha's "symbolic

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<sup>15</sup> Doctor Zhivago, p. 393.

<sup>16</sup> Steussy, op. cit., p. 195.

definition". It is followed (very closely) by the explanation "I realized that this had happened to him because he had handed himself over to something lofty but deadening and pitiless, which wouldn't spare him in the end."<sup>17</sup>

It will be shown that this explanation does not entirely agree with Steussy's definition of Antipov as the "failure of the Revolution in practice to become worthy of the Ideal Revolution".

Steussy commits similar errors in defining most of the remaining personages. These points will become clarified with the development of this discussion. However, it may be said at this stage that Steussy's basic failing lies in the fact that, like most Western critics, he approaches Doctor Zhivago from an anti-Soviet position and with the a priori conclusion that Pasternak's position with regard to the Revolution is similar. Given evidence, therefore, that Lara, for example, is to be associated symbolically with the events of 1917, Steussy unhesitatingly casts her in the role of the March Revolution. Indeed, how can someone as beautiful as Lara be even remotely associated with something as repulsive as the Bolshevik Revolution?

Steussy's conclusions are, of course, the product of his line of approach.

It was not the intention to present here a comprehensive

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<sup>17</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p. 393.

critique of Steussy's ideas. What has been said by way of comment, however, was intended to suggest that the present thesis will have a different orientation. While this thesis is definitely an outgrowth of Steussy's article, it will become clear that the latter represents essentially but a superficial understanding of the symbolic development of the Revolution and as such is incomplete, inaccurate in some respects, and wrong in others.

It is felt that the present thesis will justify itself as a study in its own right.

#### 11. THE SYMBOLIC LEVEL

An attempt has been made to relate Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago directly with his poetry, which is characteristically complex and multiplanar in structure. That the novel presents a multiplicity of themes is readily apparent. What is somewhat less obvious is the fact that the plot structure of Doctor Zhivago is laid out on two distinct levels. This has been implied by Struve's reference to some of the major characters as belonging to a symbolic plane.<sup>18</sup> It remained for Steussy to establish that this symbolic plane in effect represents an allegorical presentation of the Revolution, in which the major characters of the novel take on the roles of

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<sup>18</sup>Struve, op. cit., p. 240.

symbols representative of forces which were at play in Russian society before, during and after the Revolution of 1917. This may be visualized as if the characters who play the roles of individuals in the drama of life, projected at the same time, large images on some back drop. While the individuals act out one plot, their images take part in another, parallel in development but on an entirely different level of significance.

The implications of this are far-reaching. For example, the actions of characters may have double significance. What is more important is that actions of characters which are completely paradoxical and inexplicable in terms of a "personal level", more often than not, form a logical part of the symbolic superstructure. A very important case in point is Zhivago's infidelity to his wife, Tonya. While on the personal level it is problematic and may be explained in several ways, on the symbolic level the entire love triangle assumes a clear and logical significance in terms of revolutionary developments.

Enigmatic, illogical or awkward passages acquire a clear significance in terms of the symbolic level. In fact it will be seen, and this will be one of the basic assumptions in this discussion, that the symbolic level in Doctor Zhivago is constructed on a number of what might be named "obvious places" (for want of a better term). These are passages which for one reason or another stand out in relief from the general

narrative, are clearly intended to be taken notice of.

A particular passage may be "obvious" for one of several reasons: because it clearly represents the author's interpellation, because of surprising emphasis placed upon it, because it seems to be out of context or appears to be unrealistic within a generally realistic framework, or, finally, because it represents a metaphorical equation of a person with an idea or a concept. More often than not a passage of this type has a peripheral relation to the immediate context but has a definite and logical relationship to the symbolic pattern.

What will be referred to as the "symbolic level" in Doctor Zhivago is a more or less clearly definable symbolic presentation of revolutionary events which moves in parallel with development on the personal level although not necessarily in a chronological correspondence, and represent a generalized conception of the Revolution.

The symbolic level can be broken down into two distinct spheres of interrelationships of symbolic personages. Within each sphere, the role of a particular figure develops in relation to other figures and particularly in relation to one which forms the focus of each sphere.

One can suggest, then, that each of the four women associated with Zhivago have a symbolic significance. These are Tonya, Lara, Marina and Tania and their significance is

developed on the basis of their relation to Yury. Further, there is a clear symbolic significance associated with each of Lara's three men. They are Antipov, Komarovsky and Zhivago and their significance is developed on the basis of their relation to Lara. Yevgraf is also a symbolic figure but he does not enter into either of these spheres.

The volume of material to be considered here, as well as the fact that the symbolic level will be discussed in chronological correspondence with historical events, will perhaps make these spheres of relationship not readily apparent. However it is helpful to visualize the symbolic level in this schematic form.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TWO WORLDS OF YURY ZHIVAGO

That Yury Zhivago is a member of Russia's middle class intelligentsia of the pre-revolutionary period is a matter of definition. He embodies all the salient characteristics of this group of "carriers" of Russia's culture of the period. He is a member of the middle class and a well-educated professional. A poet himself, he is in the midst of the literary current. He is a humanist whose concern for the welfare of the people of his country and his feeling of guilt over his privileged social status predispose him toward an acceptance of the Revolution from an intellectual point of view.

Yury's representative role does not end here. It can be shown that not only is he a typical member of the intelligentsia as an individual, but that in fact, he represents the intelligentsia, or a specific element of it as a collective entity.

But before entering into a discussion of this aspect of Yury's role it is necessary to make some general remarks on Russia's intelligentsia as a group.

#### I. THE RUSSIAN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY

##### INTELLIGENTSIA

The Russian intelligentsia was the unique product of

uniquely Russian conditions. Until the latter part of the nineteenth century it drew its membership from the aristocracy. This group was the only educated element of Russian society. As such, it had a dual role: it was the repository of Russian culture, and it was the only group politically conscious and articulate enough to offer any sort of opposition to an unbearably totalitarian autocracy.

Some interesting results came from these conditions. The intelligentsia began to look upon themselves as spokesmen for all of the Russian people in a struggle for social and political concessions from the Government. This was strengthened by the emergence of what has become known as a "repentant nobleman" complex, a feeling of guilt on the part of the intellectuals over their privileged status and a feeling of obligation to the working masses for having made this status possible. This, in turn, developed into a romantic conception of the masses as the "People" which had its extreme expression in Populism. Another result of these conditions was the fact that because strict censorship made open polemics impossible, creative literature became a forum for voicing political and social ideas.

Because under Russian conditions there was no opportunity to test ideas practically, social and political ideology tended to be strongly utopian and radical. Also, while the intelligentsia were avowed leaders and guardians of the

"Peoples" rights, there was virtually no understanding between these two elements. The lack of contact between the intelligentsia and the object of their idealization became clear during the so called "going to the people" of 1873 and 1875. This lack of understanding of the real people was to be a continuing feature of the intelligentsia's world outlook. It continued to make their theories unrealistic, and was not, in fact, corrected until the Revolution of 1917.

At the turn of the century, after the decline of the aristocracy, the intelligentsia was composed mostly of members of the middle class. However its role vis a vis the Government on the one hand and the "People" on the other remained unchanged. Under the influence of socialist thought, the intelligentsia drifted more and more towards extremism in its attitude towards the government. The recalcitrant attitude of the government in the face of demands for social and political reform furthered this trend. Had the fruits of the 1905 Revolution been allowed to develop the drift toward extremism might have been stopped. As it was, the limited liberties granted in 1905 were rescinded at the first opportunity. The results of 1905, then, were a tantalizing taste of constitutional freedom and the ever growing conviction that the only means to the establishment of a democratic order must be nothing short of Revolution.

This trend was strengthened further by the emergence of a secularized religious philosophy. This resulted in a unique blend of Christian messianism and socialism in which ideas of Apocalypse and Revolution, rebirth and emancipation of man became inseparably fused.

The man mainly responsible for this new orientation was Solovyov, considered to be Russia's foremost philosopher of the nineteenth century. At the centre of his thought was the conception of man as a link between nature and God:

In Christ's incarnation he saw the evidence that man can be redeemed and become divine. The purpose of human history, which Solovyov conceived as part of a cosmic process, is the marriage of humanity to divinity by which the duality of the divine and human, of the spiritual and the natural would be overcome. This process which also encompasses man's regeneration, is conceivable only as a collective endeavour within the framework of family, nation or mankind; . . .<sup>1</sup>

He viewed history in terms of two periods: that pre-dating Christianity during which human relations were based on principles of tyranny of the powerful over the weak, and the Christian era which gave a new foundation for society. The ultimate victory of the Christian basis of society over the remnants of the old and bankrupt order would be achieved but only after wars, tribulations and the temptation of the

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<sup>1</sup>Mark Slonim, From Chekhov to the Revolution, Russian Literature 1900 - 1917 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.104.

Antichrist.<sup>2</sup>

Similar religious ideas were echoed in the writings of other ideologists like, for example, Merezhkovsky and Berdiaev. The entire spectrum of Russian intellectual thought of the period 1900 -- 1917 was to some extent influenced by Solovyov. This is particularly true of Symbolism which was an extremely powerful current in the arts at the time.

As a result of the events of 1905, Symbolism in literature began to reflect more and more a concern for social and cultural questions. Under the leadership of Ivanov, Bely and Blok it combined Christian humanism and revolutionary messianism which was peculiarly Russian. The Apocalypse which Solovyov foretold was to take the form of Revolution toward which Russia was taking the first steps. The social upheavals were an indication of this. The victory of God would take the form of complete reconstruction of society on a Christian basis. In the eyes of the Symbolists the social unrest and the Revolution which they expected took on the aspect of a holy crusade.

Ivanov, like Solovyov, defined his own era as one of change and upheaval. Cultures had to die before new

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<sup>2</sup>S. V. Utechin, Russian Political Thought, A Concise History, (New York -- London: Frederick A. Proeger, Publisher, 1964), pp. 169--177.

life could rise from the tomb, and he hailed the work of destruction in the cycle of eternal renewal.<sup>3</sup>

He envisaged the role of art as being central in the preparation for this coming crisis.

A similar orientation led Bely to look upon the catastrophe of the 1917 Revolution and the Civil War as a Golgotha which promised resurrection and emancipation of man. Russia was suffering for all mankind.

Thus the messianic faith of the Slavophiles, the revolutionary pathos of the Populists . . . , and the Christian mystical flight of Symbolism were all blended in this vision of Russia announcing a new Gospel amid storm and blood.<sup>4</sup>

Blok accepted not without a sense of loss the coming destruction of culture, as he knew and cherished it, in the name of a glorious future. This drove him to a rejection of the milieu of which he was a part. In effect this was self-negation, the rejection of that part of himself which was part of Russia's culture. This was done in the name of something as yet intangible, something mysterious and frightening in a way, yet irresistably seductive. This was the result of the realization that the beauty of the

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<sup>3</sup>Slonim, op. cit., p.188.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.193.

world of the privileged, of his own world which had inspired his early poetry, was false, illusory and illegitimate, that the real world was that "other world" which he had discovered with a start: the dark world of suffering and moral and literal filth which surrounded him and those like him.

Thus, at the height of his literary career Blok's view of life changed drastically. The pure, romantic themes of his early poetry gave way to sombre imagery. The premonition of an imminent catastrophe dominated his work. And he gave himself wholeheartedly to the coming Revolution. His poetry became a prayer to Russia, which often took on the image of a woman: a mother figure or a mysteriously alluring, sensuous mistress.

In their ever growing commitment to the revolutionary dream the intelligentsia underwent a profound psychological crisis. The fact of the situation was that while the failure of the 1905 Revolution seemed to prove that the only solution to Russia's problems was to be found in a Revolution, the events of 1905 were also a presage of the pitiless and violent tendencies of the masses which would be surely released in an out and out uprising. It became manifestly clear to the intelligentsia that a genuinely popular upheaval would mercilessly destroy not only the corrupt social and political system but that which was positive and valuable.

Thus, in accepting the Revolution in the name of the "People", the intelligentsia also consciously accepted the destruction of its own culture, which at the time was enjoying a vital rebirth. Something of the ambivalent feelings of the intelligentsia is evident in Blok's comment on his hymn in praise of the Revolution, The Twelve: "I love The Twelve. I fought against what I wrote, yet I felt it as a supreme truth."<sup>5</sup>

Peretz, a Jewish writer, expressed himself in 1906 in this way in speaking of the "People" and their imminent rising:

Today's day does not wish to die. Each sunset is a bloody one . . . I want, I hope for your victory, but I am afraid and I shudder before it. You - are my hope, you are my fear.<sup>6</sup>

The same sentiments are echoed in Doctor Zhivago:

. . . Yury saw it as it was, he could see it [life as he knew it] was doomed, and that he and such as he were sentenced to destruction.  
 . . . . .

He understood that he was a pygmy before the monstrous machine of the future. He both feared and loved that future and was secretly proud of it, . . .<sup>7</sup>

The vacillations of the intelligentsia reached a peak

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>6</sup>I. L. Peretz, "Hope and Fear", 20tn Yorhundert, (Buenos Aires: Yosef Liphshitz -- fond fun der literatur -- gesellschaft baym YNO, 1952) pp. 221 -- 224.

<sup>7</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p. 183.

during the year 1917, after the March Revolution which saw the overthrow of the monarchy. On the one hand it seemed that enough had been achieved to assure a stable democratic system. The violence of the popular upheaval also tended to show the wisdom of retaining the status quo. On the other hand the "Revolution" as it had been visualized by the intelligentsia was only a step away. The fulfillment of the socialist dream seemed within reach.

This dilemma was solved by the Bolshevik coup in October. But many who, like Blok hailed this event were doomed to disillusionment. The new system not only destroyed their former way of life; it also refused to accept them. The "People", for whom they had sacrificed so much and whom they had idealized, rejected them as representatives of a hated system and as potential enemies.

In the interest of historical accuracy it must be said that the above discussion of the intelligentsia in relation to the Revolution represents a rather over-simplified and selective view. Not all the intelligentsia were literary men, not all were Symbolists, not all were inspired by Christian messianism. Nor did they all hope for a socialist revolution although it seems the majority favoured the overthrow of the Tsar.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>It seems however that even the liberals who supposedly represented an alternative to socialism were not unreceptive to socialist radicalism. See, for example: Mark Raeff, "Some Reflections on Russian Liberalism", The Russian Review, XVIII (July, 1959), pp. 218 -- 230; and V. A. Maklakov, The First State Duma, Contemporary Reminiscences, trans. Mary Belkin (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964) pp. 233 -- 243.

Scientific accuracy was not the object here, nor was it possible. What was intended was an overview of forces at play during the period 1900 - 1917 synthesized in a manner which seems relevant to the present discussion, in order to form a frame of reference of sorts.

### I. YURY ZHIVAGO

Yury exhibits altogether too many representative characteristics to be regarded simply as an individual. Some of these have been mentioned. To this at the outset must be added the fact that he is under the strong influence of his uncle's peculiar secularized Christian humanism<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>It would seem that Nikolay Nikolayevich also plays a symbolic role. It is significant, of course, that he is a voluntarily de-frocked priest. This on the philosophical plane is paralleled by the fact that his Christian humanism has become secularized to the extent that it is not incompatible with atheism. (Doctor Zhivago, p. 17). It is interesting to note the change that comes about as this humanism becomes progressively less religious until it finds expression in Marxism. Vadenyapin is initially described as one who "craves[s] for an idea, inspired yet concrete, that would show a clear path and change the world for the better . . ." (Doctor Zhivago p. 15). He apparently finds this "inspired yet concrete" idea in Marxism. Yet it seems that to Pasternak something vital is lost in this change in the man. At the beginning he is a man whose "mind move[s] with freedom and [is] open to the unfamiliar. He ha[s] an aristocratic sense of equality with all living things and a gift of taking in everything at a glance and of expressing his thoughts as they first [come] to him and before they [lose] their meaning and vitality" (Doctor Zhivago, p. 15).

When he appears again he is no longer the humble seeker after truth but a "flashy" personality conscious of his public image, with the overbearing confidence of one who has found the answer to the world's problems. In fact, he has become unrecognizable to Yury.

which is an unmistakable echo of Solovyov's philosophy, particularly of two concepts in it: the idea that social relations must be based on the Christian principle of cooperation between free men who live with and for each other, and secondly, the concept of the bankruptcy of the pre-Christian social system, based as it was on enslavement of man by man. There are other factors that make him a symbolic figure. His exposure to the "other world" of the poor people and their misery comes immediately after the events of the 1905 Revolution which gave the intelligentsia somewhat of an insight into the temperament of the "People" as well as a foretaste of the Revolution. The sharp contrast that is drawn between the concert at the Gromekos' and Lara's world after which, significantly enough, Yury begins thinking "about the girl and the future, and not about his father and the past"<sup>10</sup> recalls not only the wide gulf which separated the intelligentsia from the lower classes, but can perhaps also be seen as an allusion to the change in Blok's view of Russian reality.

There are other, more definite allusions to Blok. Yury shares Blok's loyalty to the Revolution. Yury's hallucination while he is suffering from typhus is reminiscent of the view of the Revolution as the Apocalypse:

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<sup>10</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p. 68.

Near him, touching him, were hell, corruption, dissolution, death; yet equally near him were spring and Mary Magdalene and life. -- And it was time to awake. Time to awake and to get up. Time to arise, time for the resurrection.<sup>11</sup>

Yury's death in 1929 is significant not only because it coincides with the beginning of the Stalin era but because the symbolism of the manner of his death so clearly recalls Blok's description of the Soviet system shortly before his own death:

There are no sounds! All sounds have ceased. There is nothing to breathe with either. It is impossible to write under such oppression.<sup>12</sup>

On the symbolic level, Yury represents that element of the creative intelligentsia which awaited the coming Revolution with fond expectation and, when it came in the form of the October coup, accepted it.

In view of Yury's central position in respect to other characters it would be difficult, at this point, to enter into a more detailed analysis of his symbolic role. This would necessarily involve the definition of other figures. Instead, this discussion will continue with an analysis of the roles of the other characters. This will simultaneously include a detailed investigation of Zhivago's role.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p.206.

<sup>12</sup>Slonim, op. cit., p.206.

## II. TONYA

The circumstances which lead up to the marriage between Tonya and Yury seem rather ordinary and unromantic. Tonya's parents, the Gromekos, had provided Yury with a foster home after his uncle's departure to St. Petersburg. Yury and Tonya grew up together, went to university together and graduated together. Then, at one point they became engaged, not through their own initiative, but by Tonya's mother, Anna. All this has the feel of a kind of logical, almost dull, inevitability. In Anna's words, "they were meant for each other".<sup>13</sup> To Yury, Tonya had, until then, been a part of his life which "had always been taken for granted and had never needed explaining, . . ."<sup>14</sup> All this may be taken to suggest that Yury's and Tonya's marriage was not a love match but an emotionless consequence of their long acquaintance. Yury's subsequent abandonment of Tonya would therefore seem to be inevitable and justified. Beside the living, breathing figure of Lara, Tonya appears rather plain. One is tempted to conclude as Steussy did, that "taking the novel on the human level it is impossible to imagine how Zhivago could have retained the slightest trace

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<sup>13</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.77.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p.85.

of loyalty to the featureless Tonya when in the presence of this beautiful creature [Lara].<sup>15</sup>

But how are these things to be reconciled with Yury's thoughts on the fateful night of his capture by the partisans?

He worshipped Tonya. Her peace of mind meant more to him than anything in the world. He was ready to defend her honour and was more sensitive to anything touching it than her father or herself.<sup>16</sup>

The answers to the relationship between Tonya and Yury must be sought on the symbolic level. A key to the symbolic interpretation of Tonya's role is to be found in the passage describing Yury's thoughts during his journey home from the front.<sup>17</sup> This passage represents an example of what has been referred to as "obvious places". It represents a metaphorical equation of concepts and personages. Here both Tonya and Lara are symbolically defined. But to deal with Tonya:

In one circle were his thoughts of Tonya: their home and their former, settled life where everything, down to the smallest detail, had its poetry and its sincerity and warmth. Yury felt anxious about this life, he wanted it to be safe and whole, and after two years of separation, rushing back to it in his express train, he longed already to be there.

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<sup>15</sup>R. E. Steussy, "The Myth Behind Dr. Zhivago", The Russian Review, XVIII (July, 1959), 193.

<sup>16</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.297.

<sup>17</sup>This was noted by Steussy.

Here too were his loyalty to the revolution and his admiration for it, the revolution, in the sense in which it was accepted by the middle classes and in which it had been understood by the students, followers of Blok, in 1905.

This familiar circle also contained the foretaste of new things. In it were those omens and promises which before the war, between 1912 and 1914 had appeared in Russian thought, art and life, in the destiny of Russia as a whole and in his own.

It would be good to go back to that climate, once the war was over, to see its renewal and continuation, just as it was good to be going home.<sup>18</sup>

It is clear that Tonya is identified with the warmth and stability of life before World War I, with the gains of the 1905 revolution and what they promised for the future. Tonya's symbolic definition takes this form: it would be good to go back to that climate, once the war was over, to see its renewal and continuation, just as it was good to be going home. Key words, also, are middle classes.

These are the views of a member of the middle class intelligentsia, because it was for this group that this period was so significant, with its new developments in literature, art and culture in general. This was the intelligentsia's Russia -- they were married to it.

One must not overlook the significance of the fact that Yury's and Tonya's betrothal is described in the chapter "Christmas Party at the Sventitskys". This chapter is the

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<sup>18</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p. 160.

description of the cultural, fashionable, familiar and warm life of the middle classes. In this context the air of "logical inevitability" which surrounds the betrothal has a specific meaning. It is representative of the bond between the intelligentsia and this middle class world of the period after 1905, which had a gradual and logical development -- the result of thorough familiarity. The world of the intelligentsia was one of old familiar and cherished things suddenly, as a result of the 1905 Revolution, seen in a new light, given a new vitality, a new potential. This is implied in the sudden change in the way Yury looked on Tonya:

To Yura, his old friend Tonya, until then a part of his life which had always been taken for granted and had never needed explaining, had suddenly become the most inaccessible and complicated being he could imagine . . . he was filled with that ardent sympathy and shy wonder which are the beginning of passion.<sup>19</sup>

This life had been interrupted by the war and Yury longed to recapture it. And yet, when he returned to it it seemed somehow strange, not so much because it had changed but because something had changed in him. This was the result of the war. It brought him into contact with something which he tried very hard to forget.

His child which was born to him at the beginning of

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<sup>19</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.85.

the war rejected him and "he went out of the room depressed and with a feeling of ill omen."<sup>20</sup> He looked with different eyes on the life of which he was a part:

. . . There really was something unhealthy in the way rich people used to live. Masses of superfluous things. Too much furniture, too much room, too much refinement, too much self-expression.<sup>21</sup>

During the next few days he realized how isolated he was.<sup>22</sup>

He looked at his friends differently: "He must have over-estimated them in the past".<sup>23</sup>

The life which was so dear to the intelligentsia, was, unfortunately, meaningful only to a narrow stratum of Russian society. The intelligentsia became aware of the discrepancy in the way of life of the various levels of Russian society. This is clearly brought out in the chapter "Moscow Bivouac" and is represented by the "duck party". Here, Zhivago echoes in his thoughts, the "repentant nobleman"

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<sup>20</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.173.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, p.169.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid, p.174.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid, p.174.

concept formulated in the 1860's by Lavrov<sup>24</sup> which formed part of the intelligensia's "People" - oriented revolutionary philosophies:

. . . The saddest thing of all was that their party was out of keeping with the conditions of the times. You could not imagine anyone in the houses across the street eating or drinking in the same way at the same time.

And so it seemed that the only real way of living was to live like everyone else, to be lost in other people's lives without leaving a trace, and that unshared happiness was not happiness . . . <sup>25</sup>

This passage must not be understood in terms of the immediate context alone. It is symbolic of the profound dichotomy in Russian life.

The same chapter "Moscow Bivouac" also contains Zhivago's meditations on the Revolution and its inevitability. At this point he is already aware that he is being strangely drawn to Lara, in spite of himself and in spite of his deep

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<sup>24</sup>"According to Lavrov, all cultural progress was made possible by the millions who sweated and toiled, thus gaining for a privileged minority the opportunity for observation, study and creativeness. This appeal, addressed to the youth of the educated classes, contended that they were indebted to the people for their artistic and intellectual pleasures."

Mark Slonim, From Chekhov to the Revolution, Russian Literature 1900 -- 1917, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962) p.5.

<sup>25</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.175.

loyalty and affection for his wife and his life with her.

### III. LARA

Lara is first introduced in the Chapter "A Girl From a Different World". The title underscores a fundamental contrast, namely the contrast between the life in Lara's world with the details of Komarovsky's sordid relations with Lara and her mother, and her mother's attempted suicide on the one hand, and on the other the concert at the Gromekos' at which the young Yury is present. This chapter describes Yury's first venture into this world which is so strange to him. He later describes this meeting in these terms:

That night, as a school girl in your coffee-coloured uniform, in the shadow of your room in the hotel, you were already as you are now, you were just as overwhelmingly lovely.

Later I have often tried to name and to define the enchantment of which you sowed the seeds in me -- that gradually fading light and dying sound which have become to me the means of understanding everything else in the world through you.<sup>26</sup>

The contrast is carried through the next chapter "Christmas Party at the Sventitsky's" with its picture of middle class contentment. This time it is Lara who invades this world alien to her.

The chapter in which Lara is introduced is a mosaic of

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<sup>26</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.417.

themes. We have here, a description of Komorovsky's devastating effect on Lara's life. Pasha is introduced here. His character is described, as well as his revolutionary activity and his relationship to Lara. Nikolay Nikolayevich's secularized Christian philosophy is further developed. We are given a sketch of the 1905 Revolution.

Lara forms the focus of this thematic mosaic. The Revolution of 1905 and Nikolay Nikolayevich's doctrine become united in Lara's consciousness. Of the revolution she thinks: "The boys are shooting . . . Good, decent boys . . . It's because they are good that they are shooting".<sup>27</sup> These thoughts are intimately bound with Christian principles: "Happy are the downtrodden, they have something to say for themselves. They have everything before them. That was what He thought. That was Christ's opinion of it."<sup>28</sup> The synthesis of these things takes this form: "'How splendid', she thought, listening to the gun shots. 'Blessed are the downtrodden. Blessed are the deceived. God speed the bullets. They and I are of one mind.'<sup>29</sup>

Lara, then, is identified with the spirit of the 1905

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

Revolution. It is not difficult to see her place among the downtrodden and the deceived. But it is of ominous significance that she considers the shots that are being fired to be only blanks. This is a preparation for another shot which is soon to be heard. This will be the shot fired at Komarovsky.

Lara's symbolic role is presented in the same passage which has already been referred to in connection with Tonya. Tonya was part of one circle of thoughts, Lara is part of the other: new things were part of this circle:

These new things were not familiar, not led up to by the old; they were unchosen prescribed by reality and as sudden and inevitable as an earthquake.

Among them was the war with its bloodshed and its horrors, its homelessness, savagery and isolation, its trials and the worldly wisdom which it taught. Here too were the lovely little towns where you were stranded by the war, and the people with whom it threw you together. Such a new thing, too, was the revolution, not the one, idealized in student fashion in 1905, but this new upheaval, born of the war, bloody, pitiless, elemental -- a soldier's revolution, led by its professionals, the bolsheviks. [Italics not in the original.]

And among his new thoughts was Nurse Antipova, caught by the war at the back of beyond, with her completely unknown life, Antipova who never blamed anyone, yet whose very silence was almost a reproach, mysteriously reserved and so strong in her reserve. Here too was Yury's honest effort to put all his strength into not loving her, as honest as his striving all his life to love everyone, not only his family and his friends.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.161.

What, then, is Lara associated with? She is associated with the new events, the results of the war, the violent, elemental upheaval which bore no resemblance to the visions of the intellectuals in 1905, precisely -- "the soldier's revolution, led by the Bolsheviks." A shocking, and yet unavoidable, juxtaposition: Lara and the Bolshevik Revolution! And yet in keeping with historical fact one can hardly claim that the March Revolution was led by the Bolsheviks.

This is clearly supported on the personal level. The duck party, already referred to, takes place at a time when the March Revolution is an established fact, but Yury, when he makes his speech, refers to the Revolution in the future tense:

The sea of blood will rise until it reaches every one of us and submerges all who tried to stay out of the war by sitting it out at home. The revolution is this flood.

When this happens it will seem to you, . . . that life has stopped, that there is nothing personal left, that there is nothing going on in the world except killing and dying. . . I don't know if the people will rise of themselves and advance like a tide, or if everything will only be done in their name [Italics not in the original.] . . . . .

I also think that Russia is destined to become the first socialist country. . . The new order of things will be all round us.<sup>31</sup>

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It is noteworthy that the novel contains no reference

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p.181.

to the March Revolution or the Kerensky regime as a "revolution".

The unavoidable conclusion to be drawn from this is that Pasternak's view of the events of 1917 corresponds with that of Soviet historiography which sees the "bourgeois" Revolution of March and the liberal regime which it ushered in as simply a sequel to the 1905 Revolution and as such a continuation of the bourgeois way of life.

Lara, then, is associated with the Bolshevik Revolution, but not so much with the actual fact, as with the expectation of it. She represents the ideal of revolution as it was conceived by the intelligentsia; and for the intelligentsia the ideal was bound inseparably with the Christian philosophy and an idolization of the "People". In this respect Lara is "a girl from a different world" in two senses: she is the downtrodden and exploited people; she is also the romantic idealistic conception which the intelligentsia had of this element with which they had essentially little contact.

There are further references to Lara in these terms to be found in the novel. Specifically, Antipov's references to Lara are of fundamental importance. Antipov, it will become clear, plays the role of parallel to Yury.

The chapter "Again Varykino" contains the following conversation between Yury and Pasha:

Antipov spoke of various things, of his adventures during the Civil War, and then:

Strelnikov suddenly switched to the Revolution.

None of this can mean anything to you. You couldn't understand it. You grew up quite differently. The world of the suburbs, of the railways, of the slums and tenements. Dirt, hunger, overcrowding, the degradation of women. And there was the world of the mother's darlings, of smart students and rich merchants' sons; the world of impunity, of brazen, insolent vice; of rich men laughing or shrugging off the tears of the poor, the robbed, the insulted, the seduced; the reign of parasites whose only distinction was that they never troubled themselves about anything, never gave anything to the world and left nothing behind them.<sup>32</sup>

.....

There was that. But what gave unity to the nineteenth century, what set it apart as a historical period was the birth of socialist thought. - Revolutions, selfless young men dying on the barricades, journalists racking their brains about how to curb the brute insolence of money, how to save the human dignity of the poor. Marxism arose. It uncovered the root of the evil and it found the remedy, it became the great force of the age.

And Tverskaya - Yamskaya Street was all that -- the dirt and the heroism, the vice and the slums, and the proclamations and the barricades.

You can't imagine how lovely she was as a child, a school girl. . . You could indict the century in her name, out of her mouth.<sup>33</sup> [*Italics not in the original.*]

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There arose before the eyes of the world the immeasurably vast figure of Russia, bursting into flames

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<sup>32</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.449.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p.450.

like a light of redemption for all the sorrows and misfortunes of mankind. [The Revolution] . . .

For the sake of this girl I studied . . . [then] plunged headlong into the revolution, to pay back in full all her wrongs, all that she had suffered, to wash her mind clean of those memories, so that it should not be possible to return to the past, so there should be no more Tverskaya -- Yamskayas.<sup>34</sup>

Clearly, what is developed here is precisely the same kind of "obvious place" that has been considered in connection with Zhivago's "thoughts". Here, Lara is included in the same "circle of thoughts" with reflections on the misery of life in that other world, so strange to Yury yet so familiar to Pasha. The Revolution and its objectives, as Pasha sees them, also belong here.

There are some very real differences in the significance that Lara has for each of the two men. The specifics of this will be considered at a later stage. It will suffice to repeat at this point that, symbolically, Lara represents the masses, not so much in the concrete sense, as in the sense of the "People" of Russia, for whom the time had come to raise their heads and demand retribution for all the injustices of history. Lara also symbolizes the "Revolution" in this sense. Rather than the historical event, she symbolizes the idea and ideal of the Revolution<sup>35</sup> -- the drawing

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid, p.451.

<sup>35</sup>Not the ideal Revolution, as Steussy suggests, -- because there was to be only one real revolution.

up of the balance sheets; the final elimination of all distinction between privileged and underprivileged; the exploiter and the exploited; the categorical rejection and elimination of "evil" in an all-embracing sense.

#### IV. THE DILEMMA

It is clear, almost from the start that Zhivago's relationship with Lara has in it something more than the simply fortuitous. The first indication of this is the passage describing the candle which is lit in Pasha's window which Yury sees as he passes on the street below: "Its light seemed to fall into the street as deliberately as a glance, as if the flame were keeping a watch on the passing carriages and waiting for someone".<sup>36</sup> And the candle has a strange effect on Yury. It inspires in him the "confused and formless beginnings of a poem"<sup>37</sup> which is to be completed only much later. From this point it becomes increasingly clear that Yury and Lara are bound together by a common and inexorable destiny and that Yury cannot help loving her in spite of his efforts to the contrary. In spite of his love and loyalty for Tonya, in spite of the fact that everything that is stable and meaningful in life, is bound for him inseparably with his

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<sup>36</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.86.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p.86.

tight family circle, Yury's life path again and again crosses Lara's and he finds himself progressively more deeply committed to her. This combination of personal attraction and fate is overpowering. Zhivago plunges into a state of near despair and self-accusation. He is in love with two women. He finds himself deceiving his wife and torturing himself. In a moment of strength he appraises his position and makes a firm decision never to see Lara again. And then, oblivious of the ominous signs of warning about him, he postpones acting on his decision. At this period he is whisked out of his predicament by "an impossible, unexpected circumstance."<sup>38</sup> He is surprised by a band of Red guerillas and is pressed into service. This incident separates him for all time from his wife and throws him into Lara's arms.

Zhivago's love affair with Lara and his abandonment of Tonya take on a special significance in the light of what has been discussed to this point. The moral questions which this episode raises on the personal level do not apply here. The episode, on the symbolic level, represents the dilemma which confronted the Russian middle class intelligentsia during the period between 1905 and 1917. It represents the vacillation of the intelligentsia between acceptance of the Revolution as the final solution and the desire to cling to the familiar way of life which must inevitably be swept away

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p.198.

in a revolutionary upheaval.

In order to accept Pasternak's views of this period, two things are necessary. First of all, it is necessary to put aside the advantage of hindsight and to attempt to appreciate the appeal which the idea of revolution held for the intelligentsia of that period. Secondly, it is necessary to look upon the events of 1905 -- 1917 in the way that they were seen by the socialist-oriented intelligentsia, in fact accept the Soviet interpretation of this period. And so, the 1905 Revolution must be seen as a "bourgeois" revolution, a victory not for the "People" but for "bourgeois liberalism". Further, it is necessary to accept the view that the March Revolution of 1917 was but a continuation of what was begun in 1905. In line with this view, the March Revolution was not a "Revolution" in the sense that the Bolshevik Revolution was seen to be at the time.

In terms of such an interpretation Yury's relation to Tonya and his attempt after the war to re-establish with her the kind of life which they had enjoyed previously is unmistakable. Yury's attraction towards Lara is also clear. The fateful crossing and re-crossing of Lara's and Yury's paths represents the force of circumstances which impelled the intelligentsia toward an acceptance of the Revolution. The episode at Varykino, prior to Yury's abduction, his visits to Lara at Yuryatin, his growing internal conflict and finally,

his "firm" decision not to see Lara again; all of these things represent the dilemma of the Russian intelligentsia in face of the events of 1917. Also; in terms of this interpretation it is possible to see the meaning of the fact that Lara sympathized with the events of 1905 and yet felt that only blanks were being used. Lenin called the 1905 upheaval a "dress-rehearsal" for the 1917 Revolution.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, it is only in terms of this interpretation that it is possible to see the significance of what otherwise seems to be an example of structural weakness in Doctor Zhivago: the kidnapping of Yury by the Red partisans. This is nothing other than an excellent symbolic presentation of the Bolshevik coup of October 1917. This was the "abduction" which separated the intelligentsia forever from the old Russia that they had known and threw them into the arms of the long-worshipped and yet feared Revolution.

What was left of old Russia emigrated to Western Europe, and Russia's leading thinkers were left to ponder with regret over what might have been, had the achievements of March, 1917 been allowed to bear fruit. Zhivago was never to see Tonya again after his abduction -- he would only remember with pangs of conscience that she was about to bear

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<sup>39</sup>William Henry Chamberlin, 1917 - 1917: From the Overthrow of the Czar to the Assumption of Power by the Bolsheviks, (Vol. I of The Russian Revolution 1917 - 1921, 2 Vols.; New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965) p. 63.

him a child at the time.<sup>40</sup>

On the symbolic level Yury's vacillation between Tonya and Lara is not the result of weak will. Zhivago's abandonment of Tonya, although in concrete terms it was forced by events, on the moral plane it must be judged not as a betrayal but as a sacrifice of something dearly loved. The contrast in attractiveness between Tonya and Lara must be seen as the contrast between something concrete and the ideal. This is the tragedy of a visionary who is seduced by his own vision. But this is a heroic tragedy because the vision promised much for others but nothing for the visionary except the knowledge that he has willingly sacrificed something very dear to him for the sake of a better world. Yury loved Lara in spite of himself. How close this is to what Blok felt when he glorified the Revolution in his The Twelve: "I fought against what I wrote, yet I felt it as a supreme truth".<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>It would seem, in spite of Helen Muchnic's opinion to the contrary, that children do play a role in the novel. It seems that they represent the "results" or the "fruit" of the intelligentsia's relationship with that which each of the three women, Tonya, Lara and Marina, symbolizes. It will be noted that Yury's first child by Tonya was born immediately before the war. It may be seen as representing the "omens and promises" which had been interrupted by the war.

Reference to Helen Muchnic: Helen Muchnic, op. cit. p.391.

<sup>41</sup>Mark Slonim, op. cit., p.205.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TRAGEDY OF THE REVOLUTION

Yury Zhivago, as the embodiment of the middle class creative intelligentsia, is cast in the role of detached observer and judge of events, the weigher of truths. He lives on a higher plane of reality -- on the plane of ideas. He sees life in pure terms, considers events in terms of philosophical concepts, according to absolute values of beauty, good, righteousness, truth and justice. He weighs events in history, past, present and future in these terms. He accepts, rejects, loves and hates on this level. This does not follow from an inability to act, rather the inability to act in some circumstances would tend to be the result of this "level of existence".

In this respect, there is a striking contrast between Yury and the man that has been put forward as Yury's parallel, Antipov.

#### I. ANTIPOV

Antipov's parallelism with Yury begins and ends with the fact that he, like Yury, is in love with Lara. In terms of the symbolic level, they are both dedicated to a revolutionary ideal in the name of the revered "People". At first glance

this may seem insignificant in the face of the great contrast between them, but it is important to see that these differences are significant in terms of this basic parallelism. What we have here is a juxtaposition of conceptions of life and a consequently different approach to it. The focus is Lara.

At the outset the two men must be placed on an equal level as regards intellectual capacity. Pasternak leaves no doubt as to the intelligence and education of Antipov.<sup>1</sup> He, like Zhivago, is an idealist and a moralist. But he is the son of a railway worker, and his intimate connection with the black life of the working people moulds his world outlook. His life has no beauty, no warmth and no music.

In contrast to Yury's life of thought and creativity, his life is from the beginning characterized by action. His part in the events of 1905 is conspicuously different from that of Zhivago for whom these events were so "meaningful".

Antipov, even as a boy, "was head over heels in love with [Lara] and committed to her for life".<sup>2</sup> The fact that he became married to her has the same significance as Yury's

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<sup>1</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.102 and p.110.

There is no point in characterizing Antipov as an "unsophisticated plodder" in contrast to Yury "the genius" as Steussy does.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.57.

being married to Tonya: Lara represents Antipov's world, his way of life. Lara in relation to Antipov, as to Yury, represents an idealized conception of the "People" and the Revolution in their name. But while Yury's relationship to these things is on an emotional and philosophical plane, Antipov is in close contact with the "People" and committed to making the ideal of Revolution a reality.

The contrast goes further. Antipov's motives are founded on profound moral principles. "He had an unusual power of clear and logical reasoning, and he was endowed with great moral purity and a sense of justice; he was ardent and honourable".<sup>3</sup> But his humanism shows a conspicuous absence of Christian principles of the kind which lay at the basis of the middle class intelligentsia's cult of the "People". He is a marxist.

The passage in which Antipov's thoughts on the injustices in the life of the masses entered into a metaphorical equation with Lara has already been discussed. When this passage is compared with the similar "obvious place" connected with Yury it is possible to see a clear difference in the relationship of these two men to Lara.

Conspicuously absent in Antipov's orientation towards the "People" and the Revolution are the Christian elements to be found in Zhivago's. Marxism is at the basis of Antipov's

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.248.

world outlook. Also, Antipov's relationship with Lara is that of thorough familiarity. Lara is not enveloped for him in a shroud of mystery as she is for Yury.<sup>4</sup> To Yury, of course, she is "a girl from a different world". To Yury "Her silence was almost a reproach".<sup>5</sup> Antipov "could indict the century in her name, out of her very mouth".<sup>6</sup> For Yury, Lara is associated with the violent upheaval which awes and frightens him. Antipov is part of it. In Antipov there is no attempt not to love Lara; he is "committed to her for life". For Antipov there is, of course, no "other love"; no other world is familiar to him. His is not a love affair willed by fate.

He sees the injustices heaped upon the "People", and there is no doubt as to what should be done. Marxism becomes a program for action. There is but one path: to plunge

headlong into the revolution, to pay back in full all her wrongs, all that she had suffered, to wash her mind clean of these memories, so that it should not be possible to return to the past, so that there should be no more Tverskaya - Yamskayas.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>"And among his new thoughts was Nurse Antipova, . . . with her completely unknown life. Antipova who never blamed anyone, yet whose very silence was almost a reproach, mysteriously reserved . . ." Doctor Zhivago, p.161.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.161.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.450.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p.451.

At Zhivago he hurls these accusations: "None of this can mean anything to you. You couldn't understand it. You grew up quite differently."<sup>8</sup> "To you, it must be so much empty noise."<sup>9</sup>

But Yury saw Lara in the early days, "a school girl and at the same time the heroine of a secret drama. Her shadow on the wall was the shadow of helpless, watchful self-defence".<sup>10</sup>

He saw and he remembered. Yes, and what did he do about it?

It is clear that in symbolic terms this is a contrast between the middle class intelligentsia, and the element of it which was of proletarian origin. The difference in orientation of these two elements of the intelligentsia toward the "People" and the Revolution is plain to see. One must conclude that Pasternak saw the orientation of the middle class intelligentsia toward the lower classes as a philosophical "love affair" with an element of Russian society from which it was separated by a gap that remained largely unbridged. It is not possible to avoid the significance of these words from Lara to Zhivago: "You and I don't really

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 449.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 451.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 450.

think alike. There is something intangible, marginal, we both understand and feel in the same way. But on the wide issues, in our philosophy of life, it's better for us to stay on different sides".<sup>11</sup> In embracing the Revolution, then, the middle class intelligentsia, continued to understand it in the way that it "had been understood by the followers of Blok in 1905", that is in terms of philosophical and Christian humanistic concepts. They played a passive role in accepting the Revolution as an accomplished fact.

To Antipov, the Revolution in the name of the wronged became a life's work. He went to war and returned as Strelnikov in order to make the Revolution a reality. The disappearance of Antipov and the re-appearance of Strelnikov in his place is important. This is the metamorphosis a humanist, moralist and idealist must undergo in order to become a judge and executioner. In the process human emotions and "weaknesses" have to be put aside: "[the] living human face [must] become an embodiment of a principle, the image of an idea."<sup>12</sup>

Strelnikov's words to Yury are the words of an activist who knows that the Revolution is time for action; if it is going to become a reality, sympathy towards it is not

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 393.

enough:

These are apocalyptic times, my dear sir, this is the Last Judgement. This is a time for angels with flaming swords and winged beasts from the abyss, not for sympathizers and loyal doctors.<sup>13</sup>

Great deeds in the making require sacrifices, and even the "People" must suffer if necessary. Lenin once said ". . . today, hands descend to split skulls open, to split them open ruthlessly, although opposition to all violence is our ultimate ideal. . ." <sup>14</sup> But what, one might ask, happens to ideals in the process? Can one destroy human lives in the name of humanity. Can violence, brutality breed good? Pasternak says no! Unconditional and absolute dedication to high ideals alone is inevitably disastrous in human terms. Strelnikov fought for what he thought to be right and good, but "in order to do good to others he would have needed, besides the principles which filled his mind, an unprincipled heart -- the kind of heart that knows of no general cases, but only of particular ones, and has the greatness of small actions."<sup>15</sup> And this is Pasternak's conclusion:

"Revolutionaries who take the law into their own hands are horrifying, not as criminals, but as machines that have got

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>14</sup>James H. Billington, The Icon and the Axe., an Interpretive History of Russian Culture, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1966), p. 477, citing M. Gorky, Days with Lenin, (New York, 1932), p. 52.

<sup>15</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p. 248.

out of control . . .<sup>16</sup>

Again, what is lacking among Pasha's principles is the Christian outlook on life, which forbids the application of generalities to mankind; which demands recognition of the individual.

Antipov represents the tragedy of the makers of the Revolution; that element of Russia's "thinking" people that was entirely and unreservedly dedicated to the realization of the Revolution whatever the cost. He represents the humanist who has become the revolutionary machine and thus not only lost his own humanity but all contact with those ideals to which he has dedicated his life.

The end does not justify the means and ideals put aside even if for the moment cannot be regained. Symbolically, Antipov abandons Lara in order to become Strelnikov and loses her.

Then he looked out of the window towards the skyline and searched for the part of Yuryatin where he and his wife had lived. Suppose his wife and daughter were still there! Couldn't he go to them? Why not now, this very minute? Yes, but how could he? They belonged to another life. First he must see this one through, this new life, then he could go back to the one that had been interrupted.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p.291.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p.250.

Antipov is destined never to find Lara again.

But he is not to be condemned as a criminal. For he and the type that he personifies were selfless and dedicated "makers of a new life", ruthless eliminators of evil and injustice -- and it was their tragedy that they were wrong.

. . . for us life was a campaign. We moved mountains for those we loved, and if we brought them nothing but sorrow, we never meant to harm a hair of their heads and in the end we suffered more than they did.<sup>18</sup>

Antipov, like Yury, is a tragic hero of the Revolution. He, like Yury, sacrifices himself and that which was part of his life for the ideal of the Revolution. He, like Yury, is a victim of fate, "one wrote with Yury in sour misfortune's book".<sup>19</sup> They both are actors in a drama which they didn't write. They both played the roles which they were fated to play. Antipov is the "doer", and if he hurts Lara while attempting to remove the memory of her degradation, he is no more guilty than Yury the "thinker" for not having been aware of her degradation before.

They are parallel types. This is why Yury can say to Lara about Antipov: "I think I can only be really jealous . . . of someone I despise and have nothing in common with . . . . I am not jealous of him."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 449.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 393.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 391.

They both love Lara. It is a tragic irony that each loses her as a result of his particular character trait.

Antipov loses Lara as a result of his own deliberate actions, and Yury, the thinker, loses her because he thinks that he is doing the right thing by not interfering with events: Yury gives Lara up to Komarovsky with these words:

It may be that by giving in to you I am making a disastrous, irreparable mistake which will horrify me all my life. But all I can do now is to agree blindly and obey you as if I had no will of my own. . .<sup>21</sup>

## II. KOMAROVSKY

Regardless of the way in which Komarovsky's departure with Lara may be related directly to historical events (indeed it is unclear whether it may be identified with any specific historical event) it is clear that it represents, symbolically, the loss by the middle class intelligentsia of the revolutionary ideal, and of their idealized image of the "People". Lara's departure recalls to Yury the events of 1917 and the meaning they had at the time:

Mourning for Lara, he also mourned that distant summer in Melyuzeyevo when the revolution had been a god come down to earth from heaven, the goal of that summer when everyone had gone mad in his own way, and when everyone's life existed in its own right and not as an illustration to a thesis in support of higher policy.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 439.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 444.

Komarovsky's role in this is more than simply of "diabolus ex machina".<sup>23</sup>

Komarovsky's sinister power over Lara is described early in the novel. But even before this he emerges as the exploiter of Yury's father and the instrument of his ruin and death. This is the "evil genius" in both the lives of Lara and Yury. The implications of this are central to the symbolic presentation of the Revolution.

Komarovsky is on the symbolic level the embodiment of the exploiting element within Russian society. That this element was part of the middle class and as such belonged to the same world as the creative intelligentsia is clear. Komarovsky's presence at the Christmas party at the Sventitsky's is symbolic of this. In relation to Lara he is symbolic of the relationship of the exploiters to the people and in the early portion of the novel, particularly in the chapter "A Girl from a Different World", this is presented in clear parallel with historical events. In particular it is noteworthy that as a result of the 1905 Revolution Lara is temporarily able to loosen Komarovsky's hold on her. If this situation is only temporary it is symbolic of the fact that the 1905 Revolution fell short of the expectations of the socialists who saw in it a partial victory for bourgeois

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<sup>23</sup>As Steussy put it.

liberalism and nothing more. The significance, in this respect, of the fact that Lara thought of the 1905 upheavals as an exercise with blanks has been suggested previously.

There is a further parallel development. It is interesting that Kologrivov, with whom Lara lived from 1906, was sympathetic toward the Revolution.

He sheltered political criminals in his house and hired lawyers to defend them; and it was said of him, as a joke, that he was so keen on subsidizing the revolution and dispossessing himself that he fomented strikes at his own factory. Fond of shooting and a good marksman, he spent his Sundays in the winter of 1905 in the Serebryanny woods, giving rifle training to the insurgents.<sup>24</sup>

It was at the Kologrivov estate that Lara learned to shoot, and this prepared her for her final attempt at ridding herself of Komarovsky.

Lara's shot shatters the warm tranquility of middle class life. It is tragically significant that this world is shared by both Yury and Komarovsky, because as Lara invades this world so alien to her, not only Komorovsky but this entire world becomes the target of her desperate determination:

She walked through the festive streets, in a terrible excitement, seeing nothing, not aware of anything, except the revolver shot which, already, had gone off in her

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<sup>24</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.78.

heart - and in her heart it was a matter of complete indifference whom the shot was aimed at.<sup>25</sup>

In spite of the fact that the parasitic element in Russian society victimized its own milieu as much as it did the lower classes, the popular upheavals in Russia were indiscriminate in their fury and the entire upper stratum of Russian society fell victim to them.

What happens from this point represents Pasternak's conclusion on the Revolution. Whether Lara's attempt on Komarovsky's life is intended to be associated with political associations of the period between the 1905 and 1917 Revolutions or whether it represents the 1917 Revolution as the final attempt to rid Russia of its exploiting elements is uncertain and, in the last analysis, of secondary importance. What is significant is that Pasternak represents this element as emerging unharmed in the end.

Komarovsky escapes harm at Lara's hands. What is more, having been successful and entirely at home in the environment of the "old Russia", he re-appears in the chapter "Again Varykino", again at home in the post-revolutionary life and in the employ of the Bolsheviks. He has a further role to play. He comes between Yury and Lara and succeeds in drawing her away from him.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p.82.

This is the alienation of the "People" from the intelligentsia:

Something made Yury feel that just then Komarovsky was speaking about him, saying something to the effect that he should not be trusted (serving two masters, Yury thought he heard), that it was impossible to tell if he were more attached to Lara or his family, [Italics not in the original] that Lara must not rely on him because if she did she would be "running with the hare and hunting with the hounds" and would "fall between two stools". 26

Lara does not protest these accusations and Yury, seeing what is happening, does nothing to prevent it.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that popular movements as well as high ideals associated with them are inevitably vulnerable to exploitation by those who are not bound by scruples and rules of conduct. The idealistic dreamers are never in a position to compete with those who serve only their own interests. This in essence is the meaning of Yury's prophetic and otherwise enigmatic words to Lara:

Perhaps there is something in your very loathing of him that keeps you bound to him more surely than to any man whom you love of your own free will, without compulsion.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p.435.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p.392.

The class origin of the Russian middle class intelligentsia proved to be a liability to them, their wholehearted dedication to the ideals of the Revolution notwithstanding. In spite of the fact that they unreservedly embraced the Revolution once it came, they, as well as the whole of the upper stratum of Russian society fell victim to the "thesis in support of a higher policy"; the "thesis" which deemed all those who had meaningful ties with the past by nature incapable of embracing the Revolution and, therefore, untrustworthy.

This is the high point in the novel on both levels. On the symbolic level it means the end not only of the old Russia; the mode of existence of the middle classes, which was voluntarily forsaken by the intelligentsia with the full knowledge that it could not be recaptured again,<sup>28</sup> but also of a kind of "supra-realistic" world which was both the cause and effect of a lack of communication on the part of the middle class intelligentsia with the real people who constituted Russia's lower classes.

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<sup>28</sup>The lack of desire on the part of Yury to re-establish contact with his family has been a perplexing problem to some reviewers of Doctor Zhivago. See, for example, Edgar H. Lehrman, "A Minority Opinion on Doctor Zhivago", Emory University Quarterly, XVI (Summer, 1960) pp. 77 -- 84.

## CHAPTER V

### THE DEMISE OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA

"All that is left to tell is the brief story of the last eight or ten years of Zhivago's life, years in which he went more and more to seed, gradually losing his knowledge and skill as a doctor and a writer, emerging from his state of depression and resuming his work only to fall back, after a short flareup of activity, into long periods of indifference to himself and to everything in the world."<sup>1</sup>

This gloomy introduction sets the stage for the appearance of the third of Zhivago's women, Marina. Yury's life with Tonya has been presented as a meaningful and happy one, arising logically and gradually as a bond of mutual understanding and affection. His relationship with Lara was a love affair, the result of the force of fate acting on an inherent affection on the part of Yury for someone who remained essentially mysterious to him. What are the nature and circumstances of Yury's match with Marina?

"So it was from this water-carrying on Sundays that a friendship sprang up between Yury and Marina. She would often come up and help him with his housework. One day she stayed with him and did not again go back to the lodge."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.454.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.467.

What is most striking is the deliberate "matter-of-factness" with which Yury's "love affair" with Marina is presented. This is certainly a sharp contrast to Yury's relations with Lara. However, there is an interesting similarity in the mood between this relationship and the circumstances surrounding Yury's marriage with Tonya. There is an apparent lack of romance in both which is not real but is rather implied by the tone of the description. A further point of similarity is the fact that these two relationships both involve marriage.

To understand the symbolic role which Marina plays in relation to Yury, it is in fact necessary to refer to something which was a part of Yury's life with Tonya, namely this conviction:

"And so it seemed that the only real way of living was to live like everyone else, to be lost in other people's lives without leaving a trace. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

At the time this was an idea; now it has become reality. In this respect, the meaning of these words from Yury in reference to Marina is unmistakable. (Yury is speaking to Gordon):

"You used to reproach me at first because Marina said 'you' to me and called me Yury Andreyevich while I said "thou" and "Marina" to her -- as though

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p.175.

it didn't distress me too! But you know that the underlying cause of this unnatural state of affairs was removed long ago; everything has been smoothed out and equality is established.<sup>4</sup>

One can hardly fail to see that the "unnatural state of affairs" is a reference to the class structure of pre-revolutionary Russian society, which had so much "distressed" the intelligentsia, and that all this has been "smoothed out" through the "levelling effect" of the Revolution.

Marina, then, represents the people; no longer "the People" of the philosophical dissertations of the intelligentsia but the real people with whom for the first time now the intelligentsia has established direct contact. This is the result of the Revolution and the necessity of sharing the hardships of post-revolutionary life.

Marina represents the concrete as opposed to the idealized image, Lara. The relative absence of romance in Yury's relationship with Marina in contrast to the love affair with Lara is symbolic of this difference. The significance of marriage in contrast to love affair has been considered in connection with Tonya (above). It applies equally to this situation. The symbolic relation of Marina to Lara is the same as that of Tonya to Lara. Both Tonya

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p.472.

and Marina are symbolic of a way of life, Lara on the other hand represents an ideal. It is noteworthy that at no time after her departure with Komarovsky is Lara referred to by Yury, nor is she mentioned directly in the narrative before Yury's death, while Marina and Tonya are mentioned several times in juxtaposition.

Marina, then, entirely replaces Lara as the focal point of his existence. This situation is, however, not destined to be long-lived. The reader is confronted with another in a series of "abandonments". Zhivago's mysterious disappearance is explained in this way:

. . . in order to rebuild his life as completely and rapidly as possible, he wished to spend some time by himself, concentrating on his affairs, and that as soon as he was settled in a job and reasonably certain of not falling back into his old ways, he would leave his hiding place and return to Marina and the children.<sup>5</sup>

This is hardly logical motivation. If taken on the personal level it raises serious doubts as to Yury's emotional stability. Given his progressive spiritual degeneration from the time of his loss of Lara one would perhaps be justified in arguing this way. This view, however, offers no logical explanation for Yevgraf's role in this episode for it was his idea that Yury should disappear and stay for some

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.472.

time in hiding.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of the symbolic level this episode has its own significance. One notices, first of all, this "abandonment" has a striking similarity to Antipov's "abandonment" of Lara. Antipov, like Yury, lived very close to his family, yet resisted the temptation to see them because "first he must see this one through, this new life, then he could go back to the old one . . ."<sup>7</sup> In other words, like Antipov's action, this act on the part of Yury is deliberate, and in this way very much unlike his other "abandonments".

What form does Yury's "rebuilding of life" take? He plunges into "devouring activity":

There were times when he could hardly keep pace with his thoughts . . . He was in a hurry. Whenever his imagination flagged he whipped it up by drawing in the margins of his notebooks. The drawings were always of forest cuttings or of crossroads in town marked by the sign Moreau and Vetchinkin . Seed Drills . Threshing Machines.

The articles and poems were on the same theme, the Town.<sup>8</sup>

This description of the process of artistic creation begs to be compared with the only other such description in

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 475.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 250.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 476.

the novel: Yury writing poetry in Varykino. The contrasts are immediately striking. To begin with, Lara is no longer a source of inspiration. Also, the process of poetic creation in Varykino was described as a deep personal experience where the poet yields to the force of inspiration: "At such moments Yury felt that the most part of his work was not being done by him but by something which was above him and controlling him . . ." <sup>9</sup> Now the poetic process so far from being spontaneous, is guided by a definite orientation:

Where in such a life, is pastoral simplicity in art to come from? When it is attempted, its pseudo-artlessness is a literary fraud, not inspired by the countryside but taken from academic book shelves. The living language of our time is urban. <sup>10</sup>

There is something unpoetic about whipping up one's imagination; about being in a hurry.

There is something arbitrary and categorical about Yury's theories on literature expressed here. One wonders whether this is Pasternak speaking through his protagonist. This is hardly to be expected from a poet who, in 1935, just at the time when such artistic dogmatism was prevalent

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p.427.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.477.

in Russia, spoke out against imposing restrictions and guidelines upon poetry, and himself turned toward lyricism.<sup>11</sup>

These thoughts expressed here by Yury are an echo of the new orientations in literature which appeared in the Soviet Union during the NEP period. They are, in particular, an echo of the Futurist's proclamations on literature. One notices the similarity between Yury's condemnation of "pastoral simplicity in art" and this declaration by the Futurists:

The bourgeois artists copied the trees, the sun, the mountains, etc. Why? All this exists . . . and is a thousand times more beautiful than when daubed on canvas or hewn out of sugary blocks of marble . . . If you are artists . . . then create your own, human objects . . . Factories, mills, and workshops are waiting for artists to appear and supply them with new models of objects never seen before.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>"poetry will always remain that height above all Alps which is scattered in the grass underfoot, so that one has only to bend down, in order to see it and pick it up from the ground; it will always be too simple to be judged upon at gatherings; it will for all times remain the organic function of man's happiness, full of the blissful gift of judicious speech . . ."

"Slovo o Poezii" (A Work About Poetry), publikatsija i komentarii G. P. Struve, Sbornik stattej, posvjashchennykh tvorchestru B. L. Pasternaka, Issledovanija i materijaly, serija, 1. vypusk 65 (Munich: Institut po izucheniju SSSR, 1962) p. 9 citing Mezhdunarodnyj kongress pisatelej v zashchitu kul'tury. Parizh, injun', 1935. Doklady i vystuplenija, ed. I. Luppol (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoje izdatel'stvo "Khudozhestvennaja literatura", 1936).

<sup>12</sup>Paul, Miliukov, Literature in Russia (Vol. II of Outlines of Russian Culture, 3 vols., ed. Michael Karpovich; New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., Incl., 1960), p. 79.

How, then, is Yury's mysterious disappearance to be understood? It is to be noted that the episode takes place during the NEP period, and its symbolic significance must be explained in terms of the relationship between the bourgeois creative intelligentsia and the Soviet State at the time.

This was a period of new ferment in the field of art, particularly in literature, characterized by attempts to place literature on a new footing as an expression of the new way of life. There was a determination on the part of young writers and theoreticians to make in the field of literature the same decisive break with the past as had occurred in Russian social and political life. There was to be a repudiation of bourgeois literature and, with it, of its representatives as entirely inappropriate to the new circumstances. The new literature was to be an expression of a new proletarian culture, something as yet intangible.

On the official level, however, there was a decision to accept the bourgeois writers who, after the publication of Trotsky's book on Soviet literature, Literature and Revolution, became known as "Fellow Travellers" as a legitimate and necessary link with the past of Russian culture. The pre-revolutionary Russian culture, it was argued, was indispensable as a basis for any future proletarian culture. This decision was partly forced by the fact that literary

talent was almost the exclusive property of the Fellow Travellers. A. Voronsky, then publisher of the periodical, Red Virgin Soil, which printed much of the work of the bourgeois writers, echoed the stand of Party leaders on this question when he said that

There is no proletarian art in Russia . . . at best, there is only an art which is connected with the old . . . Of course the proletarian, the bourgeois, and the petty-bourgeois apply art to varied and often contrary purposes, but this does not necessarily lead to the division of art, science and culture into three categories -- bourgeois, proletarian, and petty-bourgeois, because in fact until this moment only the culture, science and art of the olden times exist. Man of the future social order will create his own art, culture and science by founding them on the new material base. For the time being, during the present transitory period, especially in Russia the existing bourgeois culture is sufficient.<sup>13</sup>

Voronsky's views were upheld at the Thirteenth Congress of the Communist Party in 1924. In the field of literature the class struggle was to be mitigated, and an effort was to be made to win the intelligentsia over from the bourgeoisie.<sup>14</sup>

The fact that the Fellow Travellers were "differentiated" and hesitant furnished the basis for hope of this conquest. It was only necessary to hew away the anti-proletarian and anti-revolutionary elements, to fight against the neo-bourgeois ideology among a section of the Fellow Travellers; and to show tolerance

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p.94.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p.97.

towards others - depending, however, upon their prompt adoption of the Communist ideology. <sup>15</sup>

Yury's mysterious disappearance must be seen as this re-habilitation of the bourgeois intelligentsia, under official protection, at the price, of course, of a certain ideological re-orientation. When viewed in this manner, the meaning of Yury's desire "to rebuild his life as completely and rapidly as possible . . . to be reasonably certain of not falling into his old ways" is abundantly clear.

It is to be noted also that Yury's "rebuilding of life" also includes the possibility of employment in his professional capacity as doctor. This corresponds accurately with historical facts, namely with the question of engaging of bourgeois specialists in the building of Soviet society.<sup>16</sup>

It is Pasternak's opinion that the price of the intelligentsia's rehabilitation involved something more than an ideological re-orientation. It involved the loss of the newly gained bond with the people. The new Soviet writers among whom the Fellow Travellers were the more talented

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p.97.

<sup>16</sup>Yevgraf's role in this, indeed in the entire "remaking of life" episode casts a special light on that personage as a symbol, and leads to some interesting conclusions. This will be discussed presently.

majority became, in effect, a new Soviet class. Their writings, although they now dealt with new problems, displayed the same abstract utopianism and the same distance from the realities of life that were characteristic of the world outlook of the intelligentsia before the Revolution.

One characteristic of the new orientation on the part of the Fellow Travellers was a pre-occupation with the concept of building a new society on an urban basis. We have noted this change in orientation in Yury's writings. His "articles and poems were all on the same theme, the Town". What is particularly striking is the source of Yury's inspiration. It has been noted that Lara ceased to be the focus of his orientation soon after her departure with Komarovsky. The new source of inspiration is "forest cuttings or crossroads in town marked by the sign 'Moreau and Vetchinkin . Seed Drills . Threshing Machines'".

The sign in question, appears in the novel several times.<sup>17</sup> Each time it is mentioned in passing with no particular emphasis as something incidental to the events which are taking place. There is no indication that the sign has any particular meaning except for the fact, perhaps, that it is mentioned several times. At this point, however,

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<sup>17</sup>Doctor Zhivago, pp. 255, 291, 300, 419, 476.

when it is mentioned as a source of inspiration to Yury it becomes clear that it does have an important significance.

This new and unexpected emphasis, forces a reconsideration of the instances in which the sign appears in the novel. It is mentioned for the first time when Yury notices it upon his arrival at Yuryatin. Yury's attention is again drawn to it as he looks out the window of Lara's flat at Yuryatin. His fateful kidnapping by the partisans occurs near this sign. It is again mentioned when Yury wishes to point out to Lara the place of his kidnapping but confuses the location.

It is difficult to assess from the context in which this sign appears what it is precisely that would provide a source of inspiration for Yury later. The only thing which may be said of the various instances at which the sign appears is that Lara is in some way associated with each of them; she is the only "common denominator". Even this connection is not immediately apparent, and is noticeable only in after thought. Now the sign has replaced Lara as inspiration for Yury.

What conclusions can be drawn from this? The sole conclusion which may be justified on the basis of overt evidence is that in symbolic terms the old utopian ideal of a Revolution based on Christian principles in the name of an idealized "People" has been replaced by something

decidedly profane in comparison. Something which had always been present side by side with these concepts but which had never been deemed worthy of anything except notice in passing. What this "something" is can only be suggested. It is whatever characterized the outlook on life during the Soviet period as opposed to the pre-revolutionary days: the desire to build a new society on an industrial and urban basis, the attempt to create a new culture, the attempt to create a new man, the attempt to define literature as a means to these ends. Perhaps it is the conception of the Revolution in terms of class struggle rather than as a struggle in the name of humanity, with its consequent emphasis on the role of the Bolsheviki as the sole makers of the Revolution.

This "something" is whatever made the Fellow Travellers with their former views on life outsiders to this "new" life; whatever made it necessary for them to "rebuild [their] life as completely and as rapidly as possible" in order to fit into the new scheme of things.

What may be concluded on the entire "rebuilding of life" episode is that it is intended to represent a conclusion to the pattern of spiritual decline on the part of Yury, which is evident in the novel. In the final analysis this episode in Yury's life bears the same marks of self-deceit that have been seen in connection with Antipov's

abandonment of Lara. Like Antipov, Yury is destined never to see his wife, Marina, again.

It is not accidental, that the only remaining work belonging to this period in Yury's life is the poem "Hamlet" which is the song of pessimism and resignation to an undesired role of a lonely figure surrounded by a sea of Phariseeism. It is also not accidental that death comes to Yury immediately after his decision to reshape his life. The instrument of his death is the streetcar, one of the symbols of the new pace of urban life. And a pitiful symbol it is.

The year of Yury's death is 1929. The significance of this date in terms of Soviet history is readily apparent. This was the beginning of the first of Stalin's Five Year Plans. This period brought the final and unconditional capitulation of all independent thought to strict ideological regimentation. It also brought the physical extermination of many representatives of the old pre-revolutionary intelligentsia.

The plight of the creative mind under the restrictive conditions of that period is very effectively rendered by the suffocating effect of the streetcar on Yury. What needs to be mentioned in this connection is that the atmosphere of constriction which results in Yury's death has its beginnings elsewhere. It begins with Yury's self-imposed isolation from his family in his small room which became for

him "a banqueting room of the spirit, a lumber room of unreason, a storeroom of discoveries".<sup>18</sup> This corresponds symbolically to the trends in literature in 1928 which conceived of its function in a narrow way as a "catalyst" in the "cultural revolution". Literature was to be proletarian literature. It was to include the work of sympathetic non-proletarians. In Averbakh's words:

Proletarian art is not a form of art which must necessarily be created by a proletarian. Proletarian art is such art as aids the proletariat in the building of socialism, and organizes our feelings and thoughts in the direction of the building of a communist society.<sup>19</sup>

Yury's death represents not only the physical death but a death of the spirit, the result of a constricting atmosphere which was at least partly self-imposed. The period of Yury's devouring creative activity corresponds chronologically with what Pasternak called "the last years of Mayakovsky's life, when there was no more poetry - neither his nor anyone else's."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p.475.

<sup>19</sup>Edward J. Brown, The Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature 1928 - 1932, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), p.63 citing Averbakh, Kul'turnaja revoljutsija i voprosy sovremennoj literatury, p. 65.

<sup>20</sup>Boris Pasternak, An Essay in Autobiography (London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1959), p.101.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FRUIT OF THE FRUIT

It is interesting that while the poem "Hamlet" is presented as the last of what remained of Yury's poetry and represents the final stage in a clear progression from an atmosphere of optimism in expectation of the coming triumph of Christian humanism to that of dejection and resignation in face of a life which "is not like the crossing of a field", the poems which form the "Conclusion" of Doctor Zhivago begin with Hamlet and are arranged thematically in precisely the reverse order. The poetry which ultimately also represents the conclusion on the theme of Doctor Zhivago, represents a mirror image of the spiritual decline evident in Yury's life. Thus the novel ends on a note of optimism in the expectation of the inevitable triumph of Christ.

And just as the poem "Hamlet" marks a spiritual low point and at the same time is the beginning of a new hope, so Yury's death has in it the promise of new life.

#### I. TANYA

The "Epilogue" to Doctor Zhivago describes the period immediately following the Second World War. Looking back Dudorov can conclude:

It's an extraordinary thing, you know. It isn't only in comparison to your [Gordon's] life as a convict but compared to everything in the thirties, even to my favourable conditions at the university, in the midst of books and money and comfort; even to me there, the war came as a breath of fresh air, an omen of deliverance, a purifying storm . . . a blessing compared with the inhuman power of the lie . . .

A new era has dawned.

The war has its special character as a link in the chain of revolutionary decades. It marks the end of the direct action of the causes inherent in the nature of the upheaval itself. By now secondary causes are at work; we are seeing the fruit of its fruit, the result of its results.<sup>1</sup>

These new things are represented by Tanya. Tanya, Yury's and Lara's daughter, has an important role in the symbolic scheme of Doctor Zhivago. The other of Yury's children by his marriages to Tonya and Marina are also important by implication, because it is Tanya and not they that is of central significance.

Tanya's symbolic role is presented in a characteristic concept -- personage association:

Gordon said:

"You realize who she is -- Tanya, the laundry girl?"

"Yes, of course".

"Yevgraf will look after her", he added after a silence: "This has happened several times in the course of history. A thing which has been conceived in a

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<sup>1</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.495.

lofty, ideal manner becomes coarse and material.<sup>2</sup>  
[Italics not in original.]

Tanya represents the result of the intelligentsia's love affair with an ideal, a hardly recognizable product. Nevertheless, she is the embodiment of hope. Tanya represents the "presage of freedom which is in the air",<sup>3</sup> and Yevgraf's promise to her: "I'll find you again, you can be sure of that. I'll find you and send for you again."<sup>4</sup> is ground for hope that the presage will become reality.

The fact that Tanya is chosen as the embodiment of that which is positive and hopeful in the Soviet Union's post-war reality is important to a full understanding of Pasternak's attitude to the Soviet System particularly as concerning its future. There is, of course, to be no returning to the pre-revolutionary way of life. At the same time there is a rejection of the fruits of the intelligentsia's post-revolutionary existence. In the one it is the form of life which is rejected, in the other it is the conception of life in which what was embodied in Lara no longer had meaning. What alone is the bearer of new hope for the future is something "coarse and material" which had,

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<sup>2</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p. 506.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 507.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 499.

nevertheless, a "lofty and ideal" conception.

The realization of this promise for the future is subject to the rediscovery and acceptance of its origins. In symbolic terms this is implied in the fact that Tanya will soon become aware of her true parentage - she will realize that Komarovskiy was not her father.

Pasternak's prognosis for the future, then, is that Christian principles will ultimately triumph, but that this will presuppose the recognition of pre-revolutionary intelligentsia's role as the spiritual fathers of the Revolution.

But Tanya's symbolic role can be understood fully only in juxtaposition with that of Yevgraf.

## II. YEVGRAF

There is one figure in the novel that has not been discussed in detail thus far: Yevgraf. While his "will-o-the-wisp" nature readily invites speculation as to his symbolic role he is, at the same time, the most difficult to define in symbolic terms. His enigmatic nature is, aside from his Kirkh's eyes and sheepskin coat, the most readily noticeable of his characteristics. Throughout the greater part of the narrative he acts more as an apparition than a living figure; he appears from time to time to aid Yury in difficult situations just when the reader has all but

forgotten him, only to disappear again.

Interpretations of Yevgraf's role are many and they seldom concur.<sup>5</sup> Steussy's conclusions in this regard are astute with, however, some errors. This has been discussed previously but bears repetition.

Steussy's argument that Yevgraf represents Russia's Eurasian culture and its victory over Russia's pre-revolutionary Westernized culture seems hardly tenable. True enough, the concept of Eurasianism did enjoy a certain popularity at the time of the Revolution (although mainly among the post-revolutionary emigrees) and finds expression in Blok's Scythians. But there seems to be no overt indication on either the symbolic or personal level in Doctor Zhivago that Pasternak saw the Revolution in these terms.

Certainly, Yevgraf's role vis a vis Yury is not only a negative one. He is also Yury's benefactor and inspiration among other things. In seeing Yevgraf's role in negative terms only Steussy simplifies what in fact is a paradox. And yet, it is only in terms of a paradox that Yevgraf must be discussed as it is in these terms that he reflects historical reality.

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<sup>5</sup>See for example: Isaac Deutscher, "Pasternak and the Calendar of the Revolution", Partisan Review, XXVI (Spring, 1959), 259; Mary and Paul Rowland, "The Mission of Yury and Evgraf Zhivago", Texas Studies in Literature and Language, V, 206; Muchnic, op. cit., p. 350.

Yevgraf's role is that of fate. The role of fate as one of the determining factors of man's life is central to Pasternak's life-view. Pasternak takes great pains to make the reader of Doctor Zhivago aware of this. The great number of coincidences is not the product of an incompetent writer unable to handle his plot.<sup>6</sup> Zhivago's congenital heart ailment is not simply something to be noted in passing. The role of fate in a man's life is the theme of Pasternak's poem "Hamlet". In man's life the order of the acts is planned and the end of the road is inescapable, and the individual must play his role, sometimes unwillingly, as it is dictated by circumstances and events.<sup>7</sup> In the context

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<sup>6</sup>Struve observes that coincidences "belong to one of the themes of the novel, the theme of the providential, another outward expression of which is the deliberately mysterious, unreal figure of Zhivago's half brother, Evgraf. . ." Studies in Russian and Polish Literature, In Honour of Waclaw Lednicki, Zbigniew Folejewski and others (eds.) (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1962), p.235.

<sup>7</sup>An "obvious place" which is clearly intended to make the reader aware of this is the episode which describes an engagement between the partisans who have kidnapped Yury and a detachment of White cadets. (Doctor Zhivago, pp.328 - 329). In the scene Yury shoots (in spite of himself) three young boys, with whom he obviously sympathizes. The entire scene, which as a realistic description of a military engagement is entirely incredible, must be understood in symbolic terms. It is not intended as a realistic description. Indeed its "surrealism" recalls a "Freudian nightmare" in which the dreamer finds himself acting in a way which is contrary to his normal behaviour and desire but finds that he is powerless to stop himself.

This, then, is a symbolic enactment of the law of life which, in the words of the novel, forces man to "submit to the order of events, to the laws governing what is happening before his eyes." (Doctor Zhivago, p.328).

of the novel, fate takes the form of historical events, that "other drama" which is the Revolution.

There are many elements in Yevgraf's relationship with Yury that suggest that he is a symbol of historical circumstances. What stands out most boldly is the fact that Yevgraf first appears to Yury as he reads of the establishment of a Soviet regime in Petersburg. Also, it is significant that Yevgraf undergoes a striking transformation at the time of Yury's death which coincides with a transformation in the Soviet State. Conversely, his enigmatic apparition-like nature between his first appearance to Yury and Yury's death corresponds to the period of Civil War, War Communism and the NEP, during which the Soviet system was in a fluid state. This period saw the struggle to ensure the survival of the Soviet regime, while at the same time the form which this regime would ultimately adopt was quite unclear. Its stable form emerged with the coming of Stalin. It would seem, then, that, specifically, Yevgraf represents those historical events which are connected with the development of the Soviet state.

Yevgraf affects the path of Yury's life more or less directly on two occasions. On his advice Yury leaves Moscow and goes to Varykino. It is also on his advice that Yury enters upon his "remaking of life" episode. Both episodes involve tragedy for Yury, and both are periods of inspiration and creativity. The symbolic implications of

both these episodes have been discussed in detail. In this lies the paradoxical effect of Yevgraf on Yury. This is why Yury can speak of him in these terms:

He knew for certain that this boy was the spirit of his death or, to put it quite plainly, that he was his death. Yet how could he be his death if he was helping him write a poem? How could death be useful, how was it possible for death to be a help?<sup>8</sup>

Yevgraf's effect on Yury is thus both positive and negative because historical events were ambivalent in their effect on people like Blok, as they always are in their effect on man. This is why Yevgraf is Yury's doom, and this is why he is responsible for the publication of Yury's works.<sup>9</sup> This is why after the Second World War he represents hope.

Yevgraf's appearance in the "Epilogue" of the novel is extremely important. The fact that at this point he is a military officer corresponds with the general war footing of the Soviet Union at the time. The key question here is the significance of the fact that Yevgraf seeks out Tanya and promises to take care of her in the future. The fact

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<sup>8</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.205.

<sup>9</sup>Steussy accurately points to this as being symbolic of the publication by the Soviet regime, in so many tragic cases, posthumously, of the literary heritage of the Fellow Travellers.

that this takes place in the "Epilogue" has definite implications inasmuch as the "Epilogue" represents the author's concluding comment on the revolutionary era and its outcome. That it is injected with a note of optimism is clear. The spirit of Yury lives on in his works and "a presage of freedom is in the air".<sup>10</sup> Yevgraf's new role as Tanya's guardian and benefactor must be considered to be part of this optimistic conclusion. Her discovery by Yevgraf seems to be the sole reason behind her appearing in the novel at all. The author intends this development to be a comment. How is it to be understood?

There are two aspects of this development that are noteworthy. In the first place Yevgraf corrects a misconception that Tanya had about her parentage - he assures her that she is not the child of Komarov(sky), but, interestingly enough, does not tell her who her real father was. Secondly, he does not undertake to care for her immediately, but promises: "I'll find you again, you can be sure of that. [*Italics not in the original.*] I'll find you and send for you again."<sup>11</sup>

If historical events are a one-way road the end of which is inescapable, if the order of the acts is planned,

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<sup>10</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p. 507.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 499.

then it is clear that Pasternak visualizes another act in the drama that he has described. Yevgraf will, in fact, seek out Tanya again; he will tell her the story of her origin, and take care of her.

It is Pasternak's belief that the heritage of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia has not been lost. At some future time this heritage will be rediscovered. With this, will come the full appreciation of the positive role of the intelligentsia with regard to the Revolution. Old humanistic, Christian, dreams and ideals will be salvaged from the "garbage can of history", and will again become the driving force behind new developments, the basis of a new life.

It was impossible for this to happen during Stalin's era but, in the words of the novel, "a presage of freedom was in the air throughout these post-war years, and it was their only historical meaning".<sup>12</sup> Yevgraf, as the embodiment of historical events has only this one role to play in the "Epilogue".

Presumably, as Pasternak was preparing his novel for publication at the beginning of the "Thaw", he thought that the time for the fulfillment of this promise had come. He was wrong. But his profound faith in the future is clear:

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<sup>12</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p.507.

On the whole, in our age, people are moving forward a new attitude in life.

. . . . .  
This means as I see it, a departure from the materialistic view of the nineteenth century. It means a reawakening of the spiritual world, of our inner life -- of religion. I don't mean religion as a dogma or as a church, but as a vital feeling.<sup>13</sup>

This is part of historical developments which cannot be reversed. This will be the final act in Russia's drama:

Something new comes forth, a new view of life, a sense among humanity of its own value . . . .  
Isolated official measures are of no importance. The new Russia comes forth anyway, in defiance of all administrative interferences. Something grows among the people organically.<sup>14</sup>

It is the advent of the inevitable!

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<sup>13</sup>As given in interview with Nilsson. Quoted in: Nils Oke Nilsson, "Pasternak: 'We Are the Guests of Existence'," The Reporter, XVIII (Nov., 1958), 35.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p.34.

Similarly, when one CHAPTER VII deals with  
the symbolic concept of the "self-contained" level  
of their own... as a symbol of characters.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Inasmuch as the present thesis in itself represents a conclusion, a separate chapter of conclusions would be largely redundant. However, a brief resume of what has been attempted would be in order, together with a summary of Pasternak's views on the Revolution.

The present thesis had as its object, to show that there exists in the novel Doctor Zhivago, a distinct and "self-contained" symbolic level. In other words, the underlying proposition has been that the main characters in this novel, apart from being individuals, are also symbols in a somewhat different sense than the protagonist of Fedin's Cities and Years<sup>1</sup>, for example, is a representative "type" of the pre-revolutionary intellectual. Each of Pasternak's characters represents a force or element which played a part in Russia's revolutionary developments. In effect, therefore, when, in dealing with the symbolic level, one speaks of Yury, one is speaking of the creative element of the Russian pre-revolutionary intelligentsia.

<sup>1</sup>The theme of Fedin's Cities and Years is strikingly similar to that of Doctor Zhivago. The protagonist, Andrej Startsov, like Yury on the personal level, is an intellectual who visualizes the Revolution in idealistic terms and finds it impossible to come to terms with its brutal reality. When asked by an activist what he had been doing during the making of the Revolution he answered (even as Yury might): "I Loved!"

Similarly, when one speaks about Lara one is dealing with the idealized conception of the "People" and a "Revolution" in their name. And so on with other characters.

It is felt that a part of the claim to validity of the arguments as they have been presented is the fact that it is possible to discuss the symbolic level of the novel without undue stretching of fact and over-interpretation. This is not to presuppose, by any means that all the pitfalls inherent in proving a theory have been successfully avoided here. But it is felt that the various elements of the symbolic pattern fall into place readily with considerable mutual complementation. A conscious effort has been made to eliminate that which bordered too dangerously on conjecture.<sup>2</sup>

Further, it might be pointed out in defence of the approach taken here, that several otherwise enigmatic passages seem to take on a clear significance in terms of a symbolic level. This is particularly the case with the much discussed abandonment of Tonya.

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<sup>2</sup>The significance of the "Moreau and Vetchinkin" signs remains somewhat problematic. However, it was felt that they were altogether too "obvious" to be disregarded.

As regards material which was not included, a case in point is the symbolism of the duck which was the subject of comment by Mr. Jackson (Robert L. Jackson "The Symbol of the Wild Duck in Dr. Zhivago", Comparative Literature, XV, pp.39 -- 45). Apart from Mr. Jackson's interpretation, it seems to have some significance in terms of the "repentant nobleman" theme.

With regard to Pasternak's views on the Revolution, the following observations can be made:

To begin with, Pasternak follows the accepted view of Soviet historiography in regarding the Revolution of 1905 and March, 1917 as "bourgeois revolutions" and therefore as belonging to an era pre-dating the Revolution -- the Bolshevik coup. He seems to believe that the Bolshevik Revolution was inevitable given the circumstances at the time.

At this point, however his views diverge from Soviet historiography. The period before the Revolution was not "utterly and irredeemably corrupt".<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, the gains of the "bourgeois revolutions" were part of definite and orderly developments in the direction of a just social system. His conclusion in retrospect is that the trends before the October Revolution were, as Tonya puts it in her letter to Yury "born to make life simple and to look for sensible solutions"; the beautiful utopian ideal of an ultimate solution was born simply "to complicate it and confuse the way".<sup>4</sup> But the Revolution came; it is an irrevocable fact and there is no looking back. The ideal of the Revolution was beautiful -- the reality was not.

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<sup>3</sup>As Steussy puts it.

<sup>4</sup>Doctor Zhivago, p. 408.

Mistakes were made and a terrible price was paid for them. The innocent suffered -- the guilty escaped.

What of the future? The heirs of the Revolution, the "children of the terrible years", will ask questions, look for answers, and come to their own conclusions regarding life. They will look back to the origins of the Revolution and, in looking back, they will re-discover the legacy of the intelligentsia. Christian humanistic ideals will be rehabilitated to form the basis of life. This is best summed up in Pasternak's own words:

Times will pass, many great times. I will not be here then. There will be no return to the times of the fathers or of the forefathers, which incidentally is neither necessary nor desirable. But that which is noble, creative and great after long absence will finally again appear before people. It will be an age of accomplishments, your life will then be the richest, the most beautiful. Remember me then.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Arkadij Gajev, "B. L. Pasternak i ego roman 'Doktor Zhivago'", (B. L. Pasternak and his novel Doctor Zhivago), Sbornik stattej, posvjashchennykh tvorchestru B. L. Pasternaka, Issledovanija i materijaly, serija 1., vypusk 65 (Munich: Institut po izucheniju SSSR, 1962), p.42, citing Gerd Ruge, Pasternak, (Munich: 1958), S 125.

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